CULTIVANDO RIQUEZAS CULTURALES: THE IMPACT OF FAMILIAL SUPPORT ON FIRST-GENERATION LATINX STUDENTS AT A HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION

Abstract

The purpose of my phenomenological qualitative study was to understand the impact of family involvement and engagement on the persistence of first-generation Latinx students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designated university. Grounded in Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth (CCW) model, I explored the ways CCW assets learned from family help students persist in college past their first year. I also sought to understand the way students use their CCW assets to navigate their college experience. CCW served as the guiding framework to better understand familial involvement for first-generation Latinx college students at an HSI. By utilizing Fierros & Delgado Bernal’s (2016) pláticas as the data collection methodology, I met with 5 student participants attending an HSI university and their parents to platicar about their lived experiences as they pursue an undergraduate degree.

My study contributes to the research and knowledge for how to support Latinx students and their families in the college attainment process. Findings indicate the various ways in which parents support their students while in college and how they are involved in non-traditional defined ways. Participant narratives provided valuable insights indicating the way CCW shows up. Four capitals were identified that demonstrated how family participants used the forms of capitals during their journey in higher education: 1.) aspirational, 2.) familial, 3.)
navigational, and 4.) resistant. Three main themes emerged from the data analysis with consequent sub-themes related to cultural capitals. The first *Maldita Pobreza*: Leveraging Resistant and Navigational Capital Through Financial Challenges, discusses the challenges families faced with financing their college education. The second, *De Tal Palo, Tal Astilla*: Overcoming Educational Challenges with Aspirational Capital, presents findings related to the hopes and dreams families have to obtain a college degree for a better future. The third *Amor Eterno*: Fostering Wellness, Love, and Support Through Familial Capital, captured the importance of love as a supporting mechanism for students. My study concluded with a discussion of the findings and practical recommendations for HSI institutions to consider as a way to rethink how they become student ready and serve Latinx families to advance their success.
This dissertation was presented
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*Lo logramos, si se pudo.*
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

The Latinx population has been the largest racial minority group in the United States over the last 2 decades. Since 2000, the Latinx population has nearly doubled from 35.7 million to 62.1 million (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020). In just the last decade alone there was a 23% growth from 50.5 million to 62.1 million (Krogstad & Noe-Bustamante, 2021). As the largest minority group in the United States, they are also the largest and fastest growing racial minority in the landscape of education both in K-12 and higher education. Since 2009, the number of Latinx students enrolled in public schools increased from (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021) and a total enrollment of 19% Latinx students enrolled in colleges and universities (Fry, 2011). To this end, Latinx student success in education is of importance to America’s prosperity.

Latinx constitute a significant portion of the population in education, although they continue to face challenges in degree completion. Despite efforts to move the needle on college enrollment, Latinx students remain the most underrepresented racial group in higher education (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). Trends in access to higher education for Latinx students are promising, although degree attainment rates are not increasing rates as they are in enrollment efforts. Compared to their white peers (63%), Latinx students are less likely to graduate with a baccalaureate degree (51%), although they are making a stronger presence

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1 The term Latinx is used by the author in an aim to move beyond gender binaries and is inclusive of intersecting identities of Latin American descendants. Latinx is a term used to be inclusive of transgender, queer, non-binary, gender non-conforming, or gender-fluid individuals. When the author uses the term Hispanic it is because that is what the source data or author I am citing uses.
at the certificate and associate level degree (*Excelencia* in Education, 2020). Perez Huber et al. (2015) noted that out of 100 Latinx students who start at the elementary level, roughly 60 will graduate from high school. Of that number, only about 13 will graduate with a bachelor’s degree (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*The U.S. Latinx Educational Pipeline by Gender*


Research continues to unfold about Latinx student success in higher education and increased attention has been given to understanding the diversity and intersections of identity for this population to better serve them (Garcia, 2019). A holistic approach must be taken into account, which considers the many facets that make up the Latinx population. Today’s makeup of college students is
more diverse than years before. Latinx students are more likely to identify as female, first-generation, and of low socioeconomic status compared to other racial/ethnic groups (Excelencia in Education, 2019). Acknowledging these indicators disproportionately impacting Latinx students allows educators to consider the type of support they need. Additionally, it allows for the opportunity to learn how to meet the students where they are and understand how they show up to our institutions. More information is needed to determine how family plays a role in their student success and leads to degree completion in order to close equity gaps in degree attainment.

One of the barriers hindering Latinx student success is the lack of understanding race and cultural efforts of institutions when serving underrepresented students (Garcia, 2019). Institutions operate with Euro-centric practices and norms that often do not consider cultural efforts of students of color (Garcia, 2019; Yosso, 2005). An important concept to consider with first-generation Latinx students is the role of the family in the college going and completion process. For many Latinx students, going to college is often a family decision and it plays an essential role in the college process (Cuevas, 2020). Family support and involvement contributes to the resiliency of students to overcome challenges while pursuing a higher education, especially for low-income students whose first language is Spanish (Hernández & Ortiz, 2016). The role of Latinx families, their perception about education, and their involvement in the process contribute to the college experience of the student (Kiyama, 2011).

First-generation students generally are from working class families and their parents’ educational and occupational background could affect their educational decisions. This generational status may leave students feeling as they are navigating college on their own with minimal parental support. Parents may
feel that they are unequipped to help with the education experience of their student leaving them marginalized in the process. Research shows that parents of first-generation students may not be involved in a child's education in traditional ways, however, they value educational achievement and have aspirations for their children to continue education beyond high school (Fann et al., 2009). According to Michel and Durdella (2019), the academic encouragement first-generation Latinx college students received from their families helped them complete their academic work. There is a consistent message in the literature about incorporating families into the educational process of their children being fundamental to their success (Kiyama, 2010). Parent involvement and engagement should not end at the secondary level. In fact, the lack of parental involvement in the college process can be detrimental to student success, especially in Latinx families.

**Statement of the Problem**

Parent involvement and engagement in a student’s education is essential to their academic success (Bergersen, 2009; Kiyama & Harper, 2018). Historically, parental involvement has been defined on the foundation of Euro-centric practices and actions related to traditional involvement practices such as participating in the Parent Teacher Association, volunteering their time in the classroom, or attending school meetings (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011). These service-oriented behaviors are common to families consisting of Euro-centric, middle-class, single income households with English speaking and college-educated parents (Ortiz, et al., 2012; Kiyama & Harper, 2018) and often leave out families outside of the traditional profile such as low socioeconomic status and families of color (Liou & Matias, 2018).

As the increase of Latinx students pursuing a college education, most of who are typically from diverse demographics, higher education institutions need to
clarify their understanding of the impact and influence of the family and parents. Significant attention has been given to parent involvement in the access and transition to college. There is relatively little literature about the impact of family involvement and engagement while students are navigating and persisting through their college education past their first year. The problem this qualitative study aimed to address was the impact family has on the persistence and completion of an undergraduate education for first-generation Latinx students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). More specifically, the research investigated the ways students uses their community cultural wealth assets to navigate their educational experience. Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth (CCW) model describes the ways the community cultural wealth assets learned from the family help students persist in college. This concept looks at a student’s background and experience from an asset-based approach, a direct challenge to the deficit narratives commonly used to describe households and communities of color. Yosso’s (2005) framework challenges deficit ideologies and describes CCW as a way to think about the knowledge, resources, skills, and abilities students bring to the classroom that are often obscured, unacknowledged, or unrecognized.

Higher education leaders and scholars have a responsibility to understand persistence and attainment and the ways family helps students persevere through their college experience beyond the first year in college. More so, it is important to understand how families are partners for students in the college process and how they may show up to help students beyond traditional support. In order to understand this concept, we must ask students themselves in what ways their families supported them and helped them complete their college education.
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to understand the impact family involvement and engagement have on the persistence of first-generation Latinx students at an HSI designated university. The study explored the ways community cultural wealth assets learned from family help students persist in college past their first year. Additionally, this study sought to understand how students use their community cultural wealth assets to navigate their college experience. When higher education institutions have an understanding of the importance of incorporating Latinx families into the college experience of their students, it can better help support this population and fulfill their mission to help their students succeed. At the same time, if they are informed of the assets they bring with them to the college campus, they may be better equipped to serve them and capitalize on their strengths.

The research questions used in my research to understand the impact the family has on the experience for Latinx students navigating and persisting through college are as follows:

Research Question 1: How do families of first-generation Latinx students at an HSI university support their student as they pursue their undergraduate degree?

Research Question 2: In what ways do community cultural wealth assets help first-generation Latinx students navigate their university experience on their way to college completion?

Significance of the Study

This study is necessary because institutions need to be informed of how to support the largest and fastest minority group in education. The study contributes to the research and knowledge on how to support Latinx students and their
families in the college-going process. Due to the growing number of Latinx students accessing higher education and the low college completion rates, it is important for higher education institutions to consider the various factors contributing to their success. Parents play an important role in the college process and understanding their perception of involvement will help institutions know how to meaningfully involve families in the educational experience of their students. Additionally, this study will also contribute to the knowledge in the K-12 sector as students and parents prepare to access higher education. Families can have an understanding of what support and involvement can look like at the postsecondary level. They will also be able to have information on how to be involved in the transition process as well as beyond the first year of college. For both parents and students, they will gain an awareness of the cultural wealth they bring that can help them navigate their college experience.

Involving parents and families in education positively impacts the academic achievement of their students. It is the institution's responsibility to find best practices that are student serving and meet the student where they are in order to foster their success. As institutions shift to student serving, they must assess their campus culture to understand who their students are and their ways to serve them. Understanding the needs of students can help facilitate and transform how practitioners can work with students to foster their success. This work is about dismantling systems of oppressions that exist within higher education and have been replicated over time impacting our communities of color.

**Theoretical Framework**

Using Yosso’s (2005) concept of CCW as the guiding theoretical framework, this study investigates the influence of family support and involvement on the experience of first-generation Latinx students at an HSI
university. This framework also looks at a student's background and experience from an asset-based approach, which further challenges the notion that households and communities of color are deficit. The CCW model highlights six forms of capital that communities of color possess and are not mutually exclusive, rather a dynamic process that builds on one another as part of CCW: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant (Yosso, 2005). Yosso asserts that the culture and knowledge of historically marginalized communities are not valued in education and are often not considered. This framework seems most appropriate for this study because it employs an asset-based approach where the institution highlights what the student brings and meets them where they are to better serve them, rather than the student's expectation to be college ready. It will be used to understand how students of color persist and navigate through their college experience using a strengths-based perspective.

**Definitions of Key Terminology**

The following terms and definitions will be used in the study:

**Community cultural wealth:** Yosso’s (2005) six capitals defined as aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant.

**First-generation college student:** an individual is the first in their family to attend college, or whose neither parent/guardian completed a bachelor’s degree, therefore implies “the possibility that a student may lack the critical cultural capital necessary for college success because their parents did not attend college” (Center for First Generation Student Success, 2017, para. 5).

**Hispanic-Serving Institutions:** higher education institutions with an undergraduate enrollment full-time equivalent student of at least 25% Hispanic students (U.S. Department of Education, n.d-a).
Latinx: a gender-inclusive term for individuals who identify as having racial/ethnic roots in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean (Garcia, 2019).

Navigation: Skills used to maneuver social institutions (Yosso, 2005).

Parent and Family Involvement: parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children (Jeynes, 2007).

Positionality

As a Latina navigating the educational system as a first-generation college student, I first-hand understand the challenges that we face when pursuing a college degree. As immigrants from Mexico, my parents came to the U.S. in pursuit of a better lifestyle than what they lived back home. Without knowing the American educational system, they to put my brothers and I through college. As I navigated my undergraduate education, I often felt alone and frustrated that I was not able to ask my parents for help with the enrollment process, support with projects, or simply how to get through difficult classes. I often hear the same narratives from students about not having traditionally defined support from their parents. Since I started in my position with HSI Title V grant work and initiatives focused on Latinx student success, I have come to understand parents in fact do support their students in ways that are often unrecognized or unacknowledged. As I have furthered my education, I have become aware that my parents have been involved in the process and supported me in ways that helped me persevere and push through the finish line. It was because of their consejos and si se puede messages that I have been able to get to the point I am now in my education. Because of my personal and professional experience, I am invested and interested in contributing to the literature about the importance of parental involvement particularly with first-generation Latinx students. There is research on parent
involvement for the student related to access and the transition to higher education; however, little is known about what parent involvement and engagement looks like beyond their first year. My intention is to provide research to inform educators about the importance of involving families in the educational trajectory of students to foster their success. Additionally, I also want to bring light to students and families about the support families provide that are the rock and foundation for us to keep pushing forward.

As HSIs have gained notoriety, it is crucial for institutions to consider the campus climate of serving their students and assessing their institutional responsibility related to serving students of color in a culturally and racially conscious way. As someone who went through their undergraduate experience thinking that I did not have parent involvement and support, in retrospect, I see that it was their type of support that got me through. Through my research I hope to present an asset-based approach of parental involvement in higher education for first-generation Latinx students. I wish to demonstrate and bring awareness of the various types of support parents provide to help students feel encouraged from the onset of their college experience. Professionally and personally, my positionality allows me to acknowledge and validate the undergraduate Latinx experience, while also using my experience and knowledge to analyze the data through objective research methods.

**Pláticas de Mónica y Ana**

As the only daughter in my immediate family, my mom, Ana, and I were always platicando. Our pláticas provide vivid memories on the value she placed on education, and it was evident because of the high expectations she had for me to do well in school. Earning bad grades was not an option I could consider, and if I was not doing well, I needed to make sure I was asking questions to my teachers
to get the information I needed. My mom did not speak Spanish, but that did not stop her from helping us with what we needed. I still remember the “big gold book” she always carried with her when she would check our homework. It was the dictionary she used to make sense of what we were working on and can do her best to help us do our homework. She encouraged us to do get involved in school.

I remember always having my mom’s support with what I wanted to do in school. What I did not know, were the challenges she faced and the ways she used her cultural capital to help us navigate our educational experience. She describes her experience,

*Aqui [en los Estados Unidos] tuve 3 hijos que fueron aqui a su escuela. Todo era muy diferente al sistema en México al que se usa aquí. Me dio un poco de trabajo porque no sabía el idioma, pero pues tuve personas que me ayudaron a navegar y me aconsejaron lo que tenía que hacer. Fue muy difícil, porque todo era diferente. Primeramente, la forma de que se vive aquí. El idioma, las personas. Las personas eran muy diferentes a las que yo estaba acostumbrada a tratar… [Cuando tu hermano mayor empezó la escuela] yo lo puse en clase de español porque yo no sabía cómo lo tenía que registrar. Yo pensé que todo era igual aquí que en México]. Yo pensé que aquí en estas escuelas que daban clases de español. Entonces ya la maestra me dijo que cuál era mi primer idioma y me lo pusieron en clase de español...Cuando te puse a ti en la escuela, lo que pensé fue ‘No vaya a pasar el mismo error con ella’ Y te puse en clases de inglés (Ana).*

Although I started kindergarten in an all-English classroom not speaking one word in that language, I was a quick learner and loved to be in the classroom. I would try to be involved as much as I could. In elementary, I was played the flute in the band, participated in the spelling bee, won school secretary in fourth grade, and was a student “safety leader” in fifth grade. I have always loved school and to learn. I frequently won awards like student of the month and honor roll and received recognition from my teachers. During the summer we would spend a lot of time at the library and participating in the *Book It!* Program where I would earn
individual pizzas from Pizza Hut when I reached a new milestone. My passion for school led me to want to be a teacher and I remember my mom telling me, “Para ser maestra tienes que estudiar y sacar buenas calificaciones”. That was my motivation to do well.

College was not something we talked about at home. My mom noted,

Yo sabía del colegio. Tenía idea porque yo escuchaba por allí de colegio pero no sabía bien que era. Entonces tenía yo la idea de que había un colegio donde aprender, donde después de la escuela tenían que ir y yo pensaba que era el colegio que ustedes donde iban a ir, así como. Como cuando yo fui a estudiar contabilidad, algo así, sencillo, eso es lo que yo pensaba y para mí se me hizo bien. Yo de la universidad no sabía nada, no sabía de universidad. Yo hasta me confundía con el nombre de colegio, colegio y universidad. Yo decía ‘que no es lo mismo?’ Yo no sabía nada de universidad, no tenía mucho conocimiento del colegio. Entonces yo cuando salieron ustedes de de la high school, pues yo estaba interesada en que fueran al colegio, para que? Para que se preparen. (Ana)

The first time I heard about it was high school my sophomore year because I started to think about what it would take for me to be a teacher. Although my grades during high school were strong, my involvement with school was almost nonexistent. I did not participate in any co-curricular activities. At the time, my older brother, who is two years older than me, graduated and started attending our local community college. When I started asking about what that was my mom responded, “Allí es a donde vas cuando te gradúes de la high school. Estudias lo que quieras y sacas tu licencia para que puedas tener un buen trabajo.” During
my junior year, I felt comforted knowing that I knew what I was going to do once I graduated.

I had a difficult time during my senior year and life had different plans for me. Upon graduating high school, I found out I was pregnant. I became a single teenage parent and the little hope I felt for what I was going to accomplish in my life immediately went away. It was a very challenging time for my family, but my parents stood by my side. My mom always inculcated in me that “tienes que prepararte para que tú puedas valerte por ti misma”. This was when I had to rise to the occasion and go to college so I can get a good job, as everyone would say. My original goal was to go to a vocational school to earn a certificate as a certified nurse assistant because according to the school’s recruiter, I was guaranteed an 8-5 job, Monday-Friday, and I would earn “way more than minimum wage”. It sounded perfect for what I needed to raise my daughter, only the ticket price for the school was not what I expected. When I told my mom about my plan, she told me to go to my local community college because it was “free”, and they might offer the same program without my having to pay for anything.

I did as my mom suggested and I went to my community college for the first time, although it was located down the street my entire life. I happened to come across the EOPS and CalWorks office where I found people to help me from one milestone to the next. Behind every step I took was my mom cheering me on and helping me in ways that kept me going, especially at times when I felt life giving up. As I near the finish line of my doctoral program, I sought to understand how other students felt about the support they receive from their parents and family. I also wanted to give parents a space to voice their experiences because many times they are part of the process with us, yet their narratives remain obscured. Throughout my study, I share the pláticas I had with my mom, in
addition to sharing her lived experiences as she has walked with me through my educational journey.

**Summary**

This chapter presented background information and problem statement about the deficit of college completion rates for first-generation Latinx college students. As enrollment continues to increase for this group, degree attainment is not proportional to that of students accessing higher education. When working with this group of students and how to better serve them, it is important to note the diversity within the Latinx population in addition to the various intersections of identity that make up each student. Family plays a critical role in the college experience of first-generation Latinx students, and it is important to understand how the family impacts and influences the ways they navigate and persist through college. Using Yosso’s (2005) CCW model, the research aims to understand how the family impacts the experiences for Latinx students when persisting through college. My research also aims to understand in what ways students use their cultural wealth to navigate through their higher education and attain their degree.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

The dissertation was organized in five chapters. The following chapters included the following information.

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature pertaining to first-generation Latinx students in higher education and the role of family during their educational trajectory. The following areas are addressed: Latinx Students in Higher Education, Latinx College Access and Completion, Educational Family Involvement and Engagement, HSI, Institutional Responsibility, A Culture of Community Cultural Wealth.
Chapter 3 presented the methodology proposed for this study as well as the data collection and analysis that will be used. A phenomenological qualitative study was conducted and the data collection method included a culturally relevant method selected for my research.

In Chapter 4, a detailed analysis of the findings was presented and introduced based on the theoretical framework of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005).

Lastly, Chapter 5 concluded with recommendations for future research followed by recommendations for higher education institutions to offer practical solutions when working with first-generation Latinx students and their families.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Contrary to cultural deficit perceptions, Latinx families hold a high value of their children’s education and have aspirations for educational attainment (Ortiz, et al., 2012). As being the fastest growing cultural group in the United States, and in higher education, they have the lowest college attainment compared to other racial groups. Latinx students are in need of support and resources not only to help get them to go to college, but also with completing their college degree. The concept of letting go and letting grow when entering college is not always the case for this population. Parents are encouraged to let their children go into adulthood and have a hands-off approach during college (Kiyama et al., 2015). This may look different for Latinx students, especially those who are first-generation and learning to navigate the educational system with limited traditional familial support. The act of going to college is a family decision for Latinx students and familial involvement is essential for Latinx student success (Ceja, 2004). The engagement and involvement family provides may look different from traditional defined support, nonetheless, the support they offer their students is just as critical and needed to help their students navigate their educational experience.

My research focuses on the importance of familial involvement and engagement for students on the trajectory to college completion. The following sections of the literature review provide an overview of Latinx students in higher education in the U.S followed by research about family involvement and engagement in students' education. A majority of the literature is focused on the role of Latinx families in their student’s college experience and the support provided to their students. A review about the increase of HSIs and institutional
responsibility is also discussed. Lastly, a review of Yosso’s (2005) CCW model which serves as the theoretical framework for my research is presented.

**Latinx Students in Higher Education**

Latinx are the largest minority group in the U.S. million (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020). The recent 2020 census results indicate there are 60.6 billion Latinx in the U.S. with California, Texas, and Florida having the largest population percentage of Latinx residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Also, the largest minority group in education, they comprise 13.8 million of students in the nation’s public elementary and secondary schools (Fry, 2011). Since 2009, the number of Latinx students has increased from 22% to 27%, which has changed the composition of students in public schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). Similar to the rising number of students in K-12, this ethnic group is the fastest growing minority group in postsecondary education (Fry, 2011). Currently, 19% of Latinx students make up the population of students enrolled in colleges compared to 56% White students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). A report by *Excelencia* in Education (2019) found the majority of Latinx students enrolled in higher education are of Mexican descent (50%) or Puerto Rican descent (26%) and are U.S. born (84%). Additionally, Latinx students predominantly attend public higher institutions with 41% enrolled in public 2-year institutions and 28% enrolled in public universities.

Despite the growing rate of Latinx students going to college, there is a deficit in the college pipeline showing they lag behind their peers (Pappamiheil & Moreno, 2011). Although they are pursuing a college education at influx rates, there are various challenges they face when accessing higher education and completing their degree. Yosso and Solórzano (2006) discuss the leaks in the Latinx educational pipeline and show the college going rates for this group.
According to their findings, out of 100 Latinx students who start at the elementary level, less than half (46) will graduate high school and only 26 will enroll in college. More alarming is the college completion rate for this group: of the 26 students that enroll in college, only 8 will graduate with a baccalaureate degree (Yosso & Solórzano, 2006). The disparity between Latinx male and women is also noteworthy. Latinx females and males graduate from high school at similar rates, however, male students tend to drop out from high school more than females (Excelencia in Education, 2019).

**Latinx College Access and Completion**

Much attention has been given to the access to higher education for Latinx students and there is ample information about the deficits students experience when applying and enrolling in colleges. Increased focus is on the first-year transition to college; nonetheless, there is a gap in the literature of what support and resources Latinx students need beyond their first year to be successful. These students are not completing their degree at the rates they are enrolling (Contreras & Contreras, 2015). Latinx students are less likely to graduate with a baccalaureate degree compared to other groups (Gramlich, 2017) and are graduating at lower rates than their White peers, 51% compared to 63%, (Excelencia in Education, 2020). They are however, largely represented at the certificate and associate level degree although transfer rates are low. A study conducted by Contreras & Contreras (2015) found Latinx had lower completion rates as well as community college transfer rates compared to their White counterparts in Southern California HSI.

When examining college-going and completion rates for Latinx students, it is critical to understand students' demographics and the intersection of identities in order to provide the adequate support they need when they enter college. Directing
attention to intersectionality allows for institutions to recognize what factors contribute to student success (Garcia, 2019). The traditional college student profile is continuously changing and the profiles for these students are now more diverse. Latinx students are much more likely to be first-generation status than other racial/ethnic groups. In 2017, almost half of Latinx (46%) were the first in their family to attend college, 58% of Latinx students identified as female, and 47% of Latinx students received a Pell Grant (Excelencia in Education, 2019). Financial barriers are a significant factor in college enrollment. Latinx students surveyed indicated they entered the military or got a job directly after high school to help support their family rather than enrolling in college (Crogstad, 2016).

In addition to their demographics, Latinx students are more likely to attend college part-time, are employed more than part-time, may attend college inconsistently (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Excelencia in Education, 2019), and are less likely to attend a selective college (Fry & Taylor, 2013). Nearly half of Latinx students enrolled in higher education begin their college experience at a public 2-year school, making them the highest group to attend this type of institution (Krogstand, 2016). When understanding the various factors comprising Latinx college students, it allows for educators to understand the additional support they need to help them have equitable opportunities for college completion (Garcia, 2019).

**Educational Family Involvement and Engagement**

Family engagement and involvement in their children’s education is known to be critical to their educational success (Bergersen, 2009; Kiyama et al., 2015). Involvement and engagement have shown a positive association with pursuing a higher education (Ceja, 2004; Sáenz, et al, 2020). The role of family, their perception about education, and their involvement in the process contribute to the
overall college experience of the student (Kiyama, 2011). The term parent involvement and engagement are often associated with traditional actions aligned to families consisting of Euro-centric, middle-class, single income households with English speaking and college-educated parents (Ortiz, et al., 2012; Kiyama & Harper, 2018; Liou & Matias, 2018). Examples of traditional parent involvement at the K-12 level often refer to actions such as attending school meetings, volunteering in the classroom or school community, being a part of the Parent Teacher Association (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011), and is highly associated with transactional and service-oriented behaviors (Liou & Matias, 2018). Additionally, parental involvement and engagement opportunities are often designed with Euro-centric views and practices such as monolingual activities and offering parent involvement opportunities during traditional working hours (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011; Liou & Matias, 2018; Ortiz, et al., 2012). Families outside of the traditional profile are at a disadvantage as they are often not able to be involved in traditional ways. Families from underrepresented communities such as first-generation immigrant status, families of color and low socioeconomic status may not have the time or resources to engage the ways schools define as involvement or engagement (Liou & Matias, 2018).

In higher education, outcomes of family involvement and engagement often contribute to positive student development, academic achievement, and social/emotional support often leading to degree completion (Kiyama et al., 2015). Traditional familial involvement and engagement looks different than in the K-12 compared to higher education. Involvement and engagement are often prominent in the college going process and college choice as well as financial matters although once the student is enrolled, parents are likely to decrease their involvement (Kiyama & Harper, 2018). Traditional family programming at the
higher education level can include parent orientations, family weekend, and parent websites all predominately in English, which are often not built to serve families of color (Kiyama & Harper, 2018).

**Educational Involvement of Latinx Families**

As a collectivist community, *familia* holds a high value for Latinx. When a student is in the process of applying to college, it is ultimately a family decision and they rely on them to make choices (Ceja, 2004; Hurtado-Ortiz & Gauvain, 2007; Sáenz, et.al, 2020). Mariscal (2021) notes the college choice process as a Latinx family affair and the importance for practitioners to work alongside students and their parents during the process.

Latinx families place high importance on the collective culture and hold families to be included in the college process (Witkowsky et al., 2020) yet parents are typically described as supporters of the process, not holders of college knowledge (Garcia, et al., 2021). Whether the student enrolls in college, determining what campus they will attend, and how it will be paid for are part of the conversations Latinx students have as a family. Parental influence is critical in whether a student will pursue an undergraduate degree. Alvarez (2010)’s conceptional framework of *familismo* in relation to college choice indicates family prioritization may exist and familial obligations, responsibilities and the well-being of family are considered in the college going process. The direct and indirect messages students receive from their parents about the importance of college are inculcated in their students and their educational aspirations are influenced by their parents (Ceja, 2004).

Nearly half (46%) of Latinx students in higher education are first-generation, meaning they are the first in their families to attend college and pursue a baccalaureate degree (Excelencia in Education, 2019). First-generation students
generally are from working class families and their parents’ educational and occupational background could affect their educational decisions. This generational status often leaves students feeling they are navigating college on their own with minimal parental support. Parents may feel that they are unequipped to help with the education experience of their student since they are not familiar with the college process. Although parents may not be involved in a child's education in traditional ways, they value educational achievement and have aspirations for their children to continue education beyond high school (Fann et al., 2009; Hurtado-Ortiz & Gauvain, 2007). Parents understand that reaching higher economic and occupational mobility are contingent upon doing well in school (Ceja, 2004). There is a consistent message in the literature about incorporating families into the educational process of their children being fundamental to their success (Kiyama, 2010). Parent involvement should not end at the secondary level. In fact, the absence parent involvement in the college process can be detrimental to student success, especially in Latinx families.

Family engagement and involvement for Latinx can take on many different forms other than traditional ways. In fact, parents often are faced with navigating various obstacles when attempting to help with their student’s academic experiences (Sáenz, et al., 2020). Language barriers are often present because many institutions do not provide support or information in the native language of the families nor provide culturally relevant opportunities for them to become engaged. Although some colleges may provide translated materials, the absence of intentional programming can result in missing the personal connection to families (Witkowsky, et al., 2020). Maintaining and enhancing bilingual and bicultural epistemologies to demonstrate the value of personal and sociocultural knowledge students bring with them is essential to student success (Garcia, 2019).
Engagement and involvement include various types of ways relevant to their culture. These range from engaging in frequent conversations about the college process, goals and expectations, and consejos. Mothers are often the primary supporters of students and they set high expectations for their children (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011; Sáenz, et al., 2020). Through story telling of their own lived experiences and their trajectory in education, or lack of education, Latinx parents share with their students a way to encourage and motivate them to continue and finish their education (Auerbach, 2002; Duran, et al., 2021). Parents will often share their own upbringing or talk about their current employment status as a way to create a college-going culture and motivate their students to have more promising opportunities than they do (Auerbach, 2002). Knowing their parents’ struggles often serve as a motivation to pursue and obtain a higher education (Auerbach, 2002; Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011)

**Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)**

An effort to address the rise of Latinx students and provide support higher education has been the increase of across the nation. As the Latinx population increases in higher education, so do HSIs (Garcia et al., 2018). HSIs are federally recognized higher education institutions that enroll at least 25% of Latinx students. When the institution reaches this enrollment target, they are eligible to apply to receive HSI federal funding such as Title V of the Developing HSI program. Funding awarded to an HSI is intended to assist with enhancing the programs, facilities, and services to increase opportunities and services for Latinx students and other underserved services (U.S. Department of Education, n.d-b). There has been an upward trend in the number of growing HSIs in the last decade. As of 2019, there are 569 HSIs in the nation that collectively enroll a total of 2.2 million students, which is two-thirds of all Latinx college students. HSI designations are
on an upward trend as there are currently 362 “emerging” HSIs with enrollment between 15%-24.9% with a projected designation within the next decade (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, n.d). Not surprising, the majority of HSIs are located in California and Texas which are also the two states with the highest Latinx population. These growing numbers suggest that HSIs are becoming important to the higher education landscape (Garcia, 2019).

A study conducted by Santiago (2007), examined Latinx student’s college choices and the reasons why they enroll in HSIs. Access, location, and affordability are 3 factors students consider when going to college. A majority of HSIs are located in places with large Latinx populations, are more likely to be public institutions, and have open admissions (Santiago, 2007). Findings from the study showed that many Latinx students were not aware of the school’s HSI designation, and their college choice are what creates the HSIs. Malcolm et al. (2010) note HSI designation is an acquired identity, one that happened to the institution rather than a purposeful action by the institution.

As HSIs are increasing in the postsecondary landscape, emerging research is beginning to examine what it means to serve minoritized student populations (Garcia, 2019). Having an HSI designation and meeting eligibility requirements does not indicate that the institution is serving its students. HSIs are challenged with identifying and understanding their institutional identity to align with its designation in order to better support their students. For these institutions to reach their full potential, they must shift from a federal designation into a measurable construct that can be put into research and practice (Garcia, et.al, 2018).

Debate exists about differentiating “Hispanic-enrolling” vs. “Hispanic-serving” (Garcia 2016, 2017). An increased focus is on how HSIs serve Latinx
students, examining the way institutions have been successful at doing so, and identifying the institutional HSI identity to better serve minoritized students (Garcia & Ramirez, 2018). Garcia (2017) proposes a typology of HSIs that reflects their organizational culture. Latinx-enrolling describes an institution that enrolls the minimum 25% Latinx students in order to gain the HSI designation, however, equitable outcomes are not produced. Latinx-producing refers to the 25% Latinx enrollment and produces a significant number of outcomes. Latinx-enhancing cultivates a culture that enhances educational outcomes for students. Lastly, Latinx-serving has a 25% enrollment rate of Latinx students and strives to produce equitable outcomes and enacts a culture that enhances their education and racial/ethnic experience of Latinx students (Garcia, 2017).

Latinx students attending HSIs have fewer economic resources as far as family income and are first-generation (Cuellar, 2019; Garcia, 2017). Understanding the demographics of students can provide information to the institution on how to better assist them and their family (Garcia, 2019). Cuellar (2019) found family capital a strong predictor of enrollment at an HSI universities. Students attending HSIs indicated their family’s encouragement and support as an important factor in going to college. Research exists on the impact of family engagement and involvement has on the student; however, little is known about the role of the institution engaging parents throughout the college experience of their student (Kiyama et al, 2015). As the number of HSIs are increasing in higher education, it is important to consider family engagement at these institutions. Institutional efforts to engage families in the students experience and fostering familial capital into institutional practices show to be promising on the strong influence of Latinx enrollment at HSIs and emerging HSIs (Cuellar, 2019).
Institutional Responsibility

Higher education institutions have the responsibility to serve their students and ensure they are succeeding. Support provided to students from enrollment to graduation is recognized as critical for increasing retention and completion for all students (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015). This means institutional agents must change their perspectives about what it means to serve students and institutions must redefine their identity to foster student success (Garcia et al., 2018; Garcia, 2019). It is the institution's responsibility, and not the students to foster a culture of belonging and social and academic integration that is inclusive of diversity (Kiyama et al., 2015). This may look like representatives of the institutions needing to reflect on their personal assumptions when serving students of color and reviewing their policies and practices in place (Kiyama & Harper, 2018). Additionally, it is important for institutions to take stock and understand their student demographics in order to develop strategic goals to include equity, diversity and inclusion to meet the needs of those they are serving (Garcia, 2019; Matos, 2021). Using student data is an important tool for transformative leadership and can be of use when taking stock of the campus climate (Liou & Matias, 2018). Delgado Bernal (2001) notes that when understanding this student population, institutions can move towards innovative design and implementation of curricular and pedagogical ways to include bilingualism, biculturalism, and community commitment in the curriculum. When reflecting on the campus climate, review of color-blind and class-blind ideologies or policies, that may restrict or create barriers for families of color, should be taken into consideration (Kiyama & Harper, 2018).
Culturally Responsive Institutions

Shifting to a culturally engaging and responsive campus environment helps with the positive lived experiences of college students as well as fosters positive student success outcomes (Witkowsky, et al. 2020). Students desire to have an environment and community they are familiar with when they go off to college and want to have a connection to their cultural identity (Clayton, et al., 2019). Infusing an identity with the university can be reached through the use of culturally responsive environments. According to Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005), students that take diversity courses and are involved in culturally based organizations have a higher sense of belonging and are more likely to see their university as a welcoming environment. Clayton et al. (2019) found that students intentionally seek out culturally based organizations and opportunities to find their sense of belonging when they are in college. Campus’ need to assess their culturally responsive offers and move beyond standalone programs and shift to institutionalizing them into core structures of the university towards a more comprehensive model to serve students (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015).

Involving Families

Kiyama et al. (2015) calls for the need of institutions to revisit their practices to better serve Latinx families. Universities must rethink the ways they help Latinx students nurture and draw front the commitment they have to their families and communities (Delgado Bernal, 2001) and for schools to offer more intentional opportunities for high quality, meaningful involvement (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011). Latinx families need to be involved in the experience for the transformation to occur for these students (Witkowsky, et al., 2020). A study from Larrotta and Yamamura (2011) found that parents want to be involved in the educational process of their children and they want to translate their aspirations
into actions, but they do not know how to. It is no longer acceptable to assume the current practices of institutions founded on Euro-centric normative standards is a fit all model (Garcia, 2019) rather, they need to shift to meet families where they are. Institutions have the responsibility to find ways that better serve students and families through curricula and programs that place them at the center (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015). Students feel they matter when they see themselves represented at the university whether it be in the curriculum or the campus environment (Matos, 2021). This can mean seeing themselves represented in faculty, staff and administration. In a study conducted by Witkowsky et.al (2020) parents shared the importance of the connection with staff with similar cultural backgrounds. Having Spanish-speaking Latinx staff with similar cultural backgrounds on the campus fostered a sense of trust, transparency, and connection to the university. Language is a primary factor for families related to a sense of belonging and feeling connected to the university (Clayton, et al., 2019; Witkowsky, et al., 2020). Parents expressed that having tangible information in Spanish was not enough and creating an atmosphere that embraces their culture is important (Witkowsky, et al., 2020). Studies show that tapping into families’ cultural assets are an effective way of familial involvement (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011).

A Culture of Community Cultural Wealth

Using a critical race theory framework, Yosso’s (2005) CCW paradigm looks at a student's background and experience from an asset-based approach which further challenges the notion that households and communities of color are deficit. Deficit thinking takes the position that families of color are at fault for poor academic performance because (a) students enter school without the normative cultural knowledge and skills; and (b) parents neither value nor support their child’s education (Yosso, 2005). CCW provides a counter narrative to deficit
theories while challenging belief. It presents an approach as a way to think about the knowledge, resources, skills, and abilities students bring to the classroom that are often unacknowledged or unrecognized. As seen on Figure 2, this model leverages six forms of capital that communities of color possess and are not mutually exclusive, rather a dynamic process that builds on one another as part of CCW: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant (Yosso, 2005). The strategies learned in the home and community help serve as cultural knowledge that helps Latinx students overcome challenges and obstacles they face on their educational journey (Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Figure 2

*Community Cultural Wealth Model.*

![Diagram of Community Cultural Wealth Model](image)

*Note.* This model was produced in 2005 by Yosso to summarize the community cultural wealth model. From Yosso, T.J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 78.
First, Yosso (2005) describes aspirational capital to the idea of having dreams and hope for the future regardless of barriers and challenges one may face and see the possibilities beyond their present circumstances. Second, linguistic capital refers to “the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style” (Yosso, 2005, p. 78). Linguistic capital acknowledges the various languages students bring to the school setting and realizes that these students may also have acquired certain skills by various storytelling traditions in the home (Yosso, 2005). Third, familial capital refers to the “cultural knowledges” that are acquired through family and expands this concept to include a broader understanding of family. This capital also includes extended family and the community who we might consider family. Social capital is the fourth concept which is understood to be “networks of people and community resources (Yosso, 2005, p.79). This capital is helpful to students as they navigate society's institutions. Navigational capital is the skills acquired to steer through institutions such as education. This capital infers the ability to navigate through institutions not created for communities of color such as higher education (Yosso, 2005). Lastly, resistant capital refers to those “knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality” (Yosso, 2005, p. 80).

The CCW framework challenges the common misconception that families of color are not interested or do not support their children in their educational endeavors. The CCW theory challenges this notion and shows that Latinx families may not be engaged or involved in traditional Euro-centric ways, but they are still actively engaged in positive educational outcomes for their children (Matos, 2021). This lens indicates that Latinx students credit their families for their academic achievements (Matos, 2021; Yosso, 2005). In a recent study by Matos
it was found that while Latinx parents transmitted capital to their children, children were often making plans to return that capital to their families and communities. Students also describe their families as being a motivation to go to college and obtain their college degree. Students often describe a motivation for college is to make their parents proud (Kouyoumdjian, et, al, 2015). Additionally, students account their aspirations to their families for wanting to pursue a higher education. Students aspire to earn a degree to obtain a high paying job to take care of their family and repayment for families having supported them (Matos, 2021). Placing a focus on these capitals could bolster the success of Latinx students by re-shifting the perception to their strengths and cultural knowledges.

Summary

A review of literature pertaining to increase of Latinx students in higher education aligned to its implications was discussed. A shift from access to retention has emerged in recent years as the number of Latinx students enrolling to higher education has increased, however, retention and completion rates are low. The importance of familial involvement and engagement was discussed related to student success for Latinx students. The literature implies familial involvement in their student’s education in non-traditional ways that have been overlooked as support. Yosso’s (2005) CCW model was presented as an asset-based approach to consider familial support to first-generation Latinx students. This model is based on the notion that Latinx families use their cultural wealth when supporting their children and students use those capitals to navigate their college experience when pursuing their degree. The following chapter of this dissertation discusses the methodology used for this study.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As the fastest growing racial group, access to higher education for Latinx students has received a great deal of emphasis. Since 2009 institutions of higher education have significantly increased their Latinx student enrollment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). Much attention has also been given to familial involvement in the transition to higher education through college access supports. Limited research exists on familial involvement for first-generation Latinx students beyond their second year of college. Despite increasing college access rates, retention and degree completion rates are not at the rates of admission and enrollment. Several implications contribute to this matter and must be considered when exploring ways to support these students. Nearly half (46%) of Latinx students accessing higher education institutions tend to be first-generation status meaning they are the first in their families to pursue a baccalaureate degree (Center for First Generation Student Success, 2017). As the first in their family to go through the college process, students may receive limited familial support and engagement such as helping to understand the curriculum, knowledge of resources, or available opportunities. Support, however, may show up different than traditionally defined by research. Latinx parents and families provide support focused on effort, resilience, and a si se puede (yes you can) attitude (Kiyama et al., 2015; Witkowsky, et al., 2020; Yosso, 2005)

Grounded on an asset-based approach, the purpose of this study was to understand how family supports their students as they persist through college. Additionally, this study sought to explore how families are involved and engaged in their child’s college experience. Using Yosso’s (2005) CCW model, this study
explored how students leverage their CCW assets learned from their parents to persist through college on their way to degree completion.

This chapter presented the proposed research methodology that will be used to explore family engagement and involvement of first-generation Latinx students at an HSI university. The following information presents how this qualitative study will be conducted. The intent of the study was to contribute to the literature about student success using an asset-based approach for best practices when serving first-generation Latinx families. Additionally, the findings provided recommendations to educators on how to support the involvement of Latinx families in the higher education of their children.

**Research Design & Methodology**

A qualitative research design guided this study as it allowed for an in-depth understanding of the experiences of first-generation Latinx college students and their family. More precisely, a phenomenological qualitative approach was used to allow the exploration of the lived experiences of students and their parents related to their college experience as they are on the way to college completion (Creswell, 2013; Padilla-Diaz, 2015). The central phenomenon of this study was the way these students use their CCW to navigate their college experience and identify the types of family involvement and support they receive as they are on the path to a college completion. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of interest. The use of open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews/pláticas of students was employed in order to understand the experiences of the participants and allow the me to analytically explore the data and find themes and patterns in responses. Additionally, using pláticas methodology, conversations in Spanish were held with the parent(s) of the student participants in an effort to understand their experiences of supporting their student.
Pláticas is appropriate for the parents’ participants since it is a culturally responsive approach in the Latinx communities. The traditional ways of qualitative data collection methods have not accounted for tradition, languages, or experience of Latinx people (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). This research method allowed for the me to build confianza (trust) and amistad (friendship) with the parents of students. The methodologies used in this study were intentionally selected keeping the sensitivity of the participants’ language and cultural background in mind.

**Research Questions**

The target phenomenon in my study was familial support and involvement of first-generation Latinx students on their way to college completion. To understand the impact family has on the experiences of Latinx students navigating and persisting through their way to college completion, the following research questions were used:

Research Question 1: How do families of first-generation Latinx students at an HSI university support their student as they pursue their undergraduate degree?

Research Question 2: In what ways do community cultural wealth assets help first-generation Latinx students navigate their university experience on their way to college completion?

The findings sought to highlight the ways parent(s) support their first-generation student(s) when attending a public university. Additionally, using Yosso’s (2005) CCW model will demonstrate how student’s use the assets learned from their parents to navigate their way to degree completion.
Context of the Study

Site and Sample

This study was conducted at a public university in Southern California. The proposed institution was an HSI with its designation since 2010. The student demographic for the institution is diverse with enrollment in fall 2020 reaching 55% Latinx, 61% first-generation, and 57% are Pell eligible. This institution was selected due to its large Latinx student demographic and HSI designation. Additionally, this institution has had a significant increase, nearly doubling in Latinx enrollment since it became an HSI growing from 29% in 2011 to 55% in 2020.

The participants recruited for this study were first-generation undergraduate Latinx students who have attended a higher education institution for at least 3 consecutive semesters. Parent participants invited to interviews/plática are parent(s) of the student participants. Parents selected for this study were also first-generation immigrant status in the U.S. whose primary language is Spanish. The student completed their K-12 education in the U.S.

Participant Recruitment

Following Padilla-Diaz’s (2015) recommendation for phenomenological research design, a purposeful sample was selected for this study. Using a phenomenological approach, in particular hermeneutical phenomenology, allowed me to find participants who have lived experiences in what the research is intended to find (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). Participants were solicited and recruited via social media and email communication to various student groups and departments at the institution. Communication via flyer (Appendix A) and social media posts describing the research and the role of the participants was sent out to various
groups to solicit participation in the study. Once potential participants replied to the posts demonstrating interest in the study, an individual message (Appendix B) was sent to each respondent asking them to complete a screening survey (Appendix C) to confirm they met the requirements of the desired sample population. A total of 5 students with at least 1 parent participated in the study except for 1 student’s parent.

Instrumentation

The source of data collection came from pláticas with participants and their family. Participants were invited to a plática in person or via video call. According to Padilla-Diaz (2015), the most appropriate data collection strategy of phenomenological research is the interview/plática because it allows researchers to address the phenomenon profoundly, “providing a space of aperture for the informants to express their experiences in detail, approaching reality as faithfully as possible” (p. 104). By administering the questions in-person or video call, I had the opportunity to observe any emotions, expressions or gestures they make. The interviews/plática consisted of open-ended questions that asked participants to share their experience in navigating their college experience. An interviews/plática protocol plan (Appendices D and E) was developed when asking and recording answers during the interviews/plática following Creswells’s (2013) interview protocol components. These protocols include instructions for the familias, plática questions, probing questions, sufficient space between questions to record the responses, a thank you statement acknowledging the time of the participants, and a log for record keeping (Creswell, 2013). I took field notes along the way to document facial expressions and body language along with information that was answered in the questions.
When platicando with parent participants, the primary language used was Spanish. I am fluent in both written and spoken Spanish and was able to connect with parents. All plática materials were available in English and Spanish. As a Latina myself, pláticas allowed for me to connect with the parents in a way that was mutually culturally responsive. It allowed for me to focus more on cultural formalities when speaking with participants as such the process introduced by Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) of the entred, amistada, Amistad, and despedida. Through this process, I was able to build rapport with the participants by explaining the purpose and relationship to the study in the entrada, followed by informal interview method in the amistad phase, and ending with the appreciation of time and information during the despedida (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016).

**Data Collection Procedure**

Following policies set by California State University, Fresno, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application will be submitted to the Department of Educational Leadership's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects to seek approval of the research before data can be collected. A pilot study was conducted to ensure the plática questions could gather the intended information and check for understanding from the view of the participants.

Once I received notification from individuals with an interest in participating, the screening survey was administered to ensure the participant met the criteria. Upon confirmation of participants, I scheduled a plática meeting in-person or video call. A letter to the participants informing them with an invitation to participate, a brief description of the purpose of the study, and information about participation was provided to the participant. By signing, the participant validated their informed consent. A copy of the informed consent can be viewed in Appendix F.
During the in-person or video call \emph{plática}, I used digital recording to capture the information. Handwritten field notes were written down to record my impressions and interpretations of the \emph{plactia}. All recordings were transcribed by a professional transcription service and stored securely using appropriate combinations of passwords and locked files on my computer.

The semi-formal \emph{plática} process was used to guide the content and allowed for flexibility in responses. The \emph{plática} process included questions that seek to understand the lived experiences of first-generation Latinx students and parents as they navigated their way to college completion. Additionally, the questions sought to understand how they used their CCW to navigate their college experience. Pseudonyms were assigned to the participants when presenting the findings to ensure confidentiality.

\textbf{Data Analysis}

\emph{Pláticas} with the participants were recorded using a voice recorder or Zoom recording. The conversations were be transcribed by use of a professional transcription service. Padilla-Diaz (2015) found that data analysis in a phenomenological approach is characterized by using Moustakas’s (1994) \emph{epoche}, which identifies common meanings. Additionally, following Giorgi’s (1997) interpretation of the human scientific phenomenological method, the following five concrete steps were used to make sense of the \emph{pláticas} with my participants. The five basic steps include 1.) collection of the data, 2.) read and review the data, 3.) breaking the data into parts, 4.) organizing the data from a disciplinary perspective, and 5.) synthesizing the of the data for presentation.

Ascertaining an asset-based approach, Yosso’s CCW framework served as the lens for analyzing and making sense of the data. This allowed for me to find a triangulation of the information and determine how the findings intersect in order
to make meaning as a researcher. Step 1 included collection of data through semi-formal interviews/pláticas in order to provide the familias the opportunity to express their experiences from their viewpoint extensively. Step 2 entailed for me researcher to read all of the data collected before any analysis happens. Using my linguistic capital, I was able to make sense of data in the various languages used, Spanish, English, and Spanglish. Once I divided the data into parts as part of step 3, a preliminary analysis of the data was be conducted and then data will be divided into “meaning units” which were later identified as the themes for my study. According to Giorgi (1997), operationally, relevant meanings are formed as the researcher reads, and rereads the data collected and “meaning units” will be expressed in the participants own language. In step 4, after the meaning units were identified, I examined, probed, and redescribed the value of each unit to establish structure, or themes related to the study. In the last step, expressing the structure of the phenomenon, I determined which meaning units are essential to the phenomenon in relation to my study (Giorgi, 1997). Following Giorgi (1997) method and leaning on my experience as a scholar, educator, and practitioner, I shared the themes found in my pláticas.

Role of the Researcher

Positionality

As a first-generation Latina student, I have a unique position with the participants. Having similar lived experiences as the participants, I am able to connect and build rapport during the plática. As an educational practitioner working in the field of higher education, particularly with designing and implementing culturally relevant programming for Latinx families at and HSI, I firsthand understand the impact family plays in education. Acknowledging this is a
potential bias may help me with empathizing with the participants’ stories and draw more data and use reflexivity throughout the study. I shared my experiences and those of my parents with the families as a way to be relatable and approachable. By being vulnerable I was able to connect with my familias and build confianza which allowed for me to gather information about their educational experiences.

Validity/Member checks

In order to ensure validity, participants were given the opportunity to review the transcribed plática and provide feedback on the analysis of the data. The view of the participants on the data collected was important to ensure the interviews were transcribed accurately. As the I coded the data, I allowed for member checking with the participants by sending them copies of their transactions to them for clarification and assurance of accurate data collected. This step ensured the interpretation of their lived experiences are accurate.

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed description and overview of the proposed methodology for this study. The research design selected was a qualitative phenomenological approach through use pláticas with student and parent participants. The selection criteria and sampling plan for recruitment was also described and a backup plan for soliciting participants was proposed. Information about data collection was presented and analysis was considered.

The following chapter presents the findings from my study. An overview of the participants allows for an introduction to the familias that shared their experiences. A review of the findings from the pláticas relevant to the CCW
capitals and how they are utilized at an HSI university and also presented. Finally, I offer a summary of the findings presented at the conclusion of the chapter.
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

Pláticas de Mónica y Ana: “Tu siempre me decías que querías cumplir muchos planes. Yo me quedé sorprendida cuando me dijiste que no ibas a ir al colegio me quedé muy triste. Porque ‘Dije qué va a hacer? Ya no quiere estudiar’. Y yo para mí el estudiar era importante, más ahora que ella ibas a tener un hijo. Para mí era importante que te fueras a la escuela, pero yo te veía muy desanimada. Pero bendito Dios que ya después reaccionaste y ya cuando me dijiste ‘Mamá, voy a regresar al colegio, yo ya me sentí un poquito mejor porque dije ‘Bueno, por lo menos va a retomar su vida y va a prepararse’. Porque yo lo que me importaba que tu te prepararas para que salir Adelante. Tenías que sacar adelante a tu criatura. Entonces yo pensé ‘Yo tengo que ayudar a preparar a mi hija. Yo quiero que que tenga una vida buena para su niña y para ella. Y la única forma que yo veía por su edad era que ella siguiera estudiando para que ella se preparara. (Ana)

The purpose of my study was to understand the impact family involvement and engagement have on the persistence of first-generation Latinx students at a designated HSI university. My study explored how CCW assets learned from family help students persist in college past their first year. Moreover, my study sought to understand the way students use their CCW assets to navigate their college experience. This chapter presents findings based on an analysis of pláticas between my student and parent participants and myself based on Yosso’s (2005) CCW theoretical framework. I used 2 qualitative research questions as a framework for the data analysis to categorize and describe the findings. The research questions guiding my study are the following:

Research Question 1: How do families of first-generation Latinx students at an HSI university support their student as they pursue their undergraduate degree?

Research Question 2: In what ways do community cultural wealth assets help first-generation Latinx students navigate their university experience on their way to college completion?
I used a phenomenological approach to learn about the lived experiences of first-generation Latinx students as they navigate their undergraduate education. Parents of student participants were also invited to the *plática* in order to recognize their experiences as they support their students through college. I present findings from the *pláticas* with the *familias* as an overview of their background.

This chapter was divided into four sections. First, I provided an overview of the participants followed by a review of the findings from the *pláticas* with the participants relevant to the CCW capitals and how they are utilized at an HSI university. I shared direct quotes of student and parent participants to capture their lived experiences in higher education. Finally, I offer a summary of the findings at the conclusion of the chapter.

**Participants in the Study**

In this section I introduce the *familias* who trusted me to share their stories and lived experiences. Student participants were invited based on the criteria of being first-generation Latinx undergraduates enrolled in college for at least 3 consecutive semesters and who were currently attending an HSI university. The parents of the students were willing to participate in the study to share their perspectives. A total of 5 first-generation Latinx students participated in addition to the parents of 4 of the student participants. Las familias Cortez, Gonzalez, Jimenez, Martinez, and Rodriguez engaged in a *plática* with me. Both parents of Andrés Cortez and Amelia Martinez participated in the study. The mothers of Maribel Jimenez and Benjamin Rodriguez also participated. The parents of Jimena Gonzalez were not available to participate. Participants were given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. An overview of the family demographics is shown on
Table 1. In the following pieces, I highlight who the student is, their family background, and share about their parents.

**Familia Cortez**

Andrés Cortez is a first-generation Latino male who is the first in his family to follow an undergraduate degree. He is currently in his 4th year and is pursuing a biology major. Andrés was admitted at his current institution as a first-time freshman upon graduating from high school. Andrés’ parents are immigrants from El Salvador. His father immigrated to the U.S. in the ‘70s at the age of 19 to escape the political challenges happening in his country at that time. His mother came to the U.S. in the ’90s when she was in her 30’s where she later met Andrés’ father. Back in their homeland of El Salvador, his father attended elementary school up to the third grade and was unable to continue his education due to financial challenges. His family was no longer able to afford for him to go to school and he needed to begin working on his family’s farm to help bring income to the home. Upon his arrival to the U.S., Andrés’ father worked in the construction industry as a roofer. When Andrés was in high school, his father had a back injury and was unable to further engage in physical labor, resulting in a permanent disability.

André’s mother completed high school in El Salvador and attended an equivalency to vocational school to become a nurse practitioner. Upon her arrival to the U.S., she was unable to continue working in her field of study and started to work in housekeeping. She later returned to school to learn English and earned her Certified Nurse Assistant certification to continue working in the healthcare field. During this time, she worked 2 jobs to help the family make ends meet. She currently works in a hospital helping patients with post-surgery procedures.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Familia</th>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Parent’s Country of Origin</th>
<th>Matriculation Status At University</th>
<th>Mother’s Educational Level</th>
<th>Father’s Educational Level</th>
<th>Mother’s Occupation</th>
<th>Father’s Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cortez</td>
<td>4th Year</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>First-time Freshman</td>
<td>Vocational Education</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Certified Nurse Assistant</td>
<td>Construction, Retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonzalez</td>
<td>4th Year</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>First-time Freshman</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Farmworker, Caretaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimenez</td>
<td>4th Year</td>
<td>Environmental Science &amp; Resource Management</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>Food Service</td>
<td>Construction &amp; Caretaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martinez</td>
<td>4th Year</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>Farmworker, Housekeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodriguez</td>
<td>4th Year</td>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>Domestic caregiver</td>
<td>Construction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During his first year of college, Andrés faced financial difficulties because he did not qualify for any grants or scholarships to help pay for his educational expenses. After his father was injured, his family's income was impacted drastically. His parents managed to help pay his educational expenses out-of-pocket for the first year of college, but it became challenging as he began his second year. Andrés decided to take a semester off and move back home to work. He later returned to school the following year and is now in his last year of college.

**Familia Gonzalez**

Jimena Gonzalez is currently a 4th year student at her university and pursuing a Psychology degree with a minor in Chicana/o Studies. She is a first-generation Latina student and the first in her immediate family to pursue a college education. She started her educational journey as a first-time freshman after high school. Jimena is currently a peer mentor on her campus where she supports first-generation students with the first-year transition of college and helps them navigate the university culture.

Jimena lives in a predominately low income Latinx town. Her former high school is a low-performing school with limited opportunities for students. Given her family situation and low socioeconomic status, Jimena decided to attend her local public university and she daily commutes to school. This has helped her family financially afford her educational expenses.

Jimena and her parents immigrated to the U.S. from Michoacan, Mexico. Her father came to the U.S. for the first time in the ’80s to work as a farmworker and would provide financial support to her and her mother back in Mexico. At the age of 4, Jimena and her mother moved to California to reunite with her father.
After 5 years of living in California, her family moved to Florida in pursuit of better opportunities. During that time, her father faced unstable employment circumstances and her mother became ill. The resources available to help her mother’s illness were limited and the family decided to move back to California where they have settled since. Jimena’s father is now a full-time caregiver to her mother. Despite her father’s sixth grade education and her mother’s high school education in Mexico, her parents have fully encouraged Jimena to go to college.

**Familia Jimenez**

Maribel Jimenez is a first-generation Latina student currently enrolled in her last semester at her university and is double majoring in Environmental Science and Resource Management, and Chicana/o Studies. Although her parents did not have the opportunity to obtain a high level of education, both she and her brother have attended college to further their education. Maribel was admitted to a public university located several hours away from home upon high school graduation. She later decided to go back home to continue her education at her community college after the first year at the university. After a year of community college, she transferred to her local public university where she commutes to campus every day. She is involved in various activities on campus including clubs/organizations, a sorority, and is employed as a student assistant on campus.

Maribel’s parents both immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico. Her mother is from Tlaxcala, Mexico, and moved to the U.S. at the age of 18. She is from a large, low-income family where obtaining an education was challenging. She started working at a young age to help make ends meet financially for her family, nonetheless, she was able to complete a high school education in Mexico. Upon her arrival to the U.S., she started working in factories and housekeeping for
several years until she secured a job working in food service at a hospital where she is currently employed.

Maribel’s father immigrated to the U.S. from Michoacan, Mexico also at a young age. He frequently traveled from Mexico to work seasonal contracts in construction to earn money and send back to his family until he decided to settle permanently in the U.S. His highest level of education is middle school. He currently works 2 jobs as a painter at a factory and is a caregiver at a hospice center. Maribel’s parents met here in the States and later married.

**Familia Martinez**

Born to undocumented parents, Amelia Martinez is the first in her immediate family to go to college. Her parents immigrated to the U.S. from Michoacan, Mexico in pursuit of a better life than the one they lived in their homeland. She is currently in her last semester of college and will be graduating with a bachelor’s degree in Sociology. Amelia started her higher education at her local community college and later transferred to her local public university where she commutes. She lives at home with her parents and works part-time as a peer mentor on campus. Staying home and going to school nearby have allowed her to afford college and pursue her degree.

Amelia’s parents did not have the opportunity to go to school in Mexico due to financial challenges. Her mother was an orphan from a young age and only obtained a primary school education. She had to work in the agricultural fields and clean houses to help her family financially and was not able to afford to pay for school. She decided to move to the U.S. for increased work opportunities. She currently has her own housekeeping business where she continues to clean houses.

Amelia’s father immigrated to the U.S. in his 30’s also pursuing a better life for himself than the one he was living in Mexico. There were extremely
limited job opportunities in his town influencing him to move to U.S. to find something more promising. He was a farmworker in Mexico and did similar work in the U.S. when he arrived. During the first years of his arrival, he lived throughout California until he settled where he lives now and has been here for over 30 years. He has worked in various occupations ranging from farm work, housekeeping, and factory jobs. He is currently working in a factory and helps his wife with the housekeeping business. Amelia’s father earned a sixth-grade education in Mexico and was also not able to continue due to financial reasons.

**Familia Rodriguez**

Benjamin Rodriguez is 1 of 5 children born to his immigrant parents from Guerrero, Mexico. He is the first, and only, child in his immediate family to go to college. In his last year of college, Benjamin is pursuing a degree in Health Science and plans to pursue the medical field upon graduation. His higher education trajectory was not a linear one. Upon high school graduation, he entered the workforce and worked full-time for 2 years before going to college. He enrolled full-time in community college while working two jobs roughly 100 hours a week during his first semester. He struggled academically his first year and was placed on academic probation. He decided to quit his jobs to focus on school and later transferred to a university nearly 2 hours away from home.

His parents entered the U.S. with an undocumented legal status and later became residents. They both have an elementary education where his mother completed the second grade and his father the sixth grade. Despite their limited educational level, they have always inculcated the importance of education and the opportunities it can bring. Benjamin’s father is the sole breadwinner of the family and works in construction, while his mother is a stay-at-home caregiver for the family.
Although Benjamin’s educational experience is not a traditional trajectory, he has taken advantage of various opportunities that have been presented to him. He was selected as Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Scholar, participated in various undergraduate research opportunities where he published an article with one of his faculty and is a student leader on his campus.

**Summary of the Findings**

Three themes emerged from my study which demonstrate the ways families support and are involved with their student as they persist through their college experience. The themes presented in this section talk about the 4 CCW assets defined as part of the findings: aspirational, familial, navigational, and resistant capital. Additionally, the findings below discuss the ways in which students use their CCW assets to navigate their university experience on their way to college completion.

**Maldita Pobreza: Leveraging Resistant and Navigational Capital Through Financial Challenges**

*Pláticas de Mónica y Ana: Yo no sabía nada de cómo pagar el colegio. Cuando tu hermano empezó a estudiar, él me decía que teníamos que llenar aplicaciones para recibir dinero. Nos pedían mucha información y después no nos dieron nada de ayuda financiera gratis, solo prestamos. No entendíamos el proceso de cómo pagar ni porque no calificábamos.”* (Ana)

Yosso’s (2005) resistant capital refers to the skills and behaviors developed through navigating oppositional behaviors that challenge inequality. Latinx students gain knowledge and skills through challenging systems not designed for them. Understanding financial aid and the process of paying for college is challenging for students, in particular first-generation families. They may not be aware of financial literacy aspects regarding the cost of college or how the awarding process works. When asked about challenges faced as they pursue their
degree, all 5 families described financial difficulties. They all had distinct experiences, however, paying for college and managing educational costs has been the most prevalent hardship throughout their college course. Whether money was at the center of deciding where to go to college, how to pay for college, or simply manage everyday expenses while in school, they have managed to find a way to persevere and navigate paying for school.

Student participants, including their parents, stated they do not understand the financial aid process nor how the awarding process works. Despite the lack of understanding of financial aid and literacy, students shared that their parents have never made them feel that money was an obstacle for them to go to college. On the contrary, parents were reassuring that they would find a way to fund their education and help their student achieve their goals. The families shared the various sacrificios they have lived to make certain their student went to college.

Jimena shared that although she knows her parents don’t have money to help her pay for college, her dad always told her not to worry about any expenses she has to pay and that he will find a way to get her what she needs.

My parents have always made sure that I feel like money isn't a problem for coming to college… That's been one of the things that they're always making sure I have that I don't have to stress about. I know they told me many times, ‘You don't have to work if you don't want to. We'll make it work somehow… But don't let money limit you to not pursue your goals and dreams in achieving your degree’. (Jimena)

Jimena has felt her parent's support with money for college since she was applying in high school. She decided to attend her local public university to commute to campus and save money. Her financial aid package pays for tuition costs, and she currently works on campus to help pay for other educational expenses.
**Con Mucho Dolor y Sacrifico: Family Sacrificios**

**While Paying for College**

Two participants, Andrés and Maribel, do not qualify for grants or scholarships and they fund their expenses either out of pocket or with federal loans. Andrés and his parents shared the challenges they encountered during his first year of college. He was not eligible for grants and didn’t understand how his financial aid award was determined because his dad was not employed, and his mom worked part-time. Andrés shared:

I didn't receive any financial aid my first year and a half, and I was...in and out of the financial aid office... For some reason, the FAFSA was taking the income of when both my parents were working. That was at the time my dad lost his job. What I didn't understand...was that even then my dad didn't make a lot [of money], my mom, as a CNA, doesn't make a lot either. She works part-time, a max of 36 hours. I just didn't understand what was going on.

Andrés’ family did not allow the financial aid award to prevent him from going to school. His parents provided support by encouraging him to get the answers he needed and not give up on the financial aid. His mom insisted that he ask questions until he was able to understand the process. They were involved by regularly going to campus to figure out what was going on despite the 3-hour commute. He discussed the impact her mother’s involvement had on him:

They helped me a lot with figuring [financial aid] out...I feel like it's a lot of emotional and mental support that they've been helping me out with. The moments where I feel like I'm struggling a lot, they give me that pep talk like, ‘No, come on. You got this.” and all that.

Despite not receiving grants and scholarships during the first year of school, Andrés’ parents understand the value of education and did all they could to make sure his son was able to pay for school, even if that meant losing money by paying a financial penalty. His father withdrew money early from this 401k.
retirement account resulting in paying a high penalty fee. He sacrificed his retirement for his son to see him go to college. With this experience, he noted:

_Fue algo duro, pero uno de padre sabe para qué está ahorrando un dinero. Y ese dinero que yo estaba ahorrando sirvió para [pagar la universidad] ... Y ahí se me fue todo mi retiro [que] era para cuando ya estuviera jubilado. Pero era por algo para mi hijo y no fue en vano. Pues yo lo que yo le digo a él que tiene que aprovechar porque si él no aprovecha, entonces mi trabajo fue en vano. Y uno, el padre, puede dar cualquier cosa para que sus hijos estudien, sigan adelante. Esa es mi vida, era mi enfoque._

Andrés eventually moved back home after his first year of college. He took a semester off school to work and save money to pay for school. During his time off, his mom frequently urged him to return to school and finish his degree. His mom shared how she felt about the experience:

_Salió un trimestre y fue al colegio [comunitario]. Yo no estaba de acuerdo con que [se saliera]. Nosotros luchamos para que él no se saliera, para que él no dejará ese espacio...porque en verdad yo sí tenía miedo...y es bien difícil que vuelva otra vez a entrar a la misma línea y nosotros se lo pedimos. Y quizás le lloren mucho también, pero ni aún así él se quedó el semestre acá. Pero pues él aprendió y él se dio cuenta que hubo mucha pérdida alguna._

His parents were proud when he returned to school, and they continue to help him pay for college expenses such as his phone bill and transportation. Since his return, he has worked two jobs to pay for his education.

_Similar to Andrés, Maribel was not eligible to receive grants or scholarships since she started college. She originally moved away as a freshman and was responsible to pay for her educational expenses out of pocket. Her family's only option was to borrow federal loans to pay for college. Feeling overwhelmed by living away from home and the cost for her to attend the institution, she decided to move back home after the first year to attend her local_
community college. Maribel felt supported by her parents when she decided to return home although her parents were willing to help pay for her expenses. Her mom shared that she did not once hesitate to borrow a federal parent loan to help pay for her daughter’s education and supported Maribel’s decision to return home. She noted:

*Nosotros financieramente no la podemos ayudar...Nosotros no calificamos para ningún tipo de ayuda financiera y es difícil cuando uno está pagando como casa, carros, todo eso es mucho gasto para nosotros los padres...porque es bastante caro y luego pues todavía mi hijo todavía estaba en la universidad, aquí también, o sea, era para nosotros súper difícil pagar 2 colegiaturas... Pero nosotros nunca le dijimos no es mucho dinero para endeudarse. Yo le dije a mi esposo vamos a dejarla, que vaya, que conozca para que al rato no diga o no mis padres nunca me permitieron tener esa experiencia.*

When she returned home, Maribel enrolled in her local community college for a year and decided to transfer to her local university which allows her to commute and save money. Her parents have supported her decisions in relation to her education. Maribel recounts always feeling like she can talk to her parents openly about what she wants. She felt supported about the decision to move home and her mother provided her with the encouragement she needed to make the transition. Her mom shared her conversation with Maribel when she told her she wanted to move back:

*Me dice ‘Mamá, me voy a regresar’. Yo le dije ‘Ok, hija. Claro que sí, regrésate’. Dijo, ‘Es mucho dinero para mí que se va a pagar. Si yo me quedo ahí cuatro años, cuando salga voy a tener una deuda de más de $84,000. Y luego, si hago mi maestría, mi doctorado, ¿cuánto voy a deber? Toda mi vida voy a estar endeudada’. Le dije ‘Mija, ya fuiste, ya conociste, ya sabes lo duro que es la economía. Y si tú te quieres regresar, tú estás bienvenida. Dinos cuándo nosotros vamos por ti’. Y así fue. Se inscribió en el colegio [comunitario].*

Maribel still did not qualify for grants or scholarships upon her return home and worked 2 jobs to pay for her college expenses.
As the first in his family to go to college, Benjamin had very limited information about the college-going process. In high school he applied to several universities as directed by his teachers and even though he was accepted, he did not go through with the enrollment process. During his last year of high school, he was in a Regional Occupation Program (ROP) class where he worked in the medical field and received hands-on experience that helped him land a full-time job upon graduation. Not knowing how to navigate the financial aid process or what the cost of college was, Benjamin decided to work to save until he had enough to pay on his own. Two years after he graduated high school, he enrolled at his local community college and paid out of pocket. Still managing 2 jobs, he did not do well in his first year and was placed on academic probation. During this time, his parents were facing a home foreclosure and with the money he had saved up over the 2 years, he was able to give money to his parents to get out of their situation. As the oldest in his family, he felt he needed to give up on his education and help his family financially. When he realized he was not doing well and his parents were facing financial difficulties, he had doubts about continuing his education. He shared this with his mom, and she encouraged him to focus on his education and not work so much as he had been. His mom values education and wanted him to focus on school. In that moment he understood education was important to his parents and how empowering it is for them.

Determined to get back on track, Benjamin met with different campus resources to help him improve his academic standing and transfer out to a university. Since he moved away to college, he works part-time on campus to help pay for his educational expenses although his parents find ways to help him financially. Part of his father’s job is to deliver work material to companies Monday-Saturday, and he often picks up shifts on Sunday to earn extra income to
give to Benjamin *para sus libros*. His parents are constantly reaffirming that money is not an obstacle for him to go to college. His mom noted,

* A veces me dice ‘Mami, no me alcanza el dinero’. Yo le digo ‘No te preocupes, yo voy a tratar de conseguir el dinero para que tú salgas adelante’... A veces las escuela es bien cara, los libros, todo es caro y yo le digo ‘No te preocupes, vamos a poder primeramente Dios’... Y él me decía ‘No, mami, pero yo no quiero que gastes dinero’. [Yo le digo] ‘A mí no me importa gastar dinero. Tú te tienes que ir [a la escuela].

His mom does not work and stays home to take care of her other four children. Although unemployed, she finds other ways to help him pay for his educational expenses. She shared she sold her gold jewelry she was gifted back in México and often collects and recycles cans to make extra money. She also sacrifices other items for her home to make sure Benjamin is getting what he needs to pay for college. His mom noted:

* Pues a veces yo me voy a vender botes si no alcanza o trato de no pagar unas ciertas cosas para ayudarlo a él porque es lo más importante para mí es el estudio de él. La meta que tengo en mi mente es eso, estudio más que nada y estar con mis hijos también los demás, porque también ellos me necesitan. O sea, pero yo a veces le digo a mis hijos... Si me alcanzó el dinero y no me alcanza y a veces sacrifico una cosa por otra. ¿Me entiende? Pero a veces sí... he tratado de ir a vender botes para tener un poquito más.

His parents help Benjamin by paying for his car and the maintenance that goes into it. His mom knows first-hand about his goal to finish his degree in 2 years at the university and she finds a way to alleviate some his financial stress. His mom shared:

* Le digo a mi hijo porque él no sabe nada del carro, o sea chequear el carro ni nada de eso. Yo ando así que chequeando su carro porque anda bien lejos, cositas así que su carro esté bien, que no le vaya a pasar algo en el camino.

The familias shared their experiences of how they have learned to navigate financial challenges during college. Although these participants and their families
do not understand the financial aid process, they have demonstrated resilience when having to pay educational expenses. Their parents see the value of education and have found ways to pay for college. They shared *sacrificios* they have lived to make it to the point where they are and the ends they are willing to go to help their children pay for school. Students are aware of the *sacrificios* their parents make, and they use that as a motivation to do well and strive for graduating with their college degree. During the process, parents have made their children feel supported and encouraged to not give up or let money be an obstacle to them achieving their goals. Student participants acknowledged the support they receive from their parents and have all found a way to help pay for their education even if it means working multiple jobs.

**De Tal Palo, Tal Astilla: Overcoming Educational Challenges with Aspirational Capital**

The parents of the student participants immigrated from another country to the U.S. not speaking or understanding the English language. They were not familiar with the culture or lifestyle of this country, nonetheless, they learned to navigate their new homeland and provide their children with better opportunities than the ones they had growing up. Each family shared the challenges they lived through, and the students reflected on the stories their parents shared as a motivation to go to school and persist through the challenges they have faced as they pursue their college education.

Aspirational capital refers to the hope and dreams in light of challenging experiences (Yosso, 2005). As first-generation college students, they are the first in their families to navigate the college experience. Student participants discussed the adversities of imposter syndrome and not feeling a sense of belonging, especially during their first 2 years. When asked what has helped them push
through, they share the reminders their parents give them such as *si se puede*, *echale ganas*, and *busca lo que necesitas*, as a way to persevere. They also shared about lived experiences their families have where they witness the resilience of their parents and use that as a motivation to overcome difficult times in education.

**Si Se Puede: The Value of Education**

Parent participants expressed how fortunate they feel to live in a country with many opportunities for their children compared to their homeland. They acknowledged the importance of education and compared the circumstances they faced as children. Benjamin’s mom felt forced to migrate to the U.S. despite not wanting to leave Mexico. She planned to return home however, she met Benjamin’s father and later married and started a family. Her husband proposed to move back to Mexico, but after having children, she wanted to stay to give her kids a better life. His mom shared the told her husband, “*Nos vamos a quedar, porque yo quiero una mejor vida para mis hijos, porque yo quiero que mis hijos estudien... Como yo no tuve ese privilegio, yo quiera que ellos tuvieran ese privilegio...estuvieran adelante y sacaran un buen futuro.*”

Benjamin shared that despite her mom having a second-grade education in Mexico and not knowing how to read or write in either language, she succeeded to get her driver's license when he was in middle school. He grew up in a metropolitan area where public transportation was readily accessible but that later changed when they moved to a small town. It became difficult to get around because of limited transportation options. His mother recalls Benjamin not sharing with her about school awards and recognitions he earned in middle school. When she asked him why he did not tell her he responded he did not want to burden her with having to find transportation to get to school knowing she had 4 kids at home
with her. In that moment her mom became determined to get her driver’s license for her children. She recalled,

_Entonces yo les prometía a ellos que pues que yo iba a superarme al saber manejar. Después le dije ‘¿Sabes qué mijo? Yo no quiero ese futuro para mí, yo quiero que tengan un futuro mejor para ustedes’. Y siempre le anduve batallando, pero le doy gracias a Dios que yo soy una mujer luchadora, una mujer que no me gusta depender de nadie._

Knowing his mom’s determination motivates Benjamin to push through his education. Remembering what his mom has accomplished and the stories she shares with him help him get through his workload. He shared,

_That has been my whole mentality here at [my institution]. I have to do things myself because if I don't do it, then no one's going to do it for me... Some of the classes I've taken... were very challenging... [and] hard to navigate, but I did it. I broke it down how my mom broke it down. And so I took it one day at a time and one hour at a time. And I would just slowly start... reading the book or the quizzes and being patient with myself. I learned to be patient with myself and to trust the process._

Amelia’s parents also recount their limited educational experiences in México and often share them with her. There were countless challenges for her parents to go to school including lack of funds and transportation. They both had to help their family financially and were forced to leave school to begin working. They acknowledge the opportunities available in the U.S. and encourage Amelia to go to school. Her mom noted, “_Estamos en un país que aquí se puede estudiar. Si no estudias es porque no quieres...lo mejor que puede tener [Amelia] es la escuela... [En México] no teníamos muchas oportunidades._”

Jimena recounts the expectations of her parent’s for going to college from a young age. Though she didn’t know about college or what the process was, her parents instilled the importance of education and pushed her to find the answers she needed to achieve her goals. She recalls seeing her parents struggle financially
and not having job security. She indicated she does not want that to be the case for her. She noted,

I think knowing that my parents didn't have that opportunity and then having them come to a new country, looking for better opportunities for both my brother and I really pushed me to come to college because of all the sacrifices they made. I feel like I have to give back to them in a way. To let them know that coming here was worth it and that all the struggles they face for me to be here and to show them that I'm capable of doing it.

During the first 2 years of college, Jimena struggled to connect to the campus and was losing motivation to continue. She shared a time when she went home crying because she didn’t feel like she had a place at her institution. Her dad asked her to tell him what she was going through, and she opened up about not feeling a sense of belonging. She shared,

I knew I was missing something, and it was that social connection and the social piece of the whole college experience. And I remember coming home that day and I was just really sad. And the thing about me is my parents are able to tell when I'm having a bad day. And so as soon as they asked ‘¿Qué tienes?’ I just broke down. I was kind of like, ‘I don't even know if going to college is for me. I feel like I'm not getting the most out of it. I feel like I'm missing those connections. Yes, I'm getting good grades and I'm getting my assignments done but I feel like that's not enough. I feel like there's something in the college experience that I'm missing’. I remember them asking, ‘Oh well, have you talked to your professors? Is there a specific professor that you can go to?’ So then they really encouraged me to put myself out there more and start on those networks.

This conversation helped Jimena begin to look for what she needed to start building connections. Her family continues to be her primary support to keep pushing forward, “My first go to is always my family just because they know me, they know who I am, they know my goals and what I need to hear when I'm facing a challenge.”
¿Qué pesa más, los libros o los ladrillos?: Hard Work and Perseverance

All parent participants in my study have, or currently earn a living by working in physically demanding jobs. Student participants have a recollection of seeing their parent(s) wake up early in the morning to go to work and how tired they were after working long days. This served as a motivation to do well in school and finish their education. Amelia, Benjamin, and Andrés have lived experiences of doing similar physical labor as their parents which has taught them the value of education and the opportunity to a better future. Their parents use those experiences as a reminder to keep pushing through when they are struggling in school and losing motivation.

Amelia’s parents frequently emphasize that they want more for her than what they had growing up. This motivation has been reinforcing to her as she is near completing her degree. As farmworkers, her parents worked long hours and would tell her, “Ve a la escuela para que no pares en donde nosotros fuimos a parar”. When she was in high school, she went to go work in the fields for 2 weeks. After that experience, she has valued education more and was motivated to go to college. She recalls, “It was shocking when I went to go [work in the fields] and I just didn't see myself [doing that] for the rest of my life. For sure and I wanted something better for me”. While her parents did not like to see her tired from working in the fields, they saw the impact it made for her to want to further her education. Her mom stated,

[ella decía que] es tan duro el trabajo que ya no [lo] soportaba... Y [yo] le digo ‘Ya no vayas’. Pero eso le sirvió a ella para estudiar. [ella] dijo ‘Eso es lo que a mí me motiva más’...Llegaba ella con los pies arrastrados, bien cansada, se acostaba en el sofá. [Pero] eso fue lo que ella lo motivó a estudiar.
Benjamin learned at an early age that he did not want a physically intense job as his father had in construction. He shared,

So he used to make me in fifth grade, go to work with him. And I used to wake up at 3 in the morning to go to work with him and drive 2 hours. He works in drywall. So he always told me ‘¿Qué pesa mas, los libros o los [ladrillos]?’ So when he said that he really put [into] perspective [that] I do not want to have a job like my father. And so I think my dad, why he said, ‘Yo quiero que mi hijo estudie pa’que el tengo un buen trabajo en donde el no se esté matando y quebrando el cuerpo’. He would say that all the time. And those words vividly haunted me. If I don't have an education, I'm going to have a hard job, physically demanding job that's going to be hardcore.”

When Andrés left college and moved back home after his first year, he worked in landscaping to save money to go back to school. He recalls working outdoors during the summer in the heat and remembers the day he did not want that life for himself. He shared the conversations he had growing up with his dad about the value of education which motivated him to return to school. He shares,

One thing that's really stuck with me that my dad said, ‘Would you rather be tired mentally or physically?’ Working [indoors] versus working outside, like what he did, roofing. He likes to say, ‘Look at me now, right? I'm injured. You could just be working out your brain or tiring at your brain rather than [your body]’. Yeah. That stuck with me...During my time off of [college], I worked full time...with my cousin who was a landscaper...One of the days I was working out there, I got heat exhaustion. I was so burnt out...I would rather be mentally exhausted than feel like that.

The narratives shared by my participants demonstrate the ways aspirational capital has served to feel supported by their parents and help them persist through their undergraduate trajectory.

Amor Eterno: Fostering Wellness, Love, and Support Through Familial Capital

Pláticas de Mónica y Ana: Yo soy tu mamá, yo tengo para mi reto como madre de sacar adelante a mis hijos y verlos que salgan adelante. Que tengan una vida y un destino productivo. Porque esa es mi meta. Eso es lo
que yo siempre esperé. Entonces yo no voy a parar de ayudarles porque yo quiero que sean productivos y que sean personas de bien. Para mí eso es mi logro y ese es mi tributo. Y ese es mi agradecimiento. (Ana)

Yosso (2005) described familial capital as learning and maintaining a healthy connection to our family and community. Our kin also model lessons of caring, coping, and providing educación, which inform our emotional, moral, educational, and occupational. At the center of all conversations with participants, parents emphasize how much they love their children and how proud they are of them. Student participants affirmed that their parents are the reason why they went to college and the motivation why they keep going. The love their parents show them empowers them to overcome any obstacle and challenge they face. Students shared that knowing they can reach out to their parents whether it is a text, or a phone call made them feel supported and reassured they are not alone on the journey. Students also reflected that talking to their parents about what they do in the classrooms makes them feel as if they are including them as part of their education.

Student participants revealed that though their parents are not able to help them directly with their assignments, guide them through the content of their projects, or understand the rigor of being a student, they do show their support in other ways. One of the most prevalent supports they receive from their parents is the concern be taken care of physically, mentally, and emotionally. Their parents provide them with meals, listen to them when they need it, or give them their space to do what they need to take care of for school.

¿Mijo/a Ya Comiste?: Food as a Source of Love

Pláticas de Mónica y Ana: Yo la manera que te ayudo mientras tu estudias es por cuidándote a tus niñas para que tu no te preocupes por ellas. También trato de ayudarte por haciéndote tu comida para que comas
porque yo te veía llegar muy tarde de la escuela o del trabajo. ¿Pues que más podía hacer? (Ana)

Maribel discussed feeling supported by her mom through food. She currently lives at home with her parents and commutes to school. Her mom takes care of making meals to ensure she is fed and does not have to worry about spending money for food or not having time to make food. She shared it is significant help because it is one less thing she has to do which helps her tremendously to balance all other responsibilities. Her mom shared that dinner time is when they connect about their day and Maribel shares what she is going through at school. Her mom noted,

[Yo me aseguro] que siempre tengan su alimentación, su plato, comida calientes cuando lleguen. [Les pongo] los lonches...hasta lavar su ropa...Mi hija tiene 2 trabajos, tiene la escuela y mientras yo vea que ella le hecha ganas, que se supera, que logra sus sueños, que va a terminar su universidad, yo la voy a apoyar al 100%...Yo siempre les pregunto todos los días ‘¿Como te va?’ Siempre trato de involucrarme con ellos y. Si me dice ‘Voy a tener que estudiar para esto’, yo trato de darle su tiempo para que ella tome su tiempo y porque yo sé que para lograr tus estudios necesitas mucho tiempo. No solo para ir a las clases, sino para hacer tareas, para terminar tus proyectos. Para hacer muchas cosas. Y si yo no pude lograr ser una profesional cuando fui chica, estoy muy agradecida con la vida de que mis 2 hijos son graduados ya de la universidad.”

Similarly, Benjamin’s mother felt she is able to support and connect with him through preparing him meals. She is constantly checking in on him to see what he needs and what she can do help him. His mom said,

Yo miro a mi hijo que es muy difícil estudiar. A veces no tiene tiempo de comer. A veces no le ando ofreciendo comida, ‘Orale mijo, come esto. Tienes que salir adelante’. Yo sé que no es fácil y me siento bien orgullosa hacia él, que a veces me dice ‘Mamá, tráeme un café’. A veces no quiere comer a veces de tanto estudio que tiene él. Yo le arrimo su plato y a veces pues yo sí me preocupo mucho por ellos, la verdad. Para mi mis hijos es lo más bonito que tengo en mi vida.
Benjamin appreciates his parents constantly checking in on him because it reminds him to pause and make sure he is taking care of himself. With the busy schedule he has between work and school, he often does not have time to take care of his health although he faces several medical conditions. There have been 2 instances where he had pain and when he mentioned it to his parents, they urged him to go get it taken care of. He shared,

I feel like I'm a bad son sometimes because I'm always like, ‘Go, go, go, go, go. Let's do this.’ And I think my mom, she shows me how to calm down and ground yourself…Oh, that's the other thing. My mom, if I tell her something like recently, I've been having this really bad [pain]...and she's like, ‘Oh, you need to go to the doctors right now’. And I'm like, ‘No, I can't, I have to do this. I have to do that.’ But she just tells me things that motivate me and things that it's for my best safety. Because I'm always thinking about school. My brain is 24 hours school.

Benjamin also shared the ways his dad helps with making sure he is taking care of himself. He occasionally visits him to ensure he is okay and staying healthy. He described,

So I've been having tooth problems since I transferred and I didn't go to the dentist until last semester. So I waited out my tooth problem all the way to last semester. And we went to Mexico to fix it. I don't know, my dad, he's always like, ‘Are you okay?’ And honestly, if it wasn't for my dad, he's like, ‘Get in the car now, we're going to Mexico," I would be like, ‘No, I'm not going.’ But my dad was like, ‘Get in the car, we're going.’ And I'm like, ‘No.’ But they really show me to slow down. They know that school's important, but they also know I need to be okay too.

Maribel similarly describes her mother checking in on her to make sure she has eaten and appreciates the fruta picada she makes for her. Andrés’ parents make sure they bring him plenty of his favorite food when they visit him. They are concerned that he has something to eat and does not have to worry about making food.
Hablame Por el Feis: Communication to Stay Connected

All five families indicated commuting regularly with their children. The use of text messaging and video calls facilitated the communication they had whether it was a quick check-in message or long FaceTime calls. Parents and students felt connected to their children when they talked to each other in this capacity.

Andrés lives 3 hours away from his parents and he communicates regularly with them through text messages and FaceTime. He shared that his relationship with his father has become closer since he went away to college, and he begins his days with phone calls and coffee with his dad. During this time, they talk about what is going on with them and his dad is continuously reassuring him that he is capable of achieving anything he sets himself to. His dad shared that he knows when Andrés is not doing well, or something is bothering him and he talks to him to help him get through it. He noted,

El me habla a veces antes de ir al trabajo e ir en la misma universidad... Pues yo lo conozco. Y le preguntó, Hijo, ¿te pasa algo?... Ok, platícame.’ Y cuando terminamos de platicar [se va a comer] un burrito al comedor y me habla de vuelta. Ya me dice ‘Ya estoy comiendo. Voy a ir a trabajar’ y ya va contento. Hay veces que me habla 2 o 3 veces [al dia]. Sí, porque yo necesito que me hable también. [Si] el no me habla, yo me preocupo y yo le digo “Hijo, ¿porque no me hablaste ayer?”

When asked how he handles challenges and overcomes hardships, Andrés talked about his conversations with his dad and how they serve as “nice little grounding moments” for him. He shared,

Every time I have a coffee in the morning, I FaceTime my pop, or at least I try to every morning. My mom works, so she would text me, ¿Estas bien miyo? Then that's how I know she wants to talk on the phone, so I just call her when I can or if I can at that moment... [Talking to them is] huge. I'm very close with my family. I'm very close with my parents. Over the years, I'd definitely say I've gotten a lot closer with my dad, especially with what
he went through with his back. Yeah. It's just a nice little grounding moment.

Andrés also shared the ways he involves his parents in his education by showing him what he does in class. As a biology major, he is often in laboratory classes and he FaceTime’s his dad to show him what he is working on. As a first-generation college student, he needs to share his experience with his family since he knows his parents did not have the opportunity to go to college. He stated,

I FaceTimed my dad while I was working on an experiment. He was just so shocked. He's like, ‘I never thought I'd see you like this,’ and he teared up a little bit. Just getting them more involved with campus life and what we do as students because my dad didn't [go to college] ... I think inviting them to school to show student life is a big thing. Especially being a first-gen, they don't know what it's like. They just know you're going to go to school and get a degree. They see the start and finish, but they don't see the process. Any hints, bits, and pieces of what you do is really cool.

His dad with excitement shared how proud he was to see his son in a laboratory doing experiments and felt honored his son was now teaching him. He stated the following about his experience,

_Me divierto. El me dice 'Papá, ¿puedo enseñarte lo que yo estoy estudiando?' Le digo yo, 'A cualquier hora'. Y se pone a decirme detalle por detalle ...Yo le digo '¿Sabes qué, hijo? Yo esto lo esperaba, que mi hijo me enseñe a mí.' Él se siente muy, muy contento conmigo porque yo lo escucho. Y yo a la vez, me alegro mucho porque él me está diciendo que son las cosas que él está haciendo. El otro día me habló cuando estaba en el laboratorio y me explicó unas cosas._

Benjamin also moved away from home to go to college and maintains close communication with his parents. Like Andrés, Benjamin will FaceTime his mom to talk to her and he has called his mom during campus events so she can be a part of the experiences. He recalls calling his mom one summer during a Spanish parent workshop when he worked as an Orientation Leader. He wanted his mom to hear the information because that programming was not offered to him when he transferred to the school. He noted,
I was so excited because when I was an orientation leader, there was a session in Spanish. And I attended obviously because I was an Orientation Leader. And I told my mom, ‘Mom, whatever you're doing, you need to stop and you need to be in this session. You're going to be next to me and just listening. And then she was like, ‘Okay.’ She was so excited.

He also shared that he talks to his mom regularly and she is constantly checking in on him to make sure is okay and taken care of:

So my parents call me a lot, more than I would want them to, but I do appreciate them calling. I think their support is just mostly like, ‘Are you okay? Are you housed? Are you safe?’ Even my mom, every time I do the commute… she'll call me 2 hours later just to make sure that I was okay… I appreciate it.

When Maribel first moved away to college, she would also FaceTime her mom regularly to talk to her and her mom would worry when she didn’t. Her mom would tell her to FaceTime her every day and when Maribel wouldn’t call or text, her mom became anxious.

“Tu Puedes, Echale Ganas”: Empowerment & Resilience

Pláticas de Mónica y Ana: Cuando me dijiste que querías sacar tu doctorado, yo dije ‘Dios de mi alma. ¿Qué va hacer con 3 criaturas?’ Pero estabas tan entusiasmada y yo veía que te gustaba mucho estudiar. Y te dije, ‘Ok, pues ahí en lo que te pueda ayudar’. Tu puedes, si tu te crees capaz, pues yo te ayudo y te apoyo en lo que tu quieras. Yo no entiendo nada de eso. Pero pues si tu quieres, pues yo te ayudo. (Ana)

The parents in the study did not have the opportunity to go to college and most of them do not have beyond a middle school education. Nonetheless, they understand the importance of education and the possibilities it provides for a better future. All participants shared their experiences growing up and the value of education inculcated in them at a young age. Their parents held high expectations for school and encouraged them to always do their best. They continue to hold those expectations for themselves as they navigate college.
Benjamin and Andrés both recall going to school functions as children with their parents and remember when they realized their parents held a high standard for them. Benito recounted one of the times his dad went to a high school function and looked around the classroom to find Benjamin’s work and didn’t see anything:

So in high school, my dad had the shade to throw at me. [He said], ‘I was looking at the honor roll and I didn't see your name’... And so, because I've worked so hard [to get recognized], I'll wase like, ‘Can you look at the honor roll list this time, please? Because I'm there,’ … I just see them being really happy and just very proud of my accomplishment. And I do see them cheering me on for my next journey.

Andrés shared the time he remembers his dad setting a high standard for him in school and continues to do so. He shared,

I remember a lot during my elementary, there was this list on the wall, and there were the super readers and then the extremely well. My dad's like, ‘You're going to be on that list. That's what you need to strive for. That's where you need to be. That's where I want to see you.’

Andrés recalls a time of empowerment when his dad helped him get through a difficult time with one of his professors. He shared that one of his professors ridiculed him in class and that experience held him back from seeking support from his professor and going to office hours. His father’s encouraging words helped him get through his fear of seeking help. His father recalls when Andrés told him about the incident and how he helped encourage him. He dad recounted,

[Yo le dije] ‘Los profesores ya son profesores. Usted apenas va a sacar una carrera. Entonces usted, cuando ya flote en su carrera, usted ya llegó a su tope...y usted no ha terminado. Entonces quiere decir que usted no tiene que estresarse.’

Jimena lives at home with both parents. Her mother is physically disabled, and her father provides full-time care to her. Jimena and her dad alternate responsibilities at home to help with obligations as well as taking care of her mom.
Between caring for her mom, commuting an hour to school every day, and working part-time, she balances many duties and often finds herself stressed and overwhelmed. She shared the support her dad gives her by packing her food to eat while she is on the road and providing emotional support when she feels overwhelmed. By her dad giving her a space to talk to him about what she is going through, and her experiences has provided a positive impact on her journey. Jimena shared,

They have always supported me economically but also emotionally. I feel like when I'm stressed, my dad's always asking me, ‘Oh, ¿como estás? ¿Por qué te ves estresada? ¿Qué es lo que estás pasando?’ So he always makes sure that I talk about my feelings and how I'm feeling with school and just all the stress that comes with being in college. So I always just talk to him about what's going on in my classes…and then that in a way helps me feel relieved because I feel like I am making them a part of this journey too. Even though they can't necessarily help me with the schoolwork, they understand what I have to do and they've always been very supportive. And even though I spend hours here on campus, he always makes sure I bring my food. So I think that's one of the ways they've always supported me, making sure I'm taking care of myself while studying.

Knowing her parents listen to her journey and encourage her to finish helps her see the finish line and motivates her to keep going. The affirmations she receives when times are challenging give her the sense she is not alone. Jimena noted,

I think they've always made sure I feel good about this journey. They always tell me, ‘Tu puedes, has pasado por cosas más difíciles y esto es temporal. You're almost done at the finish line.’ So I know right now my family knows that I'm only a semester away from finishing college. And so they're all very excited and it's very noticeable because they're like, “Ya casi acabas” And then they're like, ‘Tu puedes. Si ya has terminado 3 años, las últimas semanas que te quedan van a pasar volando’. I think they just always remind me like, ‘Estás aquí por una razón. Tu eres inteligente. Sabes que te apoyamos en todo.’ I think they just take a weight off my shoulders because I know I'm not alone in this journey.
Amelia’s dad shared his perception of his daughter’s determination to complete her degree. He noted,

*Lo más mejor…de mi hija es que tiene mucha voluntad…Yo veo en ella, que no tira la toalla. Porque …yo llego [de] trabajar noche..llegó como a las 12 de la noche y sé que ella va a estar [estudiando]. Siempre veo que está la luz aquí del cuarto a todo el tiempo. Hay veces que llego y la cobijo o equis cosa…porque hay veces que se queda dormida en la computadora y la computadora encendida… y pues allí ya se queda y ni se cobija…estamos muy orgullosa de ella”*

**Tan cerca, pero tan lejos: Giving Time and Space as Support**

Amelia’s parents felt they connect with her daughter and support her educational journey. Although Amelia expressed frustration about not being able to get support from her parents on projects and assignments and the stress it caused her to find the answers on her own, she knows her parents are there for her. She does attempt to share what she is working on, and her parents listen. Her parents may not understand the workload she has or the energy that goes into homework but they do recognize when she feels overwhelmed. They give her a space to take care of what she needs to while they are on standby waiting to support her. They use food to begin the conversation to help her during those times. Her mom noted,

*Ay, pues yo la veo tan estresada que voy hacer algo de comer para que no se tenga que preocupar por la comida o cosas así… porque uno no puede hacer mucho ahí. Porque la verdad es que uno no puede hablar inglés ni le entienden a lo que está haciendo. ¿De qué forma la pueden ayudar o consolar? Le damos su espacio. Sí, porque si no podemos ayudarle no estar estorlando también.*

Amelia’s parents pick up on her physical cues of when to talk to her and try to approach her. Her mom also shared, “*No, simplemente ya cuando la miro que ella como que sonrío, entonces le digo yo ‘A ver, ¿traes hambre?’ Me dice ‘Pues*
Amelia appreciates her parents’ effort to connect with her and their words of encouragement to help her get through. She shared she feels calm and de-stressed when her parents cheer her on with phrases such as *Tu ya sabes lo que tienes que hacer, Échale ganas* or *Tus esfuerzos poco a poco se están demostrando y ya estas mas cerca de lo que quieras lograr*. Although her parents do not tell her directly, she knows she makes them proud.

Similarly, Benjamin’s mother feels she is able to support him by giving him space when he is studying without interrupting or questioning him. She shared she worries to see him stressed and overly focused on school, but she understands the rigor of the classes and is available to talk and listen to him when he needs. His mom said,

*Pues sí me siento bien feliz. Me siento contenta, pero a veces me da tristeza porque a veces está muy ocupado, no hablamos...yo me pongo a pensar y digo ‘Pobre mi hijo’. Porque pues en realidad es mucho estudio, es mucho estrés también.*

Maribel’s mom understands that students need their space to do their work and gives her the time she needs to focus on her homework. She does not expect Maribel to do more than what she is able to and supports the time an effort she dedicates to school:

*Hay que darles su tiempo, que ellos tomen su tiempo que ocupan...porque muchas familias yo pienso que presionan a los hijos que tienen que ayudar en la casa, yo sé que si es algo importante. Pero yo, personalmente, te puedo decir que a mí no me ha importado eso. Yo prefiero que ellos se involucren en lo que se están preparando para su educación académica. Y yo pienso que eso es muy importante, darles su tiempo a ellos, porque ya es mucho estrés de las escuelas.*
Summary

The focus of my study was to understand how parents of first-generation Latinx college students support and engage with their children as they pursue a college education. My study sought to identify the ways students use the lessons learned at home to overcome challenges and navigate their college experience. Yosso’s (2005) CCW framework was used to identify how families used the forms of capitals during their journey in higher education. The 4 capitals identified were aspirational, familial, navigational, and resistant. Three main themes emerged from the data analysis with consequent sub-themes related to cultural capitals.

The first theme, Maldita Pobreza: Leveraging Resistant and Navigational Capital Through Financial Challenges, discusses the challenges all 5 families faced with financing their child’s college education. Despite not understanding the financial aid process and how the awarding is allocated to students, all the participants managed to navigate the financial cost of college and pay college their expenses. Each family shared their experiences and the sacrificios they have made to secure their student goes to school and does not have to worry about finances. Students discussed their willingness to help their parents pay for college even though it meant working multiple jobs. Parents of the participants shared their view on the importance of education and letting their children know money will not be a reason why not go to school.

The second theme, De Tal Palo, Tal Astilla: Overcoming Educational Challenges with Aspirational Capital, presents findings related to the hopes and dreams families have to obtain a college degree for a better future. Parents of participants have diverse educational attainment ranging from a second-grade education to a vocational career in their homeland. All parents work physically demanding jobs and first-hand understand what it is not to have completed a
higher education. Through their experiences, they often reiterate the importance of going to college, so their children do not have limited opportunities. Three of the 5 students shared their experience with working physically intense jobs which have helped them push through obtaining a higher education. Their parents often remind them of those experiences and contrast the weight of learning versus the physical pain they endured. When students are struggling in college, their parents motivate them and remind them that *si se puede* and they can achieve anything they set themselves to. Student participants use their aspirational capital to navigate college when they are faced with challenges.

Finally, the third theme *Amor Eterno: Fostering Wellness, Love, and Support Through Familial Capital* captured the importance of love as a supporting mechanism for students. Acts of love were demonstrated by frequent communication between the student and parent whether it was a phone call or simple text message. Using technology platforms such as FaceTime were important for both the student and the parent. Students shared a sense of comfort when they talk and “see” their parents through videocalls. All participants shared the importance of food as a way of support. One of the parents’ primary ways of showing their children their love and support was by providing meals either at home or to send to their students when they went back to school. Students shared a deep appreciation for the care their parents provided, and food was a way they connected. Parents also have reinforced their student’s potential and remind them to *echarle ganas*. When their student is lacking motivation, their parents find the right words to remind them they will complete their education.

Chapter 4 presented the findings from *pláticas* with my participants. In chapter 5, I present a summary of the findings from this chapter in relation to my research questions. The chapter also presents a discussion specific to the capitals
found from the family’s experiences. It concludes by presenting recommendations for practitioners and implications for future research.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

This work was done with *mucho sacrificio*. It meant having to dig deep into my personal experiences and ways of living. My upbringing was very much rooted believing in oppressive ways that exist. I was often directed to lose sight of my traditions and culture and to assimilate to the dominant culture to be successful. Through this work I have learned to accept who I am and view my experiences both personally and professionally with an asset-based approach. This study demonstrates the significance of advancing educational equity work with a counter deficit perspective. I position my work to dismantle systemic oppression in a way that is equitable, just, and inclusive. I aspire to bring value to the assets Latinx families bring to our institutions and inform educators how to better serve students entering our schools.

My phenomenological research sought to understand the ways in which families of first-generation Latinx students at a HSI designated university support them during their educational journey. More so, it sought to understand the impact family involvement and engagement has on student persistence and challenging the deficit ways of defining involvement. Using Yosso’s (2005) CCW model allowed for an understanding of the assets students learn from their families in order to drive their persistence in college beyond the first year. I used a qualitative approach using *pláticas* as the methodology to understand the experiences of students and their parents as they navigate through their college experiences as first-generation Latinx students. *Pláticas* methodology allowed for me to capture the voices of 5 families by encouraging them to share their journey while focusing on CCW assets. My research not only gave a space for students to share their
experiences, but also invited parents to contribute their story as they support their student in the college process. This chapter serves as a voice to advance the work of social justice and equity for Latinx families in higher education. I propose a new model for serving Latinx students and their families by sharing the experiences of the familias in my study and the significance it has to student success.

The chapter is organized into four sections. The first section reviews the findings from the pláticas with families. The second section provides an in-depth discussion of my findings in relation to the research questions used to guide my study. The third section offers recommendations for practice from my analysis of participant voices and literature on the topic. The last section includes implications for future research. The chapter concludes by providing a summary of the chapter and the entire study.

Summary of Research Findings

The research questions guiding my study were intended to understand what familial support and engagement look like and how students use their CCW assets to navigate college as first-generation Latinx students. I wanted to listen directly from my familias how they experience higher education and what they do to support their students through this journey. This was made possible by using a phenomenological approach to understand the lived experiences of my participants and to hear first-hand how they have navigated their college experience. To do so, I used pláticas as the methodology as a way to disrupt traditional ways of knowing and building new knowledge in a culturally responsive way. The method I chose gave a space for my participants to share their lived realities in ways they are familiar with, pláticando. Pláticas is an appropriate methodology for the Latinx
community as it focuses on cultural formalities (Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2015). The following are findings from my pláticas with my familias.

**Con Mucho Dolor y Sacrificio: Family Sacrifices While Paying for College**

*Pláticas* allowed an insight to how familial support and engagement showed up for first-generation Latinx students while pursuing a college education. Despite the challenges experienced during college, families reflected how they have learned to resist and navigate through those difficult situations. Financial hardships were a common finding amongst all participants. Although faced with adversity due to finances, parents acknowledge the value of education and found ways to fund their students' education. Participants described having a limited understanding of the financial aid process in higher education, however, they did not give up and navigated to pay for expenses despite numerous hurdles. Parents’ narratives described the sacrificios they lived such as paying high transaction penalty fees for withdrawing early retirement funds and accepting federal parent loans without truly understanding the process. Families discussed the creative ways of making money such as working extra shifts on their days off, selling personal belongings such as gold jewelry they had for years, and recycling cans for profit. Additionally, students shared they work multiple jobs while in college to help with paying for their expenses.

Two of the five participants returned home after their first year in college because they did not qualify for grants and resulted in having to pay out of pocket for the expenses. While trying to support their student’s decision, parents reiterated the importance of education and not giving up. The families worked with their students to help them get back on track and go back to school. One student took a year off to work and save money. Another student opted to stay
home and attend community college before transferring to her local public institution. One participant did not go to school out of high school because he did not understand the financial aid process. He worked for 2 years to save money so he can pay out of pocket. His mom eventually encouraged him to stop working so he can go to school and pursue his college degree.

Students acknowledge the sacrificios their parents have made to pay for college, and they are paying it forward by doing well in school and finding ways to also help their parents pay for college. Students feel it is a sense of responsibility and a belief that they “owed a debt” to their parents by going to school (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). All 5 student participants are currently working, and 3 of the 5 work 2 jobs to help pay their college expenses. They aspire to one day give back to their parents in monetary form as an appreciation for the support they currently receive.

De Tal Palo, Tal Astilla: Overcoming Educational Challenges with Aspirational Capital

Aspirational capital showed to be the greatest source for motivation and encouragement to navigate challenges and overcome obstacles for my student participants. Although their parents did not go to college themselves, they have demonstrated support for their students by sharing their own personal stories of not obtaining an education. All 5 families currently work, or have worked, physically demanding jobs such as construction, housekeeping, or factory jobs. Parents noted they do not want their children to have to go through the same physical demands and low paying wages. They acknowledge that education provides opportunities for better jobs and financial stability. Three students shared their experience of working in physically demanding jobs at a young age that served as important moments in their lives. This allowed them to understand the
value and opportunities higher education provides. Their parents continue to remind them about those experiences when students lose motivation or are challenged with school.

Families also recognize the value of the education system in the U.S. compared to their homeland. All parent participants mentioned their limitation to obtaining an education themselves was due to financial constraints and not being able to pay for their elementary education:

*En México yo no estudié mucho. No había muchas oportunidades de estudiar allá. Nosotros éramos muchos [hermanos], éramos como diez. Y para estudiar la mayoría de las personas que estamos en el rancho, casi no estudiamos mucho y si vamos a estudiar tenemos que salir de ahí a estudiar más lejos. Y si no tenemos el modo (money), pues no vamos a ir.* (Amelia’s Dad)

Despite the fact that parents did not understand the educational system in the U.S, they challenged their children to do their best. Parents and students shared the way in which encouragement was given in order to achieve the highest potential by questioning why they did not do well in school or were not highlighted in the classroom during parent-teacher conferences. Students learned at a young age of the expectations their parents had of them to do well in school. Students tell the ways in which these messages and stories from their parents serve as a way to help them persevere through difficult times in college. One participant mentioned his persistence to succeed was connected to him seeing his mother getting her driver’s license in the U.S. despite not knowing how to speak the English language, nor knowing how to read and write. His mother reminds him that if she is able to accomplish that with her limitations, he can do anything. He noted:

*I think about, [my mom. She] has a second-grade education. She can’t read, she can’t write. And I am like, ‘Wow, that’s tough.” Imagine going to a different country and not knowing… the language… And so I’ve seen my*
parents' resiliency in the way that they handle situations...My mom had to learn how to drive. And she was like, "I'm going to learn how to drive." ...She got up and she learned how to drive... And I knew she was doing it because of us. She wanted us to have a good life and not suffer as much. And so I knew she was learning how to drive because of us...She also took her driving license test. I don't know, it took her nine attempts to finally pass her test, probably more, but she passed it and she was studying for it. And it was like, "How are you studying for it if your reading is not that great?" But I guess I saw her grit and I knew that I had to have the same mentality of not giving up and continuing to do it, because if you don't do it for yourself, who's going to do it for you? (Benjamin).

*Amor Eterno: Fostering Wellness, Love, and Support Through Familial Capital*

Familial involvement appeared to be fundamental in the persistence of students as they navigate their undergraduate education. When presented with challenges, students seek their family for support and encouragement. Frequent communication, whether a phone call or a simple text message, demonstrates to students that their parents are there for them unconditionally. Parents reiterated they feel they support their student by checking in on them periodically to make sure they are doing okay and help them with anything they may need. Video calls also allowed for students to connect with their family and share their college experience. Two students shared that they have called their parents during lectures or co-curricular activities to demonstrate to their parents firsthand what they do in college. Parents shared having a sense of pride to see their children doing well in school and enjoying their experience.

While the parents of the participants had limited educational experience themselves, they remind their students about the value of education. Through their own pláticas with their children, parents reiterate the capability their child has to achieve anything they set their mind to. Parents have demonstrated their support for education to their children from a young age by challenging them to do better.
Their parents set high expectations by not giving up and looking for the answers they need to solve their situation. Students communicated that they carry with them the words of encouragement their parents have given them to push through their experience in college.

Familial support also showed up from parents by giving the time and space students need. Parents shared their experiences of seeing their children stressed out about the academic load, and although they don’t understand the rigor of assignments, they try to support them by letting them take care of what they need to and listening to what they are going through. Parents have learned to read their student’s body language and when they see the student is stressed out, they ask what they can do to help. Students shared that simply being able to talk about what they are experiencing makes them supported.

Answering the Research Questions

My study builds on and adds to the literature of educational experiences of first-generation Latinx students in higher education. More precisely, my study unpacked the multiple ways in which educational journeys are a family affair that involve distinct ways of offering and accepting support to advance the student’s college-going experience. Additionally, my study explored the ways students use their cultural wealth assets learned from their family to persist through college past their first year. Family participants shared their experiences and discussed how they used various capitals to navigate higher education. This section provides an overview of the findings in connection to the research questions.
How do parent(s) of first-generation Latinx students at an HSI university support their student as they pursue their undergraduate degree?

The familias in my research shared the ways support is given while pursuing a college degree. Through pláticas my participants talked about how their parents support, encourage, and motivate them. Support and involvement showed up for families during challenges such as financial hardships, motivation to continue college, and helping students stay consistent with their goals of pursuing an education. Constant communication was important for both students and parents during their college experience. Parents shared the value they see in education and told stories about the sacrificios they have endured to make their students' education possible. They acknowledge not knowing or understanding the American education system, nonetheless, they let their students know they are by their side for what they need:

_Pues yo le digo a ella, ‘El estudio es duro pero usted puede y echele ganas. Todo está en la meta que usted se ponga y lo va a lograr’...Uno no puede hacer mucho por ellos. No pueden hablar inglés ni entienden lo que está haciendo. ¿De qué forma la pueden ayudar o consolar?...Le damos su espacio, porque si no podemos ayudarla no estar estorbando también. Ya después vemos como esta._ (Amelia’s Mom)

Lack of information and understanding does not mean lack of interest for parents (Kiyama, 2010). Parents reminded their student that _si si puede_ and that they will achieve their educational goals. Consistent with the literature, my study showed parents are powerful influences and motivators for students (Kimaya & Harper, 2018).

Research indicates family engagement and involvement in their children’s education is known to be critical to their educational success (Bergerson, 2009; Kiyama et al, 2015). Findings from my study assert the importance of involving
families in the educational journey of their students. Parent involvement has historically been associated with traditional actions aligned to the dominant culture including consisting of Euro-centric, middle-class, single income households with English speaking and college-educated parents (Ortiz, et. al, 2012; Kiyama et al, 2015; Liou & Matias, 2018). Additionally, familial involvement and engagement opportunities are often designed with Euro-centric views and practices such as monolingual activities and offering parent involvement opportunities during traditional working hours (Larrotta, 2011; Liou & Matias, 2018; Ortiz, et. al, 2012). The research findings in my study indicate that familial involvement and engagement show up in multiple ways that help students as they pursue an undergraduate education. More so, students come equipped with CCW assets.

**In what ways do community cultural wealth assets help first-generation Latinx students navigate their university experience on their way to college completion?**

Contrary to the deficit belief that first-generation Latinx students may not be ready for college, my findings indicate that students in fact do come ready with CCW assets which help them navigate and persist through college. Students expressed moments of frustration of not being able to ask their parents for help for assignments or navigating administrative processes with the university, nonetheless, all students know their parents stand by them as they navigate higher education. Students shared the *pláticas* they have with their parents during difficult times and how the support they receive during those moments help them push through and not give up. My participants referenced the ways their parents transmitted the forms of CCW and shared stories of how they utilize that capital.
Aspirational, familial, navigational and resistant capital were the most prevalent CCW assets found in my study.

Aspirational capital refers to the hopes and dreams for the future despite any barriers or challenges experienced (Yosso, 2005). Consistent with the literature, participant data in my study showed the various ways students use their aspirational capital to navigate college. As first-generation Latinx college students, they struggle to maneuver through the nuances of education and experience a lack of sense of belonging. Students expressed the ways their families' hopes and dreams drive them to achieving their degree. The messages students receive from their parents about the importance of college are inculcated in their students and their educational aspirations are influenced by their parents (Ceja, 2004). Parents shared they learned the value of education from their personal experiences despite not obtaining a higher education themselves. Nonetheless, they instilled the importance of going to school to have better opportunities for social and economic mobility to their children. Parents reminded their students of the limited opportunities they had and the physically straining jobs they had to work because they did not have an education. They acknowledge that obtaining an education may not be easy, however, it is more rewarding than to work strenuous jobs. Families form educational ideologies in different ways that serve as positive influences (Kiyama, 2010).

Familial capital as described by Yosso (2005) refers to cultural knowledge learned from family and community networks. Participant data revealed familial capital showing up as fostering wellness, communication, and empowerment. Undoubtedly, family plays an important role in the retention of Latinx students as they impact their willingness to stay in school (Hernandez, 2002). Parents and students have constant communication through various means and they both feel
connected to each other and supported through their educational experience. Parents shared they feel they contribute to their students' experience by providing them with care such as cooking meals, listening to their students when they want to talk, reminding them to take care of themselves, and doing acts of kindness such as fixing their car or helping them pay for expenses.

Navigational capital was closely connected to resistant capital. Navigational capital attributes to the skills we learn as we maneuver through institutions not designed for people of color (Yosso, 2005). Resistant capital refers to knowledge and skills used through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality. Students in my study shared they ways they have leveraged both navigational and resistant capital in their educational journey, particularly when facing financial challenges. All family participants come from working class backgrounds and they do not earn high paying wages that allow for them to pay college out of pocket. They depend on financial aid, however, not all families qualified for gift aid. Other students that did receive grants or scholarships still needed to work in order to help pay for additional educational expenses. As first-generation Latinx college families, my participants did not understand the financial aid process and the gap of knowing the system resulted in 2 students dropping out of college due to financial constraints. They redirected their educational journey and found ways to get back on track. Students have witnessed firsthand the sacrificios their parents have made to help them pay for college. They acknowledge the support their parents have made to get them through. They work hard to persist through their education in order to pay their parents back for all they have done for them:

I do feel a need to support and come back full circle to my parents. I think the biggest thing is being financially well, and then being able to even come back and try to help support my parents. That's a huge thing for me. I want to be successful for myself, and I want to be successful to be able to help out my parents and my family. (Andrés)
Recommendations for Practice

Educational practice can be guided by an understanding of evidence-based research. It is my hope that by combining the findings from my research and the existing scholarly literature on familial involvement and engagement in higher education, there are informed recommendations for practice in institutions designated as HSIs. My recommendations center around providing welcoming spaces for first-generation Latinx families while offering culturally relevant programming intended to meet families where they are both in curricular and co-curricular spaces. Old ways of knowing, thinking, and doing are no longer acceptable as students in higher education are rapidly diversifying. We must begin to view our practices with an unapologetic lens to help support the students at our institutions. Participant narratives provide valuable insights in the ways institutions can engage families intended to support their students in the educational process. My recommendations are intentional calls of action for practice and future research. The stories of my participants are used to provide the following recommendations for campus leaders such as staff and administrators as well as instructional recommendations which can be used in the classroom. As institutional leaders, we have the responsibility to transform our practices to better support our students of color and their families.

Recommendations for Campus Leaders

Engage in culturally relevant approaches that intentionally engage Latinx Familias

It goes beyond representation…We can say we are an HSI that serve 60% Latinx…that is just a number…But if you don’t have specific resources and curriculum tailored to their success, then it’s just performative activism…Universities need to go higher than just getting a number of students that are BIPOC communities and actually instill designs for success. (Maribel)
Critically reflecting on institutional infrastructures and investing in culturally relevant practices to become more Latinx responsive to address the needs of diverse students is essential for Latinx student success (Contreras, 2019). Students feel validated when they see themselves represented in the university. Institutions can find ways to intentionally implement activities where students and families can show up to the university just as they are and are welcomed for what they bring to our spaces. It is not enough for institutions to have an HSI designation to indicate they are Latinx student serving. Designing and inviting Latinx families to campus for programming specifically designed for them such as Orientation, Family Weekends, and campus events throughout the year in the primary language of families is important. Existing efforts focused on low-income, first-generation, and families of color are largely absent and family engagement is not systematically built to focus on diverse student populations (Kiyama & Harper, 2018). Maribel noted the following,

Having more community events…at times where it’s most reasonable for parents to come…like afternoon or nighttime…A lot of parents are off work…so not having something in the middle of the day where it’s impossible for them to get off. It’s understanding the social and cultural barriers that are placed on them to make it out to these things.

Universities can also prioritize supporting linguistic diversity throughout campus. Offering programming in Spanish helps families feel welcomed and can feel a part of the experience. Jimena shared,

Having more culturally relevant events and programs that families feel comfortable coming to. Where they don’t have to worry about not having things not said in their language…Knowing that there’s going to be people that speak their same language…My parents don’t like to go to event’s because they [don’t speak English] ...Just make sure families feel welcomed.

When appropriate linguistic programming is provided, students can enjoy the experience and activities with their families without having to feel they are the
middle person between the university and their parents. Students often are having to translate information to parents, and they miss out on what is happening in order to ensure their parents are understanding. Jimena added,

[I have always had to translate] ... (My parents) would feel left out because they wouldn’t understand. And so then in a sense, I felt like I also lost a lot of information because I was worried about translating to make sure my parents would understand and not feel left out or behind.

If an HSI is serving a large amount of first-generation Latinx students, representation and embracing their culture on campus is important. The findings from my study align with research in that creating an atmosphere that embraces their culture is important (Witkowsky, et al., 2020). Rethinking programs and activities to engage families in the experience of their students is critical for first-generation students. Latinx parents can serve as a critical vehicle fostering student success and provide benefits for student learning and development. A school’s commitment to listening and engaging in dialogue with families is crucial (Larrotta & Yamamurra, 2011).

Representation matters for student success. HSIs must adjust services to address the gap of knowledge for Latinx families. Institutions need to have an appropriate number of staff representative of the student population to work with families in order to offer a culturally relevant perspective. Hiring staff that have similar experiences to the student population can help families feel connected and understood. It creates a welcoming environment for families to contact the school to have their questions answered. Maribel quoted,

Just having people from our [Latinx] community and staff [is needed]. Because if someone already has a firsthand experience on all of that, they are able to inform other university staff about their own experiences. And then they're able to build off that for events and stuff for families and students.
Implement clear and transparent information and resources for students and families beyond the first year. The findings revealed that paying for college is one of the most prevalent challenges for families. The issues of financing a college education and its impact on Latino student retention is critical when you consider the national trend of increased student tuition while decreasing financial aid programs (Hernandez & Lopez, 2004). Universities can invest in offering financial aid and financial literacy programs to students and their families about the process of paying for college. More specifically, support beyond the first year is important to retain students. Two of the 5 student participants withdrew from college at some point due to financial reasons. They shared they did not understand the financial aid process and could no longer afford to pay. One student delayed his entry to higher education because of his limited understanding about the cost of college. Universities can create resources such as a road map for students beginning in the first year until graduation for the student to be informed of what to expect and what financial resources are available. Designing culturally relevant financial literacy information about the real cost and value of education is important for families to understand the process.

Additionally, information can be provided for families in Spanish for parents to understand the content. Often universities and college access programs offer support such as workshops to inform prospective students about the financial aid process and it is vital that this support continues past the first year. It is the responsibility of the school to meet the students where they are and provide them with what they need to be successful. Outreach and educational efforts are needed to educate Latinx students and their families about financial aid programs. Financial planning seminars and materials that are language sensitive should be developed for Latinx parents (Hernandez, & Lopez, 2004).
Build Inclusive Models to Involve Familias in the College Process.

Higher education institutions need to rethink how they involve parents in the experience of their students (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011). When first generation Latinx students go to college, their family goes with them (Contreras, 2019). My research findings gave insight to the ways families are involved in their students' education from home and they shared their limited experiences with involvement on campus. Most parents indicated that they have not been to campus and the graduation ceremony will most likely be the first time they visit the university. Parents also shared they would be willing to go if they had the opportunity to do so. As first-generation families, parents may feel incompetent, intimidated, and overwhelmed with the college experience (Cuevas, 2020). Providing opportunities for families to be informed about the college process beyond their first year is helpful for parents to understand the process and be involved with their students. Modeling after parent programs such as the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) program can be helpful to implement at the university for parents of students that are currently enrolled at the university. These access programs are focused on cultivating a college-going culture. Institutions can offer similar programs for families already enrolled in college to create a college-completion culture. Fostering spaces to connect parents with other parents can be helpful to form communities and cultivate their social capital throughout the process. Parents can support one another and share their lived experiences to better serve their students and navigate unfamiliar territories. It also provides opportunities for families to become aware of the various campus resources for their students to help them be successful. Maribel’s mom shared,

*Tal vez que haga más talleres como para los padres de cómo nosotros podemos ayudar en las clases o involucrarlos…porque muchas veces no lo sabemos y no más nos basamos a que les dejamos todo el trabajo a los*
hijos que lo hagan. Y yo pienso que también es mucho estrés para los hijos cuando los padres no nos involucramos tanto porque no sabemos nosotros en qué programas ir o adónde acudir, o dónde pedir ayuda.

Parents want to know more about student college lifestyle and ways of how to be actively involved (Cuevas, 2020). Having a dedicated parent engagement and/or family office on campus that actively outreaches to parents to get them involved on campus can be a step towards fostering a family culture at the institution. The office can be fully part of an organizational structure that intentionally focused to engage with families before and during enrollment as well as throughout the student’s college experience. Higher education spaces should intentionally develop relationships with Latinx families to further support Latinx students (Kiyama & Harper, 2018).

**Foster Partnerships with K-12 Schools.** Outreach efforts focusing on the transition to college should begin at the elementary level to better equip families for the process. The transition to college is important but also how teaching students to navigate college as first-generation students is equally significant. College readiness programming can focus on what happens after the first year in college, what resources are available to the student and family, and how to be academically prepared. Access to higher education and staff from universities serve as a resource to families and helps families get familiar with the process. Leveraging the family and the home environment can be used as an effective retention tool by familiarizing Latinx parents with the college setting and providing them with an opportunity to meet and develop rapport with college educators and support staff (Hernandez, 2000).
Recommendation for Instructional Practices in the Classroom

Increase Capacity for Cultivating Equity-Minded Educators. Higher education institutions have the responsibility to serve their students. This implies we must reframe our perspectives about what it means to serve students and we must redefine our institutional identity to foster student success (Garcia, 2018, 2019). Institutional efforts need to foster around capacity to build equity minded leaders and educators and to design equity-minded services and pedagogical practices to narrow equity gaps and improve student outcomes. Investing in faculty and staff to access coordinated professional development opportunities that raise consciousness of social justice and inform teaching methods and practices with an equity lens is important. Particularly in HSIs where there is a significant population of Latinx students, institutions need to attract and retain inclusive educators to advance inclusive values and culture. Equity-minded professional development for faculty, staff, and administrators is essential to increase campus-wide understanding of the implications of changing student demographics and embrace HSI identity and purpose (Hurtado & Ruiz Alvarado, 2012; Malcolm-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2017). It is important for educators to reframe deficit thinking practices and learn asset-based approaches to foster student success for students of color.

Advance Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Pedagogy. Besides culturally responsive co-curricular activities at institutions, it is equally important to offer culturally relevant curriculum. According to Matos (2021) students know they matter when they can see themselves both in the curriculum as co-curricular activities. By including a diverse perspective, the curriculum can validate the spaces students are in and their experiences they have. Offering ethnic programs
of study relevant to the student population allows them to serve students through curricula (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015). Jimena shared,

I think my first 2 years at (HSI institution) was very difficult for me to make those connections with my professors because I am a Psychology major. I felt like there was nothing in common between me and my professor. And because they didn't look like me, I felt intimidated to reach out to them or even have conversations with them. So it wasn't until I declared a Chicanx Studies minor that I started to make those connections with my professors because they look like me, they spoke the same language I did. They had similar background stories. And so that in a sense made me feel comfortable in reaching out and forming those networks, attending office hours, and just asking for help when I needed it.

Garcia (2019) introduces the idea of fostering an HSI identity enacted through a social justice curriculum and culturally relevant programs, services, and practices. To achieve this, institutions must offer programs with diverse perspectives and teachings of racial and cultural histories. Faculty should also gain an awareness and understanding of cultural wealth students bring with them to the classroom and foster their own capitals to help students succeed (Matos, 2021). Faculty should find creative ways to incorporate opportunities for students to cultivate their CCW through different assignments and projects that may include their family or embed service-learning opportunities that tie into their culture and background. Faculty can also foster spaces for students to work with each other and acknowledge who is in the classroom and uphold their cultural identities.

Maribel shared an experience about not having culturally relevant curriculum in her program and the lack of representation in the field of study. She shared,

It’s funny because I've called them out on it (not having representation). I reached out and I emailed the chair, all the faculty, everyone who's just on the ESRM website that's listed. And I have the email. But I basically called them out for saying like, ‘How can they be a program focused on the environment and not taking aspects of environmental justice and how can
you be so close to a community like (my city) that experiences so many factors of environmental racism and you don’t do outreach and research with them. You don’t engage with the community. Because you can’t have environmental justice if you don’t have social justice first.’ So I feel like that program lacks any aspect of that. And then the Intern Program Director at the time, she responded back to me and she just had a rebuttal for every single little thing. Because I was like, ‘You guys don’t have diversity in your staff. You guys lack curriculum that’s relevant to environmental racism’, stuff like that, right? And she was like, ‘Yeah, we do. We teach it in ESRM 100.’ And it’s funny because I’m currently in ESRM 100 and there’s no mention of any of that stuff. For diversity, she’s like, ‘We have staff who have dual citizenship.’ And I was like, ‘From where? Ireland and the United States?’ So she just had a rebuttal for everything. So I think after that, that kind of put the nail in the coffin for me. I was like, ‘I really don’t feel comfortable with these people.’

**Facilitate Access to Mentorship.** While parents play an essential role in the success of their students, institutions have the responsibility to support the student while they are on students at their campus. Findings revealed that students often have experienced difficulties in the classroom with professors and they often do not feel comfortable nor prepared to approach and talk to educators on campus. Andrés shared,

I also had an incident with a professor once that he made me feel dumb. He just made me feel stupid. Since then, I had a big challenge in talking to my professors, going to office hours. Yeah, it was definitely a moment where I gained fear over my professors at a certain point that I didn't want to sound dumb.

Two participants shared negative encounters with professors, and they shared that they talked to their parents about it. Parents recommended they seek the help they need to overcome the obstacles they are facing. Andrés noted he learned his resilience and from “his momma”. He stated,

With the professor thing, I told myself, ‘I'm here to learn, right? Who else is going to help me if it's not the professor? I'm also paying for this out of my own pocket. I'm going to get something out of this.’ I will ignore my fear, my pride, whatever it may be, but things need to be done, so I'm going to get that done.”
Institutions can invest in offering formalized mentoring opportunities for students with faculty in a culturally responsive way. Designing faculty mentoring opportunities while understanding the landscape of their students and the capitals they hold is a step forward to offering this type of support. Educators can mentor students on how to show up in the classroom and help navigate academia as first-generation students.

**Hire Educators Representative of the Student Population.** Students shared the importance of seeing faculty, staff, and administrators that look like them to foster a sense of belonging on campus. Although not a prominent finding in my study, students use their linguistic capital to navigate spaces in higher education. Maribel noted her experience in her Chicanx Studies classes, “I feel comfortable. I feel like I’m at home. Because that’s what I talk at home, either full on Spanish or Spanglish.” Institutions need to find ways to validate students’ cultural wealth to improve equitable practices. Linguistic capital refers to the various language and communication skills students bring with them to their college environment (Yosso, 2005). Institutions must take stock of the campus’ student demographic and develop strategic plans to invite diversity and inclusivity (Matos, 2021). Hiring diverse faculty on campus to reflect the population of the campus student demographic is critical. Garcia (2019) notes that to construct a Latinx-serving identity, it is essential to maintain and enhance the cultural and linguistic epistemologies of students. Jimena shared how minoring in Chicanx Studies and having professors that are similar to her have fostered a sense of validation and belonging to her campus,

I think just because obviously within our [Latinx] culture, there's a lot of *dichos o frases* that if you translate them to English, they won't necessarily make sense. And so when my Chicanx studies professors would say them I'd be like, ‘Oh my God, *yo se se ese dicho.*’ And that in a sense made me feel like, ‘Oh, I can start forming these connections or they will understand
where I'm coming from. The struggles I have to face. How I have to balance school, work, and family." And just hearing about their journeys as well made me feel like we have similar backgrounds. And because I see you as a professor, I know that I can also achieve my goals. So just having them know the Spanish language made me feel like I'm at home talking to my parents or my friends and family. (Jimena) 

Having educators on campus that resemble the student population sends a welcoming message to families and they can feel more comfortable visiting campus. Maribel notes that her mom felt comfortable going to school events with her that were culturally relevant. She shared,

Yeah, I think she really liked [the Latinx event] because growing up, a lot of my teachers were not Latinos, they're mostly white. And my mom can speak English, but I think the fact that there's faculty that resemble our community here and she's able to communicate with them and for them to be on a more understanding level, really meant a lot.

**Implications for Future Research**

My study considered the implications of involving and engaging parents in the educational experience of first-generation Latinx students. The experiences shared in my study cannot be generalized to the entire Latinx student and family population; however, their narratives can be used to inform practice and future research as it relates to persistence, retention, and student success efforts. My contribution to this effort has been through pláticas with students and parents to understand their experiences firsthand. This study works towards giving a voice to parents who have otherwise not had the opportunity to share their stories of how they are also working alongside their students to support them. My work adds to the scholarship of supporting Latinx student success at HSIs. My study is vital to the field’s understanding of how Latinx families play an essential role in the experience of their students.

As the landscape in higher education is changing to a more diverse playing field with the rapid growth of HSIs, it is critical that we understand who our
students are and what they bring with them to our institutions. We must also reframe the way we as educators are ready to serve the families that enter our schools. My study provided insight into some of the challenges first-generation Latinx families face as they pursue a higher education at an HSI. It also provided an asset-based approach of what students bring with them to help them navigate these spaces and the ways their families engage with and support them.

Implications for future research includes investigating what support looks like from other family members. Participants in this study shared about other important people in their lives that have helped them through the process. It is also important to consider students who may not have parental support but may find sources of support from other kin. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge diverse student populations such as students who have lost their parents or non-traditional aged students who might have a different relationship with their parents compared to traditional age students.

Future research could further investigate familial involvement beyond the first year of first-generation Latinx students. There remain gaps in understanding familial involvement and engagement beyond the transition to higher education. A longitudinal study can be deployed to examine what involvement and engagement looks like and the impact it has on student success. Future research can also focus on graduate students pursuing a postgraduate degree and what familial support and involvement looks like at a postgraduate level.

My study included students with diverse living situations and the decision was factored by various factors. The type of involvement and engagement was different between students who lived at home with their parents and those who moved away to go to college. An opportunity is to study these families in a comparative study to examine their educational experiences.
Limitations

My study achieved its desired outcome of answering the research questions, however, I acknowledge the limitations that were presented. I recognize the narratives shared in this story do not capture the whole educational journey of students and their parents. My intention with this research was to illustrate how familial support shows up for students and by using Yosso’s theory, how CCW is used by first-generation Latinx students to navigate their college experience.

One limitation was the number of participants in the study. Broadening the participant pool can provide more detailed insight to the experiences of other families. Another area to consider is focusing on a matriculated status of students whether transfer or first-time freshman at an HSI university to explore whether there is a difference in familial involvement and engagement between the two groups and how it may vary and how they each navigate their experiences.

All the participants come from households where both parents are married and living together. While both parents were invited to participate in the study, not both showed up. Only 2 families participated where both the mother and father were present. Two other students only had their mother engage in a plática with me and their fathers were not available. One participant was not able to get her parents to participate. Involvement from the mother and father seem to vary from pláticas with the student and the parent.

This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and pláticas were via video calls where the opportunity to meet in person was limited. Considering the nature of my methodology using pláticas, it was challenging to build rapport with parents and build trust from the beginning. Some parents were nervous to engage in a plática with me and the use of technology was uncommon.
to them. By the time parents started to open up and trust me, we were near the allotted time to end the *plática*.

**Summary**

My research focused on understanding the role of family in the experience of first-generation Latinx students in college, particularly understanding the ways they support their students through their journey. This chapter discussed the findings from my pláticas with my *familias* and I made recommendations for practice based on what they shared and what has been found in the literature. I provided implications of the research and recommended areas for future research on this important topic. With the increased number of Latinx students entering higher education, now more than ever we need to reflect on our current practices and rethink the ways we are serving our students of color. To move the needle on social justice and equity, we must challenge old ways of knowing and adapt new ways that serve our students and families to encourage and support their success in higher education.

Pláticas de Mónica y Ana: “Ahora me quedo pensando en todo este logro que hiciste. Estoy tan sorprendida de la fuerza con la que tú te levantaste y ya no paraste. Fue como un relámpago que no paró hasta lograr este objetivo. Para mí eso es algo muy grande, muy valioso. Que yo estoy sorprendida y encima de ese logro me siento muy orgullosa de ti, porque aparte de los 3 hijos que yo tengo, ninguno ha llegado a donde tú estás. Y con una familia, con un matrimonio y con una casa que tienes que pagar. Y te levantaste y no paraste. Me siento muy feliz por ver la fuerza con la que tú te levantaste desde la ceniza y ahora estás brillando. Y para mí eso es un ejemplo para muchas personas que no quieren salir adelante y van a decir no pueden, porque todos podemos cuando queremos. Tú eres muy valiente y yo me siento muy orgullosa de ti. Te estás llevando a tus hijas también por el camino que tú estás caminando. Aparte, eres una mamá que ha vivido, que conoce la vida y que estás enseñando a tus hijas a tomar decisiones correctas. Porque nada es perfecto, pero todo se puede lograr y uno se puede levantar.” (Ana)
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APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT FLYER

Participants Needed!
Looking for students and their parent(s) to participate in a research study.

What is the study about:
- Understand how your parent(s) have supported you throughout your college experience
- How you have navigated your university experience as a first-generation college student

If you and your parents are willing to engage in a plática, please complete the following 5 minute questionnaire.
https://tinyurl.com/CCWscreening

Steps to participate:

1.) Complete the questionnaire
2.) Once you have completed the questionnaire, you will be contacted to participate in a 60 minute interview with the researcher
3.) You and your parent(s) will be invited to participate in a 60 minute plática with the researcher

Recruitment Materials_Spanish

¡Se necesitan participantes! ¿Interesado en ganar una tarjeta de regalo de $30? Buscando estudiantes y sus padres para participar en un estudio de investigación voluntario.

¿Sobre que es el estudio?
- Entender cómo sus padres lo han apoyado durante su experiencia universitaria.
- Cómo ha navegado su experiencia universitaria como estudiante universitario de primera generación

Si usted y sus padres están dispuestos a participar en una plática, ¡por favor complete el siguiente cuestionario de 5 minutos!
https://tinyurl.com/CCWscreening

Pasos para participar:

- Completa el cuestionario
Una vez que haya completado el cuestionario, será contactado para participar en una entrevista de 60 minutos con el investigador.

Usted y sus padres serán invitados a participar en una plática de 60 minutos con el investigador.
APPENDIX B: INVITATION EMAIL

Subject: Invitation to participate in dissertation study of first-generation Latinx students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution

Hello,

My name is Mónica Ocampo and I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership program at Fresno State University. I am conducting my dissertation research to understand the impact of familial support on first-generation Latinx students attending a Hispanic-Serving Institution. I am examining how family involvement and engagement impacts the persistence of first-generation Latinx students.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. Participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, I will ask you to meet with me for one 60-minute in-person or Zoom interview. Additionally, I would also meet with your parent(s) to understand their experiences as you navigate your college process. The interview will be conducted at a time of your choice. Your name will be kept confidential throughout the study.

To participate in this study, you must:

● Be a first-generation college student
● Your parent(s) must also be willing to participate in the study
● Identify as: Latino/a, Latinx, Chicano/a, Chicanx
● Currently enrolled at a Hispanic-Serving Institution
● Have been enrolled in college consecutively since fall 2020

If you would like to be considered to participate or have questions regarding my study, please complete this survey [https://tinyurl.com/CCWscreening](https://tinyurl.com/CCWscreening) or email me at mocampo1006@mail.fresnostate.edu Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Mónica Ocampo
Doctoral Candidate
Fresno State University
Department of Educational Leadership
(805) 663-3936
Invitación a participar en el estudio de tesis de estudiantes latinos de primera generación en una institución que sirve a hispanos

Hola,

Mi nombre es Mónica Ocampo y soy una candidata doctoral en el programa de Liderazgo Educativo de la Universidad Estatal de California, Fresno. Estoy realizando la investigación de mi tesis doctoral para comprender el impacto del apoyo familiar en los estudiantes latinx de primera generación que asisten a una Hispanic-Serving Institution. Estoy examinando cómo la participación de las familias afecta la persistencia de los estudiantes latinx de primera generación.

Me gustaría invitarte a participar en mi estudio. La participación es completamente voluntaria. Si decide participar, le pediré que nos juntemos para una entrevista en persona o de Zoom de 60 minutos. Además, también quisiera platicar con tus padres para comprender sus experiencias mientras navegas en tu proceso universitario. La entrevista se llevará a cabo en el momento que elijan. Su nombre se mantendrá confidencial durante todo el estudio.

Para participar en este estudio, debe:

- Ser un estudiante universitario de primera generación
- Sus padres también deben estar dispuestos a participar en el estudio
- Indentificar como: Latino/a, Latinx, Chicano/a, Chicanx
- Estar inscrito actualmente en una institucion Hispanic-Serving Institution
- Has estado inscrito en en un colegio/universidad consecutivamente desde otono de 2020

Si deseas ser considerado para participar o tienes preguntas sobre mi estudio, complete esta encuesta o envíe un correo electrónico a mocampo1006@mail.fresnostate.edu. Gracias por tu tiempo y consideración. Espero oír de usted pronto.

Atentamente,

Mónica Ocampo
Candidato a doctorado
Universidad Estatal de Fresno
Departamento de Liderazgo Educativo
(805) 663-3936
APPENDIX C: SCREENING SURVEY

Screening Survey

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Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1.1 Hello!

Thank you for your interest in my study. Please take a few moments to answer the following questions.

The purpose of this study is to understand the impact family involvement and engagement has on the persistence of first-generation Latinx students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Additionally, the study aims to explore in what ways the community cultural wealth assets learned from the family help students persist in college past their first year, in addition to understanding how students use them to navigate their college experience.

This study will include a two-part plática process. The first plática will be with the student to understand their experience in college. A follow-up plática will be with the student and the parent. Please ensure your parent(s) is willing to participate in this study as well.

-Gracias Mónica Ocampo

---

End of Block: Default Question Block

Start of Block: Block 2
Q3.1 This is a research study that is looking for participants that meet **ALL** of the following characteristics: First-generation college student Your parent(s) must also be willing to participate in the study Identify as: Latino/a, Latinx, Chicano/a, Chicani Currently enrolled at a Hispanic-Serving Institution Have been enrolled in college consecutively since fall 2020

Do you confirm that you meet all of the characteristics mentioned above?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

---

*Skip To: End of Block If This is a research study that is looking for participants that meet **ALL** of the following charact... = Yes*  
*Skip To: End of Survey If This is a research study that is looking for participants that meet **ALL** of the following charact... = No*  

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Start of Block: Block 1

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Q2.1 First Name:  **Primer Nombre:**  

______________________________________________________

---

Q2.2 Last Name:  **Apellido:**  

______________________________________________________
Q2.3 Email Address:

Correo electronico:

______________________________________________________________

Q2.4 Phone Number:

Numero de telefono:

______________________________________________________________

End of Block: Block 1
Start of Block: Block 3
APPENDIX D: PLÁTICAS PROTOCOL: STUDENT

Student Pláticas Guide: English

Goals: build rapport, establish comfortable communication, allow participants to tell their stories. The researcher will discuss the research questions with participants.

Script:

Hello, my name is Mónica Ocampo and I am a doctoral candidate conducting a research study for my dissertation. My study seeks to understand the impact family involvement and engagement has on the persistence of first-generation Latinx students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Additionally, the study aims to explore in what ways the community cultural wealth assets learned from the family help students persist in college past their first year, in addition to understanding how students use them to navigate their college experience. My two research questions are:

Research Question 1: How do families of first-generation Latinx students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution support their student as they pursue their baccalaureate degree?

Research Question 2: In what ways do community cultural wealth assets help first-generation Latinx students navigate their university experience on their way to college completion?

To help answer these questions I developed the following interview guide to capture your experiences. As a reminder, all information collected today will be kept confidential and your identity will not be shared or disclosed with anyone. If at any time you feel
uncomfortable with any of the questions, please feel free to let me know and you are not obligated to answer. There are no right or wrong answers.

I will be recording our conversation today and I will also be taking notes. Please feel free to stop me at any time if you have any questions. I have created the interview questions in a way for you to be able to be honest and open in answering them. I may have some follow up questions to ensure clarity and accuracy in understanding your responses.

This is the consent form which has all the information that I just reviewed with you. Please review the form, and sign and date it if you feel comfortable with all the terms involved.

Do you have any questions about anything I just explained before we get started?

The following prompts will guide our conversation

- Tell me about your family involvement in your educational journey.
- Describe your experiences in higher education

RQ 1

Tell me about your family involvement in your educational journey.

- Tell me about your family background.
- Tell me about any familial support and challenges you encounter as you pursue your college degree.
- In what ways have your cultural and family expectations influenced your decision to go to college?
- What were your family’s expectations of you going to college?
RQ 2

Tell me about your experiences in higher education.
● Why did you choose this institution?
● Can you share an example of a situation where you faced an educational challenge while you were in college?
  ○ In what ways has your family helped navigate educational challenges while in college? OR
  ○ Where do you look for support when you are faced with challenges? OR
  ○ What strategies have you used to navigate these challenges?
● In what ways do you use lessons learned at home to navigate your college experience?
● What can institutions of higher education do involve Latinx parents in the process and the experience to better support you?
● What can higher education leaders do to help create a welcoming space for families of Latinx students?

Conclusion
● If your parent(s) were here with you today, what would you like to say to them as far as their support/involvement in your college experience?
● Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Thank you for your time and sharing about your educational journey with me. I have enjoyed listening to your stories. I appreciate the time you took to answer my questions and contribute to my study.

As indicated in my invitation letter, I would like to have the opportunity to meet with you and your parent(s). What would be the best day and time to meet? Do you prefer in person or via Zoom?
Student Pláticas Guide: Spanish

Goals: build rapport, establish comfortable communication, allow participants to tell their stories. The researcher will discuss the research questions with participants.

Script:

Hola, mi nombre es Mónica Ocampo y soy candidata de doctorado realizando un estudio de investigación para mi tesis. Mi estudio busca comprender el impacto que tiene la participación y el apoyo de la familia en la persistencia de los estudiantes Latinos de primera generación en una Hispanic-Serving Institution. Además, el estudio tiene como objetivo explorar de qué manera las riquezas culturales de la comunidad aprendidas de la familia ayudan a los estudiantes a persistir en la universidad después del primer año. También tiene de objetivo de comprender cómo los estudiantes los usan para navegar su experiencia universitaria. Mis dos preguntas de investigación son:

Pregunta de investigación 1: ¿Cómo apoyan las familias de estudiantes Latinx de primera generación en una Hispanic-Serving Institution a sus estudiantes mientras obtienen su título de bachillerato?

Pregunta de investigación 2: ¿De qué manera usan sus riquezas culturales los estudiantes Latinx de primera generación a navegar su experiencia universitaria en su camino hacia la finalización de la universidad?

Para ayudar a responder estas preguntas, desarrollé la siguiente guía de entrevistas para capturar sus experiencias. Le recordamos que toda la información recopilada hoy se mantendrá confidencial y su identidad no se compartirá ni divulgará a nadie. Si en algún momento se siente incómodo con alguna de las preguntas, no dude en hacérmelo saber y no está obligado a responder. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas.

Estaré grabando nuestra conversación de hoy y también tomaré notas. No dude en detenerme en cualquier momento si tiene alguna pregunta. He creado las preguntas de la entrevista para que pueda ser honesto y abierto al responderlas. Es posible que tenga algunas preguntas después de que responda para tener claridad y precisión en la comprensión de sus respuestas.

Este es el formulario de consentimiento que tiene toda la información que acabo de revisar con usted. Por favor revise el formulario, fírmelo y si se siente cómodo con todos los términos involucrados.

¿Tiene alguna pregunta sobre algo que acabo de explicar antes de comenzar?

Las siguientes indicaciones guiarán nuestra conversación

- Cuénteme sobre la participación de su familia en su educación universitaria.
- Describe tus experiencias en la educación superior.
RQ 1
Cuénteme sobre la participación de su familia en su educación universitaria.
- Pláticame sobre tu familia.
- Cuéntame sobre el apoyo familiar y los desafíos que ha encontrado al obtener su título universitario.
- ¿De qué manera tu cultura y familia han influido en tu decisión de ir a la universidad?
- ¿Cuáles eran las expectativas de su familia de que asistiera a la universidad?

RQ 2
Cuéntame tus experiencias en la educación superior.
- ¿Por qué eligió esta institución?
- ¿Puede compartir un ejemplo de una situación en la que enfrentó un desafío educativo mientras estaba en la universidad?
  - ¿De qué manera ha ayudado su familia a superar los desafíos educativos mientras estaba en la universidad? O
  - ¿Dónde busca apoyo cuando se enfrenta a desafíos? O
  - ¿Qué estrategias ha utilizado para afrontar estos desafíos?
- ¿De qué manera usa las lecciones aprendidas en casa para navegar su experiencia universitaria?
- ¿Qué pueden hacer las instituciones de educación superior para involucrar a los padres Latinx en el proceso y la experiencia para brindarles un mejor apoyo?
- ¿Qué pueden hacer los líderes de la educación superior para ayudar a crear un espacio inclusivo para las familias de los estudiantes latinos?

Conclusión
- Si sus padres estuvieran aquí con usted hoy, ¿qué le gustaría decirles sobre su apoyo / participación en su experiencia universitaria?
- ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría compartir?

Gracias por su tiempo y por compartir conmigo su viaje educativo. Disfruté escuchando tus historias. Agradezco el tiempo que se tomó para responder a mis preguntas y contribuir a mi estudio.

Como se indica en mi carta de invitación, me gustaría tener la oportunidad de reunirme con usted y sus padres. ¿Cuál sería el mejor día y hora para encontrarnos? ¿Prefieres en persona o vía Zoom?
APPENDIX E: PLÁTICAS PROTOCOL: PARENT

**Goals:** build rapport, establish comfortable communication, allow participants to tell their stories. The researcher will discuss the research questions with participants.

**Script:**

Hello, my name is Mónica Ocampo and I am a doctoral candidate conducting a research study for my dissertation. My study seeks to understand the impact family involvement and engagement has on the persistence of first-generation Latinx students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Additionally, the study aims to explore in what ways the community cultural wealth assets learned from the family help students persist in college past their first year, in addition to understanding how students use them to navigate their college experience. My two research questions are:

- **Research Question 1:** How do families of first-generation Latinx students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution support their student as they pursue their baccalaureate degree?

- **Research Question 2:** In what ways do community cultural wealth assets help first-generation Latinx students navigate their university experience on their way to college completion?

To help answer these questions I would like to plática with you to understand your perspective and experiences. As a reminder, all information collected today will be kept confidential and your identity will not be shared or disclosed with anyone. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions, please feel free to let me know and you are not obligated to answer. There are no right or wrong answers.
I will be recording our conversation today and I will also be taking notes. Please feel free to stop me at any time if you have any questions. I have created the interview questions in a way for you to be able to be honest and open in answering them. I may have some follow up questions to ensure clarity and accuracy in understanding your responses.

This is the consent form which has all the information that I just reviewed with you. Please review the form, and sign and date it if you feel comfortable with all the terms involved.

Do you have any questions about anything I just explained before we get started?

The following prompts will guide our conversation
- Tell me about your involvement in your student(s) educational journey.
- Describe your experiences as your student navigates the university.

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<th>Aspirational Capital</th>
<th>Navigational Capital</th>
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Pláticas Pláticas Protocol: Spanish

**Goals:** build rapport, establish comfortable communication, allow participants to tell their stories. The researcher will discuss the research questions with participants.

**Script:**

Hola, mi nombre es Mónica Ocampo y soy candidata de doctorado realizando un estudio de investigación para mi tesis. Mi estudio busca comprender el impacto que tiene la participación y el apoyo de la familia en la persistencia de los estudiantes Latinos de primera generación en una Hispanic-Serving Institution. Además, el estudio tiene como objetivo explorar de qué manera las riquezas culturales de la comunidad aprendidas de la familia ayudan a los estudiantes a persistir en la universidad después del primer año. También tiene de objetivo de comprender cómo los estudiantes los usan para navegar su experiencia universitaria. Mis dos preguntas de investigación son:

Pregunta de investigación 1: ¿Cómo apoyan las familias de estudiantes Latinx de primera generación en una Hispanic-Serving Institution a sus estudiantes mientras obtienen su título de bachillerato?

Pregunta de investigación 2: ¿De qué manera usan sus riquezas culturales los estudiantes Latinx de primera generación a navegar su experiencia universitaria en su camino hacia la finalización de la universidad?

Para ayudar a responder estas preguntas me gustaría platicar contigo para entender tu perspectiva y experiencias. Le recordamos que toda la información recopilada hoy se mantendrá confidencial y su identidad no se compartirá ni divulgará a nadie. Si en algún momento se siente incómodo con alguna de las preguntas, no dude en hacérmelo saber y no está obligado a responder. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas.

Estaré grabando nuestra conversación de hoy y también tomaré notas. No dude en detenerme en cualquier momento si tiene alguna pregunta. He creado las preguntas de la
entrevista para que pueda ser honesto y abierto al responderlas. Es posible que tenga algunas preguntas después de que responda para tener claridad y precisión en la comprensión de sus respuestas.

Este es el formulario de consentimiento que tiene toda la información que acabo de revisar con usted. Por favor revise el formulario, firmelo y si se siente cómodo con todos los términos involucrados.

¿Tiene alguna pregunta sobre algo que acabo de explicar antes de comenzar?

Las siguientes indicaciones guiarán nuestra conversación
- Cuénteme sobre su participación y apoyo en la educación superior de su estudiante (s).
- Describa sus experiencias mientras su estudiante navega por la universidad.

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<th>Aspirational Capital</th>
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APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 Please indicate which language you want to read the Informed Consent.

Indique en qué idioma desea leer el Consentimiento de el estudio.

- English/ Ingles (1)
- Spanish/ Español (2)

Title of Research Study: Cultivando Riquezas Culturales: The Impact of Familial Support on First-Generation Latinx Students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution

Researcher(s): Student investigator name: Mónica Ocampo
Principal investigator name (faculty advisor): Ignacio Hernandez, PhD

Description: You are being asked to participate in this research study because you can provide valuable information about the experiences of first-generation Latinx students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution. The purpose of this study is to understand the impact family involvement and engagement have on the persistence of first-generation Latinx students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Additionally, the study aims to explore in what ways the community cultural wealth assets learned from the family help students persist in college past their first year, in addition to understanding how students use them to navigate their college experience.

The questions that guide the study are:
1. How do families of first-generation Latinx students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution support their student as they pursue their baccalaureate degree?  
2. In what ways do community cultural wealth assets help first-generation Latinx students navigate their university experience on their way to college completion?  

This document provides you with information about the study. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.  

**Procedures:**  
*If you agree to be part of the research study you will be asked to allow the researcher to interview you about your experiences in a plática. The pláticas will be audio or audio-video recorded. The plática is planned to require no more than 60 minutes of your time, though you may choose to continue beyond the 60 minutes allotted at your discretion.*  

**Possible risks:**  
*There are no known risks to being a part of this study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to and may stop participating in the plática at any time. Participant names will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used for individuals and institutions.*  

**Compensation:**  
*No compensation will be provided.*  

**Recordings:**  
*You will be audio or audio-video recorded at each plática.*  

**Voluntary Participation:**  
*Participating in this research study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to answer any question or choose to end your participation with the study at any time for any reason without penalty. If you decide to withdraw early, the information or data you provided will be destroyed unless you give consent for it to be used.*  

**Questions:**  
*If you have any questions about this study or your participation, please feel free to ask questions now or contact me at mocampo1006@mail.fresnostate.edu or at (805) 663-3936.*  

*If you have any questions about your rights or treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact Dr. Nichole Walsh, Department of Educational Leadership Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at 559.278.0350 or nwalsh@mail.fresnostate.edu. The Department of Educational Leadership Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects at California State University, Fresno has reviewed and approved the research study.*

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**Q3 Tómese todo el tiempo que necesite para leer este documento y decidir si le gustaría participar en este estudio de investigación.**  
**Título del Estudio:** Cultivando Riquezas Culturales: El impacto del apoyo familiar en los estudiantes latinos de primera generación en una Hispanic-Serving Institution  
Investigador Principal: Ignacio Hernangez, PhD  
Estudiante Investigador: Mónica Ocampo
Descripción:
Se le pide su participación en este estudio de investigación porque puede proporcionar información valiosa sobre las experiencias de los estudiantes latinos de primera generación en una Hispanic-Serving Institution. El propósito de este estudio es comprender el impacto que tiene la participación y el involucramiento de la familia en la persistencia de los estudiantes Latinx de primera generación en una institución de cuatro años con asignación Hispanic-Serving Institution. Además, el estudio tiene como objetivo explorar de qué manera las riquezas culturales de la comunidad aprendidas de la familia ayudan a los estudiantes a persistir en la universidad después del primer año, además de comprender cómo los estudiantes los usan para navegar su experiencia universitaria.

Las preguntas que orientan este estudio son:

1. ¿Cómo apoyan las familias de estudiantes Latinx de primera generación en una institución de cuatro años con asignación Hispanic-Serving Institution mientras buscan su licenciatura?
2. ¿De qué manera ayudan las riquezas culturales de la comunidad a los estudiantes Latinx de primera generación a navegar su experiencia universitaria en su camino hacia la finalización de la universidad?

Este documento le proporciona información sobre el estudio. Lea la información a continuación y haga preguntas sobre cualquier cosa que no comprenda antes de decidir si desea participar.

Procedimientos:
Si acepta ser parte del estudio de investigación, se le pedirá que permita que el investigador lo entrevisté sobre sus experiencias y que lo grabe en audio o video mientras lo hace. Está previsto que la entrevista no requiera más de 60 minutos de su tiempo, aunque puede optar por continuar más allá de los 60 minutos asignados a su discreción.

Riesgos:
No se conoce ningún riesgo por ser parte de este estudio. No tiene que responder a ninguna pregunta que no desee y puede dejar de participar en la entrevista en cualquier momento. Los nombres de los participantes se mantendrán confidenciales y se utilizarán seudónimos para personas e instituciones.

Compensación:
No hay compensaciones monetarias asociadas con la participación.

Grabaciones de audio:
Se le grabará en audio en cada entrevista. Las grabaciones de audio se transcribirán con fines de análisis de datos. Después de la transcripción, los archivos de audio se destruirán. Si no desea que lo graben en audio / video, informe al investigador y solo se tomarán notas escritas a mano durante la entrevista.
Participación Voluntaria:

Su participación en esta investigación es completamente voluntaria. Usted es libre de participar en este estudio de investigación o de retirarse en cualquier momento. Su decisión de participar (o no participar) no afectará en ninguna manera su relación con la organización. Si en algún momento durante el curso de este estudio se siente incómodo, no dude en comentar su inquietud con el investigador principal.

Preguntas:
Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre este estudio de investigación, comuníquese con la investigadora: mocampo1006@mail.fresnostate.edu or at (805) 663-3936.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos o tratamiento como participante de la investigación en este estudio, comuníquese con la Dra. Nichole Walsh, Comité de Liderazgo Educativo para la Protección de Sujetos Humanos del Departamento de Educación al 559.278.0350 o nwalsh@mail.fresnostate.edu.

El Comité del Departamento de Liderazgo Educativo sobre la Protección de Sujetos Humanos de la Universidad Estatal de California, Fresno, ha revisado y aprobado el estudio de investigación.

Q4 If you agree to participate in this research study, please indicate "yes" below. Si usted está de acuerdo de participar en este estudio, indique "sí" a continuación.

○ Yes/Si (1)
○ No (2)

Q5 Name/ Nombre
______________________________________________________________

Q6 Date/Fecha
______________________________________________________________

End of Block: Default Question Block
Fresno State

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- [X] Make my thesis or dissertation available to the CSU Scholarworks database immediately upon submission.
- [ ] Embargo my thesis or dissertation for a period of 2 years from date of graduation. After 2 years, I understand that my work will automatically become part of the university’s public institutional repository.
- [ ] Embargo my thesis or dissertation for a period of 5 years from date of graduation. After 5 years, I understand that my work will automatically become part of the university’s public institutional repository.

Type full name as it appears on submission

Mónica Ocampo

5/26/2022

Date