COLOR, CAPITAL, AND THE CLIMB TO HEADSHIP: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL ON PEOPLE OF COLOR WHEN APPLYING TO BECOME A HEAD OF AN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

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A Dissertation
in
Educational and Organizational Leadership

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education 2012

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Ara Carlos Brown
DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my family who sacrificed so I could build my social capital.

Let us all now reap the benefits.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank all of the heads of school who agreed to be a part of this study. Your story will allow the next generation of heads of color to lead beside you.

I want to thank my family, especially Kalah and Noah, for allowing Daddy to spend long hours away from home to do his homework. Just know that now that this is finished, you won't be able to get rid of me. As you become teenagers, I am sure that you will wish that I could pursue another degree. Rest assured that I am in the process of pursuing an advanced degree in how to be the best father possible. I know that it will be filled with hands-on, experiential learning and may take a lifetime to complete. Nonetheless, I am ready to give my all in order to pass the test.

I want to thank Gene, Joan, and Gray for their unwavering support and guidance throughout this process.

I want to thank Torch Lytle and Earl Ball for not only providing guidance through this process (even if it meant reading and meeting about my final dissertation at the 11th hour), but for being honest with me about my study, its relevance, and the next step in my career. The two of you will get the first copy of the book once it is complete!

I want to thank Pearl Rock Kane for seeing something in me that I never saw myself. It is because of you that I decided to work in independent schools. I owe my career to you.

Lastly, I want to thank my chair, Peter Kuriloff, for not giving up on a kid who gave up on himself. Because of you, I was able to reach the greatest milestone in my educational career.
ABSTRACT

COLOR, CAPITAL, AND THE CLIMB TO HEADSHIP:
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TO BECOME A HEAD OF AN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

Ara Carlos Brown
Peter Kuriloff

The literature on social networks, homophily, and educational backgrounds indicates that people of color have less access to the social capital that would be necessary to be considered for the position of head of an independent school in the United States. Furthermore, research indicates that people of color receive decreased returns on their social capital as compared to whites. Therefore, it can be argued that people of color need more social capital than whites when it comes to career mobility. This becomes important given the fact that nearly 70% of heads of school will retire within the next decade and there is a push for a greater representation of people of color in this position. This study used a mixed-methods approach to examine the social capital held by people of color who obtained their first headship in an independent school between July 2006 and July 2011. The data from the study shows that there is a significant statistical difference in the percentage of recently appointed heads of color who are alumni of independent schools and who have previously served as an assistant head of school versus their white counterparts. Furthermore, there is a greater percentage
of heads of color who are alumni of a selective graduate program and who hold, or are currently completing, a terminal degree. Lastly, heads of color reported that they found it important, yet difficult, to develop relationships with the educational search firms who often serve as the gatekeeper to these coveted head of school positions. The results of this study give independent schools the framework needed to move beyond the criteria and approaches that were used in the past to identify viable heads of school candidates.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In a recent study by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), it was reported that almost 40% of the respondents who were heads of school had plans to leave their position within the next five years. An additional 32% of the respondents indicated the same thing within the next ten years (NAIS, 2010). With approximately 70% of the leadership leaving their position within the next decade, this could represent a grave problem for independent schools if there are not enough candidates in the pipeline. This is especially significant since 78% of school administrators who participated in this study indicated not being interested in pursuing a head of school position.

Given that NAIS notes that most current heads of school were previously associate or assistant heads of school before being appointed in their current position (2010), this would be an ideal position in which new heads of school could be recruited. However, if this was to be the primary pool from which heads were selected, it would overlook many potential candidates of color since only 16% of the people in these positions identify themselves as being a part of the racial minority (NAIS, 2010).

In the report, NAIS takes the following position on the issue:

Facing widespread leadership transitions in the next five to ten years, it is vitally important that independent schools look for ways to expand and enhance the leadership pipeline... [which includes] removing barriers to participation by people of color and women. A potentially small pool of potential candidates in relation to the number of heads who are poised to retire demands an analysis of the head search process. (2010).

In this dissertation, I argued that these barriers are related to the amount of social capital (i.e., social networks, educational attainment, and occupational experiences)
possessed by candidates of color as compared to their white counterparts. Candidates of color not only need an abundant amount of social capital, but given the search process, they may require more social capital than white candidates in order to successfully obtain a head of school position. If they do not, candidates of color may have a harder time even being considered for a position. This is especially true when candidates of color are looking outside of their current institution where the guidance of an executive search firm may be taken more into account.

With fewer than 60 heads of school who identify as a person of color, out of more than 1,400 schools that make-up the membership of NAIS, there needs to be a better understanding of why people of color are not being encouraged, considered, and hired for these positions in order to develop ways to increase the talent pool. This study looks at how the social capital possessed by people of color, as compared to their white counterparts within independent schools, influences their candidacy for a head of school position.

**RESEARCH QUESTION**

*How does social capital influence the candidacy for people of color who seek a head of school position at a college preparatory, independent school in the United States?*

**Sub-Questions**

- How do people of color’s level of education, the type of schools they attended (high school and post-secondary), and leadership development programs completed influence their candidacy to become a head of school?

- How do people of color’s career experiences influence their candidacy to become a head of school?
• How do people of color’s social networks influence their candidacy to become a head of school?

• How much career-related support are candidates of color receiving before becoming a head of school?

Significance

Given that there are less than 60 heads of school who identify as a person of color out of more than 1,400 schools that make-up the membership of National Association of Independent Schools, we need to have a better understanding of why people of color are not being encouraged, considered, and hired for these positions. By examining the social capital of recently appointed heads of color, as compared to their white counterparts, we can begin to figure out ways to diversify pool of candidates for future head of school openings.

Review of the Literature

The review of literature for this dissertation is organized in the following manner:

• Definition of and related research on independent schools in the United States, including its history and purpose, structure and governance, employment trends, and the position of the National Association of Independent Schools;

• Definition of and related research on social capital, including how it applies to educational qualifications, social networks, race, career support, and hiring.

Independent Schools

Independent schools are unique in their history, structure, and purpose from other schools within the United States. They were born in an era when compulsory education
throughout the states did not exist (Kaestle, 1983, p. 3-4). Furthermore, while they are now often classified as preparatory schools for four-year colleges (Powell, 1996, p. 3), the constitutions of several of the early and influential schools in the late 1700s “made no mention of preparation for college” since the curriculum was “less classical and included science and moral philosophy”; subjects that were new, but quickly copied by these colleges and universities (Sargent, 1919, p. 15). This diversity in subjects and approach continues to be a reason why parents choose an independent school for their child. Other reasons include cultural opportunities, safe environments, outstanding teachers that offer specialized and individualized instruction, school organizations, family legacies, student-teacher relationships, and an emphasis on educating the whole child in terms of cognitive and affective development (Gooden, Stephens, & Alford, 2002, p. 75-77).

Independent schools can be classified as private in that they have their own governing board and are not required to follow the same obligations placed upon public institutions (e.g. federal mandates on curriculum, teacher certification, and days of instruction) (Kane, 1992, p. 9-11). However, they shun this label because of the exclusivity that is associated with the term private (Kane, 1992, p. 5) as well as to differentiate themselves from their parochial school counterparts whose “ultimate control is held by their religious hierarchy and clergy” (Gooden et al., 2002, p. 75 – 83).

Although independent schools are diverse in composition and mission, they share several commonalities: “self-governance, self-support, self-defined curriculum, self-selected students, self-selected faculty, and small size” (Kane, 1991). Many of them are also members of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), a non-profit organization that strives to be the voice of and center of collective action for its 1,400
member schools. The freedom allotted to these schools in admitting students and hiring faculty who are attracted to their distinctive mission, curriculum, and assessment measures are what contribute to their success (NAIS, 2010). Longitudinal research from NAIS has shown that families primarily choose independent schools because “they perceive the quality of teaching to be exceptional” (2006). This is probably because independent school students are at least twice as likely to have a teacher who had graduated from one of the top 100 most selective colleges than their privileged suburban public school counterparts (NAIS, 2006) and almost three times as likely to score over 1100 on the SAT (NAIS, 2004). Furthermore, in regards to career outcomes, independent school graduates are twice as likely to earn an advanced degree and achieve a top management position by mid-career than graduates of public schools (TABS, 2012). In essence, families are drawn towards these types of statistics because independent schools, many that are tuition-driven, strive to attend to and reinforce the interest and values of said families (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987).

Because of the success of their graduates, in addition to how they have been portrayed in stories such as A Catcher in the Rye and School Ties, independent schools are often seen as elitist, impenetrable, and the “centers of privilege and power” (Profit, 2007). However, it is important to note that these schools have shown a great commitment to abolishing that label. For example, NAIS, as a part of its Principles for Good Practice, encourages schools to dedicate both financial and personnel resources to increasing and supporting the diversity (e.g. religious, ethnic, racial, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity) of its students, staff, faculty, and administration (2012). Despite the economic downturn in the United States in 2008, independent schools have
been able to remain steadfast in their approach, especially as it relates to students. For instance, because public schools tend to be tied to, and therefore only pull students from, specific neighborhoods, independent schools tend to be more ethnically and socioeconomically diverse (especially if the independent school has a boarding component). Furthermore, NAIS recently reported that in the 2010-2011 academic year, 25.9% of the student body in its member schools identified themselves as a person of color (2011). This is up from 21.9% in the 2007-2008 academic year (NAIS, 2008). Despite these growing trends for students, there is slow progress with, and great concerns around, increasing the diversity of faculty and administrators within these institutions (Brown and Greenwood, 2010). Moreover, there is a growing concern regarding the ability to increase the pool of women and people of color who are ready, willing, and able to fill some of the vacancies that will be left by heads of school as they retire within the next five to ten years (Torres, 2011, p. 11-12).

Understanding the role of head of school is important in increasing its diversity. This is especially significant given that many administrators who would be prime applicants to become a head of school in the future are not interested because of a skewed sense of the head’s responsibilities (Torres, 2011, p. 22). While it is true that the responsibilities of a head of school will vary based upon things such as the size, mission, and endowment of institution (just to name a few), there are some basic commonalities that exist in the “what” and “how” of the position across all schools. NAIS states that the primary responsibility of a head of school is to fulfill the school’s stated mission by:

- Communicating the mission to, and supporting it when working with, students, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, and the community-at-large;
• Ensuring that every element of school life (e.g., admission, marketing, faculty recruitment, faculty evaluations, and fundraising) reflects the principles of equity, justice, and the dignity of each individual;

• Overseeing the development, administration, and assessment of the school’s program;

• Supervising the financial management, maintenance of the physical plant, strategic planning, and fund-raising for the school;

• Working in partnership with the board of trustees to establish, refine, and support the school’s mission (2012a).

While these five bullet points are short, they encapsulate a lot. Many independent schools are tuition-driven, college-preparatory institutions with storied traditions that seek to attract and retain not only quality teachers and the next generations of legacy families and their donations, but a new cadre of students, teachers and administrators that better represent the global community as well. The job of head of school has become more complex, difficult, and stressful (Profit, 2007), yet it is also attracting more “non-traditional” people to the job who seek “the unique opportunity to guide, manage, and direct the education of hundreds of students” (Prewitt Spiller, 2011, p. 3). Because there are a myriad of responsibilities that come with the position, it is believed that a competent and successful head should have experience with “finance, advancement, handling parents, hiring and evaluating teachers, and working with a board” (Frankel & Schechtman, 2010). While no head of school is expected to be an expert in all areas, it is
this last point of working with a board of trustees that may be the most difficult. However, it is also one of the most useful given a head’s relationship with the board.

A board of trustees is a “self-selecting and thus self-perpetuating” group that not only “bears ultimate responsibility for an independent school’s philosophy, resources, and program” (Kane, 1991, p. 7), it is responsible for the hiring and evaluating of its sole employee, the head of school (Kaufman, 2011, p. 38). Consequently, who a board selects as head of school is as much of a reflection of their own ideals and values as it is the schools'. Therefore, when looking to fill this important role, most schools obtain the services of an executive search firm that specializes in recruiting heads of school.

There are roughly twenty executive search firms that independent schools readily employ for help with senior-level, administrative searches (NAIS, 2012b). While they differ in size, location, and the amount of searches they handle per year, many, if not all, are owned by or employ former independent school educators. For example, more than 40 former heads of school are a part of these organizations. They are seen as ideal for this line of work because they are able to frequently tap their professional contacts—usually sitting heads of school, board members, and other educational leaders—as prospects and/or for referrals when searching for the next school leader (Barbieri, 2011, p. 87). Therefore, one way aspiring heads of school can increase their chances of a referral is by having and maintaining positive relationships with former and current heads of school.

When a search firm is involved in the appointment of a head of school, the application process for an applicant usually entails the following:

- The candidate submits his/her curriculum vitae to the firm handling the search;
• The candidate has a face-to-face and/or phone conversation with the search firm;
• The candidate participates in the first round of interviews with the school’s search committee (a subset of the board of trustees) if the search firm thinks the candidate is an appropriate match;
• The candidate participates in a second round of interviews as one of three to four finalists. This round of interviews usually consists of a two-day visit where the candidate meets with students, parents, faculty, board members, and alumni.

Because the search firm receives all of the applications and presents the search committee with the initial group of semi-finalist, they are often seen as the gatekeepers of these positions. Therefore, the effort that an aspiring head places into establishing and maintaining a relationship with these firms is as important as the effort placed into obtaining things such as an advanced degree and leadership experiences. This is because “head of school search committees are often reluctant to hire new heads who depart from the traditional model" (Torres, 20122, p 17). Given the current statistics for heads of school from NAIS, and the fact that the typical head of school is currently a white male in his 50s, this traditional model tends to consist of the following pieces of capital:
• Worked as a teacher;
• Spent most of their career working in an independent school;
• Have an advanced degree;
• Previously served as an assistant, associate or division head before being appointed;
• Had to leave their current school in order to find a headship.
While some recently appointed heads of school deviated from this model, it is important to note they were the exceptions and not the rule (Frankel & Schechtman, 2010). What will set candidates apart from one another is not necessarily their educational background or work experience. Instead, it is their connections with other independent school leaders—specifically search firms, heads of schools, and boards of trustees—that will help separate them from their peers. As one recent head of school noted:

An advanced degree will help your CV make the cut...[however, you need to] find out whether you—or anyone in your circle of friends, acquaintances, and colleagues—know any of the trustees...never pass up opportunities to research, network, and do the groundwork for relationship building (Kaufman, 2011, p. 40).

With 37% of the heads of school planning to change jobs or retire in less than five years, with another 32% planning to do it in less than 10 (Torres, 2011, p. 21), independent schools are presented with a great opportunity to allow their senior leadership to better reflect the growing racial diversity of their schools. However, despite a growing number of administrators of color, a recent report by NAIS indicates that current heads of school—who serve as one of the main referral points for aspiring heads—feel that there are too few qualified candidates of color (i.e. they do not follow the traditional model) relative to the jobs that are and will be available (Torres, 2011, p. 17-23). Therefore, understanding how people of color obtain and use social capital for career mobility, especially how it pertains to becoming a head of school, will be an important first step to diversifying the pool of candidates for future head of school openings.
Social Capital

The concept of social capital has become a widely researched theory within the social sciences. It has been cited in several seminal studies as an influential factor in people's sense of community, civic virtue, and political participation (Putnam, 2000); American's connectedness by three friendship links (Milgram, 1967) and; given that humans are not independent of others, but are an "ensemble of social relations", it called for socialism as well (Marx, 1845). However, despite its empirical study in disciplines such as economics, political science, anthropology, and psychology, there is not a widespread consensus on how to define or measure social capital. The debate usually revolves around whether social capital is the property of individuals or of a larger group; its types and purposes (e.g., bonding, bridging, or linking social capital); whether it has a positive or negative function in our society; and its components (e.g. relationships, trust, civic norms) (Finsveen & van Oorschot, 2008). Nonetheless, even with its discrepancies, Portes notes that social capital “is arguably one of the most successful 'exports' from sociology to other social sciences and to public discourse during the last two decades” (2000). This research in sociology tends to focus on social capital at either the micro-level (e.g. individuals), the meso-level (e.g. social groups, neighborhoods, ethnic groups, etc.) or on the macro-level (e.g. large communities, countries, etc.). The term social capital was used as early as 1920 and has just recently, as of the past 25 years, found some sense of a shared understanding through the work of American sociologist James Coleman and French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Although their work was done independent of one another, it collectively sets the basis for the theoretical foundations used in most of the research on social capital today (Dika & Singh, 2002). And while
their research is heavily cited and considered seminal works in the field of sociology, their description of social capital is not unlike of the theories of political, financial, and physical capital. In essence, their composite explanation of this phenomenon “posits that the investment and mobilization of capital enhances the outcomes desirable to individuals or communities” (Lin, 2000). However, while both theorists focus on the benefits accrued to individuals and/or families by virtue of their ties (i.e. social networks) with others, there are still some significant variations in their theories.

Coleman was interested in examining how social capital led to the creation of human capital (i.e. education, training, etc.) within the next generation of a family. Building upon Becker’s work on human capital (1964), he agreed that one’s socioeconomic standings partly depended upon human capital. However, he took it a step further in saying that the way to obtain human capital was through opportunities created when the connections between people revolutionized in a way that produced helpful consequences (1988). He saw these opportunities via connections as social capital and having a complementary (and quite possibly symbiotic) relationship with human capital. For example, not only would someone gain access to human capital through resources and opportunities (social capital), but social capital would be gained by obtaining things such as a college or advanced degree (human capital). Furthermore, Coleman believed that this increase in human capital would not only increase the social capital possessed by the individual who obtained it, but for the people the individual was connected to as well. He defined social capital not necessarily as a tangible item even though he included the semi-tangible human capital as being an inseparable part of it. Instead, he felt that social capital was defined more by its function in that:
It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence (1990, p. 302).

Therefore, Coleman believed that an individual who lacked a network of people who possessed resources that would help said individual attain a goal was deficient of social capital. However, he did not solely focus on the importance of obtaining a bountiful social network that was rich in resources. He noted that a given form of social capital may be valuable in facilitating some actions or outcomes for an individual, but be deemed useless or even harmful in other situations. Furthermore, he spoke to the importance of the length and frequency of contact with those in a network (1988).

Although Coleman did not specifically allude to this, these two pieces leads us to believe that managing the network and its embedded resources are as important as simply having access to the resources. If nothing else, Coleman had a functional view of social capital that provided the opportunity to explain it by its effects (e.g. the outcomes produced for an individual by its existence).

While Coleman’s study focused on how social capital, as defined by family and community norms and resources, promoted things such as educational achievement, school-related motivation, and engagement in school by an adolescent, his theories have been used to explore things from behaviors in business to political activism (Baker, 2000). Nonetheless, some researchers find his theory relating social capital to human capital as somewhat vague given his exclusion of social capital’s specific properties, the inability to adequately quantify it, and how an individual, especially an adolescent, can explore and access the resources in his network (Dika & Singh, 2002; Lin, 2001, p. 26;
Portes, 1998). Additionally, Coleman’s theory focused on how social capital provided assets for an individual in a network and excluded the mention of collective assets (outside of developing trust and norms within the group) (1990). This micro-level perspective, in turn, under-develops the impact social capital could have on the advancement of an entire group. Recognizing how social capital can help people of color, and not necessarily just an individual, is an important faction of this study.

Therefore, it is important to turn to Bourdieu’s theory based on social reproduction, symbolic power, and access to institutional resources to give further clarity to the factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of people of color within leadership positions in independent schools. In analyzing social inequalities, Bourdieu defined social capital as the following:

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in various senses of the word (1986, p. 248).

He felt that the amount of social capital held by a person was dependent upon the size of the network of connections and on the amount of capital—economic, cultural (the closest thing that other theorists define as human capital which, in part, consists of knowledge, skills, educational qualifications), and symbolic—held by each person in the network (1986). This expansion of social capital to include multiple parts that were valuable was overlooked by Coleman. Instead, when defining the value of social capital, Coleman focused on the importance of reciprocity within one’s social network for individual gain; the group’s enforcement of norms; the consequences of possessing social
capital (e.g. access to privileged information); and the social structures that provide the context for both sources and effects to materialize. Bourdieu focused on not only the resources themselves, but one's ability to obtain them by virtue of membership in different social structures. With this perspective, a person's social capital can be broken down into two elements: (1) the relationship that would allow someone the ability to benefit from resources possessed by members of a network and; (2) the amount and value of said resources (Portes, 1998). Moreover, social capital can be measured not only by the amount and quality of connections available in one's network, but also by how one benefited from the resources in the network. In other words, the denser the network of relationships with people who possess things that one could benefit from (i.e. the members are sharing their resources with many other people), the greater the social capital. It is important to note that Bourdieu did not see these networks as happening naturally and instead felt that they must be developed via deliberate investment strategies geared towards preserving the sanctity of a group. More specifically, he saw social capital as the investment the dominant class in a society needed to make in order to maintain their position (1986). How this applies to independent schools given the historical composition of its leadership as being predominantly white males makes this study that much more urgent.

Bourdieu's concept of social capital is better understood in relation to his other work, mainly cultural capital. It is there where he exemplifies how it can exist in the dispositions of mind and body (embodied), cultural goods (objectified), and like Coleman (1988), within educational qualifications (institutionalized). Furthermore, Bourdieu goes on to note that certain forms of cultural capital are valued more than others in different
situations. For example, within the context of independent schools, it can be deemed that the educational background of the faculty is an important marketing tool since most institutions publicly list their faculty's college background on their website.

However, where Bourdieu's theory falls short is that it fails to indicate which persons have more social capital than others or whether someone has social capital at all. Moreover, unlike Coleman, Bourdieu's over-emphasis on an individual's investment towards collective assets fails to recognize that networks have different degrees and qualities of assets. For instance, it does not indicate whether one's network possesses resources that are relevant to that individual's specific goals and needs. Lastly, while Bourdieu measures social capital as successful use of accessible resources, he fails to talk about how we can assess potential access (i.e., having, but not using, a helpful resource). Instead, he tries to reduce social capital to economic capital that network members use as credits that can be reinvested in the relationship or used for resources (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 252-253). While this approach, unlike Coleman's, gives the opportunity to measure the volume of capital possessed by a network, it assumes that all members maintain a strong, reciprocal relationship.

Despite these differences, Bourdieu and Coleman's theories of social capital has helped lay the groundwork for organizing concepts that help researchers better explore and understand the factors that affect life chances of individuals and the well-being of communities. For example, through empirical research based on these theories, it has been confirmed that social capital enhances the likelihood of more job leads, better jobs, greater promotions, higher earnings, and even better mental health (Hero, 2007; Lin, 2000). This is because Coleman and Bourdieu's theories are complementary with one
focusing on an area that may have been left underdeveloped by the other. Therefore, each theory brings its own set of strengths to help explore how social capital impacts the appointment of people of color as a head of an independent school. Coleman's functional definition emphasizes human capital as well as how people can use "socio-structural resources" within a managed reciprocal relationship for the achievement of otherwise unattainable ends (1990). This is a great starting place in understanding if social capital has an impact because it looks to the backgrounds of recently appointed heads rather than those who were not able to reap the rewards of the resources. Bourdieu's more expansive view and importance of the social network, especially how it depends upon cultural capital in striving to maintain the status quo, will give the ability to look at things on both a meso and macro-level. By using a combination of these two sociological theories of social capital, there is now a rich theoretical framework to begin to explore how race intersects with social capital. In using this framework of social capital, an important step will be to discern how race impacts the acquisition, management, and perception of the different pieces of social capital (social network and human capital) at the meso-level. Therefore, the following sections will review the research on social networks, educational qualifications, and the career advancement of people of color. This, in turn, will give a better understanding about the influence of social capital on people of color obtaining their first head of school position.

**Social Capital as Social Network**

As Bourdieu (1986) noted, being able to reap the resources of those in your social network is one of the cornerstones of social capital. It provides an individual with resources to obtain things that would not be otherwise obtainable (Coleman, 1990).
Therefore, it could be assumed that the more expansive the network, the better. Based on the small world theory that all Americans are connected by no more than six individuals (Milgram, 1967), people in the United States should have an equal amount of resources to access anything they desire.

However, despite this theory, everyone will not have access to the larger constituency and, consequently, its unlimited amount of resources. This is because social capital is distributed differently across the varied social groups (Lin, 2000). Therefore, people will tend to pull from only a small cluster of individuals that are seen as accessible and reciprocal in this vast network. Furthermore, despite the assumption of a bigger network being inherently better, it is not the size of the network that matters. Instead, it is the structure. Subsequently, who you know is more important than how many people you know. Interestingly, research has found that who you know is very similar to who you are. For instance, within the United States, people's social networks tend to be relatively homogenous in regard to age, gender, race, socioeconomic status, education level, and occupational prestige (Baker, 2000, p. 50-51; McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009). Moreover, when a social network has a high density (most people in the network know/are connected to each other), and therefore contains a high level of redundancy (homogeneity of resources), social capital becomes stifled (Burt, 2005; Lin, 2000). Therefore, those who actively expand their social network by connecting with people outside of their usual, homogenous social circle tend to have greater social capital. This expansion becomes extremely important when utilizing social networks for career mobility.

There is a substantial body of literature that confirms how social capital, in particular, social networks, influence career success and growth (Baker, 1994; Burt,
2005; Granovetter, 1973; Lin, 2001; Mouw, 2003; Podolny & Baron, 1997). For example, Luthans, Hodgetts, & Rosenkrantz (1998) have shown that the most successful managers spend 70% more time engaged in networking activities than their counterparts. However, not only is social networking important for being successful in a position, it is also essential when it comes to obtaining a new position. Several research studies suggest that individuals who access relevant information through their extensive social ties (friends, relatives, and expert acquaintances), generally receive a greater quantity of job information and are more likely to acquire jobs than those with fewer social ties who search through methods such as cold-calling, newspaper ads, or general placement agencies (Granovetter, 1995; Jacobs & Cornwell, 2006; Peterson, Saporta & Seidel, 2000; Portes, 1998; Rosenbaum, DeLuca, Miller, & Roy, 1999). This becomes even more pronounced when the network consists of high-status contacts (Cornwell & Cornwell, 2008; Kanter, 1977; Lin, Ensel, & Vaughn, 1981). While having a larger network correlates with greater leads, it is important to remember that simply having a large network does not necessarily translate into more leads (Smith, 2005). This is because networks that are rich in resources are characterized by its leads that are unique and non-repetitive—a resource heterogeneity—and not just by quantity (Lin, 2000).

Despite these findings, members of low-status groups, based on achieved or ascribed status characteristics, do not see the same level of success in career mobility when using their social network. This is because they tend to have less access to high-status contacts (Cornwell & Cornwell, 2008; Ibarra, 1995; Kanter, 1977; Lai, Lin, & Leung, 1998) and are inclined to form networks involving others that possess similar characteristics (Green, Tigges & Diaz, 1999; Marsden, 1987; Martineau, 1977;
McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001). This is seen as resource-poor networks given the “relatively restricted variety of information and influence” (Lin, 2000). Therefore, this lack of access due to the composition of their group directly impacts the type of career advice and job referrals they receive. This is especially the case for people of color. For example, whites, as compared to blacks and Hispanics, usually have greater access to social resources because their networks tend to be larger, more diverse, and possess information and opportunities that can help with career advancement (Elliot, 1999; Marsden, 1987; Parks-Yancy, 2006). One explanation for this is that white males are able to access high quality jobs through “old-boy networks” while people of color tend to have social networks that lack a variety of information and influence (Saloner, 1985). This shortage of access to social capital, also known as cultural deficits (Lin, 2001), results in people of color obtaining less schooling and having less financially rewarding careers than their white counterparts.

This is not to say that people of color do not have nor use networks to obtain employment. On the contrary, research has shown that people of color are more likely to have obtained information about their current job through their social network than whites (Elliott, 1999; Green, Tigges, & Browne, 1995; Reingold, 1999). Nonetheless, even though people of color are more likely to get their job through their network, they are less likely to use their network in seeking employment (Fernandez & Fernandez-Mateo, 2006). This may be because they do not see their network as providing any useful leads due to its homogeneity in occupational prestige. For instance, the jobs obtained by people of color through their social networks often pay considerably less than jobs obtained through other means (Elliot, 1999; Green et al. 1999; Smith, 2000). To make
matters worse, when they are referred by blacks and Hispanics, people of color are led into jobs that are racially homogeneous (Braddock and McPartland, 1987; Elliot, 2001; Falcon, 1995; Mouw, 2002), thus, limiting job leads for the future and continuing the cycle.

An awareness of these shortfalls within their network may motivate some people of color to establish social ties with members of advantaged groups in order to gain access to better information and influence. For example, some upper-class blacks attempted to form social ties through professional associations, their children's schools, civic groups, and alumni associations. However, these ties tended to be unproductive (Drake, 1965). Nonetheless, the literature has stressed the importance for people of color to establish ties outside of not just their neighborhood (Elliot, 1999; Green et al, 1995; Green et al, 1999; ), but establishing them across ethnic boundaries as well (Cornwall and Cornwall, 2008; Lin, 2000). This is especially important for career advancement.

**Developing a Social Network for Career Advancement**

Developing social ties for career advancement is the basis for Granovetter's (1973) weak-tie theory. Granovetter is an American sociologist who noted that when relationships in a network are strong (i.e. emotionally intense, frequent, and involving multiple types of relationships), the resources possessed by any one member of the network is likely to be shared quickly throughout the network and possibly become redundant. Furthermore, job information that is shared with multiple sources increases the application pool and can lead to lower salaries or even the inability to acquire an interview. Therefore, weak-ties (i.e. infrequent, restricted to one narrow type of relationship) are often a source of unique information and resources, and are more likely
than strong-ties to have been the course of information about job openings (Granovetter, 1973).

While Granovetter made it seem as if establishing a weak-tie for unique job information would be relatively easy given that it does not involve frequent contact nor is it emotionally intense, developing a relationship that provides social capital consists of several steps. For starters, when there is no prior relationship, or a relationship is just starting in a network, the parties need to establish trust between one another in order to bridge the structural hole in the network in order to start the sharing of resources. This structural hole can be defined as the gap in a network that does not allow information to flow (Burt, 2005, p. 16). It is important to note that this structural hole does not indicate that the parties are unaware of one another. It just means that they are not sharing resources as members of the same social network. Since they are not a part of the same social network, they cannot benefit from each other’s resources. In order to bridge that structural hole, they need to feel as if the relationship will provide “reciprocal services” (Granovetter, 1973) and be mutually beneficial. For example, Coleman relates this to a rotating credit-association where:

These associations are groups of friends and neighbors who typically meet monthly, each person contributing to a central fund that is then given to one of the members…until, after a number of months, each of the n persons has made n contributions and received one payout (1988).

Not only does this “repetition of cooperative exchange promotes trust” (Burt, 2005, p. 99), it also builds the reputation of the individual trying to enter the network, the trust between the parties, and allows for the associations to begin to turn into capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988). However, if someone’s reputation within the network,
either before a relationship is developed or even after it is present, becomes damaged (e.g. not seen as reliable), then trust dissipates. Once this happens, people within the network are less likely to develop or continue a meaningful relationship with that individual. While building trust across a structural hole seems simple, “it is a slow process, starting with minor transactions in which trust is required because little risk is involved...[until] both partners can prove their trustworthiness, enabling them to expand their relation and engage in major transactions” (Blau, 1968). Therefore, the ability for someone to present an image of reliability through consistent contact within the network becomes an invaluable step in bridging a structural hole.

This idea of consistent contact may sound troubling given Granovetter’s theory on weak-ties (1973) which proposes that too much contact between members of a network can lead to a redundancy of information being shared. However, if there is not contact, there is the tendency for relationships to weaken and decay over time (Burt, 2005, p. 197). This possibility for decay reinforces the importance of not just having connections, but also managing the relationships in a social network (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990). With the management of relationships in mind, it is important to note that consistent contact does not need to be in the form of continued physical contact and self-promotion. Burt, an American sociologist who focuses on the social structure of competitive advantage, shows that “reputations do not emerge from good work directly so much as from colleague stories about the work” (2005, p. 218). This indicates that one builds their reputation and recognition – thus building his social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) -- when people within a network speaks highly of him. As Burt mentioned, “good work completed for people who don’t talk about it is quickly forgotten...The key to building
reputation is to get people in closed networks talking to one another” (2005, p. 218).

More importantly, not only do people in the network need to say good things about the party trying to gain trust, this information about the individual needs to be repeated. This repetition influences reputation, turning possible anecdotes into data. Favorable opinions that are echoed within a network result in trust while doubt in an individual translates into distrust. This idea of “building the buzz” may more easily be understood through its use in word-of-mouth marketing (Rosen, 2000). Yet, the same can be done in building a reputation within a social network. However, what becomes important in building this buzz in a network is not only what is being said, but what is being said by whom.

**The Role of Advocates in Career Mobility**

Support (or advocacy) from people who have an established, positive reputation and possess a lot of trust in a network are important for those trying to bridge a structural hole. These individuals are often seen as high-status contacts and/or experts due to their occupational prestige and/or perceived knowledge around a task or data that is ambiguous for the rest of the network (Cornwell and Cornwell, 2008). While relative, they are also considered to be an authority on a subject due to their title and level of education (Cialdini, 2009). Gladwell has referred to these individuals as “connectors” since they are able to help bridge structural holes in networks (2000). It is important to note that these agents also possess qualities of what he termed as “mavens” (information specialists) since they are not only knowledgeable, but they are also involved with “sharing and trading what they know” (2000, p. 69). Given this standing, these “connectors” can broker trust within a network and provide credibility through advocacy for the newcomer in areas that relates to the high-status contacts’ field of expertise (Burt,
What is most revealing is that the literature shows that when a broker is used to bridge a structural hole by being an advocate, the parties who become connected receive greater returns (Burt, 2005, p. 25 - 26).

A prime example of this trust brokerage can be seen with executive search firms that are used to recruit senior-level administrators (Finlay and Coverdill, 2002). Because of a search firm’s reputation and established trust within a given network, organizations (including independent schools) rely on them to sort through dozens, if not hundreds, of resumes in order to identify a small group of candidates that would be appropriate for their job opening. This is because these companies and schools feel that search firms possess not only knowledge about the field and job market, but has access to specific candidates that would be appropriate for their opening as well. In addition, rather than discerning between all of the applicants themselves, it saves the organization time and resources. Furthermore, when a search firm advocates for a particular candidate, it becomes the first step in building trust and bridging the structural hole between the company and candidate. Despite all of these benefits, what organizations might be drawn to the most in using an executive search firm is that the referrals who are hired tend have more promotions and greater job satisfaction (both which indicate a high level of work output) than their co-workers (Clerkin, 2005).

Candidates who understand the importance and impact of this type of advocacy seek-out these third-party brokers (e.g. friends, search firms, etc.) to help them establish a relationship (e.g. secure a job offer) with the organizations that would be appropriately suited for them. In doing so, they increase their chances of not only finding a position,
but of receiving a higher initial salary and a bigger percentage salary increase as well (Seidel, Polzer, and Stewart, 2000).

The use of an executive search firm for a head of school search is common within independent schools. In a 2009 study conducted by NAIS, it was found that administrators are seldom promoted within their current school. Rather, a majority of heads (78%) moved to their current positions after service at another school, or even from another field such as from higher education, business, or the non-profit sector. However, when it comes to the placement of aspiring heads of color, it was found that the majority of African American heads were appointed from within their own school while only one moved schools in order to obtain the position (Profit, 2007). Therefore, in order to understand that stark difference, it is important to explore how search firms are obtaining, viewing, and recommending candidates of color. This is especially important given that both heads and other senior-level independent school administrators indicated in a recent study that there is room for improvement in the search firms' work with independent schools. For example, fifty-three percent of heads felt that search firms only do a good job of identifying strong candidates for independent school leadership “some of the time.” However, the truly alarming statistic is that only 1% of the respondents felt as if search firms identify strong candidates “all of the time” (NAIS, 2010).

While the role of an advocate may seem relatively easy, there are inherent risks involved. For instance, a candidate that is recommended becomes a reflection of the advocate. If the candidate's reputation becomes tarnished, it could influence the reputation of the advocate. This may be the explanation for how search firms are
currently viewed by heads of school. Therefore, advocates have to carefully choose who they recommend in order to maintain their own reputation within a network.

Granovetter noted that using advocates “are of paramount importance in connecting people with jobs (1995, p. 22). Whether the relationship is formal or informal (albeit informal is better), this connection with experts is advantageous (Cornwell & Cornwell, 2008). For example, the benefits for networks to use experts as third-party trust brokers has led to a large percentage of career movement, especially as it pertains to the mobility of higher levels of management and executives being attributed to referrals from executive search firms. However, people of color appear to not be developing relationships with executive search professionals (Clerkin, 2005) and thus not gaining access to these positions at the same rate as their white counterparts. This may also be the case within independent schools as well. One explanation is that using an executive search firm, as an advocate is itself a networking process; one that people of color may not be able to access and/or find success. Another explanation for someone’s inability to access an advocate would be because they, “for more or less structural reasons, lack the right personal contacts” (Granovetter, 1995, p. 20). Therefore, examining these structural constraints on how people of color develop and access their social network becomes imperative in understanding their career mobility.

Race, Homophily, and Accessing the Social Network

There is a general acceptance that social capital is differentially dispersed among social groups, specifically when looking at racial/ethnic groupings. That is because even when the social capital (e.g. quality and quantity of contacts) between whites and people of color is equal, there is still a difference in the outcomes of using these resources. This
is due to homophily. Homophily can be defined as the general tendency for individuals to associate with those of similar group or socioeconomic characteristics. This is important because it tends to lead people to form networks involving others from their same racial group. Research has shown that if two individuals of similar standing, but of different races (e.g. one being white and the other black) expend an equal amount of time in developing a relationship with someone that could advance their career, the returns on that relationship will not be equal. Instead, the white candidate will be more likely to receive greater returns on the connection if the social tie is also white because of homophilic preferences (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009; Parks-Yancy, 2006).

This within group preference becomes troubling when considering the career mobility of people of color for several reasons. The first is that, despite modest gains since the 1960s, people of color are barely represented in many of the white-collar occupations in the United States. This is because most of the progress towards equal opportunity in the labor market has gone to white females (Tomaskovic-Devey & Stainback, 2007). Second, people of color are already less likely to have access to expert advocates within their network and thus excluding them from a wider array of job referrals (Cornwell & Cornwell, 2008). Having a trusted advocate who can vouch for a person of color becomes important since employers who use informal referrals in hiring were more likely to hire a white employee (Braddock & McPartland, 1987). These results should not be confused with people of color not trying to use their social capital in a job search. On the contrary, research indicates that people of color are more likely to have obtained information about their current job through their social network than whites (Elliott, 1999; Green, Tigges, & Browne, 1995; Reingold, 1999). Yet, because of
the homogenous nature of their social network, people of color tend to perpetuate the cycle by referring members of their network to jobs that are also racially homogeneous (Braddock & McPartland, 1987; Elliot, 2001; Falcon, 1995; Mouw, 2002). These factors, in addition to cross-race ties being more useful for blacks than whites (Elliot, 1997), makes it seem as if people of color will never have the same career mobility as their white counterparts even when they may possess the same level of social capital. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that in order for people of color to have some type of career mobility, they need to have more social capital (i.e. social network and human capital) than their white counterparts when looking to advance in their career.

Lin refers to this difference in the outcome that is generated, despite the quality or quantity of social capital possessed, for members of different social groups as a return deficit (2000). He offers three explanations to why this may happen for different groups. In using race and career advancement as a framework, the first reason would be that people of color might not appropriately use correct resources within their network to help them in the job market. This could be due to the fact that they were unable to locate them or because they hesitate to use such social capital because of a perceived inability to return the favor. It has already been indicated that they are less likely to use their network when searching for a job (Fernandez & Fernandez-Mateo, 2006). However, if they did pursue their contacts, the second explanation for return deficit leads us to believe that their contacts would be reluctant to invest their capital on the behalf of a person of color. This could be due to the feeling that an employer would resist candidates of color and thus not take the contact’s recommendation seriously. This would, in turn, be a cost for the contact and discourage him from recommending the person of color. The third
explanation may be due to norms in the job market itself. Lin notes that “employers respond differently to [candidates] even if they present similar human and/or social capital—a bias shared by organizations in an institutional field” (2000). Therefore, it may be simply socially acceptable to not recommend people of color for certain positions.

Despite these explanations, it is possible to partially overcome homophily and return deficits. In order for this to happen, it involves people to making connections with members of majority groups. However, these types of interactions require a great deal of effort for all parties involved. The individual who is rich in resources needs to consider if the resource-poor individual trying to bridge the structural hole can reciprocate with meaningful resources of his own. Given the resource differential, the cost involved in forging this relationship may be too much for the resource-rich individual. Furthermore, the prestige effect indicates that people prefer to interact with individuals who have a slightly higher social status, not lower (Laumann, 1966). Therefore, the individual that is resource-poor needs to exert a great deal of energy, more than what may be capable of him or desired, in building trust across the structural hole. These factors lead to heterophilous interactions to less likely occur (Lin, 2001, p. 47). This is extremely important given that people of color in professional and managerial careers have less access to the networks necessary to advance than their white male counterparts (Ibarra, 1992). Part of the rationale behind this was the fact that there are often fewer people of color in leadership positions to provide that type of support.

However, studies by NAIS have found that there has been an exponential increase of people of color in senior-level administrative positions within independent schools
within the last five years (NAIS, 2010b). While this is not necessarily the case for heads of schools, we are seeing more people of color in administrative positions to the point where it is rivaling the teaching staff. Simultaneously, there is the perception that these administrators of color are not ready to become heads of school (Torres, 2011, p. 16-17). This may be due to a lack of support they are receiving, both formally and informally, to prepare them for the next step in their career. Therefore, it is important to understand how issues of advancement found in the business world, such as mentoring, translates to the education sector.

*Mentoring in the Social Network*

Mentoring can be defined as the relationship in which someone with less experience receives help and guidance from someone with more experience whose intent is to improve the career opportunities and growth of the person with less experience (Kram, 1985). The two subsections of this definition can be seen as providing career development and psychological support. Career development may include sponsorship, coaching, exposure, and protection. Psychological support focuses on enhancing the mentee’s level of confidence, competence, and effectiveness, as well as helping the person develop a greater sense of self through role modeling, counseling, and friendship. Given that the theoretical framework of social capital is using a sociological lens, it is the former that will be the impetus for examining how mentoring may be able to overcome the structural constraints on people of color’s social network in this section.

It has already been noted in this literature review that people of color experience less access to executive search firms and possess fewer experts, high-status contacts, and other advocates in their social network. Therefore, it should be no surprise that the
research shows that they are less likely to be mentored by their white supervisors (Drecher & Cox, 1996). This not only adds to their inability to network and informally learn about promotions, but it also denies them access to the human capital (i.e. training, knowledge of skills needed for higher position) that would make them a stronger candidate for a promotion. Although these findings are daunting, the literature makes it unclear how this may apply to the field of education, especially within independent schools, where there are several formal and informal mentoring programs available.

The practice of mentoring is common among independent school heads. NAIS reports that in 2009, nearly 60% of heads received mentoring. This is slightly down from almost 70% in 2002 (although most of the mentoring during this time was done informally). Furthermore, almost 85% of heads have mentored someone else, either formally (62%) or informally (23%) with 70% of heads noting that their mentees went on to become a head of school or took some other leadership role (NAIS, 2010). However, these reports make it unclear if the mentees are employees within a mentor’s school or if it is across schools. This becomes important considering the possible influence of homophilic preferences and the low number of heads of color that may lead to aspiring heads of color missing out on being mentored.

Heads of school have found mentoring as a helpful way to develop future leaders, especially given retirement of many school leaders in the next five – ten years (Bisgaard, 2011; Bowers, 2010; Frankel & Schechtman, 2010). Division directors of color in independent schools also shared the sentiment. Interestingly enough, division directors of color equally felt that while “having a mentor of color can be an asset, shared race or ethnicity was not the essential element in the mentor-protégé relationship” (Kane,
Fontana, Goldberg, & Wang (2008). This could be due, in part, to the fact that while 24% of division directors are people of color, there is only 5% of heads of school that identify as a person of color (NAIS, 2010). Therefore, with such a small number of heads of color, division directors of color may find it difficult to find and secure a head of color as a mentor.

Access to mentoring seems to be a key factor in developing and sustaining talent for head of school positions, especially since its weak-tie connection can lead to promising career information and referrals. If aspiring heads of color can gain access to a mentor through either an informal mentoring relationship with their head of school or through one of the formal NAIS-sponsored programs, they may have a greater opportunity at building social capital for career mobility. However, even with having a mentor inside of their school, they will need to be mindful of how their human capital (i.e., educational and work experiences) impact their career opportunities as well.

**Social Capital as Human Capital**

The U.S. Department of Labor reported that in 2009, "individuals with higher levels of education generally have better access to higher paying jobs—such as those in management, professional, and related occupations—than individuals with less education" (2010). However, earning a college degree is not the only thing that influences people’s access to jobs. Where one goes to school impacts their career mobility and social capital as well. For instance, a degree from a prestigious independent school and/or college is correlated with higher earnings, career satisfaction, advanced degrees, and more referrals from executive search firms (Clerkin, 2005; Lin, 2001). It can even counterbalance the effects of being from a family with a low socio-economic
status (Zweigenhaft, 1993). However, the influence of race on career mobility takes a little more. For example, a study by Georgetown University found that people of color must have at least one degree higher of educational attainment to earn a salary that is on par with white males (Carnevale, Rose, & Cheah, 2011). This, in turn, reinforces the notion that people of color need more social capital than their white counterparts in order to have access to the same opportunities.

Summary

The literature reviewed herein speaks to the history, purpose, and structure of independent schools as being an important aspect of education in America. While the 1,400 NAIS member schools only educate roughly 1% of the total student population served in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States (NAIS, 2011; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012), there is an attraction to the challenges and opportunities of the head of school position in these institutions by a wide array of individuals. However, every individual does not have the same access to this position. Given the historical ramifications of race in this country, the literature on social networks, weak-ties, homophily, and educational backgrounds indicates that people of color have less access to the social capital that would be needed to be considered as a viable candidate for this position. Furthermore, even if social capital was equal between people of color and their white counterparts, the concepts of cultural deficits and return deficits show that this is still not enough for people of color. For that reason, it can be assumed that people of color may need more social capital than their white counterparts in order to be considered for a head of school position. This becomes important given the
fact that nearly 70% of heads of school will retire within the next decade and NAIS is pushing for a greater representation of people of color in these positions.

Therefore, in order to understand how there can be a greater pool of candidates of color for future head of school positions, it will be important to examine the type of social capital possessed by heads of color who were recently appointed to their first headship as well as how it influenced their candidacy.
CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design and methodology used in this study. It begins by examining the rationale for the study and is followed by a description of the sample population. The chapter concludes with an overview of the methodology, including the survey design and data collection protocols.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to better understand ways to increase the pool of candidates of color for head of school positions in the future. This was done by looking at the disparity in access to and career returns from social capital by racial and ethnic minority groups. In particular, it examined the type and amount of social capital that was understood as necessary for people of color to obtain their first of head of school within an independent school in the United States.

Participant Selection

Participants in this study include heads of NAIS member schools in the United States who started their first headship between July 2006 and July 2011. While research on heads of school that identify as a person of color is extremely limited, it does indicate that those with less than five years in their position are more likely to experience the search process differently than those who have been in the position longer (Profit, 2007). Patton has noted that selecting a homogenous sample (in this case heads who were appointed to their first headship between July 2006 and July 2011), provides information-rich cases which allows for one to “learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (2002, p. 46). Focusing on this group provided the
opportunity to more easily compare people of color who were recently appointed to that of their white counterparts. Moreover, using people who were new to headship allowed for control over the confounding variables that would arise by incorporating sitting heads in the study (e.g. the ability of sitting heads to more likely acquire another headship before someone who has never served in the position). It was also assumed that heads who were hired more than five years ago may not be able to reliably recall the composition of their social network before and during the search process.

Given that there are less than 60 heads of color in NAIS member schools, limiting the sample to heads that were hired to their first headship starting in July 2006 drastically reduced the amount of heads of color that were able to participate. However, there was still a large enough sample (n = 16) of heads of color that participated.

Participants for the study were identified by their participation in the NAIS Institute for New Heads within the last four years. A list of recently appointed heads of school was also obtained from Educational Directions, an executive search firm that specializes in head of school searches, as well as NAIS. Lastly, participants of color were identified through my own social network. All participants were solicited by email to participate in an online survey. Heads of color were encouraged to also participate in an interview.

**Methods**

In research that examines the impact of social capital on the access to employment, especially when it comes to the intersection of race and social capital, there is much ambiguity around whether ties to high-status employees provide access to high-status jobs for those with a great deal of human capital (skills, knowledge of job, etc.) or
if those with a lot of human capital simply gain access to high-status employees in the
course of their own work (Fernandez & Harris, 1992; Johnson, Bienenstock, & Farrell,
1999; Lichter & Oliver 2000). It is suggested that one way to examine this ambiguity is
to study those who are already in the position of choice and use a mixed-methods
approach when having them reflect on the different pieces of their social capital that were
present when they pursued their employment (Fernandez & Fernandez-Mateo, 2006).
Therefore, this study identified, quantified, and compared the nature and amount of social
capital people of color had when applying for a head of school position versus their white
counterparts. This was done by using a sequential mixed methods approach consisting of
surveys and interviews. A quantitative data collection was used first via an electronic
survey on Surveymonkey.com to test the theory of social capital and to look at trends
between white candidates and candidates of color. An informed consent form served as
the first page of the survey and participants were not able to proceed without indicating
that they agreed to voluntarily participating. The informed consent form also included
the purpose of the study, a confidentiality clause that their information will be kept
secure, information about how they can pull out of the survey at any time, and an option
to participate in a follow-up interview.

Social network researchers regard relationships, or ties, as the basic data for
analysis (Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). Therefore, a survey, expanded from Erika
James' Organizational Network Survey (2000) that utilizes both a name and position
generator methodology of examining accessed social capital was used as a part of the
quantitative methods to collect information about the social capital possessed by each
participant. The name generator model poses one or more questions about an
individual's contacts and the strength of those ties. Furthermore, it allows measurement of social capital through the diversity in the characteristics (gender, race, age) and range of resources (education, occupation). The position generator measures social capital based on the access an individual has within his network to the structural positions that are salient for career mobility. Literature on social capital on status attainment by incorporating these two models has shown that career mobility of an individual is affected by both the resources that were accessed within a network as well as the achieved status (education, current position) (Lai, Lin, & Leung, 1998). This survey (see Appendix A) was used for, but was not limited to, examining the following for each participant:

- Identity demographics (age, race, gender, etc)
- Educational background
- Occupational experience
- How they were referred to their position
- How they sought their position
- Who supported their application
- Access to experts for mentoring and job referrals
- Race and occupational status of their advocates

Because results from one method can help identify participants to study or questions to ask for another (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), qualitative data collections of heads of color via voluntary interviews were solicited. A qualitative approach can be used to better understand the influence of different factors (Creswell, 2009, p. 112-113). Therefore, these interviews allowed for a detailed exploration with the participants of color that helped to develop a deeper understanding of how and why social capital is acquired and used.
The questions for the interview were modeled from those in the survey, but allowed the participants to go into greater detail about their personal and professional support, journey to becoming a head of school, and their level of satisfaction within their position. This also was important for data triangulation to ensure validity (Glesne, 2006, p. 37). Prompts for the interview can be found in Appendix B. In addition, they were asked to reflect upon what led them to pursue a head of school position (personal goal versus professionally suggested).

Interviews took place either in-person or over the phone and were recorded with either a digital record (in-person) or with Google Voice (over the phone). Once the interviews were completed, the digital files were compressed, encrypted, password protected, and stored on an external hard drive that resided in a locked drawer. The files were renamed based on the date, race and position of interviewee (ex 4-10-11 African American Head of School). As suggested by Creswell, identifiers were removed to keep anonymity (2009, p. 91). The participant's name, their school, and other identifying markers were not included in the results section of this paper. In the remaining sections, they are described based on their position, ethnicity, and region of the United States in which they work (i.e. east coast, west coast, Midwest, etc). Nonetheless, given the small number of people of color serving as heads of school, it may be possible for some to identify who some of the participants might have been.

This qualitative data was transcribed, coded and then compared to the quantitative data as a validation method (Creswell, 2009, p. 217). The data was coded by using a "start list" that would allow for further themes and subcategories to emerge (Miles & Huberman, 1984). This start list was based upon the categories of social capital (e.g. size
and composition of social network, reciprocal nature, educational background, etc) and how it applied to career mobility (e.g., job leads, advocates, etc.). The coding software, Atlas.ti 6.2, was used to organize the codes and emerge themes from the data. Codes were then further defined as the part of the iterative process. Codes were also developed based on the trends from the quantitative data. This interpretative analysis, as noted by Glesne (2006, p. 165), allowed for greater connections between the personal experiences in the qualitative data and transcends the quantitative data for a deeper form of analysis. Using Atlas.ti 6.2 to code the data allowed me to have sub-categories within each major theme which, in turn, gave me the opportunity for a deeper analysis. After significant coding, common themes emerged and were recorded. A list of the themes used can be found in Appendix C.

Validation and Bias

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection can produce concerns around validity and bias. To help minimize some of this, a pilot study was conducted in June of 2011. According to Glesne (2006, p. 43), a pilot study gives a researcher the possibility to test aspects of the research and refine data collection and analysis techniques. It also helps in understanding the role of the researchers and discovering biases that may exist. Therefore, a pilot study consisting of both the survey and interview questions was administered to ten recently appointed independent school heads. There was an equal distribution of white versus heads of color in the pilot study, with three from each group being interviewed.

To further help in reducing concerns around the validity and error, a mixed methods approach was used. Mixed methods allows for qualitative and quantitative data
to be compared against each other. Not only does this help control for issues around validity and bias, it also helps to generate greater evidence for an even deeper level of analysis (Schwandt, 2007).

An analysis of the data is presented in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3
RESULTS

This chapter consists of summarized data from interviews of twelve heads of independent schools in the United States who self-identified themselves as a person of color that acquired their first headship within the past five years. Data from an electronic survey administered to 125 heads of school (13 people of color and 112 white) that started their first headship between July 2006 and July 2011 were used to set the foundation to this chapter in Section 1 and to support the narrative quotes throughout. In using the conceptual framework of social capital as identified in the literature review and how it relates to race, the data are categorized into four sections: (1) Demographics of survey participants; (2) Social Capital as Educational Qualifications; (3) Social Capital as Social Network; and (4) Social Capital as Advocates.

Interviews of the twelve heads of color were conducted either over the phone or in person between June and December of 2011. They were identified through either the administrative staff of NAIS, Educational Directions Incorporated (an executive search firm), or the electronic survey that was administered May through July of 2011. As a part of the survey, respondents had the opportunity to indicate if they would like to participate in an interview. It is important to note that the twelve heads of color that were interviewed do not represent each of the thirteen respondents from the survey that identified themselves as a person of color. While there was some overlap, there were four survey respondents of color who were not interviewed and three interviewees who did not complete the online survey. This gives a total of sixteen heads of color who
participated in either the online survey or an interview. Given the small number of new heads of color in independent schools, they have been de-identified in the narratives. However, brief demographic information of the heads can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Heads of Color Ethnicity Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Interview and Survey</th>
<th>Interview or Survey</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-racial</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the heads of color in the study were male (56%). While NAIS reports that the gender gap has historically favored female heads of color, the shift changed in 2005 where males represented 50% or more of this group (Torres, 2011, p. 15).

Furthermore, the subjects in the study self-identified as African American (50%) with the next largest group being those that indicated they were multi-racial (31%). Having the majority of the heads of color in the study identify as African American coincides with data from NAIS that notes that historically, African Americans made up the majority of the heads of color in independent schools. Their latest numbers from 2009 indicate that out of 59 heads of color (4.8% of total heads of school), 37% identified themselves as African American (Torres, 2011, p. 15-16).
Where there is a difference between the sample in this study and national statistics for heads of color is with those that make-up the second largest group. While 31% of the participants in this study identified themselves as being multi-racial, only 10% of the heads of color in 2009 identified themselves this way. Instead, the second largest group of heads of color in NAIS member schools were Asian Americans, accumulating 22% of the total population of heads of color (Torres, 2011, p. 16).

Other demographic information (e.g. types of schools they lead, education, work experience, etc.) about these heads of color (as compared to their white counterparts) as well as their perception of what helped them obtain their first headship are the focal points of the next four sections. These factors help show the type and amount of social capital possessed by people of color before becoming a head of school.

**Demographics of Survey Participants**

*Type of School*

During the 2010-2011 academic year, NAIS indicated that there were roughly 2,000 independent schools with approximately 1,400 identifying as members of their organization. However, it is important to note their statistical reports represent roughly 1,200 of these institutions (NAIS, 2011). They define an independent school as a 501(c)3 non-profit entity that is governed and financed independently. More specifically:

Independent schools "own themselves" (as opposed to public schools owned by the government or parochial schools owned by the church) and govern themselves, typically with a self-perpetuating board of trustees that performs fiduciary duties of oversight and strategic duties of funding and setting the direction and vision of the enterprise, and by delegating day to day operations entirely to the head of school (NAIS, 2011b).
There are a little over 550,000 students enrolled in NAIS member schools (NAIS, 2011). The National Center for Education Statistics reports that 49.4 million students enrolled in public schools during the fall 2011 (2012). To put it into context, independent schools enroll less than 1% of students served by public schools.

With over 1,400 NAIS member schools, no less than 10% hired a head of school between 2006 and 2011 that was new to this position. Table 2 through Table 4 illustrates the type of schools (i.e. who they serve, their location, and financial health) that were a part of the quantitative study. For example, Table 2 shows that 57% were day schools (versus having some type of boarding component). However, given that only 76 white heads responded to working at either a day or boarding school, and the majority of independent schools are day schools (NAIS, 2011), this number could be much higher.

Table 2: Type of School (Day vs. Boarding) Survey Respondents Lead

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>% of People of Color (% of responses)</th>
<th>% of Whites (% of responses)</th>
<th>% of All Respondents (% of responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>84.6 (11)</td>
<td>52.7 (59)</td>
<td>56.8 (71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding</td>
<td>15.4 (2)</td>
<td>15.2 (17)</td>
<td>15.2 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn't Respond</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>32.1 (36)</td>
<td>28.8 (36)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 3, 30% of the schools hiring someone who was new to the position were located in the northeast corridor of the United States (versus 21% on the west coast and 14% in the south). When separating the respondents based on race, nearly 40% of the heads of color took a position on the west coast with another 40% taking positions in New England. Out of 13 heads of color, nearly one-third of the respondents (38%) needed to relocate to another state when taking the head of school appointment.
Table 3: Location of Schools in the United States of Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>% of People of Color (% of responses)</th>
<th>% of Whites (% of responses)</th>
<th>% of All Respondents (% of responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>38.5 (5)</td>
<td>28.6 (32)</td>
<td>29.6 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Coast</td>
<td>30.8 (4)</td>
<td>28.6 (32)</td>
<td>28.8 (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>16.1 (18)</td>
<td>14.4 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-West</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>13.4 (15)</td>
<td>12.0 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Coast</td>
<td>38.5 (5)</td>
<td>18.8 (21)</td>
<td>20.8 (26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the financial health of these schools that were hiring (Table 4), 30% had endowments less than one million dollars and another 30% had endowments between one million and ten million dollars. When using race as a lens to view the data, 62% of the heads of color work in schools with endowments under ten million dollars. NAIS reports that the mean endowment for member schools for the 2009-2010 academic year was $16.9 million. They also report that schools with an endowment under ten million dollars tend to be elementary schools and/or schools with less than 300 students (NAIS, 2011c).

Table 4: Endowment of School of Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Endowment</th>
<th>% of People of Color (% of responses)</th>
<th>% of Whites (% of responses)</th>
<th>% of All Respondents (% of responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $1,000,000</td>
<td>15.4 (2)</td>
<td>31.3 (35)</td>
<td>29.6 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000,000 - $10,000,000</td>
<td>46.2 (6)</td>
<td>27.7 (31)</td>
<td>29.6 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000,000 - $20,000,000</td>
<td>7.7 (1)</td>
<td>10.7 (12)</td>
<td>10.4 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000,000 - $50,000,000</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>13.4 (15)</td>
<td>12.0 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; $50,000,000</td>
<td>15.4 (2)</td>
<td>8.0 (9)</td>
<td>8.8 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn't Respond</td>
<td>15.4 (2)</td>
<td>8.9 (10)</td>
<td>9.6 (12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data on endowment mirrors the type of schools the heads of color are leading in that 7 out of 13 (54%) are primarily elementary schools. For example, as indicated in
Table 5, there is a considerable difference in the percentage of heads of color that were appointed at a school without a high school program as compared to their white counterparts \((p = 0.036)\). Understanding the types of schools heads of color are leading in their first headship will help provide a window into possible roadblocks aspiring leaders of color may face when pursuing a headship.

Table 5: Grades/Divisions at School of Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>% of People of Color (# of responses)</th>
<th>% of Whites (# of responses)</th>
<th>% of all Respondents (# of responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-8</td>
<td>61.5 (8)*</td>
<td>32.1 (36)*</td>
<td>35.2 (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-12</td>
<td>15.4 (2)</td>
<td>25.9 (29)</td>
<td>24.8 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6-12</td>
<td>23.1 (3)</td>
<td>16.1 (18)</td>
<td>16.8 (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t Respond</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>25.85 (29)</td>
<td>23.2 (29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \(p \leq .05\)

**Positions Prior to Becoming a Head of School**

In examining the background of these newly appointed heads of school (see Table 6), almost 90% of them reported via the survey that they worked as a teacher in an independent school. In looking at other positions identified in this sample, nearly 50% served as a division director, 20% worked as a dean of students, and over 40% of the respondents served as an assistant or associate head of school.
Table 6: Prior Positions Held in an Independent School Before Becoming A Head

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>% of People of Color (# of responses)</th>
<th>% of Whites (# of responses)</th>
<th>% of All Respondents (# of responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>84.6 (11)</td>
<td>86.5 (90)</td>
<td>87.1 (101)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division Director</td>
<td>46.2 (6)</td>
<td>46.2 (48)</td>
<td>46.6 (54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dir. of Diversity</td>
<td>30.8 (4)**</td>
<td>2.9 (3)**</td>
<td>6.0 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Students</td>
<td>30.8 (4)</td>
<td>18.3 (19)</td>
<td>19.8 (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant/Associate Head of School</td>
<td>69.2 (9)**</td>
<td>37.5 (39)**</td>
<td>41.4 (48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Prior Independent School Experience</td>
<td>0.0 (0)</td>
<td>13.5 (14)</td>
<td>12.0 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Not Respond</td>
<td>7.7 (1)</td>
<td>7.14 (8)</td>
<td>7.2 (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01

In using race as a factor when looking at the previous positions of recently appointed heads of school, again there are trends that surface. Given the small sample size of people of color that participated in the study (n=13), they disproportionately (and significantly with p = 0.00) represent recently appointed heads of school who once served in the role of director of diversity—making up 57% of that group.

Furthermore, nearly 14% of the recently appointed heads of school that identify as white indicated that they were not an employee of an independent school prior to becoming a head of school. On the other hand, 100% of the heads of color moved through the ranks of independent schools in their path to headship. Interestingly enough, NAIS reports that the many independent school heads feel that there is a lack of heads of color because people of color haven’t “come through the pipeline of independent schools” and “followed the traditional career ladder of senior leadership” of being an assistant/associate head or division director (Torres, 2011, p. 16-17).

Therefore, what is most notable is that only 38% of recently appointed heads who identify themselves as white held the position of assistant/associate head of school prior
to becoming a head of school while nearly 70% of the recently appointed heads of color previously held the position. The difference between the amount of heads of color that served in this notable “gateway position” to becoming a head of school (Frankel & Schechtman, 2010; Bassett, 2011) versus their white counterparts is statistically significant with p = 0.007.

It is differences in their background such as this that heads of color who were interviewed indicated as important capital that helped them obtain their first head of school position. Building upon the findings in Section I, the remaining three sections uses the data from the interviews to investigate how race impacts the obtainment and use of social capital. Bourdieu’s theory of social capital indicates that the amount of social capital held by an individual is dependent upon his cultural capital (e.g. educational qualifications), the size of his network of connections, and the amount of capital held by each person in the network (1986). Therefore, the remaining three sections expand upon Bourdieu’s framework by indicating the amount of social capital held by heads of color before acquiring their first headship. This is done by examining how they perceive their:

- Educational qualifications:
  - Being an independent school alumni
  - Attending a prestigious college
  - Leadership experiences in an independent school
- Social network:
  - How it is developed
  - Who it is comprised of
Strength of relationships within the network

- Advocates:
  - Those within independent schools that provided career advice and opportunities
  - Relationship with and influence of search firms

**Social Capital as Educational Qualifications**

Bourdieu indicates that cultural capital consists of knowledge, skills, education, and the advantages these bring in order to access a higher position within society. He also notes that the different dispositions of cultural capital (embodied, objectified, and institutionalized) are valued more than others in different situations (1986). Within education, specifically independent schools, institutionalized cultural capital, or academic credentials, are highly coveted. Therefore, how 12 recently hired heads of color perceived the impact of institutionalized cultural capital, or social capital as educational qualifications, on their appointment of their first headship is the focus for this section. This will cover their comments on the impact of being alumni of independent schools, the importance of choosing a prestigious graduate school, and the value of leadership experiences at noteworthy independent schools.

Research has shown that educational qualifications, such as prestige of college and advanced degrees, influence career advancement (Ishida, Spilerman, & Su, 1997). This sentiment was expressed by the heads of color who were interviewed for the study. Many of them repeatedly noted that they felt the importance of having schools, from secondary institutions to graduate programs, which were considered as prestigious or
competitive on their resume. One head of school at a pre-k through 12 independent school in an urban environment on the east coast noted that:

There are certain candidates who have the right stuff to be considered and so it’s about your educational background; it’s about the schools where you’ve taught...I’m a safe candidate because my educational background is more elite than most of the parents here.

He was certainly not alone in his remarks. This idea of highlighting academic credentials and prior places of employment resonated with all of the heads of color. For example, a head of school in another urban environment on the east coast who was in the process of updating his resume consciously “moved education to the top” because:

Going to Tabor Academy and going to Brown University matters to people and I want them to know that. How I did at those places and how I got there, people don’t really need to know, but it does seem to matter to them that I went there.

While these quotations are only two of many, they emphasize the notion that these recently appointed heads of color understand the importance independent schools place on institutionalized cultural capital, or educational qualifications. This emphasis on quality education is not just anecdotal. For example, independent schools highlight the fact that they provide high academic standards, excellent teachers, and a greater likelihood that their graduates attend a private college and complete a graduate degree than their public school counterparts (NAIS, 2004). Furthermore, given that independent schools do not require teachers and administrators to have a teacher’s or superintendent’s certification in order to be hired, they expect their faculty and administration to be well-educated as reflected in their alma mater and/or prior places of employment. Longitudinal research has shown that independent school students, in comparison to their suburban public school counterparts, are twice as likely to have a teacher who graduated
from one of the top 100 most selective colleges in the United States (NAIS, 2006). Lastly, research has indicated that investing in employees with high educational qualifications positively correlates with an increase in employee performance and productivity (Becker, 1975). Therefore, highlighting the prestige of where they went to school (i.e. secondary, post-secondary, and graduate school) and their places of employment prior to becoming a head of school allowed the heads of color to draw on their social capital as educational qualifications in pursuing their first headship.

**Impact of Being an Independent School Alumnus**

Being a graduate of an independent high school was a trend for both the heads of color that participated in quantitative study and those that were interviewed as a part of the qualitative study. Of the 16 heads of color that participated in either portion of the study, 56% were graduates of an independent school in either the United States, France, or Central America. These independent schools included Collegiate School (VA), Tabor Academy (MA), Chapin School (NY), Garland Country Day (CO), Sacred Heart (CA), Friends Select School (PA), and Sewickley Academy (PA). With only 35% of their white counterparts indicating that they are graduates of an independent school, there is a statistical difference in these numbers with p = 0.099.

In looking at those heads of color that were not graduates of an independent school, all but one attended the NAIS Fellowship for Aspiring School Heads program or a similar leadership development program. Moreover, several of them not only attended an Ivy League institution for their graduate work (Teachers College, Columbia University or Stanford University), they also have a terminal degree (i.e., Ph.D. or Ed.D.).
The heads of school that are alumni of an independent school all responded in their interviews that being a graduate of a college preparatory, independent school helped in their pursuit of headship. One head of school on the west coast noted the following:

I think I was a little naive about how much it mattered to people, but I really believe that it made people comfortable with me. Are people always looking to hire someone who is like them? I think a lot of times -- yes. I think we need to do a better job of hiring people who are not like us, but people are always looking for that cultural synchronicity... What it did for me was alleviate people’s fears about who I was and who my friends were and how standard my English was if you will. People thought I could be with them because I was one of them... There is still this mentality that if you are in this door with us, we need some connective tissue and sometimes these prep school affiliations reassure people that you can be part of the culture of the school.

This notion of being “one of them” by identifying themselves as a graduate of an independent school resonated with all of the heads of color interviewed that were alumni of independent schools. They also suggested, as indicated in the previous quote, that being a graduate of an independent school could counterbalance the fact that they were a person of color and make others, specifically those involved in the hiring process, more comfortable with them leading their school. Furthermore, it was the feeling of the heads of color that being a part of the “club” would allow people to see past their ethnicity. Lastly, they commented on how being a graduate of an independent school would give them cultural caché, or capital, with those involved in the hiring process because it might indicate that they intimately understood the culture of independent schools.

Several of the heads interviewed noted their discomfort with capitalizing on the privileges gained by being alumni of an independent school. However, they stated that being alumni of an independent school, along with advanced degree work from a noteworthy institution, was almost necessary in order to be considered for a head of
school position. For instance, the head of a school on the east coast stated that a big part of the reason she was considered was because she "went to prep school, went to 'the right colleges,' [and] had the right kind of academic pedigree." Nonetheless, despite the fact that nearly 60% of the recently appointed heads of color were graduates of an independent school, they felt that being alumni of these schools was only a fraction of the social capital necessary to be seen as a viable candidate for a head of school position. What they deemed as providing the greatest amount of social capital in regards to their educational qualifications was the competitiveness and prestige of their graduate school education.

Graduate School Commonalities

Interestingly, almost all of the heads of color that participated in the study went to a highly competitive undergraduate institution in the United States. Only four of sixteen did not attend an undergraduate institution that appears in the list of the top 40 schools from Barron's Guide to the Most Competitive Colleges and the US News and World Report Best Colleges list – two widely referenced annual publications that are used to rank colleges in the United States. However, it is important to note that two of the four that did not attend a the top 40 undergraduate institution were born outside of the United States and subsequently received their undergraduate degree (and their first graduate degree) outside of the country.

While there are some differences in the undergraduate institutions and majors pursued by the heads of color in the sample, these differences dissipate when looking at the graduate schools they attended. For example, all of the heads of color in the study have a master's degree and nearly 40% also have or are in the process of completing a
terminal degree. Conversely, the data on their white counterparts from the sample show that 3% do not have a degree higher than a bachelor's and only 22% have a terminal degree. This is comparable to national trends that indicate 24% of all heads of school having a terminal degree (i.e. Ed.D., Ph.D., or J.D.) (Torres, 2011, p. 18).

In looking at the graduate schools of the heads of color more closely, fourteen of the sixteen graduated from what would be considered a prestigious and competitive graduate school. More specifically, seven of the sixteen (43.8%) have a graduate degree from Teachers College, Columbia University. Four of the remaining nine attended Stanford University with three either obtaining or pursing a Ph.D. from the school. In asking one of these four why he decided to pursue a Ph.D. from Stanford University, he replied that “name recognition was important” and that “coming out, [he] wanted to be able to say that [he] went to a tier I institution.”

Many of the other heads of school noted that name recognition, or pedigree, was important as well. In exploring why attending a noteworthy institution was important, a head of a school on the east coast stated:

“One of the heads of school that I respect the most sat me down at one point and he said to me very clearly when I was thinking about graduate work -- he said ‘If you don’t do a pedigree school, your challenge is going to increase significantly. You need to go to a Harvard or Columbia, to go through the Klingenstein Program [at Teachers College, Columbia University] to get your degree because you don’t want to give anybody any ammo.’ You have heard it said to you. I know it was said to me a million times, if not a million and a half, that you have to do it better, longer, and stronger [as a person of color] to be considered equal.”

Many of the heads of color indicated that they felt that need to work harder in order to be seen as equal to their white counterparts. This is a common feeling of people of color, especially for African Americans (Bell & Nkomo, 2001). Research has shown
that this type of racial socialization of a person of color needing to be better than his white colleagues is often passed down from parents to children at a young age (Coard, Wallace, Stevenson & Brotman, 2004). However, given society’s propensity for a return deficit -- the process in which a given quality or quantity of social capital produces differentiated returns for members of different social groups—on social capital for people of color regarding career mobility (Lin, 2001, p. 180-183), it is no wonder why not only the feeling, but the need exists for these candidates of color to work harder and possess more social capital than their white counterparts when pursuing their first head of school position.

Therefore, the importance of attending not only the highly ranked Teachers College, Columbia University, but specifically the master’s program through the Klingenstein Center for Independent School Education seemed to resonate with many of the heads of school. One head of color in the southeast commented that graduating from the Klingenstein Center “provides the keys to the kingdom.” When looking at the nine heads of color that did not attend Teachers College, Columbia University, all but three have or are in the process of completing a terminal degree. As one head of color in the east (who is a graduate of Teachers College, Columbia University) noted, this is because they “feel like there is this sense of pressure in making sure we have the best programs, the best names attached with the schools that we go to.”

A head of color in New England also commented on this plight regarding heads of color in independent schools.

You know, I think there certainly might be something about credentials...Even in 2011 it’s amazing how few heads of color are in the independent school system. I know I’m the only head of color in [my
state]. I think there is one other individual in [my region] who pray also went to Teachers College.

While an article in *Independent School* lists earning a master’s degree from the Klingenstein Center as an “intentional step” for someone interested in pursuing a headship (Frankel & Schechtman, 2010), this overrepresentation of Teachers College that appears on the curriculum vitae of heads of color is not reflected in the resumes of their white counterparts from the sample. For instance, while 50% of the heads of color completed a master’s degree through the Klingenstein Center for Independent School Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, less than 10% of their white colleagues who also participated in this study are graduates of the program. When the interviewed participants were asked if they felt it was important to go to Teachers College or another Ivy League university in order to be considered for a head of school position, a head of color in the southeast corridor of the United States reflected on the following advice that he received from a mentor:

This non-African American head of school who gets it -- he’s a good guy -- said to me, ‘You could go to Rice University...and [you would] stay at your school. But, if you really want options, you should go to a pedigree school.’ I have never forgotten that whole pedigree school thing. His theory was that they’re already going to be looking for reasons not to hire.

This need to have competitive graduate schools (in the case of these heads of color, it was Teachers College, Harvard, Stanford, and Brown) on their resume was not just to be seen as a viable candidate by the search committee. The heads that were interviewed also commented that they felt that graduating from these institutions was a necessity in order to be taken seriously by the search firms that often serve as the
gatekeepers for head of school positions. One head of school on the east coast shared the following remarks:

That degree [from a prestigious graduate school] helps! And the search consultants make sure the search committees understand that. It’s really important to them where my degrees were from so it was important to me. And that opened a lot of doors...I know plenty of people who are smarter than me, but they’re not as well educated or don’t have the right kind of degree and so the door isn’t open for them.

The importance of an advanced degree from a noteworthy institution was supported in a recent article by Marc Frankel and Judith Schechtman, two senior search consultants and partners in an international consulting firm that works with independent schools to help recruit and place heads of school. It is also important to note that they were involved with the design and administration of the NAIS Fellowship for Aspiring Heads, a leadership program completed by most of the heads of color in the study. In the article, they specifically state that completing a program at Klingenstein Center at Teachers College, Columbia University, Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education, or the University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Education (three Ivy League institutions) will not only allow aspiring heads to build their resume, but is “an intentional step” they should take towards becoming a head of school (Frankel & Schechtman, 2010). However, another head of school on the east coast commented about how having an advanced degree from a prestigious university is not always enough to be perceived as a viable candidate. He noted that:

Even though I had a Ph.D. from [a top tier university], I was questioned because my [former] school is so different from this school...I had more of this independent school stuff in me than most people at the school...I think that gives capital, but people still second guess it.
Again, this exemplifies Lin’s concept of return deficit (2001). In the case of this head of school, who was a graduate of an independent school, held a terminal degree from a competitive university, and had experience as a division director in the school where he was ultimately appointed head, he felt that his social capital as it related to his educational qualifications, and therefore his candidacy, was questioned due to the reputation of one of his previous places of employment. While graduate school education, especially from a noteworthy institution, is crucial -- as indicated in the reflections of the heads of color -- this begins to emphasize the impact of the third portion of social capital as educational qualifications: leadership experiences in noteworthy independent schools.

**Impact of Prior Positions and Places of Employment**

In looking at the sample, there are two examples of heads of color that were neither alumni of an independent school or a prestigious graduate school. However, like their counterparts that were interviewed, they possess institutionalized cultural capital in regard to their leadership training, prior places of employment, and previous positions held. For example, while one of the exceptions received his bachelor’s degree from Rutgers University and his master’s degree from the University of Miami, like most of the other heads of color that were a part of this study, he participated in the NAIS Fellowship for Aspiring School Heads Program. Furthermore, his career in independent schools spans over a decade and a half in three different schools (including his current school). Prior to becoming a head, he worked in a competitive pre-K through grade 12 school outside of New York City where he taught middle school and served as assistant head. He also worked at a prestigious pre-K through grade 12 school in Chicago as a
middle school principal where then-Senator Barack Obama sent his children before transferring them to Sidwell Friends School (D.C.) after becoming President of the United States. Both the schools in New York and in Chicago are seen as two of the top preparatory schools in the country by the Wall Street Journal (Gamerman, Chung, Park, & Jackson, 2007), thus reinforcing the notion highlighted by a head of color at the beginning of this section that social capital includes “the schools where you’ve taught” as a part of “the right stuff” for a viable candidate of color.

The head of an independent school in the east, who is also an independent school graduate, indicated the same thing when looking at the strength of her own resume based on her prior places of employment:

I think so much of that has been in the caliber of the schools where I’ve worked. Everyone knows [this prestigious school]. That at times can elevate your application in ways that I could’ve been a double Harvard or a Harvard / Stanford grad.

Therefore, while heads of color felt that their pedigree was certainly an extremely important factor in their candidacy for becoming a head, it is not the only factor being considered when assessing the weight of their educational background. They indicated that their leadership training, prior places of employment, and previous positions held (as indicated in Section I by the amount of heads of color who were previously assistant heads), also contributed to the amount of social capital they possessed when applying for their first headship. Nonetheless, not being alumni of an independent school, a graduate of an Ivy League university, and/or having a terminal degree is still an exception in the type of social capital held by the majority of the heads of color who were recently appointed. Furthermore, even with their large amount of social capital as educational
qualifications, they still needed to depend upon their social networks when pursuing their first headship.

Social Capital as Social Networks

While all of the heads of color interviewed in the study decided to become a head at different points in their career, the one major theme that came from the data was that they all did it with the support of people in their social network. Research has shown that the path to a leadership position is, in part, dependent upon job information that is received by the highest levels of supervisory authority (Brass, 1995; McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009; Seibert, Kraimer, & Linden, 2001; Tichy, 1981). However, the lack of access to this information for people of color has included a deficit of high-status contacts (Lai, Lin, & Leung, 1998), racial homophily (Parks-Yancy, 2006), and the uniqueness and strength of professional connections (Granovetter, 1995). The heads of color reflected upon this when they spoke about the care and interest they took in developing and maintaining their social network. They noted that using their social network -- the contacts, relationships, and social and emotional investments with other independent school administrators -- as social capital was imperative in their journey to becoming a head of school. Given the low number of heads of color in independent schools, the data indicated that these networks consisted of primarily white administrators. Nonetheless, the heads of color spoke to the importance of having other people of color within their network for emotional support. How these networks were developed, their composition, and the strength of the relationships within them will be the focus for this section.
How Social Networks are Developed

Throughout the interview, the participants talked about how they developed their social network in independent schools. While some commented on the fact that their job naturally lent itself to make connections with others within the independent school community, the most commonly referenced ways heads expanded their social network were through attending and presenting at conferences (such as the NAIS annual conference or their People of Color Conference [PoCC]), leadership programs, serving as a board of trustees, and by being a graduate of their secondary and graduate institutions.

One head of color on the east coast noted the following:

I go to the PoCC and I have 3,000 friends or it certainly seems that way. Some of it is the atmosphere, but some of it is just years and years of developing relationships over more beers than workshops probably.

These connections, specifically at conferences, were reiterated by many of the heads of color in the sample. They stressed the importance of an aspiring head developing his network through conferences as a way to connect and be associated with current and future leaders in education. One head of color related it to attending a party with the “in-crowd.” They also commented on how not just attending these conferences, but also presenting while they are there is another piece of social capital as educational qualifications. However, they qualified their social network as being equal to, if not even more important than, their educational background. For example, a head of color from the south noted that developing relationships with others:

Is where social capital becomes important...you got to stay in touch with folks...you got to tell them the work you are currently doing and where you would like to go...you have to be at the top of your game and never rest. As soon as you rest, someone else will make that connection and pass you by.
This concept of staying connected with others is important given the literature around social capital being strengthened due to an increase in one’s reputation. This increase in reputation usually is not just the result of good work done by an individual. Instead, it is because that individual, as well as others within his network, are talking about said work. As noted by Burt, “good work completed for people who don’t talk about it is quickly forgotten...the key to building reputation is to get people in closed networks talking” (2005, p. 218). Nonetheless, while the heads of color felt that building relationships with other educators, both inside and outside of one’s school, was crucial (albeit artificial at times), they made sure that the quantity of connections never superseded the quality of connections they sought for support, guidance and referrals.

**Composition of the Connections**

In reflecting upon the composition of their social networks before they acquired their first headship, the heads of color indicated that their network tended to consist of current heads of school, division directors, board of trustee members of independent schools, attendees of independent school conferences, and finally, recruiters from search firms that help to place heads of school. One head of color on the west coast noted that her social network before becoming a head of school consisted of:

The heads of the school where I was a trustee, the head of school where I was an employee for 11 years, and my good friend who is the head of Kingswood Oxford in Connecticut.

These types of connections coincide with the research that says relationships with experts and people within senior level positions, especially if they are close friends or family members, increase status attainment (Cornwell & Cornwell, 2008). Moreover, if
these connections are strong (i.e. emotionally intense and frequent) yet narrow in the type of relationship in that unique information and resources will not be shared with many other people, it will lead to greater and more exclusive job leads (Granovetter, 1973).

Interestingly enough, when looking at data on the social networks of those that were interviewed for the study, almost everyone mentioned, without solicitation, at least one of the four following individuals as someone that was their social network prior to becoming a head of school:

1. Gene Batiste - a black male who serves as the Vice President of School Consultancy Services & Equity and Justice Initiatives at the National Association of Independent Schools;
2. Reveta Bowers - a black female who serves as a head of school in California;
3. Lucinda Lee Katz - a Chinese American female who serves as a head of school in California;
4. Pearl Rock Kane - a white female who serves as the director of the Klingenstein Center in New York, which focuses on the development of teachers and administrators in independent schools.

While all four of these individuals are highly revered and respected within independent schools, and association with them would certainly increase the heads of color social capital given the resources these four individuals possess, this indicates a lack of unique connections within the social networks of the heads of color. Since these four individuals work to actively create and support leaders of color in independent schools, with three of the four identifying as a person of color themselves, it is not a
surprise that they are connected to the heads of color. Nonetheless, this could have an
aversive effect on access of future resources for the heads of color. Therefore, given this
overlapping network and the low number of heads of color overall, it becomes even more
imperative for candidates of color to look outside of their race when developing their
social network in order to increase their social capital and access to unique resources.

_Race and Social Networks_

When the heads of color were asked to reflect upon the top five people that had
the most impact in guiding and/or referring them to a head of school position, only
thirteen out of the forty-one individuals they mentioned (31%) were identified as a person
of color. On the other hand, the participants indicated that they felt closer to those
members of their network that they identified as a person of color. Many of the heads of
color talked about why having people of color, more specifically a head of color, in their
social network was important for them. One head of color on the west coast noted the
following:

    My mentors of color were incredibly important to me. It's funny though
    because they did not live in my immediate vicinity. They were often in a
different state, a different time zone. They were people I could call and
email on occasion... You can talk to anyone who is a head of school and
feel a connection, but there is something even more specific to the
narrative of being a head of color that I think you need to be able to talk to
people about this kind of relentless feeling of being visible... I think it's
very important because otherwise you don't have that psychological
support for the work that you have to do if you don't have those mentors
of color.

    Given that there are so few heads of color in independent schools, the heads of
color in the sample felt that the ability to network with other heads of color in different
states was crucial. At the same time, not all of the heads of color agreed that it is
important to have a network of people of color. One head of school on the east coast commented on the need for balance:

It's not to say that I don't know heads of color who have not offered themselves to me to be mentors, but, there's like this kind of unwritten obligation that they may feel. I really look to people I can identify with from a socioeconomic stand point, for people I can identify with from an intellectual stand point, for people I can identify with from gender. That and then, if they are people of color, we might be able to have a deeper conversation or a deeper relationship because of some shared experience at that level, but it's not as if our primary shared experience is our race.

Along those same lines, a head of school in the south, who (like the last two heads of color quoted in this section) is also a graduate of an independent school, talked about the importance of being able to maneuver through several different types of groups.

I think unfortunately, in independent schools, for a lot of faculty of color, they will initially feel isolated. For me, going to independent schools and being around so many white kids who are my best friends in life -- they really are to a degree -- being around them helped me become very bi-cultural. That's a huge asset and students of color and faculty of color need to understand that being bi-cultural is a gigantic asset. It's not a liability. It's an asset.

While finding solace in connecting with others who share similar ethnic backgrounds was something that the majority of the heads of color indicated as being important when they were searching for their first headship, this concept of being bi-cultural proved to be an asset. They noted that their ability to move in and out of different social circles in order to develop and expand their social network, and thus their social capital, was essential (especially given the low number of people of color in high-status positions in independent schools). Furthermore, having shared social characteristics with several of the white leaders within independent schools, such as being alumni of certain schools, being associated with specific leaders, or being a
participant in a select few conferences and leadership programs, proved to be an effective way to expand their social network. This is important because it is through these connections that mentoring relationships are born and job referrals are presented.

**Social Capital as Advocates**

In addition to indicating how their educational qualifications and social network added to their social capital while pursuing their first headship, the heads of color in the study reflected on the search process itself and specifically the advocates (i.e. mentors and search firms/placement agencies) that helped them acquire their first head of school position. For example, 69% (11 out of 16) of the heads of color indicated that they were encouraged to pursue headship by another head of school who was not only a member of their social network, but more importantly, was also considered a mentor. Having a mentor has been identified as a crucial part in supporting and promoting administrators of color and women. Previous research (Crase, 1994; Fontaine & Greenlee, 1993; Gorena, 1996; Jackson, 2003; Lindsay, 1994) found that mentors, support groups, and networking are important professional development activities for administrators of color in higher education. Given the similarities between the two fields, especially now around the availability of leadership development (Frankel & Schechtman, 2010), the same should apply in independent schools.

In examining how the heads of color found their first job, 63% (10 of 16) indicated that they used a search firm to find their current job. The most commonly used search firm used by the heads of color was Carney, Sandoe & Associates. Not only have they placed over 650 heads of school and top administrators since 1977 (Carney, Sandoe & Associates, 2012a), according to a senior consultant for the company, Carney, Sandoe 

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& Associates have helped place more heads of color than any other placement agency (E. Ball, personal communication, March 25, 2011). The other search firms that were consistently recognized and used by the participants of color in the study were Educational Directions, Wickenden Associates, and Gregory Floyd & Associates.

It is important to note that the senior search consultants for these firms tend to be retired heads of school. With more than 40 former heads working in everything from a large to one-person enterprises, they frequently tap their professional contacts from when they were a head of school (Barbieri, 2011, p. 87), thus reinforcing the importance and impact of a well-developed social network with high-status contacts that can serve as advocates and mentors for people of color. As one head of school notes, “understanding the search firm and consultant the board has chosen is just as important as understanding the board itself because the firm and consultant represent the board to the candidate and the candidate to the board” (Kaufman, 2011, p 38). Therefore, whom a search firm chooses as a candidate to present to a search committee reflects the ideals, morals, character, and even the social capital of the firm.

While ten participants indicated the use of a search firm in acquiring their first head of school position, there were two that reported using job boards such as Educational Direction’s “Blue Sheet” and the job listing on websites such as www.nais.org and www.klingenstein.org. Furthermore, there were four (25%) that were hired from within their school (as compared to 30% of the white heads of school that participated in the study).

For those that were hired through a more traditional approach, and that is through the use of a search firm, they spoke about the importance of the relationship with the
search firms. Furthermore, they spoke to how race may impact the development (or lack thereof) of that relationship. Most of the responses spoke to how a candidate of color can get noticed by the firms. This recognition is important because, as one head of school on the east coast noted, it appears that “people of color in leadership positions, don’t have the same access to search firms and the major search firms like our Caucasian colleagues do.” Therefore, understanding how heads of color developed their access to and relationships with search firms is important.

Many search firms encourage aspiring heads of school to contact them directly, before a candidate pursues a particular school, for an initial face-to-face conversation so they may better assess the candidates’ strengths, possible weaknesses, and “fit” for current and/or future openings. However, they do not simply wait for candidates to come to them. For instance, Carney, Sandoe & Associates state on their website that one of the main ways they develop a pool of candidates is by reaching out to their academic contacts in colleges and universities, foundations, government agencies, independent and public schools, and at professional associations (Carney, Sandoe, & Associates, 2012b). In other words, they depend on their social network for referrals. Given that the leadership in many of these entities (i.e., colleges, government agencies, professional associations, etc.) are white, this again reinforces the importance for people of color aspiring to be a head of school to have a broad and well-established network of ties in their network who are in a position of power and outside of their race. With that said, in reflecting upon how they gained access to these search firms, the heads of color indicated that the most effective way was through a weak tie or a referral from a current head of
school or a board of trustee member at an independent school. For instance, one head of school in the southeast stated:

Over time I got to know some of these folks through either conversations or someone gave them my name. So, [the search firms] would call my head of school or they would call another head of school and say ‘Do you know of anyone?’ And they would respond saying that I am someone they oughta’ really be talking to.

While being referred to a search firm through a member of their network worked for most of the heads of color, it was not a sure-fire way for all of them to be recognized. One head of color on the east coast noted that although he was a graduate of an independent school and Ivy League institution (i.e. having social capital via educational qualifications), a long-time administrator at several great schools in the United States, and had a connection through a family member to a senior associate at a search firm (i.e. having social capital via his social network), he still had difficulty getting their attention.

I had at one point reached out to Jim Wickenden, one of the bigger search firms, and his father was a legendary head of school at Tabor. I knew his uncle who was on faculty there. I thought that connection would at least get me a conversation with the guy --- no interest. No interest in talking to me at all.

This indicates that despite the amount of social capital a candidate of color may have in regard to their educational qualifications, depth of their social network, and support from advocates who have ties to search firms, they may still fail to garner the attention of the search firms. A head of school from the east coast explained this phenomenon as such:

I think it’s the case because many of these firms at the highest level are not people of color. I think well intentioned, well-intended people sometimes over look those of us of color in leadership positions. It wouldn’t occur to them that we could be head of this school or that school. I think there are issues of race and access. I think there’s issues of where
does the glass ceiling occur for people of color who are in leadership positions.

This speaks to the issue of racial homophily (Mollica, Gray, & Trevino, 2003; Parks-Yancy, 2006) where search firms consisting of white senior search consultants (and for that matter primarily white search committees), will tend to select white candidates because of that shared characteristic. Nonetheless, given the role these search firms play within head of school searches, the heads of color emphasized the importance of not only making connections with the firms, but also developing deep relationships with them. While they noted that it is much easier to do it now that they are a head of school since search firms are constantly soliciting them for referrals or presenting them with new opportunities to consider, they cited the development of this relationship as one of the most important pieces of social capital that a candidate could acquire.

In summary, while candidates of color may possess other shared characteristics with the search consultants (e.g. educational background, weak ties in their social network, geographic origins), that might be able to trump race (Wimmer & Lewis, 2010) it depends on an increased level of contact between the two parties (Mollica, Gray, & Trevino, 2003). Therefore, whether it is increased advocacy from search firms or better educational qualifications and a more expansive social network with many unique weak ties and high-status mentors who are white, people of color aspiring to be a head of school will still need more social capital than their white counterparts.
CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

This study examines the experiences and current schools of 16 heads of color that acquired their first headship within a member school of the National Association of Independent Schools between July 2006 and July 2011. The research sought to explore the impact of social capital (i.e. educational background, social network, and use of advocates) on their appointment. Most importantly, it was done to look at how the pool of candidates of color pursing and acquiring a head of school position could be increased.

The theoretical framework that was used in this study was the theory that social capital is based on social reproduction, symbolic power, and access to institutional resources. More specifically, the amount of social capital held by an individual is dependent upon the size of the network of connections and on the amount of capital---economic, cultural (in part consisting of educational qualifications), and symbolic --- held by each person in the network (Bourdieu, 1986). In relation to independent schools and hiring, the greater the social capital, the more likely one is to be recommended for a head of school position. However, given the research on social capital and hiring (Lin, 2001), it was believed that people of color needed to have a greater amount of social capital -- obtained through education, work experiences, their social network, and mentoring -- than their white counterparts in order to offset racial homophily and segregation in the hiring process and be seen as a viable candidate.

Data for the study were collected through a mixed-methods approach. The study used quantitative methods via an online survey to collect demographic data on 120 heads of school -- 13 who self-identified as a person of color -- who acquired their first
headship within a NAIS member school between July 2006 and July 2011. These data includes information on their educational background (secondary, post-secondary, and graduate schools), leadership training, work experience, use of search firms, social network, and school demographics. The study also used qualitative data collected through interviews of 12 heads of color, some who did not participate in the online survey, about their interpretation of how their educational background, work experience, social network, and use of the search firms, influenced their road to headship. The information from the literature review, pilot study, and quantitative portion informed the questions for the design of the interview questions. The data were summarized and presented in the results section in a manner where the quantitative data gave an overview of some of the interesting or significant points between the schools and experiences of the white heads of school versus their counterparts who identified themselves as a person of color. The quantitative data were then used to support the attitudes and experiences of the heads of color that were collected through interviews. These narratives are important because they enhance the study by capturing specific experiences of, and individual perceptions and interpretations by, the participants (Fink & Kosecoff, 1985). Furthermore, given that NAIS is reporting that 70 percent of heads of school will be retiring within the next ten years (2010) these narratives also provides insight on the perceived barriers of and possibly solutions to appointing more heads of color within independent schools.
Summary of Findings

As an aggregate, heads of color that were appointed to their first headship between July 2006 and July 2011 reported that there are differences in the educational backgrounds, work experiences, types of schools where they are appointed, social networks, and support from search firms between them and their white counterparts who were appointed to their first headship during this same time. It is their belief that it is more important for them, as a person of color, to possess certain criteria, or capital, when being considered for a head of school position. This includes being a graduate of an independent school and/or having a graduate degree from an Ivy League university. The data from the study shows that there is a greater percentage of heads of color who are alumni of independent schools as well as from selective graduate school programs (with most graduating from Teachers College, Columbia University) than their white colleagues. Through the interviews, the participants also indicated the importance for people of color to develop a social network for professional mobility and personal support that includes, but is not limited to, mentors and colleagues who are heads of color. However, while the heads of color who were interviewed all indicated one of four individuals (three who were a person of color) with whom they connected in their pursuit for headship, most of the top five mentors and advocates that were indicated in both the online survey and interview were white. Nonetheless, it is through these relationships that most of the heads of color were made aware of and/or how they were recommend for their current position. Lastly, while all of the heads of color in the study did not use a search firm in obtaining their first headship (e.g. four were hired internally), all of them spoke to the importance of, as well as the difficulty with, developing a relationship with
these organizations. Because they are often the gatekeepers to the position in that they work with institutions to recommend candidates to a school’s search committee, having these firms be aware and supportive of candidates of color is paramount in diversifying the pool of applicants for future head of school positions.

**Answers to Research Questions**

*How do candidates’ level of education, the type of schools they attended (high school and post-secondary), and leadership development programs completed, influence their candidacy?*

**Educational background (including participation in a leadership development program)**

The heads of color had more social capital via their educational background and participation in leadership development programs than their white counterparts when pursuing their first headship.

- There was a significant statistical difference ($p = 0.099$) in the percentage of heads of color that graduated from an independent school (56%) than their white colleagues (35%).

- Seventy-five percent (12 out of 16) of heads of color that were surveyed attended an undergraduate institution that appears in the list of the top 40 schools from *Barron’s Guide to the Most Competitive Colleges* and the *US News and World Report Best Colleges* list.

- All of the heads of color have a master’s degree. However, 3% of the white survey participants do not have more than a bachelor’s degree.

- Nearly 88% (14 out of 16) of the heads of color have a master’s degree from a highly selective institution. This includes Brown University, Stanford University,
Teachers College, the University of Chicago, and the University of Virginia. On the other hand, only 50% of the white heads of school reported being an alumnus of a highly selective graduate school.

- Nearly 50% (7 out of 16) of the heads of color earned their master’s degree through the Klingenstein Center at Teachers College, Columbia University as compared to only 10% of their white counterparts.

- Nearly 40% (6 out of 16) of the heads of color have or are in the process of completing a terminal degree. Only 15% of the white participants met this criterion.

*How do people of color’s career experiences influence their candidacy to become a head of school?*

The heads of color had more social capital via their work experiences than their white counterparts when pursuing their first headship.

- There is a statistical significance ($p = 0.007$) between the nearly 70% of the heads of color in the study who served in the gateway position of an assistant head (Bassett, 2011) before becoming a head of school versus only 35% of their white counterparts.

- Nearly 12% of the recently appointed heads of school that identified as white were never an employee of an independent school prior to becoming a head. The converse is that all of the heads of color had between 13 and 25 years of experience, served in two and five different independent schools, and primarily experienced four to six career promotions (excluding lateral moves) throughout their career.
• Given the small sample size of people of color that participated in the study (n=16), they disproportionately (and significantly with p = 0.00) represent recently appointed heads of school that once served in the role of director of diversity by making up 57% of that group.

How do people of color’s social networks influence their candidacy to become a head of school?

The interviews indicated:

• Four individuals whom all of the heads of color used for career advice and/or advancement, thus indicating a shared network and lack of respective weak ties.

• The importance of developing social networks through conferences, participation on school boards, and alumni associations.

• Referrals for head of school positions were made by individuals in their network (save for four who were hired from within and two who used employment postings to acquire their position).

• The difficulty race may have on expanding one’s network.

How much career-related support are candidates of color receiving before becoming a head of school?

• Most of the narratives spoke to the importance of people of color having mentors and peers of color. However, there was the dissenting voice that other pieces of identity (i.e. social class and gender) are more important than race.

• The narratives also mentioned that despite having an elite educational background and well-rounded social network, the heads of color still felt as if they did not
have the same level of access and support of the placement agencies and search committees as their white colleagues.

• The most commonly used search firm by the heads of color was Carney, Sandoe & Associates.

• The data from the surveys indicated low numbers of people of color in the participants' social network that they felt close to and regularly used for career advice and advancement before becoming a head of school.

Implications

Pat Bassett, president of NAIS, recently reported that there are only 56 heads of color in nearly 1,200 NAIS-member schools (2011). That is roughly 5% of all heads of school. The number becomes even smaller as we look at those that were appointed to their first headship within the last decade. He notes that while:

Independent schools have come part way on the journey to becoming inclusive institutions where the adults, students, and leadership reflect the mosaic that is our country...we seem to have hit a speed bump in a key industry challenge: the underrepresentation of women and people of color in independent school headship (2011).

Bassett goes on to mention that while schools may look to have a diverse pool of applicants, all too often the person of color either does not make it to the finalist stage or becomes a close second for the position of headship. While the data collected throughout this study are of those who were selected to run an independent school, looking at their journey to headship provides great insight in understanding how candidates of color can
be successful in their pursuit of headship. The study also begins to answer the questions Bassett recently posed to independent schools:

What must candidates who are people of color do to increase their likelihood of being appointed to headships?
What must search firms do to help candidates and schools see people of color as equally appealing as white male candidates?
What must boards do (since boards ultimately make the head selection) to make it more likely that candidates of color are more proportionately, not just included in the pool, but also seen as the right choice? (2011)

Most importantly, the results of this study gives independent schools the framework needed to move beyond the criteria and approaches that were used in the past to identify viable heads of school candidates. This will allow schools to diversify their talent pool with people of color in a timely manner given that close to 70% of the current heads of school will be retiring in less than a decade (NAIS, 2010).

Research on homophily shows that people are more likely to hire people with shared characteristics (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001). This can transcend race if other characteristics are shared (Wimmer & Lewis, 2010). This is extremely important given the fact that there are not many heads of color who can recommend other people of color who are aspiring to become a head of school. Therefore, given the insular nature of independent schools (e.g. legacy students, former independent school leaders retiring to work for a company that does executive searches for schools, etc), it becomes apparent that heads of school that are white need to recommend people of color for other head of school positions in order to help diversify the candidate pool. It cannot become the sole responsibility of current heads of color. At the moment, candidates of color seem to be referred because of their connection to current heads of school through shared characteristics such as being an alumnus of a specific independent and/or graduate
school. It can also be seen through their participation in specific leadership development programs, serving on school boards, presenting at conferences, and serving on committees in regional associations for independent schools. While these qualities may have provided them with a foot-in-the-door, it gave no guarantee that they would be taken seriously by placement firms and search committees as some still struggled despite this. Nonetheless, the data from this study indicated recently appointed heads of color felt that the social capital they possessed from their educational backgrounds, work experiences, and their social networks that consisted of heads of school and other influential players in independent schools, was pivotal for them when acquiring their first headship.

**Educational Background**

Throughout the narratives, the heads of color indicated that they felt their educational background had a large impact on being viewed as a viable candidate by placement firms and search committees. More specifically, they talked about the importance of highlighting the fact that they were a graduate of an independent school on their resume as well as in their conversations with placement firms and search committees. This seemed to allow search firms to look past the candidate's race and feel more comfortable that the candidate truly understood the interworking of an independent school. The heads of color that were interviewed also felt it was important to hint at their alumni status as they expanded their social network in order to be seen as part of the independent school “club,” despite their years of service working in independent schools. Furthermore, they indicated that the prestige, or “pedigree,” was a motivating factor in
choosing their graduate school program in order for them to be viewed as a viable candidate.

It is my belief that it is no accident that most of the heads of color appointed in the last five years are graduates of the master’s program through the Klingenstein Center at Teachers College, Columbia University. The Center’s director, Pearl Rock Kane, has not only published widely referenced research on the experiences of people of color in independent schools (Kane & Orsini, 2003; Kane, Fontana, Goldberg & Wang, 2008), she also is a highly respected leader with decades of experience developing and working with current and aspiring heads of school. Therefore, search firms often seek her out for referrals. While anecdotal, as an employee of the Klingenstein Center over a decade ago, I vividly remember fielding calls and emails from search firms and schools who were soliciting Dr. Kane for head of school candidates. As one head of color indicated in the interview, Pearl Rock Kane is seen as providing “the keys to the kingdom.” Furthermore, the Klingenstein Center boasts the oldest graduate school program in the country that focuses primarily on independent school education. Since the mid-1990s, few if any formal leadership development opportunities in independent school education existed outside of the Klingenstein Center’s programs (Frankel & Schechtman, 2010). As a point of comparison, the NAIS Fellowship for Aspiring Heads of School, the leadership program that most of the heads of color in this study completed (as opposed to only 11% of the white heads in the sample), did not have its first cohort until 2003. Not to mention, the Center is also housed at Teachers College, Columbia University, which is consistently ranked as one of the leading graduate schools of education in the United States. Lastly, even NAIS has spoken to the benefits of getting a master’s degree from the Klingenstein
Center by recommending it as an intentional step someone can take in becoming a head of school (Frankel & Schechtman, 2010). Therefore, having this “stamp of approval” on their curriculum vitae made the heads of color feel as if they had credibility with placement agencies and search committees. Ironically enough, this stamp of approval was not necessary for the large majority of the white heads of school who acquired their first headship during this same time frame.

For those heads of color that did not graduate from Teachers College, they still had an advanced degree from an extremely prestigious university. If not, they have or are in the process of completing a terminal degree. This mirrors the literature that people of color need to have at least one degree higher than their white counterparts in order have the same level of achievement (Carnevale, Rose & Cheah, 2011). Therefore, it is no surprise that, when looking at percentages, more heads of color have graduated from prestigious universities and have more terminal degrees than their white counterparts.

This emphasis on pedigree can be expected given that many independent schools, especially those which describe themselves as a college preparatory school, often publish the alma maters and degrees of their teachers and administrators on their website and admission material. This material is often alongside the institutions where their graduates were accepted and is commonly used as a way to market the school. While college counseling departments are trying to alleviate the stress families feel about getting into the right school, independent schools are inadvertently reinforcing it through their marketing materials.

Given the research around cultural deficits (Lin, 2001), it is no surprise that people of color who graduate from independent schools and Ivy League institutions find 83
greater success in obtaining a head of school position than their colleagues of color who
do not share this same characteristic. These individuals have a more expansive network
of possible weak ties that will allow them to receive unique leads and offers based on
shared characteristics of those involved in the search process. Having this type of
background may be the first step for people of color who are seriously interested in
becoming a head of an independent school. However, in looking at the number of
graduates of color from these types of institutions that decide to work in education, the
possibility of expanding and diversifying the candidate pool for headship seems daunting.

NAIS has indicated the “need to create a more diverse pool of candidates that will
include more women, people of color, and those from other underrepresented groups”
(Torres, 2011, p. 11-12). Therefore, independent schools and search firms will need to
begin to look beyond candidates of color being independent school alumni or graduates
of an Ivy League institution if they truly want to diversify their pool of future leaders.
The exception is often made for white candidates. For instance, in a recent book by
NAIS, several heads of school indicated how headships are attracting more non-
traditional people to the job. The book goes on to reference several current heads who
came into their position by non-traditional means (i.e., the non-profit sector, public
school background, etc). In all of the cases, the heads relied on their social network to
help them locate and acquire a job at some point in their career (NAIS, 2011).

However, there was one exception. There is a story about a woman who was born
in Columbia. Not only did she teach at one of the most prestigious independent schools
in the country, Phillips Academy in Andover (MA), she also taught at, and earned her
master’s and Ph.D. from, Harvard University. At Phillips Academy, she held the
positions of the Spanish department chair, head of the World Languages department, and
dejan of studies, all before being named the 55th head of Deerfield Academy (MA) in
2006. With roughly 20 years of experience working in an independent school that
graduates Presidents of the United States, Noble Prize winners, and Pulitzer Prize
winners (note the plural in all of these cases), as well as having a terminal degree from
and teaching experience at Harvard University, the classification of her career being non-
traditional is confusing. One could hypothesize that it is referring to the fact that she is
woman or that she is a native of Columbia. If that is the case, it reinforces the notion that
underrepresented minorities, particularly people of color, need to have more social capital
in regards to their educational qualifications than their white counterparts when aspiring
to become a head of school.

At the same time, it is important to note the two examples from the data that did
not share this exclusive background. Instead of being a graduate of an independent
school or Ivy League institution, both of these heads of color were dependent upon their
work experiences and social networks to obtain a head of school position. These are
important contributors to one’s social capital. For example, in looking at the individuals
who were a part of the Fellowship for Aspiring Heads from 2003 to 2008, “those who
attained headship were almost all assistant heads during their participation” (NAIS,
2009), thus reinforcing the importance of this traditional gateway position.

In addition to their leadership training program, the work experiences the heads of
school had before their first headship was quite vast. For example, nearly 70% served as
an assistant or associate head of school. Nearly a third of the heads of color interviewed
for this study also had the opportunity to work as a head of school either through an
interim position or in a non-independent school before eventually becoming a head. Those that did not had a breadth of experiences that prepared them to become a head of school. Some of these include serving as a Director of Admission or Dean of Students. Furthermore, many were placed in positions where they had the ability to work alongside their school’s Development Office and attend Board of Trustee meetings. This type of exposure to the range of responsibilities should not be discounted even though the interviewees did not spend much time speaking to it. If nothing else, it gave them an opportunity to network with a larger constituency than one normally would in a support-type leadership role. Further exploration of the work experiences in preparing a candidate of color for headship is definitely needed.

Nonetheless, as two senior search consultants note, “networking regularly with other educators outside of your own school is often as valuable as any formal program” (Frankel & Schechtman, 2010). Therefore, while social capital gained through ones educational background and even work experiences certainly helps, an important piece for a person of color aspiring to be a head of school is to develop social capital by developing, expanding and utilizing their social network effectively.

Social Network

The heads of color interviewed expressed how they developed their social network through participating in conferences, serving on a board of trustees for an independent school, or by being alumni of an independent and/or elite graduate school. While these things were extremely helpful in creating more connections, what the heads of color neglected to reflect upon was how their work experience helped expand their social network as well.
Given that most of the heads of color worked in two to five different schools, this allowed them to expand the amount of people they were in contact with throughout their career. Furthermore, a recent NAIS study also indicated that when candidates of color did not serve as an assistant head or division director, they were less likely to be appointed for a headship (2009). This agrees with the findings of this study in that there is also a significant difference in the amount of heads of color that previously served as an assistant/associate head, the notable gateway position to and traditional method of becoming a head of school, versus their white counterparts. Ironically, despite the fact that search firms are stating that most people who are “deans of faculty, academics, or students—as well as directors of admission, marketing, communications, diversity, and other specialized programs—will need another job (or two) before becoming a credible candidate for headship” (Frankel & Schechtman, 2010), the data from this study indicated that this was not the case for a large portion of the white heads of school who were hired to their first headship between July 2006 and July 2011. In addition, when looking at the sample, not only were there more heads of color who served as an assistant/associate head of school before becoming a head of school, they were also in the position longer. This suggests that, before becoming a head of school, white candidates do not need to possess the same level of social capital from their work experience as candidates of color. When this is coupled with the differences in the educational qualifications that were reported from the two groups, it can be assumed that white candidates must depend upon and utilize the social capital gained from their social network in order to become a head of school. Nonetheless, while there is a difference in work experiences, serving as an assistant head before acquiring their current position allowed the heads of color to be
seen not only by their school’s community-at-large as the leader in their head’s absence, but it is also allowed them to expand their own social network (and thus increased their social capital) by participating in conferences, board meetings, and development events.

This expansive network proved useful given that most of the heads of color were not promoted from within their own school. Interestingly enough, previous research indicated that African American heads of school tended to have been promoted from within their institution (Profit, 2007). This discrepancy could be due to the fact that the individuals in that study acquired their first headship more than 10 years ago. Nonetheless, the data here indicates that most of the heads of color were encouraged to apply to their first headship from another head school. What is even more shocking was that all of the participants that were interviewed identified at least one of the four same individuals as providing career support and mentorship. This reinforces the literature that shows how under-represented groups need to refer others who are also under-represented several times more in order to neutralize the segregating effects of referring (Rubineau & Fernandez, 2010). Interestingly enough, the data also shows that most of the participants in the study were mentored and/or encouraged to apply to a head of school position by someone who was not only white, but also higher than them professionally.

However, where this study, as well as the literature, falls short is on the mechanisms professionals (in this case heads of school) use to refer candidates to positions that are comparable to their own. For instance, there are definitely similarities in the educational backgrounds and social networks of people of color becoming a head of school. However, are these factors being consciously recognized and utilized by heads of school when referring candidates of color to become a head of school? Nonetheless,
when you couple the practice that current heads of school are one of the main referral sources for aspiring heads with the fact that there are a low number of heads of school who identify as a person of color, it becomes even more imperative for white heads of school to connect with, mentor, and refer people of color for head of school positions.

**Limitations of Study / Considerations for Future Research**

The number of studies examining how inequality in social capital affects the career mobility, especially within the field of education, is limited. While the data in this study did allow for a snapshot of the background, experiences, and reflections of recently appointed heads of color, there were several limitations of the study. This study began to examine the variation of social capital across racial groups and how it relates to issues of homophily, capital deficit, and return deficit. However, the influence of several other variables (i.e. gender, socio-economic status, and ethnicity) needs to be explored as well. Therefore, future studies may benefit from several conceptual clarifications.

Given the intersection of race and gender in our society, it was often difficult to compare their background and experiences of heads of color to their white counterparts and understand if some of the results were a direct result of race or if gender had become an extraneous variable. For instance, NAIS reports that women seem to have less confidence in their networking and the reputation of the schools where they have worked (Torres, 2011, p. 13). Furthermore, studies have suggested that women use networks less often (Marsden, 1988) and are affiliated with smaller, less diverse networks with ties that are more likely to be female and in lower hierarchical positions (Moody, 1983). Because these networks tend to be more homogenous, with the exception of family ties being heterogeneous, there is a greater likelihood that of a reproduction of resource
disadvantages among women (Lin, 2000). Therefore, it is important to understand if this is a contributing factor on the low number of women of color that are heads of school.

It would be equally important to examine the possible impact of one’s socio-economic status (SES) with this type of career mobility. Both Coleman (1988) and Bourdieu’s (1986) theories of social capital included references to how class influences the access to and use of social capital. Furthermore, the literature shows that people with lower SES tend to rely on homogeneous, local, strong ties that often consist of their family (Green et al., 1995; Stack, 1974) which results in attaining lower statuses in their career (Lin, 2000). This relevance of SES and how it relates to race can be seen even more clearly in that black children adopted into white families tend to not only have access to better social resources, they have higher academic achievement as well (Moore, 1987). Therefore, future research needs to examine both the ascribed SES of the candidate’s family, as well as the current SES of the individual to get a more accurate view of how social capital influences career mobility.

Lastly, it is unclear if the ethnicity of the heads of color had a greater influence on their career mobility. There is certainly a difference in the ethnic composition of heads of color in NAIS member schools with African Americans disproportionately represented in this position (Torres, 2011, p. 15). Furthermore, the literature indicates a difference in the type and amount of social capital across ethnic groups. For instance, Chinese women are found to be deficient in social capital compared to Chinese men. However, their capital was greatly enhanced through their political party affiliation and, unlike women as a whole, through their kin ties (Lin, 2000). Moreover, a study by McDonald, Lin and Ao showed that the impact of social networks on career mobility is
greater for Hispanics than African Americans (2009). Given that homophily shows that members of an ethnic group tend to interact with other members from the same group (Lin, 2001), and America’s differential treatment among ethnic groups, the differences in social capital that exist between these groups makes it even more important for future research.

Future research should also explore the experiences of both white and people of color who aspire to be a head of school in order to better understand the social capital of the individuals currently being referred for a head of school position. Given the small number of heads of school who acquired their first headship within the last several years and also self-identify as a person of color, it was difficult to locate and encourage them all to participate. I often needed to rely on my own social network to identify and solicit participants. Therefore, in order to have a greater understanding of race and social capital within independent school leadership, incorporating aspiring heads of school would help increase the size of the sample. NAIS began to do this when they looked at the background and perceptions of participants of their Aspiring Heads program from 2003 to 2008 (NAIS, 2009). However, this research can be expanded by looking at the correlation between educational background or work experience and being a finalist. Furthermore, it could examine the composition of their social networks in order to better understand the impact of mentoring and referrals.

Lastly, future research should also examine the processes placement firms and search committees use to select candidates for a head of school position. For example, it will be important to examine how things like an applicant’s educational background, list of references, career experiences, or referral sources are used in calculating the strength
of a candidate. Moreover, given the comments by the interviewees that it is easier to
become a head of school once you are already in the position elsewhere, it would allow
us to see how many sitting versus aspiring heads become finalist and are then offered a
position. Without this knowledge gained from researching the process used by placement
firms and search committees, we will never fully understand how to best increase the
diversity within the candidate pool for heads of school.

With that said, I will attempt to answer Pat Bassett’s three questions around how
candidates of color can become more successful in pursuing their first headship within an
independent school.

*What must candidates who are people of color do to increase their likelihood of being appointed to headships?*

It is evident from this study that the people of color who were appointed to their
first head of school position within the past five years not only attend a prestigious
independent school and/or post-secondary institution, they also were exposed to a
plethora of opportunities and responsibilities under the tutelage and mentorship of a small
number of independent school leaders. Therefore, as more people of color become
interested in a head of school position, it will become imperative for them to have a
wealth of experiences (from formal education and/or positions held in independent
schools) in order to be seen as a viable candidate given the changing landscape. No
longer are schools just looking toward the teacher who has put in their proverbial time in
the classroom. Instead, strong candidates need to have experience with development,
employee valuations, and strategic planning. While some may believe that America is a
post-racial society given the ethnic make-up of President Barack Obama, research in
psychology and sociology informs us that in-group preferences are often difficult to uproot. Therefore, it is important that candidates of color have a wealth of experience that no board nor search firm can discount. In addition, it will be vitally important for the candidate to develop relationships, both mentorships and weak ties, with a wide-range of individuals in independent schools. This is because one’s resume can only speak so much for an individual. There comes a pivotal point in the search process where it is important for others to sing the praises of the candidate. Despite the individualistic, pull-myself-up-by-the-bootstraps mentality of the United States, interpersonal relationships are paramount for career mobility. These types of relationships can be realized through things such as participation in both regional and national conferences that tend to issues within independent schools. Furthermore, membership in regional and national organizations that provide the opportunity for one to network with leaders within the field is also useful.

What must search firms do to help candidates and schools see people of color as equally appealing as white male candidates? AND what must boards do (since boards ultimately make the head selection) to make it more likely that candidates of color are more proportionately, not just included in the pool, but also seen as the right choice?

I feel comfortable combining the last two questions together because I feel that the approach is the same. Search firms and boards must understand that it is not about which college one goes to, but what one does in college (and afterwards) that really matters. It is important to let a candidate’s personal reputation and work experiences speak more for the candidate than a loose association with a particular institution. Furthermore, when searching for a candidate, look for qualities that may transcend responsibilities. Lastly, use the school’s network of resources to widen the net of
candidates. This can include cultivating leadership from within the institution. It could also include soliciting alumni, board members, parents, community members, and even current employees for referrals. Let’s not forget that if schools are looking to attract candidates of color, it would behoove them to advertise the position within communities of color. For example, there are many organizations, several that are a part of graduate schools of education, that help to promote the career advancement of people of color who work in the field of education.

The best person for the job is often never considered because s/he is either unaware of the position or unaware of his/her own ability. It is important to not leave the development and appointment of future heads of color to happenstance. Schools do not do that when it comes to educating students or planning for their financial future. The same should be done when it comes to planning for and selecting a head of school. If a board truly desires to get outside of its often narrow range of “traditional” candidates, its selection committee must carefully pursue all of the options by considering a wide range of people. By having that type of diversity of thought and approach in the selection committee, only then can we begin to truly diversify the head of school position.
APPENDIX A

Demographic Information and Organizational Networks Survey

Section 1:

I am interested in the profile of the people in your career that comprise your informal network of relationships. Please list the people in your career (subordinates, peers, superiors, former co-workers, etc.) who best represent the two statements below.

To ensure the anonymity of your network, please provide first names and last initials only. List up to 10 people for both questions and feel free to list the same person on both questions, if appropriate. Please note that it is ok to identify fewer than 10 people for the statements below.

Once you write-in their first name and last initial, please answer the questions about each of them.
The people within independent schools who have provided me with valuable job/career related advice and information are:

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<tr>
<th>First Name &amp; Last Initial</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>List their current position</th>
<th>Level of their position</th>
<th>Please indicate how close you feel you are to each person</th>
<th>How did you meet this person?</th>
<th>Would you consider this person to be a mentor (i.e. someone who actively provides you with professional feedback and/or career advice)?</th>
<th>Does this person provide help in “learning the ropes” within independent school education?</th>
<th>Does this person provide you with trust and respect?</th>
<th>Does this person provide you with emotional support?</th>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select race from a drop box. The choices will include: Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, White, Other, Unknown</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select gender from a drop box. The options will be: Male, Female, Unknown</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select employer from a drop box. The options will be: Person currently works at the same school, Person works/worked at my current school, Person</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select level from a drop box. The options will be: Below me in the normal organizational structure of schools (subordinate), On par with my current position</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select closeness from a drop box. The options will be: Distant, Somewhat close, Close, Very Close</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select how they met this person from a drop box. The options will be: Colleague, Worked together on a project, Met at a conference, Attended school together,</td>
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<td>Works at my former school</td>
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<td>Educator</td>
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<td>Worked with</td>
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<td>Introduced through</td>
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<td>Above me in the normal</td>
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<td>Organization Structure</td>
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<td>Sought for guidance</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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</table>
The people within independent schools who have become personal friends are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Name &amp; Last Initial</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>List their current position</th>
<th>Level of their position</th>
<th>Please indicate how close you feel you are to each person</th>
<th>How did you meet this person?</th>
<th>Would you consider this person to be a mentor (i.e. someone who actively provides you with professional feedback and/or career advice)?</th>
<th>Does this person provide help in “learning the ropes” within independent school education?</th>
<th>Does this person provide you with trust and respect?</th>
<th>Does this person provide you with emotional support?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select race from a drop box. The choices will include: Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, White, Other, Unknown</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select gender from a drop box. The options will be: Male, Female, Unknown</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select employer from a drop box. The options will be: Person currently works at the same school, Person works/worked at my current school, Person works/worked at my former school,</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select level from a drop box. The options will be: Below me in the normal organizational structure of schools (subordinate), On par with my current position,</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select how close they met this person from a drop box. The options will be: Distant, Somewhat close, Close, Very Close</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select how close you feel you are to each person</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select how they met this person from a drop box. The options will be: Yes, No</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select race from a drop box. The options will be: Male, Female, Unknown</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select gender from a drop box. The options will be: Male, Female, Unknown</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select race from a drop box. The options will be: Male, Female, Unknown</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select race from a drop box. The options will be: Male, Female, Unknown</td>
<td>Note: subjects will be able to select race from a drop box. The options will be: Male, Female, Unknown</td>
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<td>Person works at a different school where I wasn't employed,</td>
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<td>Person is an education consultant, Other, Unknown</td>
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<td>(peer), Above me in the normal organizational structure of schools (superior), Other, Unknown</td>
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<td>through a mutual acquaintance, Sought him/her out for guidance, Other</td>
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</table>
SECTION 2:

Career Experiences

(NOTE: Participants will be able to answer each question by selecting a response from a drop box)

1. How many years, including this one, have you worked in education?
   a. Answers will include 1 – 65 years.

2. How many years, including this one, have you worked in an independent school?
   a. Answers will include 1 – 65 years.

3. How many different independent schools have you worked in during your career?
   a. Answers will include 1 – 20.

4. How many years, including this one, have you worked at your current school?
   a. Answers will include 1 – 65 years.

5. Please indicate the total number of promotions in rank you have received during your time working within an independent school. Include all promotions received, even if it was obtained at different schools that moved you from one level to a higher level. Do not count transfers or lateral moves.
   a. Answers will include 0 – 25.

6. How rapidly do you feel you have moved up professionally within independent schools?
   a. Answers: Much less rapidly than I expected; Less rapidly than I expected; As rapidly as I expected; More rapidly than I expected; Much more rapidly than I expected.

7. How satisfied are you with your career progress since you started working in an independent school?
   a. Answers: Very Dissatisfied; Dissatisfied; Satisfied; Very Satisfied.
8. Please indicate the different types of independent schools, excluding your current school, where you have been employed. If the school has different divisions, please just select the division in which you worked. You may select more than one.

a. Options include: primary, middle school, upper school, a school with a boarding program, a Friends school, an all-girls school, an all-boys school, a therapeutic school, a school that specializes in learning differences, a school located in the northeast, a school located on the east coast, a school located in the south, a school located in the mid-west, a school located on the west coast, a school that is considered to be progressive, a school that is considered to be conservative, my alma mater.

9. Please indicate the type of your current school. You may select more than one.

a. Options include: primary, middle school, upper school, a school with a boarding program, a Friends school, an all-girls school, an all-boys school, a therapeutic school, a school that specializes in learning differences, a school located in the northeast, a school located on the east coast, a school located in the south, a school located in the mid-west, a school located on the west coast, a school that is considered to be progressive, a school that is considered to be conservative, my alma mater.

10. Please select the position(s) that most reflect the one(s) you previously held while working in an independent school and total number of years of experience in that position.

a. Options will include: teacher, department chair, division director, assistant academic dean, academic dean, director of curriculum, assistant dean of faculty, dean of faculty, assistant director of diversity, director of diversity, assistant director of admissions, director of admissions, assistant director of alumni affairs, director of alumni affairs, assistant director of communication, director of communication, director of special programs, assistant dean of students, dean of students, assistant director of residential life, director
of residential life, assistant director of student activities, director of student activities, business manager, assistant director of development, director of development, assistant head of school, head of school, other.

11. Please list your current position:

12. How many years, including this one, have you been in that position?
   a. Answers will include 1 – 60 years.

13. Are you currently seeking a head of school position?
   a. Yes or No.

14. If so, how are you searching for the position? Please select all that apply?
   a. Options will include: advancing at your current school, career mentor, a search firm, referrals from employees at other schools, referrals from a current head of school for a position at another school, referrals from a departing head of school for his/her position, cold-calling, electronic job boards (nais.org, klingenstein.org, etc.), newspapers, alumni office at your alma mater, other.

15. Have you had an interview for a head of school position already?
   a. If so, how many?

16. Were you a finalist for any of the searches?
   a. If so, how many?
   b. What type(s) of school(s) were you a finalist?
      i. Options include: primary, middle school, upper school, a primary and middle school, a middle and upper school, a k-12 school, a school with a boarding program, a Friends school, an all-girls school, an all-boys school, a therapeutic school, a school that specializes in learning differences, a school located in the northeast, a school located on the east coast, a school located in the south, a school located in the mid-west, a school located on the west coast, a school that is considered to be
progressive, a school that is considered to be conservative, my alma mater.

SECTION 3

Demographic Information

Please answer the following questions about your background.

1. Gender
   a. Male or Female

2. Race
   a. Answers include: Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, White, Other

3. Age

4. Please select each degree you have obtained. If you have more than one of the same degrees, please indicate that in the additional remarks field below.
   a. Answers include: Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate, Post-doctorate, additional remarks
   b. Please indicate the discipline of each degree

5. Please indicate the name(s) of the post-secondary institution(s) where you graduated. If it is more than one, please place them in chronological order.

6. Did you graduate from an independent school for high school?
   a. If so, which one?
   b. Where is it located?

7. Have you participated in any leadership training programs?
   a. Yes or No
   i. If yes, please indicate the name(s) below.
APPENDIX B

Interview Prompts

Main Questions
• How did their level of education and the type of schools they attended (high school and post-secondary) influence their candidacy?
  • How did their career experiences influence their candidacy
    o Yrs in education
    o Yrs in independent schools
    o # of school where they were employed
    o Previous positions
    o Leadership training programs
  • Desire to becoming a head of school
    o Have you been offered another heads position at any time?
    o How long have you wanted to be a head of school?
    o How many times did you apply (years and schools)
    o Willingness to relocate
    o Type of school
  • Obtaining their current position
    o Relationship with search firms
      ▪ Who did they work with
      ▪ How did they develop that relationship? When/how did it start?
      ▪ Appointed from within the school?
    o How did their social networks influence their candidacy?
      ▪ Composition of social network
        • Race
        • Gender
        • Age
        • Independent School employee
        • Current/Former Head of School
        • Board of Trustee member
        • Search Firm
      o How much career-related support are candidates of color receiving?
        ▪ Mentored by whom
        ▪ Actively sought a mentor or did a mentor choose them
        ▪ Do they mentor others
        ▪ Role of race and ethnicity in mentoring
      o Most influential factors in having them become a head of school
      o Types of head of school offers
        ▪ Size and location of school
  • Advice for a person of color who is aspiring to become a head of school
APPENDIX C

Below is a list of the coding that was used to organize the qualitative data. Atlas.ti allowed for sub-categories of each major theme. It also gave a count of how many times a particular theme was used when organizing the data. The number next to the bulleted theme is the amount of times the theme appeared in the data.

- Capital
  - Community Involvement (40)
    - Being involved in opportunities both inside and outside of the school to make you a viable candidate
  - Education Decision (25)
    - Descriptions of what prompted the subject to choose the schools and programs they did
  - Pedigree (52)
    - Importance of higher education from noteworthy institutions

- Decision
  - Announcement (6)
    - Descriptions of how they let other people know they were interested in becoming a head of school
  - Pursing Headship (32)
    - Descriptions of how they decided to become a head of school

- Engaging Network (12)
  - Descriptions of how they use their social network to acquire other positions

- Geographic references (7)

- Introspection
  - Culture (45)
    - Descriptions of their feelings around the impact of culture, race, and/or nationality in their lives
  - Self-Worth (12)
    - Descriptions of their self-worth (e.g. feeling good enough/competent) and confidence level to do the job

- Mentoring
  - Being mentored (39)
    - Descriptions of them being mentored before becoming a head
  - Mentoring others (14)
    - Descriptions of them mentoring others
  - Mentoring importance (12)
    - Descriptions of the importance of mentorship

- Miscellaneous (25)

- Network Opportunities (20)
  - Descriptions of opportunities they used to network (e.g. conferences)
• Relationship Building (28)
  o Descriptions of how they built relationships and their feelings around its importance
• Relationship with the Board of Trustees (6)
  o Descriptions of their relationship with the board of trustees before they were hired
• Relocating for position (14)
  o Descriptions of relocating for the head of school position
• School Readiness (16)
  o Descriptions of the heads of school's perception of their school's readiness to hire a person of color
• Social Network (23)
  o Descriptions of their social network prior to becoming a head of school
• Social Network Now (11)
  o Descriptions of their social network after becoming a head of school
• Support
  o Advice (23)
    ▪ Descriptions of advice given by others about their career
  o Priming (27)
    ▪ Descriptions of where they were deliberately put into positions/situations by a superior that would be beneficial in their future role of head of school
  o Support (57)
    ▪ Descriptions of feelings about being supported by others
  o Trust (2)
    ▪ Descriptions of building trust with others so both parties felt supported
  o Use of Consultants (45)
    ▪ Descriptions of their relationship with search firms
• Weak Ties (37)
  o Descriptions of the existence of weak ties and how they were used
WORKS CITED


Gooden, J, Stephens, D, & Alford, B (2002). The Independent School. In S. Harris, S. Lowery (Eds.), *A School for Every Child*, (pp. 75-86). Lanham, MD: R&L Education.


NAIS. (2009). *Still aspiring: An examination of why women and people of color are less likely to attain head of school positions following completion of the aspiring heads fellowship*. Retrieved from www.nais.org (only accessible via password now).


