



6-20-2024

## **“If They Can Help, They Will”: A Community Cultural Wealth Approach on Parent Support and Its Influence on the College Success of First-Generation Latinas**

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

“IF THEY CAN HELP, THEY WILL”: A COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH  
APPROACH ON PARENT SUPPORT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE COLLEGE  
SUCCESS OF FIRST-GENERATION LATINAS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BY

FABIOLA ROSILES-DURAN

CHICAGO, IL

MAY 2024

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have a vivid memory of the day I graduated with my bachelor's degree and seeing the doctoral students get hooded and thinking "I want that to be me." I remember sitting on the left side of the stadium, and my family sitting on the right. Both the stage and my family were in my view, and I envisioned myself obtaining my doctorate too. While I knew that I wanted to pursue a Ph.D. far before my undergraduate graduation, seeing it happen made it seem that much more attainable. After undergrad I went on to pursue my masters' degree knowing that the Ph.D. would be next, but I was discouraged about how many years it would take me to finish. I remember telling my mom and her responding, "*De cualquier manera los años van a pasar. Pueden pasar los años sin obtener un doctorado, o pasarán asistiendo a la escuela y al final obtendrás un doctorado. Tú decides.*" (Either way the years are going to pass. They can get by without getting a Ph.D., or they'll end up going to school and you'll end up getting a Ph.D. You decide.) Those were the words that pushed me to apply and enroll, and words I often thought about throughout my doctoral journey. Since enrolling in the program, my family has experienced great heartbreak and it has also grown, but one thing has stayed consistent, my family has always been supportive. College has truly been a collective effort, investment, and success. This doctorate is for all of us.

First and foremost, I would like to thank both of my parents, Bertha and Abel, thank you for always pouring love and support into me with everything I do. Your parenting has always been rooted in love, and for that I thank you, we (Abel Jr., Galy, and I) are so blessed to have

you as parents. You both have contributed to our success in more ways than you know, and I hope this has been highlighted through this study and with our conversations through the years. To my brother, Abel Jr., thank you for teaching me that I have the strength and agency to make my own decisions and to always celebrate the small and big wins in life. While you are no longer here with us physically, I always carry you in my heart in everything I do. To my sister Galy, thank you for your continuous motivating conversations, for always bringing some humor into my days, and for being my study buddy. Your confidence is admirable, and I appreciate you for instilling some of that confidence in me.

To my son, Abel Jabari (AJ), thank you for choosing me as your mom and for showing me that life is bigger than myself. You came into my life at the perfect time and have made my days brighter. I love you so much! I can't wait to tell you all the stories and show you all of the pictures we have taken along this doctoral journey. To my husband Cris, thank you for being my anchor, my thought partner, and my soulmate. Thank you for always reminding me that I am capable and for always cheering me on, especially on my toughest days. You have stood by my side and shown me that no matter the challenge we may face, we will face them together. We began our life journey together as two undergraduates in college, and now two proud parents of our sweet AJ. We have grown so much, I am so humbled and blessed to have found my life partner in you, I love you.

To my extended family, friends, and mentors that have expressed their support throughout the years, I appreciate all of you. From standing next to me on the toughest of days, to celebrating lives victories, thank you for being by my side. To everyone who has shared *recuerdos* (memories) of my brother throughout this journey, you have helped motivate me and brought him into this experience with your reminders, and for that I am grateful.

To my committee members, Dra. Norma López, Dr. Katherine Cho, and Dr. Lorenzo Baber, thank you for your guidance and support these last few years. From our in-person conversations to emails, thank you for supporting me and guiding me in this doctoral journey. To my chair, Dra. López thank you for creating our Latina accountability group that provided support, community, and companionship in a journey that often feels isolated. To the fellow first-generation Latinas that participated in this study, thank you for sharing your testimonios with me and contributing to this important work and my success. To my mentor and master's thesis chair, Dr. Ann Russo, and Dr. Dave Marcial, I am forever grateful to have crossed paths with you prior to my doctoral program and for your immense guidance in navigating academia, I appreciate you.

To everyone that has shown me immense love and support in this journey, *lo hicimos* (we did it)!

To my parents, Bertha and Abel Rosiles, thank you for always supporting me.

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the parental support first-generation Latinas have received, and recognizes the skills, knowledge, and various forms of support that Latinx parents can and have provided their daughters when they seek a college education. Through a community cultural wealth framework, this study adds to the current literature on Latina and first-generation college students and specifically challenges the deficit approach that is often used when studying these student and parent populations. Furthermore, this study aids in better understanding the experiences of first-generation Latinas who receive parental support in ways that are outside of the traditional definition, and coins Existence Capital as vital to Latinas' college success. Through the participants' testimonios, the findings respond to the study's research question; How do first-generation Latina college students narrate the support they receive(d) from their parents? Ultimately, confirming that the support that parents of first-generation Latinas provide is highly influential to their college and overall success.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Over the years, institutions of higher education have been confronted by demanding calls for educational diversity and inclusion, and the questioning of traditional non-inclusive practices and epistemologies have been brought to the forefront by many students, researchers, and educators. Historically, institutions of higher education have been embedded in inequitable practices and epistemologies that highlight the Eurocentric practices and ideologies that are implemented in United States' academic spaces, and how these practices and ideologies are oppressive and dismissive of People of Color (PoC) non-academic and non-white epistemologies. Unfortunately, these discriminatory practices are not just limited to PoC students. Historically, academia has also been dismissive of PoC knowledge and experiences, especially of members who have not obtained a college degree. This then leads society to believe that those who do not hold a college degree cannot provide quality support and guidance to those pursuing a college education. For communities of color, this inaccurate belief adds another layer to overcome and demystify.

Simultaneously, when discussing the first-generation Latina college experience there is often a deficit-perspective about this student population. This deficit perspective highlights the various challenges that first-generation students face without recognizing the multiple skills and assets that they have and putting them into play to overcome such obstacles. Similarly, previous traditional literature sheds a negative light on parents and indirectly places blame on the parents

of first-generation students for not having the college knowledge and experience to pass down to their first-generation students.

### **Purpose and Significance of Study**

As a first-generation Latina college student, I believed that my first-generation status only brought challenges into how I navigated college. I believed the traditional Eurocentric myth that because my parents did not hold a college education that their support was not legitimate or that it was very limited. It was not until the end of my undergraduate years that I was exposed to feminist literature that challenged Eurocentric practices and encouraged me to acknowledge and celebrate all my identities. Ultimately, the literature helped me reflect on how my parents helped shape how I navigated not only through academia but society as a whole. It was this self-reflection that further sparked my interest to pursue a graduate degree to continue analyzing my experience as a first-generation Latina attending a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). Once in graduate school, I was introduced to the book titled *Wise Latinas* a collection of 22 *testimonios* that acknowledges the variety of experiences of Latinas in higher education and recognizes how these experiences are impacted by larger structures of power and oppression. For me, this was one of the first times where I saw some of the experiences I had as a first-generation Latina reflected in the literature I was reading.

Through my graduate studies I began to remove myself from this deficit label and instead began to recognize the strengths and skills that helped me overcome them and lead me to where I am today. This helped me realize that while some of my identities brought additional barriers in comparison to my peers who were white or not first-generation, it did not mean that I was not qualified. In these years of reflection and analysis, one thing was confirmed, valuable knowledge and support is not only manifested within the Ivory Towers of academia. I began to legitimize

the skills and knowledge taught to me by hard-working immigrant parents that I held then and hold to this day as legitimate forms of knowledge and skills. However, it was not until my late college years that I recognized the hidden curriculum in academia that blinded me from acknowledging this support as legitimate and valuable.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to shed light on how traditional definitions of parental involvement have disregarded cultural forms of parental support. For this specific study, I focused on the support that Latinx parents provide their first-generation Latina daughters to and through college. In addition, this study was conducted to encourage other first-generation Latina college students to acknowledge and/or further name the valuable skills that have been passed on to us by our parents. In alignment with inclusivity efforts, the testimonios included in this study highlight the parental support first-generation Latinas have received, and encouraged the opportunity to recognize the skills, knowledge, and various forms of support that Latinx parents can and have provided their children when they seek a college education. Through Yosso's (2005) framework of community cultural wealth, the type of parental support discussed is categorized and named as a form of capital. By doing so, the support provided is named using academic terminology and highlights how knowledge and skills are often gained outside of the walls of academia.

This study adds to the current literature on Latina and first-generation college students and specifically challenges the deficit approach that is often used when studying these student and parent populations. Furthermore, this study aids in better understanding the experiences of first-generation Latinas who receive parental support in ways that are outside of the traditional in-school presence and support. Using Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework, this study expands this theory to include, name, and categorize parental support as forms of



capital. Instead of only looking at the challenges that first-generation Latina college students face, this study shifts the negative perspective of first-generation Latinas' parental support to one that is asset focused.

By recognizing community cultural wealth, academics can debunk the myth that parental support is limited to just school-centered presence or the sharing of college knowledge. Through the testimonios collected, the findings highlight how Latinx parents support, and instill the importance of higher education and *una buena educación*. Similarly, the testimonios serve in highlighting how Latinx parents shape first-generation Latina college student goals and aspirations and create space to disrupt “the dominant culture's interpretation of 'our' experience, or the way they ‘read’ us” (López, 2009; Anzaldúa, 1990, pp. 25-26). While some first-generation Latinas were aware of the quality support that they have received from their parents, this study interpreted that support as a type of community cultural wealth, a valuable type of support that needs to be recognized by the academy. For first-generation Latinas who may not have thought of their parental support as a crucial component in their collegiate success, this study served as an opportunity for self-reflection in recognizing and naming their parents' support.

### **Research Problem and Research Question**

Historically, the Eurocentric practices and ideologies within higher education have disregarded and ignored how race, among other intersecting identities such as college degree attainment can impact and influence a students' college experience (Lundberg, 2012). More specifically, when analyzing the college experiences of first-generation Latina college students, there is often a deficit-based approach that overgeneralizes the PoC experience and fails to acknowledge the sociocultural experiences and strengths that PoC individuals bring to the

college experience (Luedke, 2020). In addition to the deficit assumptions, parents of first-generation college students are often presumed to not play a supportive and/or knowledgeable role in the success of their children. This deficit-based approach is evident in academia's ingrained institutional biases, policies, and practices that marginalize Communities of Color (Gonzales, 2012, p. 126). The demand in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work within academia continues to emphasize the urgent need to disrupt institutional biases and integrate equitable practices and policies within colleges and universities.

In efforts to create more equitable and inclusive institutions of higher education, colleges and universities must work beyond raising the college diversity rates and prioritize the need to better study the disparities in college access, enrollment, persistence, and support for college students from traditionally underrepresented communities (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018). Given the demand for academic equity in today's climate, educators must challenge the systemic practices in place that continue to devalue Latina first-generation students and recognize non-dominant experiences, knowledge, and support. To better understand the first-generation Latina college student experience and the parental support they receive, the following overarching question was analyzed through an asset-based approach: How do first-generation Latina college students narrate the support they receive(d) from their parents?

### **Overview of Methodology**

To best answer the overarching question of the study, the selected methodology aims to center the stories and knowledge of those who are often excluded from the dominant discourse. Through a community cultural wealth framework, this qualitative study explores the college experience and parental support received by first-generation Latina college students. The following chapter goes more in depth as to how a community cultural wealth framework best

supports and answers the overarching question of this study. Given that Yosso's community cultural wealth is a response to Bourdieu's definition of cultural capital, and is rooted in Critical Race Theory, community cultural wealth aids in contextualizing academia's traditional concept of capital and aids in centering and better understanding the support that first-generation Latinas receive from their parents.

### **Community Cultural Wealth**

The work of scholars such as Solórzano and Huber (2020) state how through a community cultural wealth approach, PoC students and educators can learn to recognize and communicate hostile college environments (Yamamura et al., 2010). Rooted in Critical Race Theory, Yosso (2005) challenges the negative misuse of Bourdieu's definition of cultural capital in education, because it fosters a deficit-oriented thinking that devalues PoC knowledge, experiences, and capital. Fortunately, Yosso offers community cultural wealth as a framework that recognizes the "array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (p. 77). Hence, for this study's question of focus, a community cultural wealth framework was a crucial component in educational advancement to better understand the first-generation Latina college student experience and the parental support they receive. In this study's analysis process, the types of parental support were categorized and named under the six types of capital: aspirational, social, familial, navigational, linguistic, and resistant capital.

### **Testimonios**

Testimonios have and continue to be a strong component of Latinx culture and are political and intentional ways of sharing Latinx stories that are often left out of academic and historic books and conversations. Testimonios center on reality and experience that is not the

dominant story and produce a sense of awareness about different narratives and experiences that resist the status quo and discourse. Through the testimonios collected in this study, it is evident that Latinx parents highlight, support, and instill the importance of learning and higher education and provide quality support in the college process. Similarly, the testimonios highlight how Latinx parents shape first-generation Latina college student goals and aspirations and create a supportive environment. In relation to community cultural wealth and knowledge production, testimonio disrupts traditional knowledge production because it challenges normative interpretations of what constitutes knowledge and who is given legitimacy to produce knowledge.

### **Defining Key Terms**

#### **Latinx**

In alignment with inclusivity efforts, the term Latinx is used throughout the reviews as a “gender-neutral” and “gender inclusive” term when referring to the parents and families of Latina students (Salinas & Lozano, 2019; DeGuzmán, 2017).

#### **Parents**

While the term “parent(s)” was not directly defined across all the literature reviewed, in this examination the term refers to the literatures’ understanding of parent, which can refer to biological, adoptive, or chosen parents. For this study, participants were not asked to explain their definition of parent(s).

#### **First-Generation**

For this study, I used Lundberg’s (2012) definition of first-generation college student to refer to students in which neither parent has earned a bachelor’s degree.

**Latina**

Throughout this research Latina college students refers to women identified students whose ethnic backgrounds are from Latin American countries (e.g., Mexico, Colombia, Peru, etc.)

**Role of the Researcher**

By utilizing the critical race theory approach of community cultural wealth, I decentralized the normative culture that claims that valuable parental support is limited to only parents who have attended college. As the researcher of this study my purpose was to examine and better understand the first-generation Latina college student experience and the parental support they receive while pursuing a college education. By recognizing the non-traditional types of support that parents provide, academic institutions and researchers can begin to recognize the multitude of Latinx parental support that has been devalued in education. In addition, my role as the researcher was to encourage first-generation Latinas to self-reflect in recognizing and naming their parents' support and ultimately shift the negative light that is traditionally placed onto first-generation Latinas and their parents to an asset-based perspective. In short, my role as the researcher was to become a witness of first-generation Latina experiences within academia, and the parental support they receive. For the purpose of this study, my role was also to connect the parental support received to the theoretical framework of community cultural wealth.

**Researcher Assumptions**

Organically, my own assumptions and beliefs have shaped the focus of this dissertation topic and study. My own lived experiences and reflection as a first-generation Latina college student has encouraged me to further examine this research topic and engage in conversation with other first-generation Latinas. As an undergraduate student at a public PWI I went

throughout my college years thinking that my first-generation status and race only added obstacles to my college experience. I did not recognize this until I began to recognize my own strengths as a Latina first-generation college student and recognized that while my identities brought some struggles, they also brought a multitude of strengths. More importantly, during my graduate studies, I identified that some of the struggles I faced as a first-generation Latina college student were a result of the faulty system of oppression that is instilled in higher education that traditionally excludes non-white identities and ideologies. For me, this awareness promoted me to question what is recognized as legitimate knowledge and who is considered to be knowledgeable. It is then that I began to recognize the skills and attributes that I learned outside of the classroom and who I learned them from.

In all of my years of schooling, very rarely, if at all did, I hear that my parents and other non-college educated parents provided valuable support. This realization led me to ask, why have I not always recognized the valuable skills that my parents have taught me? Or broadly speaking, why does the academy not value the work, knowledge, and skills that the parents of first-generation Latinas have provided? I am aware that other Latinas may have asked this question prior to my own timing, however there are other Latinas who possibly have never asked this question. Similarly, it is important to note that not all first-generation Latinas may not credit their parents as the foundation of their skills and capital, therefore I cannot make that assumption. Furthermore, my role in this instance was to engage in this conversation of reflection and legitimize Latinx parents' knowledge and capital.

While the research topic of this study is rooted in my own experience and reflection, my goal was not to place my own experience onto other Latinas, but rather study how other Latinx parents have supported and/or influenced first-generation Latina college students. To provide a

rigorous qualitative study, I identified my identities and biases, and monitored how they may influence the shaping of the collection and interpretation of data throughout this study (Bowen, 2009, p. 28). As an ongoing process throughout this study, I disclosed my own biases to create awareness and separation between my narrative and that of the participants in a reflection journal.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite the growing body of literature and efforts to better support and understand the first-generation and/or Latina college experience, research has often disregarded the influential ways in which parents who do not have a college degree support their children through college. Research indicates that parental involvement and support for their children's college aspirations has been one of the most influential elements that impact students' decisions to pursue a college education (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018). When analyzing the role that parents play in supporting first-generation and/or Latina college students through college, it is necessary to define the following:

- What does the literature say about the first-generation Latina college experience?
- What has historically constituted parental involvement?
- How do Latinx parents provide support for first-generation Latinas through college?
- How can a community cultural wealth framework help recognize and name the various types of support that Latinx parents provide first-generation Latinas through college?

To better integrate the multitude of non-traditional parental supports that first-generation Latina college students receive, researchers must continue to examine how community cultural wealth impacts and supports first-generation Latina college students' academic achievement while in college. Yosso's theoretical framework helps shed light on the cultural wealth that is overlooked by traditional forms of capital and strengthens the efforts to value the knowledge and



experience that first-generation Latina college students bring into the classroom from their parents, families, and values such strengths as capital.

### **First-Generation Latina College Students**

Throughout the years higher education administrators, stakeholders, and researchers have emphasized the need to find effective ways to recruit and retain more students to U.S. colleges and universities. However, oftentimes the efforts fall short as many students from marginalized communities do not feel welcomed and/or supported while in college. Even though institutions of higher education have intensified their outreach efforts, they continue to face obstacles of making colleges and universities accessible to all students, specifically low-income students of color (Liou et al., 2009). It is important to note that most first-generation college students come from low-income and underrepresented backgrounds, and their generation status creates additional challenges as they pursue a college education (Engle, 2007). Hence, it is important to further explore the experiences of first-generation Latina college students through an asset-based perspective that acknowledges the various challenges that Latinas overcome.

While the number Latinas in college continues to rise, there continues to be a need to further analyze the specific experiences of first-generation Latina college students and further explore how they navigate academia. According to the most recent National Center for Education Statistics, Latinas held the following percentages of the associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions in 2018-2019 (NCES, 2022).

- Associate's degree: 25%
- Bachelor's degree: 15.7%
- Master's degree: 11.6%

- Doctoral degree: 8.8%

Research on this student population helps educators better recruit, retain, and support these students through college and degree attainment. Moreover, the literature presents a series of challenges and triumphs that first-generation Latina college students exemplify throughout their college years and thus important components to highlight. Unquestionably, generational status and race play a key role in how college students navigate academia and therefore I highlight how identities of being first-generation and Latina impact the college student experience. Throughout the analysis of this student population, it is important to note that there are a multitude of other intersectional identities that first-generation Latina college students hold (class, sexuality, ethnicity, etc.), all of which also impact how they navigate college. However, the focus of the literature included mainly reflects the experiences of first-generation and/or Latina college students.

### **College Access for First-Generation Latinas**

In accessing higher education, first-generation students of color have commonly had difficulty in accessing higher education, and once in college, difficulty completing a degree successfully (Ramos, 2019). Scholars emphasize that the term “access” should go beyond the literal opportunity to be able to apply and be accepted into college but to also incorporate practices that support students toward completing their postsecondary degree. Pascarella et al. (2004) state the following:

Access to higher education must be understood to mean not only admission to some postsecondary institution, but also ‘access’ to the full range of college experiences and to the personal, social, and economic benefits to which those experiences and degree completion lead. (p. 281)

When looking at the college enrollment and completion of first-generation Latinas in U.S. colleges and universities, it is evident that the number is rising, yet compared to other peers, remains one of the lowest populations with college degrees. In efforts to better understand this pattern, it is important to highlight some of the common themes of their collegiate experience, and how institutions of higher learning can be better equipped to support their success.

### **Reasons for Going to College**

For many first-generation Latinas, the interest of pursuing a college education is sparked by their parents emphasizing the importance of education. Latinas are reminded that a college education exposes them to a network of academics, professionals, and other college-educated individuals who can increase their social capital and networks in achieving a variety of goals. Contrary to the common assumption that parents of first-generation and/or Latina students lack an interest or prioritization in education, there is a multitude of literature that states otherwise. For instance, Gonzales' (2012) study highlights how Latinx parents offer valuable and transferable forms of cultural capital that motivate and support their children's academic and professional careers (p. 125). More specifically, the testimonios of the Latinas in her study "recall how family ties, community, and faith strengthened them and helped them persist throughout the K–20 schooling experience" (p. 125). Ultimately, first-generation Latinas in the study credited their families and communities for their college-going experience and success (Gonzales, 2012). It is important to note that college aspirations are also strongly emphasized in the classroom by many educators who state that a post-secondary education has positive benefits to the individual and beneficiary to society (Choy, 2001, p. xviii). Education is often marketed as a strong foundation that launches students into a world that unlocks their potential through deep learning, relationships, and opportunities that lead to success that simultaneously expands to

include one's family and the entire community (Jabbaar-Gyambrah & Vaught, 2018). As a reflection of this promise, substantial evidence indicates that through a college education, students can gain academic, personal, and professional development all of which can benefit not only the student but their families as well.

To prove so, decades of research has shown that a college education plays a crucial role in achieving social mobility in American society (Engle, 2007). Toutkoushian et al.'s (2018) study, discusses how attaining or improving human, social, and cultural capital is a common motive for pursuing a college education. Larger research institutes such as College Board (2004) and the Institute for Higher Education Policy (2005) also echo this message and state that "higher levels of educational attainment are related to higher incomes and lower rates of unemployment" and the earnings gap between college graduates and non-college graduates increases over time (Engle, 2007, p. 25). In efforts to improve their quality of life and accumulate the benefits that come from a college degree, national reports such as these often serve as motivators for first-generation Latina students to pursue a college education.

### **Themes in the Literature of First-Generation Latina**

While there has been a flourishing body of research on first-generation and Latina college students, much of the work has focused on the deficits in first-generation college preparation and experience. Like the first-generation college student population, the exploration of Latinx undergraduates often receives a similar deficit-based approach (Morgan Consoli et al., 2015). This deficit lens encourages poor myths and stereotypes that label Latinx as having a cultural deficit and lack of interest in education (Rodriguez et al., 2000; Gloria et al., 2005). For instance, work in the 1950s and 1960s promoted a cultural deficit model that emphasized cultural differences between the Latinx community and white culture and labeled Latinx individuals as

disadvantaged, and this model was used as an explanation in low enrollment and retention of Latinx students in higher education (Escobedo, 1980; Rodriguez et al., 2000).

Unfortunately, these assumptions are still engrained in college culture and this cultural model continues to place a deficit label among students who are not the traditional white, middle-class students. Therefore, more inclusive approaches not only call-out deficit-approaches but also redirect them by highlighting the strengths of Latinx college students, specifically possible predictors of resilience and thriving in Latinx undergraduates (Morgan Consoli et al., 2012). These high levels of resilience are often a reflection of Latinas' strong work ethic, social and familial support, and overall personal development before and during their college years (Ramos, 2019). In this discourse, resilience can be understood as the skill and persistence to continue working beyond present circumstances or lack of objective means, and to thrive meaning to be better after adversity (Morgan Consoli et al., 2015; Yosso, 2005).

Although there is a growing emphasis on supporting diverse college students, over time Latinas and first-generation students continue to be a group that has received inadequate support due academia's lack of knowledge and understanding of their student needs and concerns (Rodriguez et al., 2000). Pascarella et al.'s (2004) study, among the work of others, focuses on better understanding the differences in college experiences and outcomes between first-generation and other college students. Evidence in multiple studies indicates that first-generation Latina college students often face additional academic and social disadvantages in their postsecondary preparation and through their college years in comparison to their peer counterparts (Gloria et al., 2005). As a response to these adversities, scholars also note that in comparison with non-first-generation college peers, first-generation college students have higher levels of resilience (Ramos, 2019).

## **A Collective College Experience**

Prior to attending college “Latinas hav[e] [a] strong individual initiative and motivation to achieve on behalf of the family” (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012, p. 88). In Hurtado’s (2003) work on Latina experiences, she states that “among communities of color there has been a strong commitment to advancing the group through acts of self-help because there [are] very few avenues for group advancement” due to social barriers that limit the opportunities of the entire group (p. 26). This means that “educational achievement cannot be conceptualized as an individual process” but a process and achievement for the entire Latinx family (Hurtado, 1996, p. 32). For families who have immigrated to the United States in recent generations, having a child attend college offers multiple opportunities and networks that can expose the student and family to new knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts.

Family well-being and advancement is a common motive as to why many Latinas pursue a college education, which is not just for oneself, but for the benefit of everyone in the family. This commitment of community advancement as stated by Hurtado can be connected to *familismo* which emphasizes strong family ties and the importance of family, a cultural value in many Latinx families (Sabogal et al., 1987). Within the Latinx community, this prioritization of family well-being repeatedly translates to become a collectivist motivation and effort for pursuing a college education (Azpeitia & Bacio, 2022).

## **Familial Involvement**

As proven in previous literature, a common theme in studying this population is the fundamental and complex role that family plays for Latina first-generation college students (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012). While the transition to college is difficult for many, the transition is lightened when students have supportive family and friends (Fischer, 2007; Nora & Cabrera,

1996;). Despite the deficit approach that Latinx children, parents, and families are often consigned to, various studies report that Latinx families are an important and consistent source of support by the Latinas in college (Gonzales, 2012). For instance, while Latinx parents or family members may not be able to provide direct college guidance and advice, many Latinx families embrace cultural narratives, motivational messages, and work ethic strategies to encourage first-generation Latinas to seek and continue a college education (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994).

As noted by Engle (2007), because for first-generation college students, going to college disrupts the familial pattern, relationship, and life, students commonly face additional challenges in transcending the change for not only them but their families as well. For many first-generation Latina college students, they often experience a challenging need to negotiate a school-family balance that appropriately meets academic requirements and family responsibilities (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012). As a response to these challenges, many first-generation Latina college students embrace their resiliency and learn to create an equitable and supportive academic and familial environment in which they can attend to the multitude of needs between family, community, and academia (Wells et al., 2011). In efforts to recognize the growth that happens when grappling through adversity, scholars explain that sometimes such challenges promote new and stronger skills (Carver, 1998; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995). Fundamentally, familial involvement is evident in several other ways beyond motivation, support, and familial responsibilities. It is evident that the familial support provided enriches the college experience of Latinas and while at times challenging, such challenges only highlight Latinas' multifaceted abilities in different spheres beyond the classroom, the workplace, and the home.

## **Influential Cultural Mentorship**

Previous studies have shown that for parents of first-generation students, the limited college knowledge is not only reflected in the parents' educational histories, but it is also reflected in the parents' limited information networks (Auerbach, 2007). Fortunately, institutions of higher education serve as a networking space in which first-generation students can access different networks and mentorship opportunities that can help them achieve their academic, personal, and professional goals. As noted by Rios-Aguilar and Deil-Amen (2012) when it comes Latina/o social networks, these networks are key to their postsecondary and career success as they serve as central resources throughout and post their college years. Echoing this thought, Auerbach (2007) notes that parents of first-generation college students also view college campuses as spaces for networking where students are exposed to making the right connections that can help them succeed.

When discussing the impact of mentorship, it is important to note that traditional mentorship within higher education strives to assimilate students from diverse cultures into the dominant Eurocentric academic culture (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001; Villaseñor et al., 2013). In efforts to better support Latina college students to and through college, cultural mentorship such as “*mujerista* mentoring has the potential to best serve Chicana/Latina students and contribute to their academic achievement, professional success, and personal development” (p. 51). For first-generation Latinas, cultural mentoring can provide validation and affirmations that remind them that they have the appropriate skills and ability to succeed in higher education (Ramos, 2019).

In addition to mentoring, scholars emphasize how a student's social network can provide access to social support and strengthen a student's sense of belonging to their college institution



(Anistranski & Brown, 2021). For example, in the first-year student study by Berardi et. al. (2020), the researchers emphasize how building mentoring relationships that are rooted in care and support for the students can lead to an easier transition and a more successful college experience. Specifically speaking to Latina students, mentors can positively impact persistence by guiding them through feelings of isolation, stress, and sense of belonging and conclusively, increase the chances of their success (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000, Villaseñor et al., 2013). Ultimately, mentoring relationships and mentorship programs that center the authentic experience of the student can help students “successfully navigate pathways into and through college to degree completion” and closer persistence gaps in degree attainment (Perna, 2015, p. 5).

For authentic connections and success to be achieved, the relationships must center the students’ best interest and their success. When a genuine connection or mentorship relationship is built the mentor(s) can provide the appropriate guidance and support that first-generation college students need to overcome the challenges they face throughout college (Ramos, 2019). Some of these challenges include but are not limited to the lack of basic college expertise and preparation, lower family income and/or support, vague or different degree expectations or academic plans (Pascarella et al., 2004). Therefore, first-generation Latina college students can greatly “benefit from having a mentor who can help them navigate the academic and social transitions into college” (Engle, 2007, p. 39). Given that many first-generation Latina college students have not received or receive limited college guidance by their parents, mentorship is a crucial and positive factor in their transition to college, sense of belonging on college campuses, and overall college success.

Castellanos and Gloria (2007) focus on redefining the success of Latinx students by implementing the psychosociocultural (PSC) approach that emphasizes that effective mentorship must embrace cultural beliefs (such as familismo, cultural values, etc.) to be effective. By doing so, mentors are embracing a holistic approach to their mentorship that recognizes and celebrates the cultural richness of Latinas. Ultimately, effective mentorship can serve as an important support for Latinas as they navigate negative campus interactions that are unwelcoming and discriminatory to students of color (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007). Hence, scholars emphasize the need to learn and understand the importance of integrating core Latina values such as culture and family in efforts to better support and enhance Latina students' academic experiences, retention, and graduation (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007).

### **Importance of Campus Involvement**

As previously mentioned, college campuses serve as a social institution where students can build long-life connections that can aid in their personal, academic, and professional success and the exposure to these connections often come from campus involvement. Through campus involvement in Registered Student Organizations (RSOs), students can develop their social network on campus which can overall help with the students' sense of belonging and positively impact retention and persistence. As revealed by the literature, "extracurricular involvement [has] significant positive effects on critical thinking, degree plans, internal locus of attribution for academic success, and preference for higher-order cognitive tasks for first-generation students" (Pascarella et al., 2004, p. 273).

On the aspect of social capital, this socialization can also help first-generation Latina students build a community of significant and supportive relationships to aid in their growth and success, and build on their social capital (Sanchez et al., 2006). To demonstrate the impact of

campus involvement, current work highlights notable research that discusses how campus environments influence student subpopulations and impact student outcomes, from critical thinking to persistence (Duran et al., 2020). The result of this study adds to the existing literature on how environmental components affect college students' sense of belonging, especially for first-generation Latinas (Duran et. al., 2020). For instance, cultural centers and organizations that are identity-based have been a prime environment where there is a sense of belonging and support for many first-generation Latinas (Duran et al., 2020; Means & Pyne, 2017). In addition, these social networks can serve as central support and resources that can help Latinx students throughout their postsecondary and career journeys (Rios-Aguilar & Deil-Amen, 2012). For instance, organizations such the Association of Latin American Students, or Latinx Fraternities and Sororities provide kinship support that resembles familismo while also providing opportunities for personal, academic, and professional development.

Ultimately, the body of literature that discusses campus involvement for first-generation college students of color reiterates how extracurricular and social activities in college are a key component to creating a sense of belonging (Duran et al., 2020). Therefore, institutions of higher education should establish and/or invest in organizations and programs that include and celebrate the needs of diverse students. Similarly, academia should also recognize the communal support that is poured into students by non-academic organizations and communities. By recognizing the need for communal spaces and belonging, colleges and universities can truly engage in a more inclusive culture that helps retain and support more first-generation Latinas.

### **Challenges in the First-Generation Latina College Experience**

As noted by previous scholars, there are two general categories that cause major barriers in the participation of Latinas in higher education: challenges before entering college and those

they face during college (Rodriguez et al., 2000). For first-generation Latina students, academic and social challenges begin prior to stepping foot on a college campus and are commonly reflected in difficult transitions from high school to college in comparison to their peers (Pascarella et al., 2004; Terenzini et al., 1996). These disadvantages refer to limited college knowledge (application process, financial aid, etc.), level of family support (including financial support), and the overall knowledge throughout their college journey (Pascarella et al., 2004). In comparison to students whose parents attained a college degree, first-generation students are less likely to stay enrolled in a four-year college or university after the first year and less likely to attain a bachelor's degree altogether, ultimately impacting their college persistence and retention (Pascarella et al., 2004). In addition, first-generation students possess other demographic characteristics (low socio-economic status, citizenship status, etc.) that can add additional obstacles to their college persistence and success (Cataldi et al., 2018). Regarding race, first-generation Latina college students often find themselves “balancing familial cultural values with conflicting messages from institutions of higher education” (Villaseñor et al., 2013, p. 51).

Previous studies have revealed financial restraints, academic obstacles, family obligations, and gender roles as frequent stressors for Latinas (Rodriguez et al., 2000). In response to these challenges, first-generation Latinas learn various skills and/or strengthen traits they already possess that help them overcome these challenges. For instance, for Latinas mental health challenges are often a result of financial restraints, however family involvement and collective learning of financial literacy can positively impact Latinas overcoming these challenges (Robles, 2014). Following these challenges, research shows that first-generation college students of color gain a greater benefit of their academic experience compared to other students because those “experiences act in a compensatory manner and thus contribute

comparatively greater incremental increases in first-generation students' stock of cultural capital" (Pascarella et al., 2004, p. 280). In alignment with the purpose of this study, when discussing the challenges faced by Latinas, an asset-based approach was used that highlighted their strengths and skills that helped them overcome said challenges.

### **Imposter Syndrome**

A rigorous process for many first-generation Latinas, imposter syndrome has been a notable hardship for many students of color, women, and a common challenge among first-generation Latinas. Coined by psychologists Dr. Pauline Rose Clance and Dr. Suzanne Imes in the 1970s, the imposter syndrome phenomenon is defined as the feeling of being an academic or professional fraud (Edwards, 2019). Given the Eurocentric culture of colleges and universities, research on imposter syndrome has revealed how African American and Latinx first-generation college students are prominent groups who experience the imposter syndrome (Peteet et al., 2015). Goodenow (1993) defines sense of belonging as the concept where an individual feels accepted, valued, included, and encouraged by their educators and peers. Unfortunately, higher education culture fails to recognize that not all students have the same knowledge and experiences prior to entering college, and therefore may require different or additional support and guidance to help them feel valued and supported. For instance, first-generation students may require additional guidance when it comes to registering for classes and completing other college tasks. However, oftentimes additional support is not visibly offered, and students feel as if they are out of place or as if they do not have the necessary skills to succeed. This lack of college information and support is followed with feelings of confusion, isolation, and at times discouragement and thoughts that they may not belong on a college/university campus, leading them to experience imposter syndrome.

Luckily, recent academics have begun to challenge this notion of imposter syndrome by redirecting the focus to include and challenge the systems in place that cause this phenomenon. Explicitly speaking, Tulshyan and Burey's (2021) article directly critiques how the original development of imposter syndrome did not include the impact that systemic racism, classism, xenophobia, and other biases have on marginalized groups (p. 3). Hence, encouraging the redirection to challenging and diminishing the marginalized biases within institutions that have first-generation Latina college students feel less than and/or not worthy. Conclusively, Tulshyan and Burey suggest that the individuals experiencing imposter syndrome are not at fault but that the environment in which they are in are to blame for the negative emotions and experience. To abolish imposter syndrome, environments must foster a variety of leadership styles that reflect authentic inclusive practices and policies that include and validate all identities (Tulshyan & Burey, 2021). By better understanding the support that first-generation Latinas need and by making the necessary structural and institutional changes, colleges can demolish this phenomenon that is frequently experienced by many first-generation Latinas.

### **Traditional Perception of Parent Involvement and Support**

Through this study, parent involvement and support are used interchangeably as parent involvement is often interpreted as a supportive parent and vice versa. Traditionally, parental involvement has been defined by scholars as the frequency in which parents attend academic events and/or engage in academic organizations or conversations, all of which are limited to the academic sphere (Jordan et al., 2002). Recently, researchers on the topic of parent involvement recognize the privileged roots and norms of what is considered valuable parent support within education (López, 2001; Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018). Given that this study focuses on Latinas and their Latinx parents, it is important to note that previous research has found that parents'

involvement with their children differs by gender and race/ethnicity (Wells et al., 2011).

However, historically speaking, definitions of parental involvement have a privileged domain with a narrow spectrum of what is considered legitimate and valuable support such as attending college workshops, college visits, financial support, etc. (Engle, 2007; López, 2001).

Correspondingly within academia, the social norm that parental involvement is socially constructed to privilege white, middle-class norms when it comes to education, this then becoming the expectation of educators (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). Therefore, marginalizing diverse forms of parental involvement and support that do not fit this Eurocentric standard.

Given that most first-generation, Latina college students do not identify within white and middle-class categories, this understanding of parental involvement often discredits and marginalizes the role and support by the parents of these student populations.

These traditional models mirror deficit-based approaches of Bourdieu's (1977) theory that argue that the "knowledges of the upper and middle classes are considered capital valuable to a hierarchical society," and assumes that People of Color and/or low-income communities lack valuable social and cultural capital (Yosso, 2005, p. 70). These perceptions then depict individuals from marginalized communities as people who do not hold any valuable capital, knowledge, and skills if they were not born into dominant (white, middle-class) communities or received a formal education. As a result of this deficit approach, academic institutions have adopted deficit-based policies that marginalize students who come from disadvantaged communities such as first-generation Latinas and have constructed a myth that their parents provide poor parenting practices (Gonzales, 2012; Yosso, 2005). However, this false perception proves academia's lack of information about Latinx rich culture and capital (Matos, 2015). Given that this is a troubling and false assumption, there is a high need to further challenge the

traditional understandings of parental involvement. As Yosso (2005) states, there are various forms of cultural capital provided by families and communities that strengthen the experience of students of color in the classroom and therefore must be recognized in the classroom (Matos, 2015). Therefore, academics must recognize that parental involvement in education is multidimensional and parental involvement does not need to abide by the traditional school-centered definition for diverse types of parental support to be legitimate (Dotterer, 2022).

### **School-Centered Parental Involvement as the Norm**

Although many first-generation Latina college students cannot rely on their parents for college information due to the parents' limited college knowledge, parents still offer important insight and advice for their daughters to succeed. Prior research has documented mainstream parent involvement definitions to be strictly school-centered perceptions of what parent roles and support should look like, thus excluding culturally relevant family practices of support among diverse communities (Auerbach, 2007). Consequently, academic institutions strictly measure school-centered presence and support as the only form of parental involvement, and such involvement or lack thereof is interpreted as a reflection of the parents' school values and priorities (Jordan et al., 2002). This narrow definition excludes less tangible support such as the emotional support that many Latinx parents provide their children. For instance, a motivational conversation by a parent may not directly assist in completing an academic task, but it can still assist in motivating the student to complete the task, therefore, a form of parental support. However, this type of support is often excluded from what is considered parental support. As a result of the constricted spectrum of parental involvement, educators and researchers must seek to include the wide range of practices by diverse parents at home and at school that constitute parental involvement (Auerbach, 2007). Moreover, more focus needs to be allocated to analyzing



the barriers that academic institutions have in place that marginalize, ignore, and/or limit parental support as defined by the traditional framework.

Fortunately, scholars are challenging these marginalizing norms and debunking the myth that parent involvement is only measured through school-centered presence and that parents who do not have a college education or cannot provide quality support to their college-going children. Rather, substantial evidence demonstrates the various forms of support that is instilled in first-generation Latina college students due to their parents instilling cultural values that emphasize a college education (Sáenz et al., 2018). By recognizing the non-traditional support that parents provide, academic institutions and researchers can begin to recognize non-academic ways of support and ultimately better understand and support first-generation Latina college students throughout their academic journey and success.

### **First-Generation, Latina College Students, and Latinx Parents**

To begin, it is important to note that there are a multitude of definitions for first-generation students.

The term ‘first-generation student’ is defined differently by a number of organizations, often differing in the extent of exposure to postsecondary education (e.g., enrolled, attended, or completed) as experienced by disparate combinations of parent/guardian arrangements (e.g., highest extent of exposure for one parent/guardian or both parents/guardians). (Toutkoushian et al.’s, 2018, p. 17)

Most first-generation definitions articulate a strong focus on the parents’ higher education exposure or college degree attainment. For this study, I used Lundberg’s (2012) definition which defines a first-generation college student as a student in which neither parent has earned a bachelor’s degree. As noted by Lundberg, this definition is commonly used nationally and among federal programs and organizations. Moreover, throughout this study Latina college students refers to women identified students whose ethnic backgrounds are from Latin American

countries (e.g., Mexico, Colombian, Peru, etc.). The literature of this specific group also helps shed light on better ways to recognize, encourage, and validate the unique skills and contributions that Latina students bring on to college campuses (Rodriguez et al., 2000). Given that the focus of this study was to better understand the Latinx community, the term Latinx is used throughout the reviews as a “gender-neutral” term when referring to the parents and families of Latina students (Salinas & Lozano, 2019).

### **Parent Involvement Models and Latinx Parent Support**

A previous study on Latinx parents’ school engagement has revolved around two main ideas: academic involvement and life participation (Zarate, 2007). This specific study recognizes how for many Latinx parents, their academic involvement is more at-home based (e.g., moral support) rather than direct academic involvement and therefore rarely accounted for because it does not happen on academic grounds (Zarate, 2007). In efforts to recognize and value the at-home support that Latinx parents provide, scholars offer to analyze and validate the transmission of sociocultural values to be recognized as legitimate parent involvement (López, 2001).

Auerbach (2007) responds to Epstein’s (1990, 2010) family-school-community partnership model which for multiple decades led parent involvement research, policy, and practice. As described by Auerbach, Epstein’s model is rooted in an objective theory that does not include culture and family values as meaningful additions to educational aspirations and support. While Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1997) model recognizes parent perspectives and beliefs as part of their involvement with their children, this model still operates in conjunction with white, middle-class norms that view direct school-related behaviors as the best type of support (Auerbach, 2007). Like other mainstream approaches, this model ignores the fact that academic institutions have specific practices and norms that discourage and/or are inaccessible to

all parents due to factors such as language, formal education, work responsibilities, etc. (Auerbach, 2007).

While not having a college education can add challenges for parental support, it does not mean that a lack of a college education equals no parental support- or involvement. Rather among Latinx families, “family and school practices are necessary components for *una buena educación* (a good education)” and parents often feel a sense of responsibility to aid their children in the collegiate endeavors (Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014, p. 150). However, due to the traditional definition of parental support, this type of support is often excluded from what is considered legitimate support.

### **Challenging the Traditional Definition of Parental Involvement**

Critical scholars have shifted the focus of parental involvement to be more inclusive and demands academia to take a further look at the multitude of parental support that has been ignored in education. Due to non-traditional forms of support such as moral, emotional, or aspirational support (among others), happening off academic grounds, these supports are regularly not accounted for by academic institutions and researchers that operate on a biased conception of cultural capital (Auerbach, 2006; Gonzales, 2012). Therefore, there is a strong emphasis for the field of education to expand the definition of support to include family and community involvement in forms of theories and cultural values (Jordan et al., 2002).

In the realm of theoretical approaches, a community cultural wealth framework is later discussed as it acknowledges cultural, and family centered practices that encourages academics to interpret parent support in education through a value-based lens that recognizes important forms of capital that aid their students’ success. Consequently, the various capital that a community cultural wealth framework highlights, reinforces that valuable capital can also be

attained outside of formal schooling, and therefore a valuable form of capital that many Latinx parents have and pass down to their first-generation and/or Latina college daughters.

### **Reconceptualizing Parent Role Orientations in Education**

Auerbach (2007) describes three role orientations that parents play in their children's education: moral supporters, struggling advocates, and ambivalent companions. Through this reconceptualization of parent roles in education, Auerbach challenges the traditional parent involvement models to include working-class and PoC parents' at-home support and advice. The three role orientations recognize that regardless of any presented barriers, Latinx parents provide continuous support for their daughter's access to post-secondary opportunities and success (Auerbach, 2007; Gonzales, 2012). Moreover, the parent roles identified help frame an asset-based approach in studying the parental support in first-generation and/or Latina college students.

**Moral Supporters.** Moral supporters are defined as parents who approve their children's ambitions and provide encouraging indirect support through storytelling, *consejos* (narrative tips), and/or other verbal or moral forms of support that develop future aspirations for the students (Auerbach, 2007). Auerbach (2006) emphasizes that "this moral support encompasses practices such as stressing the value of education and hard work; encouraging students to study, do well, and go to college; and sharing consejos and other stories to reinforce the message" (p. 276). The emphasis on the importance of education and hard work is a common moral theme among the families of first-generation Latinas.

**Struggling Advocates.** The second parent role orientation is the struggling advocate, which is described as parents who provide more direct and involved academic support, including at-school advocacy (Auerbach, 2007). This support is illustrated when parents seek information

to help aid the students' academic success. Substantial evidence has revealed that parents of first-generation students regularly embed the importance of help-seeking practices for their children to succeed while in college. Furthermore, parents in this category emphasize the need to make the right connections for students to gain strong social capital that can aid them with the necessary skills and knowledge through and beyond college (Auerbach, 2007). This role orientation proves that regardless of any struggles that the parents may experience, they continue to provide or find the needed support for their children to pursue a college education.

**Ambivalent Companions.** Rooted in family dynamics, parents who are ambivalent companions fall between the moral supporters and the struggling advocates and support their children's education through strong emotional and moral support, close communication, and casual tangible support (Auerbach, 2007). In practice, this parental role orientation is witnessed when parents provide less direct assistance, offer strong emotional reinforcements, and communicate ambivalent messages about college (Auerbach, 2007). Evidently, this ambivalent support is provided by parents of first-generation Latina college students as they often provide a combination of academic and emotional support.

### **Latinx Parental Involvement Through College**

Recent literature on parental support recognizes that due to intersecting identities of race, class, gender, culture, and family dynamics, parents also experience unequal access and resources in their relationship with academic institutions (Auerbach, 2007). As a result of these intersecting identities and experiences, parental involvement and support may look different than traditional understandings of parental engagement. However, academic institutions rarely reach out to Latinx parents in efforts to find culturally appropriate and welcoming ways to engage them in their children's academic process (Auerbach, 2004). When institutions analyze parental

involvement, access to resources, and intersecting identities are regularly overlooked, and parents of marginalized groups are often labeled as unsupportive or uninformed because their engagement does not align with traditional forms of involvement (Kiyama et al., 2015; Yosso, 2005). In efforts to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for first-generation Latinas and other marginalized communities, academia needs to modify their understanding of parental involvement, and recognize the skills, knowledge, and various forms of support that parents can provide their children when they seek a college education.

### **Consejos**

To demonstrate this transition of capital, the *consejos* and *dichos* (proverbs) shared provide cultural strategies that instill motivation and hope while also bonding parents and their children through mutual care and dialogue on lived experiences and struggles (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Villenas, 2006; Yosso, 2005). While parents of first-generation students cannot directly relate to the struggles of academia, parents might translate the lessons of working hard in labor intensive jobs into lessons of working hard in school, thus using the concept of storytelling to pass on the cultural value of hard work and motivation (López, 2001). Regarding Latina college students, previous research has shown that for some Latinas, their mothers' *consejos* were framed within a belief that education was liberation from patriarchal norms that may devalue them (Espino, 2014). Based on the mothers' own lived experiences and struggles, these *consejos* stemmed from a sense of care and self-resiliency and in hopes that with a college education their daughters would have a better lifestyle than they might have lived. Although not all of parents' *consejos* are specifically answering or challenging oppressive structures, most of parents' *consejos* emphasize the importance of education and are meant to strengthen their daughters'

resilience as they navigate higher education (Auerbach, 2007). Therefore, transcending capital support between the parents' lived experience and the collegiate experience of the student.

### **Salir Adelante and Familismo**

Previous literature amplifies the magnitude of the phrase “salir adelante” and how it is shared by Latinx parents to encourage their children to seek opportunities that can reap a better and more secure life than they did (Gonzales, 2012; Hanna & Ortega, 2014; Matos, 2015). Studies on Latinx students and college aspirations demonstrate how deeply parents value a college education as a tool for social, familial, and financial success. This mentality to move towards advancement is also a form of capital. This mentality encourages the need to fight against any structural barriers and challenges that may arise along the journey to success (Hanna & Ortega, 2014; Yosso, 2005). In connection to the traditional Latinx immigrant belief that through hard work and determination goals can be achieved (e.g., the American Dream), parents share how through a good education a better life can be attained (Hanna & Ortega, 2014).

Since going to college disrupts the familial pattern and relationships for first-generation families, students often face additional challenges in transcending the change for not only themselves but their families too (Engle, 2007). Rooted in the cultural value of *familismo*, which emphasizes strong family ties and the importance of family, Latinx families are commonly engaged in the college-going experience and the benefits that come from a college education (Hurtado, 1996; Sabogal et al., 1987). While the motive to pursue a college education is frequently encouraged by Latinx parents and families, the familial ties of *familismo* sometimes privileges family and collective needs above the individual needs of the student (Ovink, 2013). For instance, parents often encourage their Latina daughters to seek a college education as a tool for independence and growth, but also expect them to continue fulfilling familial responsibilities

and maintain the value of close family connections (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Gonzales, 2012; Ovink, 2013).

As a result of familial and collegiate expectations, Latinas often feel pressure to negotiate a school-family balance that appropriately meets academic requirements and family responsibilities (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012). Since the multiple demands of school and family relationships have complicated impacts to the Latina college experience, Espinoza (2010) argues that this cultural and familial struggle among Latina college students needs to be further studied. Hence, familismo then leads to ambivalent messages of support that encourages Latinas to seek a college education to salir adelante but is also a constant reminder that family should be a constant priority. Despite the conflicting demands of family and college aspirations, studies show that family connections mainly serve as a motivation and support for many first-generation Latinas as they seek their academic endeavors (Auerbach, 2007; Hanna & Ortega, 2014; Ovink, 2013; Sy & Romero, 2008). Ultimately, the familial capital of familismo is evident as many Latinas consider their own educational success and advancement for the whole family (Hanna & Ortega, 2014).

### **Theoretical Framework: Reframing Parental Involvement and Support**

While previous research has demonstrated a cultural deficit approach when analyzing first-generation and/or Latina college experiences and parental involvement, the literature discussed provides an asset-based framework that can help academics better understand these parent-student populations. Through a community cultural wealth approach, the discussed parent role orientations include and value cultural and family knowledge and serves as proof that there are non-traditional ways that parents can provide support for first-generation and/or Latina students (Gonzalez, 2012; Yosso, 2005). In correspondence to these efforts, scholars demand that



to provide greater support and understanding of PoC college students, educators must find culturally appropriate ways to recognize non-traditional ways of support (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; López, 2001). If academics continue to only validate narrow definitions of parental support, institutions of higher learning will continue to marginalize communities that see, work, and live differently, such as first-generation, low-income, and communities of color (Gonzales, 2012; Ramos et al., 2017). To better understand and support first-generation and/or Latina college students, academics must embrace a community cultural wealth approach and recognize the Latinx parental support that traditionally has not been recognized by academia. By doing so, educators can begin responding to the demanding need for authentic DEI work, and positively transform academia.

Previous studies have investigated the educational processes of first-generation and/or Latina college students and addressed a variety of obstacles that diverse populations face. These obstacles are systemically rooted in the Eurocentric practices and ideologies implemented in U.S. culture and academic spaces that structurally marginalize diverse populations such as first-generation Latina college students (Gonzales, 2012). Scholars argue that institutions of higher education function from a Eurocentric epistemological perspective that sets European or Anglo-American values and experiences as the standard, and excludes and discredits non-white truths, realities, and knowledges (Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Museus & Jayakumar, 2012). This Eurocentric standard is reflected in the deficit-base lens that commonly highlights only the deficits and challenges of non-Eurocentric communities.

Due to this deficit approach and negative assumptions that are associated with marginalized communities, academics, researchers, and administrators often fail to understand and support diverse populations effectively (García & Guerra, 2004). Scholars on the topic

highlight how one of the main reasons the U.S. education system has underserved Latinx students is due to the negative myths and stereotypes regarding the Latinx population (Rodriguez et. al, 2000). As a direct response to the deficit-based approach, Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework challenges traditional interpretations of cultural capital while recognizing and celebrating the multitude strengths of Communities of Color. Hence, a community cultural wealth approach recognizes the strengths and multitude of capital of first-generation Latina college students and disrupts the negative myths that are frequently associated with these populations (Luedke, 2020).

### **Cultural Capital**

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defined cultural capital as a familiarity with symbols of dominant culture that acknowledged white, middle-class culture as the standard, and most valuable in a hierarchical society (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Yosso, 2005). In education, Bourdieu's definition of cultural capital often deems other non-Eurocentric epistemologies, practices, experiences, and cultures as less valuable. Within education, Bourdieu's theoretical perception has been used to explain the lower outcomes of success of People of Color (PoC) in comparison to white counterparts (Yosso, 2005). Bourdieu argues that valuable types of capital such as cultural, social, and economic capital can be attained through one's family or through formal schooling, however in education this approach fails to recognize that cultural capital can also be gained outside of the classroom (Yosso, 2005) and therefore capital does not have to be aligned to Eurocentric standards.

**The Eurocentric Norm of Cultural Capital.** Within education, Eurocentric pedagogies and experiences have become the norm and therefore has fostered a deficit-oriented thinking that devalues PoC knowledge, experiences, and capital. More specifically, education's interpretation

of Bourdieu's theoretical framework has led to the assumption that PoC individuals lack the social and cultural capital needed for social mobility (Yosso, 2005). Due to this misconception, academic efforts commonly try to help "disadvantaged" students by teaching them Eurocentric knowledge and practices that are considered valuable by dominant society (Valenzuela, 2010; Yosso, 2005). For instance, academic institutions often encourage students who acquire and practice only the traditional forms of cultural capital discussed by Bourdieu. This Eurocentric practice then reinforces the hierarchical structure and belief that PoC students do not hold valuable skills and capital if they do not align with the Eurocentric norm (Rodriguez et al., 2000). This negative perception is problematic because it makes the false assumption that individuals must be born into or have access to white and middle-class knowledge to be deemed valuable and move up the social ladder. This deficit-lens approach notes that students and families are at fault for their poor academic performance due to students entering school without the normative cultural knowledge and skills, and because parents do not value or support their child's education (Yosso, 2005). As a result of deficit theories like these, academics fail to recognize the rich capital that Latinx students have, leading Latinx students to think that their cultural capital is not valuable because it does not align with the Eurocentric capital norm that academic spaces uphold (Cuadraz, 1996; Gonzales, 2012). For instance, Cuadraz's (1996) work calls out how for Latinx students, cultural capital is often different from what the school system promotes, and therefore Latinx students often receive messages that they lack the intellectual ability and cultural capital to succeed.

In efforts to challenge the devaluation of Latinx capital, scholars such as Anzaldúa (1990), Solórzano (1997), Bernal (1998), Bernal & Villalpando, 2002), among others have questioned the inadequate appreciation and validation of Latinx knowledge and experiences

(Yosso, 2005). While frameworks such as funds of knowledge also name and define the cultural assets that Latinx families transfer to their children, Yosso directly challenges the traditional interpretations of cultural capital and highlights the rich attributes that Communities of Color bring into society and into the classroom (González, 2012; Yosso, 2005). When challenging the traditional understandings of cultural capital, the critique should focus on the systemic factors in place that perpetuate deficit thinking and produce educational inequalities for students whose identities differ from dominant sociocultural and linguistics groups (García & Guerra, 2004). By focusing on the systemic structure, academics can recognize how the Eurocentric standard marginalizes and ignores the cultural capital that diverse populations bring into academic spaces. Hence, through this asset-based framework, educators can better understand and validate the forms of capital held by marginalized groups such as first-generation Latina students (Samuelson & Litzler, 2015).

### **Critical Race Theory**

Given the historic marginalization of non-white ideologies, academic scholars have called out power and racial dynamics through Critical Race Theory (CRT). By utilizing the critical race theory approach of community cultural wealth, this study decentralizes the normative Eurocentric standard that claims valuable knowledge and experiences are only attained through formal forms of education and support. Continuing the intellectual work of Dubois' (1989) "color line" which referred to the ongoing issues of racial dynamics in society, CRT centers how race influences individuals' experiences in society and challenges the deficit perspective when analyzing racial and ethnic groups. Originally founded within the field of law, scholars have recognized how racial dynamics is deeply grounded in all American life, and racial inequalities are clearly mirrored within education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano,

1997; Tate, 1994; Yosso, 2005). Researchers argue how racial dynamics and deficit thinking affects both schools and how those who work within education are influenced by the negative perceptions placed among Communities of Color (García & Guerra, 2004). Hence it is critical for educators, administrators, and researchers to recognize the racial dynamics and inequalities embedded within education to better understand and support all students.

In education, CRT scholars argue that CRT work must be an intellectual movement of human resistance that challenges dominant discourse on race and racism, and examines how educational theory, policy, and practice are used to subordinate specific racial and ethnic groups (Solórzano, 1998; West, 1995). More specifically, the following five tenets were identified as guiding points in challenging marginalizing practices in the field of education: (a) the intercentricity of race and racism; (b) the challenge to dominant ideology; (c) the commitment to social justice; (d) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (e) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches (Solórzano, 1997, 1998). In correlation with these CRT tenets, a community cultural wealth framework theorizes, examines, and challenges the ways that race, and racism implicitly and explicitly impact the understandings of cultural capital in education (Yosso, 2005). It is evident that in efforts to engrain equitable practices within higher education, the CRT approach of community cultural wealth framework can encourage the shift in academia to recognize and celebrate PoC epistemologies and cultural capital.

### **Defining Community Cultural Wealth**

Yosso (2005) challenges Bourdieu's negative perception of PoC cultural capital and offers community cultural wealth as a framework that recognizes the “array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression” (p. 77). As developed through Yosso, there are at least six

forms of capital that build on one another as part community cultural wealth, and aid in individual and communal advancement of PoC communities (Pérez & Taylor, 2016; Yosso, 2005). These six forms of capital include aspirational, social, familial, navigational, linguistic, and resistant capital. Substantial evidence reiterates how traditional definitions of social and cultural capital within education standardize white ways of knowing and exclude PoC epistemologies and hence the need for a more equitable approach that centers PoC experiences and capital (Liou et al., 2009).

### **Development of Community Cultural Wealth**

The work of scholars such as Solórzano and Huber (2020) state how through a community cultural wealth approach, PoC students and educators can learn to recognize and communicate hostile college environments (Yamamura et al., 2010). However, the community cultural wealth framework is not limited to just academic structures, but it can be applied to critique, navigate, and resist other racist structures in other social systems (Acevedo & Solórzano, 2021). Recently, scholars have applied the community cultural wealth approach to analyze access to community cultural wealth in schools and how it affects persistence (DeNicolo et al., 2015; Samuelson & Litzler, 2015). In a broader concept, scholars call for continued research in understanding PoC's individual, family, and community assets and how they serve as protection when navigating structural racism (Acevedo & Solórzano, 2021). Through the adaptation of community cultural wealth in numerous studies, evidence shows that this framework follows the CRT approach which moves away from deficit mindset and rather recognizes and challenges the systemic issues in place. Within education, this framework is a crucial component in educational advancement to better support college-going students from diverse communities such as first-generation Latinas.

## **Community Cultural Wealth and Latinas in Higher Education**

For many first-generation Latina college students, navigating academic spaces is often accompanied by systemic challenges that often go unchanged by academic institutions, and strengths and sacrifices that go unnoticed. Regarding capital, it is commonly understood that attending college is an opportunity for underrepresented groups to access and gain capital, however this understanding does not recognize the multiple forms of capital that students such as first-generation Latinas already hold. To further explore the concept of community cultural wealth, capital, and its relation to higher education, the following defines six forms of capital and what they reveal about the knowledge, skills, and abilities of first-generation and/or Latina college students.

### **Aspirational Capital**

Unlike traditional forms of study, a community cultural wealth approach recognizes the systemic and racial struggles that first-generation Latinas experience when pursuing a college education while also acknowledging their abilities to push through these hardships. Latinas' strong traits of hope, resilience, and determination to persevere even in the face of perceived challenges can be interpreted as what Yosso (2005) defines as aspirational capital. This form of cultural wealth recognizes how individuals look beyond the present state of hardship and into a dream of possibilities even when they may not have the objective means to reach such goals. Aspirational capital is not limited to just academic spaces, Gándara (1995) notes that for Latinx first-generation students, the aspirational stories shared by parents “nurture a culture of possibility as they represent the creation of a history that would break the links between parents' current occupational status and their children's future academic attainment” (p. 55). As shown by Gándara among others, hope and perseverance transcends past the walls of academia and is held

by individuals who may not have received formal schooling; therefore, proving that regardless of educational status, individuals such as parents of first-generation students can teach and maintain high aspirations for their children's future academic attainment and success.

**Seguir Adelante.** Aspirational capital is commonly embedded and shared in Communities of Color in efforts to instill hope when overcoming systemic obstacles that may try to discourage individuals from seeking specific opportunities or experiences. For first-generation Latina college students, this aspirational capital mentality is often inherited from hearing stories about the hardships parents have endured, and ultimately serve as experiential knowledge and motivation for students to work through those obstacles for the family's overall well-being (Villalpando, 2004). For instance, the phrase of *seguir adelante*, is commonly shared among many Latinas' families and translates to "continue to move forward." For many Latinx families to *seguir adelante* means that one must fight against any barriers and move forward to gain a better life and social mobility for oneself and one's family (Hanna & Ortega, 2014). For many students who are daughters of immigrant parents, there is a sense of responsibility to gain a college degree, as a college degree is often associated with more opportunities, better lifestyles, and social mobility, all of which are attributes of the American Dream.

More importantly, for many first-generation Latinas, attaining a college degree helps honor their parents' efforts and sacrifices (Matos, 2015). This aspirational capital is also evident in how their parents have faced racism, prejudice, and discrimination through hope, hard work, and resilience to achieve the American Dream (Hanna & Ortega, 2014). Ultimately, aspirational capital highlights the importance of hope in the face of hardships and emphasizes the importance of perseverance to reach one's goals. Among the Latinx community, this strength is passed down through many generations and community cultural wealth helps shed light on this form of



capital. For first-generation Latinas, the mentality and ability to *seguir adelante* proves that even when multiple obstacles are presented, they have the skills to overcome them through resilience and hard work.

### **Linguistic Capital**

Linguistic capital is defined as the intellectual and social skills gained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style (Faulstich Orellana, 2003; Yosso, 2005). When looking at education, this linguistic capital is reflected in education in the multitude of languages and communication skills that PoC students practice such as bilingualism, and storytelling in the form of oral histories and *dichos* (proverbs) (Yosso, 2005). For Latinas who are bilingual, the “[ability] to communicate in more than one language and other forms of expressions such as art, music, and poetry” is an accurate example of linguistic capital (Liou et al., 2009, p. 538). This form of capital is frequently exercised by bilingual Latinas when they serve as translators for their parents, adults, or other peers, and it is a skill and responsibility that they take on far before and after college.

**Bilingualism and Linguistic Skills.** Through these interpretation practices, Latinas gain multiple social tools such as cross-cultural vocabulary, audience awareness, and teaching skills, all while fulfilling civic and familial responsibilities (Faulstich Orellana, 2003). Latinas also engage in other forms of linguistic capital outside of bilingualism, such as sharing oral histories, narrative advice, and storytelling (Liou et al., 2009; Yosso, 2005). However, these linguistic skill sets are often established in cultural and home upbringings and are often overlooked by traditional forms of cultural capital. Fortunately, CRT scholars emphasize the need for educators to recognize that students’ home languages and communication experiences are powerful assets inside and outside of the classroom (Liou et al., 2009; Yosso, 2005). Through CRT and

community cultural wealth methods, the recognition of linguistic capital reiterates the fact that first-generation Latina students carry various language and communication skills that enrich academic spaces and their collegiate journeys.

### **Familial Capital**

As defined by Bernal (1998) and Bernal and Villalpando (2002) familial capital refers to the cultural knowledge, skills, and support that is cultivated among *familias*, and a kinship that conveys a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition. Familial capital exhibits a community value that “engages a commitment to community wellbeing and expands the concept of family to include a [broader] understanding of kinship” (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). Prior to college, this capital is seen within family, teams, schools, or churches in which individuals can share a sense of community and knowledge. Among Latinas, family capital can be connected to the cultural value of *familismo* which emphasizes strong family ties and the commitment to community advancement and family well-being (Sabogal et al., 1987). This familial commitment is evident in studies that have found that more than half of Latinx students (in comparison to non-Latinx students) note family and friends as their main reason for enrolling in an institution of higher education (Person & Rosenbaum, 2006). For first-generation Latinas, seeking a college education serves as an opportunity to enhance their families’ well-being as they constantly share the attained knowledge and resources between their families, culture, and kin groups.

**Familial Groups on Campus.** On college campuses, campus involvement can help Latinx students expand their network of familial capital to include peers, faculty, and staff that can help support them as they grapple through higher education. Involvement in kin-like cultural groups encourages students to work collaboratively in a commitment to community and cultural awareness, all while strengthening their connection to their campus community (e.g., Association

of Latin American Students or ALAS). In response to racial inequities, cultural groups on college campuses offer a safe space for students to address racial issues and celebrate cultures. Across studies, it is illustrated that students' involvement in kin organizations enhances students' sense of belonging and self-confidence and extends their familial capital to include individuals in their campus community (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012). Correspondingly, their involvement encourages students to maintain a healthy connection to their communities and encourages the opportunity for students to contribute their own efforts and knowledge to the communal well-being (Yosso, 2005).

**Benefits of Familial Capital.** As a result of involvement in kin-like organizations on campus, two key benefits have emerged; an increase in feelings of attachment to campus and an increase in persistence, both of which are key obstacles for first-generation and/or Latina college experiences (Fischer, 2007). In addition, when Latinx students become involved in organizations rich in familial capital, studies show that students can relate with others around common interests and issues. This connection also helps students realize that they are not alone in their journey, leading to a decrease in feelings of isolation (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994). Ultimately, familial capital not only encourages the commitment to community well-being, but it also expands the concept to include different understandings of kinship and familial support and its positive impact on Latina students' collegiate success.

### **Social Capital**

As demonstrated through the literature, attending college can be a crucial component for many Latinx families because of the exposure to new networks, opportunities, knowledge, and connections. This gain of new information and connections can be understood as gaining social capital, a key asset to social mobility. Social capital is defined as valuable relationships that can

provide social support, guidance, and resources in social situations and goal attainment (Liou et al. 2009; Yosso, 2005). Among Communities of Color, individuals have used their social capital to navigate through education, legal justice, and employment, among other social institutions (Yosso, 2005). This social capital is often seen among parents when parents utilize social networks to “obtain resources needed for their children to experience positive educational outcomes” (Matos, 2015, p. 439).

Academically speaking, social capital can be measured as the people in one’s network that can provide support regarding an academic task such as assisting in completing a college or internship application. While social capital is relevant in the lives of many first-generation and Latinx populations, historically, these populations have been stereotyped to have lower levels of social capital. This social capital can be seen in students’ supportive families, friends, peers, or mentors that help and support prior to and during college (Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Nonetheless, college can be an important venue for the continued social capital growth of first-generation Latina students and their families as it can provide instrumental support and knowledge.

**Social Capital on Campus.** Through community connections and relationship building on college campuses, first-generation Latina students can increase their social capital and gain access to different resources and opportunities (Lin, 2001). For many students, attending college offers the opportunity to connect with social networks from different backgrounds, experiences, and professions that can aid in their personal, academic, and professional success. Social capital attainment can be seen when students connect with professional organizations on campus or connect with community leaders that can assist in other personal matters or interests. In addition, these connections can help integrate first-generation and/or Latina students into campus life,

while also providing companionship, support, advice, and information (Fischer, 2007). Given the magnitude of collective support and success among Latinx families, it is important to note that the social capital obtained through a college experience is also shared among the students' families, social networks, and communities (Yosso, 2005).

### **Navigational Capital**

When discussing institutions of higher education, it is important to note that colleges and universities were not created with PoC, women, and lower-working class communities in mind. As a result, college campuses are often difficult to navigate as they traditionally lack the familiarity, culture, and customs of diverse and non-Eurocentric communities. To successfully go through college, students must know the necessary skills and strategies to navigate through non-inclusive social institutions. This skill set is known as navigational capital (Liou et al., 2009; Yosso, 2005). As discussed by Cooper and Loui (2007) navigational capital refers to the students' ability to use the necessary navigational strategies, resources, and opportunities to excel in structures that exclude them, such as academic institutions (Liou et al., 2009). While college campuses can provide new navigation skills and strategies, many times first-generation Latinas already have navigational capital that they can apply when overcoming challenging experiences.

In connection to familial and social capital, first-generation Latinas frequently rely on their networks to advise them on navigational tactics, while also reciprocating the knowledge they already hold when navigating higher education (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Liou et. al, 2009). This is evident when students ask a mentor on how to respond to a microaggression or provide peer advice about safe spaces on campus. All in all, navigational capital equips first-generation Latina students with the necessary skills to navigate through higher education successfully.

**Navigational Capital on Campus.** Through effective mentorship and social networks, navigational capital is displayed when individuals share tips or advice on how to navigate through racially charged environments like college campuses (Martinez-Benyarko et al., 2022). In effective cultural mentoring relationships, Latinx mentors often provide guidance that is inclusive of cultural values and capital that is necessary to successfully navigate through college (Martinez-Benyarko et al., 2022). When it comes to social networks, the navigational capital shared among student organizations often serve as central support and resources that can help Latinx students throughout their postsecondary and career journeys and are key components in creating a sense of belonging and retainment on campus (Duran et al., 2020; Rios-Aguilar & Deil-Amen, 2012).

Cultural organizations such as the Association of Latin American Students help create a sense of community where students can provide peer to peer mentorship such as where or who to seek for help on campus, and ultimately provide encouragement of educational persistence and attainment among the group (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Overall, navigational capital acknowledges inner strengths and agency within institutional constraints and can help connect Latinx students connect to networks that empowers them to overcome and navigate through spaces that were not created for them (Matos, 2015; Williams, 1997).

### **Resistant Capital**

Despite the difficulties of navigating academia as a first-generation and/or Latina student, research indicates that resilience is a key trait in their pursuits of a college education. This resiliency is linked to resistant capital which is the skill to not only survive and recover, but to thrive and gain new skills during challenging instances of inequality (Liou et al., 2009; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000). This resilience is rooted in the ability to make use of other forms of

capital and resists any oppressive obstacles that may arise along the way of attaining new capital (Yosso, 2005). Hence, Deloria (1969) highlights how this type of community cultural wealth is historic among Communities of Color because of its roots in resisting subordination (Yosso, 2005). Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) discuss how resistance differs from other forms of oppositional behavior that may feed back to the system of subordination because resistance aims to not only survive oppressive systems but to transform them as well. For instance, marginalized communities have openly demanded systemic changes as they continue to face inequitable treatment, and in higher education, students continue to resist oppressive practices and demand equitable support for all students. Through these efforts of resistance and transformation, academic spaces can lead to shifting academic spaces to be inclusive of PoC communities and the capital they hold.

### **Parent Support for First-Generation Latina College Students**

It is important to note that communities of color navigate social spaces differently due to race and other intersecting identities, yet their values and aspirations for their children's educational outcomes remain high (Gándara, 1995; Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018; Villalpando & Solórzano, 2005). As seen through various literature on the topic, family is a leading source of strength and comfort for many Latina students, and many times this familial and parental support is intensified when Latinas pursue a college education (Saunders & Serna, 2004). Moreover, even though parents of first-generation students may not fully understand academic systems due to their limited formal education, they still provide meaningful support and emphasize education as a priority, a value that is prioritized among Latinx families (Saunders & Serna, 2004).

Previous studies have demonstrated that parents who stress at an early age that education is important, and that college is an expectation, have instilled a sense of competence in first-

generation students that they can go to college and succeed (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018). Among Latinx families, pursuing and attaining a college education is an extended family goal and sacrifice in which parents are profoundly invested in, and parents often draw on inner resources of moral capital to strengthen their children's purpose and academic focus (Gonzales, 2012). Through the Auerbach's (2007) parent role orientations and in connection with Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework, the following section identifies the valuable support and sacrifices that the parents of first-generation Latina college students provide.

### **Moral Support as Linguistic and Aspirational Capital**

To begin, it is important to note that previous research on Latinx college students has demonstrated that parental support has been a key predictor of emotional adjustment as students adjust to the college environment (Dennis et al., 2005). When it comes to providing academic support, Latinx parents build on their linguistic strengths and family relationships to empower and support their children in school (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994). For many parents, this moral support is expressed through verbal narrative advice, such as *consejos*, folktales, *dichos* (sayings) all of which are grounded in empathy, compassion, cultural values, and serves as motivational messages along their academic journey (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Delgado Bernal, 2001; Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014). Auerbach's moral support role can be connected to Yosso's concept of linguistic and aspirational capital because new intellectual and social skills are attained through communication experiences. More specifically, linguistic capital is often a result from the moral support provided by Latinx parents as they encourage their daughters to navigate English speaking spaces and ultimately a form of capital given that many first-generation Latinas serve as translators for their families.



Parents as moral supporters challenge the traditional definition of parent support by proving that through moral support, parents can instill cultural and ethical values that motivate their children to pursue an education, and as a result, increase student persistence and resilience (Auerbach, 2007). In a broader scope, it can be understood that the sharing of consejos establishes a sense of resilience and self-worth against the challenges faced outside of the home (Gándara, 1995). To continue, studies show that regardless of formal education status, Latinx parents along with families are often the first to promote and instill the importance of learning and education, and aspirations for a college education remain firm for their first-generation Latina daughters (Gonzales, 2012; Luedke, 2020). While moral support is one of the most common ways in which parents of first-generation and/or Latina college students provide support, this support is left unrecognized by educators and researchers on the topic.

### **Advocate Support as Social and Navigational Capital**

Parents of first-generation and/or Latina college students are aware that even though they provide substantial support to their daughters, they cannot provide all the support they need to succeed, and therefore encourage their daughters to seek any additional resources needed. Yosso's community cultural wealth framework helps academics gain a deeper understanding of how PoC and other marginalized communities "enact their information seeking behaviors by developing alternative social networks that enable their academic success" (Liou et al., 2009, p. 538). While family and parents play a key role in the personal, social, and cultural development of Latinas' academic journeys, it is undeniable that Latina first-generation students need to seek additional individuals and resources to help guide them through college (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012). For instance, parents in this role may take proactive steps to support college pathways such as connecting with family members or co-workers who have had some exposure to college

and can provide insight for their college-going daughters and encourage their daughters to seek the necessary resources to help them succeed (Auerbach, 2004). Therefore, parents in this parental role orientation often monitor, advocate, and seek information for the success of their children.

Parents who embrace the advocate orientation role, entail an action-oriented approach that recognizes the cultural capital benefits of a college education, and emphasize progress, strong social networking skills, and a need to learn how to work social structures to their advantage and success (Auerbach, 2007). This advocate parental support aligns with Yosso's (2005) concepts of social and navigational capital since they emphasize the need to seek the appropriate network and resources to navigate through post-secondary institutions not created for PoC students (p. 80). By instilling social and navigational capital, parents teach their daughters that it is crucial for them to learn how to navigate the inequitable structure of academia and access important information to help them succeed (Liou et al., 2009). All in all, this parental support highlights that even though parents may not have college experience, they still encourage and advocate for the necessary tools in their daughter's collegiate success.

### **Ambivalent Support as Familial Capital**

The last parental role orientation is the ambivalent companion, parents in this role provide strong emotional support and some direct help, but give ambivalent messages about higher education (Auerbach, 2007). This ambivalence stems from parents encouraging their students to seek a higher education for better opportunities, but also supporting other goals, as they believe that college may be a threat to the family bonds and obligations (Auerbach, 2007). For this role, parents hold strong relationships with their children, through constant communication, protection, and moral support while also conveying a mix of regret, shame, and

frustration about their missed academic opportunities (Auerbach, 2007). Unlike the other two role orientations, ambivalent companions have more familiarity with the American education system and the benefits that can be gained from a college education. Nonetheless, parents often fear that their close relationships with their children may change as they seek opportunities to salir adelante.

### **Conclusion: An Opportunity for Transformation**

While existing literature on parent involvement emphasizes the need for more inclusive acknowledgement of parent involvement in K-12 education, this study serves to further emphasize the analysis of parent involvement in first-generation Latinas' success at the college level. Through a CRT grounded approach, community cultural wealth encourages academics to critique, challenge, and deconstruct dominant ideologies and reframe the deficit perspective that is often used when regarding students of color (Samuelson & Litzler, 2015). Simultaneously, a community cultural wealth framework replaces the deficit lens with a value-based lens that illuminates non-Eurocentric experiences, knowledge, and support as positive and valuable attributes and capital. Additionally, this framework aids in recognizing the various forms of capital and multiple strengths that PoC communities produce and how they transcend into academic spaces (Yosso, 2005). A benefit of using a community cultural wealth framework when looking at equitable practices in academia is that this framework expands the view of knowledge production and validation to include the cultural skills and knowledge that is produced outside of the classroom (Liou et al., 2009). Through this framework and its emphasis on acknowledging different types of capital, educators and researchers can challenge the Eurocentric knowledge standard that is inhibited in social structures and validate the knowledge and epistemologies that parents of first-generation Latina provide throughout their college years.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

Over the years, institutions of higher education have been confronted by demanding calls for educational diversity and inclusion, and the questioning of traditional non-inclusive practices and epistemologies have been brought to the forefront by many students, researchers, and educators. Historically, institutions of higher education have been embedded in inequitable practices and epistemologies that highlight the Eurocentric practices and ideologies that are implemented in United States' academic spaces, and how these practices and ideologies are oppressive and dismissive of People of Color (PoC) non-academic and non-white epistemologies. These Eurocentric practices and ideologies within higher education disregard and ignore how race, among other intersecting identities such as college degree attainment can impact and influence a students' college experience (Lundberg, 2012). For Latinx students, academic spaces can be hostile environments rooted in Eurocentric ideologies and are maintained without the consideration of Latinx students (Matos, 2015). When analyzing the college experiences of first-generation and/or Latina college students, there is often a deficit-based approach that overgeneralizes the PoC experience and fails to acknowledge the sociocultural experiences and strengths that PoC individuals bring to the college experience (Luedke, 2020).

In addition to the deficit assumptions placed on PoC communities, parents of first-generation and/or PoC students are often presumed to not play a supportive role in the success of their children. This deficit-based approach is evident in the academic spaces ingrained

institutional biases, policies, and practices that marginalize Communities of Color (Gonzales, 2012). Fortunately, the demand in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work within academia has shed light on the urgent need to disrupt institutional biases and integrate equitable practices and policies within colleges and universities.

Institutions of higher education should not just prioritize college enrollment and retention rates but also prioritize the need to better study the disparities in college access, enrollment, persistence, and support for college students from traditionally underrepresented communities (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018). In efforts to create more equitable and inclusive institutions of higher education, colleges and universities must work beyond raising the college diversity rates and prioritize the need to better study the disparities in college access, enrollment, persistence, and support for college students from traditionally underrepresented communities (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018). Given the demand for academic equity in today's climate, educators must challenge the systemic practices in place that continue to marginalize Latina first-generation students and recognize non-dominant experiences, knowledge, and support. For this study, I solely focus on first-generation Latinas college students, because it is a growing population that is commonly neglected or misunderstood due to the lack of inclusive practices and pedagogy within academia. While the number Latinas in college continues to rise, there continues to be a need to further analyze the specific experiences of first-generation Latina college students and further explore how they navigate academia (NCES, 2022). This research helps educators better recruit, retain, and support Latina students through college and degree attainment.

In this chapter, I discuss the significance of this study and the research questions that helped guide my research, along with a brief narrative of my positionality. I also include a

rationale for the research approach, setting/context, sample and data sources, data collection and analysis methods, trustworthiness, and limitations and delimitations.

### **Significance of Study**

This study adds to the current literature on Latina and first-generation college students and specifically challenges the deficit approach that is historically used when studying these student and parent populations. More specifically, this study aids in better understanding the experiences of first-generation Latinas who receive parental support in ways that are outside of the traditional in-school presence and support and names such supports as forms of capital. In order to demystify the myth that parents of first-generation students do not or cannot provide quality support to their students, this study helps categorize and name the types of support using Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework. Ultimately, expanding Yosso's framework to question traditional definitions of parent support. Instead of only looking at the challenges that first-generation Latina college students face, this study highlights the community cultural wealth that Latinas have that help them navigate academia. Therefore, this study also aims to shift first-generation Latinas' perspective on the parental support that they have received through college.

By recognizing community cultural wealth, academics can debunk the myth that parental support is limited to just school-centered presence or the sharing of college knowledge. Through the testimonios collected, academics can begin to acknowledge how Latinx parents highlight, support, and instill the importance of learning and higher education. Similarly, the testimonios serve in highlighting how Latinx parents shape first-generation Latina college student goals and aspirations and create space to disrupt "the dominant culture's interpretation of 'our' experience, or the way they 'read' us" (López, 2009: Anzaldúa, 1990, p. 25-26). While some first-generation

Latinas may be aware of the quality support that they have received from their parents, this study names that support as a type of community cultural wealth, a valuable type of support that needs to be recognized by the academy. For first-generation Latinas who may not have thought of their parental support as a crucial component in their collegiate success, this study's focus encouraged participants to engage in "reflection on meaning" and making meaning of their experiences and recognition of their parents' support (Zavala, 2020, p. 40).

### **Rationale for Research Approach**

The purpose of this study was to examine and better understand the first-generation Latina college student experience and the parental support they receive while pursuing a college education. Therefore, a qualitative approach was the ideal method because the focal point was to understand "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). Through an asset-based approach this study's goal was to add to the existing theory of community cultural wealth and expand the traditional definition of parental support with first-generation Latinas as the focus population. In efforts to best engage in the understanding and purpose of this study, the following overarching question guided this study: How do first-generation Latina college students narrate the support they receive(d) from their parents?

### **Positionality**

My approach to this research was directly impacted by my own identities and experiences as a first-generation, cisgender, heterosexual Latina from a working-class background. I am the oldest of three and I am the proud daughter of Mexican immigrant parents. I see my identity as an asset to this research because it influenced why and how I did this study, and ultimately

makes me a cultural insider which helped me build rapport with participants. While these identities grant me the opportunity to identify as an insider, I am also aware that as a highly educated Latina and researcher of this study, these identities grant me power and privilege that can make me an “outsider” in the eyes of the participants. The concept of trustworthiness will be further discussed in this chapter.

Both of my parents are from Huandacareo, Michoacán and migrated to the United States as teens. Like many other immigrants, my parents came to this country in search of a better quality of life and they have always invoked in their children the importance of *una buena educación*, this education includes both a formal college education and ethical moral values. This cultural value of *una buena educación* in Latinx communities translates beyond the direct translation of a good education, rather, *una buena educación* involves developing good moral values and academics which becomes a moral code that families live by (Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014; Daiute, 2013). Growing up, going to college, and attaining *una buena educación* became an expectation that I set for myself, and an expectation that was also embraced by my younger brother and sister. This expectation is placed among many Latinx children and showcases how Latinx parents offer valuable and transferable forms of cultural capital that motivate and support their children’s academic and professional careers at an early age (Gonzales, 2012). After reflecting on this expectation, this mentality of *una buena educación* was rooted in aspirational stories which nurtured a sense of motivation and inspiration to have a better life, ultimately serving as a form of aspirational capital for me and my siblings (Gándara, 1995; Yosso, 2005). I came to realize that the educational expectations our parents set for us were valuable, and a form of aspirational capital when I first engaged with Yosso’s theoretical framework during my



graduate school years. However, this aspirational capital was planted far before I was in college, but it became more evident in my high school years.

When conversations about college became frequent in high school, I began to realize how much I did not know about going to college. From college visits, to applications, to Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, I knew very little information on how to navigate the process, nonetheless I knew it was something that I wanted and needed to pursue. While my parents could not provide the detailed support and information that some of my peers' college graduate parents could provide, they still provided me with essential tools to navigate to and through my college education. Unfortunately, this support was often unrecognized because I often focused only on the support, they were unable to provide. This lack of recognition stemmed from the false understanding that individuals without a college degree cannot provide valuable knowledge, guidance, and support; an idea that is set and upheld by the academy and its researchers (Huber, 2008). This mentality was problematic: it does not consider the lack of access to a college education for many communities, and most importantly, it does not account for the various forms of knowledge that are created outside of the ivory towers of academia.

This mentality casts a negative light on students like me whose parents did not attain a college education. Similarly, through this deficit perception, parents of first-generation students are labeled to be not supportive or knowledgeable in how to support their children to and through a college education. However, through my own lived experiences, research, and conversation with other students with similar identities to mine, it is evident that non-college-educated parents can and do provide valuable resources and support that help us to and through our college years. Hence, my desire to pursue this study.

### **Research Setting and Context**

By using the testimonios research design, this study included the lived experiences of ten first-generation Latinas and the ways in which parents supported them throughout their college years. In alignment with Critical Race Theory and community cultural wealth, the use of testimonio throughout this study centers Latina voices and affirms how testimonios serve as a form of theory making that helps first-generation Latinas reclaim our stories as college students through asset-based perspective that honors the work and parental support received while pursuing a college education.

### **Research Design**

Testimonios have and continue to be a strong component of Latinx culture and can serve as political and intentional ways of sharing stories that are often left out of history books and overall conversations inside and outside of the classroom. Testimonios are often presented as memoirs, oral histories, song lyrics, or spoken word, and are often not left in an oral state, but are documented through interviews, recordings, or transcriptions (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012). Testimonios allow the narrator to share personal life stories and experiences from their own point of view. Hence, testimonio cannot be directly translated to the English word of testimony because its English translation does not include the theoretical, political, and intentional underpinnings of this methodology (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012). Testimonios highlight a reality and experience that is not the dominant story, ultimately, producing a sense of awareness about different narratives and experiences that resist the status quo. A testimonio is born out of the speaker, therefore can serve as a political and authentic tool aimed at resisting oppressive practices that silence and/or misinterpret the lived experiences of others (Brabeck, 2003). Testimonios allow the narrator to reflect and express personal life experiences and “identify the

forms of oppression that have affected their experiences, rather than the researcher defining those experiences for them” (Huber, 2008, p. 169). When the researcher becomes self-aware and is transparent in the research process, the researcher becomes a “witness” or “participant” and an agent of “collective memory and identity” by providing a space for participants to share and reveal their own experiences within academia (Yúdice, 1991). Within education, testimonio as a methodology serves as a pedagogical support for students and educators to demystify common structural marginalization (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012). Through testimonio, it is the speaker’s decision what is shared, how it is shared, and when it is shared; testimonios allow the speaker to have agency in all aspects of their own lived experience.

### **Testimonio as a Methodological Tool for Liberation**

Rooted in 1960s and 1970s Latin American rights struggles, testimonios were first used to tell the experiences and enduring struggles of people who experienced persecutions by governments and other socio-political forces throughout Latin American countries” (Bernal et al., 2012). Since its origins, the methodological objective of testimonios has been to bring voices from the margins to the center, to question power structures and to reclaim the authority to narrate our own lived experiences and realities. It is then that this theoretical tool provides a theoretical foundation to build knowledge from Latinas’ lived realities (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Regarding survival and liberation, testimonios serve as what Anzaldúa (1987) refers to as *la facultad*, a survival tactic developed by those who have suffered and experienced oppression.

In alignment with Latin American right struggles, Anzaldúa and Moraga highlight the importance of “theories in the flesh” and testimonios as a form of theory making and as channels to express the unspoken truths and conversations that many People of Color (PoC), especially, Women of Color (WoC) face. Moraga defines theory in the flesh as lived experiences based on

the color of our skin, and how our skin color along with other identities infuse a political experience (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983). Testimonios function as a way to validate and honor oppressed peoples' experiences by documenting and analyzing their experiences, while also dismantling the apartheid knowledge that is perceived to be the status quo (Huber, 2008, p. 172). This apartheid knowledge is defined as the "Eurocentric epistemological perspective that perpetuates dominant ideologies rooted in white superiority" which has clearly been indulged by American institutions of higher education, and exclude non-white ideologies, experiences, and knowledges (Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Scholars like Third World Studies researcher Okihiro (2016) focuses on highlighting the lack of inclusivity in the United States' education system and calls out its various structures of power that have led the academy to be a space of oppression with the pressures of compulsory assimilation. An example of American education as an institution that excludes non-white ideologies, is evident in the unfortunate experiences of Indigenous peoples when they were forced to learn a Eurocentric curriculum that objectified them as the "Other" (p. 99). Unfortunately, this structure of whiteness within education has also oppressed other communities such as Black and Latinx students.

Past research has investigated the educational processes of first-generation Latina college students and addressed a variety of obstacles that these populations face. These obstacles are systemically rooted in the Eurocentric practices and ideologies implemented in U.S. culture and academic spaces that structurally marginalize diverse populations such as first-generation Latina college students. Scholars argue that institutions of higher education function from a Eurocentric epistemological perspective that sets European or Anglo-American values and experiences as the standard, and excludes and discredits non-white truths, realities, and knowledges (Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Museus & Jayakumar, 2012). This Eurocentric standard is reflected in the

deficit-base lens that commonly highlights only the deficits and challenges of non-Eurocentric communities, like the way they view parental involvement.

Rooted in theories of the flesh, testimonios can then serve as proof of how an individual has lived and embodied systemic oppression, all of which can lead to psychological and physiological consequences (Cruz, 2001). The methodological form of testimonio then connects lived experiences to larger societal structures and/or the lived experiences of others and takes a single autonomous experience to a collective experienced reality (Brabeck, 2003). Testimonios allow an opportunity to pay attention to the complexities of our identities, our realities and experiences, and the systems that marginalize people, creating a process of reflection, healing, and collective memory (Huber & Cueva, 2012).

In relation to community cultural wealth and knowledge production, testimonio disrupts traditional knowledge production because it challenges normative interpretations of what constitutes knowledge and who is given legitimacy to produce knowledge. As Brabeck (2003) argues, “testimonio emphasizes the validity of experiential and/or lived knowledge,” and reminds us and others that we do not all experience the world in the same way, and that our identities impact those experiences (p. 256). These testimonios help cultivate a space of knowledge where common themes and parallel experiences across differences can be brought to the surface of conversations regarding peoples’ experiences (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). In addition, this type of personal narrative “serve[s] to reorient theories about the relationship between the individual and the social by calling attention to the social and cultural dynamics through which individuals construct themselves as social actors” in our society (Maynes et al., 2008, p. 2). Ultimately, testimonios aid in validating PoC human subjects and experiences as experts of their own experiences and producers of knowledge. This means that the production of

knowledge is not limited to academia and traditional Eurocentric ways of knowing but is also experienced and produced outside of academia through lived experiences.

### **Decolonization within Academia**

As mentioned in the work of the Latina Feminist Group (2001), testimonios were and continue to be used as a method to create a reflective process that theorizes Latinidades through testimonio, and therefore can transcend into the theorizing about our own experiences as Latina academics (p. 8). In the discussion and planning of this research study, I realized that I would not be able to share participants' voices through an unfiltered and authentic research lens without writing and accepting my own first. Therefore, in alignment with the process of decolonization, reflexivity, and transparency, as a first-generation Latina student and researcher, I also documented and analyzed my own experience.

In creating one's testimonio, scholars like Ortega (2017) argue the need for *conocimiento* with oneself and the understanding of one's place in this world, by doing so this *conocimiento* can convert into a testimonio and serve as a method of resistance against the monolithic truth that often excludes PoC experiences and ways of knowing. Ortega argues that we need to challenge Eurocentric ways of colonization in academic spaces, in order to create space for PoC inclusion in the classroom and in curricula. Ortega argues that "certain local histories and certain bodies are being erased from conversation altogether," and through our testimonios we can validate and center our PoC experiences and knowledge (p. 509).

Therefore, scholars like Ortega (2017) encourage us to question forms of homogeneity and partake in "decolonial woes," which she explains as "resistant practices aimed at dismantling the hegemony of Eurocentric thought" (p. 510). These practices include but are not limited to "the negation of dominant ways of knowing," and "negat[ing] knowledge that we have

disclosed” (p. 512). By stating our testimonios, we can begin to validate our knowledge and experiences within academia, and overall begin to decolonize ourselves and our knowledge from the dominant white narrative in higher education. Through this piece I refer to colonization as the act or process of establishing control over the “Other,” referring to those who are marginalized based on race, gender, sexual orientation, class, etc. and stripping away rights, practices, knowledge, and overall individuality (Okihiro, 2016). Hence, to decolonize oneself is to gain that agency back for oneself and/or one’s peoples, in this case, Latinas gaining agency for their story and lived experience.

In this study, the testimonios displayed what Bernal (1998) refers to as cultural intuition which is the forms of knowledge that an individual gains from a multitude of experiences in our personal, professional, and academic life. The testimonios offer an opportunity for readers to read and hear the experiences Latinas from various universities and across/spanning pan-Latinx ethnic identities, who share their story that is often left out of the dominant college-life conversation. In relation to the overarching question of study, the testimonios center and celebrate the histories, experiences, knowledge of first-generation Latinas and the parental support received which has often been devalued, misinterpreted, or excluded within formal educational settings and conversations. Therefore, through testimonios we are able to better understand the Latina college experiences and also challenge the oppressive systems and stereotypes that Latinas live in by no longer remaining silent (Reyes & Ríos, 2005).

## **Testimonios and Latinx Parental Support**

Despite the growing body of literature and efforts to better support and understand the first-generation Latina college experience, research has often disregarded the influential ways in which Latinx parents support their children through college. Research shows that parental involvement and support for their children's college aspirations has been one of the most influential elements that impact students' decisions to pursue a college education (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018). When analyzing the role that parents play in supporting first-generation and/or Latina college students, it is necessary to define what constitutes parental involvement and how parental support may vary depending on the parents' background. Recent literature on parental support recognizes that due to intersecting identities of race, class, gender, culture, and family dynamics, parents also experience unequal access and resources in their relationship with academic institutions (Auerbach, 2007). As a result of these intersecting identities and experiences, parental involvement and support may look different than traditional understandings of parental engagement.

However, academic institutions rarely reach out to Latinx parents in efforts to find culturally appropriate and welcoming ways to engage them in their children's academic process (Auerbach, 2004). When institutions analyze parental involvement, access to resources and intersecting identities are regularly overlooked, and parents of marginalized groups are often labeled as non-supportive or non-knowledgeable because their engagement does not align with traditional forms of involvement (Auerbach, 2007; Yosso, 2005). In efforts to have a better understanding and better support first-generation Latinas, the testimonios included in this study help readers understand the parental involvement first-generation Latinas have received. In addition, this study encourages the opportunity to recognize the skills, knowledge, and various



forms of support that Latinx parents can and have provided their children when they seek a college education. In this study, parents did not undergo any interviews as this study solely focused on the experience and reflection of first-generation Latina students.

### **Research Sample and Data Sources**

This study asked 10 current or recent (within one year of graduation) first-generation Latina undergraduate college students to reflect on their college preparation and present years, and how their parents have influenced and supported their college education. The sample size was large enough to include a variety of first-generation Latinas with different backgrounds and experiences, yet small enough to do an in-depth analysis of their experiences. While the sample size was not limited to the range listed, saturation was used as a way to know when I was done collecting data. In this study, saturation meant that there was a point of data replication and redundancy (Bowen, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, it is important to note that increasing the sample size was optional but not necessary (Bowen, 2008, p. 140).

During these interviews, participants were able to articulate how their parents have supported them, and how said support influenced their college experience. Purposeful criteria-based sampling was used in recruitment efforts to represent people who have experienced the phenomenon of parental support as first-generation Latina college students. This type of sampling strategy was helpful because this student population was able to best answer the research questions (Maxwell, 2013). Regarding rigor, the student population also served as the most appropriate sample given the questions and goals of this study which is to shed light on the phenomenon of the valuable support parents provide to first-generation Latinas (Tracy, 2010).

For this study purposeful sampling was used by emailing college/university professors and first-generation and/or Latinx students, organizations, and majors (see Appendix A). The

email included a concise summary of the study and inclusion criteria for participants regarding their experience as first-generation Latinas and the community cultural wealth received by their parents. Social networks were also used, and a recruitment flyer was shared (see Appendix B). The goal was to recruit participants who identified as first-generation Latinas who had reflected on the support they have received from their parents and how those skills and supports have helped them navigate academia. With that said, the social networks used were intentionally selected as there is a high number of academics and students on LinkedIn, and specific Instagram academic influencers with a high following of first-generation Latinas were sought. Most participants in this study were recruited through a post on LinkedIn. In addition to these recruitment efforts, I used a snowball-sampling method and asked participants to share the research opportunity with other peers who fit the study's criteria.

When interested students reached out, they received an explanation of terms in advance (see Appendix C) so they can decide whether they fit the identity criteria and if they have received any type of community cultural wealth from their parents. Prospective participants were encouraged to respond and complete the consent form (see Appendix D) if they believed they were eligible for the study.

### **First-Generation Latinas**

For this study, I recruited 10 first-generation Latinas who identified with the first-generation Latina definitions below and are current undergraduate students or recent graduates from an accredited four-year college or university. To better answer the overarching question on the impact of Latinx parent support, I used Lundberg's (2012) definition that defines a first-generation college student as a student in which neither parent has earned a bachelor's degree. As noted by Lundberg, this definition is commonly used nationally and among federal programs

and organizations. Throughout this study Latina college students referred to women identified students whose ethnic backgrounds are from Latin American countries (e.g., Mexico, Colombia, Peru, etc.). Therefore, there was an intentional focus on ways to recognize, encourage, and validate the unique skills and support that parents of first-generation Latinas contribute to their daughters' success.

### **Defining Parents and Support**

The term “parent(s)” throughout this study refers to the participants' individual understanding of parent, which can refer to biological, adoptive, or chosen parents. Similarly, parental support was limited to the traditional definition of school-centered presence and support as the only parental engagement. Rather, participants were asked to share specific examples of support and the ways in which their parent(s) provided such support.

### **Data Collection Methods**

Through testimonio we can critically reflect on our own experiences within various socio-political realities (sex, race, class, sexuality, etc.) and we learn to reflect on our own experiences as part of knowledge production and researchers. The interviews aligned with the purpose of testimonio because the participants made the decision to share how and what was shared with me, and ultimately gave them agency in how their lived experience was told and shared. Hence, as part of the self-reflexivity and self-awareness in this study, I also documented my own responses to the interview questions (see Appendices E & F) provided to participants. This allowed for my work as a researcher to be reflective and authentic and serve as an example as I interviewed participants. Similarly, my own responses served as a form of accountability and reflection to let my participants know my own positionality and experience in response to the research question at large.

Participants engaged in two 60–90-minute virtual semi-structured interviews via Zoom. With the consent of the participants, all participant interviews were video recorded, and interviews were held on a secure server, password-protected computers. Through the semi-structured interviews, I had the opportunity to gain some insight on the participants' relationship to their parents, the parental support they received, and their experience in college. During the first interview, participants were asked to reflect on how they felt their identities as first-generation and as Latinas impact[ed] their college experience, their relationships with their parents, and how their parents provided support before and during college. The interviews were categorized as semi-structured because participants were able to provide any additional information that was not asked for throughout the interviews.

In alignment with Patton's (1990) meaning of triangulation and the effort to reduce the impact of potential bias in this study, collecting data through different methods allowed me to verify findings across different datasets and ultimately strengthen this study (Bowen, 2009). I specifically chose to include artifacts in this study because artifacts have stories and carry symbols of meaning about how they were collected, created, inherited, or purchased (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017). Prior to the second interview, participants were asked to select an artifact that represented their parents' support throughout their college experience (see Appendix F). Participants were asked to discuss their chosen artifact with their parents before the second interview. The parent conversation did not need to be recorded, and its purpose was to engage in conversation about what the artifact meant to them and if their parents tied the same meaning to their chosen item.

The artifact and parent conversation provided an additional layer of knowledge and insight into the discussion and analysis of what parental support can look like for first-generation

Latinas. The artifact was then explained by the participant during the second interview stage and helped me gain a direct understanding of the participants interpretation of the parental support (Douglas et al., 2015). A discourse analysis took place in which it was my responsibility as the researcher to engage in conversation with the participant to determine the relevance of the object to the research question and examine how the artifact attributes values, attitudes and beliefs from the participants perspective (Bowen, 2009; Saldaña & Omasta, 2017). Through a documented analysis of these artifacts alongside the participant, the artifacts helped enrich the descriptions of their experience in relation to the research question (Bowen, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). In addition to this, their conversations with their parents encouraged further reflective dialogue between the participants and their parents about their meaning of support.

### **Participant Demographics**

This study's participants included ten first-generation Latinas from six different states in the U.S., with most of the participants being from California. All the participants identified as Mexican, with one of the participants also identifying as Salvadorian. The majority of the participants attended a public university in their home state and were in their senior year of college. In addition, half of the participants were also enrolled or a part of national or state college support programs for first-generation students while in high school and/or in college. While there was no prominent field of study, there were two participants who were psychology majors and all three of the recent graduates were enrolled in their first year of graduate school.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Participant Pseudonym	Year	Ethnicity	Major	Type of University	University State Location	Home State
Valentina	Senior	Mexican	Marketing/ Management	Public	Illinois	Illinois
Teddy	Recent Grad	Mexican	Product Design Analysis	Public	Texas	Texas
Marleny	Junior	Mexican	Psychology & Public Health	Public	California	California
Alex	Recent Grad	Mexican	Psychology	Public	Georgia	Georgia
Victoria	Senior	Mexican	Psychology in Education	Private	Maine	Delaware
Mieriam	Freshman	Mexican	Bilingual Education	Public	Texas	Texas
Valerie	Recent Grad	Mexican	Speech Language Pathology	Public	California	California
Isabel	Sophomore	Mexican & Salvadorian	Law	Private	California	California
Chelsey	Senior	Mexican	Ethnic Studies	Public	Washington	Washington
Rosario	Senior	Mexican-American/ Chicana	Cognitive Neuroscience	Private	Illinois	Illinois

### Data Analysis Methods

In this study, a thematic analysis of the testimonios was conducted using a narrative approach. Participants participated in a virtual individual interview which was recorded and saved under a password protected electronic device. To protect the participants identities, all participants chose pseudonyms and interviews were only identified by the pseudonyms selected. For participants who did not select a pseudonym, a pseudonym was selected for them. In alignment with the purpose of testimonios as a means of expressing agency, all interviews were transcribed.

Once interviews were transcribed, transcripts were coded through a thematic coding process using Nvivo and I engaged in an open coding practice when reading the interview transcripts. During this stage I described, named, and identified general themes that I noticed in the interviews, codes such as, “college preparation,” and “description of parent/participant

relationships” arose during this stage. For example, interview responses where a parent supported their daughter with rides to college preparation events was categorized under “college preparation.” This open coding process generally categorized these experiences and allowed me to further categorize them using the community cultural wealth framework in the closed coding stage. In this stage, the general concepts were connected to the overall research question, and served as starting points for analysis (Charmaz, 2014). An example of this would be categorizing a type of support with a type of community cultural wealth capital. Lastly, I moved into a focused coding phase in which the types of support shared by participants allowed me to synthesize and explain how the types of support shared connect to the types of community cultural wealth capital, ultimately highlighting this study’s most significant aspects (Charmaz, 2014). When coding was complete, I followed up with participants by providing a narrative summary of my main takeaways. Participants were asked to provide any clarifications, or gaps in their interviews. This was done to assure that my interpretation in connection to the theoretical framework used was reflective of the lived experience they shared during the interview.

This analysis method was first applied to the responses of my own testimonio to not only reflect on my own lived experiences but to also make me aware of possible biases. A possible concern in this study was participants being able to specifically single out specific types of support that they have received, rather than answering yes or no to a question, participants were prompted to describe *how* parents motivated them to not give up or *how* parents advised them to navigate through difficult times. By answering my own questions and then trying to categorize those types of support under a type of community cultural wealth, I was better suited to answer any clarifying questions that came up during the interviews.

For the artifact analysis, a discourse analysis took place in which the artifact was explained by the participant during the second interview. During the second interview, we engaged in conversation about what the artifact meant to them, what the artifact meant to their parents, and ultimately how this artifact symbolized their parents' support. I referenced the transcript of this interview to further determine the relevance of the object to the research question and analyze how to categorize the artifact under the different types of community cultural wealth. Before ending the second interview, participants were presented with a brief overview of the six types of capital (see Appendix G) and received a brief example, (ex. Bilingual being a linguistic capital). This was done to introduce participants to the CWW terminology and was done at the end, so it did not influence their initial responses of what support is or meant to them. As a result of this exposure, all participants were able to identify additional forms of capital.

### **Researcher Role and Trustworthiness**

Regarding trustworthiness and credibility, my responses served as a reference point as to how my lived experiences influenced the study's topic and impacted how I interpreted the data collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By being aware of my own experiences, I conducted interviews through a lens of self-awareness and added a coat of vulnerability and authenticity to the process.

One of the many strengths of testimonio methodology is that while testimonios derive from one person, it can represent the lived realities of many who have been affected by social stigmas, events, or structures (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012). My role as a researcher in this study was to document these Latina testimonios in efforts to disrupt the monolithic college narrative that parents of first-generation college students do not provide essential skills and



knowledge as their children navigate college. To avoid misinterpreting the participants' experiences, the self-reflexivity, vulnerability, and transparency of the researcher was integrated into the goals, methods, categorization, and analysis of the study (Tracy, 2010). Therefore, echoing the work of Yúdice (1991), my role as the researcher was to become witness of their experiences within academia. For this study, my role was to connect the parental support received to the theoretical framework of community cultural wealth. By naming supports as forms of capital, I was simultaneously challenging the traditional definition of parental support that often disregards Latinx parent support. While my identities as a first-generation Latina college student and researcher provided additional insight into what questions to ask participants and provided a level of credibility in the study, they also led to my own assumptions and biases. In efforts to provide a rigorous qualitative study, I identified these identities and monitored how they influenced the shaping of the collection and interpretation of data (Bowen, 2009). Through a reflection journal, I disclosed my own biases to create awareness and separation between my narrative and that of the participants.

In addition, these testimonios created the opportunity to connect with one another in a shared experience. More importantly, Chicana and Latinx scholars have embraced testimonio methodology as an emerging power where those sharing their testimony are creators and holders of knowledge and allows them to “speak to the importance that oppression, [and] the importance that knowledge plays in empowering oppressed people” (Collins, 1991, p. 221). In this study, participants’ testimonios in relation to their parents' support helped in demystifying the idea that parents of first-generation Latinx students do not provide valuable support throughout their college years and success. This research study aids in the shift from a deficit-based perspective that is placed on first-generation students and families to a value asset approach, while also

naming a new form of capital. Simultaneously, in connection with Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth, in the process of this study's analysis, the type of parental support is named and categorized under the six types of capital (aspirational, social, familial, navigational, linguistic, and resistant capital). In alignment with Tracy's (2010) conceptualization of rigorous analysis, this study entailed transparency with the participant regarding the sorting, choosing, and organization of the data collected.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

The purpose of this study was to better understand and support the first-generation Latina college student population and comprehend the support that is provided by their parents. While recent studies have researched the familial support of Latina/x college students, this study focused on how first-generation Latina college students narrate the parental support they receive (Zavala, 2020). The methodology is aimed at highlighting the stories and knowledge of first-generation Latinas who are often excluded from the dominant discourse, and it is not intended to overthrow any other lived realities that are experienced by other first-generation Latinas. Similarly, given that recruitment was mainly done online, this set a limitation as those who did not have access to online platforms or social media accounts may not have been aware of the opportunity to participate. In efforts to create an environment of commonality and cultural community, I invited participants to ask me questions about my own experiences as a first-generation college student and daughter of Mexican immigrant parents. By doing so, authentic conversations and rapport helped develop a trusting relationship with participants. Furthermore, the purpose of this qualitative study was not to generalize the college experience and parental support received by this population, rather it was done to contextualize, better understand, and support this population through an asset-based perspective.

## Summary

While previous research has demonstrated a cultural deficit approach when analyzing first-generation and/or Latina college experiences and parental involvement, a community cultural wealth theoretical framework provides an asset-based approach that can help academics better understand these Latinx parent-student populations. Through a community cultural wealth approach, the discussed parent role orientations included and valued cultural and family knowledge and serve as proof that there are non-traditional ways that parents can provide support for first-generation and/or Latina students (Gonzalez, 2012; Yosso, 2005). More importantly, this study highlights the perspective of first-generation Latinas when it comes to the parental support that they have received through college. Rather than believing the myth that parents of first-generation students do not or cannot provide quality support to their students, this study categorized and named the types of support using Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework. In addition, this study also coined a new form of capital, Existence Capital.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

#### **Aligning Parent Support to Types of Community Cultural Wealth**

This study challenged the deficit-based approach that fails to acknowledge the sociocultural experiences, knowledges, and strengths that first-generation Latina college students gain from their parents through forms of support. The study included two in-depth, semi-structured interviews in which participants discussed their college experience as first-generation Latinas, the support they received from their parents, and an artifact that symbolized their parents' support. The purpose of this study was to further explore and answer the following research question:

- How do first-generation Latina college students narrate the support they receive(d) from their parents?

Through the interviews of 10 current undergraduate or recent graduates, the results revealed numerous types of parental support through interactions of the following community cultural wealth: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant. Through the different interview questions, study participants affirmed the value of parental support in their college success at different levels and their artifacts mirrored this support. In addition, the interview questions revealed students' understanding of capital, how it was passed on to them, and also encouraged further reflection in which participants were able to acknowledge how they also built on the capital that was passed on to them. Ultimately, this interview process served as

not only an opportunity to acknowledge and name their parents' support as forms of capital, but also an opportunity to recognize themselves as holders and creators of capital.

This chapter will highlight the three unique themes that Latina college students narrated about the support they received from their parents. Three themes were identified in this study: (a) Parental Support as Influential to College Success (b) Naming Types of Latinx Parental Support as a Form of Capital (c) Existence Capital. The themes are discussed below.

### **Parental Support as Influential to College Success**

In recounting their experiences, some of the participants became emotional when reflecting on their college experience and the support they received and continue to receive from their parents. This emotional response could be due to the process of reflection and collective memory that is part of telling one's testimonio. In this scenario, these recollections of memories reminded the students of the numerous support they received, and how this support made them feel important and cared for while in college. While all the participants had previously reflected on their parents' support and its influence on their college experience, some mentioned how this study encouraged them to think of support in a new way. Isabel stated, "I've never really looked back and reflected on what they have told me. I'm just reflecting right now on all the things that they've said throughout, like my whole life." As a result of the CCW reflection approach, the following sub-themes emerged; the comparison of parental support received vs. the support received by other peers and parent support as a positive impact on college success.

Most participants provided testimonios that described positive and healthy parent relationships, however, some participants highlighted hurdles in their parent-daughter relationships. For some participants, this shift occurred during their middle school years and were with their father figures. For instance, Valerie had a difference in opinion with her dad,

whom she described as a “machista type dad who wants their daughters to stay home.” She noted, “I didn't want that.” For her, this change in their relationship came from the realization of gender role expectations and her questioning of her dad’s machista mentality. Participants who shared a change in their father-daughter relationship often stated that there was a difference in perspective or expectations as the cause of this change. As a result of this difference, participants who mentioned strain with their fathers often mentioned their mother figures as their go-to parent and referred to their mothers as their “best friend.” Like Rosario who mentioned she “gravitate[d] away from [her] dad,” due to what she referred to as a “toxic” mentality. Evidently, when it came to aspirational support, mothers were often the ones that provided the most emotional support for their daughters. Regardless of any changes in the parent-daughter relationship, all of the participants stated seeking a college education for not just themselves but their families and/or communities and identified their parents' support as influential to their success.

### **Comparison of Parental Support**

Latinas in the study acknowledged some of the challenges of being first-generation and the historical lack of support within institutions of higher education, more specifically, they acknowledged how their identities impacted their college experience. For instance, some participants disclosed multiple mentions of pressure they felt as first-generation Latinas. Chelsey shared the following about her identities, “Yeah, it's a badge of honor. But at the same time, like, there's just like, a lot of pressure.” Similarly, Mieriam shared “I’m scared of failure and scared of my academics,” and “I feel a lot of pressure to succeed.” Chelsey shared that when it came to her identities as first-generation Latin, she was well aware of the following, “Being first gen

definitely impacts the way I experience college, because I do share those common feelings with other students,” her statement referring to being the only PoC in her college classes.

Echoing this sentiment, Victoria shared that her identities as a first-generation Latina were prominent identities in her upbringing and throughout college, and it was without a doubt that these identities also impacted how she navigated college. She stated, “I think about my identity every single day, because it affects [me] in so many different ways.” When it came to her college experience as a first-generation Latina she noted:

It definitely does affect. First, navigating higher academia, especially if it's not built for you. The different ways of cultural capital that you might not know that, again, like with fostering relationships with your professors, joining extracurriculars, those types of ways [build capital]. The alumni, and people who have college educated parents are able to pass down to their children.

Through this response, it was evident that Victoria recognized how to build capital while in college, while also recognizing how other non- first-generation students possibly had that capital passed down to them. While Victoria shared a couple of the challenges that came with being a first-generation Latina from a low socioeconomic background, she made sure to end by emphasizing, “my identity definitely makes me stronger.”

Other participants in the study also echoed this reflection and recognized some of the ways that their parental support deferred from their non-Latina peers. When asked if she had reflected on her parents’ support prior to this study, Chelsey responded, “I've engaged in reflection of it quite a lot. It's always during graduation season, where it kind of hits home to me, like, yes, of course, I'm really happy and supported.” However, she noted that in spite of the support she has received, seeing other peers share how much support they have received also made her think of the support she has not been able to receive from her parents. Chelsey stated “my parents just helped me with life stuff. My parents just made sure I'm alive.” She further

explained that while she was grateful for the support her parents provided her, she could not help but compare it to the support her peers received. She recalled:

I can't imagine what it's like for your mom and dad to help you the entire time on your homework assignment. And like, they helped you the whole 10 weeks in this class, because you just needed help. I was like, I don't know if I feel jealous. But it's like, I just don't understand that feeling. I feel like that's where I just had to give myself an extra hug and be like, 'Well, you did that class all on your own.' Like, 'Well, you did all these other hard classes, all on your own, but good for them.'

Through reflective dialogue, Chelsey expressed gratitude for her parents who have been able to support her in different ways such as providing guidance and affirmations when it came to navigating life and providing general advice and giving her positive affirmations. Moreover, Chelsey credited her parents limited yet valuable support for pushing her to become independent and accountable for her own actions and success. She shared how growing up her parents would apply pressure or *la regañaban* (scolded) to do well or do better, and now this self-integrity and self-motivation has transformed into independence and accountability. Ultimately, her parents' expectations and scolding served as indirect forms of support that helped her become self-sufficient, self-driven, and ultimately an independent and successful individual. Although students were aware of the kinds of support their white peers received and compared their parental support to theirs, they also saw their parents' positive impact on their college experience. Most students attributed their success to their parents despite being aware that their support looked different from their peers.

### **Challenging the Traditional Meaning of Parental Support**

Through our conversations it was important for me to validate the feelings of participants when they expressed their frustration in the difference of support, while also encouraging them to recognize the non-academic ways that their parents supported them. For instance, I asked,



“how did your parents provide support in overcoming challenges while in college?” Through questions like these, participants reflected and shared how their parents showed up for them in those situations. As a response to this reflection, Alex shared the following:

I never really reflected on the little things that they were doing for me until now. Like I mentioned, my mom, you know, doing the meals. And I think at this point, this is when I realized, that's her way of supporting me. Because there was no other means of her really, helping me out with navigating college. But I think the only way she knew how was through meals and stuff. Yeah and my dad, I feel the same thing. You know, I always appreciated their help, but not until now is when I fully understood how much of support they really gave me through my undergrad years

Through Alex's statement, it was evident that she had reflected on her parents' support, but this CCW helped her think of her parents' support in a new way. In a way, some of the participants initially only thought of tangible forms of support that their parents provided such as financial support. However, when digging deeper into the ways in which their parents were involved in their college journey, more forms of support came to light, ultimately, support that were often overlooked. Alex shared that she had never really reflected on her parents' support until this study, and when reflecting back on it she was able to identify ways in which her parents provided support which before she had not attributed as a type of support. She stated: “I always appreciated their help, but not until now is when I fully understood how much support they really gave me through my undergrad years.” Other participants echoed this depth of reflection as well, like Isabel who shared that while she had reflected on her parents' support in the past she answered, “definitely not like a deep dive like this.” Thankfully through our reflective conversations, Isabel was able to highlight more ways in which her parents supported her and shared, “Wow, I probably gained more from my parents.” Similar to Isabel's reflection, the students conceptualize their parents' support in a variety of ways, all of which are reflected throughout the themes in this chapter.

## **Positive Impact of Parent Support**

In this study, all of the participants shared that they had previously reflected on their parents' support, and they all identified ways in which their parents' support had positively impacted their college success. Participants had engaged in these conversations through specific racecourses or first-generation programs. Most participants like Rosario credited her parents for her success and stated, "I think if it hadn't been for their support, I don't think it would have been as successful, like at all." Other participants shared how their parents stated, "perdon por no saber y no poder ayudarte" (sorry for not knowing and not being able to help you), or for not being able to support further however they provided the right support like Mieriam's parents did. All of the participants echoed a sense of gratitude for how their parents provided support.

Victoria shared that she had briefly reflected on her parents' support with other individuals in the past. This sense of reflection was sparked when a speaker attended her campus and shared that he was not "self-made," but "community made." This statement really resonated with her and encouraged her to reflect on the different support she had received from other people that has helped her get to where she is today. She specifically thought of her parents, she expressed, "it's one of those things like if they can support, they'll do it." She mentioned:

My parents never taught me how to read or how to write an academic paper. But the skills to write an academic paper, they've also taught me and there's different ways that these skills show up.

To further expand on this, she shared that while her parents could not provide the direct academic support to write the paper, she learned her parents' perseverance and work ethic, which also contributed to her completing her academic tasks. Furthermore, her parents would send her daily texts that said, "hola buenos dias" (hello good morning) as a way to check-in and see if she needed support. For Victoria, these texts were chosen as her artifact because they reminded her

that, “They are thinking of me and want to know how I am.” She expressed her gratitude and stated, “I’m actually so grateful that my parents are able to send a message because I know how busy they are.” Moreover, Victoria recognized her parents’ check-ins as crucial components to her success. She noted, “I’ve definitely become way more appreciative of my parents’ support, just knowing that like, in any ways that they could [and] were able to do so.” When in dialogue about her artifact, her parents reminded her, “hacemos lo que podemos hacer si necesitas algo aqui estamos” (we do what we can do if you need anything we are here).

At large, participants noted that they were extremely grateful for their parents, like Valerie who could not help but get emotional for all the support they had provided her. When it came to her artifact, she chose an action, which was her parents’ help in moving out of state for graduate school. This was a significant form of support because she acknowledged how her parents have always been there for every stage of her life, including the transition periods like moving. When discussing the significance of this support she said, “I really appreciate when they do things like that, like the big moves especially because it’s a new chapter, a new era for me, like transitioning into these new, like living spaces.” When she shared this significance with her parents, her dad responded, “It’s our duty, like your parents it’s to support you. We’re always going to be here for you,” he added, “it’s his job to support me.” Even though she had already graduated college at the time of her interviews, she knew that their support would continue on as she embarked on her collegiate journey as a graduate student. While at times Valerie had felt a sense of guilt for going away to school and pursuing an opportunity her parents did not have the opportunity to do, she was proud of how far she had come. More importantly, she was grateful for the support and the opportunity to be able to engage with her parents, especially with her mom about her college journey. She also made sure to state that she had been reflective of her

parents' support, and also the support that unfortunately her parents did not have, which made her even more grateful for the support, love, and guidance they provided her. She noted, "I'm so proud of myself. I don't know where I would be without my parents." When referring to her parents and the influence they had on her success she stated, "they're part of my why, they're part of my story, my identity." Valerie shared that both of her parents were able to provide her with financial support, constant motivation, and advice on how to handle life situations, all of which had a positive influence in how she navigated college and now graduate school.

### **Naming Types of Latinx Parental Support as a Form of Capital**

The literature review in Chapter Two provided an overview of different types of parental support that expand the traditional definition of what parental involvement and support looks like for first-generation Latina college students. Through a community cultural wealth lens, different forms of capital were identified in the parental support that participants shared during the interviews. Although they did not know these types of capital, participants were able to name and decipher how parental involvement contributed to their CCW and collegiate success. When participants shared their parents' support, they did not use capital terminology, nor did they always narrate how their assets derived from their parents' support. In a way, it seemed as if participants had internalized the negative connotation of the first-generation experience without looking at the strengths and skills, they gained by being first-generation Latina college students. Throughout the interviews it was evident that the participants had previously reflected on the support that their parents had provided, however some support was overlooked or questioned if they would be considered support in this study. The questioning or lack of acknowledgement of certain supports highlighted the need for this study which was to identify the forms of support and connect them as types of capital using Yosso's CCW framework. The capital below

highlights the immense support parents of first-generation Latinas provide and ties it to academic terminology.

### **Aspirational Capital**

Across the study, the most prominent form of capital was aspirational capital and was often shown through affirmations, moral support, or “words of love” as Rosario called them. For Latinas, the aspirational words or stories shared by parents helped them boost their confidence in times of doubt, affirmed their hard work in times where they felt overlooked or over worked, and served as a way to help love and nurture their daughters. When discussing aspirational support through her mom’s affirmations, Valerie stated, “I’m so grateful for her kind words. Like, they’ve really helped me throughout my academic journey.”

Aspirational capital was also the most prominent symbolization of capital when it came to artifacts, as participants chose items like a screenshot of a text or keychain that motivated them. For instance, Isabel’s artifact was a keychain with an affirmation that her parents often said, “eres Chingona” (you’re a badass). She stated, “although they’re not in physical form, I attribute them in physical form,” meaning that while the words they told her were not in physical form, when she saw her keychain, she would think of her parents’ positive affirmations. Alex’s “you’re doing great” mug that her mom gifted her was also a reminder of her parents’ affirmations. She stated, “I envision like, oh, you know, my mom is saying, ‘you’re doing great,’ or my parents are saying, ‘you’re doing great.’ A little reminder, that you know, they actually do notice the hard work.” Overall, the participants narrated this aspirational support as crucial in their collegiate success as it often fueled them to and through hardships. This aspirational support was often provided through emotional support, affirmations, or having their parents’ sacrifices as a motivational factor.

**Emotional Support.** When Teddy reflected on the support that her parents provided, she noted, “I relied really heavily on them to be part of my emotional stability.” Even though she was not physically with her parents at all times, she referred to them as being her “safe space.” For instance, when she felt stressed or unsure about something she was able to connect with her parents and talk about the issue she was facing. When feeling notions of imposter syndrome, she noted that her dad provided moral support and reminded her of instances in which she overcame hardships.

On a similar note, the consistency of emotional support was crucial, and a needed constant in the participants’ ever-changing lives. “I think my parents are very consistent with that,” was how Marleny responded when speaking about aspirational support and overcoming her anxiety and feelings of imposter syndrome. She further explained, “I think that moral support is really helpful.” She shared the following about her first year in university.

I faced a lot of anxiety my first year, and I think that stemmed from being in a new place, being in a new environment with people that don't look like me. I think, like that, some from like my imposter syndrome to just always questioning like, do I belong here? Do I? Why? Am I smart enough to be here? Am I? Like why am I here?

In the situations in which she did not know how to overcome her self-doubt, she turned to her parents who reminded her of her worth, to take a break, and to remind her that, “we're here for you, and we know that you can do it.” In addition, her parents' affirmations had a positive impact on her and helped her overcome such challenges. She recalled, “[They're] always communicating to me like ‘you're powerful, you're a great leader, you're inspiring, you care about others,’ that has kind of fed into how I see myself.” These positive affirmations and emotional support helped Marleny build her confidence. She expressed, “I'm confident that I have these skills.” As a result

of this new gained confidence, Marleny's perception about herself shifted to a positive light, and it encouraged her to seek more leadership opportunities.

For those that had faced a restraint in their father-daughter relationships, they often shared their mother's being their go-to parent for emotional support. This was not to say that their fathers did not provide any emotional support, but it was their mothers who provided the most of this capital. For instance, a lot of the aspirational support that Valerie received was expressed through emotional support provided by her mom. Valerie's mom provided emotional support through phone calls where she reminded her that she could do it, and she reassured her that everything was okay at home. This reassurance was important to Valerie because at times she worried if things were going well at home.

In addition, Valerie shared that her mom served as her "safe space." In times when there was tension between Valerie and her dad, her mom served as her "safe space." She stated, "we communicate through my mom." Ultimately, her mom served as the mediator between her and her dad, removing some stress for Valerie. She shared, "I can discuss options that I have, and then just giving me perspectives from our family." She further shared that while her father did not provide as much emotional support, he provided support in other ways, she said "he's been providing financially, like, I would want more emotionally." While both of her parents provided support in different ways, she was immensely grateful to have both of the parents' support throughout her college journey.

A similar sentiment was shared by Mieriam who worried about her family back home and her academics, yet her parents would reassure her with, "todo va estar bien, que no me estrese" (everything will be good, to not stress). Emotional check-ins were also an important part of Victoria's collegiate journey. She shared that her and her parents have weekly check-ins just to

see how she was doing, and they constantly reminded her that “whatever [she’s] going through ‘todo va estar bien’” (everything will be good). While this form of support is not always recognized as academic support, participants like Rosario defined aspirational capital as crucial in her success, she shared, “I think what pushed me forward, despite all those obstacles, was definitely just my mom's love.”

**Affirmations.** When it came to aspirational support, participants recalled their parents' frequent “echale ganas” (give it your all) and “tu puedes,” (you can do it) which Isabel referred to as “verbal support.” When it came to affirmations, Chelsey stated “it's nice to hear that kind of stuff. I'm not gonna lie.” For participants, their parents’ affirmations and reassurance served as a reminder that they could do it and succeed. More specifically, the positive affirmations have fueled a strong sense of confidence through their academic career. Isabel shared:

They reflect to me confidence, and honestly, they have a lot more confidence in me than I have in myself. It's just like for somebody to be with you, and constantly reaffirm you like, ‘you've got this like,’ you know, like ‘you will do it’ like ‘whatever you wanna do, you can do it,’ and ‘you will do it.’

For Isabel this sense of support played a key role in overcoming challenges like imposter syndrome. Due to her parents’ affirmations, and their confidence in her, she has been able to surpass hard times. Other participants, like Valentina and Alex shared how these affirmations started far before college. For Valentina, her parents had always been vocal about how proud they were when she reached important milestones and goals, such as transferring into her college major and being accepted to study abroad in Europe. Valentina shared an example of positive affirmations that her dad began at an early age that she still remembers to this day.

When I was little, I remember my dad would tell us like affirmations to say. He would always say our names like, ‘[Valentina]’ and then I would just repeat him. So he would be like, ‘[Valentina] no le tiene miedo a nada, ni a nadie’ (Valentina does not hear anything or anyone). He would teach me that as well as my sister.



At the time Valentina's dad did this practice as a way to engage with his daughters and remind them of their strength. This intentional and affirmative practice showed the aspirational capital her dad poured into her and her sisters and a valuable form of support that Valentina still remembered and drew into for strength when needed. Similarly, Alex recalled how her parents would say motivational statements like "echale ganas," or "ponte las pilas" as ways to encourage her and motivate her to keep going. These forms of aspirational support became statements that she would remind herself of when navigating tough situations. She shared:

I felt like even growing up as a child, I felt like they really instilled that 'you can do anything.' I feel like they really instilled, you know, 'you're not any different. You're not any less.' I felt like those things growing up really stayed with me as I was pursuing my higher education.

As a college graduate, and now graduate student, Alex's parents' affirmations and words of encouragement have been prominent pieces in overcoming challenges and reaching success.

**Parents Sacrifices as Intra-generational Motivation.** Several participants in the study referred to their parents' sacrifices as motivating factors for seeking a college education. This intra-generational motivation reveals the dynamism and evolution of capital, and how parents' capital can sometimes transcend to different forms of capital when passed on to their children. For instance, parents' resistance capital became a form of aspirational capital for participants. When it came to previous conversations about their parents' support, most conversations happened in spaces in which people were first-generation, Latinas, or held similar identities; this was the same when it came to reflections about their parents' sacrifices. Ultimately, aligning their academic accomplishment as a way to fulfill their parents' sacrifices and serving as an intra-generational aspiration. For instance, Marleny shared,

Being in the first-generation college program that I'm in, we do have conversations about this. And we talk about guilt, we talk about our parents at home, like with the family working. And we kind of just picked up and left but we talked about that.

Isabel shared that acknowledging these sacrifices was something she started doing more as she got older. She shared, "As I got older, I'm just thinking about all the sacrifices that were made." More specifically, she saw obtaining a college degree as a way to acknowledge all of the sacrifices her parents had to make. Other participants saw these sacrifices as a motivating factor to go to college. For instance, Rosario emphasized, "I think that my main reason for having a college degree is being able to hold space and take up space." More specifically, she saw obtaining a college degree as a tribute to her parents' hard work and sacrifices. She shared:

Doing a college degree was like holding space in a classroom that my parents never got to. And so for me, it was the privilege of being stressed about homework and having the privilege to be stressed out about a degree.

While Rosario acknowledged how challenging and stressful college was, she compared it to the stress her parents had to face when navigating a new country, she stated, "that's a different type of stress," and therefore acknowledged her stress as a privilege. Similar to Rosario, Mieriam shared, "They're really proud, and I'm happy to make them proud. Because it's just something that like I'm doing it for them, and all their sacrifices."

Recognizing their parents' sacrifices also led participants to acknowledge their parents' long workdays or for some, how their parents immigrated to this country. Marleny emphasized, "They've always sacrificed for me and my family. I'm not like a trust fund kid." As a result of their sacrifices, Marleny stated "My parents have sacrificed a lot like I'm gonna keep pushing. Make them proud, make myself proud." Similarly, Chelsey stated that her parents' sacrifices served as an influential factor in her college journey. She shared,

My parents did sacrifice a lot to be over here. And in turn, in my high school experience I had to work really hard to get into this really hard and competitive school. But you know, like someone had to give at the end.

In a way, Chelsey took it upon herself to not only seek a college education as a first-generation student but sought after a competitive school as a result. Other participants, like Rosario, also acknowledged the privilege that it was to be in college. Like Valerie who shared that her parents, specifically her mom, did not have the opportunity to go to college.

My mom always tells me about her dreams and aspirations, but wasn't able to pursue them because she started a family. And so she had to take care of her family. [As a result], I'm very passionate and they taught me to really understand and love what I'm doing because they didn't have that.

While obtaining a college degree was not the only way to fulfill their parents' sacrifices, some participants like Alex acknowledged college as being a way to fulfill her parents' highest aspirations. She specified,

I'm seeing everything that my parents had to go through, I guess, to be here, to get me to undergraduate. I wouldn't feel guilty if I didn't go to higher education, but more so maybe like I wasn't going to fulfill my highest self.

For Alex, she recognized that there were other ways in which she could fulfill her parents' aspirations for her, but for her, a college degree would help her become her best self not only for her, but her parents as well. As a response to their parents' sacrifices, the participants often felt the need to fulfill their parents' aspirations by acknowledging their sacrifices and obtaining a college education. Simultaneously, the parents prided themselves on their daughter's collegiate journey and success as a positive result of their sacrifices.

***Pride in Daughters.*** Some parents also expressed their pride in their daughter's achievements through social media networks which then served as aspirational motivational for the participants. For instance, when Mieriam was accepted to college her mom posted on

Facebook to let her extended family and friends know about her achievement. A similar practice was done by Chelsey's parents who would speak highly of her to relatives and say things like "she's such a good student," and "she could go anywhere." Ultimately, serving as an external form of affirmation and pride in their daughters. Echoing this pride and motivation, Mieriam's artifact was a picture of her high school graduation with both of her parents. For her, this picture reflected a collective achievement, but also served as motivation to graduate college. She stated, "I love looking at these pictures because well, we've grown together. Like, ellos también han crecido" (they have also grown), When conversing with her parents about this picture, her mom said "que se sentía muy bien porque apesar de que ella no supo nada que [ella] sola [se] enseñ[o]" (that she felt very good because even though she didn't know anything that she taught herself). However, Mieriam responded by telling her that she did teach her a lot and they motivated her, she said, "I told her that I learned so much from her and our support and that like everything I'm doing is for them." Affirming that at times the parents' affirmations served as not only an acknowledgement of their daughters' hard work but also as motivators to keep going. For instance, Marleny's artifact was a screenshot of a text that she received the day before graduation, and it demonstrated the pride her parents had in her because it affirmed her successes with statements like "proud of you" and "you're a role model." For Marleny, this artifact not only served as a symbol of her parents' acknowledgement of her hard work and success but also as motivation. She stated, "I kind of look for it, for reassurance, to make sure like I'm doing the right thing, and I'm on the right path," she further exclaimed, "[I] hold on to it and use it as motivation."

**Guilt.** When speaking about the recognition of their parents' sacrifices, it is also important to note that some participants felt a sense of guilt for either being able to pursue a

college education when their parents could not, for being away from home, or felt guilty when asking for support. As a result, the students narrated this guilt as motivation to succeed in college for them and their parents who were not able to pursue a college education. More specifically, the guilt of having the collegiate experience that their parents did not have and having the resources meant the participants were more determined to complete their college degree. As Victoria stated,

Guilt is so heavy, and I kind of wish we talked about it a little bit more. But my, you know, I feel guilty in a few different ways. I would say first is, I wish my parents had this college experience. I wish they were able to go to college. And they're so incredibly smart.

Similarly, Teddy shared she felt guilty due to “being able to enjoy these experiences, because they didn't get to enjoy that.” Others like Marleny, felt guilt for leaving her home to pursue a higher education, she shared, “guilt of like, oh, I'm leaving my family, I'm you know, going away from home. I'm living away, and instead of staying back and helping.” This was a similar sentiment that Valerie felt because her sister did not finish high school on time while she was away.

This sense of guilt also arose when participants asked their parents for help, especially when it came to financial support, like Valerie who stated, “I would feel bad.” On a similar note, Victoria stated, “I don't really like reaching out to them for financial things, because it makes me feel just a tiny, tiny bit, but it makes me feel like no, you can use that money for yourself.” Or Marleny, who felt guilty and overwhelmed when thinking of how she was going to make money while in school. While she knew she could ask her parents, she said “I felt bad asking, but they never said no.” This sense of guilt stemmed from not wanting to add an additional stressor to

their parents' lives, given that for many of the participants, their goal for going to college was to help the family and make things easier for the family as a whole.

### **Linguistic Capital**

This capital is gained through the ability to gain social skills by communication in more than one language, such as the ability to translate. In this study, several of the participants mentioned the ability to translate as being an asset to their collegiate experience. However, it was also the least form of capital mentioned and often overlooked as a capital that was gained outside of academic spaces. For instance, Isabel credited her parents when it came to “learning about the history of [her] culture.” When discussing the skills that their parents taught them, participants like Valentina responded with “Definitely the linguistic capital, [knowing] Spanish,” or Alex who shared, “translator, I’ve had to do that, too.” Ultimately, participants expressed how they learned Spanish from their parents and how their translation skills were able to enhance their lives as academics and professionals.

For Mieriam, the ability to connect with Spanish speaking students influenced her decision to pursue a Bilingual Education major and she credited parents for helping her develop her bilingual and translation skills. She specifically recalled her trips to Mexico and having to speak Spanish in order to communicate with her family. Academically, Mieriam shared how her parents provided support with her Spanish courses by sharing knowledge regarding historic events. When it came to learning Spanish, Isabel remembered her mom would buy books and teach her the alphabet. She described the following:

I remember a really vivid memory. It was just me and her, and she would be flashing through like flash cards of the alphabet, and words that I would say. But I remembered that she wasn't the best English speaker. She knew a couple of words and things like that, but she didn't really speak it that well.

Regardless of her mom's limited English, Isabel's mom tried her best to teach her daughter both languages, a skill that Isabel has now been able to reap the benefits of as a college student and young professional. This was a similar reflection to Rosario's who shared, "if it wasn't for the fact that I was just surrounded with Spanish speaking, my Spanish speaking mom or my dad at home, I wouldn't have been able to probably keep up with my native fluency as well." When it came to her profession, this capital only expanded in value as she shared, "just speaking Spanish in the clinical environment, like translating whatever it is so amazing, so amazing."

Teddy reflected on her parents' role in teaching her Spanish outside of the classroom and shared that her mom was able to provide some academic support when it came to courses in her Spanish minor. She stated:

I am bilingual because my parents taught me outside of the classroom, but I made the decision to make it easier for myself while in school and to take Spanish classes. Because at least I had a base for the language that I learned out of the classroom and then I could benefit and help me, push me forward in education.

It was evident that Teddy was comfortable in both languages, as oftentimes, she would weave in some Spanish during our conversations. When she referenced her artifact notes she said, "I wrote them in Spanish, I can still translate them." For Teddy, having the ability to speak both languages allowed her to translate between both languages and communicate effectively, all of which enhanced her linguistic capital as a student and professional.

As a result of her bilingual abilities, Victoria shared the following about growing up:

Navigating formal documents, like accessing FAFSA filling out, for example, just documents that hold a particular level of seriousness. Let me think about this for a second. Um, yeah, like documents, like government documents, because having to translate them at a young age, being able to decipher them a bit easier, easier.

Now, as a college student and tour guide, the skill set of switching between English and Spanish has become a valuable trait and connecting with prospective students. She explained,

being able to speak the same language does help and being able to kind of talk about certain things, because one of the things that they asked me was, what's it like being a Latina on campus? She shared that the ability to speak Spanish had not only helped her professionally, but also provided an opportunity to talk about certain things with other Spanish speaking students and families. Valerie's cultural identity was something that was not always accompanied by great pride, and this was due to negative experiences. However, speaking Spanish was a skill that derived from her Mexican identity, and a skill that her parents taught her. As mentioned, Valerie's cultural pride has grown over the years, and appreciation for the language was also very evident. She stated, "I was just looking at bilingualism, and I was like, 'Oh, my God!' My parents taught me Spanish like it's so critical to my research." She noted that as a McNair scholar, and now graduate student, language and research played a big role in her and being able to do so in English and Spanish was very special to her.

### **Familial Capital**

This capital can be directly connected to the Latinx cultural value of familismo, and the importance of family. In this study, all of the participants mentioned their family in one way or another and how they impacted their college experience. In some cases, some participants emphasized their family and collective unity more than others. Some participants shared that they did not feel alone in their collegiate journey because parents like Marleny's stated "you can always come home," or Victoria's parents who reminded her, "[Victoria] si necesitas algo nos puedes llamar." Other parents gave their daughters gifts to remember them when they were away in college. For Valentina, her chosen artifact was a ceramic bird that her mom gifted her. She shared, "my mom did give it to me with the intention of being like, 'Oh, she could remember



us.” Moreover, their parents emphasized a collective investment and effort for their daughters’ success by learning together as a family or providing financial support.

Similarly, the participants would speak of their college degree as a collective achievement, like Teddy whose chosen artifact was a family picture from her graduation party. When discussing the meaning of the picture she shared the picture symbolizes the people she could reach out to and have shown up for her throughout college. Furthermore, she shared:

They saw it as the importance of like todo paso (everything happened), you know, you've made those steps, and you've done everything that you need to do to get to this point and like this is ‘my carreras exito’ (my college career’s success), like being able to visually see that I have finished my carrera (college career).

Ultimately, her picture mirrored the familismo their parents practiced and the collective effort, investment, and achievement of her success.

**A Collective Effort.** When referring to a collective investment, it took a literal and figurative definition. For instance, several parents provided financial support and/or invested their time and effort in helping their daughters navigate college. For instance, when it came to filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) parents did not have all the answers, yet parents sat down with their daughters to watch YouTube videos on how to complete the application like Valentina’s parents or provided all the required documents like Victoria’s. Together, they figured it out. Similarly, Teddy’s parents would state the following, “we’re both confused about this, like read the stuff a little bit more.” For her, this was an impactful form of support. Teddy stated, “being there with [me], as [we] kind of both learn together, or research and learn together,” was very helpful. Overall, the emphasis on family and the familiar capital that her parents taught her helped her not to feel alone when facing challenges. Moreover,

parents, like Isabel's emphasized their full commitment to helping their daughters in any way they could, by reminding her of the following:

We might not have the best resources, we might not have the most money. We might not have the answers to something but we know that with our actions and with our words we can [make an] impact. You know, your journey in life, whether that's academically or in other different ways.

When parents could not provide academic advice, parents like Mieriam's mom would still be there for her in a literal way. She shared, "my mom would stay up with me until I finished my work. I remember [at] the kitchen table, she would sit down with me and just, like, wait." As a freshman in college, Mieriam knew that her mom had been there for her during challenging times and knew she could depend on her to be with her too now that she was in college.

**The Pull of Familismo.** Family and collective well-being were something that several participants discussed when talking about their families. While not all participants mentioned their parents as influencers in their college decision, only 1 out of 10 participants attended an out-of-state university for undergraduates. Perhaps this could be interpreted as the familismo pull that comes with familial capital. Some participants mentioned that the reason they pursued a college education, or a specific degree was for the well-being of their family. In a way, this sense of familismo and collectivism also created some challenges, such as feeling guilty for being away from home or creating a challenge when they shared they were leaving their home for college.

For example, Mieriam shared that she would go home every weekend to check in with her parents, especially since they were getting older, and she wanted to spend time with them. Chelsey also shared that while at first her parents were supportive of her going away to school, this encouragement changed when COVID hit and the day to move out was approaching.

Through reflective dialogue, we discussed possible meanings behind her parents being against her going away to school. From our conversation she came to the following realization:

I guess they just weren't ready to let me go. They've never explained it to me. But I guess they just wanted to keep us all together. Not that like every moment, you know, as a family of five is amazing and magical. But yeah, I guess they just didn't want me to go because they knew it would cause some imbalance.

For many Latinas, the support of family but the pull of family needs and culture was something that was directly or indirectly brought to us throughout their testimonios.

**Financial Support.** Various parents provided financial support for their daughters in different ways, most included paying for rent, groceries, and/or medical needs. Like Teddy's parents who told her, "Hey, if anything were to happen, like, if you need us to step in, and help you with monetary (paying) bills," to let them know. As Teddy stated, "that was a way of them showing their support. This financial support was a literal investment to their daughter's success given that financial restraints were mentioned by all of the participants in the study. When discussing her relationship with her parents and her family, Mieriam got emotional, as her family, especially her parents, were very important to her. While words of affirmation were key forms of support for her, she also realized that for her dad this was not always the main form of support. She shared that "[her dad] doesn't say with words, but like *se le nota* in things he does or like his eyes will start watering." This statement was referring to her dad's long hours at work. Mieriam shared that her dad always reminds her that "*el lo hace todo por nosotras y que si ocupamos algo, que nomas le digamos*" (he does everything for us and if we need something, we just tell him). This commitment to his daughters and the endless support he provides is evident to the prioritization of the family's well-being. While they did not experience college for themselves, they were genuinely interested and invested in Mieriam's experience and how they

can support. Therefore, Mieriam wants to mirror this commitment of familismo as well. Hence, one of her long-term goals was to be financially stable to be able to take care of her parents like her parents have taken care of her.

**Experiencing College as a Family.** One of the ways that Isabel's parents have provided support throughout the years is by actively listening and showing up throughout her collegiate journey. She shared how both of her parents are active listeners when it comes to listening about her day and what she is doing at school. Another way her parents show up for her is by reminding her that "they'll always support [her], no matter what." For her, reminders and actively showing up for her reminds her that she is not alone. Her parents also make sure to frequently tell her that regardless of the circumstance or what happens next in the future, they were always with her.

An example she shared is when there was a history conference in downtown LA, and she invited her parents to attend. At first, her parents were hesitant in attending and when they attended the event her dad said, "we don't belong here, like we're not professors, we don't have degrees." When Isabel's dad made this remark, Isabel made sure to answer by assuring them that they belonged in that space because her collegiate experience and success was not just for her but her family as well. Even though at times there was a sense of hesitation when it came to academic events, her parents still made sure to show up for her when they could. For Isabel, their support and investment meant the world. She noted that, "there are some parents that are educated, and they just don't show the same support." Hence, she was eternally grateful for her parents and the support they provided.

## **Social Capital**

For first-generation Latinas, having a strong social capital provided an avenue in which they could connect with others who had access to different information and/or opportunities that could aid in their success. In this study, participants described social capital as the people they knew prior to college, the people their parents knew, and the people they met and connected with in college that helped them navigate academia. Several participants described building community on campus through friendships, mentorships, and student support programs as a crucial component to their success. When it came to parental support, participants like Rosario noted the following, “I feel like even though like, like, our education levels are very very different. Like my mom has always been able to tell me how to almost network.” In a way, participants acknowledged how their parents shared their social capital by connecting their daughters to people they knew for further college support while also encouraging them to build their own social network.

Prior to college, Valentina’s parents reached out to other parents who had children in college or college alumni in order to seek important information that might have been helpful for Valentina. She explained:

They have done a good job of talking to other parents, members who already have had people in college. So they learned from them, like gathering all that advice, and what helped me in whatever way they could.

From early on, her parents emphasized the need to build her network in order to access new information and build her social capital. She shared, “they've always taught me to like. build your network. So just like talking to people, meeting people, and that has helped me meet a lot of cool people throughout my time.” She further added, “the social capital with cultural groups” was also something that her parents taught her. She explained, “I'm involved with, like, closely

related to the Latino community at school. Like that's like we all just understand each other, I learned that from my parents.” As a result, Valentina had been a part of a Latinx business organization on campus that has helped her build her social capital on and off campus.

Similarly, Alex expressed her gratitude for her mother’s social capital which helped her navigate the walls of academia. She shared that people in her mom’s network had friends at the university she attended, and while her mom did not have all of the college information Alex needed, her connections at the university were able to help guide Alex. She stated:

With social capital. Like my mom, she had her friend's friend, who had a connection at the school that I'm at right now. And so she was like, ‘Oh, apply to this like [Benjamin did].’ My mom not knowing anything about [college], [had] friends and connections. And it's like all connected, you know.

Ultimately, her mom’s social capital and connections provided Alex with more guidance and support, an indirect support that helped Alex in her academic endeavors. Throughout the conversations it was evident that the parents’ social capital was something that the parents shared with their daughters, and they encouraged their daughters to tap into those people if needed. Participants shared their parents’ reminders, like Mieriam who reflected on what her dad told her, “siempre [va a ver] gente que [la] [puede] ayudar” (there will always be people who can help her), hence the importance of building one’s social capital.

### **Navigational Capital**

This capital refers to the capability of using the necessary navigational strategies, resources, and opportunities to succeed in spaces that exclude first-generation Latinas, such as academia. Students narrated this capital as the strategies parents shared ranged from advising their daughters to be confident in any space, they are into reminding them that “there’s always always another option,” like Marleny’s parents reminded her of when navigating new spaces.

Ultimately, the navigational capital participants shared how parents of first-generation Latinas gained navigational capital by navigating other spaces like the workplace, and then taught their daughters those strategies when navigating academia. As a result of this navigational capital, participants like Valerie credited her parents and shared, “every time I was struggling with something I try to find something, I’m very resourceful.” Ultimately this type of capital emphasizes the ability to be persistent and not give up. In addition, two key sub themes that arose from this capital were the importance of asking questions, and the importance of being resourceful.

**Asking Questions.** Even though Teddy’s parents did not know who to ask for specific support, they helped motivate her to seek the appropriate people to help her get the support she needed. This was a skill they taught her even before going to college because they encouraged her to always be prepared and reminded her that “if [she] [had] a solution, give that solution. If [she] [didn’t] have the solution, [to] ask questions.” This skill was very helpful in high school when she was first learning about the college process, but it became even more powerful when she got to college and needed to find certain support. This mentality of persistence and asking for help when needed taught Teddy the value of self-advocacy and also helped Teddy navigate the collegiate sphere like finding the counseling support on campus she needed.

Similar to Teddy, Mieriam shared that one of the navigational strategies that her parents taught her was to always ask questions. Her dad would always tell her, “ay que preguntar en este lado o hay que buscar en el internet” (we have to ask over here or search on the internet). Whether it was a person or the internet, her dad encouraged her to ask questions to find answers. For Mieriam, this was a challenge at first due to her anxiety, however with time and practice she claimed, “I’m really good at asking questions.” As a response, her parents remind her that it was

important to speak up, and that “todo se arregla así comunicándose” (everything is fixed like this by communicating).

**Being Resourceful.** One of Isabel’s strengths was the ability to be resourceful and seek help when needed. This skill was something that derived from her mom, who was also very resourceful. Isabel shared that some of her core memories growing up were how her parents supported her, not just financially but in any way that they could. For instance, growing up finances were limited yet her mom made summers extremely fun by taking her and her sister to the city libraries and to other opportunities already in the community. She shared that she learned from her mom the importance of seeking resources and using the resources already in place, she shared:

I've been trained since I was in high school to look at everything, look at everything, look at everything, all the possibilities, all the opportunities, put myself in everything, all the clubs, all the scholarships, everything put myself in everything.

As a result of this skillset and the ability to use her resources, Isabel shared the various successes she was able to achieve while in college. The ability to use one’s resources was also something that Chelsey’s mom practiced when she was in high school. Chelsey shared that while in high school her mom frequently called her school to speak with the counselors so they could check in with Chelsey about the college process. She recalled:

My mom would just randomly call the counselors at my high school. And she would just tell them everything. Like, look, pull up her record right now. Like, look, she has good grades. She would tell them, like, help her get into college. Help her with scholarships, help her find this, help her apply to them and things like that.

Even though her mom did not know all of the logistics on how to support her daughter, she knew that there was support for her daughter and wanted to make that connection. “It felt a little invasive,” Chelsey shared, but “I get my mom was trying to do the right thing.” Ultimately, as



Chelsey reflected, her mom's actions portrayed commitment to her daughter's success by making sure that the counselors did not forget to support her daughter in ways that she was unable to do. She further explained that thanks to the connection with her counselor, she was able to receive further information regarding the university she wanted to attend. She shared, "I count that as support, honestly," because after meeting with her counselor she was able to resort to her for further college support and resources. In addition, she was able to build her social capital due to the fact that her counselor's daughter attended Chelsey's top choice university, and ultimately became a person she could reach out to when needing more information about college resources.

### **Resistant Capital**

Resilience is a key characteristic among Latinas to reach academic and/or professional success. While not all Latinas coin their persistence, dedication, and hard work as resiliency or resistant capital, the Latinas in this study exemplified this capital through the testimonies they shared. Their resilience can be understood as the skill and persistence to continue working beyond present circumstances or lack of objective means. In this study, the resistant capital they acquired was highlighted when they discussed the challenges they faced while in college. When asked, participants like Victoria responded "Resilience, oh my God, that's a big one! And further discussed the resiliency that was needed in order to navigate new spaces that are not designed for people like first-generation Latinas. In alignment with this response, several participants disclosed the feeling of imposter syndrome as a prominent challenge when in college. When discussing how they navigated through said challenges, participants often shared how their parents taught them to be independent and self-advocates forms of resistant capital. In addition,

participants shared how witnessing their parents' own resilience was influential in how they navigated tough situations.

**Independence and Self Advocacy.** As a first-generation Latina in a predominantly white and male field, Valentina described her experience as follows:

Once I did transfer to the business school. I kinda had imposter syndrome, as they say. I kind of felt like, 'oh, am I smart enough to be in the school? Did they let in extra people, because, COVID they got cut short, or something? Am I a part of a quota or something?'

And just hearing how people talk in my classes. They talk so eloquently with all these fancy words that I don't know. And I'm like, 'am I even smart enough to be in these classes?' That's one challenge that I have from time to time.

While Valentina stated that she did not like speaking about her feelings, these notions of imposter syndrome were a challenge that she faced from time to time and something she learned to navigate through. When it came to overcoming feelings of imposter syndrome, she drew on what her parents modeled and pushed through any negative feelings to remind herself she belonged. She explained; "Being first-gen, and not having parents that have experienced college before has made me more independent, and has forced me to like to have more resources and like to reach people to get the help that I need." Luckily, she shared that both of her parents have always modeled confidence and independence for her, and she learned to replace her doubt with strengths. She further explained how her parents' modeled confidence and independence and always encouraged her to replace her doubts with strength regardless of the obstacles, and to her this helped her develop her self-advocacy which she referred to as "tough skin." She stated, "I think they help me grow my own independence. And I feel like it's just made me stronger." For Valentina, this independence was a crucial asset to her college experience and success. She explained:

That has definitely helped me now that I'm in college, because it is a lot more independent, so I don't feel as scared with certain things. I'm going to study abroad this upcoming semester, and I'm not scared.

Like Valentina, self-advocacy, independence, and self-sufficiency were all attributes that Chelsey identified with, and all attributes that her parents helped her develop. She explained that while at times she questioned why her parents were not able to provide certain support like her peers' parents, she now realized "my parents taught me how to be independent, very self-sufficient." For Chelsey, these attributes transcended into valuable college skills like asking for extensions when needed and emailing professors and advisors when needed. Moreover, these skills blossomed into confidence and accountability to get her things done or seek help in order to be successful. In a space like academia that does not always provide adequate support for first-generation Latinas, these characteristics were important to her own advancement and success.

**Parents' Resilience as an Inspiration.** When discussing resistant capital, Marleny responded with "when you're talking about resistant capital, I was really thinking about my mom." She shared that her mom was the main caregiver for her grandmother who had Alzheimer's, and her mom also worked outside of the home. Through our conversation, Marleny shared her inspiration as follows.

I think that is very inspiring to me, because, like here I am at college, like I have my own, you know, stressors. I have school, but it's a privilege to be here, so it kind of makes me think, well, if my mom can get through this, and you know she still has her head on her body like she can still do everything like day to day, like I definitely can persevere. And I really look up to her in that like mentality.

Marleny also shared her appreciation for her dad who continued working a laborious job in efforts to support his family and children. Ultimately, she expressed appreciation and inspiration for both of her parents who taught her to "keep pushing forward." She continued by sharing:

I look up to [what] my parents have gone through, things they've had, you know, a lot of barriers in their life, but they're still like working through it. They're still living day to day, like they're still supportive, you know, all of that.

Similarly to Marleny, Valerie expressed her admiration for how her parents have navigated, immigrating to this country and finding a way to provide support for her. For her these skills of learning how to navigate a new country and environment were resilient traits she was able to implement as she too navigated the new space of academia. She stated:

I would say skills would be like staying resilient. I'm just watching them through struggles, struggling like growing up like resilience, patience, determination, dedication. I feel like they didn't really help me academically and because they don't know English that well, they never really helped me with things that were academic because most of my academics was in English. But other than that, they've just helped me by just staying persistent.

For many participants this mentality to never give up or the mentality of “seguir echandole ganas” (to continue trying) was a mentality that both of their parents held true in their everyday lives, and a mindset that their daughters embraced throughout her college journey and in life.

While participants recognized that their parents’ academic support was limited, they were able to learn skills of resilience by witnessing their parents overcome struggles and not give up.

**Self-Preservation.** In order to stay resilient and persevere, parents often reminded their daughters to take care of their mental health by taking breaks, practicing self-love, or simply cooking delicious meals for their daughters when they would visit and sending them back to campus with a bag “llena de comida,” (full of food) like Mieriam’s mom would. A key concept of Rosario’s resilience is self-love and self-preservation, both of which her mom has taught her. She shared that her mom emphasizes the following, “You need to sleep better or like, don't do everything at once like or like, Stop, like, trying to do everything at once.” In addition to this, her mom emphasized the need to prioritize and practice self-love and positive self-talk. For instance, her

mom would tell her “tú tienes que decir que tu lo sabes todo” (you have to say that you know everything) or “todo lo que está en ese examen tu ya lo sabes antes de que lo lees ya sabes” (you know everything on that exam, you know it before you read it, you know it).

This self-preservation was also echoed in Marleny’s testimonio, as she shared how her parents appreciated her hard work and good grades, but also emphasized wanting her to take care of herself to remain resilient. She stated that her parents reminded her that, “care about yourself, like the grades will come, you know, everything else will come. But you really need to prioritize your wellbeing.”

For some participants, witnessing their parents' resilience was inspiring and therefore a trait that they learned prior to college and then further developed throughout their college years. The resistant capital they held was in the form of independence, perseverance, self-advocacy, and self-preservation, all of which allowed them to gain knowledge to better navigate college and not give up. As a result, participants like Rosario described herself as a resilient person by sharing the following:

I call myself resilient, or the reason I talk about my obstacles in terms of triumphs is not because I firmly believe that by myself, it's because my mom literally demonstrated it to me through speech. Life will give you a lot of obstacles, and that's never gonna end. But at the end of the day, it's just about how you react to them and how you kind of take everything as learning.

Rather than giving up, participants drew from this resistant capital to continue persevering and asking the right questions, people, or resources to be successful. As Isabel put it, “a big factor that has shaped my first-gen journey is just looking, researching all these different things because they’re not gonna tell you.” Overall instilling a strong mindset of resiliency.

### **Existence Capital**

Participants in this study mentioned how their support deferred from the support their peers received, which discloses how as Latinas we have been taught to acknowledge only certain types of support as valuable. As a result, I found myself often reminding the participants of their strengths and skills that they have learned and/or gained from their parents that have helped them live and be successful. I noticed that oftentimes they did not recognize certain strengths, or they did not recognize the great value that certain traits carried. For instance, if we look at the general definition of parental support it only accounts for tangible, measurable, and objective support such as providing financial support or providing direct academic advising. Due to this traditional definition and understanding of parental support, and the Eurocentric norm of capital within education, we see other supports go unrecognized such as the teaching of existence capital that can help beyond the college experience. Similar to Liou et al.'s (2016) informational capital as an aspect of navigational capital which assists students "navigate their school day and the hidden curriculum," existence capital takes a similar approach (p. 111). However, while information capital specifically focuses on important information in navigating education, existence capital extends to include vital information to help students navigate their days within or outside of education and their existence. Useful strategies such as consejos and dichos on financial literacy, una buena educación, a strong work ethic and home living skills were critical forms of existence capital that positively contributed to the participants' living experience, especially when it came to their college success.

One of the key findings of this study was that all participants credited their parents' knowledge on existence capital as important contributions to their college success. For instance, Victoria stated that due to this study she was able to reflect on other forms of support that her

parents have provided and realized that “there’s a lot of forms of [support] that don’t get considered or counted as,” but are just as impactful. Skills such as budgeting, planning, and home living were important skills that their parents taught them or advised them on that they were able to implement in college. This knowledge is directly tied to support because such skills helped ease some college struggles and therefore allowed Latinas to focus on other things such as academics. Isabel, noted the importance of such skills in her testimonio by sharing the following:

I don't think any of my grandma's or my tios (uncles) or tias (aunts) went to higher ed. But I know for sure that they are able to provide some sort of capital where it may not be, you know, recognized in different cultures, but at least, you know, for our purposes. For, like Latinos, Hispanics it's significant to us, because that just forms our way of living.

However, it is important to note that at first, the life skills knowledge that parents shared and contributed to the participants’ existence capital was often overlooked and not considered as support. Moreover, this could be a result that as Latinas we have unintentionally internalized the traditional definition of parental support to only be limited to tangible academic support. Nonetheless, the participants below disclosed the existence of capital their parents taught them and how those skills have been adapted to their lives while in college and aided in their success. The existence capital discussed consisted of the importance of a well-rounded learning experience, and una buena educación.

### **Financial Literacy**

In this study, all of the participants disclosed finances as a challenge they had to overcome while pursuing their academic endeavors. Whether it was not having enough money for groceries or being very strategic and “not wasting money on stupid things,” like Rosario shared, all of the participants brought up money in their testimonies. Through conversation, some

of the participants also disclosed financial stability as a reason as to why they sought a college education, and others highlighted the financial knowledge that their parents taught them that helped them develop their financial literacy as a form of existence capital. For instance, Chelsey shared that it was her mom who provided financial support for her while in college. She explained:

Financially, what she did was she helped me set up a bank account and a savings account. Originally, I only had a savings account with my dad. And she was like, Okay, well let's go to the bank and set up an account. Just for you. For yourself.

She shared that her mom provided the support in starting her bank accounts which ultimately encouraged Chelsey to further develop her financial literacy and independence, both of which were needed skills when living outside of the home. This support is important to highlight given that financial support and literacy is often assumed as a lacking skill for Latinx and other PoC students. While the opening of bank accounts may not seem like an important financial step for other peers with generational wealth, this act of support encouraged the financial well-being and independence for Chelsey. Overall counting as financial support and literacy.

**Needs vs Wants.** For Alex, one of the main reasons as to why she pursued a college education was in hopes to create a stable future for herself. She shared:

I think I just wanted to be stable in my future. I think growing up, I dealt with a lot of instability in financial ways. And so I feel like I don't know, I guess I saw that higher education could provide me with, I guess, more stability.

Even though there were financial restraints growing up, her parents helped her develop a skill out of this hardship. She further explained, "Financial wise, they've always taught me like, I guess, going for my needs rather than my wants." While her parents were able to provide some financial support by taking care of certain costs like professional attire for a presentation, the prioritization of "needs vs wants" spending helped her create healthy spending habits.



**The 3 B's.** When discussing her college decision, Teddy mentioned that money was the main influencer in her college choice, she wanted to assure she got the “most bang for [her] buck.” This mentality stemmed from her parents’ teachings of, “Bueno, Bonito, y Barato” (Good, Pretty, & Cheap). Therefore, she chose a university that prioritized student retention and graduation, at a somewhat reasonable cost. When choosing her college major, a similar mentality was implemented, she chose a major that could set the foundation for further development and professional growth. More specifically, she chose a major that would give her a lot of different avenues and that could further develop her leadership skills too.

Similar to Teddy, Victoria shared, “this philosophy, I follow the three B’s, ‘Bueno, bonito, y barato.’” She explained, “it’s the same thing, or, like kind of budgeting and like finances.” Ultimately this knowledge that was passed down by her parents taught her how to shop strategically without paying for brand names. She especially highlighted her dad for their attribute, she shared, “This man is very strategic, he will never pay full price for anything. And I’m the same way like I have coupons.” For her, this valuable piece of advice was crucial especially when attending an elite university in an affluent town with high prices.

### **Una Buena Educación**

When discussing valuable life skills, some participants also discussed how their parents emphasized the importance of their daughters being a “good or nice person.” However, some participants shared how their parents did not always associate this characteristic as a skill they taught their daughters but the daughters, like Rosario stated, “it’s something like you like your, like your parents, whatever is ingrained in you.” This characteristic of being a good person could be tied to the cultural expectation of having una buena educación, meaning that education includes both a formal college education and ethical moral values. All of which was heavily

mentioned throughout the conversation with participants. For instance, when it came to life skills Chelsey stated, “My parents always taught me to give back,” and at-large similar responses arose from other participants who attributed empathy and respect as important attributes in being successful.

**Empathy.** An important skill that Alex’s parents taught her was to extend this empathy and care for others beyond her literal family. She shared the following:

You know how family is like so big and the Latinx culture. So they're always like you know, be kind to others, because you don't know what they're going through. Yeah, they've always, you know, ‘be the bigger person.’ I guess, like start conversations with those who you see who are struggling, or you know like they just look a little down. They've always sort of shown me to just help out those others that possibly need a little help.

For Alex, this piece of advice not only encouraged her to be ethical and supportive towards others but also rooted her care for others in the familial capital her parents taught her.

Similarly, Teddy’s parents taught her growing up was to always be mindful of others and how one interacts with them. For her parents, how you treat others can be a bridge you build or a relationship that you lose, ultimately serving as advice to building her social capital. She recalled:

The way you work with people is very important, because I never, you never know, when they might be able to show up. At least that's kind of how I interpreted the way that they talked about other people, because they were able to kind of use that relationship to get ahead and help others get ahead as well. Yeah, kind of helping each other out.

**Respect.** While Teddy’s parents did not specifically name this advice as a healthy practice to preserve or enhance one’s social capital, empathy taught Teddy how to treat others with respect. However, empathy and respect were not limited to just the treatment of others, but also spaces. When speaking on the traits that her parents have taught her that have contributed to her success, Victoria replied, “independence and self-reliance, keeping a clean space, definitely

senora vibes, for sure.” She explained, “Cleaning [and] respecting my space. They've taught me like, ‘[Victoria], wherever you are, you need to respect the space that you're in, like, treat it with kindness.’” The emphasis on respect was something that her parents highly valued, and a skill they were able to pass on to Victoria in efforts of una buena educación.

**Values.** Throughout our conversations Valerie referred to her values often and she shared how growing up her parents always emphasized the importance of values as a moral compass. Her parents encouraged her to ground herself in her morals as a way to help her navigate through difficult situations. She shared, “they really taught me about values and staying true to yourself. Being honest. They’ve really helped me like, instill and reinforced my values. So we have very similar values.” On a similar note, Valerie’s parents taught her the value of family, however they expanded the definition of family to include chosen family. She shared, “The value of family, they, they, like, taught me that, um, and just not only navigating academia, but also when I’m navigating, like personal relationships or friends, like they've always taught me like that as well.” In addition to building these relationships, Valerie credited her mom for teaching her how to be empathetic and aware of others' needs. She shared, “yeah the empathy and just listening skills. I'm always like, I listen to understand and not respond. And my mom is really good at that.” For Valerie, grounding herself in her values, creating healthy relationships, and being an empathetic individual have all been skills she has learned from her parents that have helped her develop as a well-rounded and self-aware individual.

### **Strong Work Ethic**

There was a strong emphasis on the importance of education and hard work among the families of first-generation Latinas in the study. Oftentimes, their parents served as the best example of what hard work looked like, and therefore became something that they learned to do.

For some participants, a strong work ethic was evident in how their parents thought, like Valentina whose parents were entrepreneurs and shared how her parents taught her the importance of being her own boss, earning profits, and the importance of an entrepreneur mindset. While other participants shared their experience of seeing their parents work long hours and their dedication to the family's well-being. For instance, Mieriam recounted cuentos of her parents of resiliency of how they left school at 12 years old to work in the strawberry fields, she said, "cuentan de cómo hacían todo eso (they would tell how they would do all that) and it just says it's like a lot of knowledge and, like, it makes me proud and to they've worked so hard." She further expressed her admiration for how her parents have navigated immigrating to this country and finding a way to provide a loving home for her. She stated that she admired, "how strong they are and like how they [came] from a whole different country not knowing the language and then still learning like their way around and everything." For the Latinas in the study, being able to witness their parents' strong work ethic encouraged them to instill a similar approach when working towards achieving their goals.

For instance, Teddy credits both of her parents for their work ethic. She shared:

Seeing their work ethic and being able to apply it to my work as they get in wherever I go. Now that's another way of life, that's what made me successful, because I was able to adapt, grow, and learn.

However, she specially noted that her dad inherited these skills far before coming to the U.S. because he and his family had multiple tiendas in Mexico in which he helped run smoothly. She described how at one point her parents were both working jobs in the fast-food industry and always found a way to take care of her and her siblings while also meeting the needs of their job. She shared, "my parents would switch us off and they would stay still working or something that one of them would still be working while like we were just visiting," for Teddy, witnessing her

parents balance work and their family taught her the importance of a strong work ethic. She confirmed the pride in her parents by stating, “I saw their work and their work ethic that have greatly impacted the way I also worked.”

On a similar note, Marleny responded by highlighting her parents’ work ethic. She replied:

They go to work every day, they wake up at the crack of dawn. They, you know, commute like they've done this. So I think seeing them always working hard made me want to work hard as well. I think that's kind of how they've taught me to be successful as well. Yeah, just overall their work ethic has kind of transferred over to me like I've seen it growing up and that's what I aspire to be when I grow up as well. I think I'm slowly developing and like becoming more like them as I grow up.

She further explained how her parents “work hard” and it is something that she thinks about frequently in college and was “instilled into [her] like [she] can't skip out on really like class.” Furthermore, she acknowledged the privilege that it was to be in college and worked to reach her goals and make her parents proud.

### **Home Living**

While not all of the participants moved out of their homes to pursue a college education, the ones that did acknowledged the valuable home living skills that their parents taught them that helped them live on their own. When it came to life skills, Chelsey shared, “yeah, my mom and dad taught me how to do basically anything home [or] house living.” She credited her parents’ wisdom by sharing, “my mom and dad, they were really there for me like apartment searching.” For Chelsey, this was a new realm that she was navigating, and her parents were able to provide information regarding what was considered a good lease, what service providers provided the best deals and so on. For her, this was valuable because this was not information that was necessarily shared in classes in or on campus. Home living ranged from learning how to make

meals and shopping for groceries, to organizing and planning, to dad's teaching their daughter's how to fix window screens. All of the house skills provided the participants with capital on how to successfully live on their own and make their transition to college life smoother.

**Meals.** For some, like Teddy, it was learning how to cook, which was helpful in multiple situations like when she studied abroad in Florence. She shared, "I cannot spend that much money eating out all the time. So this is what I could take away from my parents in having learned from them, even if sometimes subconsciously." On a similar note, Victoria referred to her dad as "a jack of all trades" because he taught her how to "pick out like good produce, because my dad used to work out of a fruit factory."

**Organization and Planning Skills.** Having organizational skills and knowing how to prioritize are both skills that Marleny witnessed her parents having grown up. She shared:

I think I always saw my mom working and always like jumbling like going to work, commuting, picking me up from practice like every day. You know all of the stuff that a lot of parents do. But I think, realizing, like you have to be organized.

Now as a college student, Marleny credits her parents for having the organizational skills she needs to prioritize immediate tasks and taking it one step at a time or task at a time. In order to be successful, she shared "you have to be organized. You have to have a schedule. You have to know what you need to do, like just being overall like responsible. Both my parents have portrayed that in their lives."

Similarly, Victoria talked about her parents' organization, planning skills, and creativity. She remarked, "My God, they're so creative!" When it came to organizational skills, the example she shared was how Latinx parents have been able to plan and host large events without formal education because they have equipped the necessary skills on their own or they have learned them outside of academia. She shared:

The way they were talking about how to plan events, there wasn't like an Excel sheet. What they had was a budget, but they were like, 'oh, like, we should do this, we should do that.' And kind of like using skills like planning skills, you know. Parents used to plan Bautizos with a pen and paper. Yeah, so I think like for me, that's also kind of helped [me] the planning aspect.

For Chelsey, these skills transcended to her and her own planning skills while also reminding her the importance of planning ahead and most importantly that these skills could be obtained outside of academia. On a broader scale, her parents also provided support and knowledge by equipping their daughters with valuable information on how to navigate living on their own and handling different life responsibilities.

### **Summary**

From this study it is evident that parents of first-generation Latinas provide numerous types of support that help their daughters achieve college success. From the participants' testimonios, it was evident that if parents were not able to provide traditional forms of support such as financial or academic, they offered their help in other ways. Like Marleny's parents who told her, "you know, like we're not rich, but we will like help you in any way that we can," or Rosario's artifact which was a motivational text from her mom in which she motivated her before an exam. For Rosario, like other Latinas in this study who mentioned their parents' motivational words as support, this text meant, "My mom was always on my side, whatever I need[ed], even if it's just a text. She'll be able to be there for me with words of encouragement."

The parental support that was discussed was significantly influential in the participants' college success and their overall life. As Alex stated,

It's an influence, like every bit you know every way, basically from you know, like from meals to the mindset to like the support. Oh, everything basically. It's so hard to really pinpoint where they've been very influential with every step that I've had. First, like undergrad and grad school. You know, and I know, like not everybody has, like you know, parents who are so involved. And that also influences [things] like, 'Wow, I'm

lucky that I have such big role models in my life, and you know they care about my future, too.'

Like Alex, participants in the study expressed their gratitude for the multitude of support they received from their parents, yet many of them did not always know what to refer to if it was not necessarily academic or financial. In efforts to identify and name these supports using capital terminology, Yosso's (2005) CCW served as an analysis framework to name the support that parents provided. As a result of this analysis, several aspects of aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital were identified as supports that parents of first-generation Latina provide. Furthermore, there were types of support that did not necessarily fall under one of the six types of capital. Rather, the findings of this study encourage the further development of this framework to a new form of capital titled Existence Capital.

In addition, the study confirms that there are multiple ways in which parents of first-generation students provide support and therefore encourages the definition of parental support and involvement to be revised to be more inclusive of CCW support. Through a higher education lens, the findings of this study reveal how college, regardless of its individualistic culture, is in fact a collective experience, effort, and success, for many first-generation Latinas and their parents. These recommendations will be further discussed in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND STUDY EVALUATION

Through the participants' testimonios, the findings presented in Chapter Four respond to the study's research question: How do first-generation Latina college students narrate the support they receive from their parents? The findings discuss how the first-generation Latinas in the study narrated their parents' support through two semi-formal interviews, which consisted of interview questions and a chosen artifact that symbolized their parents' support. When discussing their parents' support, and the impact, it was evident that their parents' support was critical to their college success. Although participants did not name or know the CCW capital, the support that they received mirrored different forms of capital. I posit this is due to an internalized understanding of parental support that is perpetuated by colleges and universities. This internalized understanding is due to academic institutions working from the false assumption that PoC students lack the necessary knowledge, skills, and capital and labeling students as "disadvantaged" or "at-risk" (Valenzuela, 2010). Unfortunately, this assumption is not corrected in higher education, rather, it continues to label or perceive PoC students negatively without recognizing the many attributes they hold (Rodriguez et al., 2000). As a response, this study contradicts this negative perception by showing the knowledge, skills, and capital of first-generation Latinas and how parental support contributed to the CCW.

In addition, participants highlighted different forms of capital that I coined as "Existence Capital" and consists of essential life skills that parents taught their daughters that helped them in their college and personal success. This capital, like others listed under CCW, challenges

“traditional interpretations of cultural capital” in its departure from middle-class socio-economic values and experiences (Yosso, 2005). This chapter begins with an interpretation of the findings in relation to CRT educational research and a discussion of major findings as related to the literature on first-generation Latina college students and parental support, which includes (1) Parental Support as Influential to college success, (2) Naming types of Latinx Parental Support as a Form of Capital, and (3) Life Skills as knowledge. All these findings contribute to how parental support is defined, the impact of parental support for first-generation Latinas, and the parental involvement contributed to their CCW. The chapter then concludes with a brief discussion of the study’s limitations, areas for future research, practice and policy, and a general summary of the study.

### **Discussion**

As previously discussed, Yosso’s (2005) CCW is a response to and challenge of Bourdieu’s definition of cultural capital and is rooted in Critical Race Theory. Community cultural wealth promotes the interrogation of academia’s traditional concept of capital and aids in centering and better understanding the support that first-generation Latinas receive from their parents. Moreover, the purpose and findings of this study align with Solórzano’s (1998) elements of CRT in relation to educational research. The elements include: (1) The importance of transdisciplinary approaches, (2) An emphasis on experiential knowledge, (3) A challenge to dominant ideologies, (4) The centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination, and (5) A commitment to social justice. In this study, four elements of CRT were covered as follows: (1) Latinas’ testimonios mirrored experiential knowledge, while also incorporating the experiential knowledge and capital of their parents, (2) The traditional definition of parental support was challenged and expanded to include CCW, (3) The

experiences and capital of Latinas and Latinx parents were the focus of the study, and (4) The purpose of this study was to add to the existing theory of community cultural wealth and expand the traditional definition of parental support with first-generation Latinas as the focus population.

Similarly, this study highlights the limitations of traditional parent support and what it means to have capital. More specifically, the testimonios in this study disrupt traditional knowledge production by challenging normative interpretations of what constitutes knowledge and who is given legitimacy to produce knowledge (Liou et al., 2009). For instance, Teddy's reflection on parental support directly states how her family's capital may not be recognized, yet the capital she gained from her family was valuable. She stated:

I don't think any of my grandma's or my tios (uncles) or tias (aunts) went to higher ed. But I know for sure that they are able to provide some sort of capital where it may not be, you know, recognized in different cultures, but at least, you know, for our purposes. For, like Latinos, Hispanics it's significant to us, because that just forms our way of living.

Through her reflection, it was evident that her parents' and family's support was important and influential, especially from her parents, as she stated, it "forms our way of living." In spaces like academia, in which the experiences and ways of knowing of first-generation Latinas are often overlooked, the participants in this study were able to share their lived experience in a societal structure and took a single autonomous experience to a collective experienced reality (Brabeck, 2003). Additionally, the testimonios in this study highlighted the complexities of our identities, our realities and experiences, and the systems that marginalize people, creating a process of reflection, healing, and collective memory (Huber & Cueva, 2012).

### **Parental Support as Influential**

Through our conversations, the Latinas' "testimonio[s] emphasize[d] the validity of experiential and/or lived knowledge," while also recognizing their parents' capital as valuable

and influential to their college success (Brabeck, 2003, p. 256). Parents' experiential knowledge was gained through different life experiences, such as navigating a new country and transforming into different forms of capital. This emphasis on experiential knowledge then challenged the traditional definition of parental support. Traditionally, parental involvement and support have been defined by scholars as the frequency with which parents attend academic events and/or engage in academic organizations or conversations, all of which are limited to the academic sphere (Jordan et al., 2002). As a result, researchers on the topic of parent involvement have recognized the privileged roots and norms of what is considered valuable parent support within education (López, 2001; Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018).

While many universities host events like Parent Weekend and commencement ceremonies that are open for families to attend, these opportunities are not always accessible to Latinx families due to financial restraints, lack of knowledge on how to attend, or fear of traveling if undocumented. Therefore, many of the current parent engagement opportunities are not welcoming or inclusive of first-generation students and/or Latinx parents. On a similar note, parents are often encouraged to assist with move-in day, yet their systemic involvement is immediately cut off by laws like the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) that protects the privacy of student records. Ultimately setting a legal norm that college is an individual experience, which socializes students and their parents to think of support in narrow ways. However, there are multiple examples of how parents want to be involved in their students' college experience regarding their academic progress and overall well-being (Wolf et al., 2009).

Furthermore, previous research has found that parents' involvement with their children differs by gender and race/ethnicity (Wells et al., 2011). For instance, historically, definitions of

parental involvement have a privileged domain with a narrow spectrum of what is considered legitimate and valuable support, such as attending college workshops, college visits, financial support, etc. (López 2001; Engle, 2007). Ultimately proving how traditional definitions of parental support exclude cultural forms of capital and support, such as that provided by Latinx parents. Instead of disregarding or overlooking Latinx parental support, this study challenged the traditional definition of parental support by expanding it to include support that is not solely academic while simultaneously highlighting the multiple forms of support that parents of first-generation Latinas provide. To further develop this argument, Yosso's (2005) CCW framework helped identify and name the support as several aspects of aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital.

As a result of deficit theories like Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) definition of capital, academics often fail to recognize the rich capital that Latinx students have, leading Latinx students to think that their capital is not valuable because it does not align with the Eurocentric capital norm that academic spaces uphold (Cuadraz, 1996; Gonzales, 2012). This misconception is often transcended to Latinx parents and the support they provide their children. In a way, this misconception and devaluation of CCW has been systemically ingrained in academic spaces and internalized by some Latinx students and their parents. As a result of this, Latinx students often receive messages that they lack the intellectual ability and cultural capital to succeed (Cuadraz, 1996). Similarly, the support that Latinx parents provide is often compared to a Eurocentric standard. This systemic problem was mentioned by participants in the study, like Victoria, who stated, "there's a lot of forms of [support] that don't get considered or counted as," but noted the support she received was just as or even more impactful. Or Mieriam's mom, who apologized for not being able to help her academically. However, participants refuted academia's lack of

acknowledgment and recognized other ways in which their parents provided support, like Mieriam, who responded to her mom by listing the various other ways her mom had been able to help her while in college. Similarly, Isabel noted that even though her parents did not acquire a traditional higher education experience, they have “fulfill[ed] their curiosity in different ways that are not traditional,” referring to academia as the traditional way of learning. She continued by stating, “Wow, I probably gained more from my parents,” based on the experiential knowledge they had and the support they provided her.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, all the participants were seeking a college education not just for themselves but for their families and/or communities and identified their parents' support as influential in molding their aspirations and success. This finding correlated with previous research that states that “Latinas hav[e] [a] strong individual initiative and motivation to achieve on behalf of the family” (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012, p. 88). Yet, many participants acknowledged not seeing this parental engagement as support or capital at first. In recounting their experiences, the comparison of parental support they received versus the support their peers received was discussed. This comparison stemmed from the social norm that parental involvement is socially constructed to privilege white, middle-class norms when it comes to education, and this then becomes the expectation of educators (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). Therefore, marginalizing other forms of parental involvement and support, such as that provided by Latinx parents.

The findings of this study confirmed that the support that parents of first-generation Latinas provide is highly influential to their college and overall success. This was evident throughout the various responses by participants' testimonios, like Marleny who referred to her parents' support as, “very empowering and very helpful in [her] college journey.” Other

participants expressed that they would not be in college if it were not for their parents' support. For instance, Valentina credited her parents' continuous support by stating, "I think that without their support, I wouldn't even be at college. I think they're the sole reason I'm there." Valentina's response mirrored previous research that notes that for some Latinas, family, and friends as their main reason for enrolling in an institution of higher education (Person & Rosenbaum, 2006). Through the narration of their parents' support, all the participants stated ways in which their parent support had a positive impact on their college success and through analysis, shared support was named as capital.

### **How Parents Contribute to CCW**

While some first-generation Latinas were aware of the quality support that they received from their parents, I interpreted that support as a type of community cultural wealth. Through Yosso's CCW framework, the findings of this study highlight a multitude of capital that first-generation Latinas and Latinx parents have while also expanding the definition of parental support to include more cultural forms of support. Moreover, participants identified the support as influential in their college success, and through my analysis several aspects of aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital were interpreted and named.

### **Aspirational Capital**

This capital was the most prominent form of support and took forms of emotional support, affirmations, or their parents' sacrifices, serving as Intra-generational Motivation. These findings aligned with previous literature that states that while Latinx parents or family members may not be able to provide direct college guidance and advice, many Latinx families embrace cultural narratives, motivational messages, and work ethic strategies to encourage first-generation Latinas to seek and continue a college education (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994). When

reflecting on aspirational support, participants like Mieriam said that her parents showered her with words/phrases of affirmation like “estamos orgullosos de ti” (we are proud of you) which would be statements she would remember when navigating tough situations. In addition, participants shared how their parents’ sacrifices helped fuel their motivation which aligns with previous literature that states that for many first-generation Latinas, attaining a college degree helped honor their parents’ efforts and sacrifices (Matos, 2015). For instance, Valerie stated that her parents had a role in her pursuing a higher education, for her, pursuing a college degree would “give back for what they sacrificed.” Similarly, Rosario shared that “Doing a college degree was really like holding space in a classroom that my parents never got to,” ultimately attributing her success to her parents too. Through the participants’ responses, it was evident that they remained motivated by the sacrifices of their parents and families, echoing similar research on the topic (Rios-Aguilar & Deil-Amen, 2012).

### **Linguistic Capital**

Several of the participants mentioned the ability to be bilingual and the ability to translate as being an asset to their collegiate experience and success. However, it was also the least form of capital mentioned and often overlooked that was capital gained outside of academic spaces. Perhaps this capital was overlooked due to years of Spanish being viewed negatively under the Eurocentric norms that unofficially established English as the norm (Bergman et al., 2008). As previous studies mention, when it comes to providing academic support, Latinx parents build on their linguistic strengths and family relationships to empower and support their children in school (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994). As a result of these teachings, Latinas mentioned how they often learned Spanish from their parents and how these skills equipped them to be successful as students and professionals. These reflections aligned with the multiple social tools that have been



ted to bilingualism, such as cross-cultural vocabulary, audience awareness, and teaching skills, all while fulfilling civic and familial responsibilities (Faulstich Orellana, 2003). Mirroring the results of other studies like Bergman et al. (2008), the participants, once prompted, mirrored the realization that speaking Spanish was an asset to their academic and professional lives.

### **Familial Capital**

Throughout the participants' testimonios, they all mentioned how their family impacted their college experience by mentioning a collective effort, familial financial support, and how college was a collective experience. These reflections correlated to the Latinx cultural value of familismo, and the importance and commitment to family (Sabogal et al., 1987). This familismo was not limited to just support received by parents but included extended family support as well.

As a reflection of this support, Teddy shared:

Both in university and in high school, familismo, [is] something that I didn't realize that my parents did for me was that they connected me with my aunts, or my aunts were very well connected with my mom. Because my dad's family is actually all in Mexico but a lot of support came from my mom's side of the family, where it was kind of like a give and take, but like one of them was able to give me a little bit of financial support.

This support then echoed a collective effort and investment for the success of first-generation Latina college students. And most importantly, displaying how the parents served as the mediator between their daughters and external family.

For others, like Chelsey, this familismo could also be a pull away from academia due to the strong family ties that require first-generation Latinas to stay home or visit home often. This pull was briefly mentioned by several participants and coincides with the literature that for first-generation college students going to college disrupts the familial pattern, relationship, and life (Engle, 2007, p. 36). Moreover, first-generation students commonly face additional challenges in transcending the change not only for them but for their families as well. However, regardless of

the imbalance their departure may cause, parents often support their daughters because they see the great benefits that come with a college education.

### **Social Capital**

When discussing social capital, participants described social capital as the people they knew prior to college, the people their parents knew, and the people they met and connected with in college. This social capital was crucial as first-generation Latinas frequently rely on their networks to advise them on navigational tactics, while also reciprocating the knowledge they already hold when navigating higher education (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Loui et al., 2009). As a reflection of this social capital, participants like Rosario recalled the following support, “my mom has always been able to tell me how to almost network in a way.” As a first-generation student, Rosario credited her mom’s teachings as influential in how she networked on campus. This contributed both to their social capital by connecting them to new people on campus and also to their navigational capital in how their parents narrated this process.

### **Navigational Capital**

When it came to this capital, participants often shared how their parents taught them strategies that helped them navigate new spaces, such as asking questions and being resourceful. This capital often stemmed from their parents’ own experiential knowledge of navigating new spaces. For many parents, this capital was gained when immigrating to the U.S. and navigating a new country. When sharing their testimonios and their parents’ support, the navigational capital was displayed when individuals shared tips or advice on how to navigate through racially charged environments like college campuses (Martinez-Benyarko et al., 2022). When it came to navigational strategies, Marleny shared, “having confidence in new spaces is what both of my

parents have taught me.” For her, this was advice she tried to implement in times of doubt, such as overcoming symptoms of imposter syndrome.

### **Resistant Capital**

When it came to resistant capital, participants often used resistant capital and resilience interchangeably. While not all Latinas coin their persistence, dedication, and hard work as resiliency or resistant capital, the Latinas in this study exemplified resistant capital through the testimonies they shared. This resiliency is linked to resistant capital, which is the skill to not only survive and recover but to thrive and gain new skills during challenging instances of inequality (Liou et al., 2009; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000). Moreover, Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) discuss how resistance differs from other forms of oppositional behavior that may feed back to the system of subordination because resistance aims to not only survive oppressive systems but to transform them as well. For first-generation Latina college students, the resistant capital they hold is crucial not only in navigating higher education but also in reaching graduation. For participants, this form of capital was often displayed in their independence and self-advocacy, mirroring their parents’ resilience, and/or the emphasis on self-preservation.

When discussing challenging situations, Alex made sure to credit her parents with her resistant capital. She shared, “I guess one of the big ones is not backing down with the belief, you know, don't back down. Or, don't give up.” She shared that her parents led by example by always pushing themselves to be better individuals and not back down from a challenge. These values of bravery, resilience, and hard work were now values that she embraced and had positively affected her college journey. Other participants, like Rosario, shared their admiration for their mom’s resilience while also adding how her mom would often remind her, “you need to sleep better,” “don't do everything at once,” or “Stop, trying to do everything at once.” For

Rosario, her mom's reminders nudge her to take a break and the importance of self-care and self-preservation.

### **Building on CCW**

One of the key findings of this study was that all participants credited their parents' knowledge of existence capital as important contributions to their college success. While similar to navigational capital, existence capital includes strategies to navigate through not only non-inclusive social institutions but aids in providing knowledge and guidance in simply existing. Moreover, navigational capital refers to the students' ability to use the necessary navigational strategies, resources, and opportunities to excel in structures that exclude them, such as academic institutions (Liou et al., 2009). Existence capital are navigational strategies and resources that are applicable in everyday life, while still useful in academia, they are practiced, and gained outside of academic institutions.

Following Eurocentric epistemology that only those in "power [can] decide what is considered truth or not," existence capital also challenges the perception that knowledge is only produced within academia (Huber, 2008, p. 161). For instance, if we look at the general definition of parental support and studies, they tend to only count objective support, such as providing financial support or providing direct academic advising (Jordan et al., 2002; Wolf et al., 2009). Due to this traditional Eurocentric definition and understanding of parental support, we see other supports like existence capital, which are often more attainable and acquired by PoC communities, go unrecognized or overlooked. This misconception echoes the assumption that PoC lacks social and cultural capital (Yosso, 2005). However, in this study, participants shared a multitude of existence capital such as financial literacy, a strong work ethic, home living skills, that their parents taught them that helped ease their college experience. Moreover,

their parents emphasized and taught them the importance of *una buena educación*, which, in a way, serves as an example of this study proving that capital can and is acquirable outside of the Ivory Tower.

For instance, Valerie referred to her values often and shared how, growing up, her parents always emphasized the importance of values as a moral compass. Her parents encouraged her to ground herself in her values to help her navigate through difficult situations. She noted, “My parents are very big on values. And they're very religious, but I wouldn't say I'm religious. I would say I'm more spiritual.” While Valerie self-identified as not religious, it is important to note that previous studies note spiritual capital as an additional capital that contributes to CCW and helps with navigating higher education (Acevedo & Solórzano, 2021; Huber, 2009). As a result of her self-identification as not religious, she leaned more into her parents’ teaching of values. She shared, “they really taught me about values and staying true to yourself, [like] being honest. They've really helped instill and reinforce my values, and so we have very similar values.” She further explained how her mom taught her to be empathetic and taught her to “listen to understand and not respond.” These teachings mirrored the importance of an ethical foundation, which ultimately contributed to *una buena educación*.

### **Beyond a Formal Education**

When discussing the different types of capital that parents of first-generation Latinas provided, it seemed like the concept and practice of education became more nuanced. By this, I mean that while none of the parents of the participants held a bachelor’s degree in the U.S., their knowledge was valuable, and, for the participants, an influential aspect in their college success. While all of the participants’ parents mentioned the importance of a college degree to them, many of them also emphasized the importance of *una buena educación*. A *buena educación*

refers to the cultural expectation meaning that education includes both a formal college education and ethical moral values. In Latinx communities, this cultural value translates beyond the direct translation of a good education, rather, *una buena educación* involves developing good moral values and academics, which becomes a moral code that families live by (Daiute, 2013; Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014). This expectation was also mirrored in the participants' testimonios, as many of them shared the importance of *una buena educación*, among other forms of existence capital. In a way, it seemed that even though parents wanted their daughters to obtain a formal education through a college degree, they also aspired for them to have ethical moral values and hold necessary existence capital like home living skills and a strong work ethic. This emphasis on *una buena educación* could also be parents' own recognition of their experiential knowledge as capital, and therefore characteristics that they also want their daughters to hold.

In addition to the emphasis on *una buena educación*, parents also taught their daughters financial literacy skills, a strong work ethic, and home living skills. When it came to finances, all the participants shared that money was a challenge they had to overcome while in college. These responses align with previous literature that highlights how first-generation studies tend to come from working-class backgrounds and have more financial obstacles in comparison to their peers (Stephens et al., 2012). Correspondingly, all the participants shared how in one way or another their parents taught them financial strategies or support when facing money restraints. Advice ranged from simple statements of "not wasting money on stupid things," like Rosario's mom would tell her, to the "3 B's" strategy, to mom's telling their daughters to open a savings and checking account like Chelsey's mom did. While parents could not fund their daughter's education and provide as much (if any) financial support, they provided their daughters with financial strategies contributing to their existence. This collective engagement in finances

mirrors previous literature that states that financial education can be “especially effective when the entire family is engaged” (Robles, 2014, p. 57). This family engagement and capital serves as a tool that can help reduce the link between financial obstacles and mental health challenges that many Latinas mentioned in the study, which is also reflected in previous literature (Robles, 2014).

When it came to the existence capital, Chelsey shared, “yeah, my mom and dad taught me how to do basically anything home [or] house living.” For participants, home living skills consisted of knowing how to shop for groceries to knowing how to be organized and plan were all skills they learned from their parents. Previous research states how students need to learn important life skills in order to be productive members of society, regardless of whether or not they attend college (Wurdinger & Rudolph, 2009). Hence, the emphasis of project-based learning programs in U.S. colleges and universities (Wurdinger & Qureshi, 2014). While the opportunity to gain this existence capital can be offered in academic spaces, Latinas often inherit these skills at an early age, and are able to put the theory to practice far beyond college. For instance, Victoria shared, “One time a friend, one of my current roommates, saw me fold my clothes. And she was like, ‘oh, did you used to work retail?’ I was like, ‘No. It's like years of scolding from my mom.’” She further explained how she often got complimented for how she folded clothes and stated, “It's like one of those things that, for me, it comes a lot easier because of the previous experience.” For Victoria, like many of the other participants that shared existence capital attributed their skills to their parents teaching them at an early age. As a result, these skills were often refined by the time they got to college and useful in their success when they left their homes to attend college.

### **Implications for Future Research, Practice and Policy**

Chapter Two included a literature review that included previous findings in relation to first-generation Latina college students, traditional perceptions of parental involvement and support, and Latinx parent involvement in college, among others. Through this study, the interview questions revealed how students' understanding of capital often mirrored traditional interpretations of cultural capital that value Eurocentric pedagogy as the norm. However, throughout reflection and conversation, it was evident that they had multiple forms of capital, yet they had never or rarely had the opportunity to reflect on their skillset, knowledge, and parental support through an asset-based framework that recognizes cultural ways of knowing such as CCW. Moreover, it was evident that creating a space to engage in such reflection prompted participants to think about cultural capital and parental support in new ways, all of which had a positive impact on their collegiate experience. As a result of this study's findings, the following implications for future research, practice and policy are suggested; (a) Revising the traditional definition of parental support to include CCW; (b) Recognizing the individualist culture of academia as a challenge for first-generation Latinas; (c) University programming and policies that encourage and value CCW.

#### **Revising the Definition of Parental Support**

By reviewing the traditional definition of parental support, academia can begin to fully acknowledge the CCW of Latinx parental Support as Influential. Historically, there has been a deficit approach to Latinx children, parents, and families, when it comes to parental support. This is due to academic institutions strictly measuring school-centered presence and support as the only form of parental involvement, and such involvement or lack thereof is interpreted as a reflection of the parents' school values and priorities (Jordan et al., 2002). As a result, culturally



relevant family practices of support among diverse communities are excluded from its definition (Auerbach, 2007). Fortunately, recent studies have begun to report that Latinx families are an important and consistent source of support for Latinas in college (Gonzales, 2012). Furthering this argument, the results of this study confirm the multiple ways in which the parents of first-generation Latinas provide support. Furthermore, the results of this study confirmed that parental support is not rigid and limited to school-centered presence or college knowledge. Extending the research on parental support to explore how support is defined and practiced by different cultural groups can confirm that a lack of school presence or other traditional forms of support does not reflect a lack of parental support.

For instance, when colleges and universities host identity-based commencement ceremonies, there is often a large presence of moms, dads, and other extended family members. While traditional commencement ceremonies are “hyper-individuated,” cultural commencements welcome Latinx families to celebrate with their graduates, offering a collective celebration (Gildersleeve & Sifuentez, 2017, p. 350). In a way, through these ceremonies “padres y madres y estudiantes become graduados,” (fathers and mothers and students become graduates) together. (p. 350). Instances like these serve as an example of the collective and parental support and effort that parents provide their daughters, which participants like Teddy refer to as “el esfuerzo que hizo la familia” (the sacrifice the family made). While there is limited literature on the impact of cultural commencement ceremonies and their engagement with Latinx, the findings of this study encourage further analysis of how these events encourage parental involvement on college campuses. Therefore, academics must recognize that parental involvement in education is multidimensional and parental involvement does not need to abide by the traditional school-centered definition for diverse types of parental support to be legitimate (Dotterer, 2022).

### **Challenging the Individualist Culture of Academia**

As previous literature and this study confirms, for first-generation Latinas, college is a collective effort and experience. This collectiveness derives from the cultural value of familismo, which emphasizes strong family ties and the importance of family, a cultural value in many Latinx families (Sabogal et al., 1987). Within the Latinx community, this prioritization of family well-being repeatedly translates to a collectivist motivation and effort for pursuing a college education (Azpeitia & Bacio, 2022). This means that “educational achievement cannot be conceptualized as an individual process” but a process and achievement for the entire Latinx family (Hurtado, 1996, p. 32). This means that regardless of the individualistic culture of academia, the value of familismo prompts students to maintain strong family ties (Hurtado, 1996). Therefore, to better understand and support first-generation Latina college students, there needs to be further research on how higher education spaces uphold individualistic norms that discourage and/or challenge Latinas’ collective lifestyle and cultural values like familismo. One-way individualistic norms are upheld is through laws like FERPA that can instill fear and discouragement for students who want their parents involved in their college experience. For instance, if a student and/or parent is undocumented, it may be anxiety-producing for the student to have to go to the registrar’s office to sign off on the FERPA consent. This could be similar to the parent who may fear having their name documented on a legal consent form, therefore discouraging formal parent involvement.

Another way in which institutions of higher education uphold individualistic norms is through traditional and formal mentorship that strives to assimilate students from diverse cultures into the dominant Eurocentric academic culture (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001; Villaseñor et

al., 2013). Through this mentorship of assimilation, Latinas are often encouraged to solely focus on academics while disregarding any familial responsibilities that they may have.

To change this individual culture, mentorship is an area that can be enhanced to better support Latinas. A cultural mentorship that acknowledges their Latinx identity, cultural responsibilities, and familial ties can ultimately enhance the college experience of first-generation Latinas. An example of cultural mentorship is *mujerista* mentoring which “has the potential to best serve Chicana/Latina students and contribute to their academic achievement, professional success, and personal development (Villaseñor et al., 2013). For example, in the first-year student study by Berardi et. al. (2020), the researchers emphasize how building mentoring relationships that are rooted in care and support for the students can lead to an easier transition and a more successful college experience. By affirming Latina experiences and values, mentors can positively impact persistence by guiding them through feelings of isolation, stress, and sense of belonging and, conclusively, increase the chances of their success (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000; Villaseñor et al., 2013). Ultimately, mentoring relationships and mentorship programs that center the authentic experience of the student can help students “successfully navigate pathways into and through college to degree completion” and closer persistence gaps in degree attainment (Perna, 2015, p. 5; Ramos, 2019, p. 57). Similarly, implementing a psychosociocultural (PSC) approach that emphasizes that effective mentorship must embrace cultural beliefs (such as *familismo*, cultural values, etc.) can ultimately help institutions of higher education to be more inclusive (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007). For instance, through effective mentorship such as *mujerista* mentoring, first-generation Latinas can feel seen, validated, and encouraged in a way that includes and celebrates any cultural beliefs.

As an example of the impact of cultural mentorship, Valerie mentioned how her advisor, also a fellow Latina had helped her immensely. She shared “I value mentorship so much,” and “that was one of the key reasons why I chose [University Name], because the advisor I wanted to work with, she's Latina, and my values, my interests, and research [aligned].” This mentorship created a sense of belonging and support, in which Valerie felt seen and heard and as a whole person, including culturally. Valentina’s experiences show how understanding the importance of integrating core Latina values such as culture and family in efforts to better support and enhance Latina students' academic experiences, retention, and graduation (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007). Conclusively, acknowledging different cultural norms and values can help institutions of higher education shift from an individualistic culture to one that welcomes collective efforts and experiences like those of first-generation Latinas and their parents.

### **University Programming and Policies**

Participants who had previously reflected on parental support and/or their college experience as first-generation Latinas had done so in spaces in which the others also shared the same or similar identities, such as first-generation programs, Latinx Studies classes or organizations, etc. More specifically, students typically only engaged in these conversations if they themselves sought out the opportunity to be a part of these communities, and then these conversations, prompted or not, would flourish. For instance, conversations of community cultural wealth or asset-based perspectives on first-generation experiences are not a traditional workshop or required class for university students. Rather, oftentimes orientation programming or mandatory first-year courses follow a deficit-oriented thinking that devalues PoC knowledge, experiences, and capital and can leave first-generation Latinas questioning their knowledge and capabilities. In effort to become culturally aware and competent, formally implementing

programming that recognizes, values, and celebrates CCW can positively influence the self-esteem and confidence of first-generation Latinas and other PoC student populations.

While some institutions may already have CRT or Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) courses that touch on CCW, the findings of this study suggest that rather than having these conversations in private settings or in courses that you have to register for, CWW conversations should be happening openly and commonly. By doing so, institutions of higher learning are engaging in authentic DEI work that recognizes and values different epistemologies and empowering populations like first-generation Latinas whose capital is often overlooked and/or devalued. As a result of CWW programming on college campuses, PoC students can reflect and strengthen their knowledge and practice of CCW rather than believe and at times internalize the deficit perspective that higher education places on PoC communities (Acevedo & Solórzano, 2021). It is important to note that this type of programming occurs early on in college and not just at the end. While there has been a growth in identity-based graduation celebrations in which students of diverse backgrounds are able to celebrate their achievements, the richness and diversity of their communities, similar intentional programming should occur in the beginning of students' collegiate journey. Therefore, another CWW programming that recognizes, celebrates, and values diverse backgrounds is suggested to occur during orientation programming, when students first face a sense of culture shock or intimidation. By implementing such programming at the beginning of their collegiate journeys, institutions of higher learning are being proactive in attaining and retaining diverse populations, and encouraging a sense of belonging by acknowledging their intersecting identities and the value they hold. Moreover, such programming will reflect culturally responsive pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 2021).

Examples of CCW orientation programming include Pláticas (Conversations) in which students are able to engage in conversations about their identities through an asset-based lens that acknowledges the differences in their experiences but also recognizes their CCW. Again, such programming is suggested to be integrated into orientation programming and not an additional resource that students would need to seek. Similarly, such programming can be prioritized by establishing institutional policies that distinguish certain funding to be used for CCW programming. In addition, such programming should not be an add-on task to staff or students, but a core element in orientation programming and therefore allocated the appropriate funding and compensation. By prioritizing funding for CCW programming, university stakeholders are contributing to students' valuing their CCW, and therefore aligning DEI mission statements to tangible and valuable forms of DEI programming and support. Moreover, literature on the topic of diversity programming and funding emphasize that “if diversity, in all its campus forms, is a strategic priority within the institution, then it will be reflected in the potential restructuring of the budget” (Wilson et al., 2021, p. 27). As a result of these efforts and programming, first-generation Latinas among other PoC populations are exposed and encouraged to reflect on their experiences and skills through asset-based perspective, creating a strong foundation of confidence as they navigate higher education.

## **Study Evaluation**

### **Limitations**

The purpose of this qualitative study was not to generalize the college experience and parental support received by this population, rather, it was done to contextualize, better understand, and support this population through an asset-based framework (Grabsch et al., 2023). However, there are some areas for future research that could add to the findings of this study,

such as data collection methods and targeted demographics. As mentioned in Chapter Four, participants who shared that they had previously engaged in reflection regarding their parents' support mentioned that these reflective conversations had occurred in spaces with other first-generation and/or Latinx students. For this study, individual interviews were best aligned with the purpose of testimonio because it gave the participant the agency of what and how their experience was told. However, a focus group may have offered more dialogue regarding different types of parental support.

In terms of ethnicity, this study lacked diversity when it came to Latina representation since all participants identified as Mexican, with one identifying as half Mexican and half Salvadorian. Future studies should focus on recruiting participants from varied ethnic backgrounds. Another area to explore would be having other PoC or non-PoC students participate in the study. By expanding the participant demographics, future research can explore the ways in which participants narrate their parents' support and identify similarities and differences among the different student populations.

### **Trustworthiness and Reflection**

My role as a researcher in this study was to document Latina testimonios in efforts to disrupt the monolithic college narrative that parents of first-generation college students do not provide essential skills and knowledge as their children navigate college. To avoid misinterpreting the participants' experiences, the self-reflexivity, vulnerability, and transparency of the researcher were integrated into the goals, methods, categorization, and analysis of the study (Tracy, 2010). One of the many strengths of testimonio methodology is that while testimonios derive from one person, they can represent the lived realities of many who have been affected by social stigmas, events, or structures (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012). In this case,

my interest in the topic first derived from my own experience and reflection on my parents' support through my undergraduate and graduate studies. All of which poured constant and valuable support that has contributed to my own CCW, which without a doubt has had a positive influence on my college success. For this study, my own reflection and breakdown created vulnerability and transparency with participants, building rapport and trust throughout the process.

**Aspirational Capital.** Aspirational capital has been poured into me through my parents' affirmations, and reminders that I am capable of anything I set my mind to and want to achieve. From expressing "estamos muy orgullosos de ti," to motivational text messages to them listening to me talk about my research study, they've always provided "words of love" and emotional support. During stressful times, my mom and dad have always asked "¿ahí algo en que te podemos ayudar?" (is there something we can help you with?) They've been my soundboard and, in times of doubt, part of my emotional stability, as Teddy mentioned. In addition, my parents' sacrifices have fueled my own motivation to accomplish all my goals, especially my academic endeavors.

**Linguistic Capital.** As a native speaker, I credit my Spanish-speaking ability to my parents. My mom always recounts the story of when I was little and learning how to spell and I asked, "¿Mami, té tiene acento en la e?" (Mommy, does tea have an accent on the e?) My mom, a passionate educator by profession, along with my dad have been my formal Spanish teachers, as I have never taken a formal Spanish course, and for that I thank them. To this day, my parents are my go-to people when I have questions about the Spanish language. However, like other participants in the study, I did not always recognize the value of speaking Spanish growing up, but now, I see the great asset it has been to both my personal and professional life.



**Familial Capital.** Like Valentina stated, when it comes to my family, “they're always there.” From moving into my dorm in undergraduate, to presenting my master’s thesis in graduate school, to frequent check-in’s, my parents have never left my side. Family is a value that they have always emphasized, from our daily family dinners growing up to their continuous support in all that I do, family has been a constant support that I have leaned into. I have never felt alone, rather I know I always have a team rooting for me. My mom has stayed up late with me while I work on assignments, a physical act of companionship. Similarly, my dad has ensured that my car was in safe condition for my trips to and from campus, an act of care for my safety even while away. My undergraduate and graduate studies have been a collective effort, investment, and success.

**Social Capital.** While my parents did not pursue a four-year degree, they have never doubted that there are people inside and outside of academia that can also help me. Whenever I mentioned that I did not know how to do something, they always told me “si no sabes pregunta,” (if you don’t know, ask), and my mom has been an extraordinary example in this practice. As a lifelong student, my mom does not give up without trying to find a solution, and I admire her for that. Similarly, my parents have shared the knowledge that they have gained from other first-generation parents in their network to help advise me in my own journey. They have been to transcend their own knowledge to help me succeed.

**Navigational Capital.** For me, the first thought of navigational capital was a literal example of how to navigate around a new place, however, the participants’ examples were not as literal. The example I shared with participants during the study was my dad’s support when it came to navigational capital. Nonetheless, both of our examples mirrored the necessary navigational strategies to succeed while in college. As someone who did not grow up in the city

of Chicago, navigating the city with a car in graduate school was something new. My dad, a hard-working landscaping professional, also worked in the city and he was able to help guide me on how to navigate the city. While in different settings, we both navigated the city in one way or another, and his knowledge ultimately became an asset to me.

**Resistant Capital.** As a proud daughter of Mexican immigrant parents, I am inspired to hold as much resistant capital as my parents. Through the years, I have witnessed my parents face many hardships, yet they continue to move forward and not give up. They have taught me the importance of self-advocacy, independence, self-sufficiency, and, most importantly, that I deserve great experiences and rest. I say this because, like many other Latinas and the participants in this study, I have encountered feelings of imposter syndrome, where I have doubted, questioned, or simply overworked myself. Luckily, my parents have helped me build my confidence to ask the necessary questions and reiterated the self-advocacy practice of “*si no sabes pregunta*” (if you do not know, ask).

One of the most important skills they have taught me is to take care of myself, because I cannot pour from an empty cup. From my dad’s reminders to take a break, to my mom’s reminders to get some sleep, they have both contributed to my own self-preservation. In a way, this is a privilege because I do not recall my parents taking breaks, nor did they always have someone remind them to prioritize their well-being. But for me, I have my parents to remind me to take breaks and provide support in any way they can so I can take the breaks that I need.

**Existence Capital.** This capital is an area that, when initially conversing with participants, they did not mention. In a way, these skills were overlooked. As Teddy mentioned, these skills were often “learn[ed] from [her parents], even if sometimes subconsciously.” This comment was referring to her managing her money and not eating out all the time, ultimately

saving her money, and a practice she was able to adopt when studying abroad. Like Teddy and other participants, I did not always realize the various life skills my parents taught me, nor that I was subconsciously learning these skills while growing up. Now, as an adult, I have realized that many of the skills I have gained, from learning how to budget to how to grocery shop, are all skills I learned while growing up. It is important to note that while growing up, I often complained of not being able to buy everything I wanted because of a budget, however, budgeting was crucial while in college as money was limited. Similarly, seeing my parents plan and prioritize certain tasks, from writing down important dates on the kitchen calendar to planning big family events, I learned general organization skills from them far before any college courses. With these skills, I learned from their strong work ethic and accountability. I have witnessed them work laborious jobs and provide for our family even on their hardest days, and as a result, these lessons have transformed into my own self-integrity, strong work ethic, and accountability. All necessary skills when navigating academia and life.

Furthermore, my parents have taught me the importance of *una buena educación*. Which, in a way influenced me to highlight the existence of capital that Latinas have and that is often obtained outside a formal education. One of my mom's favorite quotes is, "El respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz" (respect for the rights of others is peace) by Benito Juárez, a former Mexican president. Since I was little, my parents have emphasized respect and to treat everyone with respect, from the CEO of a company to the facilities staff, everyone deserves respect. To this day, I hold this value. Similarly, my mom has been a big contributor to my own social-emotional learning (SEL) and development, far before it was a commonly coined term. She has taught me the importance of listening to my feelings, and respecting the feelings of others, she has taught

me to be empathetic. For me, empathy is a characteristic that holds great value, not just professionally but in all aspects of life, and I have my mom to thank for that.

I end this reflection with the concept of *una buena educación* because our parents have contributed to our success in ways that the classroom has not. They have taught us the value of morals, a strong work ethic, and existence capital with their own actions, through experiential knowledge. Yet, this experiential knowledge is often left unrecognized because it is often produced outside of the walls of the Ivory Tower. To begin recognizing the various ways Latinx parents contribute to the CWW of first-generation Latinas, this topic of study came to fruition. In a way, this study is going full circle, parents encouraging their daughters to seek a college education, yet providing the necessary existence capital beyond a formal education.

### **Conclusion**

Through a CCW framework, the findings of this study confirm the multitude of forms of support that parents provide first-generation Latinas and its positive impact on their daughters' success. Moreover, similar studies on the topic echo that parental support reflects a variety of types that have a positive influence on students, such as the retention of first-generation students (McCulloh, 2022). Moreover, the findings exemplify how capital can and is gained outside of normative middle-class experiences, through parental support that focuses on cultural values and experiential knowledge. At large, the findings reveal how college, regardless of its individualistic culture, is, in fact, a collective experience, effort, and success for many first-generation Latinas and their parents. More specifically, in relation to the question of focus, this study identified three unique themes that Latina college students narrated about the support they received from their parents. Three themes were identified in this study: (a) Parental Support as Influential to

College Success; (b) Naming Types of Latinx Parental Support as a Form of Capital; (c) Existence Capital.

From the participants' testimonios, it was evident that if parents were not able to provide traditional forms of support, such as financial or academic, they offered their help in other ways. Regardless of how support was expressed, the parental support discussed in the participants' testimonios displayed the significant influence it had on participants' college success and overall life.

APPENDIX A  
RECRUITMENT EMAIL TO LATINX AND FIRST-GENERATION  
ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS

Hello [college or organization name],

My name is Fabiola Rosiles and I am a doctoral student at Loyola University Chicago in the graduate School of Education. I am writing to you to request your help in conducting dissertation research about how first-generation Latinas have received support from their parents throughout their college years, and the type of support they have received. The specific criteria to participate in this study is as follows:

- Must identify as Latina; women identified student whose ethnic backgrounds are from Latin American countries.
- Must identify as first-generation; student in which neither parent has earned a bachelor's degree (Lundberg, 2012)
- Must identify as someone who has received support (definition of support is up to the participant) from their parents throughout college.
- Current or recent graduate of a U.S. accredited 4-year college or university.

If you feel comfortable doing so, would you forward the recruitment email below to students in your organization/academic unit? If you have questions or need clarification before sending, please feel free to contact me via email or calling me at 224-636-1508. You may also contact my dissertation chair, Dra. Norma López at [nlopez12@luc.edu](mailto:nlopez12@luc.edu).

Best,

Fabiola

Fabiola Rosiles-Duran, M.A.  
Higher Education Doctoral Student  
Loyola University Chicago  
Pronouns: She/her/hers

APPENDIX B  
PARTICIPANT OUTREACH FLYER



## **SEEKING PARTICIPANTS**

### **A DISSERTATION STUDY OF FIRST-GENERATION LATINA COLLEGE STUDENTS & PARENTAL SUPPORT**

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION:**

**HOW DO FIRST-GENERATION LATINA COLLEGE STUDENTS NARRATE THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE(D) FROM THEIR PARENTS?**

#### **PARTICIPANT CRITERIA:**

- IDENTIFY AS FIRST-GENERATION LATINA
- IDENTIFY AS SOMEONE WHO HAS RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM THEIR PARENTS THROUGHOUT COLLEGE
- UNDERGRADUATE OR RECENT UNDERGRAD GRADUATE (FALL 2022 OR LATER) OF A U.S. ACCREDITED 4-YEAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY
- PARTICIPATE IN TWO 45-60 MINUTE VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

### **INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING?**

**PLEASE CONTACT FABIOLA ROSILES AT [FROSILES@LUC.EDU](mailto:FROSILES@LUC.EDU)**

**STUDY APPROVED BY LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT OUTREACH EMAIL

Hello,

My name is Fabiola Rosiles and I am a doctoral student at Loyola University Chicago in the graduate School of Education. I am writing to you because you seem to be an ideal candidate to participate in a study about how first-generation Latinas have received support from their parents throughout their college years, and the type of support they have received. As a first-generation Latina, I have come to recognize the various types of support that my parents have provided me throughout my academic journey, all of which have not always been recognized as legitimate types of support by the academy. I have embarked on this research study to demonstrate how traditional definitions of parental involvement have disregarded cultural forms of parental support and highlight the important role of Latinx parental support in first-generation Latinas' college success. My study specifically focuses on self-identified Latina college students, who are the first in their family to attend a 4-year college or university. If a sibling, or one or both parents/guardians attended college but did not graduate, you are still eligible to participate in this study.

The specific criteria to participate in this study is as follows:

- Must identify as Latina; women identified student whose ethnic backgrounds are from Latin American countries
- Must identify as first-generation; student in which neither parent has earned a bachelor's degree (Lundberg, 2012)
- Must identify as someone who has received support (definition of support is up to the participant) from their parents throughout college
- Current or recent graduate of a U.S. accredited 4-year college or university

Below is more information regarding what participation in this study entails.

- A consent form will be shared with you and is required for research involving human subjects
- If you consent to participate, we will schedule two 60-90 minutes in-person or video call interviews at a mutually agreed time
- If you consent, I would like to record the interviews to better understand your responses to the interview questions

- The interview questions will focus on your upbringing regarding college aspirations, your relationship with your parents, the support you have received from your parents during college, and your experience as a first-generation Latina college student.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will receive **monetary compensation** at the end of the interview in the form of a **\$25 Visa gift card**. Please know that your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to leave the study at any time. Your **identity will be kept confidential** and a pseudonym, of your choosing, will be used to protect your privacy.

I understand that you are very busy, and your participation is greatly appreciated. If you have questions or need clarification, please feel free to contact me via email [frosiles@luc.edu](mailto:frosiles@luc.edu) or calling me at 224-636-1508. You may also contact my dissertation chair, Dra. Norma López at [nlopez12@luc.edu](mailto:nlopez12@luc.edu). If you know other students who fit these criteria and might be interested, please feel free to forward this letter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Fabiola

Fabiola Rosiles-Duran, M.A.  
Higher Education Doctoral Student  
Loyola University Chicago  
Pronouns: She/her/hers

APPENDIX D  
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Project Title:** First-Generation Latina College Success & Parental Support

**Researcher(s):** Fabiola Rosiles, MA

**Faculty Sponsor:** Dra. Norma López

**Introduction:** You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Fabiola Rosiles for dissertation research under the supervision of Dra. Norma López in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago.

You are being asked to participate because you are a college student who identifies as Latina and the first in your family to attend college.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

**Purpose of study:** The purpose of this study is to explore how the community cultural wealth of Latinx parents influence the success of first-generation Latina college students?

**Criteria for participation includes:**

- Must identify as Latina; woman identified student whose ethnic backgrounds are from Latin American countries.
- Must identify as first-generation; student in which neither parent has earned a bachelor's degree (Lundberg, 2012)
- Must identify as someone who has received support (definition of support is defined by the participant) from their parents throughout college.
- Current or recent graduate (within 1 year) of a U.S. accredited 4-year college of university.

**Confidentiality & Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. If you consent, the interview will be voice recorded to obtain highly accurate transcriptions of the interview. If you would like to participate in the interview but not be recorded, please check the box below.

- Yes, I agree to audio recording.
- No, I do not agree to audio recording.

Audio and/or video recordings of these interviews will be used as a reference during the data analysis stage and will not be used in any public presentation. Once data analysis is conducted and completed any participant recordings will be deleted.

**Risks & Benefits**

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. You may experience some emotional discomfort as you recount struggles you faced and how you dealt with them. While there are no direct benefits to participants, I hope results will provide insight on how parents support first-generation Latinas throughout their college journey, particularly highlighting the positive influence they have on their daughters’ persistence and success in college.

**Contact Information**

Please contact me at [frosiles@luc.edu](mailto:frosiles@luc.edu) if you have any questions and/or would like more information about the study or the faculty sponsor Dra. Norma López at [nlopez12@luc.edu](mailto:nlopez12@luc.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

**Statement of Consent**

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX E  
PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



**Overarching Research Question:** How do first-generation Latina college students narrate the support they receive(d) from their parents?

### **Interview Questions**

#### General Background

1. Can you tell me about yourself and your background? (Family dynamics, hometown, college(s) attended, ethnic background)
2. What is your relationship like with your parents? Have there been any significant changes?
3. What are your parents' beliefs, goals, and aspirations for you?
4. What inspired you to seek a college education?

#### Parental Support

5. Did/do you feel supported by your parents when seeking a college education?
6. How have your parents supported you in this pursuit?

#### College Experience

7. Do you believe that your identities as a first-generation Latina impact/ed how you experience college? If so, how so?
8. Did your parent(s) have an influence on your college decision?
  - a. This question can be followed up with a question asking if the parents attended some college.
9. What role did your parents play in your post-secondary planning?
10. Did your parents or community influence your career or choice of major?
11. What have been some challenges you've experienced while in college? Have your parents helped overcome these challenges?
12. What are some of your college successes?
  - a. What role did your parents play in your successes?
13. What skills have your parents taught you that feel have helped you throughout college?

#### General Reflection

14. Has there been a point in college where you've been reflective of your parents' sacrifices and support?

#### Artifact Reminder

- For our next interview, please select an artifact that reminds you of your parents' support.
- Prior to our next interview, engage in conversation with your parents about what this item means to you.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW PART II PARTICIPANT ARTIFACT EMAIL

Overarching Research Question: How do first-generation Latina college students narrate the support they receive(d) from their parents?

#### Artifact Data Collection

Is there a picture, text, letter, etc. that reminds you of your parents' support.

- a. Can you describe this artifact?
- b. What does this artifact mean to you?
- c. Tell me how you got this artifact.
- d. How important is this artifact to you?
- e. Tell me about the conversation you had with your parents about this artifact.
  - i. Did you all attach the same meaning to this artifact?
  - ii. How did you feel engaging with your parents about this artifact?
- f. How has your parents' support influenced your success?

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW PART II COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH EXPLANATION SLIDE

# Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

- Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005)

Aspirational  
Capital

Linguistic  
Capital

Familial  
Capital

Social  
Capital

Navigational  
Capital

Resistant  
Capital

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## VITA

Dr. Fabiola Rosiles-Duran was raised in Round Lake, Illinois and is the proud daughter of Mexican immigrant parents. She attended Round Lake Area Schools where she graduated from Round Lake High School, and then continued her collegiate career at Illinois State University. At Illinois State, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Communication Studies with a focus in Organizational Leadership and double minored in Women and Gender Studies, and Civic Engagement and Responsibility. During her undergraduate studies, she also studied abroad in Paris, France at Novancia Business School. She went on to receive her Master of Arts in Women and Gender Studies at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. While at DePaul she published her thesis titled, *The Telling is Political and Intentional: Resistance Through Testimonio for Latinas in Higher Education*. She then went on to earn her doctorate at Loyola University Chicago in the Higher Education program. While at Loyola, she was a continuous awardee of the Paul T. and Concetta Mooney Fellowship Scholarship Award and was also named an alumni honoree in the DePaul University Chicago Changemakers Honor Roll.

Dr. Rosiles-Duran's research expertise is on first-generation and Latina college experiences, community cultural wealth, parental support, and college access. Her professional experience includes supporting students through holistic trauma-informed support, college access and admissions, and program management in middle school, high school, and college campuses.