Cultural-Institutional Values and the Coordination of Internships at HBCUs: A Framework for a Value Theory of Educational Labor

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Abstract

The paper introduces the history and politics of value formation at historically Black colleges/universities (HBCUs) and focuses on how cultural-institutional values associated with Black and minority servingness—such as Black empowerment, ethics of care, and community service—impact the work of educators to coordinate internship opportunities for students. Drawing on interviews with educators at six HBCUs (n=27), this paper documents how such cultural-institutional values impact educational labor by being manifested in institutional discourse, supported through provision of institutional resources, embodied through institutional practices, and measured and assessed though institutional regimes of accountability. Educators work to expand students' access to the market by courting employers to establish networks for internships, and at the same time, work to promote the good reputation of the HBCU by selecting and triaging students who will represent the institution well, by socializing particular social skills, work norms, and dispositions of respectability, and by sociocultural matching of student and employer. This approach creates and expands the internship market for HBCU students; provides students with extra care, advice, and anticipatory socialization for the internship; and matches the student with an employer who may be particularly amenable to supporting the student's development. The paper proposes a value theory of educational labor that highlights and clarifies how cultural-institutional values constitute a specific context that motivates educators' work to serve their students in particular culturally informed ways.

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Introduction

Higher Education and the New Internship Economy

College internships are widely viewed as a boon to students, educators, and employers alike (Knemeyer & Murphy, 2002). Academic program requirements for internships and other forms of work-based learning, along with attempts to fund and support these experiences, have become a central feature of U.S. higher education policy (Perlin, 2012). The American Association of Colleges and Universities designated college internships a "high-impact educational practice" with transformative outcomes for students (Kuh 2008). This enthusiasm is bolstered by interdisciplinary research measuring a variety of benefits for students who participate in internships, including employment (Nunley et al., 2016), increased wages (Saniter & Siedler, 2012), academic achievement (Parker et al., 2016), career thinking (Talyor, 1988), and self-confidence and adaptability (Ocampo et al., 2020).

However, educators and researchers are concerned about the uneven quality of internship experiences (O'Neill, 2010). Research evidence also indicates that variation in the quality of internship supervisor support and mentorship can affect the developmental outcomes of internship participation (McHugh, 2017). There is also evidence that the increasing frequency of unpaid internships may reproduce (and potentially escalate) existing social inequalities by establishing barriers to career opportunities (Curial, 2009; Hora et al., 2021; Wolfgram et al., 2021). Moreover, legal scholars suggest that lack of clear guidelines on the employment status of internships creates a situation ripe for labor exploitation (Yamada, 2002; Curial, 2009). Despite these concerns, the discourse of higher education and career development tends to represent internships as wholly beneficial opportunity for students (Wolfgram & Ahrens, 2022).

Demographic changes after the Great Recession of 2007–2009 contributed to expansion of the internship economy, including an 11% increase of traditionally college-aged 18- to 24-year-olds and a rise in college enrollment from 36% to 42%. Such trends indicate a growth of new entrants to the increasingly competitive employment market (Frenette, 2015). The combination of the growth of available labor, contraction of the economy, and the continuing decline of political protections provided by organized labor, led to the expansion of forms of contingent, precarious, temporary, and irregular labor, including internships (Kalleberg, 2000). Meanwhile, cultural and ideological changes influenced the goals and values of U.S. higher education, with an increasing focus on the role of college in enhancing student employability (Tomlinson & Holmes, 2016), and of internships in facilitating that outcome (Frenette, 2015). The aims of U.S. higher education are historically eclectic, including positive financial outcomes for students among other goals of "liberal learning" (Brighouse & McPherson, 2015). The disinvestment of public higher education and consequent skyrocketing of college tuition and student debt

contributed to narrowing the focus of those aims on college student employability (Mettler, 2014; Tomlinson & Holmes, 2016).

State and federal policies funded a historic democratization of access to college in the United States, with dramatic growth and diversification of the college-educated population (Thelin, 2011). Expansion of this population—again, coupled with contraction of the economy—resulted in a devaluing of the college degree as the preeminent credential for professional employment (Tomlinson, 2008). Employers increasingly consider extra-curricular enhancements (internships, but also other "experiences" such as study abroad, volunteering, and leadership of organizations) in hiring decisions (Brown & Hesketh, 2004). Students began to seek out experience-based extra-curricular enhancements to add value and distinction to their resumes (Tomlinson, 2008; Tomlinson & Holmes, 2016). To attract students, U.S. universities increasingly promote internships as a gateway to post-graduation employment (Einstein, 2015).

Cultural-Institutional Value Formation and Practice at HBCUs

Minority serving institutions such as historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) face the same economic, social, and political pressures as U.S. higher education more broadly, and have oriented toward cultivating and measuring graduate employability (Johnson et al. 2017). In 2016, the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) established the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI), a national, multi-institutional, $50 million grant program to improve, expand, and measure student-level effects on employability of HBCU graduates. The establishment and scaling of internships and other work-based learning programs for students at HBCUs is a major feature of ongoing work at CPI-funded HBCUs to improve their institutional effectiveness (Owens et al., 2020; UNCF, 2016). While there is robust research literature on the historical context (Albritton, 2012; Lovett, 2011) and cultural factors (Arroyo & Gasman, 2014; Davis eta al., 2018) that impact educational work and experiences at HBCUs, a recent review of literature indicated a lack of research how institutional settings impact the design and provision of career services and internships (Hora et al., 2020). To address this gap, this paper documents the key role of cultural-institutional values in the provision of internship opportunities to students at HBCUs.

The Rise of Historically Black Colleges and Universities

HBCUs have historical ties to Christian abolitionism and emerged in the antebellum American South and Eastern Seaboard to serve Black and minority communities that were targets of virulent racism and exclusion. During the Jim Crow era and desegregation, HBCUs battled for funding and existence on local, state, and federal levels. Given the racist exclusion of Black and minority students from PWIs and other institutions of higher education during Jim Crow, the central claim for the existence and survival of HBCUs became of their unique ability to serve the educational needs of Black and minority students, and to educate and "uplift" those students and scholars (Gasman & Tudico, 2008; Mobley Jr., 2017;). With the eventual legal desegregation of PWIs—and continued minoritization of students of color at PWIs through financial exclusion and cultural minoritization—the historic claim that HBCUs are more supportive for Black and minority students remains central to the values discourse of HBCUs as

they compete for students and funding in the higher education market (Albritton, 2012; Lovett, 2001).

Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 recognizes and foregrounds the value formation of HBCUs "whose principal mission was the education of African Americans." Studies of historic and contemporary higher education mission statements have documented that while values discourse in mission statements of other institutional types are increasingly generic (often referencing general values of liberal education), HBCU mission statements remain focused on educating, uplifting, and empowering Black and minoritized students, and serving minoritized communities (Gasman & McMickens, 2010; Taylor & Morphew, 2010).

Ethics of Care. This historical and ongoing political context informed the development at HBCUs of what has been described as "ethics of care" (Hirt et al., 2008; Kennedy, 2012; Pasour, 2004), infusing cultural-institutional values into institutional practices. This includes provision of specialized pathways suited to the education, career success, and empowerment of minoritized students (Davis et al., 2018; Palmer et al., 2010); development of culturally informed teaching and students supports (Williams et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2022); and a focus on cultivating an ethic of community service (McCallum, 2017), in part through development and expansion of community service-learning programs (Patterson et al., 2013).

Othermothering. Additionally, a central feature of ethics of care at HBCUs is cultivation of a style of educator–student socialization described as "othermothering," in which educators provide (occasionally intrusive and commanding) extra care, advice, and support for their students' education and life goals (Griffin, 2013; Hirt et al., 2008; Mawhinney, 2012). Grounded in ethics of care, institutional guardianship, and cultural advancement for the African American community, the concept of othermothering permeates educational institutions and influences the interaction of faculty and administrators with Black students (Hirt et al., 2008; Siddle Walker & Tompkins, 2004; St. John & Cadray, 2004). Black faculty and staff's othermothering relationship with Black students can stem from "similar experiences in the academy, commitments to community upliftment and high expectations" (Griffin, 2013). While the practice is associated with Black womanhood, both male and female educators adopt othermothering roles with Black students at HBCUs (Njoku et al., 2017). Evidence suggests that othermothering relationships can create supportive environments for the educational success of Black students, particularly Black male students (Hirt et al., 2008).

Research Question. Drawing on interviews with 27 educators at six HBCUs, this paper investigates the research question: *What institutional and cultural factors impact the work of educators at HBCUs to support college internship opportunities for their students?* The paper documents how cultural-institutional values associated with Black and minority servingness motivate cultural practices, including a) courting employers and community members to establish networks for internships; b) selection and triage of the "best students" for internships; c) othermother anticipatory socialization of students as prospective interns; and d) internship cultural matching of those employers and students. These practices are both motivated and realized by the cultural-institutional value formation of HBCUs.

Value Theory of Educational Labor. Based on our findings, the paper develops a value theory of educational labor that clarifies how cultural-institutional values shape the context and

form of educational labor at HBCUs. The proposed framework highlights that cultural-institutional values motivate and realize particular forms of educational labor because values

(1) are communicated in **discourse**,
(2) impact the allocation of institutional **resources**,
(3) are embodied in **practices** of educational labor, and
(4) are assessed through institutionally authoritative forms of **accountability**.

Next, we characterize and re-frame the anthropological theory of value (Graeber, 2001; Kluckhohn, 1951; Turner, 1979) to develop it as a value theory of educational labor.

What Are Values and How Might They Affect Educational Labor?

Our conceptual framework proposes a value theory of educational labor, which supposes that educational labor, such as coordination of college internships, is fundamentally informed by the normative field of cultural values situated within history and current cultural politics of the educational institution.

In anthropological theory (Graeber, 2001; Kluckhohn, 1951; Turner, 1979), the concept of values is a refinement of the traditional culture concept, focusing on the normative and aspirational aspects of culture. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz famously described culture (1973) as both a convention about the nature of social reality and a convention about what social reality should look like. In Geertz's terms, culture is a "model of" reality but it is also a "model for" reality. This model for reality, the normative and aspirational aspect of culture, is what anthropologists describe as "values." Anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn (1951) defined values as cultural "conceptions of the desirable." More recently, David Graber (2001; 2013) elaborated that "the desirable" in anthropological theory of value "refers not simply to what people actually want—in practice, people want all sorts of things. Values are ideas about what they *ought* to want" (p. 3). This concept highlights both aspirational and conventional features of values, as a norm about which desires are good, moral, legitimate, and worthy of pursuit through the development of cultural projects. Cultural values are important in the functioning and origination of institutions because they motivate creative and productive forms of activity. As Graeber describes (2013), "It is value that brings universes into being" (p. 219).

Whereas the culture concept has had a major impact on education research and theory (Burner, 2020), the framing of culture as an aspirational norm—i.e., "values"—has had a more limited impact on theorizing in education research, with the exception of philosophy of education, which self-consciously distinguishes itself from descriptive-focused social sciences of education and claims the project of clarifying the values and aims of education (Brighouse & McPherson, 2019). A key supposition of anthropological thinking on the cultural conception of value (Graber, 2001) is that philosophers are not the only people passionately concerned with values that underlie visions about how the world ought to work. Rather, such concerns are ubiquitous in human societies and form the basis of an educational project to produce appropriately socialized persons (Graber, 2001).

A value theory of educational labor will clarify how institutional-cultural norms about values motivate educators to pursue particular forms of educational labor and will elaborate how particular values affect particular educational practices. As noted above, at least four

propositions about the relationship between cultural-institutional values and educational labor form the basis of such a theory.

1. **Discourse.** Values mediate educational labor by being communicated through discourse (and other semiotic modalities), and by being the focus of authoritative institutional discursive production. In an educational institution, educators articulate and conventionalize institutional values via mission and other values statements (Brighouse & McPherson, 2019) and through how they and other institutional constituents talk about the value of their work (Wolfgram & Pasqualone, 2022).
2. **Resources.** Values mediate educational labor by motivating the structuring and prioritizing of institutional resources. The control of resources in budgets is a mechanism of power by which educational policy (articulated by leadership and policymakers) can impose institutional values through structuring of educational practices (Levinson et al., 2009). Thus, institutional discourse on the values of educational labor is realized (and imposed) through allocation of often scarce institutional resources. In fact, an institution's "values" may be considered inauthentic if institutional practices that realize those values are unfunded or underfunded (Brighouse & McPherson, 2019). As the folk saying goes, "Put your money where your mouth is."
3. **Practices.** Values are realized through embodied practices of educational labor. A central feature of anthropological theory of value is that, while crystallized philosophical statements of value may take the form of abstractions, realization of values in everyday life is through cultural practices (Graber, 2001; 2013). Values thus motivate forms of educational practice in the context of quotidian education work.
4. **Accountability.** Values are coordinated, assessed, and imposed upon educational labor through practices of accountability assessment. In addition to the role of budgets as a mechanism of power (Levinson et al., 2009), contemporary educational institutions employ techniques from management, accountancy, and the social sciences to produce data to measure, assess, and "continuously improve" the conduct of educational labor. This shift toward managing educational labor and accountability and collecting different forms of data has been described by anthropologists of education and others as an "audit culture" (Shore, 2008; Shore & Wright, 2015).

A value theory of educational labor provides additional clarity on how culture informs the design and implementation educational practices. It does so by highlighting the coordination of discourses of value, allocation of institutional resources, realization of particular educational practices, and accountability practices; together, these elements motivate and realize particular forms of educational labor.

Methodology

College Internship Study

The College Internship Study is a longitudinal, mixed methods study underway at 14 colleges and universities in the United States. Institutions include HBCUs; Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs); community colleges; and regional, comprehensive, predominantly White

institutions (PWIs). The study uses survey data, student focus groups and interviews, and interviews with educators and employers who supervise student interns, to investigate barriers, experiences, and outcomes associated with college internship participation (Hora et al., 2020). For this paper, we draw on interviews with educators conducted at the six HBCUs in the study (n=27).

Research Sites

All six HBCUs are in southeastern United States or border the region, and were formed before or during the post-Reconstruction, Jim Crow era. One HBCU was the focus of important legal battles against Jim Crow-era education policies and a hotbed of youth civil rights activism since the beginning of the struggle. The study includes **three midsize public HBCUs** with undergraduate populations ranging from approximately 5,500 to 6,500 students, with an average 66% of students identifying as Black or African American. One of these public HBCUs is a state land-grant institution; two are in large cities and the other in a mid-sized city. The **three private HBCUs** are significantly smaller, with undergraduate populations ranging from approximately 600 to 1,800 students, with an average 95% identifying as Black or African American. One private HBCU is in a larger city, another in a mid-sized city, and the last in a rural community. This mix of institutional types, sizes, and settings, along with the shared demographic focus on African American students, location in or near the southeastern United States, and formative historical context of Jim Crow-era racism, is representative of both the variety and common characteristics of HBCUs (Coaxum, 2001).

Data Collection Procedures and Research Sample

We used a three-pronged approach to identify educators who support internships at each HBCU in this study, including searching the institution's website for individuals whose roles involve supporting internships; working with institutional partners to identify and provide contacts for their colleagues who support internships; and snowball sampling by asking interviewees to identify additional colleagues who support internships. The research, which included the author, recruited participants by emailing or calling identified educators to inform them about the research and request their participation (with one follow-up email for nonresponsive educators). An interview was scheduled at a time and place based on the educator's convenience; interviews were conducted in person, by phone, or online. Prior to the interview, participants reviewed an information sheet, were given an opportunity to ask questions and to consent verbally to participate in the research. Participants did not receive any monetary incentive. Interviews lasted 30 to 40 minutes and were audio recorded with the participant's permission. The educator interview focused on types of resources available for their college; issues related to designing, managing, and implementing internship programs; descriptions of their work to support students, collaborate with colleagues, and recruit employers for internships; challenges they and students faced related to internships; and goals and values associated with their internship programs.

Of the educators interviewed (n=27), 78% identify as Black or African American (n=21) and 22% as White (n=6); 56% identify as female (n=15) and 44% as male (n=12); 67% are employed

at mid-sized public HBCUs (n=18) and 33% at small private HBCUs (n=9). Institutional roles of educators interviewed include academic faculty and instructional staff who support college internships at the departmental level (n=16; 59%); career advisors, employer outreach coordinators, and internship coordinators who primarily support internships (n=6; 22%); and leadership, who direct units that support college internships, such as directors of career services offices (n=5; 19%).

Analytic Procedures

Interviews were transcribed. The researcher conducted a round of open coding of the full corpus of interviews to identify themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) and a second iteration of coding to identify conceptual similarities between and among themes (often called axial coding; Saldaña, 2015), which led to identification of larger patterns in how educators coordinate and value college internships. Throughout the coding process, following a critical discourse analysis approach (Gee, 2011; Fairclough, 2001), the researcher annotated recurrent words, themes, and concepts, and identified how discourse features both connect and produce the social context, paying attention to how educators used discourse to value college internships (Wolfgram & Pasqualone, 2022). Lastly, first- and second-order coding and discourse analytic annotations were integrated into a set of analytical memos (Birks et al., 2008), which constitute the primary findings of the research.

Researcher Positionality

As the study author, I articulate my own positionality in relation to individuals who are the focus of this research. I am a White, male anthropologist and education researcher at a predominantly White public research university in the U.S. Midwest. Participants in my research are educators who primarily identify as Black or African American and work in HBCUs in the Southeast that serve students who also primarily identify as Black or African American. It is important to acknowledge that social science research such as the work presented in this article can be shaped by the analyst's socio-cultural background, which in this case differs substantially from that of participants. While acknowledging my positionality, I followed methodological literature on managing power relations in research (Paris & Winn, 2013), reflexively maintained awareness, and worked to mitigate the influence of my social and cultural background on the research by centering my ethical commitment to amplify the experiences and perspectives of the educators featured in this study, and the students they serve. I believe that I share a common goal and ethical commitment with these educators to serve and advance education and career goals of students of color.

Findings: Interviews with HCBU Educators their Work to Coordinate Internship

The framework developed in this paper highlights that cultural-institutional values are (1) communicated in discourse, (2) constrained and enabled by the provision of institutional resources, (3) embodied in institutional practices, and (4) assessed though institutional regimes of accountability. While the paper addresses each point, we emphasize #3, how cultural-institutional values impact educators' labor to support college internships for students at HBCUs.

1. Discourse

The history and discourse of cultural-institutional values of HBCUs motivate educators to provide tailored programing and personalized support for students of color to ameliorate barriers and facilitate success. Mission statements of the HBCUs in this study reflect the discourse of value at HBCUs nationally, foregrounding education and empowerment of Black and minoritized students, and service to their communities (Gasman & McMickens, 2010; Taylor & Morphew, 2010). When HBCU educators talk about their work to create and support internship opportunities for students, they use value-saturated language, either through explicit reference or by presupposing those values. As one educator described her work to provide students with internship and other career development opportunities, "I tell them. I value this, you know, immensely. This is something that I believe is important." Examples of educator interviews documented and analyzed below make it clear that educators at HBCUs are motivated to provide additional care and support to their students, and that they are sensitive to barriers that their students face, including race and social-economic barriers.

2. Resources

The question of funding internships "is always a major problem," according to one educator in the study. Leaders at HBCUs have directed some of their limited resources to hire internship coordinators for academic units, expand career advising and employer outreach staff, fund graduate and undergraduate peer advisors, provide faculty with course releases to coordinate internships, and purchase platforms to catalogue and inform students of opportunities (e.g., Handshake). They have funded career and internship fairs and other employer hosting events on campus, and directed institutional resources to compete for external grants to support internships and career development. As noted above, the UNCF Career Pathways Initiative demonstrates the strong commitment to support career development and internships across HBCUs (Owens et al., 2020; UNCF, 2016). Educators in this study described the importance of these resources to scale their work to provide internships, for example by supporting faculty. One educator explained, "Through this grant, [we] essentially engage faculty to help work with employers to … bring them to campus, identify opportunities for internships and help establish kind of more relationship-oriented pipelines."

Despite institutional commitment, career services leadership indicate challenges with resource scarcity: "I think we could use more staff or faculty to assist in the operation of the internships in terms of identifying placements [and] maintaining the data for internship placements where students are." Because they believe their work is of value to their students, educators often contribute extra labor. One academic department chair states, "we don't have an [internship] coordinator, it's something I do on top of all of my other duties." A coordinator explained, "I'm literally at work until 7:00 at night at least three days a week, because I've had students 10 deep outside of my office." Several educators indicated that turnover of career services staff was an ongoing problem for their units.

3. Practices

Below, we document institutional practices of courting employers; selection and triage of students; othermother anticipatory socialization; and sociocultural matching of students and employers for internship opportunities.

Courting Employers: "Tapping" and "Doing the Leg Work" to Establish Networks for Internships

The work of coordinating internships poses a challenge for educators at HBCUs, in part because students continue to face race-based barriers to employment and careers (Quillian et al., 2017; Nunley et al., 2015). To ameliorate this challenge of intreating their students into a potentially unwelcoming employment market, educators establish relationships with community members, employers, and alumni, and convey to faculty the importance of relationship-building work. HBCU leaders often recruit coordinators based on their prior careers in industry, which they can draw upon (or "tap") to cultivate networks for student internships. One coordinator explained: "I've worked for a lot of nonprofits … I spent a lot of time in community partnerships, collaborations, and so, when I started working here, I tapped into the some of the relationships." Likewise, faculty with connections to industry recommend students based on "a personal relationship with that individual recruiter, or manager, or executive." It takes years of work in a field to develop a wide internship network, as one educator joked: "That is one of the benefits of being old ... and being nosy." Another educator discussed drawing on contacts in the local healthcare sector, "Arrangements have been with physicians that have been personal friends of mine, and so, it's easier to make those connections."

Internship coordinators and career advisors also "do the legwork" to cultivate new internship networks, "knocking on the doors and building those relationships with … professionals" in the community. "Legwork" associated with establishing and maintaining internship networks resembles a process of courtship, involving regular check-in calls and lunch dates. As one coordinator explained, "I'm in meetings all day today. I have a meeting with a potential placement. That's what I strive to do." This type of courting employers is a form of emotional labor. A coordinator explained that one employer who had previously hosted students from an HBCU "felt like we had kind of been neglecting them, and, you know, she wasn't real happy with us at that moment." The coordinator worked to reassure the disgruntled employer, '"I'm here now, and I'm trying to fill that void … Look, I want to fix this, number one. That's what I've been hired to do … Well, I promise you I will be responsive … I'm willing to make sure that doesn't happen again.'" Through repeated emotional reassurance, "she and I have become close," and the employer resumed hosting internships for students from the HBCU. Another educator explains, "I do have a sort of open-door policy on that," to address any concerns or frustrations employers might have with their students or the institution. This process of courting employers to build internship networks often results in "really good friend" relations between educators and employers. One coordinator explains, "A lot of these initial arrangements … [have become] personal friends of mine, and so, it's easier to make those connections [with students for internships]." Educators maintain relations by collecting feedback from students about their internship experience and backchanneling positive feedback to the employer, "just to give them a

pat on the back." Employers are hosted on campus, given tours, and invited to address classes. "[We are] really trying to make those employers feel at home."

The courting process requires a major investment in time, resources, and emotional labor. A career advisor explains, "it can take anywhere between 3 months to a year to develop a relationship, the energy, that will allow students to start coming to do internships." The work of courting to "build," "maintain," "nourish," and "encourage" networks for internships at HBCUs culminates in what one coordinator termed "perfected internship employers"—employers in the community who can be counted on to provide quality internships. Such "long-standing partnerships," as another educator explains, "become natural internship sites." "Perfected internship employers" receive curated access to institutional spaces and privileged access to student labor.

Selection and Triage of the "Best" Students for "Perfected Internship Employers"

Internships pose a challenge because HBCUs exist in a political context in which their existence, roles, and students have been undermined throughout their history (Gasman & Tudico, 2008; Lovett, 2015). Deficit framings in scholarship and negative media representations of HBCUs can negatively affect the perception of key constituents in the community, including employers, community leaders, and policymakers (Gasman 2017; Williams et al., 2019).

A successful student internship is important to HBCU educators who coordinate such programs. One career advisor explained, "I keep a file of where students have done internships and particularly where … they've sent glowing letters back to me"; those community partnerships are targeted for expansion. A successful internship, one career advisor explained, may make the employer "receptive to our students" for future internship placements. Most educators we interviewed had concerns (or direct experiences) with having their personal reputation or the institution's reputation tarnished by a low-performing intern. One career services unit director explained that reputations of professors, coordinators, and career advisors are "on the line. And they need to make sure that now these are the best students that we're going to put out there in the world." Otherwise, she concluded, "The employer is not going to be satisfied. And that burns our brand, that type of student." A faculty member gave an example of this situation:

> Sometimes students don't perform well in their internship and then that actually affects internship opportunities for further cohorts of students. And so, I have somebody who is basically a fairly lazy student and they didn't do very well at their internship at the big medical center that's here. And so, then they don't want an intern from us [anymore].

Internship coordinators use a process of selection and triage to identify and direct the "best students" to particular employers, those with high GPAs but who also exhibit work-discipline, social skills, and respectability in class so as to represent the HBCU well in the community. They cultivate relations with other advisors and faculty on campus to identify the most skilled and motivated students. One career advisor who works with faculty and academic advisors said, "all the time, I'm like, hey, send them over, send them over, send them over." Advisors and

coordinators may recruit students with high GPAs or they may curate a list of students recommended by faculty for internship opportunities. One coordinator explains:

> There's just not enough [internships] for everyone to have access to it. So one of the things we're doing is for the paid professional internships, trying to make sure our students who are more competitive know about it. [T]hrough highlighting specific internships, getting the information to top students, specifically by name.

When a valued employer has a pressing labor need, advisors often coordinate a rapid "everyone on deck" response by directly encouraging faculty to tell their "best students" to apply for particular firm's internship. In such situations, as two educators reported, employers "want the best that we have" and "they'll want me to send them every 4.0 [GPA]."

This process of selection and triage is central for larger programs with required internships; it places intense pressure on the local internship market and on social networks for internships in which educators and advisors invest. One coordinator describes a lack of quality internships in the local market for her students and admits to sending "our best interns … [to the] really good internship agencies that we don't want to lose," and the "not-so-good students" to agencies that "aren't doing as good a job at working with our students."

Through this process, the "best interns" are prioritized to maintain the reputation of the HBCU with those valued community partners. Note that the group of "not-so-good students" includes those with problematic work habits (i.e., "they just don't work at it") but also those with "other challenges," which often refers to social-economic barriers such as time constraints due to the financial need for paid work or responsibilities such as child or adult care, or a lack of resources or ability to travel for internships. Educators and advisors at HBCUs stuck in a double bind: they are aware and sympathetic to such social-economic barriers (and provide care and available resources to support those students), but they also know that a poor performance by one of their interns can damage the reputation of the institution and/or program in the community.

Othermothering Anticipatory Socialization: "We Tell Them the Truth"

Preparing students for an internship is key to maintaining quality relationships with employers and community members. One career advisor explains, "There needs to be something in place to make sure that the students are prepared for the internship professionally, before you open it up and, you know, send them on their way, just to ensure that nothing damages that relationship." In advising sessions and career development courses, educators at HBCUs sometimes deliver direct, personal advice to students. One educator said, "we tell them the truth."

> We try to … we be honest. In this industry, we tell them you've got to go in and do double expectation. Basically, at an HBCU we have to be at a different level. Because I tell the students from here [this HBCU], we want industry to come back. That's why we tell them just like this. You can't go out and mess up and mess up, and nobody else can get there. So, you say it just like that. We expect you to do more. We expect you to be successful and prepare the way for the next person to be proud of.

To emphasize the importance of exceeding expectations, one educator tells prospective interns about a former student who was hired by an employer after his internship. He drove 65 miles, showed up early in the morning, and proved that "He was a good worker, obviously. So he was very, very dedicated." Thus, socialization of students to represent the HBCU well includes training in proper workplace discipline, enthusiasm, and "seriousness." This educator elaborates:

> We want you to take it seriously. If you have a little downtime, and you've completed a project or assignment that you were given, if you complete it early, there's no playing on the computer, and there is no talking on the phone. You need to go and ask someone there if there's something you can do to assist someone else. You make good use of your time. You let people know that you're interested in working. So they know.

Another key feature of anticipatory socialization is self-presentation. "In that regard," one educator explains, "what I expect of you is to dress the part. Dress well. Speak well." Another educator provides students with a list of expectations for their internship: "First is punctuality, dress code, and no excuses. I just instill in them you have got to be professionally thinking every day when you go." Socialization also addresses gendered workplace professional norms, as one educator explains, "we do discuss the importance of fitting into the professional environment. And so there's rules in place like attire, makeup for ladies, and hair for both. Just basically appearance." Another educator warns, "people make judgments about you based on your appearance, and of course, we take time to ensure that the females are aware of the do's and the don'ts, as well as the males."

Socialization of professional norms of respectability, or workplace etiquette, is particularly important given racial and gender dynamics in the workplace. Another educator explains:

> We also have the conversation about, you know, what it means to be a brown person in the workplace, or what it means to be female in the workplace. And I have these more frequently and more, I don't want to say blunt, but I'm pretty frank about how students do [need to] be aware of how you dress. It's not something I like, or something that I'm telling you is right or wrong, but this is what the norm is in this particular company. This company is traditional. This company, they employ predominantly older Caucasian men. This is what you may expect. So, this is how you need to conduct yourself.

A central feature of this socialization is that students learn to become vigilant about managing their own workplace time-discipline:

> I routinely tell my students … from the moment you arrive in the door, everyone's watching you. You have to be very careful about what you say, what you do, arriving on time. You want to be seated at your assigned desk, and not on the elevator.

Another educator explained, "So my biggest concern is to be sure that these students, and I talk to them about it, that they dress appropriately, that they are on time, that's my biggest peeve, that they don't show up—that they're not there." She warns her students that she has "actually pulled student[s] from an internship" because "if I get the statement that they're not there, I get extremely upset."

Students are also socialized to respect the hierarchy within the firm or organization, and advised to "know your place." In one case an educator advised a student who "wants to sit at the round table" (i.e., assuming parity with regular employees):

> You know, she needed to shut up and be quiet. Sit there and take notes. You know, she wants to sit at the round table like everybody else. And, and, and I explained to the student. I said you, "you have to be mindful. You are the intern, that means you just sit there. Luckily, you did not have to go run fetch coffee and stuff like that. But you know, don't come in thinking you are a part of it."

Another educator explains how he socializes students with a style of humble communication:

> And I particularly caution them, when you go into an agency for an internship, be careful about how you communicate with full time employees. … If the head of the agency calls you in and asks you your opinion, be respectful and acknowledge that you're an intern. And if you have a suggestion, acknowledge that your opinion is based on your limited knowledge as an intern.

A characteristic feature of the othermothering style of socialization involves use of direct advice to impart the message more forcefully. An internship coordinator in a criminal justice program explains:

> And it's not uncommon for me to say to a student, if you were a member of my police department when I was the chief, and the behavior that I have witnessed from you, you would've been fired a long time ago. I would fire you. I said, first of all, because of your habitual tardiness or absences from class, we would not have hired you. And they need to hear that and need to understand it.

One educator, an African American woman who has been "given accolades in reference to the amount of rigor that we put into preparing our students before sending them into these agencies," describes how she impresses upon her students the seriousness with which she considers their behavior during internships:

> And we have very few problems once we've placed that student in the agency, and when all else fails, I let them know that if you do anything that you're not supposed to be doing, I'm going to make a beeline over there with a belt, and—your butt. So I don't have —you know, I have very few problems.

This style of anticipatory socialization provides direct, personalized—in some cases stern—advice and directives, impressing upon students the "seriousness" of the internship experience for themselves and their careers, and for the reputation of the HBCU.

Sociocultural Matching of Internship Opportunities: "Connect the Dots"

One internship coordinator encapsulated the process of sociocultural matching of internships at HBCUs: "The challenge in my position … is [that] the matching of the students is really critical, because one bad placement can burn a relationship. And so, you're always trying to

cultivate the relationship with the placement, and to develop the students, so they're appropriate for it." A successful internship advances the student's education and career goals but also protects and promotes the reputation of the HBCU. The work involves courting the employer to "cultivate the relationship," selecting and socializing "to develop the students, so they're appropriate for it," and "matching" the students and the employer. One educator stated, "I know the company, and I know the kind of work they produce, and I know that it would be beneficial for my student to work with them, that is how I make that connection." Another coordinator explained the importance of gathering detailed personal knowledge about both the student and the employer, "That's the enviable position to be in. That allows me to be able to effectively match students with what their interests are, and also to match what I consider personality styles."

This process involves articulating a "match" based on some feature of social-cultural identity shared by the student that would be congruent with culture and expectations at the internship site. One educator explained, "I basically connect the dots. I try to match the student with that company if I think it's a good fit." Students with disabilities or who identify as LGBTQ may be matched with firms or organizations with open and inclusive cultures. Racial identity is also often a consideration when establishing a match:

> I tried to match students, you know, like where I think they'll do really well. So the one internship that was working with … Black churches. Now if I had a White student—and … the student that's doing the internship in the public defender's office is a White student—I probably wouldn't send that student to Black churches. I wouldn't agree for them to be in a position where they're advocating for environmental justice in Black churches. I would probably try to match, I would probably try to send a Black student to Black churches.

One faculty who coordinates internships for sociology students scrutinizes potential racial dynamics at the internship site. "It was a good fit for us because often African American kids needed mentors." In addition to social identity, educators consider a variety of other factors when establishing a match. Some coordinators and advisors consider cultural matching to be the primary challenge or major responsibility of their work, "I think largely it falls on me, knowing the students and knowing the placement, to make good matches."

4. Accountability

The concept of an "audit culture" refers to use of accounting and management techniques, discourse, and logics, to produce "data" to regulate social institutions and make them meaningful (Shore & Wright, 2015). Such procedures historically expanded from the private sector to other domains and social institutions; cost-benefit analysis, student outcomes, and accountability have become common features of higher education institutions (Shore & Wright, 2000). The value theory of educational labor developed in this paper draws upon this research on institutional accountability, because it is through audit cultural regimes of accountability that institutions track and authenticate the extent to which their institutional discourses, resources, and practices result in outcomes commensurate with their values. Audit cultural practices at HBCUs featured

in this study focus on collecting evidence to present to educational leadership, students, parents, and other constituents, showing that resources invested in career services and internship programs are furthering the minority serving goals of the institution. A director of a career service unit at one HBCU explained how she uses data on internship participation as evidence of their accomplishments to their institutional leadership: "We're going to talk about some of the accomplishments I've had in this [past] few months. And it's going to be data-driven. I mean, I got to say how many students I took to some of these places [internships], what happened to them."

One feature of audit culture of HBCUs is calculation and promotion of the rate of acceptance of Black college graduates into graduate and professional schools, the majority of which are PWIs. These data provide a high degree of credibility for the historic claim that HBCUs play a vital role in educating the Black community. Internship programs are critical in this audit culture. A faculty who teaches an "internship course" in his department explains:

> The rationale for creating the [internship] course was to give the students the opportunity to work with healthcare providers, with the ultimate goal to impress those healthcare providers to write letters of recommendation for the students for their applications to medical school or pharmacy school.

Career services units at HBCUs spend considerable time and resources to measure the internship participation rate of their students, to show the impact of resources and programming of those units—and often, to advocate for more resources and support for ongoing grants and future applications. A career advisor who also coordinates collection of data for grants and reports on the impact of her unit on student career development outcomes, stated, "One of the million-dollar questions is: what percentage of our students are participating in internships?" Another educator explains, "We communicate over the past few years the importance of internship. Show data that shows how much a difference it makes" for students. The "tapping" of networks and courting of employers to establish new institutional networks for internships, and the selection, socialization, and sociocultural matching of students and employers, are all ways that educators at HBCUs attempt to strengthen their internship programs.

Discussion

Our goal in this article was to contribute new insights into how employers value and coordinate college internships. Limitations in the study include the small number of HBCUs (six) and the small sample of educators associated with provision of internships (n=27), which includes educational leadership, faculty, internship coordinators, career advisors, and employer outreach specialists. The sample size precludes generalizations to the field of higher education in general, and the HBCU sector in particular. While the educator interviews provided rich data for this analysis, the study would have benefited from additional detail and discursive evidence from ethnographic accounts of behavior. This would have provided deeper insights into the nature of educators' discourse and coordination of internship labor. Below, we highlight key findings and discuss how a value theory of educational labor, drawn from an anthropological theory of value, can inform education research and theory.

The value theory of educational labor developed and exemplified in this article proposes that cultural-institutional values mediate the specific character and form of educational labor. At HBCUs, cultural-institutional value formation emerged from the existential battles they fought throughout their history, during Jim Crow in particular, and continuing through desegregation of the 1960s until the present day (Gasman & Tudico, 2008; Lovett, 2015). While considerable research addresses how the unique history, culture, and mission of HBCUs impact the educational work, pedagogy, and experiences of educators and students (e.g., Arroyo & Gasman, 2014), there is a lack of empirical studies on how cultural factors at HBCUs affect career services and provision of internship opportunities in particular (Hora et al, 2020).

Our analysis of interviews with educators who coordinate internships at HBCUs documents how educational labor to coordinate internships is structured by cultural-institutional value formation in a specific historical-political context. Findings illustrate that cultural-institutional values at HBCUs are manifested in educators' institutional discourse, supported through provision of institutional resources, embodied through institutional practices, and measured and assessed though institutional regimes of accountability. Educators work to expand students' access to the market by courting employers to establish networks for internships, and at the same time, work to promote its good reputation (and diminish reputational risk) of the HBCU's reputation), by selecting and triaging students who will represent the institution well, by socializing particular skills, work norms, and dispositions of respectability, and by sociocultural matching of student and employer. This approach creates and expands the internship market for HBCU students; provides students with extra care, advice, and anticipatory socialization for the internship; and matches the student with an employer who may be particularly amenable to support the students' development. This research contributes to the literature on how HBCUs support the education and career goals of minoritized students (e.g., Arroyo & Gasman, 2014; Palmer et al., 2010; Williams et al., 2022). Further research can focus on how cultural-institutional values are manifested in different institutional settings, for example, how values of "Hispanic servingness" inform teaching, educational and social supports, and assessment at HSIs (Garcia, 2020).

In a context of limited institutional resources, the process of selection and triage documented in this paper tends to track the "best students" toward additional opportunities and divert students who face educational challenges or other barriers away from those opportunities. Several educators we interviewed understood that many of these barriers were social-economic. This finding suggests a compelling area of future research on social-economic factors and processes that may exclude some individuals from settings in which values are produced and enjoyed (Graeber, 2011). Research from the perspective of social and cultural capital theory often focuses on raced, classed, and gendered mechanism of exclusion from capital (Bourdieu, 2018), but very little research outside of economic anthropology addresses the question of the mechanisms of exclusion from a meaningful and valuable work and livelihood (Graeber, 2011). The analysis presented in this article illustrates that research on questions of cultural-institutional value—in contrast with more narrowly framed questions of access to capital that dominate the social sciences of education—highlights and clarifies the broader contexts of what motivates people to act the way they do, including the educators who work to serve students.

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