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Staying local: how mature, working-class students on a satellite campus leverage community cultural wealth

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Introduction

Across Europe, lifelong education, particularly encouraging mature adults' access to higher education (HE), is increasingly important to economic and educational policy (Bologna Process Declarations 2007, 2009, 2012; OECD 2015). Various UK governments have also emphasised HE's role in promoting social mobility, highlighting the need to reduce barriers to access for older students and those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds (HEFCE, 2006; DfBIS 2014; DfBIS 2016; DET 2016; Office for Students 2018). Yet, in the UK, the percentage of first-year, first-degree students over age 21 has declined from 30% in 2013-14 to 26% in 2017-18 (HESA 2019). Furthermore, mature students are almost twice as likely to leave after one year of a first degree as young students (HEFCE 2017). Finally, older students are under-researched relative to younger students, as found in a literature review in which "only 41 (1.27 %) of the 3,219 articles were about older adult undergraduate students" (Donaldson and Townsend 2007; 33). Where it exists, research on this population tends to focus on the stresses and obstacles that older students face (Spiegler and Bednarek, 2013). Our study, though, highlights how local working-class students aged 25 and older attending a satellite campus in an underserved community can draw upon their familial, aspirational, and social capitals as assets supporting their success (Yosso 2005).

Previous Research

'Mature-age students' have been variously described as those aged more than 20 years (EIM Support, 2010), those aged more than 21 years at entry (HEFCE 2017) or those who completed their secondary schooling at least three years prior to enrolling at university, or those over 25 years old in their first year of enrolment (Kahu et al, 2015). Mature students can also be defined by a host of issues related to family pressures, part-time study or access issues, time poverty, commuting, and childcare and household responsibilities and social class (Marandet and Wainwright, 2010; Plagemen and Sabina, 2010).

The particular challenges and obstacles encountered by students aged over 25, especially those with dependents, is well documented in the literature (Hinton-Smith, 2009; Spiegler and Bednarek, 2013). Mature students without prior HE knowledge or who have been out of education for some time may feel like 'outsiders in the game' (Bowl, 2003:123) and may have additional and often invisible 'work' as they juggle multiple demands (Thomas and Quinn, 2007:59). HE study also presents stronger risks to identity for mature HE

students, particularly those with dependents, '…adopting a new identity of learner in addition to the continued identity, role and responsibilities of parent can be challenging' (Wainwright and Marandet 2010:458).

These pressures often are exacerbated for women, given historical and cultural assumptions about gender roles (Plageman and Sabina, 2010). During the 1990s, there were several studies on mature students, particularly women, accessing higher education (e.g. Merrill, 1999) which emphasised the lack of family support, role conflict and family responsibilities. More recently, O'Shea and Stone (2011) followed 17 Australian students who were aged over 30 and mothers through their first year of university. They highlighted both the challenges and the transformative potential of HE. Many students had re-negotiated their relationships with partners and traditional domestic roles, but the women's stories showed an implicit to accommodate their partners to avoid active resistance. This study suggests the continued constraints of traditional gender roles, which can still hinder mature women's engagement in HE.

Locally-based study makes HE more geographically accessible to students, particularly mature students who must combine work or family commitments (Greenwood et al. 2008). Locality, flexibility, support and links to employment are particularly crucial to over 25s, as the choice of institution is often heavily influenced by family and work circumstances (Bowl 2003). Based on a quantitative study of more than 100 mature students and a qualitative study of 24 mature students at the University of Hull, Gonzalez-Arnal and Kilkey (2009) found the majority were carers, for whom the location of the university was particularly important. For many, a local university was the only choice possible, due to children's schools and the proximity of support networks for care.

Mature students are often fighting class disadvantage, too. 'Working-class' refers to those employed in the lower tier jobs (National Statistics Socio-economic Classification 2010) or who move in and out of work or claim tax credits against low earned income or unemployment allowances. This group has limited access to educational opportunities (Evans 2006). The absence of a higher education script within the family also limits the educational preparedness of these learners (Ball, Davies, David and Reay 2002:57).

The White working-class, Jones (2011) argues, are often portrayed in the UK media as a form of 'low life' lacking values, morality and intelligence, summed up by the derogatory term 'Chav'. Because of the historical portrayal of the working classes as 'an unknowing critical tasteless mass from which the middle classes draw their distinctions' (Reay 2001:335), working-class people may feel shame about their backgrounds (Li 2015).

Although the obstacles for mature students, with their commonly intersecting characteristics (women, carers, working-class) are well-documented, the assets and strengths these students bring to the academy are not. Lehman (2014) is a notable exception, finding that working-class students were able to challenge the structural disadvantages of their class by drawing upon strengths such as the determination to 'get in and stay in'. Although students did not initially aspire to professional or middle-class lifestyles, they achieved that through their resilience (Lehman 2014).

Our study explores how mature, working-class students, especially carers, draw on the strengths of their existing social network by studying in their local community. The participants in this study attended a satellite campus, established in 2006 as part of an initiative to widen participation in HE (HEFCE 2006). Satellites were a 'micro university' in and for these areas of traditionally low participation in higher education (Gaskell and Dunn 2018).

Many of those universities are withdrawing from those satellites as the UK university sector faces challenges with financial pressures and demographic changes (Gaskell and Dunn 2018). Since 2016, satellite campuses in Alsager, Broadstairs, Crewe, Hastings, Scarborough, and Tonbridge have all closed. HE in further education colleges has grown to fill the gaps left by departing satellite campuses, although with a reduced degree offer. As universities withdraw from satellite sites, there is a risk that learners unable to relocate for university could become cut off from accessing high quality HE and socio-economically deprived areas will continue to deteriorate economically.

Conceptual Framework

This study draws on Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework, a revision of Bourdieu's (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu and Passeron 1994) human capital theory inspired by critical race theory. Critical of economic explanations alone, Bourdieu focused on other kinds of capital, particularly cultural capital, to understand social stratification, barriers to social mobility, and how power is reproduced across generations. Cultural capital describes particular preferences, skills, knowledge, mannerisms, tastes and ways of behaving that children learn through social interaction from a young age. The content of this capital differs across social classes and may be more or less beneficial depending upon the extent to which it is valued in a given context. Social capital refers to social networks that can be used to enhance one's economic position. White middle- and upper-class experiences (and their resulting capital) tend to be privileged in HE and the traditional professions for which HE

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prepares students. Students who do not have access to the valued, normative capitals assumed in HE may struggle to understand expectations, fit in, and get ahead (Bourdieu, 1984).

Drawing on critical race theory, Yosso (2005: 76) argued that Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital assumes that White middle-class culture is the 'standard', which can result in other cultures being 'judged in comparison to this norm'. Although Bourdieu's work sought to provide a structural critique of social and cultural reproduction, his theory of cultural capital has been used to assert that some communities are culturally wealthy (i.e. the White middle classes) while others are culturally poor (e.g. Black or working-class) (Yosso 2005). Thus, cultural capital is typically viewed as what is valued by the dominant classes in society rather than *any* forms of knowledge that are inherently possessed by a class (Yosso 2005), thereby neglecting forms of cultural knowledge held and valued by marginalised groups. Instead, Yosso (2005) theorised community cultural wealth as, 'an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilised by communities of colour to survive and resist macro and microforms of oppression" (2005:77).

Thus, Yosso's (2005) model emphasises the community wealth of socially marginalised groups that often goes unrecognised and unacknowledged. In particular, Yosso described six types of community cultural wealth (also called capital): familial, aspirational, social, navigational, linguistic, and resistance, which have been used to characterise the experience of ethnic minorities in HE (Bejarano and Valverde 2012). We focus specifically on the first three of those sources of community wealth in the context of mature English students from working-class backgrounds, many of whom have caring responsibilities. Familial capital is social and personal resources drawn from familial networks, including cultural knowledge nurtured within a family that contributes to their sense of history, collective memory, and cultural intuition. Aspirational capital refers to the hopes and dreams students have and the ability to maintain them in the face of barriers. Social capital, in this context, refers to students' social networks that are used to gain access to and support their participation in HE, including instrumental and emotional support. Navigational capital refers to knowledge of how to manoeuvre in social institutions and overcome institutional barriers. Linguistic capital includes language and communication skills derived from additional languages or styles. Resistance refers to knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behaviour that challenges inequality.

Although Yosso's (2005) theorising of community wealth/capital is based on African Americans' experiences, we extend it to students from another marginalised group, mature English students (mostly White) from a low social-economic background. In the UK, social

class, regardless of race, comes with deeply entrenched educational disadvantage (Archer and Hutchings, 2000). Nonetheless, we do not deny the unacknowledged White privilege most of our study participants had. Rather, we explore the applicability of some aspects of Yosso's (2005) theory in relation to this population.

Research Aims and Questions

Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework is used to interrogate how mature (over 25 years old), working-class students, many with caring responsibilities, enacted success during their first two years at a widening participation satellite campus. By staying in their communities to study at a satellite campus, students can benefit from their community's cultural wealth (Yosso 2005). Satellite campuses can provide access to a valued HE experience without causing the same sense of disjuncture reported in many studies of working-class students' experience in the middle-class world of mainstream HE (Li 2015). Hence, while previous literature has documented the disadvantages of students with these characteristics, we investigate the strengths and assets they draw on when undertaking HE in their local community. Consequently, this study seeks to document the impact of a national policy for encouraging participation in HE 'cold spots' (HEFCE 2006) on the experiences of traditionally under-served students.

In particular, we ask:

1) Which types of Yosso's cultural wealth (2005) do mature, working-class, English students, often with caring responsibilities, draw on in their HE studies on a satellite campus?
2) What forms do those aspects of community cultural wealth take?

Methods

Participants

Twenty first-year students (18 females; 2 males) entering HE for the first time participated. All were aged over 25 (median 37 years old), lived in non-professional households (NS-SEC[1] 4-8) with no parental history of higher education, came from low participation neighbourhoods (Polar 3 quintiles 1 and 2[2]) within 10 miles of the satellite campus, and

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[1] National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) is used in UK statistics to measure social class based on occupation. NS-SEC group refer to the eight classification groups which categorise those in higher managerial positions to those in lower socio-economic classes depending on their work. Those whose occupation is in groups 4-8 are in the lowest socio-economic groups classified by occupation.

[2] Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN) uses a classification by areas of the country that have the lowest young participation in HE (most disadvantaged) Quintiles 1and2. The areas with the highest participation in HE (most advantaged) are in quintile 5.

deliberately chose to pursue their studies locally. The sample comprised sixteen White British (all female), four English-born children of immigrants, one Afro-Caribbean (male), two Polish (female), and one Greek Cypriot (male). Most (n=16) were parents and half (n=10) were lone parents. Three had been offered a place at other institutions but chose to study locally due to caring responsibilities and their support network.

Study Context

The campus opened in 2003 to widen participation, increase opportunities for local students to take up HE, and create skilled graduates to assist the town's regeneration. The campus offered a range of honours degrees, particularly in social sciences and sciences. At the time of the study, the campus enrolled 681 students (280 over the age of 25 and from under-represented groups), approximately 60% of whom were local. The participants were typical of the campus population. All were undertaking an applied social science degree, with a high proportion of mature students in the cohort.

The satellite campus town is different from the main university site in two ways that are relevant to the study. Notably, 28.7 % of the population of the satellite campus town have high 'ties of Community' compared with only 7% in the main university town. This category describes 'people whose lives are mostly played out within the confines of close-knit communities.' Such communities often consist of families with young children who benefit from 'the social support networks of rather old-fashioned communities, where friends and relations seldom live far away. The focus of most people's lives is local.' (Sussex Arts Marketing 2007). The satellite campus town also had more than twice the percentage of 'happy families', described as people focused on family and children (Sussex Arts and Marketing 2007). We show the implications of these community characteristics for the study participants.

Ethics and Positionality

The first author's university granted ethics approval, and all participants gave informed consent. The first author, who conducted all interviews and initial analysis, had lived in the community for 20 years and worked at a local further education college. Thus she was able to draw on insider knowledge of the community and her own experience to build trust and empathy in relationships with interviewees, though she had no other relationship with them. The second author, who contributed to the interpretation and representation of data in theoretical terms, grew up in a HE 'cold spot' and left that community as a traditional-aged student to pursue HE. Both authors are White females. We reflected on our experiences to help identify typical assumptions made about the study population, to imagine new ways of

representing HE experiences that have often been overlooked, and, ultimately, hear students'
interpretations of their experience (Gadamer 1990). This approach is consistent with
hermeneutical phenomenology (Laverty 2003) and consistent with counter-storytelling in the
study's conceptual framework.

Interviews and Analysis

Participants took part in four 40-60 minute recorded interviews, with one in the first and final
term of each of their first and second year at university. The semi-structured interviews
probed students' motivations for coming to university and experiences during HE,
particularly seeking to understand students' wider social and cultural context. Key prompts
included: How has entering HE impacted your life? Are there any additional costs/financial
consideration you have as mature students? If so, what? What personal resources do you use
to support your engagement in HE? What/who assisted in your transition to studying at
university?

Hermeneutical phenomenological methods were initially used to capture the themes
bottom-up from participants' words and develop an understanding of respondents'
perspective through their interpretation of experience (Laverty 2003). Thus, the interviews
focused on broad topics to allow for flexibility for participants to develop their ideas, with the
interviewer following students' lead.

Participants reflected on their university and life experiences, how they felt about being
at their campus, their work, home, university balance and their conversations with their
friends and families about their university studies. In their initial interviews, students said it
was the proximity to home and hours suited to childcare arrangements that encouraged them
to apply, a decision they would not have made otherwise.

Regular reflective journaling was useful in tracking points of interests, emerging
themes and the first author's thought processes during data collection and initial analysis
(Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). Analysis was conducted after each wave of interviews. As the
analysis progressed, the first author kept updating journal entries relating to different topics.
Journaling kept the themes fresh in the interviewer's mind as the investigation progressed.
Data were summarised using an Excel spreadsheet which listed keywords in responses
against the questions in the interview schedule for each participant. This process enabled
comparisons of key responses that were commonly occurring in answers, and cross-checked
thematic analysis was done using Nvivo software.

Interviews were transcribed promptly and fed back to participants after each round to
confirm their contents. Subsequent interview schedules were personalised around emerging

themes to follow-up on specific issues raised in previous interviews. For example, an interviewee might update the interviewer on how their growing children were taking on increasing levels of responsibility for household tasks. Participants also were invited to give feedback on emerging themes as the project developed.

Emergent themes in the bottom-up analysis related to family supports and the importance of staying local, as are highlighted in this paper. As these findings challenged usual representations of this population, we sought a theory that would support generalisation. Yosso's (2005) theory matched the data and provided a critical lens on existing research. Common emergent patterns in responses were then grouped according to Yosso's forms of community cultural wealth, which are reported here.

Findings

 All the participants experienced a lack of confidence/academic self-efficacy and did not have personal support structures which could offer guidance as to what is expected in HE. As such findings are not new, we focus instead on the strengths and assets students brought to the challenges they faced. Although familial, aspirational and social capitals are discussed separately here, they were often inextricably linked in students' narratives, a key finding in and of itself. That is, families and friends not only provided resources of time and labour for students' studies but also fed their aspirations. Family and community also provided embodied support. Jill's (lives with a partner, two children 8 and 11) account illustrates these linkages, '*She [mother-in-law] helps me out a lot ... as she takes them [children] to school, this has helped me ... She understands why I am doing this and wants a good life for her grandchildren.... my biggest aim is for my family to see me graduate, not just the children but my mother-in-law as well. I think that graduation will make her think*, "w*ell, I helped her do something that was quite big".*'

The participants were aware that they were a role model for their families. Their strong identities as parents fuelled their motivation to be successful because their accomplishment had consequences that extended beyond themselves to their loved ones. Thus they depended upon family encouragement to support their aspirations through the challenges: '*If anyone at home were against me going to the uni and studying at home, even the kids, it would be impossible for me to do a degree. You need a lot of support, kind of permission and encouragement to say it is okay. You need them to show understanding about the demands of studying and having to juggle stuff.*'

Familial capital

In this sub-section, the focus is primarily on the support participants received from their local families of origin. Relationships with families of procreation are addressed under aspirational capital, although older children did sometimes contribute to chores, and families of origin nurtured aspirations through their support.

The proximity of the campus to their families of origin was a significant factor in participants' choice of university because it enabled ongoing support. Leoni (a single parent of an eight-year-old), who had been offered places at other universities far from home, thought that her family was happy that she had chosen a local university rather than moving away. Marilla (carer for mother, no children) spoke of her Mum's relief that she was not travelling far from home, even though she had been offered places at two London universities. In both cases, the students themselves felt a move would be too stressful for them. Their families supported their choice, in part because it allowed them to continue to support the student in the context of complex lives as we will see, for example, with Marilla later in this section.

Parents, siblings, partners and ex-partners provided material support through taking dogs for walks, shopping, and helping with the care of elderly relatives and children. '*My brother has helped out more with our parents… when [Mum] was sick and I had a lecture, I asked him to be with her*'. (Carla, one child aged 6). This assistance allowed the students to have study time at home and/or to attend university.

The 12 participants with children aged under ten particularly valued the childcare support they drew upon that enabled them to attend lectures, meet up with tutors or friends, or study at home while the children were with other parent, grandparents, aunts, uncles, wider family or friends. '*They will help…if I need them to with the kids while I got on with my studies. My mum, dad, sister, brother, will come together…and help, and that is lovely for them and the kids. They will often do a bit of housework or the garden, too!*' (Helena, lives with partner and two children aged 7 and 9). There was often a change in the division of labour in the household as partners or ex-partners took on a more significant share of childcare or housekeeping, '*Colin (partner) has helped on a practical level … he's changed to adapt to the changing needs of the household*'. (Helena) Sometimes these practical changes had transformative effects on relationships, '*When their Dad (my ex) started spending more time with them, they wanted to be with him more. We have become more of a team*' Janice (single parent, children aged 5 and 9)

Six of the students relied on members of their extended family networks (parents, siblings, partners, children, uncles, aunts, in-laws, grandparents, ex-partners or ex-in-laws) as a sounding board for thoughts and ideas, as well as for emotional support and encouragement. *'My Mum, who is housebound reads all the work that I do. She proofreads everything that I do. This has changed our relationship. Before coming to (the campus), I spent a lot of time doing her shopping and, well, just being more her carer than her daughter. She really encouraged me to do a degree, and we talk about what I have learnt. Before she married my Dad, she worked as a secretary. I didn't know she had such skills with spelling and grammar! Coming here has changed all our worlds and how we are with each other.'* Marilla (carer for housebound mother, no children)

Millie (living with a partner) found a source of motivation for and approval of her studies from her uncle, cousins, brother and parents. Having an opportunity to talk through her studies with other people, particularly assessment tasks, was important, especially when her difficulties and concerns were listened to and acknowledged. Millie said that before starting her degree, she did not realise her potential, which made her feel like a disappointment in her own and her parents' eyes.

'I can now see their pride in me. I sometimes feel that if I had not started a degree, I would not have got to know my family as I do now. They all wanted to know how I am doing. They come to see me, ask me how I am getting on [with my degree]. I can ring them, and they know how I think and need to talk about stuff. I can't just sit and think. I just need to chat about it. They are a good sounding board to discuss university assignments. They don't know anything about what I am talking about, but just talking it out with them helps me get my brain sorted out. Going to (university) has brought us closer together, and it's like we are all in it together, it's not just about me. They want me to succeed. It really motivates me'. (Millie, lives with partner and two children aged 7 and 9).

Through emotional support and acceptance, families endorsed students' studies, assuring them that studying a degree was important to the family, not just them. Although some students experienced stress in their family relationships due to the pressures of study, all the students appreciated their family, acknowledging the pressure they were under and encouraging them to continue. This emotional affirmation, concern, pride and encouragement enhanced students' self-belief and motivation. This shared family commitment to the student's success meant that the joy and sense of achievement in passing an assignment was shared. *'When I had my first grade back it was such a high I was so happy and family were so*

proud of me because I got good feedback. I was not just happy; I felt "hey now I am a proper student!"' (Millie, lives with partner and two children aged 7 and 9).

Aspirational Capital

In this section, we emphasise how students' aspirations were a strength that allowed them to persevere through difficulties. Aspirational capital is a form of resilience which allows both the individual and their children to 'dream of possibilities beyond their present circumstances, often without the objective means to attain those goals' (Yosso 2005: 78). All interviewees described how arriving at university had been the culmination of long-held desires and ambitions, which sometimes felt so out of reach that they had not shared their dreams. For example, Abigail (lives alone, no partner, and works part-time) said, '*just to get into this place was like a gate…it had been closed. I took some steps and applied through UCAS…This was difficult. I kept going back and looking at the form. I sent it at the last minute…*' For Abigail, going to HE was, '*a new beginning, a new life.*'

Nonetheless, we focus mainly on participants (16/20) who were parents because their aspirations typically extended to their children, strengthening their resilience. As Petra (single parent, one child aged 8) said, '*I want to be able to help my children financially and academically, and that is what drives me to succeed and ask for help at home. I want something better for my children, coming here has changed all our lives; it has changed everyone's life, even the neighbours*!" Katie (one child aged 4, single parent) explained that a family member studying a degree is '*an investment for all their futures'* … Her family felt that '*if she could get [on] a career ladder, then it's well worthwhile*'.

The students often acted as 'cultural change agents' within their households and the wider community, developing alternative perspectives on educational participation that built aspirational capital for the next generation. Katie (single parent to child aged 4) talked about how doing her university coursework alongside her daughter was having an impact on her daughter's aspirations and educational work ethic.

> '*I sit at one end of the kitchen table, and my daughter sits at the other end with her homework. I think homework-wise it has had an impact on her [daughter] … it is positive; they can see that actually, you have got to sit down and work. I talk to my daughter about what I have to do (for University) she says to me; "Mum, I would like to come with you and do that"'. I say to her, "I have opened the door to university for us. If you work hard and get your grades you (will) be able to study what you like to*."'

Being seen as an educational role model by family and friend was motivating and helped them stay committed to their studies. *'There have been…moments when I have thought, "I can't do this", but there have never been times when I have thought of not graduating…I wouldn't want my family to see me dropping out. I am an example to them'.* (Millie, living with a partner, no children). This awareness of role modelling was particularly keenly felt in relation to children. Edith (three children 5, 9 and 13 lives with partner) saw being at university as making her a '*good strong positive role model for my family….I want them to grow up confident…the best way to teach my children is by doing it myself*'. When the children showed pride in their parent's achievements, the students felt justified in studying for a degree. Edith confessed that her children's pride in her '*really hit me, as I've never experienced anything like that before'.*

Positioning their studies as having a positive outcome for the family motivated them when they were struggling: '*There have been more times than I can say when I have thought I just couldn't keep coming here anymore (to university) … he's [partner] the reason I am still keeping going, he'll probably never forgive me if I throw the towel in … We have all, as a family, invested so much in this. I have to complete.*' (Charlotte, living with a partner no children)

Time constraints and changed priorities also affected students' children in various other ways, which participants described as positive side effects of their study. Interviewees described how their children had developed more autonomy and less reliance on their parents. As Katie (one child aged 4, single parent) explained, '*They became more independent. They [children] all know that I am busy now and not available all of the time.*' Sibling relationships within their households also had improved, as children took responsibility for themselves and developed problem-solving skills to resolve sibling disputes (not just ask a parent to assist): '*Before starting here, it was always me that's sorted everything out, organise everyone.*' (Janice, single parent, two children aged 5 and 9).

Social Capital

The students reflected on a range of tangible and practical assistance including childcare, looking after pets, food shopping, house cleaning, or gardening, which they received from social networks beyond family members, particularly neighbours. These resources impacted positively on these students' educational experiences. For example, Edith (3 children 5, 9 and 13 lives with partner) described how during a school holiday she would say to her children:

> '"*I need to get a couple of hours done (for an essay) if you can play with next door for a while Mummy will take you out afterwards,*" *… my neighbour is*

great; the kids don't complain about it. They know I'm doing it for a reason. I take my neighbours' kids out to the park with mine when I have done, so everyone's a winner.'

Notably, students emphasised their pre-existing social networks, especially neighbours, as sources of support and assistance more often than fellow students. By studying locally, the continuity in relationships with family, friends and neighbours provided emotional support that mitigated the potential negative impact of their evolving habitus. While they described friendly collegiality with classmates and a general desire for all their classmates to succeed, those relationships typically did not extend beyond the course.

Nonetheless, the fact that fellow students were in similar situations mattered. For example, Edith described how friendship with other students on her course bolstered her learner identity. The interaction with her class-mates and mutual support through the more challenging moments helped boost her confidence and ability to envisage success. Although they experienced a sense of disjuncture in the alien environment of higher education, they did not report the same sense of being classed as 'other' as described in previous studies.

Navigational, Linguistic and Resistance Capitals

Yosso (2005) described six aspects of community cultural wealth. While the first three described above were highly applicable to this study's population, the remaining three (navigational, linguistic, and resistance) were not key themes in the interviews. We briefly discuss each here.

While navigational capital, the ability to navigate through HE and find ways to work around institutional barriers were mentioned by some participants, it was not a significant theme. The fact that many of their fellow students were also mature adults, and they were studying in a dedicated, small satellite campus designed to serve the needs of this population meant that this particular HE context was more accessible to navigate than a 'traditional' one. The students did recognise and appreciate the advantages of belonging to a smaller institution with smaller classes that facilitated more interaction with staff. For example, Keith (single parent, one child aged 10) said, '*You get the feeling that [tutors] know where you're from, they know the town, and they're interested in you.*'

Students in a larger, traditional campus environment may experience more significant barriers to navigation and thus might emphasise more how they learned to navigate unfamiliar territory. However, because these students had no experience of any other HE

institutions, it may be that the relative ease of navigating this small campus oriented toward the needs of non-traditional students was not apparent to them and, hence, not emphasised in their accounts.

As expected in a primarily monolingual sample, the interviews did not focus on linguistic capital. While there may be aspects of working-class communication that differ from the language expected in HE, linguistic assets did not emerge as a salient point in these students' experiences. Again, the fact that they remained in their home communities, with fellow students sharing a similar background and tutors sensitive to their context may have meant they felt less disjuncture between the linguistic styles of their communities and what they experienced in HE.

Yosso's conceptualisation of resistance as oppositional behaviours that challenge inequality was not explicitly evident in this study. Although participants showed some awareness of being oppressed by a 'middle class' university structure, they did not explicitly discuss resistance per se, unless one assumes that the act of doing a degree itself was a form of resistance. Given the culture of the satellite campus as a local-serving institution with a large percentage of working-class students, participants may not have experienced it as oppressively middle class. That is, if they experienced a supportive environment, resistance against inequality would not be provoked. Alternatively, although they are members of a disadvantaged social class, most still benefited from White privilege, which could also explain why resistance was not a key feature of their narratives.

Discussion

For these students who stayed at home to study, their family was a valuable source of capital, providing them with support and opportunities to achieve university success and related advantages. The concept of family capital 'capture(s) all aspects of investment made by the family' for the benefit of the student and the family as a whole (Gofen 2009:107). It describes the contribution of time or skills given by other family members to acquire future benefits. These benefits may include a better career trajectory for the student or better opportunities for their children.

Our research found both family support and changes in gender roles. Families with abundant resources of familial capital were in a strong position to accommodate and adjust to one of their members studying for a degree. Past research emphasised role conflict and families who did not support mature students, particularly women. Men's and women's roles in the home, in terms of childcare and household tasks, are often unequal, thus contributing to the heavy workload for women students (Plageman and Sabina 2010). Edwards' study (1993)

found that children adapted more quickly than the husband when a woman took up HE study. Since then, society has changed; our study shows how mature students entering HE, particularly parents and lone parents, were drawing support from their families.

Students saw themselves as making a rational choice to develop knowledge and skills to enhance their wellbeing as well as that of their families. These choices involved individuals 'nurturing a culture of possibility' (Yosso 1995:78) despite difficulties and obstacles. While previous studies (Wainwright and Marandet 2010) concluded that adopting a student identity is challenging and can be more so for learners who are parents, our participants adopted identities in which parent and student were mutually supportive, rather than conflicting. Students in this setting, where they remained embedded in their home communities and studied alongside other mature students, were motivated to provide a better life for their children. Being successful in higher education was the key to doing so. The positive effect on the student's family extended outwards and upwards, not just to the next generation.

By studying at university, they were building up middle-class cultural capital related to HE, which can have a positive effect on their family's educational aspirations (Davies, Qiu and Davies, 2014). To the extent that families recognised this contribution, students had solidarity through a shared goal (Putnam 2002). Developing positive educational outcomes for children and adapting to their mother (typically, in this case) studying corroborates earlier studies (Merrill 1999).

Theoretical significance

This study makes a significant contribution by extending the work of Yosso (2005) to mature (mostly) White students at a widening participation campus in England. By showing how Yosso's (2005) model is relevant to English students from working-class backgrounds in this campus context, the study moves beyond the deficit discourse common to discussions of mature and working-class students and instead frames students facing these intersectional challenges within a strengths perspective. In particular, it shows how students make use of their family, aspirational and social capital to facilitate their transition and engagement during their first years at university. Thus this study challenges stereotypes of working-class students documented elsewhere (Jones 2011; Reay 2001; Li 2015).

While we do not claim that all students in all communities will experience the kind of familial support reported by our participants, the findings make a valuable contribution because they show that the commonly-held understanding of working-class culture as anti-educational is not always true. Just as critical race theory (Yosso 2005) gives voice to people

of colour, enabling them to represent their strengths, so this study gives voice to these disadvantaged students' stories of cultural wealth, aspiration, and resilience. While Yosso's (2005) model widened the original range of theoretical categories of capital, further study with other traditionally under-served populations might generate additional conceptual categories.

Given that mature working-class students are usually at higher risk of attrition, often encountering additional barriers and complexities in their HE journey it is essential to consider the community wealth mature students may have and the various ways in which those assets can be leveraged to promote success (Oldfield, 2012). Presently much of what these students bring to HE is unrecognised and/or underused by the sector.

Bejarano and Valverde (2012) argued that universities often set about 'manufacturing sameness' in the first year of university, principally focusing on removing students from familial and social contexts in an attempt to acculturate them into the university. These participants studied at a satellite campus where their families of origin resided. As such, we do not capture the experiences of students who commute long distances to attend university or who relocate. It may be that only when students commute or relocate do the characteristics of learners over the age of 25 become significant detriments to student success. Thus students' experiences need to be seen as an interaction between their circumstances and the study context.

Implications for Policy and Practice

First, this study suggests the importance to student success of satellite campuses that bring university study to HE cold spots (HEFCE 2006). These satellite campuses allow students to stay within supportive family and community networks, rather than leaving their support networks or undertaking long commutes that add further life load to already stretched lives. The recent or threatened closure of many of these satellite campuses is likely to have a particularly negative effect on mature students. Thus this study has important implications for university and national policy.

Second, it has implications for reframing widening participation practices and activities to focus on the 'cultural wealth' (Yosso 2005) of students, rather than focusing on their deficits. For example, universities might include events during induction in which mature students discuss these aspects of their strengths and exchange ideas about how they might make best uses of these assets, perhaps through case discussions drawn from scenarios such as those described by students in this study. Academic advisors and student support staff could also be trained to increase their awareness of these aspects of students' experiences.

Finally, peer mentoring schemes might focus on matching new mature students with experienced mature students, as they may be better placed to advise on the particular challenges and opportunities afforded by their socio-cultural positioning.

Conclusion

This study found, through the use of Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework, that mature, working-class student participants had various interconnected forms of 'cultural wealth' including familial, aspirational and social capital that supported them in a satellite campus environment. Thus, findings from this study challenge traditional interpretations of cultural capital in terms of cultural poverty. They also show how familial and aspirational capital are tightly connected and can work to support students' persistence in higher education, given the right HE environment. The findings are relevant to HE policy on widening participation.

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