Addressing the Lack of Racial Diversity at a Graduate School of International Affairs:

Perceived Barriers and Motivators to Enrollment Among Students of Color

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of Pittsburgh

2020

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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It was defended on

June 25, 2020

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Studies

Addressing the Lack of Racial Diversity at a Graduate School of International

Affairs: Perceived Barriers and Motivators to Enrollment Among Students of Color

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University of Pittsburgh, 2020

There is a high demand among employers for college graduates with an understanding of international knowledge, yet very few students of color (American students of color and non-White international students) neither choose global careers nor do they pursue graduate international affairs graduate programs at the same rate as White students (Belyavina & Bhandari, 2011). As a result, international affairs graduate programs lack diverse perspectives and this directly impacts the halls of government. This qualitative study explored the perceived motivators and barriers to enrollment in international affairs graduate programs among students of color at a small, private, graduate school of international affairs in Washington, DC. The purpose of this inquiry was to get a better understanding of participants' perceptions and lived experiences that impacted their decision to pursue graduate school. Analysis of student narratives through the lens of English and Umbach's (2016) graduate school choice model yielded six major themes. Three key findings emerged from the thematic analysis of the data: (1) the importance of cultural and social capital in the graduate school choice process, (2) the significance of racial representation in the field of international affairs and campus racial climate perceptions among perspective students of color, and (3) the need for financial assistance to cover the high cost of a graduate education. Implications for practice encourage schools of international affairs and graduate recruitment professionals within those institutions to take actions to evaluate their campus climate and adjust

policies and procedures in order to improve recruitment strategies and attract students of color.

There is little literature that explores diversity in U.S. international affairs graduate programs. This

study contributes to the literature by adding an in-depth, qualitative examination of reasons why

students of color choose to pursue graduate studies in international affairs and potential barriers to

application and enrollment.

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Preface

This has been an amazing and transformative journey that would not have been possible without the grace, blessings, and guidance from Almighty God, the Abosum, and my ancestors. Thank you for guiding my steps and continuing to be the whisper in my ear that encourages me to achieve all of my goals. To my late grandmother, Josephine Spencer, this is a first for our family and I know I have made you proud—LOOK NAN, WE DID IT!

I have been motivated and supported by so many throughout this doctoral journey. To my husband, Yao Tyus, thank you for your unwavering support and patience. To my children, Afia, Yao Osei, Kwabena Gyasi, Esi, and Akua, I cannot express how grateful I am to each of you for your love, hugs, and patience throughout this process. There were many days when I was unavailable because I had to write and finish this degree—thank you for understanding. I hope my hard work and determination inspires you to do incredible things in your lives. To my family (parents, siblings, cousins, aunties, nieces and nephews) and friends (especially Lauren and Dara), thank you for being my cheerleaders and listening ears. I love you all! To the ladies of Mu chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., especially my line sisters, Jaaziah—there is nothing like the sisterhood and bond we share. Thank you for the fellowship, support, prayer, and encouraging words.

To my cohort mates of Team Higher Ed, thank you for being incredible people that have contributed greatly to my learning. I would like to extend an extra special thank you to my cohort and advisee sisters, Dr. Heather Black, Dr. Ashley Grice, and Dr. Brittany Moore Nwachuku—I am so grateful for each of you and honored to have gone through this process with you. You ladies ROCK! Thank you, Dr. Terri Carr, Dr. Kendria Boyd, and Dr. Simeon Saunders (2016 cohort)

for your willingness to offer guidance and prayer! I appreciate you! To Carmen Mezzera, Executive Director of APSIA, thank you for graciously taking my calls for data and advice—you have been a tremendous support. To my IWP family, thank you for being a champion for me in every professional way possible!

I reserve my final acknowledgements for my esteemed dissertation committee. I would like to give a huge thank you to my dissertation advisor, Dr. Gina Ann Garcia. I can not imagine going through this process with any other advisor! Thank you for your guidance, encouragement and reminders to "trust the process", being a listening ear during my rants, and your invaluable "love notes" (dissertation feedback comments). To my additional committee members, Dr. Linda DeAngelo and Dr. Kevin Kearns, thank you for your critical feedback throughout this process and willingness to push me harder as I neared the finish line. I am grateful to have had such distinguished scholars and experts serve on my committee.

1.0 Overview

International relations refer to the political, social, and economic interconnectedness of nations and the systematic exploration of foreign policy (SFSU, n.d.). International relations, along with technological developments, have pulled countries closer together, enhancing globalization, which is an economic concept that integrates national economies through trade and investments (Gray, 2017). Globalization implies a "significant and obvious blurring of distinctions between the internal and external affairs of countries and the weakening of differences among countries" (Payne, 2012, pp. 9-10). This integration and interconnection inevitably impact the political, socio-economic, and cultural relationships among nations and, as a result, international relations.

Advances in international relations have led to an increase in the number of international affairs graduate programs and an increase in the number of students entering these programs. According to the Pew Research Center (2017), political and ideological polarization has increased in recent years over racial discrimination, international diplomacy, immigration, and government aid to the needy. Not only are Americans divided on where they stand on these issues, but Shanto Iyengar and colleagues (2012) argue Americans also suffer from "affect polarization"—how they feel about those on the other side of the political fence. The political and ideological divide is characterized by a political landscape that is fraught with frustration and the inability to build sustainable coalitions (Pew Research Center, 2014). Considering the current 2019 U.S. political climate and divisive political rhetoric, Gavin (2018), believes "it's never been a better time to study IR (international relations)." In today's rapidly changing world, which depends on trade and exchanges with other countries, positive international relationships are critically important. Moreover, "effective communication between countries is key for making beneficial relationships

and ensuring a safer world" (Markovic, 2015, para. 1). The study of international relations is important because it seeks to understand the origins of war, how to maintain peace, the exercise of power in a global society, and the character of international decision-making actors (Rana, 2018). Graduate international relations programs prepare students to lead in this increasingly globalized world, learn the skills required to maintain positive diplomatic relations with other countries, and prevent international conflicts (Mezzera, 2018). However, graduate international relations programs lack racial and ethnic diversity.

Research indicates that while the idea and value of diversity has been made a priority at institutions, many graduate schools struggle with how to make it happen (Fant, 2001; Griffin & Muñiz, 2011; Poock, 2007). This is particularly true in international affairs graduate programs, which is problematic, as the field of international affairs is lacking the diverse perspectives of students of color. There is a high demand among employers for college graduates with a deep understanding of international knowledge, yet very few students of color (American students of color and non-White international students) neither choose global careers nor do they pursue graduate international education programs at the same rate as White students (Belyavina & Bhandari, 2011). The Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA), an organization whose goal is to improve graduate education in international affairs by bringing together the leading international affairs graduate programs around the world through collaboration and community building amongst its 38 member institutions, has confirmed the lack of diversity among its members. According to C. Mezzera (personal communication, October 21, 2019), student racial/ethnicity demographics at APSIA U.S. member institutions were predominately White in fall 2018 (65% White, 10% Asian, 8% Hispanic any race, 7% Black/African-American, 6% two or more races, less than 1% Native American, and 3% not

reported). These statistics include both American and international students and further highlight the lack of diversity within the academic discipline of international affairs.

This problem directly impacts the lack of diversity in the halls of the U.S. government. Efforts to diversify the U.S. Foreign Service have fallen short with many arguing that it is still "White, male, and Yale" (Kralev, 2016, para. 2). The U.S. Department of State, the country's lead foreign affairs agency, has struggled to keep its workforce at pace with the changing demographic composition of the United States. Its workforce is predominantly White with more than 60% of the Department's civil servants, 81% of its Foreign Service Generalists, and 75% of its Foreign Service Specialists identifying as White (U.S. Dept. of State, 2018). Chichester and Akomolafe (2003) argue the underrepresentation of people of color in foreign policy discussions is problematic because it is detrimental to minority interest. They (Chichester and Akomolafe, 2003) believe foreign policy must be representative of the collective American interest and reflect the will of the American people. The State Department is aware of this problem and has pledged to act by elevating diversity "to the next level"— doubling recruitment efforts to increase diversity at the highest ranks of the department (Somers, 2017, para. 10). In light of recent criticism of the Trump administration's immigration policies and racially divisive comments and their impact on global relations, it is increasingly important that American students of color enter international education graduate programs. The U.S. needs diplomats to represent America abroad such that their "family stories, language skills, religious traditions and cultural sensitivities help them establish connections and avoid misunderstanding. American diplomats of diverse backgrounds can help build bridges…and make the United States seem more approachable" (Pickering & Perkins, 2015, para. 5).

1.1 Purpose of Inquiry

The purpose of this inquiry was to gain a deeper understanding of the influences and barriers to enrollment into international affairs graduate programs at The Institute of World Politics (IWP). IWP is a small, private graduate school that prepares students to become leaders in international affairs and national security, and where I currently serve as the Registrar and Institutional Research Officer. The Institute has struggled to attract and maintain a diverse student body with the current student population being predominantly White and male. Fall 2018 student data retrieved from our student information system revealed 69% of students were White, 10% unknown, 6% Hispanic any race, 6% Asian, 5% Black/African American, and 4% two or more races. Additionally, there was only one female faculty member and there were no faculty of color at the time of the study. Arguably, the student learning environment lacked the richness of compositional diversity that would expand their worldview and create a better understanding of the cultures and perspectives of the populations they will lead and engage (Chang, 2000; 2001; Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, & Arellano, 2012).

This lack of diversity throughout the institution was a disservice to our primary stakeholders, the students, and the field of international affairs. As one of four Black staff members and the only Black person on the senior staff team at IWP, adding diverse perspectives was of particular importance to me. Having received a Master's degree in public administration, I realized the impact that diverse perspectives have on policy development and relationship building, both nationally and internationally. Despite our obvious lack of diversity across the institution and discussions about the need for diversity, the recruitment team struggled with how to address this problem. I wanted to see more faces of color in the classroom adding to discussions, debating history, and contributing to the cultural awareness of all members of the institution. I

was in a unique position to explore this problem within my place of practice. As the only Black female senior staff member, I often felt like my discussions about the importance of diversity fell on the deaf ears of my White male colleagues. They acknowledged that diversity was important but took no significant action to make increasing diversity an institutional priority. They, however, did value my input, and I have been able to influence policy and culture throughout the institution in other areas. To address this problem, this study aimed to better understand why students of color do or do not pursue graduate programs in international affairs. For this inquiry, students of color were defined as American students who identify as Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino/a, or Native American. The findings of this inquiry were used to develop recommendations for how to attract and actively recruit students of color to IWP. These recommendations will be presented to the IWP recruitment staff, student affairs office, and executive leadership.

1.2 Inquiry Questions

To address the lack of diversity in international affairs graduate programs at IWP, the following questions guided this inquiry:

1) What factors influence students of color to apply and enroll in international affairs graduate programs at IWP?

2) What are the barriers to application and enrollment of students of color in international affairs graduate programs at IWP?

There is little literature that explores diversity in U.S. international affairs graduate programs. Like Chichester and Akomolafe (2003), I could not find any national studies conducted to determine the number of students or characteristics of student of color who enroll in

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international graduate programs. Similar research of graduate school choice among students of students of color, however, has been conducted in other disciplines. This inquiry sought to understand the problem within my place of practice and serve as a design for action to address the problem. The findings and conclusions of this Dissertation in Practice (DiP) will be engaged by colleagues within my institution and through collective efforts used to improve recruitment strategies to attract students of color. This DiP will help IWP understand the factors that influence and deter students of color from pursuing graduate studies, improve recruitment strategies, and lead to new institutional policies and practices.

1.3 Methods Overview

This study was qualitative and exploratory. An interview protocol was created to determine what factors motivate students of color to attend international affairs graduate programs and what factors they perceive as potential barriers to keep them from attending international affairs graduate programs. Seventy-nine people who identify as Black, Latino/a, or Native American and were either current IWP students, IWP alumni who graduated within the past six years, former students who matriculated but never completed the requirements to earn a degree, or prospective students who were accepted but never matriculated were invited to participate in one-on-one interviews. The qualitative data collected allowed for an exploration of factors that impacted students of colors' decision to pursue graduate school at IWP.

1.4 Setting of Study

The IWP is a small, private, graduate school of international affairs and national security. Situated in the heart of downtown Washington, DC—the epicenter of politics and power in this country—IWP is predominantly White and has struggled to recruit students of color into its international affairs programs. The Institute offers a doctoral program, five master's degree programs, 18 graduate certificate programs, and continuing education courses. With an average student enrollment of 145-155, IWP's student body includes recent graduates of colleges and universities across the country, a small number of international students, and a mix of mid-career professionals from government, the armed forces, private industry, and foreign embassies and governments (IWP website, n.d.). IWP graduates hold influential positions in various U.S. government agencies, foreign companies, foreign governments, the U.S. armed forces, intelligence agencies, and non-government organizations. IWP alumni work in foreign affairs, defense, intelligence, law enforcement agencies, and strategic foreign military and diplomatic postings (IWP Graduate Employment Facts, n.d.).

1.5 Significance of Study

Increasing the number of students of color at IWP will prove beneficial for all stakeholders. In addition to the "improved critical thinking and problem-solving skills" (Cordova-Cobo, Fox, & Wells, 2016) that diversity affords, students, our primary stakeholders, will be able to learn in an environment where they are exposed to perspectives of individuals from other racial groups and cultures. IWP students will benefit greatly from exposure to peers whose experiences and

perspectives differ. A diverse learning environment encourages critical thinking, challenges preconceived stereotypes, and improves communication skills (ACE Board of Directors, 2012). The absence of diversity not only robs students of valuable competencies, it also threatens America's economic competitiveness in the global markets. Diversifying IWP classrooms and discussions will give our students a deeper appreciation and understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives. As the world becomes more globalized, it is increasingly important that international affairs leaders (IWP graduates) have a sense of cross-cultural awareness that guides global thinking (Penn & Tanner, 2014). This exposure will ultimately prepare them to be successful leaders in a global society.

The first step to increasing institutional compositional diversity is to make it an institutional priority. Despite flat enrollments and discussions about the need for diversity at IWP, diversity still has not made it into the strategic plan. The current IWP 2017-2022 Strategic Plan includes strategic objectives of increasing enrollment, strengthening the faculty, and enhancing marketing and visibility but omits strategies that target underrepresented populations as a means to those ends. The inquiry findings will help the IWP graduate recruitment team, student affairs department, and executive leadership understand the factors that influence and deter students of color from pursuing graduate studies at IWP. Adjusting recruitment strategies and institutional practices at IWP, as outlined in the recommendations in the final chapter, may lead to increased enrollment of students of color. This will contribute to IWP achieving its strategic enrollment goal of 250 students by 2022.

Understanding the factors that influence and deter students of color from pursuing graduate studies in international relations can also significantly change the halls of government. The lack of diversity in international affairs graduate programs directly impacts the number of people of

color employed by U.S. foreign service agencies. As a result, the U.S. government, also a stakeholder, is at a disadvantage in foreign policy circles. Chichester and Akomolafe (2003) agree with this sentiment and argue that "underrepresentation of minorities in the nation's foreign policy circles deprives the country of a range of perspectives, input and human resources to draw upon in meeting today's international challenges." The results of this inquiry provide a glimpse into how to change this scenario. Additionally, this study will contribute to the literature by examining some of the reasons why students of color choose (or not) to pursue graduate studies in international affairs.

1.6 Delimitations of Study

For this study, students of color were defined as American-born students that identify as Black, Latino/a, or Native American. This inquiry did not address students who identify as Asian/Asian American and Native Hawaiian. There has been much debate about whether to include these groups as "people of color." In the 21st century the term "people of color" has been less about skin color and more about those who have been historically affected by racism, White supremacy, and systematic oppression in the United States (Goggin, 2018). This inquiry did not address factors that impact Asian/Asian-American and Native Hawaiian graduate school choice because 1) Asians are arguably not considered (historically) people of color, and 2) much of the literature about graduate school choice among students of color only refers to Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino/a, and Native American student groups. When there were references to Asians and graduate school choice it was often referring to Asian international students not Asian-Americans. Similarly, this inquiry did not include non-White international students at IWP.

Given the problem I was trying to solve within my place of practice, this study was conducted at IWP only and did not include international graduate programs at other institutions. The lack of diversity in international graduate programs is a larger problem that affects schools across the country. However, due to resources and time constraints, the scope of the study was limited to IWP. Therefore, this study cannot guarantee that the recruitment recommendations developed as a result of this study can be implemented in international affairs graduate programs at higher education institutions beyond IWP. General conclusions, however, have been provided.

1.7 Conclusion

American students of color do not pursue graduate international education programs at the same rate as their White counterparts. This problem directly impacts the number of people of color hired into the U.S. Foreign Service and the U.S. Department of State. My place of practice, IWP, is predominantly White and has been unable to recruit large numbers of students of color into its graduate programs. Having worked there for over 10 years, as the only Black senior staff member, I wanted to know why our student demographics were not changing. I wanted to learn what motivates or hinders students of color from applying to international affairs graduate programs, particularly those at IWP. This inquiry used a qualitative approach to understand the factors that influence and deter students of color from pursuing graduate degrees in international affairs. This inquiry is significant to the field because it will help international affairs graduate recruitment professionals, particularly those within my place of practice, understand the factors that impact applicants of color and ultimately improve their recruitment strategies.

2.0 Literature Review

There is an increasing demand for graduate programs in international affairs, but students of color are not enrolling. Despite the lack of diversity that exists throughout international affairs careers and educational programs, there is little literature that explores diversity in U.S. international affairs graduate programs. Research with graduate students of color, however, has been conducted in other disciplines. To understand why there is a lack of racial diversity in international affairs graduate programs, this literature review highlights the barriers that prevent students of color from enrolling in any graduate program, motivators that influence their decision to pursue graduate education in any discipline, and strategies that have been used to recruit students of color to graduate programs in any discipline.

2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this literature review is English and Umbach's (2016) graduate school choice model. This model is an adaptation of Perna's (2006) undergraduate college choice model. Both conceptual models are grounded in the economic framework of human capital theory. Modern human capital theory, popularized by economist Gary Becker (1962, 1993), posits that one's ability to create economic value is directly related to the knowledge, skills, and abilities they possess. Human capital theory has been the primary lens through which undergraduate and graduate choice has been explored (Paulsen & Toutkoushian, 2008). Perna's (2004) work built upon this theory by validating the inclusion of cultural and social capital theory

in school choice models. Perna's (2006) model assumes that a student's college choice decisions are shaped by four layers of context: (1) habitus; (2) school and community; (3) higher education; and (4) the broader social, economic, and policy contexts. The first layer, habitus, reflects one's demographic characteristics (specifically race and gender), cultural capital (cultural knowledge and value of college attainment), and social capital (knowledge about college and the college process). The school and community context refer to an individual's access to resources and information about college and the role that schools (teachers, counselors, etc.) and middle-class community members play in providing that information. The higher education context acknowledges the role that higher education institutions play in influencing student college choice through information dissemination, marketing and recruitment efforts, and institutional characteristics. The final layer, the social, economic, and policy context, recognizes that college choice is also influenced by social forces, changes in economic conditions, and public policy decisions.

English and Umbach (2016) extended Perna's (2006) model to specifically address the differences that exist between graduate school choice and undergraduate college choice decisions. This model updated components of the habitus to reflect the transition from the undergraduate institution to graduate education. Instead of the school and community context, the second layer is modified to focus on the impact the undergraduate institution attended had on the decision maker. The third layer examines the graduate school context, instead of higher education, and the fourth layer remains the same—the social, economic, and policy context. These contexts, according to English and Umbach (2016) are a measure of human capital. English and Umbach's (2016) model acknowledges all four layers but focuses specifically on the first two (habitus and undergraduate institution context) to isolate the individual and institutional variables that affect

graduate school choice. This study, however, focused on all four contexts to identify and frame the barriers that exist for students of color entering international education graduate programs. In doing so, areas of opportunity to motivate and attract (recruit) racially diverse applicants were revealed.

2.2 Barriers to Graduate School Enrollment

In this section I explore literature that describes the various barriers that negatively influence a student of color's decision to enroll in graduate school. Habitus is a person's internalized system of thoughts, attitudes, and perceptions that are acquired from their immediate environment and determines what is "reasonable action" (Perna, 2006, p. 113; McDonough, 1997). A student's habitus is unique to that individual and is shaped by many factors (Perna, 2006). The literature identified several barriers to graduate school enrollment that were due to one's habitus including financial considerations, perceived academic ability and academic performance, and social and cultural barriers. In addition to habitus, the undergraduate institution and the student's experience there has an influence on the decision to pursue graduate school (English & Umbach, 2016). These experiences, which include racial climate and lack of advising and institutional support, can deter students of color from pursuing graduate school. Barriers due to habitus (demographics, financial considerations, perceived academic ability, academic motivation, and social and cultural barriers) and higher education institutional factors (transition from undergraduate to graduate school and experiences/perceptions of IWP) will be assessed in this inquiry.

2.2.1 Financial Considerations

As graduate school tuition rates rise, it is no surprise that aspiring graduate students heavily weigh the cost of earning a graduate degree. English and Umbach (2016) say, "individuals weigh the expected monetary benefits and costs of graduate education and select the option that maximizes their utility" (p. 197). Studies indicate that the high cost of graduate education and the amount of undergraduate student loan debt is a deterrent to applying to graduate school (Millett, 2003). Millett (2003) studied the impact that undergraduate loan debt had on application and enrollment into graduate or first professional school. She asserted that "undergraduate debt along with student's personal background characteristics, the characteristics of their undergraduate institution, their college experiences, and their immediate opportunity costs to attend graduate school" directly influences a student's decision to apply and enroll in graduate school (Millett, 2003, p. 394). In fact, Levine (2008) found one of the biggest reasons why Black males declined to enroll in graduate school was financial obligations, loan repayment, and the fear of accumulating more debt to pay for graduate school.

Goforth et al. (2016) found that for Native Americans, limited financial resources was also a reason they do not pursue graduate training. The study indicated that financial aid is often insufficient to allow Native American students to take care of themselves and their family. Financial obligations are also a consideration for Latino/a students as they decide to pursue graduate education. Averse to taking on additional debt to finance graduate school, many Latino/a participants in Ramirez's (2012) study revealed they chose less expensive (and less selective) institutions for graduate school instead of pricier, more prestigious elite schools. Alternatively, there is literature that found no association between indebtedness and graduate education choice (English & Umbach, 2016; Weiler, 1994). In fact, scholars suggest that financial aid programs and

the ability to defer undergraduate loan payments may act as an incentive to enroll in graduate school (English & Umbach, 2016; Weiler, 1994).

2.2.2 Academic Ability and Performance

The literature indicates that academic achievement and undergraduate grade point average are vital factors in the graduate school decision-making process (Collins, 2012; Hearn, 1987; Millett, 2003). English and Umbach (2016) also found that academic achievement (GPA) was associated with all phases of the graduate school process (aspiration, application, and enrollment). The researchers suggest that, when reviewing graduate admissions requirements, an aspiring graduate student may decide not to apply to graduate school because their undergraduate GPA is not within competitive range (English & Umbach, 2016).

In a study that explored factors related to Black undergraduate students' decision to apply to graduate school, Smith (2005) found that Black students' perception of their academic ability directly impacted their decision to apply to graduate school. Those who were not confident in their abilities (study skills, motivation, and desire to do what is necessary to succeed in graduate school), had no plans after graduation, and many had not even begun job searching (Smith, 2005). The same holds true for other underrepresented racial groups. Native Americans and Latino/a students also face academic challenges beginning at an early age that impact their actual and perceived academic ability and decisions to persist through college and pursue studies beyond the baccalaureate degree (Goforth, Brown, Machek, & Swaney, 2016; Longoria, 2010).

Along those same lines, Levine (2008) and Ramirez (2012) found that Black and Latino/a students did not enroll in graduate programs due to standardized tests. Levine's (2008) participants reported fear of the GRE deterred them from pursing graduate school. In a 2014 study, Wolf (2014)

found that Black applicants to New York Institute of Technology's (NYIT) Physician Assistant program decreased by nearly 4% after the GRE was added to their admissions criteria in 2010. Adopting the GRE requirement had a negative impact on their student of color application pool and created a "44.1% decrease in NYIT's pool of Black applicants" (Wolf, 2014, p. 65). Culturally biased standardized college entrance exams have "traditionally posed barriers to college entrance for Latinos/as and other underrepresented students—basing graduate school admissions decisions on GRE scores contributes to the underrepresentation and marginality" (Ramirez, 2012, p. 31) of students of color in graduate education.

2.2.3 Cultural Barriers

Cultural capital consists of a person's cultural knowledge and their value of graduate degree attainment. Perna (2006) believes that cultural capital is manifested through cultural knowledge and the value parents place on college attainment (p.138). Social capital is the information one has about graduate school and assistance they receive with graduate school processes (English & Umbach, 2016). The lack of cultural and social capital is a barrier to graduate school for students of color (Collins, 2012; Hart, 2009; Levine, 2008; Perna, 2006, Ramirez, 2011). Research has found that many students do not know how to navigate the graduate admissions process (Anderson, 1998; Ramirez, 2011) and do not fully understand the value of a graduate degree (Levine, 2008; Tatum, 2003). This is particularly true for many students of color from working-class families whose parents never attended college or applied to graduate school (Ramirez, 2011). These parents are not accustomed to the cultural norms and processes within higher education and therefore cannot guide their child through the graduate admissions process. This lack of knowledge places students of color "at a disadvantage in the college process relative

to their peers and ultimately contributes to their underrepresentation in higher education, including graduate school" (Ramirez, 2011, p. 210).

Studies have also revealed that how one values education dictates whether they will forego graduate studies. In line with previous research by Mickelson (1990) and Poock (2000), Smith's (2005) study found that students of color not planning to continue their education beyond undergraduate believed graduate school was unnecessary and felt they could receive professional training from their employers. They did not see the value of a graduate education and were less likely (at the time of the study) to pursue formal graduate studies. The literature suggests that the disinterest among underrepresented students who do not see the value of graduate school may be due to their lack of knowledge about the benefits of a graduate degree (Tatum, 2003).

There are also other cultural and social elements of underrepresented students' habitus that deter them from attending graduate school. While undergraduate and graduate school choice are affected by some of the same factors (characteristics of institution/academic programs, residency, social characteristics of campus, and financial considerations), Kallio (1995) believes graduate school choice differs from undergraduate choice regarding family, work, and life stage considerations. Both undergraduates and graduates consider familial relationships when determining school choice; however they differ on when, who, and how they exert influence (Kallio, 1995, p. 120). Kallio (1995) believes the decisions of undergraduates are often guided by their parents. To young adults ages 24-35 who are in a different life stage, starting a family, managing a home, establishing a career, and acquiring a spouse are also factors that impact graduate school choice. The literature suggests that among Latino/a and Native American students, family obligations weigh heavily on the decision to attend graduate school (Goforth et al., 2016; Longoria, 2010). Participants in both studies (Goforth et al., 2016; Longoria, 2010;)

were obligated to fulfill family obligations that made matriculating through undergraduate a challenge, which implies family obligations are a barrier to graduate school enrollment.

Language also serves as a barrier to enrollment in graduate education. Goforth et. al (2016) and Longoria (2010) noted that language and cultural barriers exist because some racial groups resist acculturation and strive to maintain their native language, customs, and beliefs. As a result, Longoria (2010) believes that Latino/a and Native American students "fail to develop adequate reading and writing skills in the English language" (p. 26), thus not pursuing college or graduate school.

2.2.4 Racial Climate

According to the literature, all underrepresented racial groups experience cultural mistrust that shapes their habitus and how they view the world (Collins, 2005; Goforth et. al, 2016; Levine, 2008; Longoria, 2010). Cultural mistrust, a term coined by Terrell and Terrell (1981), describes the mistrust that Blacks (and other underrepresented groups) feel toward White people due to a long history of discrimination. As a result, students of color are more likely than White students to consider racial climate when considering college choice (Barr, Wanat, & Gonzalez, 2007; Poock & Love, 2001). Racial climate, according to Hurtado et al. (2012) has two dimensions: behavioral and psychological. The behavioral dimension refers to "the context, frequency, and quality of interactions on campus between social identity groups and their members" (Hurtado et al., 2012, p.66). This dimension can be formal (campus facilitated interaction through intentional educational practice) or informal (interaction between individuals that occurs outside of educational activities) (Hurtado et al, 2012). The psychological dimension refers to "individual's perceptions of the environment, views of intergroup relations and perceptions of discrimination or

racial conflict within the institutional context" (Hurtado et al., 2012, p. 70). The reality is "for many racial and ethnic minority students, their community differs significantly from the community of academia" (Alvarez, Blume, Cervantes, & Thomas, 2009, p. 183). Racial climate and community differences may act as a barrier to graduate school enrollment, especially if the racial climate at the decision maker's undergraduate institution was unsatisfactory.

2.2.5 Lack of Proper Advising and Institutional Support

Studies have indicated that some students of color are unaware of the graduate admissions process and/or are not advised to pursue graduate school by their undergraduate institution (Hart, 2009; Ramirez, 2011, 2012; Tatum, 2003). Often students of color, especially first-generation college students, rely on their ability to access institutional support and school resources to successfully navigate through the college choice process given that they and their parents are unfamiliar with the higher education landscape (Ramirez, 2011). Many respondents in Ramirez's (2012) study noted they could not get guidance on how to apply for graduate school within their undergraduate university setting. As result, a participant in Ramirez's (2012) study found the graduate school application process very difficult because there was no "graduate school center/office or advisor, at her undergraduate campus" to help her (p. 212). This lack of advisement is not uncommon, as participants in Hart's (2009) study noted similar experiences. The absence of a mentor or faculty advisor that encourages them to pursue graduate school or help them navigate the process was found to be "frustrating" and "discouraging" (Hart, 2009, p. 81); one participant noted that her advisor never talked to her about graduate school (Hart, 2009). Similarly, Tatum (2003) recalled a story about his brother being encouraged by his college advisor to obtain another bachelor's degree instead of going to graduate school—as if two bachelor's

degrees are more valuable than a master's degree. Some students are being improperly advised or do not have advisors and mentors who are encouraging them to pursue graduate studies, thus they are choosing to forego graduate school altogether.

2.3 Motivators/ Influencers to Graduate School Enrollment

This section describes the motivators that influence students of color to enroll in graduate school with a focus on habitus and undergraduate context. The literature identified several factors shaped by a person's habitus that positively influence their decision to pursue graduate school. Moreover, research suggests that the undergraduate context is a motivator. In a qualitative study of motivational reasons why Black students applied to doctoral programs, Poock (2000) concluded that Black students are influenced by "academic quality, academic infrastructure, institutional sensitivity to students of color, and positive interaction with faculty" (p. 51). This section furthered Poock's (2000) conclusion and highlighted how the undergraduate institution positively influences students of color to pursue graduate school. In this section I discussed personal factors (habitus) such as parental/familial encouragement and institutional factors (faculty mentoring at undergraduate institution, reputation/ranking of graduate school, and the representation of racially diverse faculty and students at the graduate school) as motivators to graduate school enrollment. This discussion includes influencers that are not implied as opposites of the barriers above. These personal and institutional factors were assessed using a qualitative interview protocol.

2.3.1 Parental Encouragement

Horvat (1996) suggests that parents are the primary constructors of habitus and therefore are critical influencers on people's decisions and actions (Perna, 2006). Collins (2003) found this to be true and noted parental education level increased the likelihood of Black students matriculating into graduate school. He argued, "As parental education level increases, children are more likely to plan to enroll in college, as parents with college educations are more likely to value education and to transmit their values to their children" (Collins, 2003, p. 120). Hamrick and Stage (2004) reported that Black students' aspirations of higher education attainment (at both the undergraduate and graduate level) were influenced by parents' education and the expectations that parents have for their student's education.

Smith (2005) found family/parental involvement to be the most significant "socializing agent" (p. 81) regarding Black students' decision to attend graduate school. The students in Smith's (2005) study with plans to continue their studies indicated that "education past the undergraduate was emphasized within the home, whereas students with no plans of continuing their education, indicated that the importance of a college education was emphasized at home, but education beyond college was not emphasized" (p. 81). In cases where immediate parents are not in a position to influence college choice decisions, the role of the extended family, peers, and community in influencing Black students' choices to pursue higher education is particularly noteworthy (Freeman, 1997; Smith, 2005).

2.3.2 Reputation and Rankings

Morelon-Quainoo et al.'s (2011) study of factors that influenced students of color to attend graduate school found reputation and rankings of the graduate school to be of primary importance to participants. Regardless of being public or private, students looked for institutions that ranked highly. One student made the point that "all [employers] look for is how well your school is ranked. Those are the students who get interviewed for jobs" (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011, p. 11). This sentiment assumes there is a direct connection between rankings and external perceptions of program and faculty quality (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011). Strayhorn, Williams, Tillman-Kelly, and Suddeth's (2013) research findings support this idea. In their study of graduate school choice among male and female HBCU graduates, Strayhorn and colleagues (2013) found that the largest proportion of both men and women identified school reputation as a factor considered when choosing a graduate school.

2.3.3 Mentoring in Undergraduate

One of the most important influences on a student's decision to pursue a graduate education, especially underrepresented students of color, according to DeAngelo (2016), is faculty mentoring during a student's undergraduate education. Anderson and Shannon (1998) define mentoring as a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person befriends a less skilled/experienced person to assist them with their personal and professional development. Research indicates that mentoring or any type of positive relationship between students and faculty could increase the likelihood that student's continuation to graduate school (Hart, 2009). Undergraduate students who have been mentored have been found to have higher GPAs (Campbell

& Campbell, 1997). As a result, mentored students develop a strong academic self-concept, which has been found to be an indication of graduate school aspiration and enrollment (Smith, 2005). Strong mentoring relationships help introduce students to faculty contacts, members of their professional community, and increases access to information and networking resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2010). DeAngelo (2009) believes that these relationships guide students along their educational journey and help them gain confidence to pursue advanced studied. This is particularly true for students of color.

DeAngelo's (2009) study examining the role faculty mentorship had on the development and maintenance of advanced degree aspirations revealed that although both White and students of color benefited from faculty encouragement for graduate school, the size of the benefit was much larger for students of color. At a frequent encouragement level, the study found White students to have 170% greater odds of aspiring to an advanced degree and students of color having a 332% increased likelihood of advance degree aspirations (DeAngelo, 2009, 2016). Faculty engagement (mentorship and support) was also found to be a major consideration in the selection of a graduate school for students of color (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011; Ramirez, 2011).

2.3.4 Representation of Racially Diverse Faculty and Students

The literature provides insight into how perceptions of diversity or lack thereof influence students of colors' choice of graduate institution (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011; Ramirez, 2011). In the study done by Morelon-Quainoo and colleagues (2011), students' perceptions of a university's interests in diversity was determined by the number of students and faculty of color in the institution or department (Longorio, 2010; Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011). According to the Black and Latino/a students in Hunter's (2006) study, "one of the major reasons institutions of

higher education have difficulty recruiting and retaining minority students is the lack of faculty role models" (p. 68). Brown (1988) argued that the presence of Black faculty was a determining factor to whether Black students attended graduate or professional schools. In Morelon-Quainoo et al's (2011) qualitative study, students of color expected an inclusive environment that included faculty and student support, diversity, and a "strong minority networking group" (p. 17). The students believed these things would convey an institutional commitment to their "personal, academic, and professional growth" (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011, p. 17). A Latino graduate student in the study specifically noted he chose his graduate school because "There is a good Latino community here, [and] there are also people from different cultures" (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011, p. 18). Seeing faculty and students of color can influence graduate school choice among underrepresented students of color and act as supports while matriculating.

2.4 Strategies Used to Recruit Underrepresented Students of Color

Since there is little to no literature about increasing racial diversity in international affairs graduate programs, in this section I review literature about strategies that have been used to attract and recruit students of color into graduate programs in any academic discipline. This literature and inquiry findings will serve as the basis for the recommendations for practice that will be presented to colleagues within my place of practice.

2.4.1 Institutional Commitment to Diversity

Literature suggests that the first and most important step in diversifying higher education is adopting a pervasive institutional commitment (Chang, 2000; Hurtado et al., 2012). Wide-spread institutional change, however, can be difficult due to the often fragmented and loosely coupled structure of higher education institutions (Griffin & Muñiz, 2011). The loose coupling, or decentralization of departments and admissions offices, make it increasingly difficult for Graduate Diversity Officers (GDOs) and others charged with increasing diversity to influence change and implement "successful" recruitment methods. While increasing diversity is important, the "intentions are challenging to translate into concrete policies because departments function independently and manage their own admissions processes" (Griffin & Muñiz, 2011, p. 73). To mitigate these challenges, Gray (2013) argues an institution's commitment to diversity and increasing the presence of students of color must be clearly articulated and supported by its executive leader (president or chancellor). Increasing diversity in graduate education requires an institution-wide effort and shared belief that everyone across campus (executives, administrators, faculty, and staff) has a collective responsibility to support diversity efforts (Griffin & Muñiz, 2011).

2.4.2 Relationship Building and Early Institutional Exposure

Despite the challenges of institutional change, there have been promising recruitment strategies implemented to attract students of color into graduate programs. Most of the graduate-level diversity recruitment literature is program-specific with a vast majority being studies on how to increase diversity in psychology (Goforth et al., 2016; Grapin, Bocanegra, Green, Lee, & Jaafar,

2016; Proctor, Simpson, Levin, Hackimer, 2014; Rogers & Molina, 2006), social work (Bowie, Nashwan, Thomas, Davis-Buckley, & Johnson, 2018), and science (Burt, Haacker, Batchelor, & Denning, 2016) graduate programs. In a study examining the strategies and struggles of GDOs at colleges and universities fostering diversity in graduate education, Griffin and Muñiz (2011) found that forming relationships with potential applicants and building relationships with faculty at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) proved to be the most useful strategies to increase graduate student diversity. Many GDOs in the Griffin and Muñiz (2011) study formed relationships with applicants of color early by targeting fairs and conferences that draw high achieving students of color and/or those with research experience, encouraging faculty to attend these conferences to invite students to apply to their programs, and through summer research experiences and campus visitation programs.

Campus visitation programs have proven to be useful when recruiting underrepresented students of color. Griffin and Muñiz (2011) found that GDOs invited students from MSIs, particularly historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs) to their campuses to learn about the campus community, academic programs, student services, and engage with faculty. Students in these programs were strongly encouraged to apply and often left with applications in hand. These programs serve multiple purposes. In addition to exposing students to academic opportunities on a given campus, they also provide a sense of "critical mass" among applicants of color and allow students of color to meet with one another across departments (Griffin & Muñiz, 2011).

Griffin and Muñiz (2011) also found that summer research programs were a valuable recruitment tool. Academically competitive undergraduate students from across the country were invited to their campuses for the summer months to conduct research with a faculty member. One

participant noted that "90% of students who attended their summer program and were admitted ultimately decided to attend [his] university" (Griffin & Muñiz, 2011, p. 67). These programs not only allow the diversity worker or recruitment officer to build a direct relationship with students, they also facilitate relationships between prospective students and professors. This relationship allows students to connect with the institution and expose the faculty to talented students from less selective or prestigious institutions who may have gone unnoticed in the admissions process. Students in the study conducted by Morelon-Quainoo and colleagues (2011) experienced tremendous benefits from their summer experiences whether they attended summer law camps or research programs. Students were able to make connections between their summer experiences and their perceived level of preparedness for the rigors of graduate school (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011).

Morelon-Quainoo and her colleagues (2011) urge institutions to create an environment that encourages and creates an interest in research. This, the researchers believe, will promote success and the educational attainment of advanced degrees among students of color. The Atmospheric Science department at Colorado State University (CSU) found this to be true and quadrupled the number of underrepresented students of color in their graduate program over a ten-year period (Burt et al., 2016) by implementing their Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program. This program introduced diverse students to CSU and allowed students to engage in cutting edge research while building trust relationships between students, CSU faculty, and the faculty at their home institutions.

2.4.3 Faculty Involvement in the Recruitment Process

The most common theme and strategy among the graduate diversity literature was the importance of faculty in the recruitment process. Rogers and Molina (2006) found that institutions that made exemplary efforts to recruit and retain underrepresented students of color have faculty who make personal contact with prospective students, involve faculty (and students of color) during recruitment, the representation of faculty of color was significant throughout their graduate programs, and used faculty to create a pipeline between historical institutions of color and their own institutions. Faculty support plays a critical role in the advanced degree pipeline for graduate students of color (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011). This support has been realized in the form of structured student-faculty interaction, faculty inclusion of students in research, social networking, and social and academic mentoring (Burt et al., 2016; Goforth et al., 2016; Griffin & Muñiz , 2011; Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011; Rogers & Molina, 2006).

Building relationships of trust with faculty and staff at MSIs (HBCUs and HSIs) and institutions with large populations of students of color has been found to be a key component of increasing graduate student diversity (Burt et al., 2016; Griffin & Muñiz, 2011). Through long-term, regular contact and research collaborations, 55% of the faculty interviewed in the Rogers and Molina (2006) study perceived that their efforts to connect with "institutions of color" yielded the most reward—noting that "[these] connections created a steady stream of minority applicants" (p. 152). A GDO in the Griffin and Muñiz (2011) study found these trust relationships to be a more efficacious way to increase diversity (as compared to fairs and conferences), noting "I have a relationship with the faculty. They know me…and send their students to me because they trust that I will take care of their students" (p. 68).

Morelon-Quainoo et al. (2011) recommend that schools assess the impact of perceived institutional and departmental diversity on admissions and recruitment efforts. It is important that institutions understand how their institutional culture impacts their capacity to diversify the student body. Diversity and racial representation are important to students of color (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011; Ramirez, 2011). Schools must act to ensure that students of color have a sense of belonging and can see themselves at the institution. In addition to recruiting students of color, schools could review their current faculty selection process and begin to actively recruit faculty to diversify the professoriate. A faculty member in the Rogers and Molina (2006) study reported that "employing a critical mass of senior faculty of color as core program faculty…heightened the visibility of the program, created a climate of respect and support, and were critical "golden factors" that drew students [of color] in" (p. 152). Morelon-Quainoo and team (2011) argue that while having a diverse faculty is not the only solution, "it is important for all students to feel that the institution values their presence by recruiting and retaining others who look like them" (p. 20).

The literature also encourages institutions to reward faculty and staff who promote diversity at the institutional level (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011), aggressively review their institutional website and recruitment material to ensure that the discourse and imagery portray the institution's commitment to diversity (Grapin et al., 2016; Rogers & Molina, 2006), and offer culturally responsive diversity training for faculty (Burt et al., 2016; Goforth et al., 2016). Other strategies to recruit students of color identified in the literature include offering comprehensive financial aid packages (Goforth et al., 2016; Proctor et al., 2014; Rogers & Molina, 2006) and eliminating (or relying less heavily on) the GRE in admissions decisions (Grapin et al., 2016; Rogers & Molina, 2006).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined the barriers and motivating factors that impact students of colors' decision to pursue graduate school. There is little literature on diversity in U.S. international affairs graduate programs, and, as a result, this literature review highlights the barriers that prevent students of color from enrolling in any graduate program, motivators that influence their decision to pursue graduate education in any discipline, and strategies that have been used to recruit students of color to graduate programs in any discipline. The factors that deter or influence students of color to pursue international affairs graduate programs needs to be determined. To help answer this question, English and Umbach's (2016) graduate school choice model, which assumes that a person's decision to pursue graduate school is determined by four layers of context: 1) habitus (demographic characteristics, cultural knowledge and value of graduate school attainment, social capital - knowledge about graduate school and the graduate school application process), 2) impact of undergraduate institution, 3) graduate school context, and 4) the social, economic, and policy context, will be used as the theoretical framework guiding this inquiry.

3.0 Methodology

This chapter addresses the methodology of this inquiry. The purpose of this inquiry was twofold. First, this inquiry focused on students of color and the factors that influenced or deterred them from pursuing graduate degrees in international affairs. Additionally, the findings of this inquiry were used to develop recommendations for recruitment officers and student affairs professionals at IWP to increase the enrollment of students of color into its international affairs graduate programs. Given the lack of data about international affairs graduate programs and the small prospective sample population, a qualitative approach was most appropriate for this study. Qualitative interview data were collected and used to gain in-depth insight about the demographics, perceived barriers, and motivators/influences on graduate school enrollment of the sample population. Subsequent sections of this chapter include a description of the inquiry setting, epistemological approach, researcher's reflexivity, and specific research methodology for this inquiry that includes the data source, sample population, data analysis, and limitations of the method.

This inquiry aimed to address the lack of diversity in international affairs graduate programs at The Institute of World Politics (IWP). The conceptual framework for this inquiry is English and Umbach's (2016) graduate school choice model. This model assumes that a person's decision to attend graduate school is determined by four layers of context: 1) habitus, 2) undergraduate institution and transition to graduate school, 3) graduate school context, and 4) the social, economic, and policy context. Using this conceptual underpinning and the realities of interviewees, the following inquiry questions guided my work:

1) What factors influence students of color to apply and enroll in international affairs graduate programs at IWP?

2) What are the barriers to application and enrollment of students of color in international affairs graduate programs at IWP?

3.1 Inquiry Setting

Founded in 1991 by the current president, John Lenczowski, IWP is a private graduate school situated blocks from the White House in Washington, DC, that provides a professional education in statecraft, national security, and international affairs (IWP website, n.d.). After earning his Ph.D. in International Studies, working in the U.S. government in various capacities, and serving as an adjunct faculty member at a large, private university in Washington, DC, Dr. Lenczowski created IWP to fill a major national need that no other school offered. IWP's mission is to "develop leaders with a sound understanding of international realities and the ethical conduct of statecraft based on knowledge and appreciation of the founding principles of the American political economy and the Western moral tradition" (IWP Mission Statement, n.d.).

The Institute offers a doctoral program, five master's degree programs, 18graduate certificate programs, and continuing education courses. The curriculum focuses on six major components: 1) the elements of statecraft (arts of war, peacemaking and diplomacy, strategic influence, economic strategy, intelligence, cyber strategy, and moral leadership); 2) the study of diplomatic history, comparative political culture, ideology and religion, practices of foreign powers and all affairs that affect the security interests of the United States; 3) the fundamental principles of American political philosophy (democratic republicanism, rule of law, liberty, rights

and private property); 4) Western moral tradition and its use in policymaking and the use of power; 5) study of economic theory and history; and 6) character-building qualities necessary for statesmanship and moral leadership (IWP Curriculum, n.d.).

Since 2013, 763 prospective students have applied to IWP's graduate programs (doctoral, master's, and graduate certificate programs). Of these, 116 applicants were American citizens who identify as Hispanic/Latino/a, Native American, Asian, Black/African-American, or Pacific Islander. Sixty-one non-White international students have applied. Applicants of color, both American and international, only make up approximately 23% of the total applicant pool.

Enrollment has increased slightly over the past ten years, but IWP maintains an average enrollment of 145 to 155 students during fall and spring terms. The Institute's strategic goal is to enroll 250 students by 2022. Fall 2018 total enrollment at IWP was 141 across all programs. In fall 2018, the student body was 28% female and 72% male. The average age of students was 26 years old. There were 13 enrolled international students. Sixty-nine percent of students identified as White, 10% unknown or did not disclose, 6% were Asian, 6% Hispanic of any race or Latino/a, 5% Black/African-American, and 4% identify as two or more races. According to C. Mezzera (personal communication, October 21, 2019), these racial demographics are in line with fall 2018 student racial/ethnicity demographics at Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA) member institutions across the United States. It should also be noted that the demographic of faculty and staff at IWP is predominantly White and male. Out of 30 staff members, four are people of color (all identify as Black or African-American). The academic faculty, all of which are distinguished scholar-practitioners, are all White. There are two non-White instructors of language courses who are outside of the academic curriculum; language

courses at IWP are optional and do not count toward IWP degree requirements. Language instructors are contract instructors and are not considered full-time or adjunct faculty members.

With a sticker price of $1,200 per credit hour for Master of Arts ($62,400 total tuition), graduate certificate ($24,000 total tuition), and non-degree students, and $1,300 per credit hour for doctoral students ($67,600 total tuition), the cost of tuition at IWP is comparable (mid-range) to most international affairs graduate programs at other universities in the District of Columbia metro area. Despite the high price tag, graduate students have reported being attracted to IWP for its small, intimate, familial environment and the reputation of its distinguished faculty members.

3.2 Epistemology

I approached this inquiry from a constructivist perspective. This paradigm posits that individual knowledge is constructed by one's understanding of the world in which they live (Creswell, 2018). Constructivists, Creswell (2018) explains, believe that "individuals develop subjective meaning of their experiences" (p. 8) and that the goal of research should rely on "the participants' views of the situation being studied" (p. 8). Approaching this inquiry from this perspective allowed me to understand participant reality and its multiple constructions through personal data collection such as in-depth, one-on-one interviews (Mertens, 2015). As a constructivist researcher, I sought to understand the perceptions of participants knowing that their perspectives were shaped by historical, social, and cultural context.

3.3 Reflexivity

Reflexivity involves an on-going process of mutual shaping between the researcher and the research (Attia & Edge, 2017). It is important to consider the reflexivity of the researcher in qualitative studies because "the researcher is the instrument" (Mertens, 2015, p. 261). Malterud (2001) believes "a researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (p. 483-484). Therefore, much consideration must be given to who I am as the both the researcher and the research instrument and what values, assumptions, and biases I bring to the study that may impact data collection and interpretation. Unlike positivist and post-positivist researchers who strive for objectivity and generalizability, constructivist, qualitative researchers are subjective and recognize "that their own background shapes their interpretation, and they [the researcher] position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their…experiences" (Creswell, 2018, p. 8). As I pursued this inquiry from a constructivist, qualitative approach, I was acutely aware of how my positioning (reflexivity) influenced my decision to solve this problem within my institution and how my own values and beliefs could have impacted inquiry outcomes.

My objective was to examine the intentions and behaviors of students of color in international affairs. I am an American-born, Black woman, who has earned an undergraduate degree in history and a master's degree in public administration both from predominantly White institutions. I attended two separate institutions and had similar experiences at both universities. Often the only student of color in the classroom, I felt obligated to actively engage in discussions about history and politics in order to help my White professors and classmates "see the other side." I was motivated to conduct this study based on my experiences as a student and an understanding

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of the importance of diverse perspectives in White classrooms—particularly those where history and political philosophy are being taught.

Working full-time in a senior administrative capacity at a graduate school of international affairs where students, staff, and faculty of color are few and far between also influenced my decision to conduct this inquiry. My place of practice is predominantly White with a student population that is approximately 70% White. There are no faculty of color in academic courses, and there are also only four staff members of color out of 30 (one is off-site, one is a relatively new hire, another is a part-time contract employee, and myself). I have worked at my institution for over 10 years and am the only person of color on the senior leadership team. Despite being the only person of color on the senior leadership team, I have gained a tremendous amount of respect within my organization and can influence decisions. I am intimately involved in institutional planning and policy decisions and as a result can inform change within the school. Additionally, it is not uncommon for students of color to reach out to me or come sit in my office for a "safe space" to discuss their experiences, frustrations, and seek advice.

I believe that my position as a Black woman in a senior leadership position at the Institute made participants feel more comfortable and more inclined to participate in this study. As I considered my epistemological approach and reflexivity as a Black woman with an academic background in history, public administration/policy, and government studies, it was extremely important to be transparent throughout this inquiry as I have very strong beliefs and biases. As a qualitative researcher, Maxwell (2005) suggests that I cannot detach myself from the meaning-making process, but I must make conscious attempts to minimize my influence on the research and be very explicit about how my personal biases impact analysis. To minimize bias, I kept a

journal of how my perspectives changed throughout the study and used peer debriefers to identify if and/or when cultural bias existed (Mertens, 2015).

3.4 Inquiry Approach

I used an exploratory, qualitative inquiry design to investigate how one's beliefs and experiences influence students' of color decision to pursue international affairs graduate programs. A qualitative interview protocol was selected for this study because such designs can provide an in-depth focus on individual meaning (Creswell, 2018). The qualitative research process "involves emerging questions and procedures, data… [collection]…, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data" (Creswell, 2018, p. 4). Given the small size of eligible prospective participants and the lack of research about international affairs graduate programs, qualitative interviews were used to gain a deeper and more detailed understanding of barriers and motivators.

Using the conceptual model of English and Umbach (2016) as a source of comparison, I compared the factors/contexts identified in their study against each interview (view of each participant) to fine tune themes to interpret the meaning of the data. I used this constant comparison method to identify emergent themes that informed conclusions and recommendations for action. An exploratory analysis of identified themes enabled me to identify and recommend targeted recruitment strategies to attract students of color, thereby increasing racial diversity within my place of practice.

3.4.1 Data Source

To collect data, I used a semi-structured interview protocol. Semi-structured interviewing is a form of naturalistic qualitative research involving an interview protocol comprised of open-ended questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I developed the interview protocol based on the guiding conceptual framework and factors identified in the literature (Appendix A). The interview protocol consisted of eight questions with probes that encouraged the participant to expand their responses (if necessary). Using a semi-structured protocol with probe questions allowed for an in-depth understanding of each participant's perspective (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). During audio-recorded, in-person, one-on-one interviews with me, participants were asked four questions in two topical areas: 1) motivators/influences to enrollment, and 2) perceived barriers to enrollment in IR graduate programs. Both inquiry questions were addressed using this collection tool. Interviewees were asked to reflect on their considerations, experiences, and perceptions during the time they were applying to and/or considering enrollment at IWP. I used a journal to write down my thoughts during and after each interview. The journal entries or "analytic memos" as noted by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014, p. 96) allowed for reflection throughout the data collection process. The memos served as a "useful and powerful sense-making tool" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 96) that proved valuable during data analysis and when reporting final conclusions.

3.4.2 Sample

As the Registrar and Institutional Research Officer within my institution, I ran a query to identify all doctoral, master's and graduate certificate applicants that fit the following criteria: (1) American citizen, (2) self-identify as a "person of color," and (3) that had been accepted (but did

not matriculate), have attended, and/or had graduated within the past six years. For this inquiry, "persons/students of color" were defined as those who identify as Black, Hispanic/Latino/a, or Native American. This query yielded 79 eligible participants. All 79 participants had either applied to, been enrolled in, or graduated from an IWP doctoral, master's or graduate certificate program. Of these eligible participants, 38 identify as female and 41 identify as male. Thirty-two of the eligible participants were alumni, 22 attended but did not graduate, 21 were accepted but declined admission, and four were currently enrolled students.

Participants had to have applied, attended, and/or graduated between 2013 through fall 2019. The rationale for this timeframe was to allow sufficient time for consideration of a master's degree (for those that applied, but declined admission and those in a graduate certificate program), and the possibility of completing a master's program. Full-time master's students can reasonably complete their degree requirements in two years; however part-time students can take longer. The selected timeframe provides ample opportunity for students to consider attending IWP or to begin and/or complete a Master's program. It was also assumed that if participants applied or attended within the six-year timeframe, they would remember the considerations they had when deciding to apply and enroll in graduate school.

A call for participants invitation email explaining the study (Appendix B), its purpose, and potential value to international affairs education was sent to all 79 eligible participants. Two days after sending the email invitation, I followed up with non-responders by telephone to personally invite them to participate. As an incentive, I offered all participants a $10 gift card for their time. Those interested in participating were asked to answer pre-interview questions (Appendix C) to confirm eligibility. Ten participants accepted the invitation to participate and met eligibility requirements. It was difficult to contact and get a response from students who declined admission;

however, the purposeful sample included individuals from each criteria group. Demographic information for each of the participants is outlined in Table 1.

To establish credibility, member checks and peer debriefing were conducted to ensure that the participants' narratives were accurately represented, and the researcher's perspective did not overshadow those of participants. These practices should be used to achieve a high level of

Table 1 Demographics of Participants

Participant	IWP Status	Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Age
Silver	Accepted, but declined admission	Black	Female	26
Mattis	Alumni	Black	Male	46
David	Alumni	Black	Male	36
Whitney	Alumni	Black	Female	26
Deena	Alumni	Black	Female	28
Jaime	Alumni	Native American	Female	27
Mansa	Attended, but did not graduate	Black	Male	39
Sebastian	Attended, but did not graduate	Black	Male	31
Dee	Attended, but did not graduate	Black	Female	35
Helena	Current Student	Hispanic/Latina	Female	23

"accuracy and consensus by revisiting facts, feelings, experiences, and values or beliefs collected and interpreted" (Cho & Trent, 2006, p. 324). Transcribed interviews were returned to the interviewees, and they were asked to review their interview for accuracy. Interviewees had the opportunity to provide additional information and clarify data. After reviewing their interview transcripts, two participants did provide additional details about their initial responses. Member checking aligns with constructivist ideas and qualitative reasoning that knowledge is constructed through interaction with the world. As a qualitative inquiry, this study produced knowledge that

was co-created by both participants and the researcher. In addition to member checking, I discussed my interview journal entries and key themes with colleagues who hold doctorates in higher education to avoid my personal biases being presented over those of the participants (peer debriefing).

Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant to ensure confidentiality. Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form (Appendix D) to acknowledge their understanding of the study and rights as a participant. The records of this study were kept private and confidential. The audio recordings of the interviews were shared with a third-party transcription service (Rev), but identifying information was not shared with this service. Data collected from this study have been reported anonymously. Research records were stored securely, and only the researcher had access to the records, audio recordings, and interview transcripts. Paper transcripts were stored in a locked office, in a fire-proof cabinet, and all records will be destroyed after any resulting publications are completed.

3.4.3 Data Analysis

The transcribed interviews were the primary data source for this inquiry. I printed and thoroughly read each transcribed interview. I referred to my personal journal jottings from each interview and made notes on the transcribed interviews prior to coding. The margins of the transcripts were filled with hand-written, preliminary codes and thoughts about connections to other interviews and literature. I continued to journal and make analytic memos throughout this process. When all ten interviews were complete, the transcripts and analytic memos were uploaded to a qualitative data analysis software called Quirkos to be coded and analyzed. Responses were analyzed for emergent themes. I coded each interview for content, which means that I "came up

with valid and reliable approaches for grouping content at specified levels of meaning and interpretation" (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011, p. 64). Codes, as defined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), are "labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive…information compiled during a study" (p. 71). I began the coding process by cataloging demographic information of the participants. I reviewed each transcribed interview again line-by-line and using deductive codes from the conceptual framework (i.e. HABITUS_MOTIVE, HABITUS_BARRIER, CULTURAL CAPITAL_MOTIVE, UG CONTEXT_MOTIVE, etc.) and literature did the first cycle of coding. These deductive, starter codes were examined repeatedly for appropriateness and utility (Miles et al., 2014). During the second cycle of coding, open coding or inductive coding, codes were assigned based on the qualitative data itself. This phase was a repetitive process of reading, coding, and recoding as text was compared to other interviews and the literature. According to Miles and colleagues (2014), inductive coding allows others to see what the researcher is open to and what participants actually have to say rather than force-fitting the data into preexisting codes (p. 81). The use of qualitative analysis software allowed me to organize, sort, and easily filter text and memos to analyze patterns, frequencies, and relationships among the codes.

Each interview participant shared their experiences and perspectives on factors that shaped and impacted their decision to go to graduate school for international relations. Each interview was continually compared to the conceptual framework, literature, and other interview responses and analyzed for commonalities and areas of divergence in an effort to address both inquiry questions. An analysis of each inquiry question and raw interview data illustrating the codes created during the deductive and inductive coding cycles is presented in Appendix E. While there were many themes that emerged from the data, after thorough review, six key themes were identified: (a)

network of relationships, international travel experiences, and personal motivations; (b) characteristics of the graduate institution; (c) undergraduate major choice and experiences; (d) cost considerations; (e) lack of people of color in the field of international relations; and (f) post-matriculation experiences. The perceptions of each participant regarding motivators and barriers that impacted graduate school choice were different. There were, however, common threads that surfaced during analysis that linked their stories. These key themes were identified based on their frequency found among participants and broad relationship to common sub-themes. These themes, listed above by level of frequency, were determined to be the most salient (Appendix F).

3.5 Limitations of the Approach

As with all studies and inquiries, there were limitations of the approach. This inquiry took place at IWP only. As a result, this study is limited to IWP and therefore cannot be generalized to other international affairs graduate programs at other institutions. Additionally, only students of color who applied to or attended IWP were interviewed, so the results cannot be generalized to all students of color. This study was meant to understand the factors that motivate and deter students from applying and enrolling in graduate programs at IWP. While these participants did provide data about motivations and potential barriers, very little data were collected from applicants who declined admission. This study is limited in that all participants applied and enrolled in an international affairs graduate program at IWP or at another institution. It does not include the perceptions of students who decided to forego pursuing an international affairs graduate degree. As a result, several barriers to enrollment may not have been revealed by this study.

3.6 Conclusion

A qualitative interview protocol was used to gain insight about that the factors that influence and deter students of color from enrolling in graduate programs at IWP. Seventy-nine potential participants were identified for this inquiry—all students of color who had applied to (and declined admission), matriculated, or graduated from an IWP Master's or graduate certificate program within the past six years. I approached the inquiry through a constructivist lens to get a detailed account of participants' beliefs and experiences. I interpreted the data and made conclusions based on my reflexivity as a Black woman with an academic background in history, public administration/policy, and government studies. While doing so, precautions were taken to ensure that my personal biases did not overshadow the perceptions and voices of participants. This inquiry provided valuable data that answered the inquiry questions, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.0 Findings

In this inquiry I sought to identify and better understand the perceived motivators and barriers to enrollment into international affairs graduate programs among students of color at IWP. This chapter presents the findings from the one-on-one, semi-structured interviews of 10 participants. The interview participants consisted of people of color from the following groups: five alumni of IWP, one current IWP student, three former students who attended but did not complete their studies, and one person who was accepted to IWP but declined the admission offer. Using the theoretical framework of English and Umbach's (2016) graduate choice model, I investigated participants' reasons for pursuing a graduate degree in international affairs and factors that may have prevented them from enrolling in an international affairs/relations graduate program. While there were many themes that emerged from the data, after thorough review, six key themes were identified: (a) network of relationships, international travel experiences, and personal motivations; (b) characteristics of the graduate institution; (c) undergraduate major choice and experiences; (d) cost considerations; (e) lack of people of color in international relations; and (f) post-matriculation experiences. This chapter will provide an overview of the findings and elaborate on the six key themes that emerged from the data.

4.1 Network of Relationships, International Travel Experiences, and Personal Motivations

Habitus are one's beliefs and habits; it refers to the system in which individuals perceive the world, how they respond to it, and how individuals are shaped by their network of relationships,

their social and cultural capital, and their personal experiences (Perna, 2004, 2006; English & Umbach, 2016). Interview data revealed that habitus, in its various forms, was the most influential factor in participants' decisions to pursue graduate school for international affairs. These forms of habitus included their network of relationships (parental influence, mentoring and role models in the field of international relations), international travel experiences, and personal motivations (strong sense of self-determination and desire to have a meaningful impact on the world).

4.1.1 Network of Relationships

Several participants reported the existence of key influencers. These influencers included primarily parents and family members, and relationships with other people in their lives that shaped their decision to pursue a graduate degree in international affairs. Parental influence and encouragement, which was mentioned by eight out of 10 participants, played a major role in the participants' decision. The importance of the "value of education" was found throughout several of the narratives. Helena, a 23-year-old, Miami-born, 1st-generation Latina whose parents immigrated from central America described how important the value of education was in her family: "My parents greatly influenced my decision to get a college education and continue on to graduate school, because they came to this country with the motivation that their children were going to have a better opportunity." Helena went on to explain how, "in many Hispanic families, family members have a way of dictating a child's life from the age of one." Her father did not allow this to happen and urged her to be successful in whatever area she wanted, but school and education were values that were strongly encouraged.

Similarly, Deena, a 28-year-old, Black woman said her mother was her biggest encourager, noting: "My mom was always super, super into me going to school…She does not have a

bachelor's degree. But for me, she was like, 'You have to go to school.' My mom was my biggest cheerleader in that respect." Helena, whose father was a lawyer in his country before fleeing to the United States, grew up poor and said that her family has seen great struggles. Both Helena and Deena's parents stressed the importance of education as a way to "get ahead" in this country. As a person of color, education, particularly obtaining a graduate degree, is seen as a way to increase one's social mobility and economic status (Johnson, Mejia, & Bohn, 2018; Trent, 2019).

In some cases, parents not only imparted their belief in the value of education but made it clear that not only was education encouraged, it was expected. Sebastian, a 31-year-old, Black man who attended IWP but did not graduate due to a demanding new job, adamantly expressed how important the value of education was in his family. He stated,

My dad always had a global outlook on the world…He encouraged me to advance myself through studies. When it came to going to graduate school, I didn't have an option… My brother has his Ph.D., so school is not really an option for us.

Both of Sebastian's parents are college-educated; his mother is an educator, so he said there was always the desire, "for their children to be more successful than them." In addition to his parents' "expectation" and influence, the desire and pressure to keep up with his older brother may have also contributed to his desire to go to graduate school.

Their parents exposing them to world events and different cultures at an early age also shaped participants' interest in international affairs. Mattis, a 46-year-old, Black, retired U.S. Army Special Forces Officer admitted that his interest in international affairs began when he was a child, stating,

My mom's a Mississippi sharecropper…Not very well educated, but she was a stickler

about how she developed her children. My mom used to force me to watch the news. I

became very aware of world events and saw images of war and kids suffering in Africa.

This media coverage of world events increased Mattis' awareness of international politics,

religion, different cultures, and his place in the world at a very young age. As a result, he became

a curious learner, interested in what makes countries go to war, how to maintain peace, and how

people of different cultures interact.

Similarly, other respondents recalled how their parents influenced their interest in

international affairs at an early age. Silver, a 26-year-old, Black woman stated,

My mom introduced me to "international affairs" …We come from Cleveland, which is

very low socioeconomic [*sic*], so she didn't have a lot of opportunity to travel. She found

that gateway through books. We went to the library…to read about different places…she

wanted me to know that there's more out there than just what Cleveland had to offer.

Like Mattis, Silver's mother wanted to teach her child about the larger world. Limited financial

resources made it impossible for Silver's family to travel internationally. However, Silver's mother

exposed her to different cultures through reading and frequenting European cultural festivals

throughout Cleveland. There they tasted cuisines from around the globe, heard different

languages, and listened to international music. This cultivated Silver's love of "everything

international." She knew at a very young age that she wanted to study relationships between

different countries. Her mother's persistence influenced and shaped Silver's decision to pursue

international relations as a field of study and career.

Mansa, a 39-year-old, Black man who speaks five languages and has an established career in international affairs, acknowledged that his mother also shaped his interest in religious and cultural studies. He said,

> My mom converted to Islam when I was in elementary school…most Sunni Muslims in this area were West African from the Middle East. That exposed me to different cultures…different people, languages, and different foods.

He was thrust into a multicultural community at a very young age, which resulted in him being interested in international affairs "for as long as [he] could remember." He was intrigued by the commonalities among religions and believed that the shared humanity found in many religious doctrines and the ability to speak the same language as others would bring people together. Interestingly, Mattis, Silver, and Mansa grew up in low-income families with parents who did not have a college education, yet it was important for their parents, their mothers specifically, to expose them to a larger world and other cultures. Whether intentional or not, their parents encouraged a sense of curiosity about the world that may have influenced identity development, sparked an interest in international relations, and fostered a value for learning and postsecondary education.

In addition to parental influence, many of the participants noted other people in their life who influenced them to pursue advanced studies in international affairs. These "other influencers" consisted of mentors and role models who either worked in the field of international relations, had an interest in international affairs, or taught academic disciplines closely related to international affairs. Dee, a 35-year-old, Black woman who attended IWP for one semester and left because of a job opportunity, was influenced to go into international affairs in the eighth grade while working on a research project. She stated, "I reached out to a diplomat who was stationed in Gabon…and he was able to help me out… His input was very valuable. It was like, 'Oh, this is actually

something I can do.'" Silver was also influenced by a diplomat. She shared a story about their interaction, noting, "I had an informational meeting with former ambassador Amber Crombie because she also went to Cleveland Heights high school. She really helped me and was a major reason why I pursued international affairs in college and grad school."

Mattis and David were heavily encouraged to pursue international affairs by higher ranking military officers. Both men discussed at length how their military experience and guidance from superior officers motivated them to go back to school for international affairs. Mattis said, "Some of my commanding officers and supervisors in the army…counseled and mentored me and helped me find this niche in the world of IR." David, who earned an undergraduate degree in engineering, decided to go to graduate school 10 years after graduating from college because of his relationship with a retired chief petty officer, noting "Retired Chief Petty Officer Glen Tangellini. He's human library. He taught me about intel, the methods we use, how we do it, and what is really happening on the field as opposed to what's happening in the capital."

Deena made it clear that Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell, both African American, were her role models: "Condoleezza Rice was a hero. Colin Powell was a hero. We now have a shared language…I liked that I could have that in common with those people." Prior to Rice and Powell, Deena had never seen Blacks in foreign affairs represented in the media. Jaime, a 27-year-old woman who identifies as Native American/American Indian, was encouraged by history professors at her undergraduate institution to go to graduate school for international affairs. She recalls her professor saying, "Hey, you seem like you really might be interested in this program. It's a small school in DC, specializes in national security and international relations, and I think you'd be a really good candidate for it." Each of these participants were influenced to pursue international

affairs by mentors and role models that worked in international relations or in fields or academic disciplines that closely align with international relations.

4.1.2 International Travel Experience

In addition to the childhood and military experiences above, six of the 10 participants described other personal experiences that impacted their decision to go the graduate school. The most significant among their narratives were their international travel experiences. Mattis and Mansa served in the military, and both noted how living overseas solidified their desire to go the graduate school. Mansa said, "I was stationed in Asia and wanted to go to graduate school. That's when I decided international relations is where I can merge my interests, my professional occupation, and my undergraduate degree." He went on to explain, "In a short time, I had been in eight different countries. While in the military, I said, I'm starting to see that there's a lot more to the world, and I can understand international relations from a micro level." Dee, a self-proclaimed military brat, and David, a first generation American whose family is from Kenya, acknowledged that living abroad as a child, exposed to different cultures, languages, and forms of government, nurtured their interest in international affairs. Whitney and Jaime took advantage of study abroad and other international study programs while in college. International travel, at any age, seemed to be a common theme that influenced the participants' decisions to pursue a degree in international affairs.

4.1.3 Personal Motivations

Participants' personal motivations also influenced their decision to apply to graduate school and pursue international relations. All the participants expressed a strong belief in themselves, their abilities, and determination to succeed as a reason for pursuing graduate school. Whether because it was a personal goal, a way to advance economically and professionally, or as a way to avoid returning to their poverty-stricken hometown, all of the participants were determined to go to graduate school. When finally deciding to attend graduate school, Mattis quit his job to avoid any conflicts that would impact his studies. Mattis noted, "I'm green beret [U.S. Army Special Forces]. You make the impossible possible. There was nothing that was going to discourage me from enrolling in grad school". Sebastian said, "I wanted to better myself. I had the drive…and fire in my belly." Silver and Jaime were determined to go to graduate school immediately after undergraduate because they feared they would get stuck in their hometown if they returned home. Silver said, "I was afraid that if I didn't go straight in, I'd never go. I'm really not trying to go back to Cleveland…grad school seemed like the most logical next step." Silver's decision to leave Cleveland after high school, an old industrial city plagued by segregation and a median income well below the national average, was intentional. She went to college in the District of Columbia metropolitan area and knew that if she wanted to pursue a career in the foreign service it would be beneficial to remain in the same area for graduate school. Silver believed Cleveland had little opportunity, and, as a result, she continued straight to graduate school after college to avoid returning home.

Jaime shared a similar sentiment and saw education as her "one-way ticket" out of her hometown in Wasilla, Alaska. She was highly motivated to leave her hometown after graduating

from high school and went to college in Ohio "to get as far away from Alaska as possible." When describing her motivation to go to graduate school after college, she said,

> I never let the might nots stop me. I grew up really poor in rural Alaska. No grocery store, no high school kind of rural. It was the idea that, if you wanted something different, you had to work really hard to get it. I also knew that, if I spent any significant period of time in Alaska, that the day-to-day grind of life would get to me. I had to go to graduate school.

Jaime feared if she returned to Alaska after college, even temporarily, she would get complacent and never go to graduate school. Like Silver, she knew she wanted to pursue international affairs and was determined to attend graduate school in Washington, DC and start a different life.

The desire to better understand relationships between other countries and "help fix" world problems was a shared characteristic among all participants. First generation Americans, Helena and David, were passionate about addressing problems that impact Latin American and African countries respectively. They had a deep sense of connection to the countries that their families are from and wanted to learn how international economic and political decisions impact the people within those countries. Helena had the opportunity while in undergraduate to teach students in Florida most of whom were immigrants. She understood the struggles of many of her students, growing up poor to Nicaraguan parents, but, as immigrants, her students had little education and were in constant fear of U.S. immigration laws. She was compelled to go to graduate school for international relations to help fix the problems (poverty, immigration law, and education) among Latinx people in the U.S. and their countries of origin.

Other participants noted specific international events, crises, and rebellions that motivated them to pursue graduate studies. The U.S. War on Terror, anti-government rebellions across the Arab world in the early 2010s (Arab Spring), U.S. involvement with Al-Shabaab terrorists in East

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Africa, and multiple attacks in Nairobi, Kenya were frequently mentioned as world events that lead them to graduate school. Participants wanted to learn more about the political, social, and economic underpinnings that led to these events. Whitney recalls, "all of the international crises and different power and regime changes in parts of the world…sparked my interest. I wanted to advance my studies to get a better foundational understanding of what was happening…[by] doing thorough political and risk analyses." The participants decided to pursue studies in international relations because they had a personal motivation to understand the relationships that exist between various nations and cultures and a desire to make the world a better place.

4.2 Characteristics of the Graduate Institution

All of the participants noted characteristics about prospective graduate schools they were considering that influenced their decision to enroll or not. All 10 participants applied to IWP, of those, nine attended for a semester or more and one declined the admission offer and chose to attend a different institution. Their narratives highlighted their experiences and impressions of IWP, both good and bad, when considering admission. Participants overwhelmingly mentioned the positive recruitment experience they had. IWP has a very small recruitment team that at maximum capacity consists of six people. Participants appreciated the wealth of information that was sent to them during the process, consistent follow-up, quick responses to questions, and the ability to speak to recruitment staff at any time. Mattis said, "They were pretty aggressive in bringing me in. Jason emailed me every week like, 'Do you want to pursue this path?' The follow-up was great." Even Silver, who declined admission to IWP and chose to attend a nearby institution, recalled, "My recruitment experience was great from IWP. I really felt like they wanted

me, and I wasn't just a number in the pool. It was very individualized. They really sold me the program." The intimate, personalized admission experience was favorable among the participants and was consistent with comments about their love of the small size of the institution and the one-on-one interaction with faculty.

Participants also noted their dislike and fear of taking standardized tests. Some were reluctant to take the GRE and mentioned that they were unsure how to prepare for the test or feared they would not do well. Each participant who expressed this concern noted that despite their dislike of the test they would have taken it if it was required to go to graduate school. Mattis admitted, "I would have taken it if I had to, but the schools that had eliminated the GRE admissions requirement…were much more attractive to me." Fortunately for the participants in this study, IWP eliminated the GRE requirement five years ago. The elimination of the GRE requirement in recent years influenced several of the participants to apply for admission.

Other graduate context factors found to have a large impact on participants' decisions were the reputation of the faculty, campus appearance, the physical location of the school, types of degrees and curricular offerings, and the reputation of the institution. While the participants expressed positive views of IWP's scholar-practitioner faculty members, prestigious campus appearance, and location in the heart of Washington, DC, there were concerns about the reputation or lack thereof of the institution and campus race/ethnicity demographics.

The ranking of a graduate institution was a deciding factor for most of the participants (n=8). Silver declined admission to IWP and instead decided to attend a large university in DC, because of their reputation. She said, "I wanted to get my master's degree from a prestigious university in order to set myself apart. As a Black woman, I wanted my degree to speak for itself when it came to job opportunities." Mansa, who was in an international affairs graduate program

at Georgetown University years before coming to IWP, spoke on his decision to attend Georgetown, "I knew I wanted to go to a school where the name could stand on its own. My first choice was Georgetown because…I just wanted to say I went to Georgetown."

IWP's lack of name recognition was a concern for most (n=7) participants. With other large and well-known universities in the area, participants were leery about attending a school that most people had never heard of. Whitney described her parents' concerns, saying,

"This school is not well known…that made my parents a bit leery, because, of course, everybody thinks of the more well-known Beltway schools, like, "What is this school? What about GWU or American?" Similarly, Deena, who relocated from Florida site unseen to attend IWP shared the same reservations, saying, "Okay, I'm about to go to a school that no one's going to know about. I'm going to try to get a job and be like, 'I went to IWP,' and them be like, 'And ...what is that?'" The participants viewed attending graduate school and obtaining a graduate degree as a way to increase their long-term earning potential. They feared that going to a less-reputable school would make potential employers doubt the value and credibility of their degree.

Prior to applying to IWP, participants mentioned hearing from online reviews or word of mouth that IWP was politically "conservative." Deena referred to IWP faculty and administrators as "Reagan people." While this may be off-putting to many people of color who typically are more liberal some participants in the study were attracted to IWP for this reason. They admitted that while they identify as a Democrat or as liberal, they wanted to understand how "the other side" thinks. For example, David said,

> I understood it was a more conservative graduate school. In fact, that's one of the reasons
>
> why I chose IWP…I'm a Democrat, I'm more center left. I want to know how the other

side reacts in this arena, so I can have a whole complete view and maybe some of my views

would change.

Sebastian echoed David's sentiments, saying,

As a Black man, coming to a neoconservative school allowed me to understand why; why

the other side of the aisle would think this way or make certain changes. As a moderate

person, it enhanced my view and forced me to think outside the box. It made me think

further of what I can do to better myself and better my community.

Instead of showing contempt for opposing ideological views, these participants saw it as an

opportunity to learn. International relations involve people of different cultures, government

structures, and religions, and therefore it is important to understand and respect how others think.

In doing so, the participants have an understanding of why policies are created and what the

considerations of those involved in negotiations and collaborations are. This idea of understanding

the "other side" was appealing to participants because it allowed them to look beyond their own

beliefs and evaluate policies and problems at a higher level, considering all potential perspectives.

Nine out of 10 participants noted that racial diversity at prospective graduate schools was

a strong consideration. Interestingly, for the participants in this study, it was neither a motivator

nor barrier to application, but they did take it into consideration when deciding where to go to

graduate school. It should be noted that all 10 participants attended predominantly White

institutions (PWIs) for their undergraduate education. IWP is also a predominantly White school,

and when considering admission participants wondered if IWP "was a good fit" and "if they'd feel

comfortable there." David explained his concern, saying, "When you don't see people that look

like you…You know you're different, and wonder…Am I walking into a hostile place? Do they

get me? Do they understand me?" Having gone to PWIs, participants were accustomed to studying

in White spaces and resigned to the belief of "that's just how it's going to be" in graduate school. Silver acknowledges this sentiment, saying "I think as a person of color it always weighs because you want to feel comfortable, but then at the end of the day…You just become okay with it not being as diverse as you want it to be."

Participants mentioned not seeing people of color during their recruitment process or when visiting IWP for the first time prior to applying. Mansa explained,

> If you are someone of color, coming to learn more about the school; once you walk through those doors [of IWP] and do not see other Black people, it is a stark reminder that you will always be the only Black person in the room…it's off-putting.

Mansa's statement expressed not only his discontent of not seeing other people of color throughout the institution, but it also highlighted the importance of faculty and staff of colors' involvement in the recruitment process and presence on campus. This proved true for Dee, who said, "I saw an IWP flyer, and was intrigued enough to visit during an open house, but it was Mr. Dortch that got me through the door and influenced my decision to apply." Mr. Dortch is the IWP Career Director and is Black. Dee admits that "him being a person of color…absolutely influenced my decision…I can't even lie about it."

Participants also noted the lack of racial diversity represented in IWP marketing material and on its website. Participants who attended IWP prior to 2018 distinctly remembered there being no images of people of color in IWP brochures or on its website. In 2018, IWP added a picture of IWP graduates (that included a student of color) on its webpage. Deena, who began studies in 2016, was surprised and said, "They couldn't have picked a better picture…if I had seen that five years ago, I wouldn't have had any hesitation [about enrolling at IWP]." Participants had a shared belief that images of people of color attract people of color. Deena went on to say,

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I've noticed a lot more people of color coming here since they put that picture up, because it's really simple…Whether you hire models or actual students—if you advertise yourself as a diverse place, diverse people are going to show up. Even if it ends up not being what they expected it to be, at least they made the trip, and that's what you want…We have historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) right in our backyard [Howard University, University of the District of Columbia, Bowie State, and Morgan State]. What are we doing to get them in the door?

The idea being to get prospective students of color in the door, which would then give the recruitment staff an opportunity to explain why IWP is the graduate school for them. These data reveal the importance of images of diverse racial groups in marketing material as a way to attract students of color.

Enlisting alumni of color to serve as ambassadors for the Institute was also seen as a valuable tool that should be implemented to attract students of color. David passionately noted, "You [IWP] have to activate alumni more." He urged IWP to leverage its alumni network in various ways to attract and retain students of color. IWP alumna, Deena, is committed to doing just that and regularly returns to IWP to speak to prospective students at open houses and events.

Surprisingly, Jaime, the only Native American who applied to and attended IWP within the last decade said when considering graduate school or in her life in general, "race never mattered…not even a little bit." Having grown up in extreme poverty, for Jaime the motivation to attend graduate school was less about race and more about improving her socioeconomic condition. She went on to explain that while she identifies as American Indian and is a member of the Potawatomi tribe, that the history of her people is one of assimilation to avoid discrimination. She knows her tribal history but admitted she is "half Potawatomi," born to a Native American

father and a White mother, does not partake in cultural practices, and has "passed" for White her whole life. Jaime explained that using the term, "passed," often requires that she unpack the term for others when they refer to her as "basically White." After her parents divorced at a young age, she was socialized by her White mother. With dark hair and a very light skin complexion with yellow undertones, Jaime said "since there's this passing…race and the barriers that it may or may not present are not even a frame of reference for me." Like her ancestors who assimilated years before, Jaime's light complexion and lack of cultural practices distance her from the "race conversations" that other students of color have. She is viewed by the world as a White woman, and therefore the question of "fitting in" due to race is not an issue for Jaime. For the other participants who are visibly black or brown, racial diversity was a strong consideration when determining whether they would fit in or feel comfortable learning in a predominantly White environment.

4.3 Undergraduate Major Choice and Experiences

Undergraduate major choice often dictates one's demand for graduate school (English & Umbach, 2016; Monaghan & Jang, 2017). Unlike quantitative majors such as business or engineering that can secure careers in the field with only a bachelor's degree, the participants in this study knew graduate school was a necessity in order to improve their earning potential. Participants earned liberal arts degrees in political science, history, sociology, African or Asian studies, and international relations/affairs. Monaghan and Jang (2017) refer to these majors as "risky" (p.724) and found that those who have bachelor's degrees in the arts and sciences, struggle immediately after graduation, earn lower wages, and are more likely to experience unemployment.

This proved true for the participants in this study when realizing they were unable to secure a high paying occupation in the post-bachelor labor market. The inability to find a "good job" with only a bachelor's degree pointed to the necessity for graduate school. Jaime, for example, recalls, "I got my undergrad degree in history and political science. I wasn't qualified to do a whole lot other than go to graduate school." Helena explained that she has former classmates with undergraduate degrees in international relations who now work in retail because they cannot find a job in their field. Similarly, Silver said, "I was looking at job postings, trying to figure out if I wanted to go to grad school or get a job. Most of them required a master's degree…I knew I needed to get a master's." For these participants, there was an obvious demand for graduate school since their undergraduate major and degree was not enough to achieve their desired career goals.

Participants' experiences during undergraduate also influenced their decision to pursue graduate school for international affairs. Silver, Dee, and Jaime took advantage of international relations fellowships and internship programs in college. Silver did a global studies fellowship that included both an academic coursework and research project component. She notes, "It was my first semester where everything was international affairs…no history, no math, the entire semester was international affairs. I thrived…it was my first time making Dean's List." After researching social, economic, and policy issues throughout Europe, Asia, India, and Africa, she knew her fellowship and internship experience solidified her decision to pursue international affairs beyond college. The opportunity to gain practical experience and conduct research in international affairs proved extremely valuable for these women.

Silver always knew she was interested in international affairs but acknowledged that not knowing the language of international affairs in her early undergraduate years almost lead her into another career field. Prior to college, she was not exposed to international affairs terminology

other than what was on the news. In undergraduate, a school counselor dismissed her requests for information about the field, because she "didn't speak the language." She remembers the incident with the counselor, saying,

> In undergrad I didn't have a lot of help getting into the field. I went to a counselor for help, not knowing the proper terminology…and she didn't take me seriously. She advised me to, "Look at something else because this isn't for you."

Silver unfortunately had to figure out how to pursue her interest in international affairs on her own. The counselor never informed her of popular international affairs fellowships for undergraduates (such as Rangel and Pickering Fellowships), career opportunities for those interested in international affairs, or graduate school options based on her interests. This lack of proper advising left her confused and uncertain about international affairs graduate program offerings and how to pursue a career in international affairs.

4.4 Cost Considerations

The high cost of graduate school was a common concern among the 10 participants. Three of the participants secured funding for graduate school through veteran's benefits or from their parents. For most of the participants, however, they had to take on multiple jobs or get large amounts of student loan funds to cover their costs. After years of serving in the military, Mattis and Mansa were eligible for veteran's educational benefits and a housing allowance. When referring to his benefits and going to graduate school, Mansa exclaimed, "I got the Willy Wonka golden ticket and could go to any school that I wanted to." Similarly, when discussing his use of Veterans Affairs benefits, Mattis said, "you [IWP] should reach out to service members…it is very

diverse." Not only is the military service diverse, most branches offer guaranteed funding, some at 100%. Sebastian and his older brother were able to strike a deal with their father. He recalls, "The agreement was if you get a scholarship to college, I will foot your grad school bill." These participants fortunately had the social capital and resources to alleviate a huge barrier to graduate school.

The others not only had to consider the high cost of tuition but also living expenses in the DC metropolitan area where the cost of living is significantly higher than the national average. David had to work three jobs and, despite having some financial aid, struggled to cover the gaps in his financial aid award package for tuition and rent. Similarly, Silver said, "Cost was a huge barrier. I had no idea how I was going to pay for graduate school…or how was I going to provide for myself in one of the most expensive areas in the country."

For most participants, finances were the biggest hurdle to graduate school. Whitney considered how much debt she would incur going to graduate school and postponed pursuing graduate school for two years. Participants, however, were determined to go to graduate school and were willing to take on student loan debt to pay tuition and cover living expenses. Dee explains, "I had to take out loans…there was no other option. It was something I wanted, so cost didn't matter. I would work it out." When asked about barriers to enrollment at IWP, Jaime immediately said, "Cost…I didn't like the fact that endowments [at IWP] are small…and scholarships are light." At small schools like IWP with small endowments and limited ability to offer scholarships (tuition discounts), loans are often the only form of aid graduate students are eligible for. For these participants, the long-term economic benefits of having an advanced degree outweighed the burden of having to repay student loans. Yet, participants wished they were aware of non-debt options (e.g., fellowships, assistantships, and outside scholarships) available to them.

4.5 Lack of People of Color in International Relations

As noted, the field and academic discipline of international relations is predominantly White. This could pose challenges for students of color who may be reluctant to pursue graduate studies in international relations because they do not see foreign service officers or international affairs officials who look like them. For the four male participants, all of which were Black, this was problematic and seen as a potential barrier to entry into the field of international relations. David said, "It's sad because unless you get your foot in the door as a minority, you don't see or hear from other minorities in IR and intelligence" . Mansa passionately said, "You don't see Black people in international relations! Look at the UN…you see all the people of the United Nations… But who are the ones up there speaking? Who's addressing the world? Often it's not a person of color". He went on to mention that he could "count on one hand almost every Black public figure since the Carter Administration that has had their hand in U.S. international policy and security." This lack of representation in the field may deter students of color from pursing this field of study, or it is possible that students are not aware of international affairs as a career option because they do not see people like themselves in those positions. Whitney had never seen a Black diplomat growing up, and suggested that IWP "reach out to students…at the high school level…to plant the seed early. Students of color, especially those in high school, don't know that a master's degree in international affairs exists…We are taught [to go to] law school or medical school." Early exposure to the field of international affairs, Whitney believes, would help students of color realize that there is a need and place for them in international affairs.

There are also historical and political factors that impact students of color interested in this field. The Black men in this study acknowledged that U.S. race relations and the historical

oppression of people of color was a consideration when pursuing graduate school and international affairs as a career. Sebastian noted,

> As a Black man in America, you are always conscious of how Black you are, but that's why my perspective is so important. You can only change the U.S. system and how we interact with other countries from the inside.

Similarly, Mansa said,

> Once you get past the diplomatic process, then we talk money…at that point there's a thin line between international relations and international dominance based on money and power. Receiving said outlook as a Black American, fully understanding what oppression looks like, what struggle looks like, and then to see that the major players in international relations are predominantly White…it can be discouraging.

These men expressed concern about whether they would be able to make a real impact in a field that is dominated by White men. Interestingly, the women in the study (except for Jaime) acknowledged that there is a lack of diversity in international affairs, but they were far less troubled by it than the Black male participants.

Mansa was advised not to pursue a career in international relations due to the perceived inability to make a difference in the field. He recalled an undergraduate professor challenging him to consider domestic service instead of international affairs:

> He asked me how I was going to fix big world problems. He urged me to do local politics or work in the U.S. government to change the policies and the system. He believed I could effectuate more change and make a bigger impact on Americans that need it.

America has its own challenges that directly impact students of color and their families. The advice given to Mansa, highlights the dilemma that some students may face when considering

international affairs. They may question whether to go abroad to fix problems in other countries, when people in their own communities face poverty, racism, health and education disparities, and other issues that need to be addressed.

4.6 Post-Matriculation Experiences

Several participants shared their experiences as students at IWP. While the narratives about their post-matriculation experiences are outside of the scope of this inquiry (which focused on pre-application and enrollment considerations), their stories highlighted many implications for future practice that could improve IWP's institutional culture and recruitment practices. Participants were troubled by the lack of diverse perspectives presented in classroom discussions and throughout the curriculum. Helena, for example, recalling an uncomfortable classroom interaction:

> Some faculty have very different points of view and can be very passionate. For example, my dad fought in the Iran-Contra war, but not with the Contras, he fought with the Sandinistas. Hearing the different perspectives of the professors for that topic is frustrating, knowing firsthand what my parents endured and how better off or worse off they are compared to the perspective of people who weren't there but just oversaw decisions and/or studied what was going on there. It's kind of frustrating.

Helena's father's experience as a Sandinista soldier, gave her an understanding of conflicts surrounding the war, and an "insider's view" of what it was like to be Nicaraguan during that time. She was able to contribute to the discussion by presenting the Nicaraguan perspective. The professor, a White, American male, who studied the war and worked in the U.S. government during

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that time had a very different lived experience and understanding of events. This is important because it highlights the need for diverse perspectives among both students and faculty in the classroom and their educational value.

Overall, it seemed that participants enjoyed and were challenged by the curriculum. Five participants, however, did feel that the curriculum falls short in some areas. First, participants noted that the curriculum is heavily "Eurocentric" (Mattis). Mattis explains further saying, "You hear a lot about Russia. I can understand because, the faculty, many of them were in the Cold War or studied it. But now the center of attention is in the Asian-Pacific area or in the Middle East and Africa." This excerpt alone, captures many of the concerns expressed by the participants. Participants feel there is a lack of diversity in course content. They believe that the narrow course offerings at IWP do not focus on relationships with countries at the center of attention and hinder students' ability to receive a well-rounded understanding of the world. Second, all the faculty at IWP are White, many of which have heavily studied U.S.-European relationships and participants believe are offering a one-sided perspective. Whitney feels this is problematic, saying:

> A lot of classes here only focus on one narrative, and they don't include different viewpoints of the people on the other side; those who are actually native or have a more familiar connection with those kinds of conflicts. You're cutting out their voices.

Student concerns about the curriculum make it clear that the administration may need to consider expanding the curriculum to include relationships with other countries and adding diverse perspectives to classroom readings and discussions. To add diverse perspectives, participants suggested that IWP diversify the faculty, bring in racially diverse speakers from different areas of the world, and strategically select course textbooks and readings that present opposing views.

Deena admitted that at times her interactions with White classmates were somewhat contentious. She stated, "Diversity…shuts some people down. They really don't know what to do in instances where they're confronted with people that don't look like them and don't come from their neighborhoods. They don't know how to converse with people of color." Her White classmates often felt challenged when presented with a different perspective. She believed there was an obvious elephant in the room—the inability to have honest discussions about race. She urged, "It would be nice to see a class that reviews race relations on a global scale in the post-Obama era…Let's talk about the racial history of this country." Mansa shared similar experiences with fellow classmates and expressed his frustration, noting that IWP should create a course that "not only appeals to Black students, but that also humbles some of the White students on the Black experience when it comes to the founding of America." Mansa was referring to the IWP required course, American Founding Principles, and is of the belief that White students need to understand that America was founded on principles that were detrimental to people of color. These narratives illustrate the need for an extensive curriculum review to ensure that IWP students receive the educational benefits of diverse perspectives.

Mattis and Sebastian spoke of classroom experiences that highlight the need for institutional training. On many occasions when recalling interactions with faculty during classroom discussion, Mattis wondered, "What's up with this dude? Is he racist?" To him, some faculty had very short-sighted views and their perceived inability to shift their way of thinking seemed to suggest that they believed they were superior. Mattis contributed their short-sightedness to the lack of cultural awareness. When asked about his experiences at IWP, Sebastian said,

> I didn't think prior to coming here that I'd be the only African American man in all of my
>
> classes. [Turns out] I was the only Black guy in all my classes…and had two experiences

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that were really uncomfortable. One of my classmates decided to quote Lyndon B. Johnson. He [the White classmate] felt comfortable quoting Lyndon B. Johnson with the word nigger in it TWICE.

This raises the question of how faculty should manage these awkward and uncomfortable moments of racial and/or cultural insensitivity that arise in the classroom. In that moment, Sebastian felt uncomfortable and alone. Training is needed to teach faculty how to address racially and culturally inappropriate statements made in the classroom. With proper training, faculty would learn to address the insensitivity immediately and make the student of color feel supported.

In fact, Mansa, who attended but later halted his studies because he needed a "break" from IWP, was tired of being the only Black student in the class and dealing with classroom insensitivities. While he does intend to return to IWP at some point, he said,

[When you're] the only Black person in the room…you have to fight through somebody else's warranted or unwarranted thoughts about Black people. It's too much… I already have to deal with that at work…I don't want to do it after work in class too.

The post-matriculation frustrations, uncomfortable moments, and need for a "break" among participants illustrate the need for institutional support structures to help students of color persist through graduation at predominantly White institutions. There are currently no student affairs programs, ethnic student organizations, or "safe spaces" (i.e., cultural centers or racial affinity group student lounge/study rooms) for students of color at IWP. Participants did mention the importance of staff of color at IWP and the impact they had on their experience. Mattis said, "Had it not been for you and Derrick [Mr. Dortch], offering support and encouragement, I probably wouldn't have stayed here." The presence of staff of color and the ability to go to a staff member of color was reassuring to the participants. This support was often in the form of academic and

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career advisement, a safe space to speak honestly about their experiences, or a pep talk to keep them on the path to degree completion.

4.7 Conclusion

The 10 participants in this study graciously shared their stories and experiences that shaped their decision to apply and enroll in international affairs graduate programs. This chapter provided an overview of the findings and outlined the six key themes identified in the interview responses that impacted their decision to pursue graduate school. The six key themes that emerged from the data include: (a) network of relationships, international travel experiences, personal motivations; (b) characteristics of the graduate institution, (c) undergraduate major choice and experiences, (d) cost considerations, (e) lack of people of color in international relations, and (f) post-matriculation experiences.

Participants were influenced heavily by their parents, relationships with people in the field of international affairs, and their experiences as children and young adults. These people and experiences shaped the beliefs of the participants. Each person possessed a strong sense of self-determination and desire make the world a better place. The look, feel, and reputation of a prospective graduate school was also a key consideration when deciding to go the graduate school. The high cost of graduate school was identified as the biggest potential barrier to graduate school enrollment. Participants, however, while concerned about student loan debt repayment, were more than willing to take on loans to achieve their goals. It was found that there is a high demand for graduate school among liberal arts majors who are unable to find employment after earning their bachelor's degree. I discovered that internships, fellowships, and proper advising while in college

are beneficial for students interested in navigating international affairs graduate programs and career possibilities. Students of color may also be unaware or disinterested in pursing international affairs as an academic discipline and career because there is a lack of racial diversity in the field (i.e., they do not see people who look like them). Lastly, their post-matriculation experiences shed light on opportunities for improvement that could drastically change institutional and recruitment practices.

5.0 Discussion

The purpose of this inquiry was to examine the perceived motivators and barriers to enrollment into international affairs graduate programs at the Institute of World Politics (IWP) among students of color. This study was conducted at the IWP, a small graduate school in Washington, DC, to address the lack of racial diversity among the student population at the institution. American-born students who identified as Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latinx, or Native American/American Indian who (1) had been accepted (but did not matriculate), (2) had attended, and/or (3) had graduated within the past six years were invited to participate in the study. Ten participants who represented all three population sub-groups volunteered to offer insight via in-person qualitative, semi-structured interviews. The participants consisted of five alumni of IWP, one current IWP student, three former students who attended, but did not complete their studies, and one person who was accepted to IWP, but declined the admission offer. Of these, four were Black men, four were Black women, one was a Latina woman, and one was a Native American/American Indian woman. The participants ranged in age from early 20s to mid-40s.

Using the conceptual framework of English and Umbach's (2016) graduate choice model, I investigated participants' reasons for pursuing a graduate degree in international affairs and the factors that may have prevented them from enrolling in an international affairs/relations graduate program. Each interview participant shared their experiences and perspectives related to factors that shaped and impacted their decision to go to graduate school for international relations. In this final chapter, I discuss key findings and their implications for practice and future research.

<center>**5.1 Key Findings**</center>

This study was designed to investigate the perceived factors that motivated and deterred the enrollment of students of color into international affairs graduate programs at IWP. Participants discussed several variables that impacted their decision to pursue graduate school. Here I summarize the following three key findings: (1) the importance of cultural and social capital in the graduate school choice process, (2) the significance of racial representation in the field of international affairs and campus racial climate perceptions among prospective students of color, and (3) the need for financial assistance to cover the high cost of a graduate education.

5.1.1 Key Finding #1: Cultural and Social Capital Are Critically Important to Graduate School Choice Among Students of Color

All participants, regardless of race, gender, age, or socio-economic background reported that cultural and social capital heavily influenced their decision to pursue graduate studies in international affairs. Cultural capital, as described by Perna (2006), refers to the broad set of knowledge an individual acquires from a parent or other socializers, in the form of language, activities, experiences, and preferences that influence their ability to navigate an education choice process that values the cultural norms of the established educational structure. Parental influence was identified as the primary form of cultural capital that impacted their decision to attend graduate school. Parents, as previous research has found (Collins, 2003; Hamrick & Stage, 2004; Horvat, 1996; Perna, 2006; Smith, 2005), are critical influencers on students' decisions to attend graduate school. For most participants, their parents imparted a strong value for learning and higher education. These findings align with the research of Hamrick and Stage (2004) and Smith (2005)

who found that, for students of color, the decision to attain higher levels of education were influenced by their parents' educational expectations of them and the emphasis that was placed on education within the home.

Social capital is a network of resources an individual has access to and can draw upon in support of an objective (McDonough, 1997; Veenstra, 2009). In this study, participants began developing social capital at an early age and leveraged those resources in support of their educational goals and interest in international affairs. Half of the participants noted teachers and mentors from high school who exposed them to international affairs and encouraged them to further their education. Most participants also acknowledged professors and faculty mentors from their undergraduate institutions and mentor relationships during their early careers who were instrumental in their decision to pursue graduate school. Strong mentor relationships have been found to increase the likelihood of continuation to graduate school (Hart, 2009; DeAngelo, 2009, 2016), help introduce students to members of their professional community, and increase their access to information and resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2010). In addition to influencers discussed above, half of the participants noted they were introduced to IWP and encouraged to attend by someone who had a relationship with IWP (alumni, current students, or former IWP interns). The findings and literature highlight the importance of developing social capital and the impact it had on participants in this study.

5.1.2 Key Finding #2: Perceptions of Racial Climate and Representation of People of Color in International Affairs

Students of color are more likely than White students to consider campus racial climate when considering college choice (Barr, Wanat, & Gonzalez, 2007; Poock & Love, 2001). The

psychological dimension of racial climate, according to Hurtado and colleagues (2012), involves one's "perceptions of the environment, views of intergroup relations and perceptions of discrimination of racial conflict within the institutional context" (p. 70). Prior to applying to IWP, nine out of 10 participants (all identifying as Black or Latina) contemplated its racial climate and feared that because IWP is a predominantly White institution with very little diversity among the student population, faculty, and staff they would not fit in or would not feel welcomed. Participants did not see many people of color (students, staff, or faculty) on campus during prospective student functions (open houses, campus tours, etc.) and there were no students of color until late fall 2018 on IWP's website or in marketing materials. As a result, participants "did not see anyone that looked like them" and questioned whether or not they should attend. This is consistent with previous studies that found that students of color grapple with "cultural mistrust" (Terrell & Terrell, 1981) due to historical discrimination that shapes their perceptions of the world (Collins, 2005; Goforth et. al, 2016; Levine, 2008; & Longoria, 2010).

Campus racial climate is a strong consideration for students of color that who to learn in an inclusive and welcoming environment (Brown, 1988; Hunter, 2006; Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011). The lack of campus racial diversity was not a barrier to enrollment for the participants in this study as all participants ultimately enrolled in international affairs graduate programs at predominantly White institutions (nine attended IWP and one attended another PWI). They did, however, acknowledge that it was a worry when considering admission and noted it did impact them negatively post-matriculation in classroom discussion and during interactions with classmates and faculty members. Their post-matriculation experiences with race at IWP revealed the need to make institutional changes to improve the racial climate across campus.

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In a field dominated by White men, participants also noted the obvious and problematic lack of racial diversity in the field of international affairs. This was seen as a potential barrier to entry into the field because they did not see foreign service officers and international affairs leaders of color. Some participants grappled with how their Blackness would impact their ability to make a difference on an international scale. They wondered whether they should focus on a career addressing international problems or enter into a field that addresses domestic issues that people of color face every day (systematic oppression, racism, etc.). Ultimately, the participants chose international affairs and expressed a desire to understand how international decisions are made and to have a seat at the negotiation tables of the U.S. and other countries.

5.1.3 Key Finding #3: Costs Associated with the Pursuit of a Graduate Degree

Consistent with human capital theory, English and Umbach's (2016) conceptual model "theorizes that individuals weigh the expected monetary benefits and costs of graduate education and select the option that maximizes their utility" (p. 197). The findings of this study supported this theory as all participants heavily weighed the expected cost of attendance associated with attending graduate school and their future earning potential. Three participants had the social capital and/or resources to finance their education. For seven of the 10 participants, financing the high cost of graduate school was seen as the biggest potential barrier to enrollment. After graduating from their undergraduate institutions with social science and liberal arts majors, participants realized their earning potential and opportunities within the international relations field with a bachelor's degree only were minimal. There was an obvious demand for graduate school and participants saw value in having a master's degree. They perceived they would receive a favorable return on their investment in higher education and chose to enroll.

The decision to enroll in graduate school came with a hefty price tag, and most participants covered the cost with federal student loans and minimal scholarships from IWP. Contrary to Millett's (2003) assertion that undergraduate loan debt deters students from applying and enrolling in graduate programs, the participants in this study were willing to acquire additional debt to earn their advanced degree. These findings are in line with that of Weiler (1994) and English and Umbach (2016) that suggest that financial aid programs and the ability to defer undergraduate loan payments may act as an incentive to enroll in graduate school. Despite loan interest accrual and repayment realities, participants were willing to enroll in graduate school because they felt it would be a profitable decision. Student loans were viewed as a "necessary evil" to achieve their educational and professional goals, which aligns with human capital investment theory. The participants who did borrow money were disappointed that there were very few non-debt financial aid options. Participants noted that even after receiving the maximum amount of federal student loan funds and the small scholarships offered by IWP, there was still a "big gap" that left them struggling to pay living expenses and indirect school costs. There was very little institutional financial support or information sharing about non-debt funding options.

5.2 Implications for Practice

The findings from this inquiry brought forth several implications for IWP leadership and international affairs graduate program recruitment officers interested in attracting a racially diverse student population. In this section, I discuss recommendations for practice that I hope will serve as a guide for graduate program recruitment officers not only at IWP but at other at PWIs. These recommendations are based on the findings of this inquiry and relevant literature.

5.2.1 Recommendation #1: Adopt an Institutional Commitment to Increase Compositional Diversity

Institutions looking to diversify their student body must adopt an institution-wide commitment to diversity (Chang, 2000; Hurtado et al., 2012). To date, diversity is not (nor has it ever been) a strategic priority or initiative in IWP's Strategic Plan. An institution's commitment to compositional diversity and increasing the presence of students of color must be clearly articulated and supported by its executive leadership (Gray, 2013). Compositional diversity refers to the "numerical and proportional representation of various racial and ethnic groups on campus" (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005, p. 15). It is important that institutions understand how their culture impacts their capacity to attract students of color. As this study and previous literature (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011; Ramirez, 2011) have shown, compositional diversity and racial representation matter to students of color. When students of color do not see others who look like them within an institution, they question their belonging (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011). Increasing compositional diversity among students, faculty, and staff communicates to those inside and outside of the institution that diversity is a priority to its leadership and the campus community (Milem et al., 2005). Increasing the number of racially diverse students, faculty, and staff in international affairs graduate programs requires an institution-wide belief that everyone on campus has a shared responsibility to support diversity efforts (Griffin & Muniz, 2011). To do this, institutions and administrators must make a conscious effort to recruit diverse populations. Faculty (especially those of color) would have a major role in this effort by actively participating in the recruitment process by creating partnerships with schools (HBCUs and MSIs) and other organizations with racially diverse populations, especially international affairs undergraduate programs. Faculty should also increase their personal interactions with prospective students of

color. As with any culture shift, this initiative may be met with resistance as faculty will be asked to take on these additional responsibilities on top of their heavy instructional workload and research projects. To encourage buy in, literature suggests that institutions should consider rewarding faculty and staff who promote diversity at the institutional level (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011). The post-matriculation experiences of study participants made it clear that there is a need for diversity training across the institution. Faculty, staff, and students should be required to take cultural sensitivity and implicit bias trainings. Faculty should also be taught how to implement inclusive teaching pedagogies to address issues of race and cultural differences in the classroom.

Students of color currently make up a small percentage of IWP's student population; there are no faculty of color, no graduate recruitment officers of color, and very few staff members of color across the institution. The findings of this study highlighted the concerns students of color face when they do not see others who look like them during the graduate school choice process. Schools and graduate recruitment officers must act to create an inclusive environment to ensure that students have a sense of belonging and can "see themselves" within the institution. To achieve this, the administration must allocate funds specifically for expanding compositional diversity by marketing and recruiting students, staff (especially as graduate recruitment officers), and faculty from diverse racial groups. Institutions should evaluate their marketing materials, website, and other visual imagery to ensure racially diverse groups are represented.

The importance of faculty involvement throughout the recruitment process was a common theme among the graduate school diversity literature (Burt et al., 2016; Goforth et al., 2016; Griffin & Muñiz, 2011; Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011; Rogers & Molina, 2006). The inclusion of faculty of color in the recruitment process was found to be even more significant when recruiting students

of color (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011; Ramirez, 2011; Rogers & Molina, 2006). Studies have found that students' perceptions of an institution's interest in diversity was determined by the number of students and faculty of color throughout the institution (Morelon-Quainoo et al., 2011). The reality is, students of color are more likely to attend an institution where there are faculty members who look like them (Fant, 2001; Iverson, 2012; Rogers & Molina, 2006). The participants in this study expressed a desire to see more faculty of color. Increasing the number of faculty of color can influence graduate school choice among students of color. Additionally, institutions should consider incorporating alumni of color into the recruitment process to share their experiences with prospective students and to help create a sense of belonging.

Increasing compositional diversity is a first step in the direction of addressing the lack of diversity in international affairs graduate programs, but it is not enough. Increasing the number of people of color on campus is one piece of a larger comprehensive diversity plan. Previous research studies (Chang, 2000; 2001; Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, & Arellano, 2012) have highlighted the benefits of learning in racially diverse environments. Participants in this inquiry also longed for diverse perspectives in the classroom. A commitment to increase campus compositional diversity must also involve an increased commitment to the educational value of diversity. Milem and colleagues (2005) urge institutional leaders to "think systematically and multidimensionally as they consider the types of policies and procedures that will maximize the educational benefits of diversity" (p. 13). In doing so, institutions must do an assessment of their campus racial climate including evaluating curriculum offerings to ensure that diverse perspectives and world cultures are included in the curriculum, implementing active learning pedagogies (instead of traditional lecture-based approaches) to provide opportunities for students from different backgrounds to engage around course content, and developing student support structures

to ensure students of color feel culturally included (Milem et al., 2005). The narratives of participants in this study affirmed the recommendations of Milem and his colleagues (2005). Institutions must acknowledge the positive impact that racial representation, diversity throughout the curriculum, and institutional supports (such as safe spaces on campus, organizations for students of color, and culturally inclusive events, to name a few) have on prospective and current students of color.

5.2.2 Recommendation #2: Be a Source of Social Capital

The findings of this inquiry illustrate the significance the development of social capital has on shaping the interests of prospective students and influencing their decision to pursue graduate school. Participants began developing social capital early in life through personal and mentor relationships with teachers, professors, military officers, and others familiar with the graduate school process and the field of international affairs. Early exposure to international affairs and the encouragement of those they had relationships with influenced the participants in this study to attend international affairs graduate programs. Institutions should be a source of social capital for students of color by cultivating relationships with potential future applicants as early as high school. This could be done by partnering with high schools and undergraduate institutions with predominately Black and brown student populations. International affairs graduate recruitment officers could attend international affairs activities and fairs at partner institutions and host activities and conferences at their institutions. Building relationships with students and teachers/faculty at minority-serving institutions has been found to be the most useful strategy to increase graduate student diversity (Griffin & Muñiz, 2011). These relationships and activities can spark students' interest in international affairs as a field of study and open their eyes to career

possibilities. International travel experience was also indicated as a motivator to interest and enrollment in international affairs graduate programs. International affairs graduate recruitment staff should encourage prospective students in high school and undergraduate programs to take advantage of international study opportunities. With this in mind, international affairs graduate recruitment officers could collaborate with study abroad programs to target students of color who have had international travel experience.

Findings suggest that students of color may forego aspirations and enrollment into international affairs graduate programs because of the lack of diversity within the field of international affairs. These early interventions and relationships with international affairs graduate programs will serve as an introduction to the field and encouragement to "see themselves" doing international affairs work. Again, the idea of "seeing oneself" within the institution is important to recruiting diverse students. Institutions must incorporate alumni and faculty of color in the recruitment process. IWP alumni and faculty have an abundance of social networks and connections throughout Washington D. C. and abroad. Leveraging these connections by way of alumni and faculty research and mentor programs to develop the social capital among potential applicants of color could be valuable strategies to increase racial diversity among the student body.

5.2.3 Recommendation #3: Provide Financial Aid Information Early

All but one participant paid for graduate school using some form of aid (veteran's benefits, federal student loan funds, or institutional scholarships). For students of color, aid is important and often dictates their decision to attend graduate school or to enter the workforce (Davis et al., 2010). Offering robust financial aid options that include large amounts of institutional scholarships and assistantships would be ideal. I, however, understand that many institutions are

financially constrained and cannot afford a multitude of tuition discounts or paid research opportunities. This is particularly true at small, private institutions like IWP that rely heavily on tuition revenue, have a small endowment, and get no cost sharing assistance from states. In an effort to support the institution's commitment to diversity (recommendation #1), institutions should ramp up their advancement initiatives to alumni and other donors, particularly those of color, where possible to build the endowment and/or fund institutional scholarships for students of color.

Financial aid offices should also consider creating a resource guide that educates prospective students about non-debt financial aid options for graduate school. Informing students early about financial aid options can help alleviate uncertainty about how to finance their education and influence their decision to attend graduate school. There are a number of outside scholarships and fellowships for racially diverse undergraduate (e.g., Rangel and Pickering Fellowships and others) and graduate students pursuing studies in international relations. Making prospective students of color aware of these opportunities early (during undergraduate or early in the recruitment process), hence being a source of social capital, could influence their enrollment into international affairs graduate programs.

International affairs graduate recruitment officers should also market to prospective student groups that have guaranteed funding sources. Two of the participants in this study, for example, were retired military officers with guaranteed funding that covered all tuition, fees, and housing benefits through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The Graduate Management Admissions Council (n.d.) urges graduate programs to market to military personnel as there are more than 200,000 career officers leaving their branches of government, many of whom are eligible for benefits that will cover all education costs. Recruitment strategies should be implemented to target

this racially diverse market and urge these prospective students to utilize their tuition benefits to leverage their career post-active military service. Possible strategies include hosting military targeted events and speaker series, actively involving military alumni (especially those of color) and student veteran's association leaders in the recruitment process, creating networking relationships with the various branches of the military, and creating military-friendly policies and practices (e.g., flexible active duty leave policies, Yellow Ribbon tuition matching, and other financial aid offerings) to attract military personnel.

5.3 Demonstration of Excellence

In August 2020, the outcomes of this inquiry will be presented to 15 IWP staff members from the graduate recruitment office, admissions office, and senior staff in the form of a detailed executive summary and PowerPoint presentation. The presentation will highlight the lack of diversity within the institution and provide a better understanding of the perceptions and factors that influence and deter students of color from enrolling in graduate programs at IWP. I will present the problem, reiterate IWP's inability to achieve enrollment goals, present the findings (good and bad), discuss the need for an immediate institutional culture shift to address the problem, and make recommendations for future action. The executive summary will also be sent to the Board of Trustees in August 2020 and findings, recommendations, and conclusions will be presented to the Board at their August 2020 meeting. IWP has been extremely supportive of my research and looks forward to the outcomes to determine next steps. It is my hope that the recommendations for practice will be implemented at IWP to improve recruitment strategies to attract students of color. The findings of this inquiry and progress toward achieving institutional

enrollment goals will be included in our regional accreditation self-study report that will be submitted for review in February 2022.

5.4 Implications for Future Research

There is an abundance of literature on graduate school choice and how it applies to various fields of graduate study, especially social work, psychology, and science programs. There is little to no literature on graduate school choice in international affairs graduate programs. This study adds to the literature in that it examines the perceived motivators and barriers to enrollment into international affairs graduate programs among students of color. In addition to implications of practice, the findings of this inquiry are just the tip of the iceberg and reveal areas for future research that could contribute to solving the diversity problem in international affairs graduate programs.

This study was limited in that it only included participants who enrolled in international affairs graduate programs. Of the 10 participants in this study, nine attended IWP and one applied and was accepted to IWP but decided to enroll in an international affairs graduate program at another institution. This study, unfortunately, did not include people who decided not to pursue an international affairs graduate program after earning their bachelor's degree. Further study should be conducted at nearby undergraduate institutions to determine why students of color who earned degrees and majored in subjects that are prone to continue into international affairs (international affairs, history, political science, public administration, sociology, and others) chose to forgo pursuing an international affairs graduate degree. A larger, mixed methods study of this type can offer valuable insight and additional findings that improve recruitment initiatives.

As compared to graduate school choice literature, many of the motivations and barriers to enrollment into international affairs graduate programs found in this inquiry were similar to previous research findings in other fields of study. The participants in this study considered all four layers of English and Umbach's (2016) conceptual model when deciding to enroll in an international affairs graduate program. Unlike English and Umbach's (2016) study that focused on the first two layers (habitus and the undergraduate context), this inquiry found that the decisions of the participants in this study were heavily influenced by their habitus, cultural and social capital specifically, and the graduate school context.

English and Umbach's (2016) conceptual model examined "indirect approximations of social capital" (p. 182) such as parents' level of education, parents' ability to pay for graduate school, family income, type of high school attended, primary language, and location of one's undergraduate institution. The findings of this study revealed an interpersonal dimension of cultural and social capital that was not addressed in the conceptual model. While participants did mention some of the variables above (parents' education, family income, and parents' ability to pay) as considerations, none of them were identified as barriers or significant motivators to enrollment in international affairs graduate programs. Instead, participants' interest in international affairs and their decision to pursue a graduate degree in international affairs was largely due to the interpersonal relationships they had with their parents and other influencers in their lives. Future studies that explore the significance and degree to which cultural and social capital have on graduate school choice among students that do enroll in international affairs graduate programs may also be beneficial for graduate recruitment officers.

5.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the factors that motivate and deter students of color from enrolling in international affairs graduate programs at IWP. There is a troubling lack of diversity in international graduate programs, not only at IWP, but in programs at colleges and universities across the country. The findings of this study identified several factors that impacted participants' decision to enroll in graduate school. The three most salient findings being: (1) the importance of cultural and social capital on graduate school choice, (2) the racial perceptions of an institution and representation in the field of international relations, and (3) the costs associated with obtaining a degree in international affairs. The discussion of these findings gave rise to implications for practice and recommendations that IWP should take to address the enduring diversity problem within the institution.

Appendix A Semi-Structured Interview Protocol Factors that Influence Enrollment and

Perceived Barriers to Enrollment in IR graduate programs

Directions to Interviewee

Thank you for your willingness to be interviewed. Your responses are valuable and will contribute greatly to improving recruitment strategies geared toward diversifying international affairs graduate programs at The Institute of World Politics (IWP). During this interview you will be asked to reflect on your considerations, experiences, and perceptions during the time you were applying to and/or considering enrolling at IWP. Please respond as honestly and thoroughly as possible to ensure a true understanding of the influences and perceived barriers. Your responses will be reported anonymously.

Opener: Please tell me how you first heard about IWP?

Topic 1: Motivators/Influences to Enrollment

1. Tell me how you became interested in pursuing a graduate program/degree in international affairs/relations? (**All Contexts**)
   a. Probe: What were your biggest motivators?
   b. Probe: Broad social, economic, policy/political factors?
2. Tell me about the people who influenced, guided, or supported your decision to pursue a graduate program/degree in international affairs/relations? (**Habitus: Social/Cultural Capital**)
   a. Probes: family, professors, mentors
3. How did your undergraduate experience influence your decision to pursue a graduate degree in international affairs/relations? (**Undergraduate Context**)
   a. Probes: programs you participated in
4. In what ways did the racial diversity of the faculty and students influence your decision to apply/attend a graduate school? (**Graduate School Context)**
   a. FOR THOSE THAT ATTENDED IWP: Talk to me about why you decided to come to IWP over other institutions?
   b. B. FOR THOSE THAT DID NOT ATTEND IWP: Talk to me about what you did after declining admission at IWP? Graduate school at another institution? Work? Military? Other?

Topic 2: Perceived Barriers to Enrollment in IR Graduate Programs

5. Tell me about the barriers that discouraged you from enrolling in a graduate program in international affairs/relations.

     a. Probe: Personal? Professional? People? Costs of attendance? (**Habitus**)

     b. Probe: Undergraduate experience? (**Undergraduate Context**)

     c. Probe: Broader social, economic, or policy/political considerations that may have impacted your decision? (**Social, Economic, and Policy Context**)

6. What assistance might you have needed to overcome these barriers?

7. Prior to applying for admission, what did you dislike about IWP? Please explain. (**Graduate School Context**)

     a. FOR THOSE THAT DID NOT ATTEND IWP: Can you talk about the reason(s) why you decided not to attend IWP?

     b. FOR THOSE THAT ATTENDED BUT DID NOT GET A MASTER'S DEGREE: Please discuss your intentions to return to IWP to get your degree. How likely are you to return to IWP?

8. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for how IWP can increase racial diversity among students? (**Graduate School Context)**

     a. Probes: Faculty? Curriculum? Admissions Process? Funding?

Appendix B Interview Call for Participants

I am inviting you to participate in a research study that the Institute of World Politics (IWP) is conducting to address the lack of racial diversity in international affairs graduate programs. The purpose of this study is to explore factors that impact whether students of color decide to enroll in graduate-level international affairs programs or not. This inquiry is being conducted in order to complete my doctoral dissertation at the University of Pittsburgh. The data will be used to develop recommendations to improve graduate recruitment strategies to increase the number of students of color in international affairs graduate programs, and specifically at IWP.

You are eligible to participate in this study if you:
- identify as African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino/a, or Native American;
- are a United States citizen;
- have been enrolled in an IWP graduate program or have graduated from IWP within the past six years, or
- have applied to IWP within the past six years, but declined admission or chose not to enroll.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time. The research study involves one audio-recorded interview of approximately 45-60 minutes in duration. Your responses are completely anonymous and no identifiable information will be collected in the interview. The audio-recording will be transcribed and quotations from the interview may be included in the dissertation, but no information that could identify you with that material will be used.

Your participation is very valuable and will provide important information to assist educators to better understand students' perceptions and behaviors, which in turn could strengthen recruitment and retention strategies and institutional policies.

All participants will be given a $10 gift card at the end of the interview.

If you meet the stated criteria and would like to participate in this study, please email me at hnt10@pitt.edu with your name and phone number(s), with best times to call.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Hasanna Tyus
Doctoral Candidate
Higher Education Management
University of Pittsburgh

Appendix C Pre-Interview Questionnaire

(verified by email to schedule interview)

1. What is your current status at IWP?
    o   Are you currently enrolled in a graduate certificate or Master's degree program at IWP?
    o   Alumni?
    o   Attended, but did not graduate?
    o   Applied, was accepted, but did not matriculate in classes?

2. What is your racial/ethnic identity?
    o   Black/African-American
    o   Hispanic/Latino/a
    o   Native American
    o   Other

3. What is your gender identity?
    o   Male
    o   Female
    o   Neutral/Non-binary
    o   Choose not to answer

4. Are you a U.S. Citizen?
    o   Yes
    o   No

Appendix D Informed Consent Form

You are being invited to participate in a research study that the University of Pittsburgh is conducting to address the lack of racial diversity in international affairs graduate programs. The purpose of this study is to explore factors that impact whether students of color decide to enroll in graduate-level international affairs programs or not. This inquiry is being conducted in order to complete my doctoral dissertation at the University of Pittsburgh. The data will be used to develop recommendations to improve graduate recruitment strategies to increase the number of students of color in international affairs graduate programs, and specifically at the Institute of World Politics.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are being asked to participate in a 45-60 minute interview. Prior to the interview you will be asked 4 brief screening questions to ensure that you meet the criteria for participation. After the interview is transcribed, the interview transcript will be returned to you to review for accuracy. You may refuse to take part in the research or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw from the study, any data provided up until that point will be used in the study, unless otherwise indicated by you, the participant, at the time of withdraw.

BENEFITS
You will be given a $10 gift card upon completion of the interview for your time. Additionally, your responses may help us better understand student perceptions and behaviors, which in turn could strengthen recruitment and recruitment and retention strategies and institutional policies.

RISKS
The possible risks or discomforts of the study are minimal. You may feel a little uncomfortable answering personal questions. There is the infrequent risk of "Breach of Confidentiality", however safeguards are being taken to mitigate this risk. Research records will be stored securely in a private, password-protected One Drive file on the investigator's personal computer. Printed transcripts will be stored in a locked office and all records will be destroyed after any resulting publications are completed.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The records of this study will be kept private and confidential. The audio recordings of the interviews will be shared with a third-party transcription service, but identifying information will not be shared with that company. Hasanna Tyus, the principal investigator, will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you as a participant in any report or articles she may publish. Research records will be stored securely and only she will have access to the records, audio recordings, and interview transcripts. Again, transcripts will be held in a locked office and all records will be destroyed after any resulting publications are completed.

CONTACT
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you can ask them now or feel free to contact Hasanna Tyus, at 202-491-6803 or hnt10@pitt.edu. Additionally, my research advisor, Dr. Gina Garcia can also be reached via email at ggarcia@pitt.edu.

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or that your rights as a participant in research have not been honored during the course of this project, or you have any questions, concerns, or complaints that you wish to address to someone other than the investigator, you may contact the University of Pittsburgh's Human Research Protection Office (IRB) at 3500 Fifth Ave, Main Office Suite 106, Pittsburgh, PA, or (412)383-1480.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature:

_____Date:_____

Signature of Investigator:

_____Date:_____

Table 2 Thematic Coding Map

IQ1. What factors influence students of color to apply and enroll in international affairs graduate programs at IWP?			
Interview Question	1st cycle Deductive Codes	2nd cycle Inductive/Open Codes	Themes
1	Habitus_Motive Social capital Cultural capital UG Context_Motive Grad School_Motive PSE Factors	Desire to help/fix Childhood experiences Military experience International travel Exposure to different cultures Socioeconomic status Timing Parental influence Other influencers Parent education UG Major Demand for grad school Location International events DACA Immigration Law	Personal experiences & motivations Personal relationships UG major choice Graduate school characteristics International socio-economic & political landscape.
2	Habitus_Motive Social capital Cultural capital	Parental influence Parent Education Other influencers	Socializers Personal relationships
3	UG Context_Motive	UG Major Demand for graduate school Internship/Fellowship	UG major choice UG experiences
4	Grad Context_Motive Characteristics Racial climate Ranking/reputation	Positive recruitment experience Size Faculty Location Campus appearance GRE Money Conservative ideology Name recognition	Characteristics of graduate institution

IQ2. What are the barriers to application and enrollment of students of color in international affairs graduate programs at IWP?			
5	Habitus_Barrier Cultural barriers Grad School_Barrier Racial Climate UG Context_Barrier Cost considerations Ranking/reputation Field of IR	Lack of money Discouragers Cultural mistrust Race as consideration Improper advisement Academic fears Work/Career Low POCs in IR field Unaware of IR as career	Personal experiences and beliefs Personal relationships UG experiences Lack of representation within the field of IR
6	Cost considerations Grad Context_Barrier	Financial aid GRE	Cost assessment Characteristics of graduate institution
7	Grad Context_Barrier	Curriculum Lack of name recognition Conservative ideology	Characteristics of graduate institution
8	Cost Relationship building Early exposure Racially diverse environment Marketing Professional development Student Affairs and resources Curriculum	Financial aid Partner with minority-serving institutions Improve networks in IR community Early outreach (HS & UG) Diverse faculty & staff Guest speakers of color Promotional material Faculty training New student information SOC campus organizations Curriculum changes	Post-matriculation Strategies

Appendix F Key Themes

Table 3 Key Themes

Theme	Sample Quotes	Frequency
Network of relationships, international travel experience, and personal motivations		95
Network of relationships	My mom was a big motivator… she does not have a bachelor's degree. But for me, she was like, "You have to go to school". -- Deena -- In high school, I had an informational meeting with [a] former ambassador, who was an alumna of my high school. My teacher knew that I was interested in international affairs and becoming a diplomat. So,…he put her in contact with me and so we had a conversation. --Silver--	65
International travel experience	Being stationed overseas, really exposed me to international affairs. -- Mattis -- It was actually in my undergrad year that I decided to do a Study Abroad program. I went to China. That experience cemented my goal…"Yes, I want to do something in this kind of international arena."-- Whitney --	15
Personal motivations	There was nothing that was going to discourage me from ... enrolling in grad school. -- Mattis -- I wanted to help and advocate for social justice and social freedoms in oppressed countries. -- Sebastian --	15
Characteristics of graduate institution	I spoke to one of the recruiters and she really elaborated the program. She really sold it to me and I really loved how it was career based professors. -- Helena --	78

	I could tell from the website that it was a small school and that it was really hands-on, small class sizes, super experienced professors…" -- Deena -- There's the lack of name recognition. This school is not necessarily as well known." At least at that time that I applied. -- Whitney --	
Undergraduate major choice & experiences	I was thinking… I can't do anything in IR with a bachelor's degree, so I really have no choice but to go to grad school. -- Silver -- I got my undergrad degree in history and political science with minors in classical civilization and religion. I wasn't really qualified to do a whole lot other than go to graduate school. -- Jaime --	28
Cost considerations	The biggest barrier was definitely not having the money I need. I do receive scholarships and student loans, but there is still a bit big gap between living expenses, accommodations, books, food, all that stuff. -- Helena -- Cost was a huge barrier. I had no idea how I was going to pay for school. -- Silver --	21
Lack of people of color in international relations	The discipline doesn't attract people of color, let alone the school. -- Mansa -- It's kind of sad because unless you get your foot in the door as a minority, you don't honestly hear or see many minorities that are in the international affairs or intelligence field. -- David --	19
Post-matriculation experiences	I didn't think prior to coming here that I'd be the only African American man in all of the classes. [Turns out] I was the only Black guy in all my classes…and had two experiences that were really uncomfortable. --Sebastian--	19

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