

Trinity College

Trinity College Digital Repository

Senior Theses and Projects

Student Scholarship

Spring 2022

Left at the Door of Trinity- Community Based Organizations and Their Role in College Success at Trinity

Karolina Barrientos

karolina.barrientos@trincoll.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses>



Part of the [Educational Sociology Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Barrientos, Karolina, "Left at the Door of Trinity- Community Based Organizations and Their Role in College Success at Trinity". Senior Theses, Trinity College, Hartford, CT 2022.

Trinity College Digital Repository, <https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses/974>

“Left at the Door of Trinity”

Community Based Organizations and Their Role in College Success at Trinity

Karolina Barrientos

Educ 400

Professor Douglas

Introduction:

Community-based organizations, (CBOs) have given a specific subset of students opportunities for higher education. These organizations tasked themselves with providing students from historically marginalized backgrounds, typically students of color from lower social-economic statuses, the resources to access top-tier colleges and universities. On college campuses across the nation, there are a plethora of organizations, that self-identify as CBOs, that build relationships and eventually partnerships to establish a steady flow of students affiliated with those. (Eckel and King). This transactional trend can be identified in institutions like Trinity, a private liberal arts college that inherently upholds white supremacy and capitalism. In organizations streamlining students into these institutions, it eventually became clear that access to these organizations is not enough to ensure their success and clear implementation of college success was necessary.

In writing on a topic that is quite close to home it is important to position me in my research. I came to this topic after much self-reflection in many of the sociology classes that essentially allowed me to make sense of my own experiences navigating the college application process and eventually my four years at Trinity College. I am a first-generation, low-income Latina from an urban environment. I am a product of public schools who managed to find herself at a private, predominantly white higher education institution, with the assistance of a CBO. My areas of study in sociology and educational studies as give me the ability to think critically of my own experiences and make sense of my identity and its relationship with the educational field. My affiliation with one of the organizations researched in this paper is important to note as I have often referred to them as the reason I got to Trinity. I however have always been critical of their structure and interested in learning more about how higher education institutions work. I

believe that my knowledge and experience have allowed me to enhance my analysis of my data while also critiquing what literature exists on these organizations. Coming to Trinity and being introduced to sociology as a way of thinking and being I was able to make connections between what I was learning and seeing in mine and others' interactions with CBOs.

Those experiences often being described as “left at the door” led me to my research question: “How at Trinity College, are marginalized students in CBOs, centered on college access/success, supported by these organizations once they are enrolled in college/universities? What resources are provided by these programs do students use and why? Are there any ideological underpinnings of those resources?” In implementing a qualitative approach focused on the experiences of scholars and a document analysis for the context of the organizations; I was able to uncover that there are college success resources however those resources are sparsely used and support the understanding of neoliberalism as success.

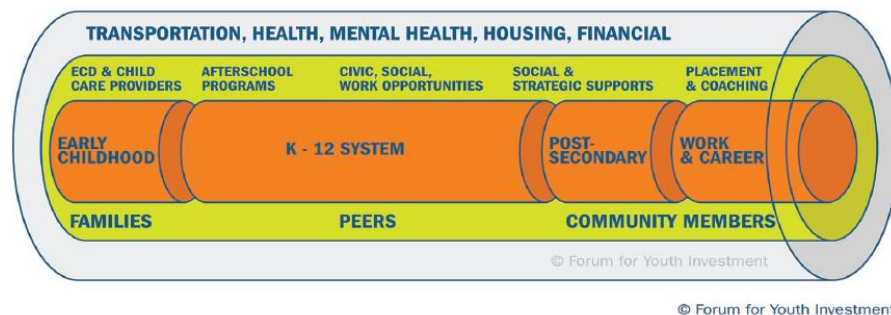
Literature Review

In looking into past research related to my topic, I began my search by using the following key terms: college success, college access, and community-based organizations as well as neoliberalism and high education. From scavenging through those results and continuing into the data collection method of my project it became clear that in doing this work I would have to clearly define specific terms and concepts. In the following literature review, I will dive into concepts such as community-based organizations (CBOs), neoliberalism, and success. I will also connect their role in the success of students affiliated with CBOs who are enrolled in higher education institutions.

College Access in Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

College access and college successes are concepts and strategies which CBOs use to complete their missions. College access focused on bridging the gap between high schools and higher education institutions while college success has the goal of students graduating from a post-secondary institution. (Hill, Bregman and Andrade 2015). Community-based organizations are “public or private, nonprofit organizations engaged in addressing the social and economic needs of individuals and groups in a defined geographic area, usually no larger than a county.” (Coles 2012). To visualize the supports and networks that CBOs provide in bridging students to opportunities consider the following image of an insulated education pipeline. In this model, you can see the multiple layers of “insulation” that socialize and impact an individual’s education path. The role of CBOs is to work in the second layer of insulation and support students throughout their education and possible career paths.

The Ready by 21 Insulated Education Pipeline



¹Yohalem, Nicole, Nalini Ravindranath, Karen Pittman, and Danielle Evennou. 2010. Insulating the Education Pipeline to Increase Postsecondary Success, Ready by 21 Credentialed by 26 Issue Brief Series. Washington, DC: Forum for Youth Investment.

Figure 1 The Ready by 21 Insulated Education Pipeline by Forum for Youth Investment

Having a clear understanding of what community-based organizations are is imperative in reviewing the literature. I specifically wanted to focus my research on CBOs and their role in the experiences of marginalized students. An important piece is, “I want to Advocate for Our Kids”: How Community-Based Organizations Broker College Enrollment for Underrepresented Students,” by Irma Ramirez (2021). This article is essentially looking at the college access supports offered to high school students in CBOs, particularly looking at it in the context of social capital. Building social capital has become an important strategy for CBOs to reach their goals, (Hill, Bregman, and Andrade 2015). Her qualitative study gave me a clear example of research on this topic can be successfully completed. What she finds confirms all my preconceived notions of community-based organizations. She organizes her findings into themes that she describes as, “cultivating authentic and safe relationships, lessons from students, and becoming advocates.” She concludes that community-based organizations act as a bridge for students, not only between high schools but between higher educational institutions, and assist in developing the social capital needed to access colleges/universities. Her research focused on the role of CBOs in enrolling students while I want to essentially build upon that and look at how CBOs play a role in colleges' success after enrollment, thus filling some gaps in the literature.

The Gap in Research on College Success

A clear gap in the previous literature has been on college success, one of the few articles that covered this topic was, “The Role of Community-Based Organizations in the College Access and Success Movement,” by Ann Coles (2012). Although the coverage of college success is limited in this article, they offer a list of seven implications that consist of college access initiatives such as an “emphasize [of] academic support and mentoring provided by a caring adult for every student. If your program does not provide this support, refer students to

organizations in your community.” This article gives a clear definition of community-based organizations and their role in college access and success for students from underserved backgrounds. It took an interesting turn in specifically discussing one organization, College Bound St. Louis, in the form of an interview with Lisa Zarin, the founder and executive director of College Bound. This article like that of others lists features of effective CBOs and goes in-depth in how existing programs should be shifted for the success of their students while also acknowledging it is attempting to fill the gap of research on CBOs.

In doing my research for my project I came across an article that put CBOs to the test; “Effects of a College Access Program For Youth Underrepresented in Higher Education: A Randomized Experiment” by David Bergin, Helen Cooks, and Christi Bergin. In this research study, the authors describe EXCEL, a college access program that provides a scholarship from a sponsored university. The researchers were able to conduct an experiment that would be able to accurately share whether EXCEL students would have higher success rates than control group students. They essentially found that they were not able to prove a clear correlation between EXCEL and enrollment into high educational institutions because of limitations in their data. However, what was interesting was that they were able to identify that EXCEL benefited the hosting university the most in attracting students of color to the institution (Bergin, Cooks, and Bergin 2007). Although my research is focused on college success, it is important for me to gain as much context as possible on organizations that focused on college access, as getting to college is the first step to succeed in college. The research was limited but again shows the need for research on organizations and programs that have goals of not only college access and enrollment but as well as the distant goal of their students to succeed in higher education.

Understanding the Concept of Success

In an attempt to gain more context and understanding of college success, I took my research into a more conceptual field of education and looked at how success is defined in academia. As I am looking to see any underlying logic or ideologies it's important to review the literature on success. When the term success has been used in academic research across the fields of study, there seems to be a lack of defining what success is and how researchers are understanding that term. In grasping how to combat this gap in research I came to two different articles that allowed me to come to my understanding of success and specifically success in higher education. "*Success for All? A Call to Re-examine How Student Success is Defined In Higher Education,*" by Maryrose Weatherton and Elisabeth Schussler, works to uncover how researchers, specifically in Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) fields, lack to define success in their work and how that negatively impacts the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in STEM departments in higher education (Weatherton and Schussler 2021). They essentially argue that researchers that define success without the consideration of students are reproducing social hierarchies that oppress marginalized students. In offering alternatives to feeding into the heteronormativity; they call for the redefining of success on the terms of students when talking about students' success in research. (Weatherton and Schussler 2021). They take it a step further and recommend that all in academia reflect on their own definitions of success and how those biases impact their research. In acknowledging their biases and clarifying the definitions of success will researchers truly be able to contribute meaningful work to academia.

Neoliberalism and Education

Neoliberalism is a concept that seems to scare academics and make them uncomfortable, especially in the educational studies field. To conduct the research I find meaningful, I must be critical of the institutions that have shaped me, Trinity being one of them. This led me to use neoliberalism as a theoretical framework for my research. I will be using the following quotations to define and give context to the concept, logic, and understanding of neoliberalism:

“Under neoliberalism, both government and society have taken up, as their primary concern, their relationship with the economy.” (Davies and Bansel 2007)

“For neoliberals, there is one form of rationality that is more powerful than any other, and that is economic rationality. Efficiency and an "ethic" of cost-benefit analysis are the dominant norms. All people are to act in ways that maximize their benefits.” (Apple 1999).

These two quotes get at neoliberalism as a way of thinking and a way of being. Davis and Bansel’s work, *Neoliberalism and Education*, identify the economy as the main concern in neoliberal logic and shares how it has become intrusive in the governing of society and the everyday lives of individuals. In both pieces highlighted, the authors dive into the relationship between neoliberalism and education. They essentially highlight how education as an institution is reproducing individualistic and capitalistic thinking centered on personal gain. In Apple’s piece, *Freire, Neoliberalism, and Education*, he continues the work of Paulo Freire and examines the connections between a private economy and the social good intentions of education, (Apple 1999). Neoliberalism is embedded into society that it has become our norm. These articles provided me with a framework and definitions to be used in analyzing my data and in answering my research questions.

Neoliberalism is Higher Education and Success

In connecting all of these concepts, neoliberal logic has embedded itself into higher education and how the success of students is determined. Interestingly, Weatheron and Schussler argue and recommend counter-hegemonic practices as ways to fight dominant cultural norms in higher education; however not once identify neoliberalism in their study (Weatheron and Schussler 2021). This is very interesting since throughout their argument they establish different ways high education socializes their students into the status-quo but doesn't define what that status-quo is. The status-quo is neoliberalism as the logics of success. This conclusion is clearly laid out in Wright-Mair and Museus's qualitative study titled, "*Playing the Game Just Enough: How Racially Minoritized Faculty Who Advance Equity Conceptualize Success in the Neoliberal Academy*, (2021). In this piece, the authors clearly define neoliberalism and acknowledge the complexities of the definition of success in relation to higher education. They found the following themes in their data, "the importance of meeting institutionalized neoliberal metrics of merit requirements established by their institutions, underscoring the salience of having a positive impact through their work, and the importance of cultivating agency to claim a voice," (Wright-Mair and Museu 2021). These themes explain and describe how embedded neoliberalism is in higher education and in what they deem successful.

In gaining the appropriate understanding of key concepts and literature we can then analyze relationships between community-based organizations, the support the provision, and the experiences of students in these organizations.

Run Down of CBOs

In moving through my research, it is imperative to introduce and give a rundown of the five organizations described and analyzed in this study. All 5 organizations identify high-achieving

students, typically from historically marginalized backgrounds, and prepare them for applications to and for life after college/university. Each CBO has its differences but has the same intention of getting its scholars to and through higher education. The descriptions and contexts of Trinity are as follows:

Posse: A Merit-Based Scholarship Program, founded in 1989, that identifies leaders in major cities (20+) and brings 10 students to partnering colleges or universities (64) on a full-tuition scholarship. Posse prepares students through their Dynamic Assessment Process (application process), Pre-Collegiate Training, The Campus Program, and the Career Program. On Trinity's campus, we currently have two Posses Chicago and New York. The Posse New York Class of 2022 is the last Posse at Trinity and Posse Chicago has scholars in all class years.

EMERGE: A college readiness/access and success program in Houston and surrounding areas. They have been assisting students since 2010 and currently have over 1,300 students across 150 colleges and universities across the country. There is no scholarship attached but prepares and connects students to opportunities. They describe their strategies as, a district partner partnership model, student profile elevation, selective college exposure, and college persistence and partnerships.

Chicago Scholars: A college readiness and access program based in the city of Chicago. Their goal is to have students apply to colleges in their junior year in preparation for "Onsite," an event centered on offering scholars acceptances and college interviews on-site. They identify their strategies as, "College Access- Launch and College to Careers- Lead", with a college success phase embedded.

Simon Scholars: A scholarship program that is based in California and at one point had satellite programs in Atlanta and in DC, founded in 2002. Centered on assisting high-achieving students facing adversity in gaining access to college and success. A scholarship of \$16,000 and ongoing

financial assistance are their priority while also providing personalized support until they graduate college.

Access Youth Academy: A college access/ readiness program, founded in 2006, that centers on urban squash and academic mentorship as their strategies for college access. The program is a 12-year commitment that develops into personalized support in college.

Methodology

I will be using a qualitative approach to research the support systems of college students from Community Based Organizations. A qualitative approach is centered on collecting detailed data through observations, interviews, or even focus groups. Through this approach, I aim to collect data on the support CBOs provided students throughout high school to provide context to their experiences with the CBOs in college by using semi-structured interviews.

The sample for this study is a non-probability quota sample. In a non-probability sample, researchers define a subgroup with specific characteristics that match the needs of their study. In searching for participants, I began by creating a flyer with the following language, “did you learn about Trinity through a non-profit organization” and “if so, I invite you to participate in an interview about community-based organizations and how they have supported college success.” With the following flyer being shared with those in my network (i.e. professors and student organizations); I had 22 interested participants. However, because of limited funding and time, I created a survey to collect demographic data that would allow me to narrow down participants while attempting to maintain a balance between race, gender, and the type of organization. This ended in having a sample size of 10 participants. I used an online calendar scheduler to have no more 30min conversations with all participants.

The interviews were semi-structured to allow interviewers the freedom to lead the conversation in a comfortable manner they deem best. To give some guidance to the interviews, an interview guide was created with the following sections. These sections gave me, the interviewer, the ability to give my interview some structure and a sort of checklist of topics that need to be asked. All of the fourteen questions asked were designed to be open-ended to give control of the conversation to the interviewee. For example, under the *CBO Support in Relation to Career/Post Grad Plans*, as the question “Describe your current plans for postgrad/ career,” with the following up questions, “How does CBO support you in those plans?” and, “How could CBO support you in your postgrad/ career plans?”

An additional approach I will take is a document analysis of the websites and other online resources of the organizations. In collecting data from the website; I gathered information from as many tabs as possible. The majority of key information came from tabs and sections that described the mission of the organization, as well as their strategies for supporting their scholars during their college careers.

In regard to the analysis of my data, I will use a three-step process of analysis with the assistance of Atlas.ti. I plan on reading over my transcripts, once for proofreading and creating summaries of each interview. I will then review all transcripts once more with the intention of creating codes and finding themes in the data. The third time I will finalize codes and begin making conclusions based on my findings. When it comes to my document analysis of the CBOs; I used the codes and themes that arose in my interviews to focus my research. By analyzing the digital sources of the organizations, I was able to piece together what organizations claim they are doing. By using the methodological approach outlined above I was able to answer my questions on the support systems provided by CBOs during college.

Limitations

A clear limitation of my research is the small sample size of my participants. Because I wanted to look at the experiences of students from various community-based organizations, and having to work with limited funding, I only was able to interview a small number of people, and even a smaller number of people from each organization. In order to get a full picture of the experiences of students from CBOs at Trinity, an even number of students from each organization based on gender identity, class year, the field of study, and ethnic self-identification is needed. It is also important to note that Posse has been on Trinity's campus much longer than other organizations and has the focus of bringing 10 students every year, so with that, there is inherently a larger population of students from Posse on campus that are interested in participating in a research study, in the case of this project, 12. In contrast, other organizations such as Access Youth and Simon Scholars only had one person self-identify as being apart from their organization. Another limitation that would arise as I worked through my project was in my document analysis.

The focus of my project was to gain an understanding of the experiences of students within the notion of neoliberalism, so I focused heavily on collecting interviews and utilizing my document analysis as context to experiences. This however later resulted in limited data made available online, my data could've been richer if I, for example, interviewed staff from the organization or requested annual reports, or uncovered the roots of their funding. If this study was to be repeated, I would be sure to implement this element.

The last limitation I will outline is that of my analysis. My analysis could be stronger throughout my findings with more time and a possibly clear plan of action at the beginning of my study. I do will say that writing this thesis really encompassed my years at Trinity and having to come to terms with that ending, navigating global atrocities and family concerns, resulted in shifts of priorities multiple times throughout the semester and the limitation of my analysis.

Findings

College Success Resources Provided

In analyzing the data collected from the virtual resources of organizations I was able to gain a stronger understanding of each organization's strategies for college success. Organizations either described in detail their strategies for college success or glossed over them with graphics and statistics. Posse, for example, has identified its college success program as "The Campus Program" and dives into the elements of the program. Access Youth Academy on the other hand does not make clear what its college success program is like. They describe their support when they state "Access Youth Academy supports students while attending college," on their missions tab on their website.

Type of Resources	Posse	Chicago Scholars	EMERGE	Simon Scholars	Access Youth Academy
Career/ Post Grad Support	Internships Career Development Grad/fellowship programs Posse Portal	Internships Career Development	EMERGE Connect (connects to career help) Networking	Career Development	Networking
Material Support		Semesterly Emergency Grant	Student Emergency Fund Winter Clothes Fund	Grant application	
Individualized Support	Faculty mentor Posse Liaison Posse siblings	Personalized guidance	Managers of College Success- one-on-one support EMERGE Squads	Connections to on-campus support Personalized Guidance	Personalized Guidance Social connections

Figure 2 College Success Resources*

* Highlight indicated identification by student or most identified (in the case of CBOs with more than one student)

The following table describes the college success resources provided by organizations. The rows of the table list the type of resources, those being: Career//Postgraduate, Material Support, and Individualized Support. Career/Post-Grad consists of things such as internship assistance, career development assistance (resume/cover letter help), and virtual networking platforms. Posse and EMERGE were the only CBOs that provided virtual platforms, the Posse Portal and EMERGE Connect. It was actually one of the only resources that every scholar from Posse and EMERGE identified. Material support, I define as anything that can produce physical support. For example, emergency funds and grants can provide money or winter clothes, both a material items.

In looking at the table we can see that highlighted supports indicate their identification by research participants. In looking at the table we can conclude that there are resources that are not identified and can assume that they are sparsely used. There is a disconnect between resources that are known and what are used.

Values in Relationships Built that Go Beyond CBOs

A strong finding that came from my qualitative data was the value in the relationships built with CBOs staff or other scholars at Trinity. These connections were built through the organization both unofficially and officially and are maintained on similar statuses during the college access phase of CBOs as well as in college success phases. For instance, with EMERGE, after the matriculation of the Class of 2022, there was the implementation of EMERGE Squad Leaders, which are essentially peer mentors who were tasked with helping first year's transition to college. This is an official relationship established by a CBO while mentorships built-in Access Youth Academy is unofficial and dependent on the scholar themselves (Susana 2022). The two examples outlined above are examples of relationships built during a student's college career. Posse is unique in that they have strong relationships with institutions and provide liaisons and mentors that are affiliated with colleges and universities. Such relationships are described by Philp, "(Posse Liaison), especially because like he's like an (administrative director). So, like he has a big say on like things that go on with people ... [if it was] having a problem with like student accounts or something or financial aid is just being really tough, as always, to get a hold of that. You know you can get an email from (Posse Liaison) you know, they're serious." In this quote, Philp describes how their Posse liaison is an advocate for them and a strong support system. It is also important to note that Philp described a relationship that benefited his personal gain in communicating with offices. Arguably a neoliberal logic.

Relationships built during the college access phase of many organizations carried into the college years of students. Program managers, trainers, and others in student-facing roles often built relationships beyond the parameters of CBOs. For example, Cheyanne, a student with Chicago Scholars stated, "I still talk to a good amount...of staff there [Chicago Scholars]. Even

the staff that have left so far because it's a nonprofit, you know, they don't pay much," (Cheyanne 2022). In this quote, we can see how Cheyanne remained in contact with staff members from Chicago Scholars past their college success programs. Cheyanne also brings up a neoliberal logic that is ingrained in CBOs; the constant turnover of those employed in CBOs. In the quote, it is identified that staff is underpaid thus resulting in staff leaving and moving on to something that would better benefit themselves and their own success.

Left at the Door

"Left at the Door" is what I chose to label the common experience of students who have weak relationships with their CBOs and describe their relationship to be distant and dependent on what was taught to them before Trinity. For instance, Jane describes their current relationship with Simon Scholars:

Once I got to college it was more hands off, it wasn't like mandatory like it was when we were in high school...they're just pretty much checking to see if we were OK. And then every semester they would send a gift box... just little tokens and like letters saying that they were proud of us, things like that. But they were a lot more hands off once I got to college. So mostly the transition prep side of it and knowing what to expect in college came when I was in high school."

In this quote Jane uses the phrase "hands off" often to describe the role of Simon Scholars in their college career. Simon Scholars did most of the "hands on" approach in the high school side of the programming and left their scholars to navigate Trinity with what they were taught before the fall semester of their first year. It is also important to note that Simon Scholars once had satellite programs in Atlanta and Jane was from their last cohort. When talking about this in our interview, Jane describes her support being distanced tremendously.

Similarly, in the case of Gabriela from Chicago Scholars, she describes expecting to be welcomed by representatives of Chicago Scholars but was surprised to have experienced the exact opposite. Here is what Gabriela shared, “They [Chicago Scholars) teach you how to go to college and be proactive... it's not about building a relationship with you like they might say that, but it's not like you have a cohort, but it's like after you graduate. That's it... I expected to have the liaison or Chicago scholars' event so we can meet each other. But no.” In this quote, she describes being left to navigate trinity with what she was taught and limited connection to the organization. In using the skills taught by the CBOs Gabriella and Jane were able to transition to college but with little to no actual help from the CBOs throughout their first year. This leads to a disconnect between students and their organizations and the fostering of a mentality that is individualistic and dependent on personal gain. Resulting in that to be their perception of success. Essentially being “Left at the Door” socializes students into a neoliberal mentality and prepares them to navigate Trinity with limited support.

Findings: Far from Trinity

Community-Based Organizations are all over the country and serve to get students into colleges and universities. With that in mind, a theme arose of the physical distance between scholars and CBOs. All of the CBOs described and researched in this study cater to students outside of the East Coast. Specifically coming from the major cities of Houston, Texas, Chicago, Illinois, San Diego, California, and Atlanta, Georgia; meaning that Trinity College, located in Hartford Connecticut, is nowhere near their home state. Students from CBOs on the East Coast have different experiences in that their homes are most likely within a two-hour car ride. The physical distances between CBOs and their scholars correlate with the relationships they have and the support systems that students find relevant and ultimately use. Susanna from Access

Youth Academy describes their relationship as distant and dependent on whether she is home or not. In the following quote:

“I don't have that much communication with my organization right at the current moment unless I am in San Diego, unless I'm in the city. ..One of my main support systems at the school is the organization. So I think they rely a lot on their alumni and mentors that are close to one that like we're close to one another to be able to support us.”

Here we can see how Susanna identifies their main support system that is affiliated with Access Youth she uses because it is in close proximity to her.

Estrella from EMERGE has similar sentiments when they state, “I feel like I'm closer to emerge on campus because we're all here.” The “we” they are referring to are the other EMERGE students that have formed a community facilitated by a squad leader. Having college success resources or supports on campus has been integral to the experiences of students from CBOs. The disconnect comes from the physical distance of organizations and sometimes the career support they provide.

CBOs provide supports that are in within their networks so if something is outside of that network it becomes more difficult for that opportunity to be applicable to all students. This specifically rings true when it comes to the supports, they can provide for scholars that are not in their hometowns or in career/ academic fields that CBOs focus on. For example, Jane shared they are interested in attending a physician assistant school but did not utilize resources from Simon Scholars because they know they have weak connections in the medical field. They said, “it would be easier” if I did it myself,” acknowledging how Simon Scholars was not benefiting their personal goals. This indicates socialization into neoliberalism, specifically individualistic logics.

Neoliberal Undertones

The invasiveness of neoliberalism does not exclude CBOs. Higher education is an inherently white supremacist and has shifted towards neoliberalism; CBOs that are attempting to get students into those schools are working within neoliberal -logics to make that happen. This becomes clear when students like Leilany avoid career resources because they are “corporate and politician, that’s not me.” They continue to describe the career paths offered by Posse; they share “I don’t want to, like, be in a career path that posse’s offering. But I want to do like things that are community-based work... it’s not going to be as big a corporate as what Posse providing.” In this quote, Leilany makes it clear that Posse does not support the career field of her interest and has learned to stray away from their support. The supports provided by Posse are neoliberal and support individualistic and an economic driven mentality.

CBOs do not only feed into neoliberalism through the career resources provided but as well as in the workshops geared towards assimilation into the middle and upper class. Simon Scholars and EMERGE and possibly the others have been known to provide etiquette lessons to teach their students how to properly dine with those that fund their programs. Jane expands on this experience when she says, “we have like etiquette dinners and things like that. They like, have a golf session where we like learned how to golf... so everyone was like, I want it. But out of 500 of us, there were only. I want to say 10 seats available.” Simon scholars are creating students that would be to socialize and eventually assimilate into the upper class and because there are so limited sports available, they are fostering a culture of competition and personal goal. One would say, I would say a neo-liberal culture.

Another clear connection to neoliberalism is the perception of success as academic gain. Organizations foster this mentality when students are afraid to fail for fear of losing their

scholarship as described by Philp; “my mentality with Posse is like, Don't fail because Posse will take your scholarship away.” Here we can see that he has developed a definition of success that is centered on producing results that can't result in failure. Throughout my analysis described in this section, we can see how neoliberalism doesn't always manifest itself as clear economic gain but has worked its way into the way scholars think and define success for themselves.

Conclusion

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are in fact organizations that have provided resources for their students and have given them access to high education. Their involvement in college success is an area of needed improvement both in evaluating their support and in providing support for differing ideologies and alternative views of success. This leads me to my conclusion that CBOs with students at Trinity do provide resources for their students in the name of College Success. However, those resources are sparsely used and support the understanding of neoliberalism as a success, thus attempting to socialize students into that ideology. CBOs work with high achieving students that in most cases are given the resources that allow them to develop into critical thinkers and determine their own path and if they are willing to “drink the kool-aid” that are neo-liberal institutions. What I often saw amongst my participants, was the beginning of uncovering the neoliberal agenda that did not align with what they defined as their success and resulted in moving away from the organization.

When looking at all the roles that CBOs take in giving historically marginalized students access to higher education, they are really giving them access to the upper class and socializing them into a neoliberal society. A society that works to further oppress and marginalized those

deemed as others. In our modern society where white supremacy and neoliberal are prevalent and are sadly thriving, we must provide young people the ability to build autonomy and critically think, and ultimately “succeed.” If CBOs want to be a part of that, they must be willing to alter their ideological approach to assisting historically marginalized communities by fostering communities amongst their scholars, universities, and themselves. In doing this research I have been able to appreciate as well as critique the role that my CBO played in my personal college success while also acknowledging the work they are attempting to do.

Next Steps

If I was given the opportunity to continue working on this research with the proper funding, I would redo my entire project with the sample outlined in my limitations. I would also use a longitudinal structure, with interviews 3-years apart starting during the students' second year of college. In the collection and analysis of that data, I would plan on covering supports used, the students' academics, their post-graduation path, and their social lives during and after graduation. I would also implement a stronger document analysis of organizations and maybe even surveys that collect data from those employed at CBOs.

Recommendations

Conducting this research would be meaningless if I did not incorporate ways, I hope these organizations could be improved and benefit their students and maybe, hopefully, work towards abolishing capitalism and a society that oppresses marginalized people. My recommendations are as followed:

- 1) An evaluation of all the CBOs on campus, with the intention to understand the support systems they provide their students and their connections to neoliberalism
- 2) CBOs adapting alternative understandings of success that work outside of neoliberalism
 - a. Allow students to build their own definitions of success
 - b. Provide opportunities
- 3) Authentic relationships between scholars and CBOs consisting of:
 - a. Constant communication and follow-up meetings, both online and in-person
 - b. Events in areas of interest of scholars and in their time zones
 - c. Clear communication of resources
- 4) Equitable and just funding of scholar-facing positions to fight constant turnover and burnout
- 5) The strengthening of relationships between Trinity and CBOs
 - a. Evaluation of relationships with CBOs
 - b. Clear Mentorships or Main Point of Contacts from CBO on campus
 - c. Events centered on community building

Works Cited

- Apple, Michael W. 1999. "Chapter 10: Freire, Neoliberalism, and Education." *Counterpoints* 109:197–220.
- Bergin, David A., Helen C. Cooks, and Christi C. Bergin. 2007. "Effects of a College Access Program for Youth Underrepresented in Higher Education: A Randomized Experiment." *Research in Higher Education* 48(6):727–50. doi: 10.1007/s11162-006-9049-9.
- Coles, Ann. 2012. The Role of Community-Based Organizations in the College Access and Success Movement. Research to Practice Brief. Pathways to College Network.
- Davies, Bronwyn, and Peter Bansel. 2007. "Neoliberalism and Education." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 20:247–59. doi: [10.1080/09518390701281751](https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390701281751).
- Eckel, Peter D., and Jacqueline E. King. n.d. "An Overview of Higher Education in the United States: Diversity, Access, and the Role of the Marketplace." 25.
- Hill, Lori Diane, Allyson Bregman, and Fernando Andrade. 2015. "Social Capital for College: Network Composition and Access to Selective Institutions Among Urban High School Students." *Urban Education* 50(3):316–45. doi: [10.1177/0042085913514590](https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085913514590).
- Miller, Peter M. 2012. "Community-Based Education and Social Capital in an Urban After-School Program." *Education and Urban Society* 44(1):35–60. doi: 10.1177/0013124510380910.
- Ramirez, Irma Y. 2021. "'I Want to Advocate for Our Kids': How Community-Based Organizations Broker College Enrollment for Underrepresented Students." *Education and Urban Society* 53(9):1064–83. doi: 10.1177/00131245211004565.
- Wright-Mair, Raquel, and Samuel D. Museus. 2021. "Playing the Game Just Enough: How Racially Minoritized Faculty Who Advance Equity Conceptualize Success in the Neoliberal Academy." *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. doi: [10.1037/dhe0000304](https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000304).
- Weatherton, Maryrose, and Elisabeth E. Schussler. 2021. "Success for All? A Call to Re-Examine How Student Success Is Defined in Higher Education" edited by K. Tanner., *CBE—Life Sciences Education* 20(1):es3. doi: [10.1187/cbe.20-09-0223](https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.20-09-0223).
- Yohalem, Nicole, Nalini Ravindranath, Karen Pittman, and Danielle Evennou. 2010. Insulating the Education Pipeline to Increase Postsecondary Success, Ready by 21 Credentialed by 26 Issue Brief Series. Washington, DC: Forum for Youth Investment.