LATINO STUDENT VOICES: FROM COLLEGE ACCESS TO CAMPUS ENVIRONMENTS

by

LINDA ZAMORA EPSTEIN

(Under the Direction of Merrily Dunn)

ABSTRACT

Latino college students of first generation, immigrant, and low-income households experience various challenges impeding successful college application and transition processes toward becoming a college student. This underachievement between Latino students and positive postsecondary outcomes is an area of concern in higher education (Calaff, 2008). Through stories of lived experiences and meaning, Latino students in this qualitative study share their journeys from college access to campus environments in navigating a successful college transition. The application of Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth and Museus' (2104) Culturally Engaging Campus Environments Model frames this reflection on wealth capitals which serves to overcome inequities in the college access process and how campus environments provide opportunities for the validation of these strength-based capitals in adjusting to campus climates. The six participants included in this study attended four different institutions and included one sophomore, three juniors, one senior, and one recent graduate. Data were collected through a two-part semi-structured sit-down interview which incorporated the use of internet-based memes as a conversational icebreaker, followed by a participant-led campus walking tour interview targeting environmental components. After the co-construction of individual

narratives, participant stories were overlapped with a mapping of the wealth capitals and environmental indicators of the two theoretical frameworks.

Evident commonalities and the creation of a collective storyline reveal the following five overarching themes in the communal narrative: family as a constant source of emotional strength, lessons, and expectations; mentors and advisors as sources of wisdom and transition resources; a sense of identity in growing up Latino in the United States; supportive peers as the product of social relationships; and the skill of resiliency as a source of focus. Recognizing the transferability of this qualitative study's findings with a potential application to other Latino students navigating the college access and transition process, the following key implications were discussed: the importance of salient secondary identities; recognizing family as a source of strength; the intentional selection of Latino roommates; the impact of both Latino and non-Latino campus advocates; the role of Latino studies courses and identity-based assignments; how financial aid offices affect experiences; and the benefits from K-16 collaboration.

INDEX WORDS: LATINO STUDENTS, COLLEGE ACCESS, CAMPUS ENVIRONMENTS, COLLEGE TRANSITION AND ADJUSTMENT, CULTURAL WEALTH CAPITALS, LATINO FAMILIES, SALIENT SECONDARY IDENTITIES, LATINO ROOMMATES, CAMPUS ADVOCATES, LATINO STUDIES COURSES, FINANCIAL AID OFFICES, K-16 COLLABORATION

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to this next generation of Latinos growing up in the United States, from my own *Juban (part Cuban, part Jewish)* sons, Nate and Jonah, to my multitude of students and alums, including the participants in this study who trusted me and shared their time, hearts, and stories. May you individually and collectively continue to have the courage to develop your Latino voice, the strength to overcome the many obstacles and challenges along the path for personal growth, and the vision to carry the aspirational dreams of our collective *raza.*

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CHAPTER I- INTRODUCTION

Background

According to data from the 2012 United States Census Bureau, people of color will represent 57% of the population in the U.S. by 2060 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). As a student population, Latinos represent the largest minoritized group (Nuñez, Ramalho & Cuero, 2010; Oliva, 2008). Continued population growth and data predictions project Latino students representing 29% of students enrolled in K-12 educational institutions by 2024 (Santiago, Taylor & Calderón Galdeano, 2016a). While these demographic shifts are evident already in academic settings with increasing racial diversity among today's incoming college students, institutional leaders are facing challenges in meeting Latino student learning needs and in facilitating student success for diverse populations in areas such as retention and degree completion (Museus & Smith, 2016). Research indicates Latinos represent the lowest level of academic accomplishment of any minoritized student group (Ceballo, 2004; Fry, 2002; Gandara and Contreras, 2009; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Nuñez et al., 2010). In the 2013-2014 academic year, Latino enrollment in higher education institutions totaled 17% of students in postsecondary educational settings, with 23% of Latinos having obtained an associate degree or higher in comparison to 42% of all adults (Santiago, Taylor & Calderón Galdeano, 2016b). As Latino students reflect on campus environments, many of these "underserved students feel devalued by the culture of their campuses" (p. 6), an experience which negatively impacts institutional sense of belonging, inclusion perceptions, and the utilization of campus resources (Museus & Smith, 2016).

As a student affairs practitioner at an independent private school for the last eighteen years and a classroom educator since 1989, I have worked closely with Latino high school students and families from their first contact in admissions as prospective applicants in the eighth grade to their post-secondary graduation pursuits, aspirations, and transitional needs by the end of their senior year. As our institution endeavors to select students to include in its high school community, our admissions committees identify these Latino students by their strong scholastic interests, their academic history, and their qualities which cause them to standout in a competitive admissions selection process. These selected incoming Latino students are well-prepared to meet the challenges of a demanding college preparatory curriculum and, through their demonstrated interests, are primed to develop into student leaders via their involvement in a multitude of student-led organizations, internship opportunities, and other extracurricular activities. Admissions committees at our school select these Latino students because of their academic tools, resumes, degree of focus, and scholastic motivation.

Yet, as upperclassmen at our private secondary institution begin to prepare for an academic future beyond high school, many of these Latino students confront how unique needs and challenges potentially could derail dreams of college degrees and professional careers. Despite the advantageous student traits which contributed to their independent secondary school selection and success, factors exist which differentiate them in the college application process. At this pivotal point, they are vulnerably different from others. Many of these Latino students are from low-income families and often represent the first generation in their immediate families to navigate a college admissions process. Regardless of a sense of belonging to their high school and among their classmates, many of these Latino students may have more in common with Latino students in large public high schools in their neighborhood enclaves than with their

friends and classmates at an elite independent school. In addition to being potentially their family's higher education pioneer, many also represent the first in their family to traverse post-primary educational settings. Based on my observations and student support experiences with these Latino students and families, many of these aforementioned variables contribute to a lack of information and familial-based challenges with the college access process, all of which need to be overcome in order for an academically eligible Latino high school student to apply successfully, become a college student, and succeed in higher education.

In a separate role as supplemental student and family support for soon-to-be Latino graduates navigating the college inquiry process at different postsecondary institutions, I often filter through controlled messages from campus visits and tours which provide insight into the complexity of campus climates from a minoritized community perspective (Magolda, 2001). More than once, my Latina orientation raised a flag of concern regarding how my Latino high schoolers will experience a campus environment. I find myself asking: Will they fit in? How do current Latino students on a campus view and navigate its culture? Will they see themselves as 'others', absent, or barely acknowledged from within a new higher education community?

Admissions representatives highlight institutional selling points and educational opportunities to Latino students throughout the college admissions process. For many Latino students, however, the answers to the aforementioned questions do not develop until they experience a campus climate from within as enrolled new students adjusting to the many academic, political, and social complexities of a college campus. Understanding a campus' climate through a Latino student perspective can draw attention to institutional formal and hidden messages which provide a glimpse into a Latino students' experiences as members of an educational setting.

Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, and Research Questions

In an ideal setting, every motivated, determined, and academically ambitious Latino secondary school student should be able to view high school success as the key to higher education and an opportunity to obtain a college degree. Yet, for many, variables beyond their control and preparation present challenges and obstacles which impede a successful application and transition process to becoming a college student. The aforementioned underachievement between Latino students and positive postsecondary educational outcomes is an area of concern in higher educational settings (Calaff, 2008). Among key barriers negatively impacting Latino student outcomes are the challenge of college access in navigating the college admissions application process (Castleman, Owen & Page, 2015) and the potential obstacles and factors in transitioning to a higher education campus climate (Museus & Smith, 2016).

Literature focused on Latinos and college access highlights key pre-college components. First, inequities exist between secondary schools and their role in the application process for higher education (Ceja, 2006; Martinez, 2003; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Vela-Gude et al., 2009; Zalaquett, 2005). Among potential inequities in resources for Latino students is the role and support from school counselors (Ceja, 2006; Calaff, 2008; Immerwahr, 2003; Martinez, 2003; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Roderick, Nagaoka, Coca, & Moeller, 2008; Vela-Gude et al., 2009; Zalaquett, 2005). Second, Latino families and familial navigational tools play a role in the pursuit of higher educational opportunities (Belasco 2013; Calaff, 2008; Castleman et al., 2015; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Fann, Jarsky & McDonough, 2009; Oliva, 2008; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Perna & Titus, 2005; Plank, 2001; Roderick et al., 2008; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005; Tornatzky, Cutler & Lee, 2002; Torrez, 2004; Vela-Gude et al., 2009; Venezia, Kirst & Antonio, 2003; Zalaquett, 2005). Third, college

counseling practices play an important role with post-secondary educational aspirations (Calaff, 2008; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Fann, Jarsky & McDonough, 2009; Gamoran; 2001; Karen, 2002; Martinez, 2003; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Reigle-Crumb, 2010; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Roderick et al., 2008; Roksa, Grodsky, Arum & Gamoran, 2007; Tierney, Colyar & Corwin, 2003; Tornatzky, et al., 2002; Vela-Gude et al., 2009). As a supplement to secondary institutional counseling personnel, community resources provide additional tools for Latinos seeking support with the goal of post-secondary educational opportunities (Calaff, 2008; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Gamoran; 2001; Karen, 2002; Martinez, 2003; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Roderick et al., 2008; Roksa et al., 2007; Tierney et al., 2003; Vela-Gude et al., 2009).

Literature focused on Latinos and college environments similarly note thematic elements which draw attention to the role of campus climate. First, campus climate perceptions differ when perceived through the lens of minoritized Latino students (Fischer, 2007; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado, Alvarado & Guillermo-Wann, 2015; Johnson et al., 2007; Locks, Hurtado, Bowman & Oseguera, 2008; Lowe, Byron, Ferry & Garcia, 2013; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010; Pyne & Means, 2013; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). Second, diverse peer relationships can have a positive impact on student outcomes (Chang, Astin & Kim, 2004; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002; Fischer, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2015; Lowe et al., 2013; Mack et al., 1997; Moreno & Sanchez Banuelos, 2013; Muñoz & Guardia, 2009; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). Third, cultural groups, coalitions, and collaborations contribute to a sense of inclusion within campus communities (Cerezo, Lydia, Enriquez, Beristianos & Conner, 2015; Fischer, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2015; Moreno & Sanchez Banuelos, 2013). Fourth, campus

spaces create physical opportunities which can impact campus inter/intracultural connections (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Lowe et al; 2013; Trujillo & Waxman, 2016; Tupper, Carson, Johnson & Magnat, 2008; Waxman, Clemons, Banning & McKelfresh, 2007; Yosso , Ceja, Smith & Solorzano, 2009). Fifth, faculty, student affairs practitioners, and staff mentoring relationships nurture sources of support for Latino college students (Bensimon, 2007; Cerezo et al., 2015; Fischer, 2007; Ferguson, 2002; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2015; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010; Rankin & Reason, 2005).

For all of these factors, matching the challenges and subsequent barriers with the appropriate avenues of equitable support is a key thread for many Latino students. Yet, within the aforementioned literature, there is a dearth of reflection by Latino college students regarding bridging the journey from college access, with its unique challenges and strengths with the college application process, to the role of campus climate and navigating a successful transition to college environments. This search for reflection defines the variable which motivates this study and serves as a guide in developing this investigation.

The purpose of this transformative study, grounded in critical/cultural epistemology, is to highlight the experiences of Latino students and empower their voices as they reflect on their college access process and adjustment to their college campus environments. Foundational to these reflections are two theoretical frameworks: Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Model, with its identification of cultural wealth capitals as sources of strength (Yosso, 2005), and Museus' Culturally Engaging Campus Environments Model, with its recognition of environmental components and institutional support sources which connect with the identities and needs of diverse student populations (Museus, 2014; Museus & Smith, 2016). Understanding the meaning of cultural factors in the college admissions application process and the impact of

campus environments on student success for first generation college-bound, low-income Latino students will help secondary school counselors, higher education student affairs administrators, community leaders, and mentors better understand the experiences of these students and how best to facilitate in the college access and transition process.

By highlighting the voices of Latino college students as an underrepresented population and providing an opportunity to portray the narratives of their Latino ethnic essence, this narrative inquiry study, grounded in Yosso's cultural wealth capitals and Museus' culturally engaging environmental indicators, seeks to explore the following primary questions:

- What meaning do Latino college students give to the unique challenges and strengths inherent in the cultural factors which play a role in their college access stories?
- How do campus environmental components and institutional support sources empower Latino college students in the application of these cultural factors as a bridge in navigating the transition and adjustment to college campus climates?

Research Paradigm

Drawing on transformative and critical/cultural epistemological frameworks, this qualitative study's worldview is based on the value of accomplishing positive change in communities as a result of conducting research (Jones, Torres & Arminio, 2014). Perspectives on ontology (the nature of reality), axiology, (the nature of ethics), and epistemology (the nature of knowledge) contribute to the dynamic of understanding a study's paradigm (Jones et al., 2014). This study's ontological lens views truth as relative, its axiological lens emphasizes the value of equitable outcomes, and its epistemological lens encourages an interactive participant and researcher relationship in the process of knowledge acquisition (Jones et al., 2014).

Through the application of narrative inquiry to the study's methodological structure (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Creswell, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2013; Jones et al., 2014; Josselson, 1996; Josselson, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), this study's research objective is to amplify the voices of underrepresented, low-income, Latino students. These participants, representing first generation college attendees from immigrant households, will share their reflections on navigating college access, as seen through their experiences with the application process and their transition to a new campus climate.

By empowering the student voices through storytelling, the researcher and the overall research paradigm explicitly acknowledge the value of these students in the co-construction of the epistemology, contributing to the literature on Latino college access and campus environmental inclusion, and to understanding the cultural and environmental complexities which define the Latino student experience.

Theoretical Framework

As the theory-based tools framing the study and influencing the nature of research, the following theoretical frameworks assist with the foundational structure and analysis of this dissertation: Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Model and Museus' (2014) Culturally Engaging Campus Environments Model. The decision to use two theoretical frameworks is based on the desire to focus on bridging the journey from college access to the role of campus climates and a successful transition through college environments. Using these two frameworks as additive to each other allowed for the study to span between evident cultural wealth factors that serve in overcoming systemic inequities in the college access process with how campus environments provide opportunities for the application and validation of these strength-based capitals in the successful adjustment and transition to the campus climate.

Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Model

As a critical theory-based tool framing the study from the perspective of a marginalized population and influencing the nature of research from a non-deficit orientation (Yosso, 2005), Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Model focuses on developed capital defined from a non-majoritized lens. At its theoretical foundation is Critical Race Theory (CRT), a perspective with an activist agenda. CRT focuses on the societal inequities of power and prestige versus oppression and biases caused by group dynamics and the social construction of race (Patton, Renn, Guido & Quaye, 2016). Oppression versus privilege is a key component in group dynamics. While a dominant group is granted direct and indirect privileges, subordinate groups experience oppression in outcomes such as marginalization (Patton et al., 2016). CRT draws attention to social justice in higher education institutions by providing a lens to view and analyze campus climate-based deficiencies such as systemic inequities caused by institutional racism and race neutrality (Iverson, 2007).

For Latinos, ethnic cultural factors and value orientations represent marginalized characteristics which can be perceived institutionally through a deficit and disempowered lens. Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Model (2005), while not nullifying the systemic nor structural issues, presents a strength-based perspective focused on identifying cultural components as sources of individual wealth and personal capital. Yosso's model identifies six forms of cultural capital which provide empowering tools and the sources of strengths for Latino students as they experience the transition from K-12 settings and the journey to obtain college access and success in higher education (Yosso, 2005). Yosso's framework model highlights these cultural-based capitals as: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance (2005). Aspirational capital recognizes the role of sources of encouragement, hopes,

and dreams in pursuing an academic goal despite any societal challenges and inequities; linguistic capital focuses on the unique foundational communication styles which develop from a multilingual and multicultural orientation along with variations of modes of expression through the arts or storytelling skills; familial capital acknowledges the family and community network, where interpersonal support and a core of values develop from trusted safety nets through kinship and a sense of familial community; social capital refers to peers and other social circles who provide a reliable network of emotional and logistical support; navigational capital represents the strategies which direct and guide through challenges and obstacles; and resistance capital refers to a focus on a greater social justice as the result of overcoming microaggresions and difficulties due to societal hardships and stereotypes (Yosso, 2005).

Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Model connects with this study in how it recognizes cultural factors and norms as components which play a role in filtering the meaning of experiences. In comparison to having minoritized cultural characteristics perceived as a source of limitation in the context of a majoritized cultural climate, Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Model recognizes how cultural value orientations, when recognized and appreciated, can serve as sources of capital which empower an otherwise marginalized population. By narrating personal stories through the lens of these cultural factors, Latino students in this study provide insight as to how these sources of capital contribute to their overall experience with the college process.

Museus' Culturally Engaging Campus Environments Model

With the intentionality of achieving greater educational equity for all college students and graduating more diverse student populations, the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) framework model identifies key culturally-engaging campus elements essential for all students to succeed in higher education and which favorably impact student outcomes through a

greater sense of belonging, academic performance, and an increase in student success among diverse populations (Museus, 2014; Museus & Smith, 2016). While recognizing the role of external factors and pre-college variables on success, the CECE model draws awareness to potential environmental changes which can contribute to transformation in all areas from policy and practices to research and curriculum development (Museus, 2014; Museus & Smith, 2016).

Based on nine indicators divided between two clusters, CECE's tenets identify key elements needed in creating culturally engaging campus environments for all students in today's diverse student populations (Museus, 2014; Museus & Smith, 2016). The cultural relevance cluster includes five indicators which focus on how environments connect with the identities of a diverse population, and the cultural responsiveness cluster includes the remaining four indicators which focus on how support features respond to the needs of diverse student populations.

Cultural relevance cluster of indicators. The five indicators in the cultural relevance cluster represent the ways in which environments connect with, embrace, and incorporate cultural identities of diverse groups of students. These indicators are: (1) cultural familiarity; (2) culturally relevant knowledge; (3) cultural community service; (4) meaningful cross-cultural engagement; and (5) cultural validation (Museus, 2014; Museus & Smith, 2016). Cultural familiarity highlights the importance of institutions allocating campus spaces so members of the community can come together to appreciate a commonality and shared understanding of identity (Kiyama, Museus & Vega, 2015). Culturally relevant knowledge focuses on formal and informal instruction of diverse cultures, histories, and value orientations. Cultural community service allows students of color to make rewarding contributions to their neighborhoods (Museus, 2014; Museus & Smith, 2016). Cross-cultural engagement targets programs and practices to search for solutions to current societal challenges. Lastly, cultural validation occurs

when a campus' culture acknowledges the diverse identities and experiences of all its students (Museus, 2014; Museus & Smith, 2016).

Cultural responsiveness cluster of indicators. The four indicators in the cultural responsiveness cluster represent how an institution's academic and support systems acknowledge and react to needs, cultural characteristics, and value orientations of students from different cultural backgrounds. These indicators are: (1) collectivist cultural orientations; (2) humanized educational environments; (3) proactive philosophies; and (4) holistic support (Museus, 2014; Museus & Smith, 2016). Collectivist cultural orientations place an emphasis on teamwork and group success instead of a competitive climate (Museus, 2014; Museus & Smith, 2016). Humanized educational environments nurture meaningful relationships with different members of the community (Museus, 2014; Museus & Smith, 2016). Such relationships ultimately provide opportunities for faculty and staff to reflect on commonalities with students from different backgrounds (Patton et al., 2016). Proactive philosophies are a counter to reactive protocols, allowing for the prevention of possible forthcoming difficult situations by predicting student needs and providing the necessary information and support services (Museus, 2014; Museus & Smith, 2016). The final indicator, holistic support, plays a role in community relationships where students can rely on guidance in all realms, from the academic to the social and developmental (Patton et al., 2016).

Researcher Reflexivity

To achieve congruency with a transformative paradigm and a critical/cultural epistemological framework, the power relationship between myself as the researcher and the participants in this study needs to be acknowledged as part of maintaining ethical considerations. In regards to my researcher's perspective, it is important to identify myself as a Latina who

similarly navigated the undergraduate process as a first generation college student in the United States. Similar to the background of these participants, I was raised in a working class/lower income household setting. I grew up in an immigrant/refugee enclave, with a non-English speaking mother and a father working multiple jobs, who resisted fully acclimating to non-Latino cultural value orientations while simultaneously being appreciative of existing in bilingual and bicultural community silos.

When it was my time to transition from secondary to higher education, parental assistance in navigating the college admissions process was not a possibility. It was foreign, from language-based challenges to lack of knowledge with application components and financial aid procedures. Additionally, selecting a university setting drew attention to cultural clashes and ignited familial disagreements, such as the ones triggered by the desire to attend an institution far from home. In many ways, the decisions I made and the steps I took to experience a residential college setting away from my immigrant enclave provoked periodic struggles with a perceived betrayal to my ethnic identity. In the mid 1980s, even with staying at the flagship institution within my state, my decision to leave my majority Latino neighborhood for another area of the state forced me to recognize for the first time as a college undergraduate that I was different, from both non-Latinos in a mainstream majoritized higher education setting and Latino students who remained within the enclave of our original adolescent ethnic neighborhoods.

Years later, my professional trajectory circled me back to these same cultural dichotomies. For the last 18 years as a Latino student affairs educator at an elite independent school setting, I have participated in many of these conversations between Latino students and their families regarding navigating the college application process and preparing for the challenges as a first generation, low-income, Latino student reaching for the goal of college

access. As an advocate for both the Latino students and their parents, my support role is defined by a relationship which develops early during their independent school application experience and outlasts the finality of their secondary school graduation. For these Latino participants in this study, I represent an "insider" because of my Latino identity and similar background experiences. However, I also represent someone who has bridged over to represent mainstream faculty, student affairs administration, and a practitioner. This duality from within the ethnic group dynamics and in looking into the ethnic group dynamics defines my researcher reflexivity.

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of usage in this research study, the following key term requires further explanations: The use of Latino instead of Latinx.

Latino Instead of Latinx

Throughout the process of writing this dissertation, I, as the researcher, have wrestled with my decision to use Latino instead of Latinx. According to Merriam-Webster, the term Latinx has evolved as a gender neutral version of the term Latino (Latinx, 2018). Used today in the United States by scholars in academic writings, activists in social media postings, and journalists in contemporary publications, the application of the term Latinx is becoming recognized as a gender-inclusive ethnic identifier (Latinx, 2018; Ramirez & Blay, 2017). From a critical and transformative paradigm, I embrace how its perceived non-binary structure empowers a spectrum of individuals (Ramirez & Blay, 2017). Strongly supportive of the right to self-identify, I recognize the importance of valuing and encouraging the importance of choice with terms which encapsulate such societal constructs.

How then does the use of Latino versus Latinx become a personal factor for me regarding ethnic identity? As a Cuban-American raised in South Florida, I have grappled before with

societal changes to the terms I would use to describe my ethnic identity. I grew up with the identification term Hispanic. In comparison to other areas of Latin America, Cuba was one of Spain's last colonies in the western hemisphere and for many Cuban families including my own, Spanish-born grandparents represented only a one generation removal from the Iberian Peninsula. Once I moved away from South Florida as an adult and connected with other Spanish-speaking enclaves from Latin America, I embraced the use of the term Latino. With its recognition of non-Spanish/Iberian geography, historical context, culture, and language, Latino instead of Hispanic represented a more inclusive term, applicable to others, and inclusive of me. But in other circumstances, terms would not be easily interchangeable. At my son's West Coast collegiate institution, for example, as a Latino parent I would feel excluded at the university's Chicano Center, a name which, for me, denotes a cultural identity attached to United States-based Latinos of Mexican origin.

While embracing the inclusive intentions behind the use of Latinx, the personal use of the term also presents linguistic challenges for me. Spanish is my first language. In addition to receiving Spanish instruction through secondary school, my graduate degree is in Spanish Language and Linguistics. In addition to my professional administrative roles, I have been for the last 24 years and continue to be a Spanish language educator. Via this lens, the use of Latinx is seen as a non-gender correction, where the Spanish masculine '–o' ending has been converted to a neutral word form in English usage. Similar to other romance languages, Spanish is structured with all nouns having a linguistic gender. It is correct that '-o/-a' endings in Spanish generally refer to masculine/feminine gender nouns and the adjectives and articles modifying them. Words are gender binary, with no third neutral linguistic gender. However, the use of Latinx does not recognize that Spanish already has the option of a neutral form- for when nouns

are used in non-gender specific situations. The non-committed gender/number form for nouns and adjectives is: '-o' ending. While advocates for the term Latinx see this neutral form as a masculine manifestation, for me, as a native speaker and as a Spanish language instructor, it is the linguistic structure of my language. Of course, potential linguistic arguments exist against Spanish's use of masculine as also the neutral form. For example, my students over the decades have heard me argue how language can present a snapshot of cultural bias and gender disempowerment, such as how the Spanish word *esposa* translates to both wife and handcuff in English. However, this highlights another challenge with the term Latinx which disregards Spanish linguistics. In comparison to how the English language evolves organically as the result of societal changes, Spanish as a language has an official governing body, *La Academia Real Española*, which functions as the supreme court of the language. Every Spanish grammar textbook published in every Spanish speaking country, including textbooks in the United States, defer to the rulings of *La Academia Real*. Controversial decisions have been handed down by *La Academia Real*, such as the removal of the fourth letter from the Spanish alphabet. These decisions and non-decisions can be debated, but they are linguistically binding. As a Spanish educator, just as an activist fighting for social causes, governing bodies can present firm thresholds.

Based on this explanation, my usage of the term Latino throughout this study is from my Spanish-speaker's perspective. It encapsulates my Spanish-language voice, where it represents a neutral linguistic usage. In sections where I describe the Latino participants and share their stories, their voices are empowered, through the use of their preferred terms- Latino, Latina, Latinx, Hispanic, nationality of origin, or any other identifier that empowers their self-identification.

Significance of the Study

Situational limitations for secondary college counselors and higher education admissions and outreach personnel may generate the need to facilitate firsthand with the college admissions process and the transition to campus environments. Hearing the voices and reflections from Latino college students who navigated the steps in the college application process and bridged the adjustment to college campus climate could provide greater insight to the experiences and perspectives in facing the challenges of college access and subsequent success in the transition to higher education environments.

Chapter I Summary

Students from different backgrounds experience the college process and campus climates differently. Perceptions of not being welcomed, not belonging, or the assumption of not being in possession of student success tools can affect academic and personal trajectories negatively (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado et al., 2015; Rankin & Reason, 2005). Discrepancies between Latino students and positive college outcomes suggest a necessity to highlight themes and topics which affect the Latino college experience. Strategies and practices generated by such reflections and used to support Latino students create opportunities for college leaders, policy makers, faculty, and student affairs practitioners to improve and to adapt for other marginalized populations (Santiago et al., 2016a). A better understanding of Latino student experiences from their own perspectives can provide valuable insight and opportunities for transformative initiatives. As foundational knowledge for this study, the following chapter summarizes existing scholarly literature on marginalized Latino students and the cultural and environmental factors which play a role in the college access and adjustment/transition process.

CHAPTER II- REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In reviewing the literature on Latino college access through secondary school college counseling, three overall themes are evident within the material: (1) secondary institutional inequities exist in the college application process; (2) cultural and family factors influence how students pursue college enrollment; and (3) successful college counseling practices bridge the gap in navigating the college application process. Within the first theme of secondary institutional inequities are the topics of: (1a) the pre-college role of student counselors; and (1b) secondary college-going culture and expectations. As part of the second theme of family factors, topics are: (2a) parental and familial support, education levels, and engagement; (2b) informational access and socioeconomic factors; and (2c) cultural capital, language and cultural norms. Within the third theme of successful practices for Latino college access are the topics of: (3a) community resources and pre-college access programs; (3b) outreach from higher education institutions; and (3c) mentors, advocates, and secondary faculty guidance as support during the college application process.

Similarly, in synthesizing the literature on Latino students and campus environments, the following five thematic categories represent Latino student experiences: (1) campus climate differs from the perspective of minoritized students; (2) diverse peer relationships and the role of cross-racial interactions and family-like relationships play a beneficial role in student group dynamics; (3) cultural and identity groups serve a function in establishing intra/inter-group coalition, networking, and collaboration; (4) campus spaces need to be considered for their

connection with community member identities; and (5) faculty, practitioners, and staff mentoring relationships are sources of information and support. Within the first theme of campus climate are the topics of: (1a) pre-college multicultural experiences; and (1b) prospective applicant tours and visitations. As part of the second theme on peer relationships, topics are: (2a) cross-racial interactions; (2b) *familismo* and Greek organizations; and (2c) social life and dining. Within the third theme of cultural groups, coalitions, and collaboration are the topics of: (3a) Latino student organizations; and (3b) saliency of ethnicity. As part of the fourth theme on campus spaces, topics are: (4a) the positives of place attachment and third spaces; (4b) the negatives of ethnic neighborhoods; and (4c) campus physical artifacts. Lastly, within the fifth theme of faculty, practitioners, and staff mentoring relationships are the sub-categories of: (5a) faculty relationships; and (5b) student affairs practitioners and staff interactions.

Inequities and the College Application Process

Compared to advantaged student groups which, historically, are more likely to apply to and attend higher education institutions, Latinos are more likely to experience identified inequities during the college application process (Belasco, 2013; Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011; Calaff 2008; Ceja, 2006; Cerezo et al., 2015; Corwin, Venegas, Oliverez & Colyar, 2004; Falls & Nichter, 2070; Immerwahr, 2003; Lautz, Hawkins & Perez, 2005; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Martinez, 2003; Oliva 2008; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2009; Reigle-Crumb, 2010; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Roderick et al., 2008; Tierney & Venegas, 2009; Vega, Hines, Mayes & Harris, 2016; Vela-Gude et al., 2009; Zalaquett, 2005). Such group inequities impact not only applications but subsequent higher education attendance as well. Pre-college factors contribute to this result, namely: secondary college counselors and college-going culture.

Pre-college role of college counselors. Students who collaborate with secondary college counselors are more likely to enroll in postsecondary institutions (Belasco, 2013; Bryan et al., 2011; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Tierney & Venegas, 2009; Vega et al., 2016). However, Latinos, more often than not, navigate the college application process on their own (Ceja, 2006; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Robinson & Roksa, 2016). This inequity alone contributes to many Latino students facing barriers with the application process which impact their enrollment in higher education as a result of limitations created by the complexities of secondary schools and their college counseling models (Marsico & Getch, 2009; Vega et al., 2016; Vela-Gude et al., 2009).

First among these limitations, many Latino secondary students receive support through the college application process with a secondary institutional lens of minimal expectations and negatively differential treatment (Martinez, 2003; Vela-Gude et al., 2009). These low expectations influence a flawed conclusion that such Latino students are not capable of succeeding in a college setting (Martinez, 2003; Vela-Gude, 2009; Zalaquett, 2005). Such a deficit-oriented lens further influences institutional practices encouraging academic potentials in higher education (Calaff, 2008). Second, many Latino students receive minimal or inadequate college counseling advisement which negatively impacts navigating the application process for higher education admissions and financial aid (Belasco, 2013; Immerwahr, 2003; Vela-Gude et al., 2009; Zalaquett, 2005). This is most evident with Latino students attending secondary institutions with large populations of minority students (Oliva, 2008). Third, some secondary institutions operate with extraordinarily high student-to-counselor ratios, which impede the potential for individualized college counseling and higher education attention (Owen & Westlund, 2016; Vela-Gude et al., 2009). Private versus public institutions offer different ratios, with a better private school student-to-counselor ratio of 241:1 versus a public school's student-

to-counselor ratio of 314:1 (Lautz et al., 2005). Fourth, many secondary school counselors manage a large caseload on a range of services beyond college counseling which limits their collective ability to focus with detail on higher education applications (Belasco, 2013; Falls & Nichter, 2007; Vela-Gude et al., 2009).

College-going culture at secondary institutions. Schools with a strong college-going culture produce environments of higher college expectations and access to counseling services while college counseling receives less attention at schools with a low college-going culture (Corwin et al., 2004; Robinson & Roksa, 2016). In these secondary settings with a low college-going culture, limited resources tend to produce a more generic college counseling model, which benefits the most advantaged student populations with existing inherited college-going capital (Robinson & Roksa, 2016). Improving Latino college enrollment requires the enhancement of a college-going culture in heavily Latino secondary school settings and an appropriate amount of structured institutional support in the college counseling process (Owen & Westlund, 2016; Roderick et al., 2008). The presence of at least a modestly structured college-going culture encourages and contributes to the development of individualized college counseling models advantageous to Latino students (Marsico & Getch, 2009; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Vega et al., 2016). Such informational insight, guidance opportunities, and overall access to college counseling services benefits students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Belasco, 2013; Bryan et al., 2011; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Vega et al., 2016).

Strong college-going culture contributes to obtaining information and guidance from college counselors early and with regularity throughout the pre-college years, an influencing factor in Latino students applying to four-year over two-year institutions and, similarly, two-year institutions over not applying at all (Reigle-Crumb, 2010; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Vega et al.,

2016). Considering how many Latino students represent the first college-bound members of their families, limited information about applying and attending college creates access struggles from an early age (Cerezo et al., 2015; Pew Research Center, 2009; Tierney & Venegas, 2009; Vega et al., 2016). Such limited information regarding the process of college admissions and financial aid contributes to a sense of unentitlement in considering higher education as future aspirations (Cerezo, et al. 2015; Tierney & Venegas, 2009; Vega et al., 2016).

Family Factors

When considering family factors, many Latino students represent first-generation college attendees, from low-income households, and recent-immigrant families, all variables which require a recognition in facilitating the college application and campus transition process (Auerbach, 2007; Belasco 2013; Bryan et al., 2009; Calaff, 2008; Castleman et al., 2015; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Cerda-Lizarraga, 2015; Dennis, Phinney & Chuateco, 2005; Fann et al., 2009; Gloria & Castellanos, 2012; Hurtado, Carter & Spuler, 1996; Kiyama, 2010; Kolkhorst, Yazedjian & Toews, 2010; Lopez, 2001; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Means, LaPlante & Dyce, 2015; Niu, 2014; Oliva, 2008; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Perna & Titus, 2005; Phinney, Dennis & Gutierrez, 2005; Plank, 2001; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Roderick et al., 2008; Rodriguez, Mira, Myers, Morris & Cardoza, 2003; Schneider and Ward, 2003; Tierney, 2002; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005; Tornatzky et al., 2002; Torrez, 2004; Turner, Chandler & Heffer, 2009; Valencia & Black, 2002; Vela-Gude, 2009; Venezia et al., 2003; Yosso, 2005; Zalaquett, 2005). In reviewing the literature on the nature of Latino families and the college access and transition process, a deficit-oriented perspective has the potential to dominate the presentation. As part of this study driven by a transformative focus and a non-deficit lens, it is imperative to underline how despite the range of mixed research among the literature and

institutional practices, Latino parents and families are important components in successfully navigating access to and the transition through higher education settings (Kiyama, 2010; Means et al., 2015; Tierney, 2002). Taking into consideration this deficit/non-deficit dynamic, the following family factors encapsulate both the strengths and challenges regarding the role of Latino parents and households in the college access and transition process: Parental and familial support, education levels, and engagement; informational and socioeconomic factors; and cultural variables such as capital, language challenges, and cultural norms.

Parental and familial support, education levels, and engagement. Parental and familial support, parental educational levels, and parental engagement with navigating both secondary and postsecondary educational structures are key questions in the command of 'how to' knowledge and resources which facilitate the process of college enrollment (Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2004; Cerda-Lizarraga, 2015; Dennis et al., 2005; Fann et al., 2009; Gloria & Castellanos, 2012; Hurtado et al., 1996; Kiyama, 2010; Kolkhorst et al., 2010; Lopez, 2001; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Oliva, 2008; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Means et al., 2015; Phinney et al., 2005; Roderick et al., 2008; Schneider and Ward, 2003; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005; Tornatsky et al., 2002; Torrez, 2004; Vela-Gude, 2009; Zalaquett, 2005).

Parental and familial support. When defining the role of Latino parental and familial support in the college process, the current literature presents mixed results based on distinctions between logistical and emotional support (Ceja, 2004; Cerda-Lizarraga, 2015; Dennis et al., 2005; Gloria & Castellanos, 2012; Hurtado et al., 1996; Kiyama, 2010; Kolkhorst et al., 2010; Phinney et al., 2005; Schneider and Ward, 2003). While noting navigational knowledge limitations, support is evident via Latino familial emotional encouragement as a source of strength (Cerda-Lizarraga, 2015; Dennis et al., 2005; Kiyama, 2010; Kolkhorst et al., 2010). This

supportive role contributes to the presence of collegiate aspirations and the development of academic objectives (Ceja, 2004; Cerda-Lizarraga, 2015; Dennis et al., 2005; Kiyama, 2010). Similarly, this supportive relationship is foundational as an adjustment tool in acclimating to higher education settings (Cerda-Lizarraga, 2015; Hurtado et al., 1996; Phinney et al., 2005; Schneider and Ward, 2003).

Parental education. In the case of Latino parents in the United States, many have limited educational expertise to offer their children in both the needed secondary preparation and the college application process as their children represent the first generation in the family to attempt higher education (Fann et al., 2009; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Tornatsky et al., 2002; Vela-Gude, 2009; Zalaquett, 2005). This can present a cultural struggle for many Latino parents in how they perceive their own role in their children's educational experiences (Fann et al., 2009). However, research does underscore how lower parental educational attainment does not equate necessarily to lower levels of parental educational expectations for their children (Ceja, 2004; Cerda-Lizarraga, 2015).

Parental engagement. When considering parental engagement for culturally-diverse parent populations, it is important to consider the practical and theoretical biases present in its evaluative metrics (Kiyama, 2010; Lopez, 2001; Means et al., 2015). In recognizing the potential for non-traditional methods of parental engagement outside of the defined higher education norms, the potential exists for Latino parental empowerment as educational partners who steer a student through the college preparatory path (Fann et al., 2009; Means et al., 2015).

Informational access and socioeconomic factors. Access to college-related information and acquired expertise with the college application and transition process is not a guarantee and can present a challenge for many Latino families (Calaff, 2008; Castleman et al., 2015; Fann et

al., 2009; Kiyama, 2010; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Oliva, 2008; Perna & Titus, 2005; Plank, 2001; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Tornatzky et al., 2002; Torrez, 2004; Vela-Gude et al., 2009). Similarly, socioeconomic factors play a role in differentiating the college counseling and adjustment experience for students from households with limited financial resources (Belasco, 2013; Fann et al., 2009; Means et al., 2015; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Venezia et al., 2003).

Informational access. Despite college-bound expectations for their children, many Latino parents are uninformed in understanding the steps in transitioning to postsecondary institutions (Castleman et al., 2015; Fann et al., 2009; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Oliva, 2008; Tornatzky et al., 2002; Torrez, 2004). The absence of familial navigational information, from coursework selection to application procedures, can obstruct the pursuit of college opportunities (Calaff, 2008; Fann et al., 2009; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Perna & Titus, 2005; Plank, 2001; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Vela-Gude et al., 2009). However, Latino families can be guided in addressing the needed knowledge and assisted in developing a sense of efficacy in promoting their children's educational opportunities (Kiyama, 2010). Examples of such can be through the arrangement of college informational sessions and customized campus visits which provide opportunities for acquiring contextual knowledge, situational comfort, and higher education experiences (Fann et al., 2009; Marsico & Getch, 2009).

Socioeconomic factors. Families affected by limited financial resources and low-income backgrounds are portrayed, often mistakenly, through flawed conclusions of educational disinterest and disengagement (Means et al., 2015). However, contextual know-how requires supplemental systemic assistance from secondary college counselors and higher education financial aid officers. Latino households affected by financial limitations and the lack of

experiential know-how rely on their respective secondary school settings for college access guidance (Belasco, 2013; Venezia et al., 2003). The greatest challenges in these situations develop when school population sizes, funding reductions, and the overuse of school counselors for a large range of in-house services cause students with the most to gain to have insufficient access to secondary college counselors (Belasco, 2013). When these challenges are ameliorated, college counseling guidance makes a significant contribution to the college access experience and application process for students from low- income household (Belasco, 2013; Owen & Westlund, 2016). As for Latino students from low-income households, increased institutional guidance with available financial aid options, assistance in completing financial aid forms, and tutorials on the costs and options with affording college enrollment allows for the needed logistical support in successfully applying to and matriculating in colleges (Fann et al., 2009; Owen & Westlund, 2016).

Cultural capital, language and cultural norms. Cultural and social capital, the inherited *'know how'* many Latino students rely on when faced with the challenges of obtaining a college degree, provide access to valuable information which facilitates in navigating the application process (Auerbach, 2007; Belasco, 2013; Bryan et al., 2009; Ceja, 2006; Fann et al., 2009; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Perna & Titus, 2005; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Tornatzky et al., 2002; Yosso, 2005). Similarly, cultural norms impact individual roles and decisions related to college enrollment (Cerda-Lizarraga, 2015; Fann et al., 2009; Kolkhorst et al., 2010; Niu, 2014; Perna & Titus, 2005; Rodriguez et al., 2003; Turner et al., 2009).

Cultural capital and language. Through the recognition of cultural and social capitals, institutions acknowledge and affirm the individual and collective value which underrepresented

Latino families have access to as they traverse the complexities of college access and higher educational settings (Auerbach, 2007; Yosso, 2005). As a form of social capital, school counselors function as an extra source of access tools who can provide needed additional support to students and parents in need of information and advocates (Bryan et al., 2009; Fann et al., 2009; Owen & Westlund, 2016). Even when parents are unable to reach out to counseling staff for support or have limited school interaction because of restricted work hours or language barriers, social capital can develop through networking with other Latino families and within the community as a collaborative option in pooling support from more approachable and trusted means of social capital (Fann et al., 2009; Tornatzky et al, 2002). From a deficit lens, low income, first-generations students need to compensate for any cultural capital limitations which negatively impact the college application and campus transition process (Belasco, 2013; Ceja, 2006; Perna & Titus, 2005; Robinson & Roksa, 2016).

Regarding language and non-English speaking parents, language challenges do present complexities to the college access and transition process. Limited English proficiency potentially presents a form of parental disempowerment and a discomfort in being a voice for their children's educational needs (Marsico & Getch, 2009; Fann et al., 2009). In unique additional circumstances, potential Spanish language deficiencies can magnify parental difficulties with second language acquisition and overall understanding of secondary and postsecondary operations (Marsico & Getch, 2009; Fann et al., 2009).

Cultural norms. As to Latino familial cultural norms, strong emotional bonds and parental contact positively contribute to student navigation of non-college related stresses and successful college outcomes (Cerda-Lizarraga, 2015; Kolkhorst et al., 2010; Perna & Titus, 2005; Rodriguez et al., 2003; Turner et al., 2009). Regular parental conversations and parental

attachment provide emotional support for Latino students during moments of transitional and adjustment stress (Kolkhorst et al., 2010). However, as to the cultural norm regarding leaving home, a cultural tendency exists for Latino young adults to stay near and within the family geographic footprint. Based on statistics in the 2010 College Board data, Latino students demonstrated the lowest 'going out-of-town' ratio while White students have the highest rates (Niu, 2014). According to Niu (2014), lower parental education levels negatively influenced parental decisions and out-of-state support. With Latino parents less likely to have a college degree, this correlated with a tendency to be locally oriented parents, encouraging students to stay home (Niu, 2014). Certain customs discourage the position to separate from the family if avoidable, evident by Hispanics as the most likely subgroup to report the importance of living at home during college, even among those with college-educated parents (Niu, 2014). Data agreed that in comparison to other populations, Latinos were the most likely to report a preference to living at home (Niu, 2014). Lastly, while many Latino families value academic accomplishments beyond secondary levels, another Latino cultural norm which can hinder the possibility of attending higher education is the familial expectation of young adults contributing to meet the financial needs of family expenses (Fann et al., 2009). For many Latino parents, a child reaching the age of young adult represents an additional financial resource in meeting the revenue cost of the family's living needs. This carries an expectation to assist with supplemental income. The individual choice to pursue further education impacts any supplemental household income contributions (Fann et al., 2009).

Positive/Successful College Counseling Practices

In reviewing the relevant literature, key successful practices for Latino students become evident. Represented among such secondary college counseling practices are resources which

bridge externally to entities, programs, or individuals, with a K-16 focus (Calaff, 2008; Ceballo, 2004; Fann et al., 2009; Gamoran; 2001; Karen, 2002; Kirst & Venezia, 2004; Lautz et al., 2005; Martinez, 2003; Oliva, 2008; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Roderick et al., 2008; Roksa et al., 2007; Santiago et al., 2016b; Tornatzky et al., 2002; Vela-Gude et al., 2009; Venezia et al., 2003; Tierney et al., 2003). Such successful practices incorporate the importance of academic rigor, counseling, co-curricular activities, family and community engagement, peer group support, mentoring, extended time of interventions, and funding priorities (Tierney et al., 2003). Representing different methods to bridge K-16 models for supplementing the limitations of school-based college counselors, the literature highlights the following categories: collaboration with community resources and pre-college programs; higher educational institution outreach; and the overall establishment of college access mentors.

Community resources and pre-college access programs. College preparatory resources and pre-college programs allow for entities outside of the secondary school systems to carry the agenda and to provide the needed additional support in facilitating college access for Latino students as members of underrepresented and minoritized communities, including with the presentation and explanations necessary for early college planning (Calaff, 2008; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Roderick et al., 2008). These community-based resources supplement challenges with limited access college counseling models. They also have the potential to represent sources of encouragement and motivation, which could overcome any presence of Latino low expectations or student aspirations in the realm of higher education.

Outreach from higher education institutions. Higher education institutions consider the aforementioned limitations when recruiting Latino students as prospective college applicants. In these settings, admissions officers and college representatives are key figures in creating the

bridge between secondary and postsecondary institutions and produce positive outcomes for first generation and marginalized students with the establishment of linkage with K-12 entities (Fann et al., 2009; Kirst & Venezia, 2004; Lautz et al., 2005; Oliva, 2008; Tornatzky et al., 2002; Venezia et al., 2003). Collaborations between college admissions/financial aid officers and secondary counselors provide foundational relationships with the establishment of an information safety net (Fann et al., 2009; Lautz et al., 2005). The importance of this relationship has been acknowledged since the founding of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) in 1937 (Fann, et al., 2009; Lautz et al., 2005). In the case of Latino first generation or recent immigrant parents, in addition to the absence of information, they exhibit apprehension and/or limitations to inquire about needed support due to language factors and/or work schedule restrictions (Fann et al., 2009; Tornatzky et al., 2002). Among effective practices and institutional strategies implemented by higher education settings which positively impact Latino applicants are: focus on geographic service area and the use of returning college students to meet with prospective Latino students at local secondary schools; focus on campus events that invite the community to the campus, including opportunities for parents with language support; and focus on holistic admissions process, including taking into consideration all aspects of the student in the selection process (Santiago et al., 2016b). Additional advantages from these interactions are: remedying the shortage of individualized secondary college counseling; providing professional guidance to secondary counselors; and presenting informed financial aid guidance to applicants and families (Lautz et al., 2005).

Mentors, advocates, and secondary faculty guidance as support during the college application process. Supportive and invested adults from the community as individualized college access tools provide essential support beyond the secondary school guidance college

counselor. Such partnerships establish the presence of college role models and personal educational mentors who assist with maintaining academic expectations and facilitate in navigating college access and transition while still embracing the cultural and linguistic diversity of Latino families (Calaff, 2008; Ceballo, 2004; Martinez, 2003; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Roderick et al, 2008; Vela-Gude et al., 2009). In these situations, an individualized college counseling model with the use of supplemental mentors and advocates is beneficial to Latino students at secondary schools with a modest college-going culture (Gamoran; 2001; Karen, 2002; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Roksa et al., 2007).

Campus Climate from the Perspective of Minoritized Latino Students

Different minoritized and identity-based student groups perceive the same campus climate in potentially differing ways (Banning & Luna, 1992; Fischer, 2007; Hurtado, 1992; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2007; Liu, 2011; Locks et al., 2008; Lopez, 2013; Lowe et al., 2013; Pyne & Means, 2013; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003; Secore, 2018; Torres, 2003; Torres, Winston & Cooper, 2003). This distinction in perception by student populations presents an important environmental manifestation for higher education stakeholders to understand how campus climates through an ethnic lens influence student experiences, persistence, and success (Fischer, 2007; Hurtado, 1992; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Lopez, 2013; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010; Pyne & Means, 2013; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Torres, 2003; Torres et al., 2003). The following represents campus environment literature in the topics of: campus climate perception, pre-college multicultural experiences, and prospective applicant tours and visitations.

Campus climate perception. Regarding marginalized student populations at predominately White institutions, findings have shown students of color as having more negative

perceptions of the campus climate than in comparison to White student perceptions (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2007; Locks et al., 2008; Lowe et al., 2013; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). Such negative perceptions for Latino students and minoritized populations in general impact lower levels of satisfaction with higher education settings, poorer grade performance, stronger feelings of not fitting in, and a greater likelihood of leaving college before successful completion (Fischer, 2007; Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Additionally, this negative climate perception potentially creates an intimidating environment for these same marginalized student groups which impedes learning opportunities and social interactions in comparison to non-intimidated student populations (Rankin & Reason, 2005). For some students, this negative climate perception causes adjustment struggles noticeably soon after initial admissions due to appearances of being viewed by non-minoritized students as differentiated admits, including because of minoritized classifications (Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

Pre-college multicultural experiences. Previous exposure to non-Latino communities has impacted Latino student adjustment to campus environments, with students from more ethnically homogeneous secondary school settings and social circles experiencing greater challenges with the transition (Lopez, 2013). In addition to the cultural disconnection, these students from more ethnically-focused communities have been more likely to be faced with obstacles associated with lower social class identities such as financial stresses (Lopez, 2013; Torres et al., 2003). In comparison to Latinos from more culturally diverse backgrounds who are more comfortable with social and cross-cultural interactions in their transition to a campus environment, Latino students from more ethnically homogeneous backgrounds benefit from support in adjusting to a new climate by connecting with ethnically-oriented organizations,

multicultural centers, and identity-focused services (Lopez, 2013; Pyne & Means, 2013; Torres, 2003; Torres et al., 2003). As these components in the environment provide initial transitional resources, eventually these students progress to seeking support from individuals within the community who further serve as resources, motivation, and sources of strength during an assimilation process (Lopez, 2013; Pyne & Means, 2013).

Prospective applicant tours and visitations. While campus visits and organized admissions tours are structured to exhibit a polished representation of a campus environment to prospective applicants and families (Magolda, 2000), for a minoritized population such as Latino students, these visitations provide a window to the institutional cultural norms and values which define the campus climate (Liu, 2011; Secore, 2018). Although attending such visitations has been portrayed as an optional step in the admissions process, for students potentially impacted by the adjustment to culturally different climates, opportunities to glimpse the authenticity of the environment provides a realistic introduction to the campus climate and potential nonverbal messages about the environmental culture (Banning & Luna, 1992; Liu, 2011; Secore, 2018).

Diverse Peer Relationships

Racial diversity among the student population on college campuses presents the possibility to establish and academically benefit from diverse peer relationships through their positive impact on student outcomes (Bowman & Park, 2015; Chang et al., 2004; Fischer, 2007; Gurin et al., 2002; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2015; Kim, Park & Koo, 2014; Lowe et al., 2013; Mack et al., 1997; Moreno & Sanchez Banuelos, 2013; Muñoz & Guardia, 2009; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Reid & Radhakrishan, 2003; Saenz, 2010). Diverse campus communities and subsequent diverse experiences contribute to higher education objectives (Bowman & Park, 2015; Kim et al., 2014; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-

Dossett, 2010). Such larger representations of students of color and increased opportunities for diverse populations to experience fully the on-campus community contribute to cross-racial interactions and subsequent friendships between students with diverse identity views, experiences, and backgrounds (Bowman & Park, 2015; Chang et al., 2004). In considering the role of diverse peer relationships, the following themes are identified in the literature: cross-racial interactions, *familismo* and Greek organizations, and social life and dining.

Cross-racial interactions. For many students, their first cross-racial interactions occur when they become members of college communities (Kim et al., 2014; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Saenz, 2010). Such friendships and informal experiences between students from different identities have a positive impact on their overall development and their perceptions of campus environment which tend to differ by identities (Chang et al., 2004; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). Such cross-racial interactions are most prevalent with students of color who engage in intergroup dynamics more often than in comparison to White students (Chang et al., 2004; Mack et al., 1997). Whereas the lack of such interactions can result in negative experiences and subsequent student departures for minoritized students (Fischer, 2007), cross-racial interactions enrich learning experiences and student outcomes and contribute to the creation and maintenance of healthy campus racial climates (Bowman & Park, 2015; Chang et al., 2004; Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2015). These campus-developed cross-racial interactions and relationships support the position for institutional objectives in developing such diverse interactions by enrolling diverse student populations (Chang et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2014; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010).

Familismo. With its emphasis on establishing intracultural peer relationships mirroring family-type bonds, *familismo* is a key factor in how peers can provide a network of motivational

support and a college persistence tool (Moreno & Sanchez Banuelos, 2013; Muñoz & Guardia, 2009). Social organizations, such as Latino fraternities and sororities, provide structured sources of familismo through their bond of *hermandad,* or brotherhood/sisterhood, and their validation of Latino culture shared between homogeneous family-like peer relationships (Moreno & Sanchez Banuelos, 2013). Such social ties based on activities contribute positively to higher levels of climate satisfaction (Fischer, 2007). Additionally, involvement in Latino Greek organizations contributes to a sense of belonging, demonstrated academic and personal benefits, and provides for engagement in campus leadership development (Moreno & Sanchez Bunuelos, 2013).

Social life and dining. Creating formal and informal peer connections through extracurricular activities and social interactions encourages strong social ties and a positive sense of satisfaction within the campus climate and community (Fischer, 2007). When these opportunities develop through voluntary and frequent interactions, meaningful cross-racial relationships become possible through shared social experiences and conversations (Lowe et al., 2013). The frequency of such encounters, such as dining experiences, favorably impact student perceptions regarding the campus climate (Lowe et al., 2013).

Cultural Groups, Coalitions and Collaborations

Identity-based student groups and their purpose in creating community enclaves in higher education settings serve a function in nurturing Latino student involvement, campus adjustment, and establishing inter/intragroup collaboration (Cerezo et al., 2015; Fischer, 2007; Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2014; Moreno & Sanchez Banuelos, 2013; Santos, Ortiz, Morales & Rosales, 2007; Schneider & Ward, 2003; Torres, 1999; Torres, 2003). Regarding Latino students, these organizations provide a means for expression of saliency of ethnicity,

while community-based coalitions and collaborations present minoritized students with networking opportunities.

Latino student organizations. Involvement in Latino-focused cultural activities and organizations contributes to a sense of belonging as a campus community member along with partnering new arrivals with existing students who serve as Latino peer models (Cerezo et al., 2015). While some may identify such ethnic clustering created by Latino student organizations as a form of ethnic self-segregation or separateness (Buttny, 1999; Santos et al., 2007), for many Latino students these ethnic student organizations provide a venue for institutional support and opportunities for inter/intra-ethnic social interactions while simultaneously offering opportunities to adjust and eventually interact with the campus-wide community (Santos et al., 2007). Similar to a positive association with ethnically-focused Greek organizations, Latino engagement with ethnic student organizations uniquely enhances interracial interaction and friendships for Latino students (Kim et al., 2014). In contrast to the potential for self-segregation from other populations, participation in such Latino affinity groups encourages cross-cultural interaction and contributes to campus-wide diversity activities (Kim et al., 2014).

In addition to creating an informal association between other Latino students on campus, networking and community building through Latino student organizations provides a social and academic base which facilitates in integrating marginalized populations with the greater campus environment and providing access to resources such as navigational knowledge and student success strategies (Cerezo et al., 2015; Fischer, 2007; Moreno & Sanchez Banuelos, 2013). The connection with such a network serves to ameliorate adjustment difficulties and issues with estrangement (Moreno & Sanchez Banuelos, 2013).

Saliency of ethnicity. With a correlation between racial identity saliency, the diversification of college campuses, and variations on campus climate perspectives (Hurtado, 1992; Santos et al.,2007; Torres, 2003), minoritized and underrepresented students on campus reflect more on their own racial identity and their place within the campus environment in comparison to White students (Hurtado et al., 2015). Students who are contending with both emerging race-related identity issues and those who have a developed core sense of their ethnic identity benefit from opportunities to experience an environment that explicitly values and embraces the presence of ethnically diverse student populations and encourages identity-based discussions throughout the campus environment (Hurtado et al., 2015). For many students, a diverse campus climate contributes to the personal development of sense of ethnic identity and awareness along with the interaction with other ethnic groups (Santos et al., 2007).

Torres' bicultural orientation model. When considering saliency of ethnicity for Latino students, the application of ethnic identity developmental theories provides clarification to the variations with saliency. As an example of a two-dimensional theoretical model, Vasti Torres' (1999; 2003) Bicultural Orientation Model allows for separate strong versus weak identification with both the dominant and the ethnic culture without affecting the scale of the other. Four ethnic orientations are possible which impact saliency: Bicultural, Hispanic, Anglo, and marginal (Torres, 1999; Torres, 2003). A strong connection and identification with both the dominant and the ethnic group reflects the orientation level of biculturalism, with bicultural individuals having achieved high levels of both acculturation with the dominant culture and a high level of Hispanic identity. A strong ethnic identity with a low dominant culture connection, therefore lacking acculturation, is associated with a Hispanic orientation, and a high level of acculturation with a minimal sense of ethnic identity reflects an Anglo orientation. Further, both a low level of

adaptation to the dominant culture and a weakened Hispanic identity is associated with a marginal orientation (Torres, 1999; Torres, 2003). Students identified as culturally marginalized confront challenges and stress in comparison to the dominant student population because of the distinction of their Hispanic heritage; students whose pre-college experience associated them with either strong bicultural or Hispanic orientations, who have found the campus environment resistant to embracing diverse populations, identify with a Hispanic orientation and seek others similar to themselves during their adjustment and transition; students with a strong pre-college bicultural or Hispanic orientation who have found the campus environment lacking diversity but open to embracing diverse student populations identify as bicultural; students whose pre-college experiences reflect majority-dominant environmental settings associate with strong Anglo or bicultural orientations, where those who were minimally exposed to their Hispanic culture identify as majority-Anglo students (Torres, 1999; Torres, 2003).

Campus Spaces

Campus spaces represent geographic opportunities and challenges for intercultural connections where college students can associate locations and physical artifacts as both havens for the expression and celebration of their identities while also potentially causing isolation and population fragmentation (Andrade, 2017; Banning & Bartels, 2014; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Lowe et al., 2013; Trujillo & Waxman, 2016; Tupper et al., 2008; Waxman et al., 2007; Yosso et al., 2009). Their effects are evident in the development of place attachment, segregated ethnic neighborhoods, and in the display of campus physical artifacts.

Positives of place attachment and third spaces. Place attachment is defined as the emotional connections students prescribe to non-classroom venues which are associated with inviting social and cultural interactions that attract specific student populations because of their

sense of safety, comfort, cultural group association, and familiarity of identity (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Trujillo & Waxman, 2016; Tupper et al., 2008). These venues, known as third places, contribute positively to minoritized students connecting to the overall greater campus community through their function with welcoming, sheltering, and providing a venue for assembly as affinity group enclaves (Trujillo & Waxman, 2016; Waxman et al., 2007). In these spaces, students create welcoming social networks and communities, known as placemaking (Andrade, 2017). This process allows for spatial bonding, through such identifying factors as language, race, or ethnicity (Andrade, 2017).

Negatives of ethnic neighborhoods. Cultural spaces leading to isolation and separation of identities contribute to ethnic neighborhoods which can be shielded from embracing differences within the greater campus community (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Lowe et al., 2013; Trujillo & Waxman, 2016). In comparison to the benefits of dining together, dining facilities as an example have created, negatively, environments of divisions (Lowe et al., 2013). Greek organizational houses have a similar negative potential to fragment the student population (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). In such areas segregating the student population into ethnic silos (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Lowe et al., 2013), intergroup peer interactions fail to develop (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Such failures lead to students of color feeling like outsiders at their chosen institutions (Lowe et al., 2013; Yosso et al., 2009).

Campus physical artifacts. As a display of institutional cultural messages, campus physical artifacts communicate cultural values and a campus' embrace of its multicultural community (Banning & Bartels, 2014). The content of the hidden messages conveys environmental insight with sense of belonging, degrees of safety, insight with group equality, and messages with perceived group roles (Banning & Bartels, 2014). Created by members of the

community or the institution itself, the four categories of physical artifacts are identified as: art, signs, graffiti, and architecture (Banning & Bartels, 2014). As a result of interacting with the campus environment during campus tours, informal visitations, or everyday student travels, campus artifacts convey messages regarding an institution's non-verbal multicultural communication (Banning & Bartels, 2014).

Faculty, Practitioners and Staff Mentoring Relationships

For underrepresented students such as Latinos, a perceived supportive environment enriched by mentoring relationships with institutional agents has the potential to translate to the needed supportive tools for college success (Atkinson, Casas & Neville, 1994; Bensimon, 2007; Cerezo et al., 2015; Ferguson, 2002; Fischer, 2007; Gardella, Candales & Ricardo-Rivera, 2005; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2015; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Moschetti, Plunkett, Efrat & Yomtov, 2017; Museus & Quaye, 2009; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Santos & Reigadas, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003). Such relationships provide access to needed resources, assist with developing navigational skills, and become sources of motivation, encouragement, and aspirational direction (Moschetti et al., 2017; Santos & Reigadas, 2002; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003).

Faculty relationships. In addition to their invaluable instructional and curricular roles, interactions and supportive relationships with faculty impact in positive ways how Latinos as students from underrepresented populations engage with and perceive campus climate and successfully adjust to higher educational environments (Bensimon, 2007; Fischer, 2007; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Rankin & Reason, 2005). Such positive student-educator relationships are identified as resources for motivation and encouragement for Latino students in K-12 settings prior to arrival in higher education (Bensimon, 2007; Ferguson, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999). In

addition to formal coursework-based communication, student success benefits stem from informal, casual interactions (Bensimon, 2007). Established relational connections with faculty positively influence sense of satisfaction for minoritized student populations and correlate with greater learning and a stronger grade performance for Latino students (Bensimon, 2007; Fischer, 2007; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004). Further and more specifically, when these relationships form with Latino faculty members, they include additional elements of hope from shared ethnic background and experiences (Atkinson et al., 1994; Gardella et al., 2005; Santos & Reigadas, 2002). Changes with tenured professors and an increase in adjunct and part-time staffing positions could result in negative consequences in establishing these beneficial faculty-student relationships (Bensimon, 2007).

Student affairs practitioners and staff interactions. Similar supportive relational connections with student affairs practitioners and institutional staff play an important role in how minoritized students experience the campus climate and adjust as successful college students (Bensimon, 2007; Fischer, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2015). These interactions provide information and social networking ties for minoritized and low-income students (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, Bensimon, 2007). Conversely, the appearance of non-supportive campus environments through the lack of developing positive interactions and student-staff relationships across all institutional divisions negatively impacts minoritized student outcomes, college persistence, and completion goals (Fischer, 2007; Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Similarly, any proliferation of counter-supportive relationships with institutional staff and faculty becomes a key component to negative climate perceptions (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). For minoritized students coming out of secondary institutions, their perception of the quality of supportive relationships and advocacy roles with institutional agents in higher education correlates as a predictor of academic motivation and

pedagogical outcomes in college settings (Bensimon, 2007; Ferguson, 2002; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010).

Chapter II Summary

In synthesizing foundational knowledge and current information on the experiences and reflections of Latino students on the college access process and adjustment to campus environments, the literature overview contributing as a background for this investigation identifies two overarching factors: pre-college factors which play a role with college access; and college environmental factors which define the challenges and supportive components constituting campus climate. Themes representing pre-college factors are: resources and informational inequities during the college application process; Latino familial navigational tools which impact college access; and college counseling practices and their influence on Latino post-secondary educational aspirations. Themes representing environmental factors are: campus climate perceptions among marginalized populations; the contribution of diverse peer relationships to student outcome; cultural groups, coalitions, and collaborations and their contribution to a sense of inclusion; campus spaces and their function in creating cultural connections; and campus staff relationships as sources of motivation.

These pre-college and campus environmental themes correlate with the cultural factors and environmental indicators to be explored further in this study through the narratives encapsulating participant experiences. Instead of through a deficit lens, these participants' stories highlight their perspectives on personal cultural wealth and situational resiliency. The following chapter outlines the design of this study.

CHAPTER III- METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This qualitative research study draws on transformative and critical/cultural epistemological frameworks, seeking opportunities for positive societal change as a byproduct of the research (Jones et al., 2014). The study's ontological perspective is based on a relative truth defined by societal dynamics and interactions, its axiological orientation is guided by the value of seeking equity, and its epistemological foundation develops from an interactive relationship between the participant and the researcher (Jones et al., 2014).

Focused on a marginalized population of Latino, first generation, low-income students, this study's research objective is to amplify the voices of underrepresented Latino students through the sharing of their stories and experiences. This empowers student participants through reflecting on the impact of searching for know-how knowledge. These students' realities and their impact on meaning while reflecting on their college access process and transition to campus climates brings value and insight to understanding how best to overcome environmental barriers, campus climate challenges, and cultural complexities which contribute to defining the Latino college student experience.

For the methodological structure of this study, I applied a narrative inquiry design (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Creswell, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2013; Jones et al., 2014; Josselson, 1996; Josselson, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This enabled me to use storytelling to explore reflections on identities, personal challenges and complexities in navigating college access, as seen through participant experiences

with the application process and adjustment to a new campus climate. In using the methodology of narrative inquiry, participants shared their stories and ethnic orientations which influenced and defined their experiences, their ontological understanding of their reality and relative truths, and the co-constructed epistemology between the researcher and the participant created by the narrative format. By empowering the student voices, the researcher and the overall study explicitly acknowledge the value of these students in contributing to the literature pertaining to Latino college access and inclusion within campus environments.

Researcher Positionality

In a qualitative research study, the researcher is the key tool for collecting data (Creswell, 2014). As a human research tool, with pure objectivity unattainable and pure subjectivity destructive to the needed impartiality of a study, the qualitative researcher's objective should be one of balance (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The role of researcher positionality allows a researcher to intentionally acknowledge personal factors and biases which may influence the interpretation of themes and patterns within the data (Creswell, 2014).

As the researcher in this study, I am invested personally in these students. During a 29-year career as an educator, in all but a few of those years, I have dedicated my time, energy, and attention to the support needs of Latino students from recent immigrant families. These particular students have represented a noteworthy percentage of the low-income, first generation future college attendees from within this ethnic population at K-12 institutions where I have taught.

In addition to my career trajectory, another factor affects my subjectivity: I was one of these students. Raised in a low-income immigrant enclave where I also represented the first generation of family to navigate higher education in the United States, many of these challenges and complexities are familiar. As an undergraduate in the late 1980s, the pre-internet college

application process was a different experience, but the sense of aloneness with the challenges and unfamiliarity was present just the same. Similar to the dual-world experience identified in the literature, I too could not rely on family knowledge for assistance and could relate to the challenges of trying to find institutional support for my particular needs and situation.

In order to separate these personal experiences from those of the participants, I made notations of observations and reactions throughout the process in a researcher journal, intentionally attempting to address personal biases and curtail inferences which cannot be supported by the data notations (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Recognizing my inability to be completely objective as a result of my personal history, I incorporated intentional reflection using researcher journaling memos which included separately my thoughts and observations.

Regarding positionality, my personal relationship with each of these participants is important to note. It is not a neutral relationship. As a student affairs practitioner at an independent school, my relationship with these participants began before they enrolled as high school students at my institution. During the admissions process, I served these students as a source of support. Later, as a Latino student counselor and an academic advisor, I remained a constant for orientation and advocacy. Students, for example, might have texted or called in the evening as challenges presented themselves. It was a mutual first name relationship, where I arranged, planned, and chaperoned group college visits, and we participated together in school-based social activities prior to their enrolling in higher education. These relationships represented an application-through-graduation experience in the secondary school setting. In serving as a researcher with this same student group, it is necessary to recognize how the established relationships potentially could influence the quality of the data collection. For many of these students, I counseled them in high school as they faced new challenges, and I

collaborated with their families with the intention of promoting their sense of parental advocacy during their secondary school years. As a familiar entity and an ally during their high school experience, this pre-existing relationship served a role in facilitating the depth of exploration and sharing of their personal stories now as college students at different higher education institutions.

Participants, Site, and Recruitment Procedures

This methodology section provides a detailed explanation of the following components of my qualitative narrative inquiry research study on the topic of Latino college access and campus environments: a description of participants; site details; and the recruitment procedural plan.

For the purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study, the criteria for recruiting participants included the following descriptors: (1) self-identified as Latino/Hispanic; (2) from immigrant families, where parent(s) were born outside of the United States; (3) first generation college-bound attendees from their immediate families; (4) from low-income households; (5) at least 18 years old; (6) attendees of a higher education institution as a 2018-2019 sophomore-2018 recent college graduate; and (7) graduate of the researcher's secondary institution. It is important to recognize Latinos as an ethnic group represent a variety of immigration experiences, familial educational backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses. Regarding the immigrant families status criterion, this encapsulates limited English or non-English speaking households, where the parents are adjusting still to navigating the overlapping of two cultures. As the children of recent immigrant parents who are still attempting to understand a foreign new home, these students represent the first generation raised in the United States. These participants are the household members who uniquely are balancing and negotiating different cultural value orientations. For the purpose of defining low-income, all of these students received need-based tuition assistance to attend the independent school at which I teach. These financial aid awards were based on

annually submitted tax returns and financial aid summary applications which justified a 75% or greater financial aid need-based award. As to the sophomore-2018 recent graduate parameter, the three year range between participants complemented the methodological structure of the study. Whereas proximity in time frame to the experience and uniformity in age among participants could impact memory accuracy with details and facilitate with comparatives, the narrative inquiry focus on participant meaning in the stories allowed for each student to highlight the richness of what resonated for them. With stories which communicated emotions, time could make the details less vivid but could impact greater insight with meaning. By requiring the participants to represent all of the aforementioned characteristics, I was able to establish foundational commonalities and control for shared experiences among this group of students.

After a review of my institution's database of Latino secondary school graduates with an intentional screening of the above-named requirements, thirteen Latino students met these expectations. I contacted these students via email (Appendix A) and follow-up phone calls and informed them about the study, inviting them to consider sharing their stories on their college access process and transition to their respective college campus environment. From those who responded affirmatively and agreed to participate in the study, my objective was to form a participant group of 6-8 students, representing a variety of different institutions from the pool of interested participants. Following the initial inquiry for participants, ten responded with a desire to participate. After subsequent conversations, six students completed the data collection process as participants of the study. The participants, representing Central American and Caribbean Latino countries of origin, included one sophomore, three juniors, one senior, and one recent graduate. The participant profiles table includes pertinent data including their ages and field of study (Table 1). The six participants attended four different institutions within a three hour drive

from their hometown. The institution profiles table includes institutional demographic data and environmental characteristics (Table 2).

Table 1: Participant Profiles

Table 1
Participant Profiles

Participant	Age	Undergraduate year	Major/Minor	Latino country of origin
Juan	21	Junior	Double - Finance & Accounting	Mexico & Guatemala
Alejandro	19	Sophomore	Biology / Human Health Pre-Medicine	Mexico
Valentina	20	Junior	Psychology / French Pre-Physician Assistant	Honduras & El Salvador
Oscar	20	Junior	Double - Advertising & Sociology	Mexico
Sara	21	Senior	International Affairs / Public Policy	Mexico & Dominican Republic
Rosa	22	Recent Graduate	Anthropology / Religious Studies	Mexico

Table 2: Institution Profiles

Table 2
Institution Profiles

Environmental Characteristics	Juan's Institution	Alejandro and Valentina's Institution	Oscar and Sara's Institution	Rosa's Institution
Undergraduate Population (Est.)	1,600	7,000	29,000	26,000
Campus Setting	Urban	City	College Town	Urban
Public/Private	Private	Private	Public	Public
Student-Faculty Ratio	10:1	9:1	17:1	23:1
First Year Retention %	89	94	95	81
% Female	53	60	57	59
% Hispanic/Latino	4	9	6	11
% White	79	41	69	23

Note. Data for institution environmental characteristics from U.S. News and World Report (n.d.)

At the conclusion of the dissertation process, in appreciation for their time, a donation will be made to the participants' secondary school financial aid program.

Site

As a qualitative study, this research project collected data in a natural, real-world setting where the participants shared personal post-college application process and transition stories from their adjustment to individual campus climates and institutional cultural environments (Jones et al., 2014). This study focused on the experiences of a purposeful sampling of Latino, first generation, low income/high financial aid students from immigrant households. Although

they attended different post-secondary institutions, they attended the same secondary school setting before their transition to higher education. As a result, there was not a designated site for this study. However, to clarify their secondary school venue which played a role in the application of cultural factors in the college access process, I included in this section a description of their shared secondary school origin.

The origin secondary school location for these participants is The Site School (pseudonym), a smaller-size progressive independent secondary school in a downtown city setting in the southeastern United States. Its graduating classes, representing a yearly average of approximately 100 seniors, attends on average 60 different higher education institutions annually (Staff member at Site School, personal communication, February 28, 2018). An independent school is an educational institution which is an autonomous entity, self-governed with its own board of trustees and self-funded through means such as tuition dollars and endowment earnings (Kennedy, 2017). The Site School, as an informal, first-name basis educational environment, stresses the value of a relaxed climate and a casual academic setting, individualized attention and support, and the expectation for students to develop holistically through academics, the arts, and athletic endeavors (Staff member at Site School, personal communication, February 28, 2018). With an emphasis on diversity as a component of its institutional framework of values, students of color are 34% of the school's population, with Latinos representing 8% of its students (Staff member at Site School, personal communication, February 28, 2018). Academically, with its college-bound climate, between 18%-28% of each of The Site School's graduating classes over the last five years received National Merit honors. Athletically over the same span of time, several of its sports teams won multiple state championships (Staff member at Site School, personal communication, February 28, 2018). Financially for the 2017-2018 school year, 85 of

its 415 high school students collectively received $1.6 million in need-based financial aid packages, with awards ranging between 25% and 99% of tuition (Staff member at Site School, personal communication, February 28, 2018). Additionally, financial aid assistance includes nontuition-based expenses, such as course trips, required school-based activities, class materials and books, tutoring needs, private SAT preparation, school lunches, transportation, and required extracurricular expenses such as supplemental costs associated with school-based musical ensembles, academic competitive clubs, and athletics (Staff member at Site School, personal communication, February 28, 2018). The Site School's financial aid funds are generated by institutional fundraising from tuition, endowment earnings, school-wide events, external private foundation initiatives, and state legislative tax credit programs earmarked for student transfers into private schools (Staff member at Site School, personal communication, February 28, 2018).

Participant Recruitment Procedures

This procedural section presents an outline of the elements needed in order to replicate this study. Before commencing the study, the researcher followed several key protocols in order to provide consistency, organization, and reliability.

In narrative inquiry, the researcher focuses on discovering the meaning participants attach to their experiences through narrative discourse (Jones et al., 2014). For this study, I selected participants through purposeful sampling. This selection technique emphasizes a process of intentionally choosing individuals as participants in the study. The researcher selected these individuals because of their profiles, characteristics, insights, or experiences with the selected phenomenon and conditions, providing an information-rich sample source (Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2014). It is a nonrandom technique, instead focused on finding specific individuals who met the criteria-based selection for the sampling frame (Jones et al., 2014).

As the primary recruitment strategy, I notified via email (Appendix A) and invited students identified through purposeful sampling meeting the criteria of: (1) self-identified as Latino/Hispanic; (2) from immigrant families, where parent(s) were born outside of the United States; (3) first generation college-bound attendees from their immediate families; (4) from low-income households, identified having received at least a 75% financial aid award at their independent secondary school based on financial need demonstrated through tax returns and fiscal documents; (5) at least 18 years old; (6) attendees of a higher education institution as a 2018-2019 sophomore - 2018 recent college graduate; and (7) graduates from the researcher's secondary school institution. As a secondary strategy, I followed-up with each individually to explain further the study's objective, to share the Participant Information Handout (Appendix B), and to answer questions. If they chose to participate in the study, each completed the study's Written Consent Form (Appendix C). Following written consent to participate, participants shared reflections and stories from a cultural perspective with adjusting to a new campus climate after having navigated successfully the college application process with identifiable cultural wealth factors. If they elected to decline participation, students were not impacted negatively, with the researcher communicating in the invitation the voluntary nature of participation.

Methodology

As the selected methodology research design for this qualitative study, narrative inquiry allows for the use of stories to create meaning and understanding of lived experiences (Clandinin, 2006; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Focusing on how individuals experience their world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), narrative inquiry highlights the relationship between the researcher and the participant, where each is "engaged in living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4).

With origins from the mid-1800s rooted in research which explored individual psychology (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), educational philosopher John Dewey expanded on the concept of narrative inquiry by emphasizing how experiences are both personal and social (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Ruthellen Josselson, another foundational source in the methodology of narrative inquiry, identifies narrative inquiry's roots in phenomenology and post-modernism through its emphasis on lived experiences and multiple ways of obtaining information (Josselson, 1996; Josselson, 2006).

By presenting a narrative snapshot through the presentation of stories and interview dialogue, narrative inquiry collects rich contextual, thematic, and holistic descriptions (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). For this study, I used storytelling to learn about Latino students and their reflections on personal challenges, experiences, and cultural strengths with college access at the end of their secondary school career and their transition to college campus climates.

Data Collection Methods

A qualitative study occurs in real-world settings and includes a variety of detail-rich data collection sources with the objective of exploration and discovery (Creswell, 2014; Jones et al., 2014). With the intentionality of maintaining congruency with the framework of this study, the incorporated data collection strategies followed criteria consistent with a critical/cultural epistemological orientation by collecting narratives filled with rich detail on the personal stories and experiences of its Latino student participants (Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2014). These narratives encapsulated and guided in better understanding the meaning of cultural, familial, and other factors playing a role as challenges and strengths for Latino students in the preparation for and navigation of the college admissions process and the transition process in adjusting to college campus climates. When considered through the lens of Yosso's Community

Cultural Wealth Model and Museus' Culturally Engaging Campus Environments Model, the co-construction of these identified factors/indicators by participant reflection and researcher analysis provide rich, empowering perspectives and association with Yosso's six types of cultural capital (Yosso, 2005) and Museus' nine environmental indicators (Museus & Smith, 2016). Accordingly, the data collection strategies for this study were: a two-part interview which incorporated the use of internet-based memes as a conversational stimulus followed-up with a semi-structured sit-down interview; and a campus-based walking tour interview targeting campus climate factors in the collegiate environmental setting which impact the transition and adjustment to campus environments. These data collecting strategies connected with the methodology of narrative inquiry by establishing a collaborative and mutual storytelling product where the voices of both the participants and the researcher played a role in the construction of the narratives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In this collaboration process, I used bracketed inserts to create a seamless, linear story after fusing rich, thick quotes from the multiple data collecting tools. These bracketed transitional words or edits allowed for a smoother reading of the fused descriptions. Participants then confirmed the accuracy of the stories and how the co-constructed narratives captured the essence of their experiences through the validation process of member checking.

Two-Part Interview and Its Use of Internet-Based Memes

Quotations with rich details and descriptions creating a clear voice for participants are an essential element of a qualitative narrative inquiry study (Jones et al., 2014). The use of interviews amasses these verbatim quotes and individual points of view (Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2014). Using a two-part interview data collection method, the first part served as a visual icebreaker storytelling memes exercise before the scheduled sit-down

interview (Appendix D). The second part of the interview used the selected memes as a storytelling tool to facilitate in generating student narratives regarding their experiences in the context of Yosso's six cultural capitals (Appendix E).

Meme icebreaker exercise. The initial prompt of six emailed questions was designed to help students think about personal stories and select internet-based memes as a visual display of their experiences for each of the six questions. Distributed through public domain internet blogs and social media, memes communicate cultural and societal ideas encapsulated in images and screenshots, often utilizing humor. The participants explained why they selected specific memes at the beginning of the subsequent sit-down interviews two weeks later. This served as a visual icebreaker in commencing their narrative discourse. Based on Yosso's six cultural capitals, the questions for this first part of the interview data collection tool asked participants to select internet-based memes which encapsulated their personal stories as Latino, first-generation immigrant and college-bound households. The memes represented the six cultural capitals with the accompanying prompts: (1) Aspirational capital- higher education academic hopes and dreams which motivate a Latino student and represent family communicated goals and academic objectives despite barriers or challenges; (2) Linguistic capital-language and communication styles which develop from a multilingual and multicultural orientation and variations of modes of expression such as through the arts or storytelling skills which Latino students bring with them to a higher education setting as a result of their dual language background; (3) Familial capital-families and precollege family communities as social and personal human resource tools which provide sources of wisdom, support, and values which Latino students bring with them as support tools in college settings; (4) Social capital-the peer and surrounding social contacts Latino students utilize for strategies, guidance, and emotional support in gaining access to

college and other academic-based endeavors; (5) Navigational capital-the skills and abilities Latino students rely on to navigate and maneuver through the challenges and obstacles of unfamiliar settings, such as intimidating collegiate settings; and (6) Resistance capital-the ability to advocate and secure personal and group rights in regards to equity and social justice as Latino students prepare themselves for the challenges with societal problems (Yosso, 2005).

Individual sit-down interviews. For the purpose of the study, the individual semi-structured sit-down interviews, scheduled to last 60 minutes, first explored the stories behind the selected memes from the first-part prompt questions. The interviews then expanded the developing participant story with six open-ended follow-up questions. I conducted these interviews in person with the students individually, making note of the importance to represent a position of supportiveness and an expectation of mindfulness (Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2014). I used a script for the interviews which included instructions and the exact wording for the initial probing questions (Jones et al., 2014). These interviews were recorded, transcribed immediately afterwards, and included as data sources.

Campus-based walking tour interviews. Focused on the college climate, a campus-based walking tour interview allowed for participants to be prompted by situational and personnel connections, encouraging the narration of stories encapsulating their transition and adjustment as Latino students to the campus environment. These walking tour interviews allowed for rich, detailed narratives and participant personal reflections to develop in the natural setting, climate, and environment in which they were encountered (Anderson, 2004; Carpiano, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Evans & Jones, 2011; Harris, 2016; Jones et al., 2008; Kusenbach, 2003). Such walking tours allowed students of color to portray their environmental interactions on campuses through the lens of their cultural identities (Harris, 2016).

A key component of the walking tour interview was the planning of the route, be it researcher-created versus participant-led, and the structuring of questions in a script versus an open-format responsive to participant story development (Evans & Jones, 2011; Jones et al., 2008). For this data collection tool, the study incorporated a participant-led, unstructured walking tour interview format, where I accompanied the participant with a discrete portable recording device documenting the participant narrations, which were later transcribed (Carpiano, 2009; Evans & Jones, 2011; Harris, 2016).

After the completion of the earlier sit-down interview focused on cultural factors, participants received a campus map and accompanying instructions (Appendix F) to identify and create a visual itinerary of the places, service venues, and location of campus-based individuals representing environmental elements and support features which impacted (positively or negatively) in addressing the needs of diverse student populations. This co-construction role for the participant empowered them in the ownership of the route and served as guides in the development of their stories during the campus-based walking tour interviews (Carpiano, 2009; Evans & Jones, 2011; Harris, 2016). The participant's listing of key venues, services, and individuals to visit determined the duration of the participant-led walking interview (Carpiano, 2009; Evans & Jones, 2011; Harris, 2016).

Maintaining participant confidentiality presented a challenge in such a natural setting (Harris, 2016). A discussion beforehand between myself and each participant allowed the participant to identify how they would be most comfortable in addressing the presence of the researcher during the walking tour interview. The participant, at the time of this pre-conversation, could have chosen to instead conduct the environment-based interview in a sit-down format if they preferred, thereby maintaining confidentiality. Similarly, the presence of

participant concerns, such as physical limitations or the occurrence of inclement weather, could be addressed with shifting the prescribed walking interview route and its accompanying storytelling component to a sit-down interview format (Evans & Jones, 2011; Harris, 2016).

Lastly, this environment-based interview was finalized with a summarizing brief discussion, allowing for unstructured researcher questions of interest generated during the walking tour. (Evans & Jones, 2011; Harris, 2016).

Data Analysis

With a purpose of exploration and discovery, qualitative data analysis searches for emergent themes, relationships, and meanings in the analysis process of the words used by participants which can be transferable to similar entities in separate experiences with the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). Incorporating inductive and deductive methods, the primary data analysis applications in this narrative inquiry study are: narrative analysis, holistic interpretation, and thematic analysis. Separately, the following techniques are also applied: interim analysis, visual content analysis, and memoing.

Narrative Analysis

Recognizing how each narrative is a different story created by individual experiences and their attributed meaning, narrative analysis focuses on "exploring different ways of examining the similarities and the differences between and across the stories" (Maple & Edwards, 2010, p.42). Through narrative inquiry as the study's methodology, I initiated the data analysis process by first empowering the participant voices through their storytelling, which required the development of individual narratives. After reading for understanding the transcribed interviews, I employed the multiple data tools for each participant and identified rich, thick quotes as the

foundation of their story. From those quotes, I built the structure of a linear story. I then inserted brackets representative of researcher edits and transitional words to co-construct a seamless storyline for each participant. Having previously sent each participant a transcript of their interviews for accuracy and verification, I then sent the participants a draft of the co-constructed individual narratives. By using the technique of member checking, they edited, clarified, and validated the final draft of their story, confirming how the individual narratives had captured and communicated the essence of their college access and campus transition experiences.

Holistic interpretation. A holistic interpretation focuses on the overall messages representative of student experiences. This analysis technique uses direct individual quotes to create overall summations for the whole of the group within the phenomenon-based experiences (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). These direct quotes guide a holistic analysis, focusing the interpretation on the communal narrative insight instead of the partial individual statements (Creswell, 2014). After finalizing the individual stories through the process of narrative analysis, I then looked at each of the elements from the two theoretical frameworks, Yosso's (2005) Community Wealth Capitals framework and Museus' (2014) Culturally Engaging Campus Environments model of environmental indicators. The bridging and application of these two frameworks guided the development of the research design, the decisions regarding the selection of data collection points, the focus of the research questions, and the structuring of the data collection tools. After creating the individual narratives, I overlapped what the six participants had shared in their stories with a mapping of the capitals and environmental components of the two theoretical frameworks. I identified key phrases from the rich quotes within those individual narratives, sorting them on a concept map organized by participant and by the framework elements (Saldaña, 2013). With the intention of creating a holistic synthesis of the information, I

reflected on the similarities and differences between and across the stories. This allowed for a vertical exploration of each narrative across the framework elements with a horizontal synthesis of the data collection across the participants, contributing to an understanding of the communal meaning behind the experiences.

Thematic Analysis

From my holistic synthesis concept mapping following the narrative analysis, I started to highlight and color code the commonalities in the participant experiences, both across the participants and across the wealth capitals and environmental components. The search for commonalities is foundational for the creation of a collective storyline (Schwartz, Donovan & Guido-DiBrito, 2009). A grouping of color-coded phrases into categories eventually defined the identification of five overarching themes, the product of the application of thematic analysis. The development of such an overarching plot reflects an understanding of the *hows* and *whys* which blend the different stories together (Hunter, 2010; Maple & Edwards, 2010). Once I identified five overarching themes, I returned to the individual participant data and I re-sorted the rich, thick quotes by the overarching themes. These themes from the collective storylines and their accompanying rich quotes progressed the data analysis from individual narratives to a communal narrative for the six Latino participants. This occurred through the application of coding.

Coding. During initial and subsequent readings of the produced individual narratives, I incorporated a coding system method in order to understand, discover, and identify relevant themes, emerging patterns, and unique perspectives. Open coding, also known as initial coding, produces researcher-generated inductive codes as an analysis of the field texts (Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2014). After the process of open or initial coding, I utilized secondary axial coding to create groupings of the themes into new pattern codes for categories in common across

the field texts for all participants (Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2014; Miles et al., 2014). These categories eventually evolved into the five overarching themes from the communal narrative of the six Latino student participants.

Interim Analysis

Representative of a cyclical moving back and forth between data gathering and data analysis, I undertook interim analysis concurrently and used it to develop a deeper understanding in guiding each round of the data collection process for all the participants, along with the subsequent narrative analysis, holistic interpretation, and thematic analysis (Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2014). Interim analysis, applied through the use of researcher journaling and memoing, was an ongoing process from the initial participant interview to the final reflections on the selection of five overarching themes from the data.

Visual Content Analysis

Used as a guide for participants in developing their stories, visual content analysis incorporates the use of images as a stimulus in storytelling (Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2014). For this study, memes functioned as an icebreaker visual device leading into the interview questions and the development of the storytelling. Through the use of participant-selected memes, images captured sentiments which would later be articulated by the participants and portrayed by the researcher through the development of the narratives.

Memoing

Memoing is the use of writing memos in an effort to articulate initial thoughts and questions and facilitate in the documentation of researcher positionality and reflections on ideas (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As a data analysis application, memos “are one of the most useful

and powerful sense-making tools" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 96). For this study, these memos served as personal journaling documents for the researcher.

Qualitative Research Rigor and Trustworthiness

The intentionality and transparency of establishing rigor and trustworthiness in a qualitative study facilitate in establishing the criteria for the worth of a study, contributing to an association with levels of confidence in the research findings (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The purpose of rigor is to create a level of quality when conducting a qualitative study, accomplished through an intentional recognition of the objective of integrity (Schwartz et al., 2009). Additionally, the presence of rigor and trustworthiness indicates the researcher's commitment to conducting the study in an ethical manner (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For this qualitative study, I engaged in rigor and trustworthiness through the use of the following: transferability, credibility, and confirmability.

Transferability

Instead of the intention of generalizability between samples and populations in quantitative studies, transferability demonstrates how the results of a qualitative study apply to potential different situations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Transferability is achieved "through rich, thick descriptions of the participants and their cultural context and a clear delineation of the research methods, interpretations, and findings" (Schwartz et al., 2009, p. 56).

Rich, thick descriptions. For the purpose of my study, the narrative inquiry's storytelling format illustrated transferability, which applied the use of rich, thick descriptions as a data collection tool in capturing participant experiences (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This included direct quotations taken from the field notes, authenticating the perspective of the different participants in the data

collection process and thereby documenting verbatim detailed participants' contributions into the study. As a narrative inquiry study, the voices of the participants were presented throughout these descriptions, collected and displayed using direct quotations (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Additionally, the inclusion of rich, thick narrative descriptions allowed the reader to capture a complete snapshot of experiences (Creswell, 2014).

Credibility

In qualitative research, credibility represents "the extent to which reliable conclusions can be derived from the research" (Schwartz et al., 2009, p. 56). It can be established through the use of strategies to ensure accuracy with the data collection (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For the purpose of my study, credibility was established through the use of the following strategies: member validation and crystallization.

Member validation. Also known as member checking, this strategy empowered the participants in providing input regarding the plausibility of data analysis and its interpretation (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles et al., 2014). According to Johnson and Christensen, member checking/validation allows for establishing confirmation and verification avenues for the collected data material (2014).

For this study, the participants reviewed all field texts including the transcriptions, narratives, and summations of themes. This built-in reviewing process throughout the study allowed for any errors in the note taking process or any flawed inferences by the researcher to be corrected and addressed directly by the participants before the collected data became the foundation for the analysis and before conclusions with the data analysis, hence establishing credibility with the data and within the study.

Crystallization. Crystallization serves as a strategy in establishing trustworthiness, recognizing multiple sides which can present corroborating data verification (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As a qualitative study, the researcher serves as the primary instrumentation source with both the data collection and the analysis (Creswell, 2014). In order to employ the technique of crystallization, the study incorporated different sources of data, hence field notes, cultural factors sit-down interview, campus map itinerary, and campus environment walking tour interview, allowing for data corroboration.

Confirmability

Used to determine the quality of the study, confirmability examines "the length of engagement, the care with procedures, the detailed record-keeping, and the extent to which researchers explore a variety of interpretations" (Schwartz et al., 2009, p. 56). It can be established through the use of member checks, expert checks, and an audit trail (Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For the purpose of establishing credibility in my qualitative study, I included researcher journaling with the data.

Researcher journaling. These journaling memos incorporated the details with the data collection process and the incorporation of my thoughts and reflections during the data collecting procedures (Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Protection of Participants and Ethical Considerations

In addition to the presence of rigor and trustworthiness as an indicator of the commitment to conducting research in an ethical manner and as part of the necessary elements to receive Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, other factors existed in this narrative inquiry qualitative research which were incorporated intentionally for the protection of the research participants (Jones et al., 2014). Strategies for addressing such concerns included: power

dynamics between participant and researcher, data misunderstandings during the analysis, participant time demands, written consent for adults, and the protection of participant identities.

Power Dynamics

In the process of using stories to create meaning of lived experiences, narrative inquiry studies require a negotiation which defines the power dynamics of participant-researcher relationships and interactions, with researchers locating themselves in the participant's world (Clandinin, 2006). As the researcher, my words and ideas affect the meaning making process, and the understanding of these experiences contributes to a co-constructed product (Josselson, 1996). However, I recognize how my insider role should not steer the narratives away from the participants in any disempowering manner (Jones et al., 2014).

Data Misunderstandings

The application of member validation provides a strategic opportunity for participants to provide critical feedback on my interpretations (Creswell, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Jones et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles et al., 2014). In addition to any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the data, such checking-in addresses mistakenly allowing any descriptions of the lives of the participants appearing to describe them with a deficit lens (Jones et al., 2014).

Demands on the Participants

Regarding participants and research time demands, constraints and already existing student challenges should not have been impacted further by participating in this study (Jones et al., 2014). As the researcher, I made sure to simplify, limit, and meet the needs of the participants by adapting to their schedule. I communicated to the participants how I valued their time and their contributions to the study (Miles et al., 2014).

Written Consent

Prior to participating in the study and the collection of any data, I explained fully the participant written consent forms. After answering or expanding on any questions or thoughts, I required all participants to consent explicitly both in a written manner by completing and signing the consent forms and in a verbal manner on the recordings prior to conducting the interviews. Additionally, I confirmed each participant's adult status on the written consent form.

Protection of Student Identities

As a method to ensure confidentiality, I used pseudonyms for all participants during the data collection. Similarly, pseudonyms concealed the description of their secondary school setting and the names and descriptors of their current higher education institutions, venues, and personnel. A document with participant information was stored separately in a different cloud storage location from the data collecting tools, data analysis, and reporting of this study.

Chapter III Summary

In recapping the design of this study, the following research questions guided the structure and direction of the investigation:

- What meaning do Latino college students give to the unique challenges and strengths inherent in the cultural factors that play a role in their college access stories?
- How do campus environmental components and institutional support sources empower Latino college students in the application of these cultural factors as a bridge in navigating the transition and adjustment to college campus climates?

Through the methodology of narrative inquiry and the application of purposeful sampling, a group of Latino college students, coming from a single pre-college secondary setting and attending different higher educational institutions, shared stories and reflections on the

college access and adjustment/transition process. These narratives were captured through the data collection tools of sit-down and walking interviews, incorporating a critical/transformative paradigm through participant-chosen internet-based visual images known as memes, through reflection and insights shared through interviews, and from participant-led campus touring itineraries of environmental highlights.

CHAPTER IV- FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, the experiences and reflections of six Latino participants regarding their college access process and adjustment to campus environments are shared through the following narratives. These six individual stories represent a co-constructed synthesis of the data collected from the two-part cultural factors sit-down interview and the campus-based environment interview. Each of these stories, co-constructed by the participants and researcher, has been validated by the participants through member checking of the transcripts and story summations, along with crystallization through the multiple data collecting tools. The narratives include rich, thick descriptions as block quotes which represent the foundation for each participants' story.

For part one of the cultural factors sit-down interview, participants responded to six prompts based on Yosso's (2005) Model of CCW which identifies the following six types of capital as sources of individual empowerment: aspirational capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, and resistance capital. For each of the six prompts, participants selected internet-based memes as a conversational stimulus which encapsulated personal stories and corresponded with Yosso's (2005) sources of capital as a Latino, first-generation immigrant and college-bound member, from a lower income household (Appendix D). For part two of the cultural factors sit-down interview with its semi-structured format, participants discussed the reasons for selecting each meme as a visual storytelling icebreaker followed by their narration of the stories which encapsulated their reflections and perspectives on their college access and campus environment experiences (Appendix E).

For the campus-based environment interview, participants used a campus map to create a visual itinerary of the places, campus-based support venues, and other components such as personnel and programming, which impacted their transition to their campus climate and served in addressing their needs as minoritized students (Appendix F). This itinerary guided the participant-led, unstructured campus environment interview, conducted as a walking or virtual tour based on the participants' preference in regards to confidentiality, physical limitations, campus size, or weather challenges at the time of the interview. Its participant-directed route highlighted stories which built on the previously identified Latino cultural wealth capitals and defined the role of an institution's campus climate from the lens of these Latino participants.

This Findings chapter is structured into six narratives representing the individual student experiences. Each of these stories is subdivided. The first subsections of each narrative identify emerging themes and threads highlighted in the storytelling by participant for each of Yosso's (2005) cultural wealth capitals. The last subsection of each narrative then identifies key environmental components during the transition and adjustment period to the campus climate which correlate with one of the nine indicators from Museus' (2014) Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model. Lastly, a summary section follows the six narratives, representing a holistic synthesis of the overarching themes across the six participants and across the cultural wealth capitals and environmental components.

Juan's Story on College Access and Campus Environments

As the oldest of five siblings, Juan is the first member of his family to attend college in the United States. With parents from Mexico and Guatemala with limited command of English, I first met Juan when he was a middle schooler inquiring about my institution's application process on behalf of his parents. The independent college preparatory school at which I teach

eventually admitted Juan as a sophomore two years later. Today, a 21-year-old junior in college, Juan is double majoring in Finance and Accounting at an out-of-state private institution. Located in a southern urban setting, its estimated population of 1,600 has a significantly large White student demographic representing 79% of the overall population. Its current Latino student population totals approximately four percent of its overall undergraduate student enrollment (U.S. News and World Report, n.d.).

Juan's personal narration of his college access experiences, as processed with the backdrop of Yosso's (2005) six cultural wealth capitals, communicates the ensuing themes: education as a foundational requirement, language as a tool to cultural understanding, the role of parental emotional support, existing between two worlds, lessons from the hardship endured by immigrant loved ones, and the importance of sense of community. When considered through the environmental Museus' (2014) CECE Model, the accompanying transition and adjustment personal stories identify the following impactful campus elements: financial aid services, housing community, diversity and inclusion programming, and affinity groups and Latino staff as extension of family.

Juan: Aspirational Capital

Figure 1. Juan's aspirational capital selected meme.

Juan's meme on aspirational cultural capital depicts a group picture with the caption, "graduation tickets? Yes, I need 43 for the family" (Figure 1). This selection confirmed an ever-

present communal emphasis on educational achievement as a personal and familial foundational requirement for a better future:

> One of the primary messages [my siblings and I] always received from our parents is that if we ever wanted to succeed in life, education was going to be key for us. They would always say, stay in school, graduate, go to college, graduate from college because that's the only way – it's the most certain way to success. [Regarding communicated goals], that was the first thing that popped into my mind. That's one of the things that was ingrained in us by our parents. That was the goal, for all of us to be together and all of us to graduate. I recall [an evening where] my dad asked me to go help him on a night job and I remember thinking why am I being asked to do this. I was 12/13 years old. While we were working, [he told me], this is the result of not going to school and … not doing what I should have done as a child. For my dad, [some days were] a struggle. I remember [thinking], I don't want to make those same mistakes, I don't want to repeat those steps. So, I told myself I was going to work hard.

Once away at college and distanced from the daily interaction with his family to reiterate the importance of these aspirational objectives, Juan sought connections with campus adults as surrogate sources for aspirational motivation:

> When I first came [to my institution], we all had assigned counselors … and it just seemed like at first, there was a mutual disinterest in each other …. I felt that my counselor wasn't interested in me or in my career goal …. I was told, when you choose your career and your degree, you should have somebody else that can guide you more properly. I was like, yes, but until that point, how am I supposed to get there? [But then], my advisor became a different person once I declared a major during sophomore year ….

> That person was one of my teachers [from] freshman year …. She was Puerto Rican, … [she already knew me], and she was really interested in me so it clicked …. Another student [and I] had been the only Latinos in her class so one day, we timidly asked her if she spoke Spanish because she just had a way of carrying herself like a Latina or something …. She was like, yeah, yeah … I think [the other student and I] have continued with [our academic path] because of her …. I think it was the [needed] extra … cushion, knowing that somebody was going to be there to help us keep going.

Juan: Linguistic Capital

Figure 2. Juan's linguistic capital selected meme.

Juan chose for his linguistic capital meme a collage of Looney Tunes cartoons with the heading, "soy de la generación que creció viendo esto" which translates to "I am of the generation that grew up watching these" (Figure 2). Serving as a linguistic tool in addition to a cultural characteristic, Juan demonstrated how command of the Spanish language provided a tool to Latino cultural understanding and a gateway to generational community identity:

> [As children, my siblings and I] would watch [cartoon] shows in English in the morning and at night they would [replay as] reruns in Spanish …. We were used to watching them [bilingually] and our parents [would say] practice your Spanish. [This linguistic tool will present opportunities]. Others will be … interested in me because … I have the ability to speak in English and Spanish, the two most common languages in the U.S.

Once at his college campus, Juan used his command of Spanish as a means to contribute to his higher education and Latino community:

> In the admissions process, they have reached out to me to speak with [visiting] Latino families. I know … [the institution] wants diversity, [including] … with languages …. I've done this … for students that are friends …, [and for] other friends trying to … know more about the school. [With] their parents … asking questions, they come to me because parents like the way I talk to them … I've had good relationships with parents. If their parents are … hesitant to send them, … I can talk to them. [Although] there are plenty of [non-Latino] Spanish majors, they are not the same [with] understanding what [Latino families] have gone through and how to [best] explain to [Latino] parents.

Juan: Familial Capital

Figure 3. Juan's familial capital selected meme.

Juan's meme on familial capital is an image of a father figure with a collection of thoughts reflecting on parental sacrifices. Examples of these reflections are: "watching my father

just get home when he left the house at 6am hurts my heart" and "he's my hero because even when he feels like quitting he doesn't cause he vowed to take care of his family" (Figure 3). This meme serves as a tribute to the role of Latino parents as emotional support:

> My dad is always outside … and he's really dark [from the sun] and really tired. I do most of the talking for [both my parents] because of the language barrier…. I've done a lot of representing for them. My parents … were there [at school] to drop me off, and buy [things that I needed] freshmen year … They call me every [morning] … and afternoon.

Juan considered how his college environment acknowledged his parents as a primary source of emotional support:

> At [my institution], … we have events for Latino students but they are never initiated [by the institution]. [The Latino students] are always the ones having to start and create [these events]. We [recently] had our first Hispanic Heritage Celebration which we organized … by ourselves. There's never really a place or somebody to talk to about how our [primary source of] support, our parents, are doing back at home. I [just] don't think my college recognizes [the role of our Latino families] …. That is one of the things that we as the Latino group on campus [have] tried to bring more awareness to but the college clearly isn't there yet. [The institution] doesn't recognize the support we get from our parents and from our families. [It] is probably our strongest [source of support].

When asked about the awareness of institutional parental programming, Juan shared not only a lack of any knowledge but also potential obstacles for such parental involvement:

> I really wouldn't know [about Parent Weekends] because [my parents have] never participated in one. [I don't know any Latino parents that] have gone …. Understandably, there are obstacles everybody has [as to why Latino parents] can't make it. They have

work or personal issues. [But, they find the way to take me home regularly]. Usually my mom picks me up on a Friday morning [so as to visit at home] for the weekend and then Sunday night they drive me back [to campus] and return home [in the early morning hours to be at work that same day]. They will do this around six times a year.

Juan: Social Capital

Figure 4. Juan's social capital selected meme.

Juan's social capital meme depicts a father expressing to his daughter the challenges with being bicultural, stating "being Mexican-American is hard; it's exhausting." This image conveys the frustration with lacking full acceptance in either culture, adding "we gotta prove to the Mexicans how Mexican we are and we gotta prove to the Americans how American we are; we gotta be more Mexican than the Mexicans and more American than the Americans all at the same time" (Figure 4). Juan's narrative on social capital encapsulates the challenges in existing between two worlds:

> All of my friends [understand the feeling of not fully belonging]. At home, if you went to a good [private] school [outside the neighborhood], they'd be like, oh, you think you're White now so you're not one of us anymore. And at school it's the same way, oh, you come from [Latino immigrant communities] so you're not American. It was always like that, you don't fit in either one. There have been similar stories [here in college]. I have met some that have [experienced] it less but [they are the students from] the bigger cities…where they had exposure to more people [and diversity] I guess. [It has been different for] the friends at school … that come from smaller, rural towns …. They're used to fitting into one place and a lot of the people that I've met from smaller towns are like, no, we've always fit in, we've always hung out … with the same small group of people. And [then] they come to a school … which is even bigger than their towns and they're just, this is an adjustment.

Once on campus, Juan communicated how important it became to find others who related to the challenges of biculturalism, and could understand how its duality could produce at the same time a sense of displacement:

> We've always felt like there's not a person or a place [on campus] for Hispanic students to talk about the issues they're going through because everybody [in the college community] has their own set of different issues. We've always felt that there's somewhere to [go] talk for the majority of students but for the minorities, like African Americans, there's no person in … Student Life [offices] to help them out, there's no Latino professional there to talk to the Hispanic students, there's no Asian [staff] for any of the Asian students.

This searching for others who would understand the complexities of biculturalism led to the formation of a Latino student group on campus:

It was [during] our freshmen year [when] we formed [OLAS- Organization for Latin American Students]. The person that initially founded it is now the student body president of the school. He's a very strong-willed person …. We had a good amount of people that wanted to create this and have something for our own so we decided to start it and had a few events to get to know each other and make a name for ourselves …. [In looking for an advisor], we approached the Spanish Department …. There were some Latino professors there that we felt … would be our best option …. It [turned out to be] received very well. They were all for it, accepting us instantly. [Originally], … it was just a group of us, like seven or eight of us that freshmen year …. We [became] a peer group …. We attended …. the club fair [where] everybody had their [table] stands outside …. [We decided if we saw] any Hispanic students, we [would] stop them …. [As a result], we [ended with] five other Latinos …. [This gave us] somewhere to start from …. And then the second year, we [knew] … we have to do this [again]. All … of us had to be there so we [could] approach as many people as we [wanted] …. [That year], we doubled [again] our size. Now this year, our founder got elected student body president.

Juan: Navigational Capital

Figure 5. Juan's navigational capital selected meme.

Juan's meme on his navigational capital is an internet posting on the hardships endured by immigrant parents, stating "children of immigrants are so protective of their parents and are

so nurturing. Our parents get ridiculed for their accents or lack of English, get talked down to at their jobs, get side eyed in White spaces. I'll fight anyone on behalf of my parents" (Figure 5). Juan's stories shared how the hardships endured by his immigrant parents serve as his navigational lessons:

> There have been times at school [where I'll say], I'm tired, exhausted, I don't know why I'm doing this anymore and [then] I remember. My parents get ridiculed, … all of these bad things have happened to them and I'm like, well, I can't let this happen anymore so I suck it up and I do my best to keep going, to keep moving forward …. Whatever I have to face is nothing compared to what they've had to face …. My dad came here on a work visa in 1996 …. He's from Guatemala …. My mom came on a – what do you call it, a vacation visa. They met here …. They were both taking an English class …. It hasn't been easy [for them from the start] …. [My mom] lacked the educational background that she needed for a decent job here and my dad still at that time didn't know English so it was complicated … to start a family at that point in time. Financially, [I remember they had] a little bistro table for two people. There weren't even chairs. I sat on a cooler, my mom sat on the taller cooler and then we had one chair and that's where we ate three of us at a time, [with] my … little siblings first …. [My mom still] figures everything out for [my dad], for all of us, and just makes everything function …. It seems like everything is fine and everything is going [smoothly] but it takes her forever to figure it out.

For Juan, commonality and camaraderie served as transition and adjustment navigational tools to counter a sense of being overwhelmed on campus:

> There have been times where I felt exhausted and like, I know I can't be the only one feeling this way and this is [only] my sophomore year. My freshman year went by really

quick so I really didn't think about it much but then sophomore year went by a lot slower …. Freshman year, I was trying to take everything in but sophomore year, I was more focused so I had time on my hands …. [During that second year], there was a disconnect even among Hispanic students. [I felt] there had to be something there. [It was] not loneliness …. When I saw [other] students, we would hang out in groups but [when] … you would see them, … they didn't look happy …. They didn't look happy to [be] here …. And I was like, yeah, I felt the same way …. That's when we started … to hang out together and talk about these things, about the similar struggles we were having, [including] missing our parents …. We started talking [to] see what was going on and [to] make sure everybody was doing alright. We did [it] one time in a common room [of the dorm] just to see how everybody was doing. We found out we all had gone through similar things, we had the same worries, same conflicts, same sort of things [to be] worried about …. [We focused on] trying to figure out how we [could] help each other get through this because … we weren't connecting like we should. [It helped to hear others] open up about the problems that nobody wanted to bring up …. Nobody wanted to mention … that there was nobody … making contact with you.

As a result of these conversations, Juan summarized:

I made a lot of new friends [during that period] …. Some of them I [had] never really talked to [while] some of them … [I knew] through soccer …. It was really nice to meet them. They're like just really nice people. [Today], I do have non-Latino friends that are very close to me and I talk to them all the time but it's not like that with everybody. [However], most of my really close friends are people of color …. Because of shared experiences, we got to know [and understand] each other.

Juan: Resistance Capital

Figure 6. Juan's resistance capital selected meme.

Juan's resistance capital meme is a picture of a large group enjoying a day in the park. It includes the caption: "Mexicans/Hispanics be like … happy 'siblings' day" (Figure 6). This meme communicates how community equates to family:

> For me, it's just like knowing that I have family around – my siblings, my four brothers and my sister, … But, also people I've had a connection with over the years that I probably don't keep in touch with but, I know that the second we see each other … we can always catch up …. [It's about] them having my back and I … having their back …. I see [my high school Latino friends] all the time. Knowing how we treated each other, … what we [are working for], and how we can help each other [is] something that has kept us together … [It's about] surrounding yourself [with] people that give you that [same] sense of, like I don't know.

Juan articulated his search for a family-like community on campus as the theme of a class writing project. His reflections in this assignment were shared with his Dean of Students:

> My [philosophy] professor submitted [my research project] … titled *Why Hispanic students seemed to be disconnected on campus* to the Dean of Students …. And so, the Dean of Students … reached out to me …. She asked me … what would I want on a

> personal level from a person they would hire. I … shared, at least somebody that can understand, that understands or went through [the same] struggles that we did as students, as immigrants, as first-time college students; what we're going through right now, that sort of thing …. That was basically what I told her, there's not a certain amount of credentials they need, just that sense of understanding what we're going through, that is really what we need to help get through things right now. I know that because I wrote that philosophy paper, the school reached out to me to ask about hiring a Hispanic [staffer] as somebody … to reach out to for support, and not just with academics but in any type of need. When I was writing the class essay, I remember going back to my professor and saying, I don't know if I feel comfortable writing this; what if the school staff thinks I'm coming off ungrateful, like I don't think what I have is enough; that's the last thing I want to come off as. But she said, no, this is something that needs to be brought up, it needs to be heard …. She reassured me, [saying], that's the least of your worries; this is something that the Diversity and Inclusion Office would love to hear.

Juan's Campus Environment Transition and Adjustment Indicators

When considering the places, spaces, people, programming, and curriculum through the environmental Museus' (2014) CECE Model, Juan's accompanying transition and adjustment narrative identifies the following impactful campus elements: financial aid services, housing community, diversity and inclusion programming, and affinity groups and Latino staff.

Financial aid services. The financial aid office and its administrative staff were essential components in Juan's campus adjustment and, secondarily, in his college persistence to date:

> The financial aid [office] was really key for me adjusting. [I selected my institution because of how, as an applicant], I made personal connections with [individuals that I

> would] spend a considerable amount of time with [in this office] …. When I [first] got here, I actually met some of the people that I was contacting through email and [phone calls]. They really were receptive to me and my situation, … always trying to hear what I had to say. [They provided customized assistance] … with the way they handled my situation and helped me. It wasn't the first time they've done it for a student so I felt like I was being attended to because they understood me …. I was honest with them in explaining my situation with being a student of immigrant parents who really didn't have any information or knowledge [regarding the financial aid process]. They were really helpful, always making sure to best [explain] what I needed to know, what my parents needed to know, and making sure that they could help us out any way they could …. [Support included direct attention from] the head of admissions who happened to also be the head of financial aid. [She was] understanding of the situation with not just me but with other students around me. [Her staff also knew me well]. It was [an intimate] environment where everybody had seen me before and knew [me] …. It was very easy for them to communicate what they needed [from] me.

Housing community. As a venue that facilitates student sense of belonging, Juan's first year housing and its predominately minoritized student population, including immigrant students, created a residential sense of community:

> I [was assigned] the newest [dormitory] building at the time when [I was an] incoming freshmen. The purpose of [this building] was to create a [sense] of community in that dorm …. [It included] a shared living space … where people could just hang out and do their thing. All of the learning community [groups] were in that building as well …. A lot of the students of color [were] involved in the learning communities and therefore that's

> how [most] ended up [in this new dorm] …. My roommate [that first year] was not of Hispanic descent. My roommate was from Pakistan …. He was a minority [like myself] and also came from parents of immigrants. We were able to have really nice conversations [about our] … immigrant experiences [which was] actually a big part of how we identified …. It was just really nice that we were both … from different backgrounds that weren't White …. It was interesting because … we didn't have to adapt to the dominant culture or anything. We could be our real selves around each other.

Diversity and inclusion programming. With the offering of opportunities to be heard as members of the campus community, Juan's adjustment to his higher education environment included the participation in diversity and inclusion programming:

> [At the end of last spring term], I wrote a paper about the disconnect among the immigrant kids [which was read by the dean of students]. [Now at the start of the new year], a lot has already changed …. There is now a new person in charge of diversity and inclusion …. She's Latina. She had been doing a teacher exchange program for the last 12 years, and now they gave her this position …. There was a push from a lot of people that wanted to hear/see something different from the diversity and inclusion office …. There were a lot of complaints … from people [last year] that events were … more like socials [instead of focused activities] on actual issues …. It had been very superficial. [For this first month back], students were given a platform to talk about some of these issues. [This past week], we had a panel focused on growing up Latino … and the panel [spoke about] our experience at this institution. It had a very good turnout. It was a full house [in the lecture hall], with people standing … anywhere they could get a spot. It was sponsored by the office of diversity and inclusion and helped

> by us, the Latino student group. [This event produced] a lot of good discussion for people to hear. [They heard how] we want to … improve our lives but at the same time create something better for our families around us. The diversity and inclusion office will continue the panel series with different student groups.

Affinity groups and Latino staff. Juan's campus-based sources of support include the establishment and participation in a Latino student group and the impact from relationships with Latino faculty and staff members from similar backgrounds:

> Our institution's Latino student group meetings are in a classroom … where professors teach Spanish classes and that's convenient because our original sponsor [two years ago] was a Spanish professor. [This] classroom became [our] student group's hub …. I had actually taken a class with [this Spanish professor] before …. At around the time when [a group of us] wanted to create a Hispanic group on campus, we decided we wanted to [host] it near the Spanish [classrooms] because we were going to have a Spanish sponsor. [He] was Chilean and Russian. He had already talked to us [before] to get to know us …. We were in this building walking … and he noticed us. He approached us … because there weren't that many Hispanic or Latino students. [Today], I don't keep up with this professor [outside of the club] as much as I used to but I do talk to him every once in a while. [Instead], I speak [more] to my [department] professors and [especially my Puerto Rican advisor] because they are the ones that have become my [extended] family now. They are the ones that ask me about everything. They go out of their way to ask me about my day. They ask me how my parents are doing because I've told them all about them. They know I talk to my parents at least twice a day. I [have received] an incredible

amount of advice and guidance from [all these] professors. They are [part of the] group that has helped me feel more included into the community.

Summary of Juan's Experience

As a summation of Juan's narrative regarding his college access and campus adjustment experiences using selected memes as narrative icebreakers (Appendix G), his stories convey the following themes: message of education as a foundational requirement, language as a cultural understanding tool, Latino parents as emotional support, the challenges in existing between two worlds and the search for bicultural peers, lessons from the hardship endured by immigrant parents, and the importance of community as extension of family. In regards to environmental components which built on his Latino cultural wealth capitals and facilitated during his campus transition and adjustment, Juan's stories identify the following campus-based elements: financial aid services, housing community, diversity and inclusion programming, and identity groups and Latino staff as extension of family.

Alejandro's Story on College Access and Campus Environments

I first met Alejandro as a middle school student interested in applying for admission to my institution's secondary school. Always a serious and focused student, today the 19-year-old is on a Pre-Medicine academic trajectory, studying Biology and Human Health as a sophomore at a private higher education institution. Although located in the same city in which his Mexican parents live, he resided on campus during his freshmen year due to a first-year residency requirement. Alejandro's school has an undergraduate population of approximately 7000, with a White population of 41% and a Latino representation of 9% (U.S. News and World Report, n.d.).

In structuring Alejandro's college access story through the layout of Yosso's capitals, the subsequent themes emerged: serving as the family's educational role model, language options for

communication, family as the source of strength in accomplishing communal achievements, social networking with others from similar backgrounds, resiliency and a fighter mentality, and remembering the sacrifices of loved ones. Alejandro's campus transition experiences, understood through the nine indicators of Museus' (2014) CECE Model, make note of the following key environmental elements: first generation peers as family on campus, the financial aid office, coping with academic stress, and work study providing access to Hispanic professional mentors.

Alejandro: Aspirational Capital

Figure 7. Alejandro's aspirational capital selected meme.

Alejandro's aspirational capital meme is a snapshot of an athlete in the midst of the game with the wording "determination-putting the team on your back" (Figure 7). From Alejandro's perspectives, the weight of being his family's educational role model is what drives him:

> I like to emphasize the [goal of] putting the team on your back. That's kind of been my mentality ever since I transitioned to [high school] …. It was [my frame of reference] when applying to colleges …. I am the first, I am the oldest in my family …. I have always been the translator at all the parent conference meetings; I am the one that all the uncles and aunts call to ask for homework help for the cousins …. I was the first to transition to a private [secondary] school, the first to go through the American educational system, [both] public schools and a private school, and the first to apply to college …. I shouldn't [have to] burden myself with the notion that as the oldest, I am

> [setting] an example, but for me it's always been a motivator instead of something that burdened me …. So whenever I think about the way I conduct myself, the way that I work, and the importance that I give to school, I always think back to my family and the … shadow that I'm casting in terms of bringing others into the fold as well …. It comes with its advantages and its disadvantages because I always feel a constant pressure to achieve and perform but it's worked in the sense that … when there are highs, they're really high, but when the lows come, they're very low because … I feel like I have let down a lot of people.

As part of adjusting to his campus climate, Alejandro shared how he struggled with his motivations as a Latino first generation college attendee, his interaction with peers, and the realities of being a Latino-American:

> Everyone [on campus] is … focusing on themselves and maybe that is the right mentality to have, but no one sees the bigger picture to what they're doing. They all think that the whole point is to just get here, learn as much as you can, go onto the next year and just kind of keep on going, [while] keeping a high GPA …. There are other Hispanic students but it's interesting because I have really come to understand that there's a very unique experience in being Hispanic [versus] being Hispanic born in the United States …. There's a big disconnect between the people that have been born here and share similar experiences [like myself] and those that are Hispanic but are international students …. [These] experiences are completely different …. It's a constant struggle to define yourself as either [Latino or first generation American] …. And often times what someone in my position has to do is … pursue one and kind of leave the other [identifier] behind because trying to find a balance is just so difficult, … especially with [today's]

political climate, … where it seems like these two things are [not compatible] …. I'd say my main goal [today] is to see the community that I was brought up into succeed, … making sure that my community is better off.

Alejandro: Linguistic Capital

Figure 8. Alejandro's linguistic capital selected meme.

Alejandro's linguistic capital meme draws attention to the fusion of Spanish and English, known as Spanglish. It shows a cowboy and spaceman toy with the caption "Spanglish everywhere" (Figure 8). Alejandro's meme illustrates his options for how to communicate:

> There are obviously a number of downsides about … trying to balance … Spanish and English, but … what I've always found is a strength has been that … [even though] … I do struggle with defining myself in terms of an identity, I've always had those two [language] options available …. It's always been interesting knowing that at a moment's notice I can speak Spanish to someone, I can speak English to someone [else], and I can communicate … in ways that no one else really can …. I feel like there are relationships and friendships that are made even more intimate by the fact that we share … [this language component]. It's kind of like opening a third culture in a sense … where … you have people that either get it or don't and if [they] understand, … you know a lot more about that person.

In applying the specifics of his language skills to his adjustment in a college setting, Alejandro shared the following reflection:

> I think academically in English. I've been taught in English my entire life and so whenever I want to convey a message that's a little bit more well thought out, then that is communicated in English. But, when things are more emotional and things are more passionate, then I speak Spanish …. You get the sense when I'm having a conversation and I throw in a little bit of Spanish … that I really am passionate about [it] …. It's kind of like a language enhancer almost.

Alejandro: Familial Capital

Figure 9. Alejandro's familial capital selected meme.

Alejandro's familial capital meme shows an elderly woman next to a buffet of home-cooked meals with the caption "when you tell your grandma you're hungry" (Figure 9). For Alejandro, his family is a source of strength, encouraging a team mentality, and contributing to a sense of communal achievement:

> [My family represents] overwhelming support … or at least in my experience my family [provides support] when they see that you are going after something that you care about …. It's always been [about] education for me …. I've always been about trying to be more involved in, … say going to college and having these very concrete goals.

> [During] the college application process and once I actually got here, I could really tell how much my family was there for me …. I never understood … when [other high school students] would say … I'm just going to apply to this college because I want to get as far away from my family as possible. I never understood that because while having such an intimate family can be at times overbearing, … you're never really alone. There's always someone to go to and there are countless stories that I could tell about how this applied to me. [For instance], … when you're living in a dorm, if one person gets sick, the other person gets sick, … and then no one can really get away from it …. But it was the ability of my family to … make sure that they took me away from that when I needed it and … nursed me back to health. [They] threw me back in [when] they knew that I would have the resources to succeed …. When I wasn't happy, … my family was constantly there to support me and give me advice and push me in the right direction.

In regards to how Alejandro's institution understands the role of his family in his successes and achievements, Alejandro laments a lack of recognition:

> [My institution] as a whole hasn't put in place [opportunities] to let me connect [the institution] with my family or celebrate the fact that I do so much [with them]. But, it has put me in circumstances where [I see] the best in my family …. I don't come from a very wealthy family but every weekend I would try to go home …. I would go visit an uncle or my grandparents and … I would notice the best in [them]. I would go up to my grandma and give her a hug and then she would sneakily slip me a $5 bill and say, buy yourself something when you get [back to] school. It wasn't like they would be giving me a lot of money but it was the act of saying, here you are, I'm here, I'm supporting you, … this is not just you- we're all in this together …. Being here has made me more aware of

the fact that I do have this entire community that is there to support me. [In the case of many other students], I think that once [they are] admitted, [many] college students are like, this is college, we are now adults, … we have completely separated [from our parents] …. [In my case], I would appreciate it if … higher education institutions would acknowledge this as not just an individual achievement. This is something that has been years in the process [for my family]. When I was admitted, I don't think I was able to fully express it towards everyone in my family that this is something that we had done [together] because as soon as I left I was gone. I wasn't able to be there in the same way but their impact was the same [for me] never the less.

Alejandro: Social Capital

Figure 10. Alejandro's social capital selected meme.

In considering social capital, Alejandro chose a meme with the image of a hand containing a collage of Latin American flags. Displaying an identity crossing nationalistic lines, the meme stresses the importance of giving a supportive hand (Figure 10). Alejandro's social capital emphasizes the opportunities from networking with others from similar backgrounds:

I've always considered myself to not be necessarily the most gifted academically … and being in pre-med has not pushed me away from that thinking. It is very difficult and

sometimes it is too much for my ability …. But the thing that I feel like I've been able to really tap into is the fact that there are dozens of people who have shared a similar story and I feel people are my biggest resource …. Whenever there's an opportunity, I'm usually the person to … make the most of it and that's usually through people that share a similar experience to me …. There aren't that many people that look like you or have shared similar experiences to you. When you come across someone that understands where you're coming from, those people usually go out of their way to help … whether that be a peer, … a professor or some [other campus member].

In searching for commonalities, Alejandro needed to search for the right friendships:

[During First Year] Orientation, [the institution staff] put us all into different groups and we were all spread out. It had nothing to do [with] ethnicity. They wanted us to intermingle and have conversations with one another, with people that didn't look like us but I felt like there should have been some aspect of that that made it so that we did know where to go if we needed a little bit [of help] …. The way that I met more Hispanic students [on campus] has to be soccer, where … we all have [the sport] as something in common …. This is a club [soccer team] …. There are a bunch of Hispanic students that all have this similar passion and it has nothing to do with us being Latino …. When I have come across someone … that I sensed had a shared experience [to my own], I hold onto [them] a little bit tighter. [Of] my current group of friends [where] there are three other Hispanics, … one happens to be on the soccer team and the other two aren't. It's so difficult to find [commonalities] … around campus that it makes you hold on tighter to the people that you do find … I made a friend who was … born in Chicago, his parents were Mexican and he shared a lot of experiences with me, and so we both agreed that we

would room together this year because the potential in that friendship is something that you … just have to [hold onto].

Alejandro Navigational Capital

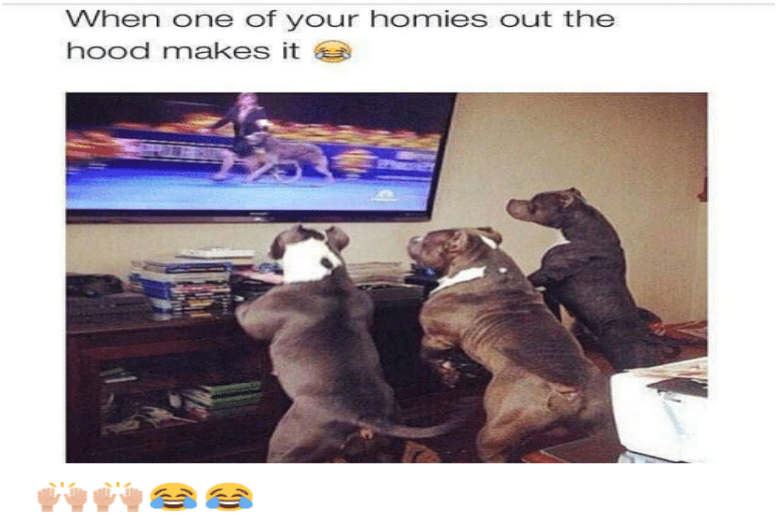

Figure 11. Alejandro's navigational capital selected meme.

Alejandro's meme shows a pack of dogs cheering one of their own with the caption "when one of your homies out of hood makes it" (Figure 11). Alejandro's navigational capital is based on the need to cheer resiliency and draw strength from a fighter mentality:

> College has been difficult and challenging but the [useful] tools [when] nothing was going my way … [have been] all about pushing and going against one barrier after another to try to achieve something. At times, I had to take a step back but it was all about making it. Whenever I have been surrounded by maybe not the most welcoming environment because no one looks like me and I have felt isolated, I think back to my experiences prior to being [in college] and how much work I had to put [into the journey just to access college] …. No Hispanic students … in college [today] would make it if we didn't have … thick skin …. It requires the ability to …make sure [to know] how to defend … against anyone …. [Even] in a safe environment, … I still have the mentality

> of me against everyone. I might not look like anyone but, … at any time, someone might come up to me and I need to be ready for that …. Over the years, it has been hard to … take the edge off and … get out of that cycle …. The problems that people have here are nothing like the problems [from my youth] …. People here have trouble with adjusting to the fact that they might not be popular or they might not go to a particular fraternity, or anything like that. I can't really be bothered with [it] knowing that there are so many other things that could be wrong in an academic setting.

In reflecting on how Alejandro found his group to cheer him on in his higher education environment:

> [During] the first few months [in college], I didn't have a group yet … The group of people that I did find weren't particularly interested in doing well in school and I didn't really care about wanting to go out and do this and that … It would have been really easy to get caught up in peer pressure, … of wanting to continue that same mentality, and being afraid of just being by myself … It's a very lonely experience when you're trying to do the complete opposite of what other people are trying to do …. But, thanks to the fact that I had gone through that [before college], I was … comfortable with waiting for the right sort of people …. It wasn't fun not having … a group of [friends] but I knew that I had … plenty of experience with waiting for the right opportunities and the right people to come my way and knowing that it's better to wait. [What] made the difference … was finally … going into the cafeteria one day, seeing a group of brown students [versus] having the group of friends over there that I didn't really agree with …. I [took] a chance on people that looked like me.

Alejandro: Resistance Capital

Figure 12. Alejandro's resistance capital selected meme.

Alejandro's resistance meme shows two individuals scaling a barrier wall (Figure 12). Alejandro chose this image, with a connection to today's political climate, as his source of resistance strength. It emphasizes the importance of remembering the sacrifices of loved ones:

> While [it] was my parents' experience, that whole process of crossing the border [defines my] mentality …. There are plenty of times where I get treated like I am someone who came here illegally and while I don't think there's any problem with it, you get treated poorly if someone assumes that it is your story. And even though … it is not my particular story, it is my community and it is the culture that I share …. I understand how people see me but the most important aspect … is the fact that my parents did cross the border …. They left a culture that they were completely comfortable with, a family that loved them a lot, and came to a place where they had no money, didn't speak the language, [and] had no social wealth…. They came with nothing basically…. That was all with the hope that I would do something with my life …. So instead of accepting [this treatment], … [my objective is] to demand respect and advocate [for] acceptance of people that look like me, people that are undocumented, and people that have crossed the border …. I didn't have to do that but someone else did that for me …. How can I honor

> that effort if I don't demand respect for what they did …. I could be content with what I have now and just be … proud of the fact that I am here and that I do have papers, … [but] while I didn't cross the border, [the experience is] a part of who I am.

Regarding Alejandro's source of resistance capital and his interaction with others in his college environment:

> I don't think I've met a single person on this campus who isn't passionate and doesn't fight for something. I don't think you could find that at many other schools. It's not just … getting a degree. [Students here are] fighting for something …. From the moment I arrived on campus, [it became clear] the institution … pursues students that [see themselves as] advocates so you are surrounded by dozens of people that while they may not be advocating for you or for the same thing as you, they understand what it is like to advocate for something.

Alejandro's Campus Environment Transition and Adjustment Indicators

Alejandro's campus climate transition experiences, understood through the nine indicators of Museus' (2014) CECE Model, make note of the following key elements which impacted his adjustment to the campus environment: first generation peers as family on campus, the financial aid office, coping with academic stress, and work study providing access to Hispanic professional mentors.

First generation peers. In trying to connect with peers during his adjustment to a new environment, Alejandro's peer support came together as a circle of first generation friends:

> During a [convocation event on the campus quad], I saw a wave of [students] and none of them looked like me and that was … my first glimpse of my class. [This led to searching for friendship in different settings]. There are [few] Latinos to begin with here

but … there [are even a fewer number] of Hispanic kids that were born in the United States. [My institution] … did a very good job … of trying to connect [the international students] as a community … but people that were born in the United States of Hispanic [origin] don't really fit in with that group because … we don't have shared experiences. [Hispanics] like me have been struggling with the concept of our own Hispanic identity and someone that's from that country of origin and speaks about their experience of living there and having a [non-immigrant] background makes my experience less [significant] …. I have one international Hispanic friend [who] is well off but he's lived here in the United States long enough for me to be able to relate to him on a more personal level. [Regarding Greek organizations], I felt that by joining a fraternity, it [would be] an excessive amount of money that I didn't need to be paying. I [would have] probably [needed] to take loans out to join a fraternity where right now I'm … debt free.

Alejandro found his peer group on the soccer field:

It was difficult not being able to play [competitive soccer] here [as I did through high school] …. I had to adjust to the fact that I wasn't playing soccer as much as I needed to. In the beginning of the school year I got cut from the club team …. That messed up my rhythm …. I joined the club team the following semester but … got cut again because of [reduced] resources. [However, that time on the soccer pitch developed friendships] …. I was able to find a group I was comfortable with. [Although meeting through soccer], it transitioned to social [circles] …. [Today] it's a group of four or five different individuals and not all of them are Hispanic, … but we are all first generation [college students]. We check in with each other and have [meals] together. We have different sets of friends apart from each other but we are like a family on campus. That's what I needed because

> I'm very used to coming home, seeing my family, having someone to talk to, and having someone that I'm just comfortable around. [That's where my] motivation comes from.

Financial aid office. When considering the importance of the financial aid office and its role in facilitating college attendance, Alejandro shared:

> I think I am [at the financial aid office] more than any other student on campus. Obviously, I get financial aid and so I have to be here but because my parents don't have a social security – well, they don't have documentation and they're self-employed, there are many things [that make my application more complicated]. Every time I have a problem, … I have a financial aid advisor … who's great …. He has dealt with a lot of things and he makes it so that I can continue going to this school.

Academic/pre-med stress. By choosing a university with a reputable pre-medicine curriculum, Alejandro has needed to consider its competitive and stressful academic setting:

> This is the [main] math and science building [on campus], and this is where I take exams. It's the most stressful place I've ever been …. The library is kind of the stress hub on campus, with its coffee and 24-hour [studying], but this building is more stressful than the library. I've been close to many mental breakdowns around here …. I think my stress is unique due to the fact that I don't know what I'm doing …. I just figure it out on my own …. I've had to change the reality of [my expectations] to the point where it's not that I'm going to walk into an exam and expect an A because people are no longer getting As …. Everyone here that's taking these [pre-med] classes is going through some sort of stress, but there's no one that I'm able to talk to about this because I don't think my parents understand …. I enjoy speaking to the people that are in my classes [but] they all have parents that are either college educated, already doctors, or professors themselves.

In recognizing the pre-medicine atmosphere, Alejandro has experienced his two dormitories through the lens of his aspirational objective, specifically becoming a doctor:

> When I was a senior in high school, I stayed here, my [current] second year living space, [for a visit] and I [found] it overwhelming, [telling] myself I never wanted to live here. So, the fact that I'm able to be in here and be as comfortable as I am is … due to the fact that I am comfortable everywhere now. [As my current housing], its location is next to the hospital and my ultimate goal is to become a doctor …. I walk past and live next to [my end goal] …. I guess you could say it's a lot of pressure, as it … looms over me at all times but it also serves as an inspiration. [When I am having] a hard time where I really don't want to study or I've studied far too much and I get a bad test grade or what not, I keep on telling myself when I walk past [the hospital] every day to get to my classes, this is the [desired] end result of me going through all these different experiences. [Similarly], my first year dorm window also overlooked [a separate medical research facility]. I was … in awe of it …. [I would tell myself] if I can get through this then I [could work] there.

Work study and professional mentors. In addition to an employment opportunity, Alejandro's work study program has provided interaction with Hispanic professional mentors:

> I am getting a lot of experience with working in the kind of environment that I want to work in. [For two years now], I've had a [campus] job in the hepatology department at the children's hospital … as my work-study position. My boss there is … [Latino]. I guess … a Hispanic in a position of power will help out another Hispanic [because] I don't think it's like an accident that I got that position. [I've wondered] if I was the most qualified or if he was taking me under his wing.

In comparison to his Hispanic work study boss, Alejandro's only other exposure to campus Latino staff were construction workers:

> [In my first year dorm], … I would always wake up to construction noise. When I looked in that direction, that was where [I would] find most of the Hispanic community here. Whenever I couldn't, … [I would] just look across the blue fence and there would be a ton of people [there] who looked like me …. I was like, wow, I can't find any Hispanics but there are a bunch over here. [But], they and I were having different experiences.

Summary of Alejandro's Experience

In concluding Alejandro's stories regarding his college access and campus adjustment experiences, the following themes emerged from the selected memes (Appendix H) and collected narratives: serving as the family's educational role model, language options for communication, family as the source of strength in accomplishing communal achievements, social networking with others from similar backgrounds, resiliency and a fighter mentality, and remembering the sacrifices of loved ones. In regards to Alejandro's campus climate transition, the following environmental elements bridged his cultural wealth capitals and facilitated in his campus adjustment process: first generation peers as family on campus, the financial aid office, coping with academic stress, and work study providing access to Hispanic professional mentors.

Valentina's Story on College Access and Campus Environments

Valentina is in her junior year at a private institution located in a semi-urban city setting. With an undergraduate community near 7,000, its White student population is approximately 40%, and its Latino students represent close to 9% of the institution's undergraduates (U.S. News and World Report, n.d.). I first met Valentina and her mother as a 6th grade applicant and newly admitted student at my secondary school. An only child of a Honduran and Salvadorian

household, Valentina would choose eight years later to attend a university located in her hometown. However, because of housing policies, Valentina has resided solely on-campus to date. Today, 20-year-old Valentina is a Psychology major with a minor in French. Additionally, she is preparing for graduate school in a physician assistant program.

Valentina's storytelling on her college access experiences as seen through the lens of Yosso's (2005) cultural capitals draws attention to the following themes: reaching for ideal professions, bilingual empowerment and its positive impact on identity, the resourcefulness of Latino families as a support tool and source of emotional strength, the reliability of Latino peer encouragement, overcoming the vulnerability and uncomfortableness in asking for guidance, and the resiliency in facing the challenges of the journey. In considering the nine indicators of Museus' (2014) CECE Model, Valentina's transition to her campus environment draws attention to the following campus climate elements: Spanish language student organizations and a language-based community, peer mentoring programs/campus mentors, Latino studies curriculum/supportive non-Latino faculty, and venues to counter emotional/logistical stressors.

Valentina: Aspirational Capital

Figure 13. Valentina's aspirational capital selected meme.

When selecting a meme portraying her aspirational cultural capital, Valentina identified United States President Barack Obama (Figure 13). To her, he represents an example of an individual who reached the pinnacle of an ideal profession:

> I think the goals … start off with this idea of Hispanic families … having a well-rounded child, student and then adult …. It's having these hopes for your kids to become doctors or lawyers …. I think that's where my hopes and aspirations to go into the medical field came from, [with] this idealization of [these] professions [as symbols of success] …. I think those goals come from … how people in these professions are portrayed.

Regarding how her higher education setting informs and educates students like herself in transferring these aspirational hopes and goals towards the development of professional trajectories, Valentina added:

> I think mainly my institution has this idea that although they do try to help you through the process of deciding a career, … they still make the assumption that everyone sort of knows coming in what their career path is …. [In my case], I feel like … I have to sort of do it on my own …. [But, what did help was when my institution] connected us with [mentors]. I guess the [mentoring] program gets a list of individuals who are first generation, low income, minority students and then they just send an invitation to join the program or try it out …. They even [reach out] during the summer before freshmen year …. I definitely [chose to become] a part of it. Now, I'm actually, a peer mentor …. [The mentors are] not just people who are still studying; they are also people who already have their careers [on track], adults who have their lives already in place …. You get [connected] first year and then you can apply to be a peer mentor [later] …. I still have my mentors who check up on me and ask me if I'm doing okay and do I need anything. So, basically what the first year [student] has is that they have a peer mentor who is usually a sophomore, junior, or senior. Then you have the graduate mentor who is in the graduate school …. [When it comes to the mentors, they're either current students or

former students] …. Lastly, there's also a faculty mentor …. I met her once and that was kind of it- I never met her again.

Valentina: Linguistic Capital

Figure 14. Valentina's linguistic capital selected meme.

In choosing a meme to capture her linguistic cultural capital, Valentina picked a picture of a Latina appearing confident, with the caption "when you don't have to read the Spanish subtitles because you're bilingual" (Figure 14). This confidence is attributed to bilingual empowerment and its functionality as a multipurpose tool:

> Based on my experiences with being bilingual, I think it's been very positive …. In an institutional setting, I can communicate with so many other people …. Whenever you're just walking around … [or] you're in a class and you hear someone else speaking the language that you speak, your reaction is, oh my god …. You just feel more comfortable …. I've definitely been in classes where people have come up to me [and said], Oh, you speak Spanish? I speak Spanish; oh my God, awesome …. From then on you form study partners and study sessions …. It just helps with courses. But, also just knowing that there's someone [that] speaks the language … you've grown up with, I think makes

> you feel more at home …. Even if you might not get along with them, you just feel like, oh, there's someone else here [like me].

When discussing how bilingualism as a linguistic capital has played a role in the transition and adjustment to her campus environment, Valentina added how her bilingual skills have been useful as an added study aid along with its positive impact on her sense of identity:

> I don't think the institution itself has [acknowledged my linguistic capital]. I think it's more with the students who share the trait and knowledge of another language. They are like, oh yeah, this is going to bring you so many opportunities …. I've noticed that I've become more comfortable speaking [Spanish] in public …. And I don't mean talking more in Spanish, I always do that … at home …. [Rather, it's about] talking more in Spanish with my friends, like picking up the phone and calling someone and [choosing to] talk in Spanish. I think it's because I've seen a lot of international students who are doing it as well …. They … emit … so much confidence when they do it because obviously, they're used to that because that's all they spoke when they were back home …. I'm not saying that I was ashamed to speak it before. I was maybe just a little bit more reserved or shy but now I'm like, hey, I can speak Spanish, this is awesome …. Seeing other people do it and not really caring who is around them has encouraged me to do that because I clearly didn't see that in high school. Separate from Latinos in the mentoring program, [there is] a Spanish club which functions like a … Latino/Hispanic club. All of us in that club … speak [Spanish fluently] …. Spanish really helps with a bunch of other … classes because sometimes it can be very similar …. [For instance], I'm taking a human anatomy and physiology course and a lot of the terms, like the medical terms for facial features or for body features, are very similar to Spanish.

Valentina: Familial Capital

Figure 15. Valentina's familial capital selected meme.

In considering the importance of familial cultural capital, Valentina's meme shows a young adult taking a picture in what appears to be business attire. In actuality, the apparent blazer is actually a pair of slacks. In looking closer at the activity surrounding the scene, other individuals have improvised the use of slacks to create the impression of a professional snapshot (Figure 15). For Valentina, this meme displays how Latino family members, regardless of the potential lack of academic and higher education knowledge, remain a reliable source of resourcefulness and as a support tool and source of emotional strength:

> I am a first generation [college student] and although [my family doesn't] have much knowledge about what college is and how to really get around and deal with it, they have managed to support me in ways that are very different from, say, helping me pick classes or helping me talk to my professor. They are not going to [be able to] help me with the financial aid applications … and yeah that sucks but … I have learned through the years how to do it [for myself] and there are other people [at my institution] that know [how to]

> and can help me as well. [Instead, my family has] … helped me in so many other ways, … [such as] encouraging me to keep going, … being supportive, and just being there [when I have needed them].

In acknowledging the importance of her family as a source of emotional strength, Valentina's reflection confirms her family's limitations with providing logistical support:

> [My institution is not] going to acknowledge that [my mom] is a single Latina mom. There was one Latino parent info session on how to help your kids adjust to college and … she did go to it. She'll ask how is college, and is there anything that I need, but she's not going to ask specifically like, oh, when is this application due or when is that due. It's also very new to her. I'm not holding it against her …. It also is just … me wanting to deal with it …. When I'm filling out an application and I need her information, … I'm going to be the one that is going to be looking for it …. [It] would actually be nice if [my institution] would reach out to Latino parents more.

Valentina: Social Capital

Figure 16. Valentina's social capital selected meme.

Valentina's meme on the source of her social cultural capital is the image of an individual cheering on others, by visibly clapping to an audience or a cast of colleagues (Figure 16). This meme communicates her reliability on Latino peer encouragement:

> I think I've received a lot of support from my peers in classes, clubs, programs and socially. I met a lot of my friends … freshmen year [as participants] in the mentoring

program …. [During that] first year, we were … struggling, … trying to help one another out …. Now we still help each other out [when needed]. [Today], my group of friends in college is less mixed than [it was] in high school …. They are less White …. I did scout [when I arrived at my institution for] Latinos and [the result is] my friend group is mainly Latino …. I still do have friends from other cultural backgrounds, but the ones that I hang out with the most [are Latinos].

Valentina: Navigational Capital

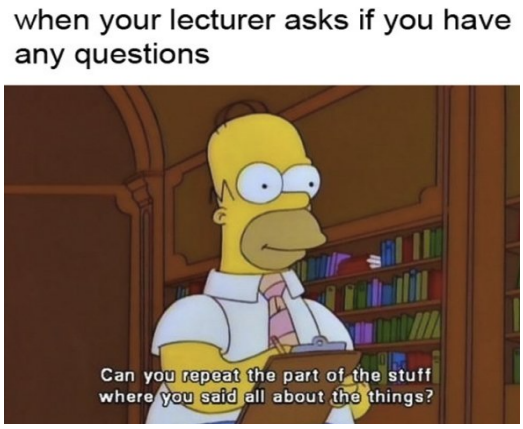

Figure 17. Valentina's navigational capital selected meme.

When selecting a meme encapsulating her navigational cultural capital as a Latino student facing college access and transition obstacles, Valentina chose a snapshot with the title "when your lecturer asks if you have any questions" and it includes the confused response caption "can you repeat the part of the stuff where you said all about the things" (Figure 17). This meme represents overcoming the vulnerability of asking for guidance:

> This comes I think more from home, [to] not brush things off but [rather] deal with them in a way that isn't … an explosive or crazy [reaction]. Yes, [things are going to] put me down or maybe … hurt, and it's going to really suck and I am going to get super stressed out. But, at the same time I [try to remain] chill about it, … [and] deal with it piece by

> piece. There is going to be … a split second where I am going to panic but then I'm just going to go with the flow, [and] at the same time, … try to find my way to make it better.

Valentina's navigational capital acknowledges a need to overcome the vulnerability and uncomfortableness of asking for guidance instead of remaining lost in difficult circumstances:

> [It is difficult to draw attention to yourself]. It depends on how comfortable I feel and yeah, it [also] really does … depend on who I'm asking …. [It feels less vulnerable in] a one-on-one [situation] … or if I know of a peer that has gone through the same thing.

Valentina: Resistance Capital

Figure 18. Valentina's resistance capital selected meme.

As an illustration of resistance cultural capital, Valentina's final meme shows the contrast between a groomed, young, and naïve first year student versus an aged, unkempt, and weathered final year student who appears beaten down by the battles and yet is a survivor (Figure 18). This meme draws attention to the challenges of the journey:

> [When] I'm faced with a challenge or [a difficult] situation, I will try to address it full force and try to fight against it. [I know] it is going to get [difficult], … but at the end I'm still going to be standing, [regardless of] so many battles.

When asked how her institution encourages her resistance capital and the frame of reference of resiliency when facing academic challenges, Valentina noted:

> I have been a part of [the mentorship program] for the past two years … and [resistance and resiliency is part of] their message. Every time we go into any event, they always remind us, you guys have been through a lot, and you guys are [still] going to go through a lot but, you guys are going to be able to make it; you are not alone and you are going to get all this help; you need to ask for help, even if you don't want to, even if you feel like you just can't …. That is what they tell us all the time.

Valentina's Campus Environment Transition and Adjustment Indicators

In considering Museus' (2014) CECE Model during Valentina's campus interview, Valentina stressed the importance of the following components: Spanish language organizations and a language-based community, peer mentoring programs/campus mentors, Latino studies curriculum/supportive non-Latino faculty, and venues to counter emotional/logistical stressors.

Spanish language organizations. Among campus student activities, Valentina connected with the campus and students through engagement in the Spanish Language Club:

> Latinos or Spanish speakers could go in there and it was an environment that really … understood how difficult it can be to [acclimate] … to such a new environment …. They really emphasized the support that they could provide …. You [could go in there] whenever you wanted …. [I first connected with the Spanish language club] … through orientation. [It was a separate session for] only Latino/Hispanic students. It wasn't … required, [but rather there was] … a sheet that [identified] clubs for Latino students and … their families … [to] go in and visit them. [After that, the club] had weekly meetings for you to go to if you wanted to. You [could also] pop in as well …. [It was a] space that was always open for anything. The identity of the group was by language, not by ethnicity. [This included the international students] …. I don't think I

> connected with [the international students] on the basis of … sharing the same identity. It's more of like, oh, you speak Spanish and I speak Spanish. I embraced hearing Spanish speakers that were obviously very comfortable with [the language]. [The international Spanish-speakers] tended to … stay together, they were super tight. I felt like I couldn't connect, I couldn't be included in that because [I was different]. I would feel super self conscious talking to them in Spanish …. Just that little [change in] accent could make you feel very different from them even though … we all speak Spanish. We are all Latinos in some way. [Yet], the people that I identified with the most were low income, … from immigrant families here in the U.S. trying to [be the first in their families to access] higher education. [That was not the case] with the international students.

Peer mentoring programming/campus mentors. As a form of student programming which directly reached out to Valentina, the institution's mentoring programming and its role in establishing relationships with campus mentors has been a constant from her early days during the first year as a mentee to today's contribution as a mentor:

> [Whereas the Spanish Language Club] was more of a student organization and a social hangout venue, … peer mentoring is more like an established organization [with a first generation focus]. I found myself going there often just to talk to the program director. [I would tell her], I'm having a hard time with this …. She was always super comforting and helpful and would direct me to who I needed to go talk to or … just give me advice on how to handle different situations.

Latino studies curriculum/faculty. A first year seminar course with a theme of Latino studies allowed Valentina to connect to the environment through reflecting on her identity in the company of other Latino classmates and a supportive non-Latino faculty member:

> I chose this Freshman seminar class [which] was taught by a Spanish language professor who was not Latino/Hispanic, but, she was into the culture. I have yet to have a Latino professor. [I gravitated] to this class because of its title- *The Hispanic/Latino topic*. [This professor] was very open … and understood me …. When I would go to her office hours, she'd be like, I understand you're Hispanic/Latino; it gets better, you'll get through it. She was a person that really helped me and advised me on how to feel comfortable in this new environment. The majority of [the students in the class] were Latino/Hispanic. You would think that we [as a class] would have been super close and we would understand each other's stories, but we were Latinos/Hispanics … [that] came from completely different backgrounds. Even though we were all Latinos, I did not feel close to everyone.

Venues to counter emotional/logistical stressors. In identifying key components of the campus climate, Valentina included a series of elements and venues associated with the challenges and coping skills of campus-based emotional stressors. They are: a competitive academic environment, financial aid/academic advisors, and dorm life.

Competitive academic environment. In reflecting on her adjustment, Valentina placed a priority on the challenges associated with a competitive academic environment:

> All first year students within the first week [of classes] … were freaking out over what they needed to do the next four years. [This was most pronounced] specifically in the science-based classes. The students [in these classes] gave off a vibe of anxiety. A lot of [them were] pre-med. I remember being in groups and we would introduce each other, start talking about our lives, where we were from, and … then someone would be like, oh yeah, my parents are doctors or my dad is a doctor or my mom's a doctor, … or my parents work in research. [I would be] sitting there [thinking], oh wow, okay. [These

students would be] freaking out over when they're going to submit their medical [school] applications and I'm over here like, I haven't thought about that yet; I am really just here to take this course and see how it goes …. That's when I would go over to my mentor from the peer mentoring program, or to the director, and I would go and be like, I'm having a really tough time with this class and [they] would talk me through it but I don't think I ever [really] dealt with that anxiety. I still feel it to this day, when I walk into that building I'm always like, oh my god, those were like the most horrible two semesters of my life. I needed to put up my wall, not letting all of this competitiveness [and anxiety] dwindle [the needed energy] to keep on going. That's when I moved over to pre-physician's assistant instead of pre-med. This was a decision made not from advising, but rather from one of my other friends who is also Latino. We were both struggling.

Financial aid/ academic advisors. In comparison to the positive impact of mentors, Valentina's interaction with financial aid and academic advisors appeared less supportive:

I would go and speak with one of my academic advisors and he would put it so simple on how I needed to do everything …. He was just like, you need to do this, … you need to get in this class …. It was never like, I understand where you're coming from. It was just more of a [checklist] …. I don't think I established close connections with my [academic] and financial aid advisors. I didn't go and talk to them on a regular basis. I would just go when I felt I really needed the help.

Dorm life. As a refuge from stressors, Valentina sought normality in her dormitory:

During my first year, I would hang out … mainly in my dorm. And that's interesting because like I didn't have a lot of Latino students in my dorm …. I think it was just [the space] … where you create your home away from home. [Today, I have two Latino

> roommates]. I met them … through mutual friends …. We realized we had a lot of things in common and that's how our friendship sort of grew …. [They are not international Latino]. I'll interact with international students in classes but I don't have close friendships with international [Latino] students.

When peers and mentors were insufficient to counter the emotional challenges, Valentina returned to previous reliable sources for strategies, namely herself or her mom:

> [Whenever I felt vulnerable that first year], I would go back to my own space, like my dorm room. Even though it was shared and … my dorm mate wasn't Hispanic or Latino, … I think that's where I spent most of my time. [When I felt I didn't fit in or belong], I would just [return] home which is interesting. I would [go home and] talk to my mom or [call saying, hey, can you pick me up and we can just hang out? I actually had [this conversation with my mom] the second day we moved in [at the start of first year]. I [told her], I don't think this is for me, I don't like this. I felt like I didn't belong and I told her, I don't think I want to do this again [similar to my adjustment to an independent school when I was younger]. But, I did it all over again and it's working out. And I'll keep doing it. I think that was a really tough time. But, having done it before definitely helped because although I felt very different, there was some reassurance of I've done this before and I can do it again. It's going to be tough at first but then, in the next years, it's going to be amazing and you'll feel like you actually belong. [Today], sometimes I feel … I made the right choice and sometimes I feel like this isn't the place for me.

Summary of Valentina's Experience

In recapping Valentina's chronicles on her college access and campus-based experiences, her selected memes (Appendix I) and her narratives draw attention to the following themes: ideal

professions, bilingual empowerment and its positive impact on sense of identity, Latino families as a support tool and source of emotional strength, the reliability of Latino peer encouragement, overcoming the vulnerability and uncomfortableness in asking for guidance, and the resiliency in facing the challenges of the journey. In regards to Valentina's campus environment transition experiences, the following components merit attention: Spanish language student organization and a language-based community, peer mentoring program/campus mentors, Latino studies curriculum/supportive non-Latino faculty, and venues to counter emotional/logistical stressors.

Oscar's Story on College Access and Campus Environments

I first met Oscar as a middle school student, before he even applied to join my institution. Humor and social connections even then were a big draw of his personality. Today, as a 20-year-old college junior, this student of Mexican parents is a double major in Advertising and Sociology. Attending a large public institution in a Southern college town with an estimated 29,000 undergraduates, its 6% Latino student enclave counters a White student population of almost 70% (U.S. News and World Report, n.d.). Oscar represents the one participant in the study who has experienced both on-campus and off-campus student housing arrangements.

When considering his college access stories in the context of Yosso's cultural wealth capitals, Oscar's emerging themes in the story plots were: a master educational plan driven by the sacrifices and dreams of family, language as a social interaction tool and a display of cultural identity and pride, the reliability and limitation of constant family presence, Latino peers as an extension of family, social relationships and peer groups as protective shields, and facing social injustices and political tensions with humor and openness. In reflecting on his campus transition experiences and how they overlap with the indicators of Museus' (2014) environmental CECE Model, campus components worth noting were: supportive financial aid

offices, identity-based courses and the interaction with Latino professors, class assignments related to identity, surrogate Latino mom on campus, Latino social events and peer group cultural activities, and the 2016 political climate.

Oscar: Aspirational Capital

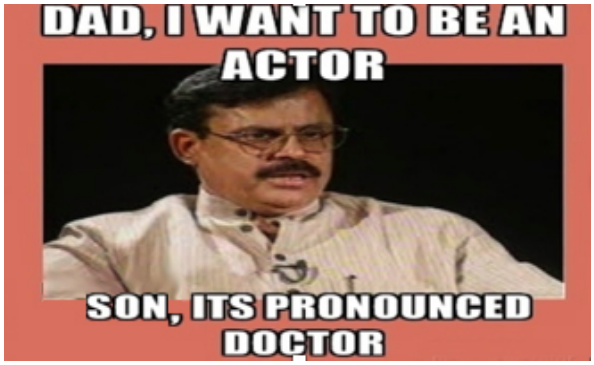

Figure 19. Oscar's aspirational capital selected meme.

For the aspirational cultural meme, Oscar identified a picture of an adult, father-like male and the statement "Dad, I want to be an actor," followed by the man's response "it's pronounced doctor" (Figure 19). Oscar shared how this meme communicated a similar aspirational plan to his own, driven by the motivational messages from the sacrifices and dreams of his family:

> I feel like one of [my family's] goals with coming to the United States was to make sure that they could set up a foundation where I … would have a better future than they had and that … [their children] … wouldn't have to struggle …. I feel like that's always in the back of their minds with whatever they're doing, [like when] … they chose to transfer [my sister and me] from public school to private school. They had all the best intentions. I remember [how] that really came to light when I was picking my high school …. I really wanted to go [a performing arts school]. I did not want to go to [my future private high school] …. I was getting into theater and I just absolutely fell in love with [the idea of attending a performing arts school instead of a college preparatory academic program]

> …. I knew that if I wanted to continue acting, that I needed to go to an acting or a theater-based high school. So, I begged my parents … [but] they kept bringing me back [to the college preparatory private school]. They kept stressing the point that I could pursue theater while [in an academic setting], … [that] I shouldn't completely throw away everything else. And it's something that I appreciate in looking back, … grateful that they helped me, [and] pushed me towards having a balance, … [and] having a backup plan. And now, I am in college and I've chosen a different career other than theater …. [Yet], I feel like there's still … that lingering question of whether I'm going to be completely [okay] without [my parents' continued guidance]. They just want to make sure that after I graduate, that I have a job and that I am well off enough so that they can go back [to Mexico] and I guess go back [to their] hometown. I think there [is] still hesitation because one night, I think it was late last year, [with] my dad already [knowing] I was [majoring] in advertising, he called me [with questions]. I forget where it came from but he asked me the question of, hey, I was looking at majors and incomes, do you know how much an advertising income makes? He just wanted to make sure that after college I wasn't going to be still struggling. So, … I get [how] that's … in the back of my head.

Regarding how his institution has provided support with the application of his aspirational capital in a higher education setting, Oscar further added:

> [My institution] really emphasizes getting experience, whether it be study abroad [or] through internships. I think they do a really nice job of … making sure … to facilitate those sort of experiences …. By emphasizing having these experiences and being able to enter into the workforce right away, I don't think [I've needed to communicate aspirations] but if I were to tell my institution, I feel like they would reassure them.

Oscar: Linguistic Capital

Figure 20. Oscar's linguistic capital selected meme.

In selecting a linguistic cultural capital meme, Oscar chose an image of an individual with the wording "*puro pinshi pari*" (Figure 20). *Puro pinshi* is a slang Spanish term used as an exclamation and the slang term *pari* is a Spanglish reference to the pronunciation of the English word party. For Oscar, such Spanish slang and Spanglish terms serve as a social interaction tool and highlight language as a display of cultural identity and pride:

> From my experience, I feel like Latinos are just mostly extroverted people …. My roommates and I like meeting new people, we like talking [to new people] …. I guess it was sort of hard at first, … going [from] a very small private high school, … into a very large college town [of] 35,000 [students] as opposed to 100 seniors in my graduating class. So, it was very overwhelming. I felt like I had to restart over again. I do get nervous but I feel having that background, … with having consistent family gatherings [and] just being in [Hispanic] social situations [often], … made it easier to talk to people.
>
> Once on campus:
>
> I went to some of the … Hispanic Student Association (HSA) events. I wasn't that active but they did have a lot of [them]. I think [I went to about one] a semester. [They were] really fun to go to and my roommates knew a lot of people there…I [felt good] having that environment where you can talk to other people of the same background.

[Regarding] my roommate *Octavio*, [we met] through Facebook [at the] last minute when we were trying to decide housing options. Just the fact that we were both Hispanic, I felt like we were going to have a lot in common so why not. It ended up working really well. We are very similar. Octavio is from [a small town], while my other roommate, *Jose*, is from another small town. It's a house full of Hispanics and so half the time we're like speaking Spanglish or I guess playing Mexican music. [When in the dorm], … people [would] come down my hall all the time and … they found … some of the cultural things … weird. We had the Mexican flag right over our TV…. They were always questioning. [Later], my roommate Octavio met another Hispanic in his chemistry class. When we were looking for housing the next year we were like, let's room together and then he had another Hispanic friend and so we all ended up getting together and that became [my off-campus] house – just four Mexican boys living together and it was a lot of fun …. We do take advantage of [our own secret language] whenever we're walking through campus and it's very crowded…. We speak Spanish and we do get some looks every now and then. We do, [however], have a lot of people who think that's incredibly interesting and approach us because we're speaking Spanish which I think is really cool. [I haven't experienced anything] overtly negative, nothing really targeted at me. But sometimes I am sort of putting myself in those situations. [For instance], right now I'm wearing a Mexican flag t-shirt. [During] freshmen year's political climate when Trump was elected, … my parents … called me [concerned] …. They told me to take my Mexican flag down. They were worried. I think the night that he got elected, I heard the day after that there were students on the street saying build the wall, build the wall. But after hearing [my parent's concern], I think the first thing that I did was I bought lights and I put the lights

all around my flag, just because I wanted to emphasize it even more. I went the opposite way. I just like embracing my culture even more in front of people whom I feel would be more conservative and not want to [have it] be in their face.

Oscar: Familial Capital

Figure 21. Oscar's familial capital selected meme.

As a representation of familial cultural capital, Oscar chose the image of someone 'dabbing', a celebratory posture, but a separate close-up shows a hidden face shielding evident tears (Figure 21). For Oscar, this encapsulates both the joy but also the lack of independence from constant family presence:

> I feel that I always have access to [my family as a] resource … because I have to call home every single day … to check in. [It is] mostly because of my dad. My mom would be okay with just a text message. [But], if my dad is home, then it has to be a call. And so, I feel like there are definitely pros and cons …. I don't really get homesick … I could come home [whenever]. I do have that flexibility. So, I feel like I always have that support system … which is really nice although sometimes it does feel like a [checking-in] chore … right before they go to sleep. I can always talk to my parents about anything, but sometimes I don't really have anything to call [about or] say. I feel like culturally, a lot of people can't [understand about] … how often we call but … I've always been really close with my family. I don't mind going home [frequently]. I love going home to my

bed, [being] with my mom, hanging out with my sister. So, I really don't mind. I do come home very often, about once every two weeks. And so, I do think that's mainly [because of] my dad and mostly a cultural thing.

When asked to reflect on his family's engagement with his higher education institution, Oscar added:

I usually…see families come [to campus] for tailgating or for games. I've never been a football person. My parents never really come for game days or sporting events. Any time I need to see them, I always go [home]. I feel like we haven't really taken advantage of any family events [on campus] … since orientation. I think they would [come for some kind of Latino family programming] …. [Prior to college], my parents had always been very involved with my academic [and school] life. Here, I haven't gotten [any communication] saying we're going to have a Latino Parents Weekend or [invitation to] bring your parents or something of that nature.

Oscar: Social Capital

Figure 22. Oscar's social capital selected meme.

Oscar chose for his social cultural capital a split screen image, with a small intimate peer group on the left versus a large crowd on the right. The included caption compares the images with the wording "non-Hispanic family parties versus Latino family parties" (Figure 22). For Oscar, this meme highlights how Latino peers represent an extension of family:

> We have done a lot of things together, my roommates and I, especially when I was a freshman. I feel like we would go to the gym, the dining halls, and we would meet up in class … I felt like we did almost everything together and I never felt like I was … overwhelmed by the different [campus] environment. I had someone there that I could relate to, experiencing it with me at the same time. And I did have past resources, like [my high school drama teacher] … who would reach out to me, … and called to check up on me which I thought was really cool …. Whenever I go back to [my high school], … I always have that support system whenever I saw any past faculty or students. I guess just having those people that are always … available and curious about you, [helps].

When first joining the campus environment and making housing decisions, Oscar intentionally engaged in searching for peer groups:

> [The Housing Department on campus] had us take a personality test for roommates and so it would give you some suggestions for people to room with. I just really wanted somebody that I could relate to culturally …. [So, I ignored the housing matchup]. I put up a self-advertisement on the [university's] roommate page … three days before the deadline and I got four different offers and among those four offers, two of them were Hispanic and I was immediately drawn to those two guys …. Both of [them] are now my roommates. I honestly do look at them as brothers so I feel like we have that familial connection … in the [off-campus rental house].

In establishing connections with affinity peer groups and Greek life on campus, Oscar further shared:

> The Hispanic Student Association is … an extension of my family …. You get an instant familial bond or connection with anybody [who] relates to your [cultural] experience …

coming in. I feel I always have something to talk about whenever I see somebody else from HSA. Also, there is a Hispanic fraternity. I did meet one of the people who is … the head or president of the Hispanic fraternity and he always hung out with us and … always made himself available to us so I felt like an instant familial connection with him. I've never been a sort of fraternity person or a Greek Life person. I've always … made fun of that Greek Life culture. It just never seemed to appeal to me and so I do feel bad for making fun of them …. My roommate Octavio was sort of into it and I guess he was hesitant just because he knew how I viewed Greek Life culture. But, he's having a good time and I'm happy for him. [Meanwhile, I continue going home on the weekends a lot.]

Oscar: Navigational Capital

Figure 23. Oscar's navigational capital selected meme.

In selecting a meme for navigational cultural capital, Oscar's choice is a picture of a waddle of penguins with the caption, "when you with the squad- lookin to roll on them haters" (Figure 23). For Oscar, this depicts how social relationships and peer groups represent protective shields as navigational tools:

I remember the first time I went to my college's downtown center. I was scared because I thought it was just going to be a bunch of fraternity dudes all over …. A classic freshman experience [for my institution] is just to go downtown and hang out with friends and I

> was really nervous …. I think I was overwhelmed with honestly not fitting in. I would say overwhelmed because I [would] look around and I feel like, I looked different. But also, not to be rude, but a lot of students just … look the same. They have [the same] polo shirts, and [those same] cargo shorts. I clearly would stand out because I would walk into a sea of [the school's colors] and here I come with my Mexico jersey or whatever …. My friends would always ask me about what I am wearing. I [could be] wearing this super weird avant-garde pants just because I like … to stand out in those types of environments …. The association that I would make in my mind is like the Vineyard Vines, frat boy, conservatives, wouldn't want me at [their] school …. I expected just to walk around and see a bunch of MAGA hats …. You do see [the hats and stickers] and you do feel a bit … uncomfortable just because you know that obviously … there would be some sort of tension there. [It's] always in the back of my head. I think just having … [my squad of friends] calms the nerves down a little bit.

In understanding the impact of the post 2016 political climate on the dynamics of peer groups on campus, Oscar shared the complexities challenging the precise sense of navigational strength among such peer groups:

> I remember finding out freshmen year that … somebody in my social circle … made it public that she did vote for Trump …. I think in knowing that, you do look at somebody in a different way because you start to assume what they might be thinking about you and so I did distance myself. But, I learned that wasn't necessarily the best way to approach the situation because she would still [want to] talk to me the same way …. I [worked on] learning how to navigate those social situations, not being on guard all the time …. People think differently and … they make decisions for a reason. I [am trying] to

> understand that, … not [resorting to] being unfriendly anymore …. You're not going to get anywhere [like that]. I wasn't going to progress out of the situation if I just completely stopped talking to [everyone] I believed was on the other side. I ended up feeling very guilty about that and I ended up trying to talk to them whenever I saw them on campus …. They've been to my room, they know my background, and [part of me] … maybe just wants to show them that I'm a friendly person too and there's no reason for this tension to be where it is right now.

Oscar: Resistance Capital

Figure 24. Oscar's resistance capital selected meme.

For the final meme representing resistance cultural capital, Oscar selected a picture of a young adult college student wearing his backpack and a t-shirt with the wording "Trump relax- I'm legal." The picture's caption adds "I feel cute. Time to take the White man's knowledge" (Figure 24). This selection draws attention to Oscar's preference to face social injustices and social/political tensions with humor and openness.

> With the political climate [my] freshman year, … my parents told me to take [my Mexican] flag down [in my dorm room]. My immediate response was like resistance … I've always liked embracing my culture … I did try to hide it when I was younger and I didn't like to admit that I was Hispanic …. I still sort of have that sense of guilt from then. I originally bought this [political] shirt to be just like a pajama shirt or whatever. It says, Relax Trump, I'm legal. I had one of my friends who is majoring in politics and a liberal, compliment it. I ended up running into him the day that I wore [it] and he was like, I love that shirt, and asked me if I had been getting any looks …. I remember seeing some people just like stopping [to] read … [it with] like a shock or like a nasty eye …. I don't get that [reaction] as much wearing my Mexico jersey but I think directly speaking about our president was just too far for some people. [However], I had a lot of fun with that.

Recognizing the challenges with the current political divisions, Oscar further reflected on his campus setting and how he has chosen to resist:

> I think [my institution has] provided – a place and an opportunity to … speak on some of the very hot issues going on right now. [Regarding] immigration, … they've had a rally on campus … I was at that one and it was really crazy seeing some … [fraternity students] in trucks with pro-Trump stuff riding by. That's when … it sort of became clear, like there's a clear division on campus …. It wasn't necessarily like predominantly Republican or conservatives [versus others], but the conflict is there. I feel like if they would have stopped [instead of driving by], that [it] would have been tense. I didn't get to see the students the day that [Trump] got elected. There are some students that do wear MAGA hats just walking around campus…The institution can't really do anything.

> There's a lot of limitations on how much they can intervene so I feel like there isn't much they can really do to sort of ease that tension other than just making sure that the safety of the students is their priority. [It might be different if I were living on campus]. I've been off campus two years now. [It might] have played out a little different if [I had been] in the dorm these two years. I feel like you're going to come across some people who are just very vocal about their ideas or whatever and so that tension would have been there if…I would have stayed in the dorms. And I guess…I have that place of security [with] having a house, and having people that [I] can relate to. That really helps. I do sometimes think about what it would [have been] like if I did live in one of the main high rises my freshman year. I would have been much more social, and I would have met a lot more people, obviously some people that would have been on one side [versus the other side] of the political spectrum, …people that would be vocal or try to agitate something.

Oscar's Campus Environment Transition and Adjustment Indicators

In reflecting on Oscar's adjustment to his higher education environment and how these transition experiences overlap with the indicators of Museus' (2014) environmental CECE Model, campus components worth noting are: supportive financial aid offices, identity-based courses and the interaction with Latino professors, surrogate Latino mom on campus, Latino social events and peer group cultural activities, and the 2016 political climate.

The financial aid office. Considering Oscar attends a large public institution, his description of the financial aid support process and the individualized attention he received merits recognition:

> Looking back at the time when I was [first] going into college, adjusting, and trying to figure [out] my place on campus … and making sure it was a viable economical option

> for me, I believe the financial aid office [made a difference]. Shortly after orientation [for admitted students] but before [arriving on campus as a new student], my parents and I visited the financial aid office. [We did not have an appointment, instead] it was more of a walk-in where we sat for ten minutes [before someone at the counter] called us up. I felt as though they were willing to listen to all of the concerns and questions …. This was when I found out that I actually wasn't eligible for the amount of tuition assistance [I was hoping for] …. I remember feeling very disappointed … with myself …. They acknowledged my concerns and they let me know … about all the loans or the different options [including] payment plans as an option which we actually ended up [arranging]. I feel like … they emphasized [how] they were willing to help and eager to make us feel like we shouldn't be limited economically.

Identity-based course/ first Latino professor. Among curriculum choices, Oscar's enrollment in a Latino studies course, with its exposure to a Latino instructor, presented an opportunity to embrace his identity in an institutional formal setting:

> My first Latino professor in college was the instructor of a Latin American and Caribbean Studies course I took during my second year …. I thought it was interesting because there were three other Latinos in that class, [in a] very small class [of about] 18 kids. [It felt like] a unique opportunity to have a very personal class. I talked to [that] professor more than I did most of [my other] classes. I [would see] him outside of class. I would speak to him in Spanish [in social settings]. He was from Argentina …. I [thought that class] was a cool way to not only reacquaint and familiarize myself with Latin history and culture but I thought it was also really cool to see how other [non-Latino] students perceived Latin culture and … how they interpret it. [I recall] there was probably one or two times where

> I was called on when we were speaking about Mexican culture and I had to give my take on it, [making me one of two] residential Mexican culture experts [among the students] in that class …. That was fun and I do miss that class.

Surrogate Latino mom on campus. Among the many individuals who played a positive role for Oscar in his adjustment to the campus environment, an unlikely supporter was a Latina dining hall staffer who represented motherly comfort:

> I found my '*mom away from home'* in a campus dining hall …. She is a Mexican lady who works in the egg line - at an omelet station. [In] trying to remember how we first began to talk, … I think she just noticed [me] one day … wearing a Mexican jersey …and she brought it up saying how much she loved the jersey. We got really comfortable and I just started telling her about my day and stuff like that and she [offered to be] my mom away from home. I just saw her today …. We were talking about how I had a dermatology appointment. I think it's [special] having somebody on staff that you can talk to and we talk in Spanish all the time, [which makes me] feel like I'm at home …. I just feel a lot more comfortable because of her.

Social events and peer organizations. Opportunities to engage socially with other Latinos and non-Latinos interested in celebrating Latino events provided peer group gatherings to contrast with Oscar's unfavorable experience with the Greek life:

> The student center on campus hosts a series of Latino cultural events …. They have these celebrations … of Latin culture, music, food, and performances. [The Hispanic Student Group] puts the program together. [At other locations], there are these Hispanic barbecues …. They are [similarly] hosted by the student group along with a Latin fraternity and one other Latin organization. [The barbeques are an event] where a lot of

> Latin students come to celebrate before games, tailgating, [and other campus events].
>
> In comparison:
>
> Greek culture is a huge part of college culture, specifically here at this institution. I wasn't [very] interested but I was kind of curious. So, my roommate and I decided one night to go to a fraternity party that we were invited to. One of our friends [in the dorm] hall was in that fraternity and he said, oh, we're going to have a Narcos-themed party, like the Netflix series. [When we entered the party, I saw] people wearing sombreros, some [wearing] ponchos, [along with] a lot of drinking. I was not comfortable and I was kind of frustrated because I thought this was [supposed to be] a Narcos-themed party like the Netflix [show but, apparently, they took Narcos as just Latin American culture. [It was not the] best first experience and it was very frustrating.

2016 political climate. As a Mexican-American college student and first-year student adjusting to his college campus during the fall of the 2016 presidential campaign and its aftermath with the turbulence of the Trump presidency, Oscar shared his reflections:

> I feel most people [create their friends group] freshman year, specifically in their dorms. And so, I knew that this would be like my main circle of [friends] for the rest of my time in college …. I met most of my hall mates and I ended up making, more than I expected, a diverse friend group …. There were Asians, Blacks, and Whites, but [Octavio and I] were the only Hispanics/Mexicans [on our floor and in our hall] …. After the [2016] election, I found out that there were two people in my friend group who voted for Trump. My gut reaction was to sort of distance myself but I … realized that wouldn't be beneficial to either of us …. I would like to be their image of a Hispanic person whenever they think about those immigration issues. So, I tried my best to not distance myself. I

> posted on my Instagram shortly after the election that if you supported Donald Trump, that's like saying you wish you never knew me …. If those ideologies with immigration were consistent throughout history, I wouldn't be here. I remember waking up [later that night] and I was already pretty emotional from the night before, knowing the direction that our country was heading …. I did not want to go to … my classes. I remember I wrote an email to my first class saying, I'm sorry, I'm just not in the right mental place. And [my TA] was like, I completely understand, I also didn't want to come to class today. I didn't expect that. [Today] it's interesting because the [approaching midterm] election throws me back to freshmen year …. I find myself in this weird place again where I'm feeling anxious again but I know I shouldn't really let it affect anything else. I'm finding myself back in that place trying not to let it affect me too much.

Summary of Oscar's Experience

In compiling Oscar's depiction of his college access and campus adjustment, his selected icebreaker memes (Appendix J) and stories highlight the following themes: a master educational plan driven by familial sacrifices, language as a social interaction tool and a display of identity and pride, the reliability and limitation of family presence, Latino peers as an extension of family, social relationships and peer groups as shields, and facing social injustices and political tensions with humor and openness. In regards to Oscar's campus transition and the environmental elements which provided a role in the adjustment process, the following components were worth noting: supportive financial aid offices, identity-based courses and the interaction with Latino professors, a surrogate Latino mom on campus, Latino social events and peer group cultural activities, and the 2016 political climate.

Sara's Story on College Access and Campus Environments

As a senior, Sara's initial field of study was in Business and Finance, but after years of exploring, her plan of study led her to instead focus on obtaining her undergraduate degree in International Affairs with a minor in Public Policy and Management at the end of this academic year. In comparison to her attendance at our small-scaled independent school where she began in 6th grade, Sara selected for college a large public institution with 29,000 students located in a Southern college town (U.S. News and World Report, n.d.). This 21 year-old of Mexican and Dominican origins has lived in dormitories on campus these past four years. With an almost 70% White student population, Sara's institution currently includes a Latino student community of approximately 6% of the student population (U.S. News and World Report, n.d.). At the time of this dissertation's data collection, Sara was focusing on post-graduation plans. She recently had submitted her application and was in the process of being considered for a Fulbright Scholarship.

Through the lens of Yosso's six cultural wealth capitals, Sara's chronicle of her college access trials feature the resulting themes of: how family expectations define personal goals, functionality of a unique blended language identity, personal space versus familial/cultural roles, females as a primary source of support, focus on resilient forward motion/momentum necessary for overcoming obstacles, and feminine empowerment/Latina understanding. And, while considering the environmental Museus' (2014) CECE Model when reflecting on Sara's adjustment to her college environment, the following campus elements merit attention: roommates and cultural differences, Latino student groups for community building and peer bonding, Latino studies classes and supportive non-Latino professors for self-identity reflection, and study abroad programs for personal and scholarly growth.

Sara: Aspirational Capital

Figure 25. Sara's aspirational capital selected meme.

For her aspirational meme, Sara chose a picture of a large family group coming together for a commencement event, with the caption "Latinos be like I need 46 graduation tickets for my immediate family" (Figure 25). As an explanation for her own aspirational source, Sara shared in her story how family expectations define personal goals. Even at times with family difficulties creating struggles with control, Sara expanded her definition of family-type circles to include trusted individuals from her past:

> I don't want to say … [my family is] controlling but I feel that I …make decisions based on expectations I know or think my family has of me …. I hate to admit it that way but yeah, I think … [other members of my family define my dreams]. It's funny because even though … now I don't really talk with my dad, … somehow [his expectations] are still something that … I think about a lot when I'm making decisions. [I want to know] … how would he feel about this.

Although offered access to campus-based mentors and advisors, Sara identified her preference to lean on reliable sources from her past:

> [My institution's] Latino student group … reached out to me [at the beginning of my first year] …. They paired up students who had been at the university for a while with

students who were just coming in, either freshmen or transfer students. They were welcoming and very open to helping, whether it was academic stuff or [something else]. After you were paired up with someone, you exchanged numbers. You [and your mentor] would meet up … whenever you wanted, maybe once a week or a couple of times a month. There would be events where everyone would come together …. Through that club, I was able to find my roommate, who is probably my best friend here at college. I think [the group's] mentality [was] that if you need someone, it was there as a resource. I don't think I ever really did reach out to them. I don't know if it's just because of the type of [personal] situation I was going through at the time [with my parent's divorce]. [There were just too many changes]. This was like a new person telling me, oh, I've got your back, … [when I] felt I had all of these really tight connections with people from my past. Why was I going to suddenly talk about my aspirations and stuff with someone [new]?

Sara: Linguistic Capital

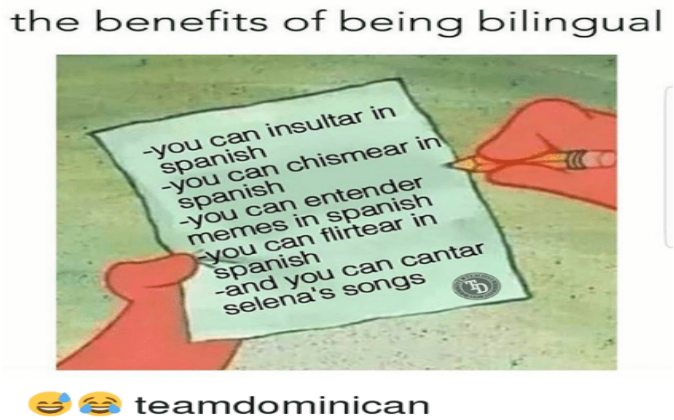

Figure 26. Sara's linguistic capital selected meme.

For her meme on linguistic capital, Sara chose a cartoon containing a list of fused Spanish and English statements which itemize the benefits of being bilingual (Figure 26). In order to understand its meaning, one would need to speak both languages. Examples of listed

statements in both languages are "you can *chismear* (gossip)" or "you can *entender* (understand)." With this meme, Sara is highlighting the functionality and communication tool of a blended language identity:

> You can do all the same things in a totally different language, [Spanish, English, or Spanglish for the bilingual speaker]. It creates opportunities. At my institution, by being a recipient of a [specific] scholarship, [I] am actually required to show … [Spanish fluency]. The application [process for this scholarship] asked me to submit an essay [written in Spanish] on my future goals … and aspirations.

Sara: Familial Capital

Figure 27. Sara's familial capital selected meme.

As a meme representing Sara's interpretation of familial cultural capital, Sara's selection depicts an exchange where one person says "I grew up," and two others respond with "well then grow back down again" (Figure 27). Considering Sara is navigating still the difficult dynamics of her parents' divorce, which took place while in college, she is struggling with juggling familial roles, personal space when needed, and the comfort with family time:

I feel bad saying this for some reason because obviously my family has always supported me but, in a way, I felt like the people who weren't actually related to me were my biggest support during the college process. [Others] … really encouraged me to try to go after the things that I wanted whereas people who were related to me were wanting me to go after the things that they wanted. I feel like I've always [had to push outside the box of the familial cultural norms] …. I don't know why, even still to this day. I often seek out people in my life who are not related to me for their assistance. I think it goes back to the power aspect of it. My dad did not want me to stay in a dormitory [that first year] but it was [a campus] policy …. After that, … it just made sense because I lived far away, I didn't have a car, and … it was easier for X, Y, and Z. And then the fact that I was going to be living with another Latina made it [easier for my father]. I feel like members of my family have always seen how much I value school so now they just always expect so much …. And they … make it very obvious too sometimes, … in cheering [me] on. They're like, look at what Sara's doing.

Regarding Sara's trips home versus her family's visits to campus-based events:

Freshman year I went home every single weekend …. [It was both what I wanted and what was expected] …. As someone who grew up so sheltered, suddenly living with someone who I had never met and being … totally out … of my comfort zone didn't even begin to cover [what freshman dorm life was like]. So yeah, I'd go home every weekend and then sophomore year, I want to say, it was roughly about the same, maybe every once in a while. It [became] every two weeks; then junior year [was even] less …. This year, I mean we're about to hit week six and I think I only went home to sleep overnight after my roommate and I had gone home for the night before going [out of state] …. It's funny

because I don't have a desire to go home right now. I'm kind of liking this independence …. I've recognized now that my family directly or indirectly affected decisions that I make even if they weren't involved because I was thinking of what they were expecting. [Now], I'm just trying to, I don't want to say break contact, but not reach out as much. This is my last year and this is like whatever decisions I make now, …. [I want] to make sure I am the only one out of my family … making decisions for myself …. My family does not actually have any idea of what the process is like [to get involved on campus]. I just don't have family come up ever. I've heard of sororities having parents' weekend. I'm sure the university does it too because I see random posts on Instagram, where someone has posted, oh look, my parent came for whatever weekend. But I feel like I only ever know that has happened after the fact. I mean, yeah, I think it would have been great [for them to be involved]. But, I feel like I hang out with my family a lot so I would rather be with them at home to get out of the [campus] area. Sometimes you … just want to be with those people in the setting that's comfortable to me.

Sara: Social Capital

Figure 28. Sara's social capital selected meme.

Sara's meme on social cultural capital depicts a cartoon figure enjoying flowers in a garden with the caption: "seeing women being each other's biggest fans and being proud of each

other and being each other's support system" (Figure 28). This encapsulates how, for Sara, female peers and women are a primary source of support:

> I just think that women are badass. I [see] women be each other's biggest fans, being proud of each other and [serving as] each other's support system. I can go on for hours. I don't even know where to begin. Yeah, I – maybe it's also because of … the stereotypes that are associated or just the way Latin women are supposed to be [which] is very different …. Just participating in this movement for the progression of women and all of this stuff I find empowering …. I went to the Women's March that happened at the state capitol two years ago and it was great. I wasn't even talking to my dad at the time but he found out that I went and was freaking out and telling my mom, what is she doing? He was freaking out and I was like, well, whatever. So, I think it was part of the whole empowering thing …. What is [my father] going to do about it. He can't stop me.

Sara concedes ethnicity complicates matters when connecting with other females:

> [These women are not necessarily Latina]. I think it goes back to … not wanting to date Latino men not because of whatever but because you just have this mentality engrained in your head …. I just think that Latino women are incapable of empowering me – or helping me feel empowered the way other women do. It's like I love my mom and everything. She's always there, but I don't feel that I look up to her in the same way …. Yeah, and it makes me really sad actually because I feel like it makes it almost seem like I'm trying to push away from the Latina identity which is not what I'm trying to do.

When reflecting on the intentionality of searching for female mentors on campus:

> My political science instructor … was actually the reason I decided to switch to International Affairs from International Business. I did an independent research study

with her and specifically wanted to work with her because I just thought she seemed really confident and assertive. I thought … I would get a lot out of an experience working on something like a research study with her. [I did not have any Latino professors] …. I know that they exist, [but] I don't know [if] they exist outside of [the] Romance Language Department …. I feel like diversity is definitely an issue at this campus.

Sara: Navigational Capital

Figure 29. Sara's navigational capital selected meme.

Sara's navigational cultural capital meme is a picture of a directional road sign with confusing arrows and the wording "good luck' (Figure 29). Sara chose this meme as an image capturing the needed resilient forward motion and momentum necessary to overcome the challenges of higher education paths:

Because I am a first generation college student, I had no one within my family that could help orient or direct me in any way …. No matter how crazy things got, it was always about forward motion …. [The mantra was], make sure you keep moving, just keep moving, just keep trying something; you know you'll eventually find it and figure it out.

In regards to campus navigational support:

> That was where [the campus Latino student organization] … came into play, through its mentoring program. I knew that I could [ask them questions], even if I never really did. Instead, I just … asked people that I knew from before, seeing what ideas they had …. I knew that not knowing the answer myself did not mean that I was going to get out of [or excused from] the situation. I never thought about dropping out of college if that makes sense.

Sara: Resistance Capital

Figure 30. Sara's resistance capital selected meme.

For Sara's final meme on resistance cultural capital, she included an image of an adorable toddler with her blond hair in pigtails, her fist in the air, and the caption "viva la resistance" (Figure 30). It summarizes the source of Sara's resistance cultural capital from feminine empowerment and Latina understanding:

> [During] the 2016 election, I was … in … a women's studies class. It was … all about women feeling empowered and I [felt] like that was … what I needed at the time with [what] was happening emotionally … at home [with my parents' instability] and all the changes that were going on [politically]. I [felt] … there was this huge uproar of, I don't know, screw the patriarchy …. I just [felt] that having a whole bunch of women around

> me [and] wanting to feel empowered, … helped me get out of the hole … as a [Latina] woman having been so sheltered.
>
> Regarding her female roommates on campus:
>
> I don't have to explain certain [cultural] things to [my Latina roommate] whereas when I had my freshman year roommate who was not Latina, [it was different]. If you ask me, I feel that I act differently in different circles. If I'm with a group of Latinos [versus not Latinos], … I don't feel more comfortable or less comfortable in one or the other social circles. [But], I do know that I behave differently. Going back to how I had to explain being different to others, [an example would be] with my freshman year roommate. I would have to say, okay, while you might talk to your family once a week, talking to my family every day, maybe [even] more than once a day, is something, I'm sorry, but it's just going to happen. [There were lots of] little things like that. I say little but they're big. [Now with my current roommate], we're both Latinas so we get each other.

Sara's Campus Environment Transition and Adjustment Indicators

While considering the environmental Museus' (2014) CECE Model when pondering Sara's campus climate adjustment, the following campus elements merit attention: roommates and cultural differences, Latino studies classes and supportive non-Latino professors for self-identity reflection, and study abroad programs for personal and scholarly growth.

Roommates and cultural differences. In adjusting to college life and campus housing arrangements in dormitories, Sara recalled how, although it was never a problem, cultural differences led to her longing for relationships where she would not have to explain herself:

> I started off living … with a non-Latino student my first year. It was totally random. It was going to be a totally new experience, nothing I had ever been used to before. And

things started off really, really well, we got along fairly well I think. There was never really an issue but as time progressed I could feel some sort of tension, and I sensed that it was maybe the cultural differences that were leading to some of the tension. Yeah, just different things like, I knew that she spoke with her family maybe once a week, I spoke to my family every day. Just little things here and there. Some things that she'd do that would seem different to me or vice versa …. However, living in that freshman dorm, I met the person who is my roommate now and she is Latina and it's interesting to see how different and how quickly we clicked and have done everything together because we understand each other. We have the same interests, many of the same practices, and things that we do don't need to be explained to the other …. Both of us started as accounting and international business majors …. It's because of a Latino student group event that we started speaking to each other but I remember at our freshman orientation she [introduced herself and I noticed the Spanish name]. After we connected at the group activity, we [started] occasionally getting [meals] together in the dining hall. And then when we were planning [housing for the next year, we started to discuss living together] …. I checked with my parents first because I was like, I have to ask my dad to make sure this is okay and he was totally fine with it. [Now, I had a Puerto Rican roommate] and we soon became best friends. And it just worked out …. It was really cool because I had never had a sister …. We're just so similar in so many ways. [We became a foursome with two non-Latinas]. We knew many of the same people and it has been just fun. When we are together we don't really engage in any Latino activities. Yet, [my roommate and I decided] living together without the other two literally in the same space … to allow us to maintain and hold on to the things that make us Latina or that make us different. We

> [would not] have to explain certain things, certain actions, habits …. Having to explain turns into me saying I'm sorry and I don't really know what I'm saying sorry for.

Latino student groups. As a venue to connect with other Latinos, affinity groups on campus facilitate in community building and peer bonding:

> The Latino student group [first reached out during] freshman year. They held events throughout the year… They were random events to get us closer to each other. I didn't go to many of their meetings, … there was just a lot going on that first year, but [I did go to the first event]. They paired us up with mentors, [individuals who would] help if you had any questions or … in regard to anything … I think [my student mentor] may have been just one year older. We didn't really interact all that much though. Whenever we would see each other around campus, we'd definitely say hi and we made an effort at the beginning to meet up but [that was about it]. I just had these close connections with people from the past, … before coming to my [institution], that [made it] seem weird to suddenly say all this stuff to someone I just met. I held on to those former relationships [to help transition] even though they weren't part of this …. I think that's what I really needed at the time …. However, I did meet my best friend and roommate at a club activity …. After we found each other, we stopped going. [For me], … it was the kind of place to connect with someone and then … that was kind of it.

Latino studies and supportive non-Latino professors. Offering opportunities to better understand the cultural, historical, and societal dynamics of her own identity, a Latino studies and Latino history class provided Sara a curricular haven during her campus adjustment:

> I took a Latin American and Caribbean Studies class [at my institution]. I knew that I needed to take something to fulfill a requirement for international affairs. I decided to

> take the Latin American/Caribbean Studies class and focus on the Dominican Republic… [That was the first time I studied my country of origin]. I had no previous academic exposure whatsoever to Dominican culture …. [The professor] was not Hispanic but he was very passionate about, actually, Brazil …. It's funny because I had such a great time in that class …. There was one other girl there. I think she was from Venezuela …. We were the only two Latinos in that class …. Sometimes things would come up in class and she and I would just kind of nod to each other.

Study abroad programs. Presenting experiences which contributed to personal and scholarly growth, study abroad adventures have been a part of Sara's personal journey during her higher education experience:

> Studying abroad was the most independent experience I've ever had …. I studied abroad in Oxford in the United Kingdom but after that I went to Spain, Italy, Greece, Sweden, Iceland …. I befriended again a balance between Latina and non-Latina girlfriends.

Summary of Sara's Experience

In reviewing Sara's stories regarding her college access and campus adjustment experiences, the selected icebreaker memes (Appendix K), and the collected narratives portray the following themes: how family expectations define personal goals, functionality of a unique blended language identity, personal space versus familial/cultural roles, females as a primary source of support, focus on resilient forward momentum necessary for overcoming obstacles, and Latina feminine empowerment. In regards to Sara's campus climate transition experiences, the following environmental elements bridged her cultural wealth capitals and supported her campus adjustment process: roommates and cultural differences, Latino student groups for community

building and peer bonding, Latino studies classes and supportive non-Latino professors for self-identity reflection, and study abroad programs for personal and scholarly growth.

Rosa's Story on College Access and Campus Environments

As the oldest participant, Rosa is a 22-year-old college graduate. I first met Rosa when she applied at my independent school, at which time the institution accepted her as a new 5th grade student in the elementary school. As a Latino student of Mexican origin, Rosa's interest in cultural and societal complexities throughout her middle school and high school years led to her selection of a humanities-oriented field of study in her college setting. At the beginning of this dissertation study, she had graduated recently with a major in Anthropology and a minor in Religious Studies. Rosa is the one commuter student in this study, having resided at home during the four years of her undergraduate program. Her public higher education institution, located in an urban setting, has an undergraduate population of approximately 25,000 students. While its Latino population is slightly greater than 10%, its White population is slightly less than 25% of the student population (U.S. News and World Report, n.d.). Post-graduation, Rosa was in the process of completing an application for AmeriCorps.

In the sharing of Rosa's college access narrative through Yosso's (2005) six cultural wealth capitals, the following themes were highlighted: motivation from her parents' hardships with labor and hard work, bilingual public speaking skills and interaction with the arts, cultural and religious values and messages from childhood, overcoming societal disinterest or disconnect by seeking individuals from similar socioeconomic dynamics, existing in-between Latino and non-Latino communities, and recognizing persistence not as a choice but rather a familial expectation. Her campus adjustment experiences, demonstrated through a reflection on the nine indicators of Museus' (2014) CECE Model, underscore the following environmental components

which made a difference in Rosa's transition and adjustment from being an applicant to a student: the complexities with public transportation logistics, community gathering areas, and the challenges with impersonal financial aid offices.

Rosa: Aspirational Capital

Figure 31. Rosa's aspirational capital selected meme.

When selecting a meme encapsulating the hopes and dreams which motivated Rosa as a Latino student and represented communicated goals, Rosa's selected meme was of a White woman sitting at her desk (Figure 31). Rosa's image portrays professional labor and hard work:

> My motivation came from … [my parents] pushing me [to aspire for a profession], saying, you don't have to do all this [physically laborious] work. Someday you can have your own office job, [where] you can sit back and relax [at a desk] and work even from home. You can do something with your mind whereas we had to do things with our hands …. It was a clear [message]. During the summers, I would go to work with my mom where she was a housekeeper. I would complain … and she would tell me, well, this is why you're going to school; this is why you're in a private school now. I [went with her] on and off for a few years …. [At these] affluent houses, … she would talk about [the families] and say, I'm not really sure what they do but … look at their vacation books.

> We could see that they had a nicer life. They had time for vacations and even time to [put together] books about their vacations.

When reflecting on how her aspirational drive contributed to her academic strengths as a Latina entering higher education, Rosa spoke about her relationship with one of her professors:

> The head of the undergraduate Anthropology Department [understood me] …. She led the … [study abroad] trip … to Brazil. I did that right after my freshman year. She had been doing her own fieldwork there … with [Brazil's poor Favela] communities …. She understood [socio economic] gaps …. Her entire anthropology class was women of color. It wasn't [intentional], … that's just how things happened …. I think there was maybe one White girl but all the rest were Black or Hispanic …. [At my institution], I think that there are more minority students [than nonminority students]. [This professor] was very understanding and would ask me about college and aspirations …. She was White, but was just a regular person [to us].

Rosa: Linguistic Capital

Figure 32. Rosa's linguistic capital selected meme.

When selecting a meme portraying the linguistic and communication capital of a dual language student, Rosa self-identified with the image of a teenager rehearsing public speaking skills (Figure 32):

> I think from the time that I was seven years old until I was seventeen or eighteen, I was one of the … lecture readers at our [Catholic] services [which were held] in Spanish. For many years, I was that girl practicing [the readings] … in Spanish and in English … because my mom … pushed me to practice both of my languages …. [It made me] a big advocate for reading out loud …. Even when I had … [an] assignment for literature class or something [in high school], I would go home and read [out loud]. There was so much English vocabulary [where] I had to use context clues …. I would read out loud so that I could understand … because when … I read it out loud, I [could] hear it. Public speaking [became] a big thing … for me to practice [in] both of my languages, so that both … sides of my brain were keeping up with each other.

Based on Rosa's language and communication capital, her experiences with how higher education acknowledged her linguistic strengths were evident in interaction with the arts:

> I feel like I had a really easy time blending in. I didn't have a problem with language …. [I became aware of being identified as bilingual/bicultural] when I was in a [fashion] modeling club for two semesters. They asked me if I wanted to perform because they knew that I did Mexican folkloric dance, and they asked me if I wanted to do that. I guess in that way, they were recognizing me for my heritage, maybe not necessarily for being bilingual. I [did] receive a lot of support [for displaying my heritage]- it was fun.

Rosa: Familial Capital

Figure 33. Rosa's familial capital selected meme.

In choosing a meme to capture her familial capital, Rosa picked a cartoon of a children's Sunday school group (Figure 33). Leading the group is a nun singing the lyrics, "if you're happy and you know it that's a sin.". Rosa chose this meme as a snapshot of the values and messages from her childhood:

> A large portion of my values, wisdom, and support came from my Catholic community and my parents …. They all were looking to me as their representation of a Latina getting into higher education. [They would say], you can go out and change the world and take these values and Christ with you …. They had high aspirations of self-actualization and self-growth [which] translated [well] with … higher education and pushing yourself …. They warned me about … pleasure and seeking things in college that weren't academically related …. It kept me aligned for the first year, at least going into college. It was like, I'm here to work, I'm here to study, I'm here to do this. So, I didn't drink [and] I didn't party. I was weird …. I remember one time, I think it was my sophomore year,

> when I finally started getting out and a friend invited me to … some toga party at a fraternity house. I went in a little … toga gown … and I'm pretty sure I was the only sober person there and it was just weird …. I didn't really like it.

Rosa's higher education setting celebrated and encouraged her familial cultural capital with its incorporation of religious venues and services on campus, along with religious programming and a curricular presence:

> [My institution had] a Catholic Center where they held services. [For instance], they [conducted] a service on Ash Wednesday for students who couldn't go off campus … In the beginning, I didn't feel I needed [the Catholic Center]. I felt that its services were there for students who were from out of state or living on campus. Later, I wasn't identifying with my church anymore so that changed. [During] my junior year, I was struggling to hold on to my religious identity. There were so many distractions and then my classes were kind of getting to my head. I loved everything that I was learning but it was really challenging the ideas that I grew up with. All of the strengths that we have been talking about started subsiding a little bit. [During my] sophomore year, I was afraid to say it out loud. I was afraid to say, hey, I don't believe in this anymore. I want to say that I have more hope today for getting my faith back then I did maybe about a year ago …. It wasn't like I was just angry at the church …. It was more of, I'm here and I'm searching. When I declared my minor in Religious Studies, … I felt the more I searched for a connection, [the more] I was finding God in all things. It seemed more and more that there wasn't just one way to be holy or happy or whole or successful or rich or what have you. I questioned everything after that.

Rosa: Social Capital

Figure 34. Rosa's social capital selected meme.

In considering different networks of people who played a role as social capital, Rosa's meme is a picture of overcoming the obstacles created by individuals seemingly minimally engaged or unable to understand fully the world of being a Latina (Figure 34). This meme represents overcoming societal disinterest or disconnect:

> I would … try to tell [others] that … I was worried about how to finance my university … but … they would be like, oh, don't worry about the money …. In my Hispanic community, I didn't feel like I had anyone that I could ask …. You can't ask at home because it's not something that someone at home is going to know [about]. There was nobody …. I honestly didn't understand SAT testing; I didn't understand why they mattered and how to get in and apply to [colleges] …. I was just moving with the crowd …. [I never talked about it with peers] …. It was intimidating for me because they were going out and far …. I don't even think I applied to more than three schools. I mean it never really seemed like an option to go out of state …. I don't know, it was all very fuzzy to me. [Regarding the other Latinos in my secondary school institution], we just never really hit it off …. I think they saw me as probably whitewashed since I had been at

> my independent school longer and maybe I intimidated them. There was never that connection. I felt right in the middle, [not Latino enough for them, nor White enough for the others].
>
> [So, I went along with being] pushed to apply, apply, apply …. [without understanding] how to take out loans. When it came time to attend my institution and I wanted to live on campus, my parents said, that's a lot of money, if you want to go and stay on campus and not commute. You're going to have to take out the loans yourself and we don't know how to help you. I tried, I didn't understand anything at all, and then I broke down and I quit. [After that], I commuted.

Once Rosa was a member of her higher education community, she overcame such disinterest and disconnect in social interactions by seeking individuals who related to her socio-economic class and experiences:

> I connected with people at my institution differently …. Because [this new campus] environment was more homogeneous, [we] all had some very similar experiences …. These [new] individuals around [me] were worried about financial aid too …. [Being] at a very urban institution, and having a very large [minoritized] population, it probably also had a significant [population] of lower income students. Additionally, during my first semester, [I was required to take] … a mandatory course. [It was] some kind of orientation. Throughout the entire semester, [the instructors made] us go and look around campus and tap different resources and [explore] things online on the website. It was kind of annoying but it was [also] great. [Because of that course], anytime I was anywhere in any building, I could ask somebody … where something was and they would show me.

Rosa: Navigational Capital

Figure 35. Rosa's navigational capital selected meme.

Essential for her as a navigational cultural capital, Rosa's meme displays two friends and includes the statement "I'm so thankful to have such a great ginger best friend, such as yourself" (Figure 35). This meme places an importance on tools and individuals outside of Rosa's Latino enclaves which facilitate in navigating when one's status is that of being in-between communities:

> [When I was in high school], my best friend [was half Latina]. She understood me [while she also] understood the outside world too. She was kind of an in between [source of strength] for me. [Once I joined my higher education community, I made a friend who was White … and she and I connected on a different level than I think I ever had with any other White person. She understood my background and my heritage and she was able to [be] … like my social translator. In some ways, where my world was a little smaller, she kind of gave me the [missing] pieces. We met … in orientation during the summer before [the fall term]. We were put into groups according to our majors and she and I had both decided to major in anthropology and we stuck through that throughout college. She understood [the] hardship [of my background]. She grew up with people like

me. A lot of her best friends were Mexican or Hispanic. She and I were able to connect and I think she saw in me [someone] Mexican but also [someone] kind of whitewashed. [By this I mean] I'm Mexican [but also] well-adapted to America because I understand White culture or American culture and I am able to move back and forth between the two. [In comparison, in Latino enclaves or back in Mexico], it is kind of awkward. [There, they] sometimes call me … gringa [while in reality] I'm really brown …. I do feel I have this really difficult hybrid identity that I struggle with every day … [I am] able to be in both but still not fully [a part of both] …. I do always [struggle with] feeling like an outsider in every setting. Sometimes that's empowering; sometimes it's isolating.

Rosa: Resistance Capital

Figure 36. Rosa's resistance capital selected meme.

When selecting a meme to represent her resistance cultural capital, Rosa's choice depicts a Latino mother threatening her son to do good or be punished (Figure 36). It encapsulated her understanding of resistance tools, where persistence was not a choice but rather an expectation:

This is very stereotypical of the Mexican mom. If you don't do what's good, … you pretty much [are going to get punished] … [It's as if] you hear, I'm pushing you because I

> can see your potential …. You keep doing it because there's somebody that's going to make sure you stay on track.

In regards to this resistance cultural capital's application to her higher education setting, Rosa provided further insight by providing as examples challenges attributed to the complexities created by financial needs:

> I think I've been very lucky. [But], don't get me wrong, it's not like [college] was a walk in the park. It was very difficult, but I can't think of a time when [the difficulty] was directed at my heritage or my skin color, at being Latino or being bilingual. [Now in regards to financial needs, there were times] … I felt like [the institution wasn't] really caring for us, not really me specifically…. I remember [one] year feeling like I wasn't going to [be able to attend] because my financial aid hadn't [been processed]. [I] needed it to go through [in order] to be an actual student. [At the Financial Aid Office], I waited in line. I would go a few times a week. I waited for emails [but] I didn't stop going to classes. I think it was happening to so many people. I just kept going [to class] because I thought there was no way that I was going to quit just because somebody else couldn't get their [responsibilities or the school's] finances in order. [My financial needs have represented] the entire basis of how I can or can't go to school.

Rosa's Campus Environment Transition and Adjustment Indicators

During the campus-based environmental interview focused on the places, people, programming, and elements which impacted adjustment to the campus climate, Rosa underscored the following environmental components impacting her transition from the college application process to becoming a member of the campus environment: public transportation venues, community gathering areas, and the financial aid office.

Public transportation venues. The necessity of public transportation and the commuting experiences as a result of not being able to afford on-campus housing created for Rosa what she described as one of the most difficult parts regarding attending her higher education institution:

> For the first semester of college, I didn't have a car so I commuted using the train. My mom would drop me off at the closest [station] in the mornings. It required preparing for a super, super busy congested day. [Later when I drove, it still required an off campus] bus shuttle and then from the bus stop you [would] have to walk [a distance] to class. It was a lot of commuting, not just driving …. The commuting was probably one of the most difficult parts about attending my institution …. I was always struggling …. In the wintertime, I felt that I went into class during the [morning] and came out when it was night. [Those were long days] …. I would need to prepare for … two or three meals and snacks. I was tired, [unable to go] back home to do my homework. But, I was still involved in one way or another, yet not enough or as much as I wanted to be. On Fridays, there was a modeling club that I was [able to attend].

Community gathering areas and activities. The following locations, as diverse and eclectic hubs of activity, created a sense of campus community beyond the pockets of Latino enclaves for Rosa: the campus central park area, lunchtime in the plaza, urban cityscapes as the campus backdrop, and the multipurpose library.

Campus central park area. As an urban campus, city public spaces overlapped with the campus footprint. One of those spaces was a campus central park area:

> [There is a city park] just across the street from the central area [of campus] …. [Often, the university] would have student clubs and [campus] associations [present], sometimes they would have music, … and snacks depending on the day or events. There were

always people that I could talk to for more information there. If I was incredibly lost or felt really lonely, I think I would have reached out to a lot more organizations. I didn't really want to be part of a sorority or anything like that but they were always there and would post things on Instagram, Facebook, and social media such as, we're going to be out there this Thursday, come for pizza or come for tamales. It was just a good place to have lunch if you wanted to. I came into contact with the Latino student organization early on and then [my interest in] it just dwindled out …. I didn't really feel called to go but they were always there, I knew exactly where the office was. I didn't connect with them because it [felt] awkward. The times that I did go, people were either doing homework or just talking about something …. My connections were more with individuals in that orientation class that had a closer background to the one I was comfortable with, everything from financial aid questions and stuff like that. I think it's just because we were going through the same thing at that moment.

Lunchtime in the plaza. Communal spaces contributed to Rosa's sense of belonging:

[There is a plaza next to the library and main administrative building]. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, you come out at … 12:15 p.m. and people are handing out flyers … for clubs, for parties, for musicians, for everything. People have tables out, they're either dancing or there's a protest going on, and there are visitors on campus or people [wanting] you to vote and –it's just crazy. [They have even played] Latin music…. Even if I wasn't part of the big crowd all the time, it looked familiar, it felt familiar. It felt like [community].

Urban cityscape as the campus backdrop. As an urban setting, surrounding city neighborhoods overlapped with the boundaries of Rosa's campus. Exploring along those boundaries allowed for Rosa to experience the city's vibrant and eclectic energy:

> There is a little area [just off campus] where you [must take] this nice walk past the cityscape and outside restaurant [patrons], to arrive at this [removed set of campus buildings]. I think [what I like about it is you] meet a lot of characters. People are playing chess or are playing instruments [versus other] people [are] in suits and … getting out of work. I just liked that whole environment of having [that city energy]. It made me feel I belonged …. It was such a cultural hub of so many different things that I didn't feel like there was an overwhelming majority of one type of person.

The library. As an off-campus student who spent long hours on campus due to her commute, Rosa connected with the campus library as the 'family room' of the environment:

> I think the library was sort of like the social hub. That's where I would eat, do my homework, take naps, cry or chat with friends, [meet] study groups, or just goof around. It was where [students] lived if you didn't [reside] on campus …. [The student union located elsewhere] was not nearly as cozy as the library.

Financial aid office and services. Support services such as the Financial Aid Office, including their staff, represented some of Rosa's greatest frustrations as a college student:

> [Regarding the] financial aid office, … I had to figure out a lot of things on my own …. You had a line, to get in line for the kiosk, to get a ticket, to get in a line [again]. [The process] … put a lot of financial literacy pressure on me to understand what the forms meant, where I had to go, and who I needed to talk to … I made it through somehow but sometimes I kept being redirected to another office or another person. [It required perseverance]. The biggest problem for me was not understanding how to … manage or process my own FAFSA. I didn't understand how to work on that application or how to renew it. [When I asked for guidance], … all the financial aid office staff [worried about]

> … were checklists. They kept me on track about things that I needed but it was up to me to figure out how to get my parents financial information, taxes and … whatever … else …. [Not understanding was not an excuse for] having my classes dropped …. [My friends] …were all in the same boat and somehow, we all managed to just get [forms] in and have it processed. [Regarding the staffers], … it was their 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. [job] and that's it …. It felt very impersonal because they treated you like a number …. I didn't really know [any] names. I didn't know who I was talking to, what their position was, or how much they even cared. [This] would lead to saying, I can't do this, I can't figure this out …. That happened to me when I wanted to apply for loans so I could stay on campus. I quit, I didn't know how to fill out the applications and my parents weren't helping me out because they told me this was my loan …. They couldn't help me.

Summary of Rosa's Experience

In encapsulating Rosa's college access and campus adjustment experiences, her selected memes (Appendix L), and her narratives highlight the following themes: motivation from parental hardships, bilingual public speaking skills and interaction with the arts, cultural and religious values and messages, overcoming societal disinterest or disconnect with individuals from similar socioeconomic dynamics, existing in-between Latino and non-Latino communities, and recognizing persistence as a familial expectation. Regarding Rosa's transition experiences, the following components bridge the adjustment process from applicant to student: complexities with public transportation, community gathering areas, and impersonal financial aid offices.

Overarching Themes in the Communal Narrative for all Latino Participants

Representative of a holistic perspective across the identified cultural wealth capitals and environmental components for the participants, this closing chapter section summarizes the

findings of this study through a synthesis of the participant stories with a comparison to the elements of the frameworks and the current research. The collective overarching themes in this communal narrative are as follows: family as a constant source of emotional strength, lessons, and expectations; mentors and advisors as sources of wisdom and transition resources; a sense of identity in regards to growing up Latino in the United States; supportive peers as the product of social relationships; and the skill of resiliency as a source of focus (Figure 37).

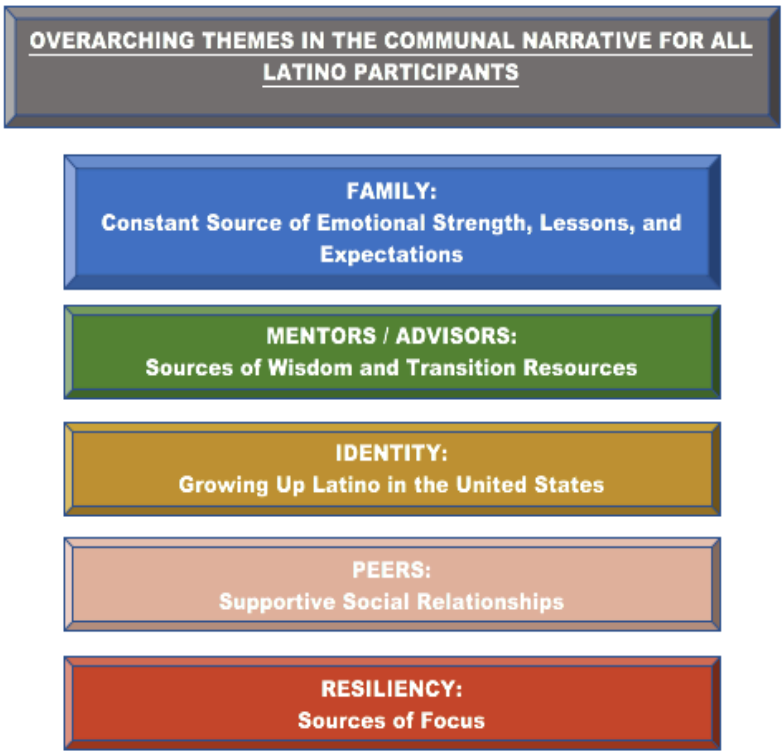

Figure 37. Overarching Themes in the Communal Narrative for all Latino Participants.

Family: Constant Source of Emotional Strength, Lessons, and Expectations

Regarding the role of immigrant Latino parents on the college access and transition process for their first-generation college-attending children, the current research is mixed. While familial limitations due to information gaps, social class obstacles, and parental self-education levels can present challenges (Belasco 2013; Bryan et al., 2009; Calaff, 2008; Castleman et al.,

2015; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Fann, et al., 2009; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Niu, 2014; Oliva, 2008; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Perna & Titus, 2005; Plank, 2001; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Roderick et al., 2008; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005; Tornatzky et al., 2002; Torrez, 2004; Vela-Gude, 2009; Venezia et al., 2003; Zalaquett, 2005), the positive encouragement generated by emotional support merits notice (Auerbach, 2007; Ceja, 2004; Cerda-Lizarraga, 2015; Dennis et al., 2005; Gloria & Castellanos, 2012; Hurtado et al., 1996; Kiyama, 2010; Kolkhorst et al., 2010; Lopez, 2001; Means et al., 2015; Perna & Titus, 2005; Phinney et al., 2005; Rodriguez et al., 2003; Schneider and Ward, 2003; Tierney, 2002; Turner et al., 2009; Valencia & Black, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Although the participants acknowledged some of these limitations, their narratives chose to focus on honoring the role of family and parents through the themes of family as a constant source of emotional support, familial lessons, and familial expectations (Figure 38).

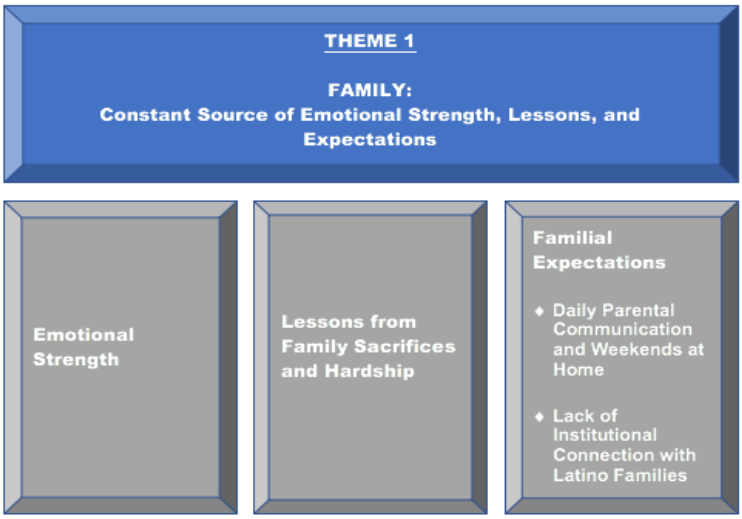

Figure 38. Theme 1-Family: Constant Source of Emotional Strength, Lessons, and Expectations.

Emotional Strength

Support can manifest itself in different ways. For each of the participants, their families' limitation of navigational knowledge was secondary to serving as a constant source of emotional strength in the college access and transition process. For Valentina, she identified how she would

reach out to her mother at moments where she felt insecure in the college access process or when she felt displaced on campus. Her mother might have lacked answers to admissions, curricular or financial challenges but she would provide Valentina the needed energy to persevere and the resourcefulness for strategizing as a persistence tool. For Alejandro, this familial source of emotional support contributed to a sense of communal accomplishment in regards to college access and student success. Never feeling alone, his family provided advice in the form of encouragement and positive direction. Alejandro expressed appreciation for how he and his family experienced the college access journey together. For Rosa, her familial source of emotional strength in the college access and transition process developed through childhood religious messages and cultural values. Her Catholic upbringing provided focus to contrast distractions in adjusting to a higher education setting. Eventually, her pursuits in Religious Studies created dogmatic struggles as she began questioning Catholic teachings and principles. Although these inquiries led to questioning her faith, they have not disqualified the ethical and spiritual seeds nurtured by her family. In Oscar's case, the supportive presence of family appeared simultaneously at times as a cultural-based chore. However, Oscar dismissed this notion by clarifying nonetheless how he loved overall familial constant presence. In Sara's case, the recent divorce of her parents impacted this familial complexity. Sara acknowledged their support but also recognized struggles caused by controlling cultural/traditional gender roles.

Lessons from Family Sacrifices and Hardship

Many of the participants included in their narratives how the hardships endured by their parents served as personal lessons. Juan shared how his challenges appeared as minor hurdles when compared to the obstacles encountered by his immigrant parents. In accompanying his father on evening jobs, Juan listened to how the struggles provided teaching opportunities.

Alejandro, Oscar, and Valentina echoed these sentiments with stories about familial hardships and dreams while also discussing benefitting from those sacrifices. Rosa added how hardships motivated her pursuits. By accompanying her mother to her jobs, Rosa understood the physical exhaustion of her mother's housekeeping work while also becoming aware of an affluent lifestyle which was different from her own defined by limited financial resources.

Familial Expectations

In reflecting on their families as a cultural wealth capital, participant narratives highlighted familial expectations which impacted their college access and campus transition experiences. Juan's story included how education is a foundational requirement for personal aspirations. He explained how his parents ingrained the message that in order to succeed, he and his siblings needed to obtain college degrees. Alejandro added that this educational requirement was an obligation as a first generation role model for his younger sibling and cousins. He envisioned personal educational successes to benefit both himself and his community. For Valentina, familial expectations included the idolization of societally-respected professions, such as legal, political, or medical fields. Oscar added how these familial educational expectations defined his parents' goals of a better future when they chose to immigrate to the U.S. Today, his parents have remained involved in discussing how these educational expectations need to be considered in career and educational plans. For Sara, the explicit nature of familial expectations impacted her academic decisions. Even without current communication with her father, Sara conveyed how she reflected on his messages of expectations when defining personal goals.

Daily parental communication and weekends at home. In discussing expectations, each of the participants, except for Rosa (a commuter student), described in their stories how parental expectations included daily phone calls and weekend visits during their transition to a

college campus. Juan still engages with daily phone calls with his parents, producing daytime and evening conversations. Oscar depicted his daily interactions as a check-in task, required to call home every evening. Sara shared how her daily phone calls home during her first year demonstrated an incompatibility with her initial non-Latina roommate, creating moments where she felt the need to apologize for cultural norms and differences. Regarding visits home, Alejandro and Sara detailed how they would try to stay at home every weekend during their first year on campus. Sara added how her weekends at home continued during her sophomore year, with a slow weaning not occurring until junior year. Valentina differentiated how her weekend trips home included dinner visits but nightly returns to her dorm. Even Juan, whose campus was three hours away from family, returned home for weekend trips monthly.

Lack of institutional connection with Latino families. In reflecting on their adjustment to their campuses, all of the participants lamented the lack of connections between their colleges and Latino families. Juan referred to the absence of Latino parent programming and the recognition of how Latino students stress over the physical distance from families. Similarly, Alejandro and Valentina shared how their institution neglected acknowledging the importance of family in their student successes. Although they attended the initial orientation, both Oscar's and Sara's parents had not returned for another event. Both noted how their parents were different from other parents who connected with the campus as empowered parents through sports events, fundraising and development activities, or Greek life programming and legacy events.

Mentors and Advisors: Sources of Wisdom and Transition Resources

Recognizing the strength from familial emotional support while acknowledging the need to ameliorate the limitations from missing information and *know-how* experiences regarding how to access and traverse higher education, the findings concurred with the research in how mentors

and advisors supplement as surrogate sources of college access support and transition resources for Latino students (Atkinson et al., 1994; Belasco, 2013; Bensimon, 2007; Calaff, 2008; Ceballo, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Cerezo et al., 2015; Bryan et al., 2011; Corwin et al., 2004; Fann et al., 2009; Ferguson, 2002; Fischer, 2007; Gamoran; 2001; Gardella et al., 2005; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2015; Immerwahr, 2003; Karen, 2002; Kirst & Venezia, 2004; Kiyama et al., 2015; Lautz et al., 2005; Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Marsico & Getch, 2009; Martinez, 2003; Moschetti et al., 2017; Museus, 2014; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010; Oliva, 2008; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Rendon, Nora & Kanagala, 2014; Robinson & Roksa, 2016; Roderick et al., 2008; Roksa et al., 2007; Santos & Reigadas, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003; Tierney & Venegas, 2009; Tornatzky et al., 2002; Vega et al., 2016; Vela-Gude et al., 2009; Yosso; 2005; Zalaquett, 2005). These pre-college and campus human resources can be found among Latino and non-Latino supportive faculty and staff along with student affairs practitioners functioning as sources of navigational and resistance tools in key institutional divisions (Figure 39).

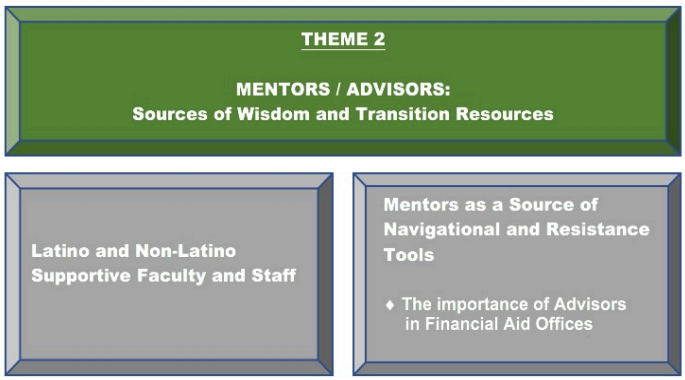

Figure 39. Theme 2- Mentors/Advisors: Sources of Wisdom and Transition Resources.

Latino and Non-Latino Supportive Faculty and Staff

For all of the participants, key non-family adults provided the navigational and resistance tools needed in the process of college access and transition to campus environments. These adult

supportive relationships developed from experiences and common interests or were influenced by shared identities. For Juan, Latino faculty and advisors represented surrogate sources of aspiration. Juan further explained how Latino faculty and staff contributed to his sense of inclusion in a collegiate community. For him, these individuals represented an extension of family, caring about him personally and the importance of his family dynamics. He spoke of a Puerto Rican accounting major advisor whom he credited for persevering in his academic studies. Juan also named Latino faculty members in the Spanish Department as initial sponsors in the establishment of a Latino student group on campus. Oscar connected with an Argentine professor from a Latin American and Caribbean Studies course during sophomore year while Alejandro, noting having yet to meet a Latino professor, spoke of his two-year mentoring connection with a Latino physician who served as an administrator for his ongoing campus-based work study program. In other examples, non-academic Latino employees were discussed. Oscar's narrative included a Mexican dining hall staffer serving as his mother figure away from home. Having befriended each other after she saw him wearing a Mexican national soccer jersey, Oscar discussed feeling more comfortable on campus as a result of their breakfast-time Spanish conversations about everything from his health to his enjoyment of her cooking. For Alejandro, the proliferation of Latino construction workers as his only daily presence of Latinos on campus highlighted the contradictions with ethnic stereotypes and higher education personnel.

While several of the participants drew attention to the scarcity of Latino professors at their institutions, relationships with non-Latino supportive faculty and staff which developed through shared interests and identities similarly served as invaluable sources for mentors and advisors. Sara, having never encountered a Latino professor outside of the Modern Languages courses during her four years at the institution, chronicled the role of a non-Latino female

political science professor who encouraged the development of Sara's International Affairs coursework through the professor's modeling of female confidence and assertiveness during a research opportunity. Additionally, Sara appreciated how a non-Latino professor's passionate dispositions regarding Latino culture and societal contributions during a Latin American and Caribbean Studies course nurtured her developing sense of Latino identity and her overall sense of belonging to the campus environment. Rosa similarly characterized the non-Latino director of Anthropology undergraduate studies who shared her own personal academic experiences and discussed with Rosa collegiate aspirations and the accompanying presence of higher education struggles during an anthropology department's study abroad program in Brazil. Rosa's encounter with this professor included attending one of her anthropology classes with an all women-of-color student class roster. Valentina echoed still not having a Latino instructor as a mid-year junior but having taken a freshman seminar course with an influential non-Latino Spanish Language professor. This professor's interest in and knowledge of Latino culture led to her becoming a source of advice in how to feel comfortable in a higher education campus environment.

Mentors as a Source of Navigational and Resistance Tools

The participants shared stories regarding how adult mentors facilitate in developing the needed navigational and resistance tools essential for Latino students during the college access and transition processes. These mentors provide a shield during moments of vulnerability, needed general information and career guidance, and essential messages of resiliency. Valentina cited her discomfort in receiving attention when asking for clarification. The privacy of conversations with such mentors and trusted advisors ameliorated this vulnerability. These relationships provided assistance to these first generation, low income, minoritized students from

those early days when applying to a higher education setting to the later objectives of launching career trajectories and approaching college completion. Reflecting on a conversation with his Dean of Students, Juan included in his story the appreciation of mentors and advisors who could empathize with the academic and nonacademic struggles of first generation students from immigrant households and who could share personal wisdom from experiences.

In regards to long-term mentoring relationships that bridge the journey between secondary and post-secondary academic settings, both Oscar and Sarah discussed ongoing mentoring relationships that carried over from pre-college needs as high school students to post-transition support as college upperclassmen. For Sara, a high school teacher remains a reliable source for advice and a frequent campus visitor. When initially adjusting to her campus climate, Sara noted how she was apprehensive to expand her network of adult mentors. With this close mentoring relationship that had carried over from high school, her preference was to continue relying on such established and trusted relationships. Regarding Oscar, his pre-college mentor was his high school drama teacher. Although Oscar chose not to pursue theatre-based interests in college, his friendship with this performing arts teacher evolved into, casual check-ins. Today, they remain in contact, through periodic updating and get-togethers back at his secondary school.

The importance of advisors in financial aid offices. Across the narratives, participants stressed the positive impact of establishing relationships with personnel in financial aid services. At Juan's institution, he expressed how the leadership of financial aid offices personally were receptive to providing customized attention to address the complexities of his family's immigrant financial dynamics. Alejandro echoed the necessity of financial aid advisors who maintain an open line of communication when financial obstacles became nearly impossible to overcome for a first generation Latino student whose parents had complicated documentation scenarios.

Despite attending a large public institution, Oscar's experience with a supportive financial aid office mirrored Alejandro's and Juan's stories. Oscar and his parents were able to arrange a walk-in private financial aid meeting shortly after his orientation where he felt staffers listened to, acknowledged, and were attentive to the details in troubleshooting solutions to his financial aid needs. Rosa and Valentina addressed the significance of negative or impersonal interactions with financial aid offices. Rosa's large public institution's financial aid services represented a primary source of frustration for the recent college graduate. Expressing her surprise in overcoming all the challenges, Rosa felt alone in always needing to educate herself on financial literacy due to a perceived indifference and bureaucratic structure from an impersonal financial aid office. Without persistence, an absence of clarification pertaining to forms such as FAFSA and parental tax returns would have led Rosa to conclude she did not have a single advocate among the financial aid staff. This frustration nearly caused Rosa to quit prior to her first term, when she was unable to receive the needed support in processing loans in order for her to reside in a dormitory at her institution. Rather than surrendering to the initial frustration and giving in to the temptation to quit, Rosa refocused and redefined herself as an incoming commuter student.

Identity: Growing Up Latino in the United States

As the children of immigrant Latino parents representing the first generation born in the United States, these participants, similar to the current research, reflected on saliency of ethnicity when considering the factors defining their identity (Hurtado, 1992; Hurtado et al., 2015; Santos et al., 2007; Torres, 1999; Torres, 2003). When considering their unique Latino-American sense of self in regards to the cultural wealth capitals and environmental components in the college access and transition processes, the following themes were consistent in the collective participant

narratives: existing between two worlds, understanding yourself through Latino studies courses, and the function of language as an instrument of cultural identity and empowerment (Figure 40).

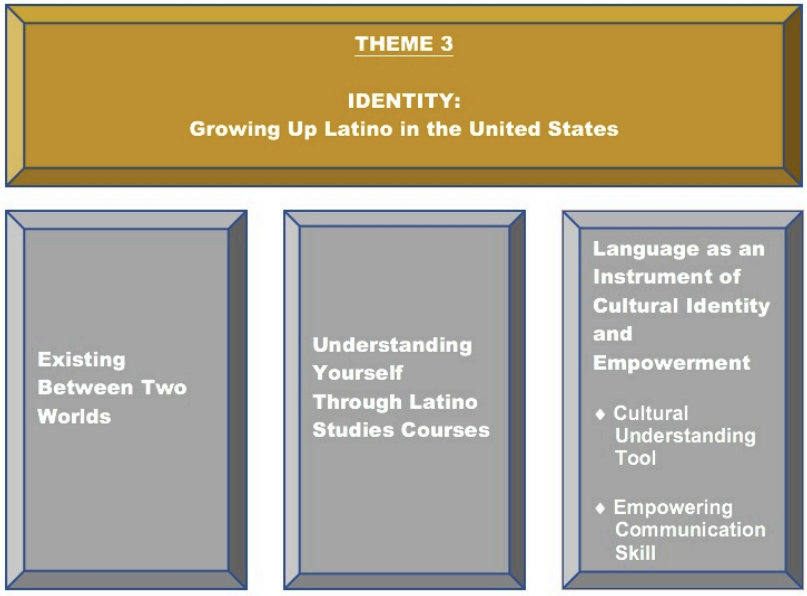

Figure 40. Theme 3- Identity: Growing Up Latino in the United States.

Existing Between Two Worlds

The participants spoke to the significance of the challenges with existing between two worlds defined by culture, language, and residence. Juan illustrated in his narrative how by attending a non-neighborhood selective preparatory institution, neighborhood Latino friends perceived him as White and no longer one of them. At the same time, non-Latino classmates at that institution viewed him as a non-American. Juan's description encapsulated the feelings of displacement caused by not fitting in anywhere. Oscar further described this duality for an English writing class assignment, where he visited Mexican restaurants around campus searching for home but realized they were an inauthentic representation of his American-raised version of being Mexican. Rosa explained how she saw herself falling in the middle, intimidated to discuss with her non-Latino friends her challenges with college access because of their different backgrounds while, simultaneously, sensing other Latino students intimidated by her because she

attended her private school since the elementary years. She summarized it as membership in two worlds but as an outsider in both. Valentina's and Alejandro's experiences at their shared institution presented a different perspective to the dichotomy, wherein the two worlds represented Latino international students and Latino domestic students rather than Latino and non-Latino students. Alejandro explained it as a disconnect between the two groups of Latino students, where domestic students like himself and Valentina existed between two cultures, balancing the push and pull caused by their presence in both but lacking full membership in either. Alejandro shared how the continuous attempt to balance the two worlds was exhausting.

Understanding Yourself Though Latino Studies Courses

Grappling with a Latino identity in the United States while recognizing an obligation to become familiar with Latino history and culture beyond the experiences shared with family, these participants referenced the identity value in Latino studies courses beyond curricular information. Sara cited how her enrollment as one of the two Latinas in a Latin American and Caribbean Studies class led to a developmental moment of reflection regarding her mixed Dominican and Mexican background. Valentina's experience in a similar Latino studies course at her institution where a majority of Latino international classmates exposed her to stories and societal portrayals of Latinos from completely different backgrounds to her own. For Oscar, participation in his section of a Latin American and Caribbean Studies course allowed him to experience how non-Latino classmates perceived Latino culture.

Courses in other curricular areas which allowed for personal reflection similarly were instrumental in identity development for these Latino participants. Citing assignments which allowed for exploring feelings of disconnection, Oscar named examples from English writing

courses, Juan identified a project in a philosophy class, and Rosa attributed the focus of coursework in her Anthropology and Religion courses.

Language as an Instrument of Cultural Identity and Empowerment

The overriding meaning attributed to linguistic capital by these participants focused on how a dual language command and dual culture appreciation serves as an instrument of identity and empowerment (Yosso, 2005). Both in establishing a commonality with a group of bilingual Spanish/English speakers and in creating scholarly and vocational opportunities, the bilingual and bicultural dynamics of the participants represent a cultural understanding tool and an empowering communication skill.

Cultural understanding tool. For these participants, communicating in different settings with the appropriate language creates a connection with home and a sense of comfort while pursuing college access and adjusting to campus environments. Juan's competency with language versatility illustrated its purpose as a cultural and generational bridge during multiple Admissions Office events where he spoke with visiting Latino parents in Spanish. For Oscar, the functionality of a unique blended language, known as Spanglish, allowed for the use of a coded-type language between him and his three Latino roommates when they sought privacy in crowded campus venues. In Rosa's case, her biculturalism was demonstrated through interaction with the arts. As part of a campus modeling club, Rosa communicated her heritage in a different manner when event organizers asked her to perform her Mexican folkloric dance skills as part of a fashion show. Alejandro similarly referred to a blended third or secret language and added how it contributed to an intimacy in relationships with others from shared experiences.

Empowering communication skill. Recognizing the practical values of bilingual skills, Valentina explained how the Latin foundation of Spanish has been a useful study aid with both

language courses and medical terms in science courses. Both Valentina and Rosa identified a source of confidence from their dual language public speaking skills. Alejandro recounted how his Spanish skills served as a language enhancer when he needed to interject a thought with a greater degree of emotion and passion.

Peers: Supportive Social Relationships

As evident through the current literature of both diverse and same-identity peer groups, peer friendships allow for the creation of embracing communities through the establishment of supportive social relationships (Bowman & Park, 2015; Chang et al., 2004; Fischer, 2007; Gurin et al., 2002; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2014; Kiyama et al., 2015; Lopez, 2013; Lowe et al., 2013; Mack et al., 1997; Moreno & Sanchez Banuelos, 2013; Muñoz & Guardia, 2009; Museus, 2015; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010; Pyne, 2003; Torres et al., 2003; Yosso, 2005). For these Latino participants navigating the college access and transition processes, peer-based interactions developed as a result of identifiable similar backgrounds or secondary salient identities in addition to ethnicity (Figure 41).

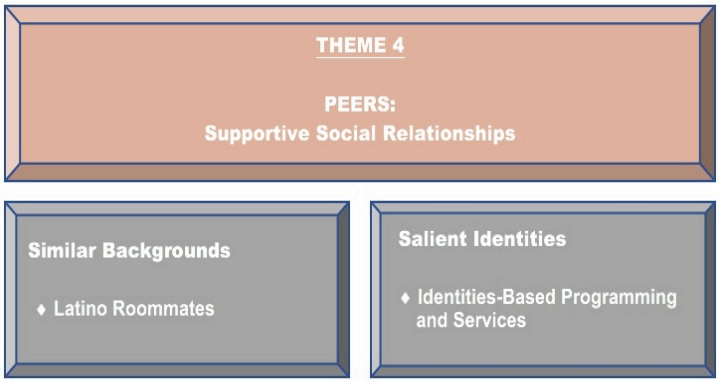

Figure 41. Theme 4- Peers: Supportive Social Relationships.

Similar Backgrounds

The participants repeatedly described in their narratives how similar backgrounds contribute to empathy and understanding from shared experiences. According to Alejandro,

individuals who understood his background provided insights for overcoming challenges. These individuals became reliable resources. For Rosa, surrounding herself with individuals from similar backgrounds created fellowships which looked and felt familiar. Juan clarified how this familiarity redefined peers from similar backgrounds as extension of family. An example of such supportive peer relationships was evident in the selection of college roommates.

Latino roommates. Every participant in this study except for Rosa, the one commuter student, paired themselves with a Latino roommate by the third year on campus. Juan's current roommate is a Colombian while Valentina's relationship with her two current Latina roommates developed through mutual friends. Alejandro decided to room with his current Mexican-American roommate after they met and realized their shared experiences presented friendship possibilities. Sara met her current Latina roommate through the Latino student group during their first year on campus. Living together for these last three years, these two Latinas are closer than many sisters and appreciate not needing to explain cultural differences to each other. Sara added how needing to explain cultural dynamics to her first year non-Latina roommate evolved into apologizing for things which simply defined her Latina essence. In Oscar's case, he met one of his three current Latino roommates through a last minute Facebook search for housing options before moving into his first year dormitory. Today, the Mexican foursome live off-campus in a house rental where they enjoy Mexican music and often communicate to each other in Spanglish.

Salient Identities

In addition to their Latino identity, each of the participants discussed a salient secondary identity. Juan referenced how he and his Pakistani roommate from the first year had a commonality in their apparent disparate but actually similar backgrounds as children of immigrant parents. Their immigrant identities allowed for an understanding of the pressures in

adapting to the dominant culture. For Alejandro, his supportive group of peers did not have in common a Latino identity. Instead, their commonality was as first generation college attendees for their individual families. Language instead of ethnicity defined Valentina's supportive campus-based identity group. Because of the disconnect between the proliferation of affluent international Latino students active on campus and those involved in this language-based identity group, Valentina eventually subdivided the peer group further to Spanish speakers born in the United States, from low-income households in particular. Oscar's Latino identity was represented better through a nationality and political lens. His self-identification repeatedly focused on being a Mexican-American with parents who received amnesty years ago due to immigration status and documentation factors. As for Sara, identifying with support from women, specifically non-Latinas, was her most salient identity. For Sara, although saddened by this revelation, the suffocation of ethnic gender stereotypes clouded her ability to view Latinas as an empowering identity. Lastly, with Rosa, her salient secondary identity focused on socioeconomic status, specifically identifying with students from low-income households. With her higher education campus representing a more homogeneous grouping of low-income/high financial aid students in comparison to the predominately affluent backgrounds of her secondary school classmates, Rosa felt more comfortable on her college campus with a group of peers defined by social class who understood each other's financial struggles. This included developing a close friendship with a non-Latina who personally understood the hardships of low-income financial problems.

Identities-based programming and services. Repeatedly, these narratives highlighted the specific identity-based campus components of Latino student affinity groups, first generation resources, Spanish language-based organizations, and peer mentorship programs. Valentina,

Sara, and Juan described Latino affinity groups as valuable activities for community building and peer bonding. Additionally, Juan said the group brought together students going through the same things, wrestling with the same worries, and facing the same conflicts. Oscar included how these groups always presented someone to talk to who was relatable. Further, these affinity groups offered social venues for celebrations and opportunities for relaxation on campus.

Regarding peer mentoring programs, Valentina cited how whenever she was struggling, she reached out through the peer mentorship program for advice in handling different situations or for guidance in overcoming insecurities and anxieties. For Alejandro, first generation student resources shared functional networking opportunities and subsequently transitioned to the formation of social circles.

One campus component which none of the participants elected to join was Greek life. Juan explained he was asked to join a fraternity but decided not to participate because of the cost and time commitment which would have conflicted with needed work hours. Alex concurred with how membership in a fraternity was a luxury he could not afford in light of his financial constraints. Rosa was asked to join a predominately Hispanic sorority but was not interested. Oscar became uncomfortable with the Greek environment when he was invited to a *Narcos*-themed party, inspired by the Netflix series about drug cartels, and instead encountered party attendees dressed in ponchos and sombreros as a stereotyped generalization of Latino culture.

Resiliency: Sources of Focus

Understanding resiliency as an ability, a skill, and a learned behavior which incorporates the needed flexibility to adapt successfully to stresses and challenges, each of these Latino students shared through their college access and campus transition stories a focus which

contributed to their strength with resiliency. Their narratives consistently cited sources of focus as: family, a community of peers, mentors/advisors, and a sense of identity (Figure 42).

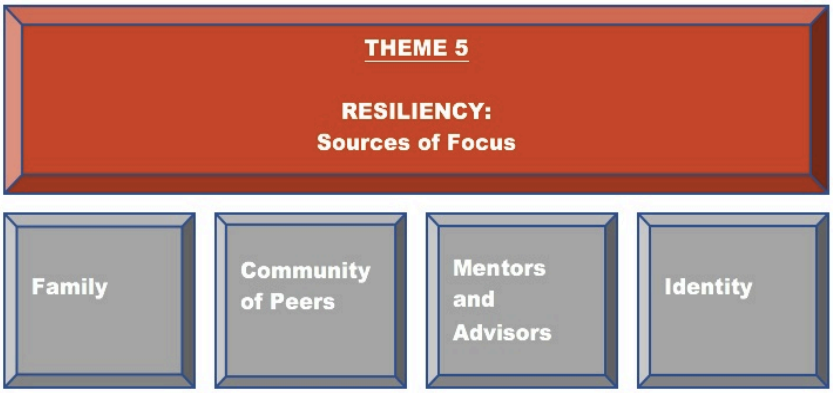

Figure 42. Theme 5- Resiliency: Sources of Focus.

Family

Each of the participants revealed how remembering the sacrifices of loved ones and the lessons from the hardships endured by immigrant parents represented a primary source of resiliency. Both Juan and Alejandro described how recalling such adversities and familial hard work to get to this point in their lives facilitated in developing a 'thick skin' of protection when faced with unwelcoming or unfamiliar situations and moments of isolation. Alejandro added how remembering the sacrifices of his undocumented parents defined his fighter mentality in facing personal struggles. Valentina faced moments of vulnerability and fragility with a sense of belonging in new situations by seeking her mother's reassurance in how she had overcome difficulties before and would be able to once again. Rosa concurred by expressing how her Latina mother would remind her of her potential and not allow obstacles to derail her.

Community of Peers

When discussing the importance of creating a supportive community of peers, Juan described how peers became an extension of family, reliable as each other's safety net. Oscar

discussed how his peer groups created a protective shield. Nervous about not fitting in or being overwhelmed by the social dynamics of a campus defined by conservative politics and fashionable attire, Oscar felt guarded by social relationships when he continued to wear Mexican soccer team jerseys on campus. Concerning Alejandro and Valentina, their private liberal arts campus created a setting for students comfortable in advocating for peer social causes. Alejandro further portrayed how he felt surrounded by a passionate peer group primed for fighting in defense of a range of social injustices. At the same time, both participants referenced the need to distinguish the camaraderie with fellow first generation peers when navigating the competitive pre-medicine academic pressures of their campus climate. Sara echoed the role of first generation peers in encouraging the drive for forward motion regardless of any setbacks.

Mentors and Advisors

As a source of resiliency, the narratives highlighted how mentors and advisors offered access to the missing tools needed in achieving college access and completion. In recognizing the attainment of a higher education degree as the product of a challenging journey, both Valentina and Sara acknowledged the value and necessity of mentorship and student group programs. Through honesty and practical advice, mentors and advisors prepared students like Valentina to strategize with a trusted companion how to manage through obstacles. For Sara, mentors or advisors served as examples of feminine empowerment and Latinas that require no explanation nor apologies for being who they are as a counter to Sara's pre-college cultural gender roles. Alejandro expanded his view of the support received by mentors to include the motivational aspect of these relationships. For him, interacting with Latino physicians in hospital venues placed a vision of his end goal in sight.

Identity

In addition to the above human resources of family, peers, and mentors, the Latino participants cited the significance of a sense of identity in developing resiliency. In the case of existing between the two worlds of Latino and non-Latino communities, Rosa characterized how a dual, blended, or hybrid identity was both isolating and empowering. Instead of focusing on the limitations of full acceptance in both cultural identities, Rosa stressed the ability to flow back and forth between the two cultures as a social translator skill. Instead of reflecting on the potential awkwardness, she embraced the power of being unique in each. For Oscar, the political tensions of the 2016 presidential elections led to his parents asking him to remove his Mexican flag from his dorm room walls. Instead, Oscar chose to castoff any stigma to his nationality, preferring to place decorative lights around his proudly displayed Mexican flag. In recognizing the fragility of identity in the midst of a volatile political climate towards immigrants, Oscar at first wrestled with how others perceived him post the presidential election but then chose to confront any tension regarding his Mexican identity with an openness about how his father ironically received immigration amnesty under the Republican Reagan administration. Additionally, Oscar relied on a self-deprecating humor, such as wearing a t-shirt referring to "no worries" concerning his legal immigration status.

Chapter IV Summary

This Findings chapter features the collection of narratives for the six study participants- Juan, Alejandro, Valentina, Oscar, Sara, and Rosa. Included in the process of recapping their experiences and reflections, the chapter identifies themes from the students' individual college access and campus adjustment experiences, organized through the non-deficit lens of cultural wealth capitals and campus environmental components. After comparing and contrasting the

individual narratives and their corresponding personal themes across the participants (Appendix G-L; Appendix M) and across the cultural wealth factors and environmental components (Appendix N-S; Appendix T), a holistic analysis synthesized the similarities and identified an overarching plot of themes in common among these participants. Among the prevailing themes for the overarching collective narratives are: family as a constant source of emotional strength, lessons, and expectations; mentors and advisors as sources of wisdom and transition resources; identity in regards to growing up Latino in the United States; peers as the product of supportive social relationships; and resiliency and its sources of focus (Figure 37). The implications of these overarching themes in this qualitative study are discussed further in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER V- SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Summary of Findings and Interpretation

Although qualitative studies do not produce findings which can be generalized, this study's findings encapsulate the lived experiences from a group of Latino college students who have provided reflection on their college access and campus transition experiences as seen from their orientation as Latino, first generation college attendees, from immigrant families, and low-income households. In addition to empowering their voices and acknowledging their individual stories, the summary of the findings highlights the significance of the commonalities which contribute to the portrayal of a communal story. In co-constructing a collective narrative grounded in the theoretical perspectives of Yosso's (2005) cultural wealth factors and Museus' (2014) culturally engaging environmental indicators, the search for discovery in participant experiences provides insight in addressing the previously identified research questions:

- What meaning do Latino college students give to the unique challenges and strengths inherent in the cultural factors which play a role in their college access stories?
- How do campus environmental components and institutional support sources empower Latino college students in the application of these cultural factors as a bridge in navigating the transition and adjustment to campus climates?

In considering this objective of inquiry, I as the researcher initiated the data analysis process with multiple readings of the interview transcripts, identifying rich, thick descriptions of experiences which served as the foundation for the individual narratives (Creswell, 2014; Jones

et al., 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). After fusing rich quotes from the different data collecting tools, I bracketed edits and inserted transitional words to create a seamless linear individual narrative. Participants were asked to confirm how these co-constructed narratives captured the essence of their stories through the validation process of member checking (Creswell, 2014; Jones et al., 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). This produced a collaborative storytelling product where the participants' voices and the researcher's retelling played a role in the co-construction of the narratives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Then, an exploratory, inductive analysis focused on a holistic interpretation overlapping thematic categories from the individual quotes with the elements of Yosso's wealth factors and campus components identifiable through Museus' culturally engaging environmental indicators (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Museus, 2014; Yosso, 2005). As the researcher, I blended an applicable understanding of the stories developed through narrative analysis with thematic analysis by identifying the commonalities across the participant experiences and the elements of the theoretical frameworks. This contributed to the development of a collective plot of communal themes which reflect an exploration and understanding of participant meaning in regards to the research questions (Hunter, 2010; Maple & Edwards, 2010; Schwartz et al., 2009). Based on this analysis, the following overarching themes highlight the meaning attached to prevalent cultural factors for these Latino participants that serve as wealth capitals and empower them by identifying how the application of these non-deficit factors and environmental components serves as a bridge in navigating the journey from college access to campus environments.

Family: Constant Source of Emotional Strength, Lessons, and Expectations

While familial limitations due to information gaps, social class obstacles, and parental education levels can present challenges, the participants in this study stressed the importance of

their parents and families as a constant source of encouragement, emotional support, personal lessons, and familial expectations during the college access and campus transition experiences. Recognizing how support can manifest in different ways, familial navigational knowledge limitations became secondary to the emotional strength and perseverance energy provided by Latino parents and families during moments of insecurity and displacement. Regarding key examples of parental guidance, the sacrifices, hardships, and personal struggles endured by these Latino parents serve as personal lessons, teachable moments, and the motivation for academic pursuits. Concerning familial expectations and these Latino participants, education serves as a foundational requirement for personal aspirations. As to familial interactions and collaborations, daily parental communication and weekends at home encapsulate the cultural norm for these Latino students, creating challenging moments of incompatibility with non-Latino roommates and scheduling conflicts with campus-based weekend involvement opportunities. In comparison to other parents who connect with campus communities through sporting activities or Greek life events, all of these Latino participants lamented the lack of institutional connections between their colleges and their Latino families, through the absence of Latino parent programing and the void of recognizing the role of Latino families on student success.

Mentors and Advisors: Sources of Wisdom and Transition Resources

For these Latino participants, mentors and advisors serve as surrogate sources of college access support and transition resources. They provide a shield during moments of vulnerability, needed general information, academic guidance, personal wisdom from experiences, and essential messages of resiliency. These relationships provide customized assistance to first generation, low income, minoritized students from the early days of applying to a higher education setting to the later objectives of launching career trajectories and approaching college

completion. These pre-campus and campus-based supportive adult relationships are found among both Latino and non-Latino faculty, staff and student affairs practitioners. Latino faculty and professionals on campus represent sources of aspiration, an extension of family, and a sense of inclusion by members of the collegiate community. Non-academic Latino employees similarly contribute as familial campus figures. However, they simultaneously highlight contradictions with ethnic stereotypes and the scarcity of Latino professionals among higher education personnel. Supportive mentoring relationships with non-Latino faculty and staff develop from common experiences and interests or are influenced by shared identities. While several of the participants mentioned the absence of Latino professionals, they appreciated how non-Latino professors similarly can nurture a developing sense of Latino identity, assist with collegiate aspirations, and contribute to the overall sense of belonging to the campus environment. As an example of the importance of key relationships for the college access and transition processes, participants stressed the benefits from establishing relationships with personnel in financial aid offices. With the potential to provide needed customized attention, an open line of communication, and troubleshooting solutions to the complexities of immigrant financial dynamics, such positive relationships among financial aid personnel, even at large public institutions, can represent a vital advocate on college campuses. More importantly, for one of these participants in particular, encounters with impersonal interaction or perceived indifference with financial aid personnel can have a significant negative impact on student experiences and evolve into a source of frustration and institutional obstacle.

Identity: Growing Up Latino in the United States

As their Latino, immigrant family's first generation raised in the United States, these participants' Latino identity is influenced by a sense of existing between two worlds defined by

language, culture, and residence. For them, this in-between existence can produce feelings of shock and moments of displacement. At times, it can be summarized as a membership in two worlds but, realistically, functioning as an outsider in both. From participant descriptions which range from isolating to empowering, this embodiment of existing between two worlds can occur between societal circles of Latinos and non-Latinos or between Latinos born in the United States and International Latinos. For these participants, curricular offerings in Latino history, politics, or cultural studies courses along with curricular assignments on identity development in humanities-based courses provide opportunities for identity reflection and greater self-understanding as a United States-raised Latino. Separately, dual-language command serves as an instrument of cultural identity and empowerment. For these participants, their Spanish and English bilingual skills represent a cultural understanding tool and an empowering communication skill. Their language versatility is enhanced further by the functionality of Spanglish as a coded manifestation of their blended identity, allowing for intimacy in communication and unique shared experiences. As an empowering communication skill, their fluent command of Spanish serves as a linguistic tool and a communication enhancer.

Peers: Supportive Social Relationships

Participants make meaning of supportive peer groups and social relationships from the college access and transition processes as an extension of family and a representation of community. For these Latino students, these social interactions develop as a result of background similarities or salient secondary identities. As to similar backgrounds, shared experiences contribute to peers becoming reliable resources for empathy, understanding, and fellowship. An example of engagement with others from similar background is demonstrated in the participants' deliberate choices of Latino roommates for their housing arrangements. As an alternative to

Greek life's brotherhood/sisterhood structure, the friendships developed from these residential pairings with Latino college roommates provide a refuge from the awkward and potentially continuous nature of explaining and defending cultural differences with non-minoritized peers on campus. As for salient secondary identities and these participants, other identifiers, in addition to their Latino ethnicity, play a role in the search for commonalities and the development of peer and mentoring relationships. Similar in their interactions to peer-based activities, identity-based programming and services offer opportunities for community building and peer bonding. For these participants, examples of such institutional resources are Latino affinity groups, Spanish-language organizations, peer mentorship programs, socio-economic support services, and first generation resources. These campus-based components provide networking opportunities, social circles, and relaxation venues on campus. Worth noting for these Latino participants, associations with Greek organizations were absent, due to such explanations as being cost-prohibitive, too time-consuming, and negative stereotyped-generalizations of Latino culture.

Resiliency: Sources of Focus

Resiliency provides a behavioral flexibility and a coping skill in navigating the stresses and challenges caused by logistical, practical, and informational obstacles to higher education accomplishments. For these Latino participants, personal sources of emotional and intellectual focus, such as family, a community of peers, mentors/advisors, and a sense of identity, contribute to their strength and association with resiliency. Regarding family, the participants made meaning from recalling the sacrifices of loved ones and the familial lessons from the hardships attributed to the immigrant experience. For them, such familial adversities contribute to the development of a 'thick skin' for protection, a fighter mentality when facing personal struggles, and familial reassurances as a counter to moments of vulnerability and fragility. As to peers,

participants make note of how a strong community of social relationships creates an extension of family, serving as a safety net or situational protective shield. For them, mentors and advisors provide access to needed tools for college access and achievement and serve as instructional or motivational models for higher education goals. And, in respect to a sense of identity, its significance with resiliency is illustrated in how a dual, blended, or hybrid identity facilitates community-based acceptance and addresses the potential isolation of existing between political and cultural dynamics of Latino and non-Latino enclaves.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Recognizing the transferability of this qualitative study's findings with a potential application to other Latino students navigating the college access and transition processes, this section represents the following key implications for consideration: the importance of salient secondary identities; recognizing family as a source of strength; the intentional selection of Latino roommates; the impact of both Latino and non-Latino advocates; the role of Latino studies courses and identity-based assignments; how financial aid offices affect experiences; and the benefits from K-16 collaboration.

Salient Secondary Identities

Each of the study's participants were selected purposely with the intentionality of creating a participant pool with shared identity commonalities. These required participant recruitment characteristics were: (1) self-identified as Latino/Hispanic; (2) from immigrant families, where parent(s) were born outside of the United States; (3) first generation college-bound attendees from their immediate families; (4) from low-income households; (5) at least 18 years old; (6) attendees of a higher education institution as a 2018-2019 sophomore-2018 recent college graduate; and (7) alumni of the same independent secondary institution. While

participant narratives included the identification of Latino/Hispanic as the primary identifier among these commonalities in their stories, the results highlighted a separate factor, namely the saliency of a separate secondary identity in their overall experiences. This unique secondary identity played an equivalent role in how they interacted with support dynamics, found mentors on campus, connected with the environment during the transition process, and traversed their overall higher education experiences. For these participants, salient secondary identities were: Juan-immigrant identity; Alejandro-first generation identity; Valentina-bilingual identity; Sara-gender identity; Oscar-nationality identity; and Rosa-social class identity. Even with two pairs of participants at the same institutions (Alejandro-Valentina and Oscar-Sara), these unique secondary identities were evident in their different experiences at their common institutions. Additionally, the identification of first generation college students served as a separate classification for college access and campus resources and as a collective supplemental umbrella identity.

"Social identities influence how people see themselves, how they interact with others, how they make decisions, and how they live their lives" (Patton et al., 2016, p. 67). For this study's participants, an underlying thread to their campus transition and adjustment was recognizing the vital impact of an overall positive, identity-embracing college experience.

In reflecting on the findings' collective narratives, the recognition of unique salient secondary identifiers for each of the Latino students underscores the improbable stripping apart of the intersectionality between multiple personal identities and its impact on overall experiences (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007). This recognizes the concurrence of differences with the application of the Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (RMMDI) by Elisa Abes, Susan Jones, and Marylu McEwen. The RMMDI model allows for contextual

influences such as peers, family, and cultural norms and a meaning-making filter to affect self-perceptions of multiple identities (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007). As support for viewing classifications with RMMDI's lens of fluidity, the identity question for these participants required not only a classification of the different components which contributed to the development of a meaning-making filter and a recognition of environmental influences, but also knowledge of saliency for the identity which most resonated at a particular moment or experience (Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007).

Regarding how higher education institutions provide access to identity-based student services, a key question becomes how the intersectionality and saliency of multiple identities are reflected in programming support options. Is it possible without this recognition of identity saliency and intersectionality, for the organizational structure of campus support services to force the dynamic of students needing to select a mono-identity classification instead of a multi-identity orientation? In recalling my own son's orientation at his West Coast university, the schedule for his first-year orientation programming included a single scheduled timeslot for different student-identity groups. How should he have decided between attending the Latino student welcome programming versus the Jewish student meet and greet luncheon? Institutions should consider how to encourage multiple layers of identity-based support, allowing for the fluidity of saliency as a result of developmental changes, personal choices, and the intersectionality of how each individual self-defines at particular moments. Instead of viewing layers of identity-based programming as a duplication of resources, such an overlapping of identity-supportive safety nets might be the solution to vulnerabilities and limitations with current institutional support networks.

Family as a Source of Strength

Throughout the different individual student narratives and across the collective participant stories, Latino families, and more specifically, Latino parents, represent a primary source of strength for Latino college students. Such a source of strength presents itself in these participants as examples of resiliency, persistence, and determination. However, for these participants, higher education's interpretations of Latino familial engagement potentially create shortcomings in both understanding and acknowledging the product of culturally different forms of parental involvement. Based on the stories shared by the participants, Latino familial involvement and engagement manifest differently from institutionally perceived parental norms. For these Latino participants, parental engagement does not appear in the form of logistical assistance with higher education procedures and applications or know-how information in how to navigate educational systems. In fact, many of these parents do not understand how to maneuver through the different mechanisms of college environments. Economic backgrounds, parental educational levels, and familial immigration experiences influence a range of challenges with varying familial perspectives on Latino parental efficacy. In comparison to the potential involvement of empowered parents among today's collegiate constituencies, the role of Latino parents could be misinterpreted as an intentional lack of involvement with an absence of parental "helicoptering" and micromanaging.

For these Latino participants, a lack of Latino parental involvement is not actually the case. Rather, it is a different kind of involvement. Evident in the narratives of these Latino students, involvement manifests as an emotional and grounding support serving as the essence of how these students cope and overcome the challenges and obstacles in navigating higher education institutions. For these participants, their Latino parents might lack the answers to

admissions protocols, curricular requirements, or financial aid strategic knowledge, but these parents overcome the barriers of these challenges by providing the needed energy, focus, and resourcefulness to nurture emotional resiliency tools for these Latino students. Latino familial advice can manifest in the form of encouragement and motivation instead of logistical or procedural guidance. As an example of the emotional bonds, familial obligations, and parental expectations, each of the study's participants, with the exception of the one commuter student, shared the norm of multiple daily telephone calls with their parents and families. Additionally, regardless of being first-year incoming students or soon to be graduates, each of the same residential participants highlighted the practice of returning home on weekends instead of remaining on campuses experiencing campus-based social interactions.

From an institutional support perspective, this understanding of Latino parental roles creates the question as to whether higher education is attentive to how the acquisition of such parental emotional strength through familial cultural norms occurs at the expense of other campus experiences and time commitments for Latino students adjusting to new campus climates. Recognizing student engagement and involvement as a valuable component for overall student success, the process of connecting new students with the campus community and encouraging their involvement with the overall campus environment is an established primary objective in providing transition support (Astin, 1984; Patton et al., 2016). Greater student involvement leads to greater opportunities for learning, personal growth, and student development (Astin, 1984; Patton et al., 2016). For these Latino participants, however, familial expectations and the absence of Latino parental campus connections impact their overall student experiences. In comparison to participant observations of how other non-Latino parents engage with campus communities through Greek organizations' parent programs, collegiate sporting

events, and official parent weekend activities, the absence of campus-based Latino parent programming and outreach on behalf of the institution contributes to a void in recognizing the role of Latino families on student success and a collective participant recognition of Latino parental disengagement from campus communities.

These Latino participants state explicitly how they lament and desire for their parents to be more connected to their higher educational settings. If Latino parents are a primary source of strength for resiliency, persistence, and determination, could an institution's disconnect to such a source of student strength impair the students' desired collegiate experiences? With a recognition of the different portrayals of parental involvement and engagement and how they can overlap with student involvement and engagement, higher education institutions need to better acknowledge the role of Latino parents, reconsidering how institutional divisions communicate to families, and connect with minoritized households through a cultural lens. Among considerations, does an institution successfully recognize these families as members of its community? Does an institution employ staff members who customize communication and programming? Does an institution provide opportunities for interaction with Latino community members? Does an institution demonstrate a willingness to customize parental orientation sessions to acknowledge the unique dynamics of different family communities? Can an institution's outreach also be structured as educational community service opportunities for families at a disadvantage with understanding the complexities of higher education? Most importantly, if a familial battle exists for some Latino parents where allowing their children to attend distant higher education settings could translate to surrendering their children to a disconnect from Latino familial value orientations, then how can campus settings ameliorate the potential sense of emotional sacrifices and guilt for its Latino students? Encapsulated best in the

narrative of one of the participants, overall, how does an institution acknowledge the importance of Latino families as an essential extension of its Latino college students?

Latino Roommates

By creating connections with faculty, staff, and fellow students from the same backgrounds and engaging through cultural identity group opportunities, Latino college students replicate the cultural value of *familismo* (Fischer, 2007; Gloria & Castellanos, 2012; Kiyama et al., 2015; Moreno & Sanchez Banuelos, 2013; Muñoz & Guardia, 2009). Defined as the importance of and loyalty to family, familismo is evident through family-type units in different settings, from peers in cultural groups forming campus-based brotherhoods/sisterhoods and ethnic identity groups to relationships with faculty and student affairs practitioners which allow Latino students opportunities to connect to their heritage, nationality paradigms, and salient identities while navigating the campus' non-Latino culture (Fischer, 2007; Gloria & Castellanos, 2012; Kiyama et al., 2015; Moreno & Sanchez Banuelos, 2013; Muñoz & Guardia, 2009).

Based on the study's narratives, an area in which the participants legitimized their need for a climate of familismo was demonstrated through the intentional selection of Latino roommates. Each of the participants, with the exception of the one commuter student, identified the importance of living with fellow Latino students. From relieving the awkwardness of constantly explaining what makes a Latino student different to the ability in finding comfort through shared experiences and commonalities, Latino roommates created a reliable extension of family which also contributed to some of the closest relationships on campus. Considering how all of the participants in this study chose not to participate in Greek life, their definitions of sisterhood and brotherhood were created through the family of roommates.

For these participants, combining familismo with their housing choices positively contributed to their campus transition and adjustment. Yet today, higher education institutions are debating residential housing arrangements with an increasing diversification of its student populations and the need to randomize roommate arrangements. While understanding the developmental benefits of exploring and experiencing cultural differences, for minoritized students such as these Latino students, they constantly are juggling the societal portrayal and the representation of the definition of different. If these participants had not been allowed to create familial spaces with Latino roommates, could their stories of successful transition and adjustment have produced alternative outcomes? These Latino participants shared how the continuous attempt to balance existing in two worlds was exhausting, and how at times, the continuous juggling and needing to explain cultural differences produced moments of apologizing for their Latino essence. If these Latino participants had not been able to overcome feelings of displacement with the intentional selection of Latino roommates, would they as marginalized students have struggled with finding spaces in campus climates where they did not exist as marginalized students?

Latino and Non-Latino Advocates

Campus advocates provide more than student support and opportunities for college access, transition and adjustment. For disadvantaged and marginalized students, practitioners and faculty who also serve as advocates can provide the needed 'safety nets' and model productive academic behaviors while establishing partnerships focused on student learning and navigating the complexities of higher education (Atkinson et al., 1994; Bensimon, 2007; Calaff, 2008; Ceballo, 2004; Cerezo et al., 2015; Ferguson, 2002; Fischer, 2007; Gardella, Candales & Ricardo-Rivera, 2005; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado et al., 2015; Kiyama et al., 2015;

Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Martinez, 2003; Moschetti et al., 2017; Museus, 2014; Museus & Quaye, 2009; Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dossett, 2010; Owen & Westlund, 2016; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Roderick et al, 2008; Santos & Reigadas, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003; Vela-Gude et al., 2009; Yosso, 2005). With a deeper engagement, the value of these meaningful and personal relationships with members of the campus community can further the potential for continued transitional support in overcoming obstacles, carrying the student from entry to exit challenges and contributing to the definition of student success.

Throughout the participant narratives, the many stakeholders who affected these students directly and played pivotal roles in their college access and campus environment transition became clear. Both Latino and non-Latino campus advocates served as valuable mentors throughout different campus environments. Latino faculty and professionals on campus represented sources of aspiration, an extension of family, and contributed to a sense of campus inclusion. Supportive mentoring relationships with non-Latino faculty and staff developed from common experiences and interests or were influenced by shared secondary identities.

Regarding such Latino campus advocates, the collective stories highlighted the current dearth of Latino role models among higher education professionals. Although Latinos are projected to represent 30% of the population by 2050, only 5% of graduate level students in 2012 were Latino (De Luca & Escoto, 2012), and in 2016 only 6.5% of doctoral recipients were Latino (Krupnick, 2016). While there has been an increase in the number of Latino professors and college instructors between 2003-2013, the ratio of Latino students to Latino faculty has worsened during that time period, from 80:1 to 90:1 (Taylor & Santiago, 2017). Of those Latino faculty, about a quarter are tenured or tenure-tracked (Taylor & Santiago, 2017). Regarding those Latino faculty working to obtain tenure, a separate factor to consider is how mentoring

Latino students and serving as advocates in matters of diversity could overextend their professional focus. Does a commitment to nurture Latino student relationships negatively impact time allocation toward researching and publishing? Do faculty evaluations today recognize the importance of mentoring marginalized student populations? Do assessment forms for tenure decision incentivize or take into consideration student advocacy and mentoring contributions? With such a disproportionately low representation of Latino faculty and student affairs practitioners on campuses, higher education needs to reconcile the complexities as to why these Latino participants would identify an environmental ethnic disconnect by only seeing themselves in cafeteria staff, construction workers, and groundskeepers on campuses instead of in campus professional offices and academic divisions.

Worth mentioning separately, the positive impact of supportive non-Latino advocates on participant experiences merits notice for its powerful and effective role in providing guidance, understanding, and direction. The examples discussed in the narratives illustrate how salient secondary identities, shared commonalities, and mutual experiences serve as catalysts in the development of these non-Latino campus mentoring relationships. Considering these non-Latino campus advocates and mentors equally could be professionally impacted by time constraints, higher education might need to consider how to balance traditional faculty evaluations with the evolving needs and college completion objectives of today's diverse student populations.

Latino Studies Courses and Identity-Based Assignments

When participants shared in their stories the complexity of existing between two cultural worlds created by biculturalism and bilingualism, it also was an acknowledgement of how, for these participants, adapting to higher education potentially requires an intentionality in publically or internally pulling away from a Latino student's ethnic enclave. Overcoming this disconnect

between worlds and adapting to college environments can cause, potentially, some aspects of the home culture to become incompatible with the nature of the higher education setting, and occur with a certain amount of guilt and pulling away from cultural dynamics and expectations (Boyte, 2014; Rendon et al., 2014; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson & Covarrubias, 2012).

The curricular offering of Latino studies courses and identity-based assignments for these participants countered the fragility and disenfranchisement of existing between two worlds with the recognition of the need to be exposed to identity and heritage exploration opportunities. Such identity-based courses or assignments allow for personal developmental reflection and insights into how non-Latino classmates perceive Latino culture. These identity-focused curricular decisions are compatible with student affairs philosophical statements which view the development of the student as a whole person, taking into consideration their cognitive and affective development and their physical, mental, and emotional growth (Evans & Reason, 2001). This student affairs perspective with a focus on the individual allows for the recognition, appreciation, and respect of individual differences (ACPA & NASPA, 1997). Additionally, these Latino studies courses and identity-based assignments contribute to a collaboration and cooperation between academic affairs and student affairs focused on student personal growth and student learning outcomes (ACPA & NASPA, 1998). Modeling these collaborative relationships through such courses is an essential piece in establishing a team mentality among the campus environment for when student challenges arise (ACPA & NASPA 1998). With these two components of higher education intertwined through the objective of student identity development, the buy-in from professors and departments would allow for partnered academic affairs and student affairs collaboration with the student centered in the middle of this partnership as their own agent for learning.

Financial Aid Offices

Evident from participants' personal narratives, a key campus component is the importance of access to information and the establishment of relationships in order to overcome obstacles. Such personal connections contribute to defining student success. Among these relationships with faculty and student affairs individuals, those rooted in financial aid offices are capable of making a difference between persistence and completion versus the abandonment of higher education aspirations (Owen & Westlund, 2016). For these Latino participants who rely on individuals for troubleshooting with fiscal documents or for an empathetic ear when confusion leads to frustration, such reliable financial aid staffers facilitate with not only finding the needed resources but also lessening the intimidating and vulnerable nature of fiscal paperwork and tax return complexities. Positive financial aid personnel relationships, even at large public institutions, can represent vital advocates on college campuses. If prospective students were to observe the everyday operations and individualized support between financial aid staffers and current students, they would be able to assess how an institution values serving the needs of students and humanizes the process for needed financial aid attention and assistance. As shared in the narratives, the opposite experiences would encapsulate financial aid offices as a primary source of frustration and an institutional obstacle for student retention, persistence, and completion. When I, as the researcher, visited the campuses of the participants as part of the campus data collecting, the students intentionally included a visit to financial aid offices. Collectively and individually, they stressed how without supportive financial aid offices, it would be a difficult challenge to attain a college degree as a first generation, low-income, Latino student. These supportive financial aid staffers become the frontline personnel in the cyclical triage needs of tuition payments and covering the costs for campus housing expenses. A

perceived indifference or overwhelming bureaucratic structure from an impersonal financial aid office would create a landscape of adversarial entities. With open-lines of communication and relationships which personalize interaction, financial aid personnel become ambassadors of favorable institutional messaging regarding student support agendas and student success objectives. As an affirmation of Nevitt Sanford's Theory of Challenge and Support, institutional challenges which students face need to match accessible institutional support (1969). The degree of support for a student should reflect the individual student needs and backgrounds (Sanford, 1969). As institutions consider campus climate areas with the greatest impact on student experiences, institutional assessment should consider highlighting personnel training and procedural components for providing customized financial aid services. What does it convey when financial aid offices are unreachable behind firewalls of automated telephone extensions which disallow interactive communication? If only one campus venue were to be evaluated by prospective students as a representation of a campus environment's commitment to student development and student success, would a financial aid office best represent its institution? If high turnover rates for campus staff negatively affect establishing campus relationships, how are financial aid offices committed to best supporting students in the long term with limited know-how resources and complex household documentation complications (Oseguera, Flores & Burciaga, 2010)?

K-16 Collaboration

As institutions consider changes with campus culture as they further prepare to receive increasingly more diverse student populations, institutional policies, procedures, and divisional programs which encourage K-16 collaboration and communication merit attention (Castleman et al., 2015; Fann et al., 2009; Kirst & Venezia, 2004; Lautz et al., 2005; Oliva, 2008; Tornatzky et

al., 2002; Venezia et al., 2003). While understanding the informational complexities created by legal privacy protections such as The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), continuous and seamless learning environments in functional areas of student support between secondary schools and higher education should be considered as an operational objective in how all students navigate the potentially intimidating structures of higher learning institutions. For these participants as marginalized students, the logistical gap defined by the summer months between the high school baccalaureate ceremony in May and the college first-year convocation event in August can feel like attempting to traverse an ocean in a rowboat without oars. As an educator, I can attest to how articulation and sequencing is a natural transition component and support strategy in K-12 educational levels. Yet, at some point, the levels between higher education and secondary schools became vulnerable to disconnection. Much of the work in secondary and post-secondary settings overlap, but with the absence of articulation, each setting is unaware of potentially vital information which could address the complexities and challenges of student success for underperforming student populations.

As seen through some of the participant stories and their relationships with advocates with a K-16 orientation, a commitment to a seamless academic transition between high schools and higher education settings through communication and shared information can serve a critical role for today's diverse student populations in obtaining college access and accomplishing student success. Without a commitment to collaborate, each system is vulnerable to duplicating systemic failures and, therefore, might be unable to replicate established protocols which have contributed to student accomplishments.

With a K-16 operational lens, the potential exists to tackle or ameliorate some of the challenges experienced by students through the creation of navigational bridges and overlapping

safety nets. Such departmental or divisional connections between secondary and higher learning realms could guide students from the entry point of outreach, admissions, and financial aid counseling to academic advising and career counseling. Customized K-16 programming could reflect targeted collaboration between college admissions and high school college counseling, through peer college mentors, advisors, and secondary schools with large populations of disadvantaged student groups or through creative use of resources such as alumni mentors and partnerships with professional associations as supplemental sources of information and guidance. With today's challenges with needing to improve college completion rates among growing diverse student populations, post-secondary educational institutions and secondary school systems operating in non-collaborative silos is counter-productive.

Suggestions for Further Study

In order to recommend variations of this study or an expansion of its structure for future research, first recalling the study's focus is useful. As the researcher, I purposely invited and selected these six Latino participants using the following criteria: (1) they self-identified as Latino/Hispanic; (2) were from immigrant families, where parent(s) were born outside of the United States; (3) were the first generation college-bound attendees from their immediate families; (4) came from low-income households; (5) were at least 18 years old; (6) were attendees of a higher education institution as a 2018-2019 sophomore-2018 recent college graduate; and (7) were alumni of the researcher's secondary institution. Additionally, all participants chose to attend higher education institutions either in their hometowns or less than a three hour drive from their families. With myself as the researcher having met all six of these participants years earlier as prospective K-12 applicants, their admissions selection and graduation from the same independent college preparatory school created additional

commonalities such as pre-secondary school intangibles which contributed to their selection, stellar academic performances, and curricular opportunities during their secondary years. Separately, a customized college counseling process with a ratio of less than 1:70 during their junior and senior year and an informal environment which encouraged post-graduation mentoring relationships between graduates and the teaching staff served as additional resources. As the researcher, I intentionally chose to create a group of participants with very similar resources at the onset of the college access and campus transition processes. The intention of the study was to analyze variations between their experiences which reflected how they bridged their cultural wealth capitals and current resources with the adjustment to different college environments.

Based on the results from this study pertaining to Latino cultural wealth factors and environmental components and their role with respect to Latino college access and campus transition experiences, variations and future research studies can focus on a range of modifications between two groupings, specifically: replicating inquiries on the Latino experiences but from different perspectives other than the students themselves; or replicating inquiries with variations on the dynamics of Latino student participants.

Future Studies from Perspectives Other than Latino Students

When considering future research studies with the same focus of the Latino student experience in navigating the college access and transition processes but with different perspectives other than Latino students themselves, possible study options are:

- Participants selected from higher education personnel and campus support venues from both student affairs and academic affairs offices or from community-based organizations which serve as mentors for Latino students who can share insights on the experiences;

- Participant pools selected from personnel in financial aid offices, admissions offices, or counseling/advising services as case studies focused on the experiences with Latino students and their complexities in adjusting to campus environments;
- Case studies focused on different types of institutions and their policies and programming impacting the experiences of Latino students on their campuses;
- Participants selected from Latino parents who can contribute cultural-based insights to the experiences of their children in navigating higher education settings.

Future Studies with Variations of Latino Students

When considering future studies with the same focus but with different variations of Latino students, possible study options are:

- Expanding on the geographic footprint of the Latino participant pool to instead focus on Latino students who chose institutions farther away from their homes resulting in limited familial visits during their transition and adjustment to their campus environments;
- A longitudinally-focused study where the inquiry follows a cohort of Latino students from the entry point of college access to the exit objective of college completion;
- A participant pool of Latino undocumented students whose experiences would reflect the complexities impacted by the political climate and documentation legal dynamics;
- A participant pool of Latino students created through snowball sampling so as to incorporate and contrast the different backgrounds and adjustment experiences of campus-created Latino peer relationships such as roommates.

Lastly, a replication of this study but without a prior relationship between the participants and the researcher could be conducted so as to contrast the richness and the sensitive nature of the data results.

Chapter V Summary

No umbrella category or classification of a typical Latino college student exists today. Who they are and how best to provide support and services which translate to student success represents the purpose for studies which aim to empower the personal messages and amplify the individual voices of all Latino students. In this dissertation, by highlighting the experiences of a group of Latino students from similar academic and socio-economic backgrounds, the many stakeholders who affected them directly and played pivotal roles in the college access and campus environment transition became clear in their personal narratives. First, institutional support networks for these students encompassed professionals horizontally from student affairs practitioners to tenured faculty, while simultaneously incorporating mentors and advisors who represented the vertical layers between higher education and secondary institutions (Nora, 2004). Equally clear among these Latino students was the need to be seen as individuals with academic potential and viable resources. Regardless of any limitation of tools due to background dynamics, cultural wealth capitals served as logistical equalizers. Lastly, for these Latino students, a human need of belonging as a member of the campus community (Strayhorn, 2012) and mattering through valued connections within campus environments was evident in their shared lived experiences (Schlossberg, 1989).

Throughout all the key elements in the stories of these Latino college student participants, the underlying thread was recognizing the vital impact of a positive, identity-embracing college experience. For me personally, considering I first met these participants as children, listening to and collaborating with their college access and campus transition narratives presented a rare opportunity for a Latino educator, student affairs practitioner, and administrator to reflect with

now-young adults on their insights and evaluation of the overriding components which guided their educational experiences.

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Appendix A: Participant Email Invitation

Dear _____,

I am writing to request your participation in a research study on Latino students and the college access and adjustment/transition process.
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may opt out of any questions in the research data collection process. All of your responses, reflections and narratives will be kept confidential.
As a participant in this study, you will be asked to participate in a two-part sit-down interview and a follow-up campus tour walking interview.

Your participation would involve 3 steps:

- 1A. Responses to a set of initial questions on cultural and familial factors with the use of selecting memes
  (approximately 30 minutes)

- 1B. A follow-up individual semi-structured interview using the selected memes as story prompts to discuss cultural and familial factors and their role in the college admissions and access process
  (approximately 60 minutes)

- 2. A campus-based tour walking interview where the participant-led itinerary will highlight and develop stories regarding venues, services, and individuals which represent key environmental components and institutional support sources which define the role of an institution's campus climate towards minoritized students
  (approximately 60 minutes)

In appreciation for your time, a donation will be made to your secondary school's financial aid program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY, OR TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS STUDY, PLEASE CONTACT:

Linda Zamora Epstein
Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
College of Education
University of Georgia
linda.zamoraepstein@uga.edu

Appendix B: Participant Information Handout

Department of Counseling & Human Development Services
University of Georgia

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION HANDOUT FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY ON LATINO STUDENTS AND THE COLLEGE ACCESS AND CAMPUS ADJUSTMENT / TRANSITION PROCESS

As a participant in this research study, you will be asked to participate in:
a two-part sit-down interview and a follow-up campus tour walking interview.

This participation would involve 3 steps between September and November 2018:

1a. *Responses to a set of initial questions on cultural and familial factors with the use of selecting memes. (approx. 30 minutes)*

1b. *A follow-up semi-structured interview using the selected memes as story prompts to discuss cultural and familial factors and their role in the college admissions and access process. (approx. 60 minutes)*

2. *A campus tour walking interview where the participant-led itinerary will highlight and develop stories regarding key environmental components which define the role of an institution's campus climate for minoritized students. (approx. 60-90 minutes)*

The data collection process will provide rich data for a research study focused on the following purpose and research questions:

Purpose:
The purpose of this transformative study, grounded in critical/cultural epistemology, is to highlight the experiences of Latino students and empower their voices as they reflect on their college admissions process and adjustment to their college campus environments. Understanding the meaning of cultural/familial factors in the college admissions application process and the impact of campus environments on student success for first generation college-bound, low-income Latino students will help secondary school counselors, higher education and student affairs administrators, and community leaders and mentors better understand the perspectives and experiences of these students and how best to facilitate in the college access and transition process.

Research Questions

What meaning do Latino college students give to the unique challenges and strengths inherent in the cultural factors which play a role in their college access stories through experiences with the college admissions process?

?

How do campus environmental components and institutional support sources empower Latino college students in the application of these cultural factors as a bridge in navigating the transition and adjustment to college campus climates?

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY
Linda Zamora Epstein
Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
College of Education
University of Georgia
linda.zamoraepstein@uga.edu

Appendix C: Participant Written Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
CONSENT FORM
Latino Student Voices: From College Access to Campus Environments

Researcher's Statement
I am asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher/co-investigator if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

Principal Investigator: Dr. Merrily Dunn
Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
706.255.8691
merrily@uga.edu

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to highlight the experiences of Latino students and empower their voices as they reflect on their college access process and adjustment to their college campus environments. Understanding the meaning of cultural/familial factors in the college admissions application process and the impact of campus environments on student success for first generation college-bound, low-income Latino students will help secondary school counselors, higher education student affairs administrators, community leaders, and mentors better understand the experiences of these students and how best to facilitate in the college access and transition process.

Eligibility Criteria
1. Latino- self identified through ethnic identity;
2. From immigrant families- where parent(s) or primary guardian(s) were born outside the United States;
3. First generation college attendees- prior generation from their immediate family (parents and grandparents) did not attend college in the United States;
4. From non-affluent households-identified by having received at least a 75% need-based financial aid tuition awards at their previous private secondary school;
5. At least 18 years old;
6. Have attended a higher education institution, as a 2018-2019 first year student through a 2018 recent graduate; and
7. Graduate from the same secondary institution as other participants.

Study Procedures
If you agree to participate, this study would involve 3 data collection steps between August and November 2018:

TWO-PART CULTURAL FACTORS INTERVIEW

This two-part interview incorporates the use of internet-based memes as a conversational stimulus followed-up with a semi-structured sit-down interview.

- The first part will serve as a visual icebreaker storytelling exercise where participants respond to a set of six initial questions on cultural and familial factors with the use of selecting memes.
  (approx. 30 minutes)
- The follow-up sit-down interview will use the selected memes as a storytelling tool to facilitate in generating student narratives regarding their experiences with Latino cultural/familial factors and their role in the college admissions and access process.
  (approx. 60 minutes)

CAMPUS-BASED TOUR WALKING INTERVIEW

This walking interview targets campus climate factors in the collegiate environmental setting which impact the transition and adjustment to campus environments.

- After the completion of the sit-down interview focused on cultural factors, participants will receive a campus map and accompanying instructions to identify and create a visual itinerary of the places, service venues, and location of campus-based individuals representing environmental components and support features which have impacted (positively or negatively) in addressing the needs of diverse student populations.
  (approx. 30 minutes)
- This visual itinerary will be used to guide a participant-led, unstructured walking tour interview, highlighting and developing stories regarding key environmental components which define the role of an institution's campus climate for minoritized students. It will be concluded with a summarizing brief discussion, allowing for unstructured researcher questions of interest generated during the walking tour. The duration of the walking interview will be determined by the participant's listing of key venues, services, and individuals.
  (approx. 60-90 minutes)

Audio/Video Recording

Both the sit-down interview and the walking interview will be audio recorded for the purpose of creating interview transcriptions. Once transcribed and verified for accuracy, the recordings will be deleted. The transcripts will be stored by the researcher as part of the data collection period until the successful completion of the study, at which time the transcripts will be deleted.

Risks and Discomforts

- Maintaining participant confidentiality may present a challenge during the walking interview. A discussion beforehand between the researcher and participant will allow the participant to identify how they would be most comfortable in addressing the presence of the researcher during the walking tour interview. The participant, at the time of this pre-conversation, can choose to instead conduct the environment-based interview in a sit-down format if they prefer, thereby maintaining confidentiality. Similarly, the presence of participant concerns, such as physical limitations or the occurrence of inclement weather,

can be addressed with shifting the prescribed walking interview route and its accompanying storytelling component to a sit-down interview format.

Benefits

A better understanding of these Latino student experiences from their own perspectives can provide valuable insight and opportunities for transformative initiatives which could benefit Latino students collectively.

- Understanding the meaning of cultural/familial factors in the college admissions application process and the impact of campus environments on student success for first generation college-bound, low-income Latino students will help secondary school counselors, higher education student affairs administrators, community leaders and mentors better understand the perspectives and experiences of these students and how best to facilitate in the college access and transition process.
- Understanding a campus' climate through a Latino student perspective can draw attention to institutional formal and hidden messages which provide a glimpse into a Latino students' experiences as members of an educational setting.

Incentives for Participation

There is no monetary incentive for participation in this study. In appreciation of participant's role in the study, a donation will be made to their secondary school's financial aid program.

Privacy/Confidentiality

As a method to ensure participant confidentiality, I will use pseudonyms, or false names for all participants during the data collection. Similarly, pseudonyms will conceal the description of their secondary school setting and the names and descriptors of their current higher education institutions, venues, and personnel. A master key document with participant information will be stored separately in a different cloud storage location from the data collection tools, data analysis, and reporting of this study. The researcher will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law. The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

Because part of data collected for the study will take place over the internet, every reasonable effort has been taken to ensure the effective use of available technology; however, confidentiality during online communication cannot be guaranteed.

Taking Part is Voluntary

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information.

Questions?
The principal investigator conducting this study is Dr. Merrily Dunn, a professor at the University of Georgia and the co-investigator is Linda Zamora Epstein, a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Dr. Merrily Dunn at merrily@uga.edu or 706.255.8691. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:
To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, that you are at least 18 years old at the time of the study, and have had all of your questions answered.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Appendix D: Part 1 of Cultural Factors Sit-down Interview

Six Question Prompts and the Selection of Memes as a Form of Visual Storytelling

Thank you again for your willingness to volunteer in this study on the experiences and reflections of Latino students on the college admissions process and adjustment to campus environments. We are looking forward to sharing your stories on your reflection and experiences with the topic. The following prompt of six questions is designed to help you think about your personal stories and Latino cultural factors which they encapsulate. Select an internet-based meme as a visual display of your experience for each of the six questions. Respond to each question below by cutting and pasting the selected meme underneath the corresponding question. Then, reply to the researcher's email with the complete list of questions and their corresponding selected memes. Participants are asked to submit their completed return emails within three (3) days of receipt.

Please do not feel stressed about selecting the 'right' meme. This is your story. The reasons for selecting each meme will be explained by the participants at the beginning of the individual sit-down interviews as a visual storytelling icebreaker in narrating personal reflections and perspectives on the research topic. Participants may take advantage of the section below each meme to make notations to help you explain later why you chose that particular meme.

Please do not hesitate to contact with any questions or clarifications. I can be reached at the below email address.

Thank you again for participating in this study!

Linda
linda.zamoraepstein@uga.edu

The following six questions are based on Yosso's (2005) Model of Community Wealth Capitals which identifies the following six types of cultural capital which can be applied to identify sources of individual empowerment for Latino students: *Aspirational capital; Linguistic capital; Familial capital; Social capital; Navigational capital; Resistance capital.*

FOR EACH OF THESE SIX QUESTIONS, SELECT AN INTERNET-BASED MEME WHICH ENCAPSULATES YOUR PERSONAL STORY AS A LATINO, FIRST-GENERATION IMMIGRANT AND COLLEGE-BOUND MEMBER, FROM A WORKING CLASS-LOWER INCOME LATINO HOUSEHOLD.

Question 1: Aspirational Capital

The following selected meme encapsulates the higher education academic hopes and dreams which motivate you as a Latino student and represent your families' communicated goals and academic objectives for you despite any barriers or challenges……

INSERT MEME HERE

Notes on why you selected the above meme.

_____
_____
_____

Question 2: Linguistic Capital

The following selected meme encapsulates the language and communication skills and expression which you bring with you to a higher education setting as a result of your dual language background……

INSERT MEME HERE

Notes on why you selected the above meme.

_____
_____
_____

Question 3: Familial Capital

The following selected meme encapsulates the personal human resources you receive from your family which provide the sources of wisdom, support and values you bring with you as tools to a higher education setting ……

INSERT MEME HERE

Notes on why you selected the above meme.

_____
_____
_____

Question 4: Social Capital

The following selected meme encapsulates peer and social contacts which you utilize for strategies and guidance in gaining access to college and other academic-based endeavors……

INSERT MEME HERE

Notes on why you selected the above meme.

_____

_____

_____

Question 5: Navigational Capital

The following selected meme encapsulates the skills and abilities which you rely on to maneuver within unsupportive, or hostile institutional environments such as unfamiliar higher education settings……

INSERT MEME HERE

Notes on why you selected the above meme.

_____

_____

_____

Question 6: Resistance Capital

The following selected meme encapsulates your ability to advocate and secure your rights to education, collective equity and social justice as you prepare for societal challenges ……

INSERT MEME HERE

Notes on why you selected the above meme.

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E: Part 2 of Cultural Factors Sit-down Interview

Questions and Semi-Structured Interview Protocol
Name of Study:
Latino student voices: From college access to campus environments

Time of Interview:
Date:
Interviewee:

INTRODUCTION (15 minutes)
Thank you - Thank you for your participation in this interview.
Introduce Interviewer- My name is Linda Zamora Epstein and I am a doctoral candidate pursuing my degree in Student Affairs Leadership in the School of Education at the University of Georgia.
Purpose – The purpose of today's interview is: (1) to discuss your selected memes and their corresponding six questions from the emailed icebreaker storytelling prompt which you completed and submitted via email about ten days ago; and (2) the sharing of your personal stories during the college access process which correlate with these cultural factors.
Data Collection Procedure- I will conduct individual cultural factors sit-down interviews with study participants that should last no longer than 60 minutes each. The interview can be stopped at any time and rescheduled for a later date within the data collection timeframe.
Key Points - Before we begin, there are a few key points of interest we will discuss:
Research Purpose- The purpose of this transformative study, grounded in critical/cultural epistemology, is to highlight the reflections and experiences of Latino postsecondary students and empower their voices as they reflect on the college access process and their transition and adjustment to the college campus environment. Understanding the meaning of cultural/familial factors in the college admissions application process and the meaning of environmental elements in the campus climate transition/adjustment process for first generation college-bound, working class/lower-income Latino students will help secondary school counselors, higher education student affairs administrators, community leaders, and mentors better understand the experiences of these students and how to best facilitate in the college access and transition process.
Informed Consent- This is a reminder of and oral confirmation of the informed consent you have given to be a participant of this research study.

1. As mentioned in your signed informed consent form, your participation in this research study is voluntary and you have the right to discontinue at any time. During this interview, you can choose to leave or not answer any questions asked about your experiences should you feel uncomfortable at any time during our interview.
2. Your identity will not be linked to your responses. Pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant and only I will have access to the key code that contains the pseudonym/name match of all participants. This will protect your anonymity. All data collected will remain confidential.
3. Your signed informed consent form also mentioned your interview sessions will be audio-recorded. After your interview is complete, the audio-recordings will be sent to a company that specializes in the transcription of audio-recordings. They will never disclose audio-recordings to anyone outside of the company. No

identifiable information like your name or personal characteristics will appear in the transcript for this interview or the findings in this study. Only your pseudonym will be used in the transcript. Once I verify the transcript is accurate, I will inform the company to delete the recordings.

4. Do you have any questions about informed consent?

Verbal verification: If you have no questions about your informed consent, please confirm that you have read your informed consent form, have received a copy for your records and have given permission to proceed with this audio-recorded interview.

Ground Rules for Interview

1. You are being interviewed because you have something of value to share about your reflection and experiences as a Latino student and the college access process.
2. Your perspective is valued.
3. There are no correct or incorrect responses so feel free to discuss your perspective as you see fit.
4. Be open and honest.
5. Please stop me if you need me to clarify a question or if you need to pause.
6. Please inform me, if during this interview, you need to stop and reschedule to continue at a later date.

Do you have any questions at this time?
OK, let's get started!

ICEBREAKER MEMES and FOLLOW-UP Open- Questions (60 minutes/ 10 minutes for each original prompt and follow-up)

*Please explain the story behind why you chose each of selected six memes in relation to the six icebreaker questions.

1. Meme #1 and Question #1

1. The following selected meme encapsulates the higher education academic hopes and dreams which motivate you as a Latino student and represent your families' communicated goals and academic objectives for you despite any barriers or challenges……

A. Share a story which conveys your institution's assumptions (positive or negative) about your academic hopes and dreams?

B. Open customized follow-up question based on the participant's narrative.

2. Meme #2 and Question #2

2. The following selected meme encapsulates the language and communication skills and expression which you bring with you to a higher education setting as a result of your dual language background……

A. Share a story which conveys how your institution acknowledges (or does not) your language and communication strengths?

B. Open customized follow-up question based on the participant's narrative.

3. Meme #3 and Question #3

3. The following selected meme encapsulates the personal human resources you receive from your family which provide the sources of wisdom, support and values you bring with you as tools to a higher education setting ……
A. Share a story which conveys how your institution includes and celebrates (or does not) the importance of your family?
B. Open customized follow-up question based on the participant's narrative.

4. Meme #4 and Question #4
4. The following selected meme encapsulates peer and social contacts which you utilize for strategies and guidance in gaining access to college and other academic-based endeavors……
A. Share a story which conveys how your institution includes (or does not) these peer and social support networks as tools in the transition to a higher education setting?
B. Open customized follow-up question based on the participant's narrative.

5. Meme #5 and Question #5
5. The following selected meme encapsulates the skills and abilities which you rely on to maneuver within unsupportive, or hostile institutional environments such as unfamiliar higher education settings……
A. Share a story which encapsulates the skills and abilities which you rely on to maneuver your institution in order to accomplish student success and a sense of belonging?
B. Open customized follow-up question based on the participant's narrative.

6. Meme #6 and Question #6
6. The following selected meme encapsulates your ability to advocate and secure your rights to education, collective equity and social justice as you prepare for societal challenges ……
A. Share a story which conveys how your institution supports (or does not) your commitment to your home community?
B. Open customized follow-up question based on the participant's narrative.

WRAP-UP (5 MINUTES)

- Remember everything you discussed during this interview will be protected as mentioned during the beginning of this interview.
- If you have any questions or concerns, my e-mail address is linda.zamoraepstein@uga.edu
- The next step in your participation with this interview will be to review the transcript from your interview session by reading over the dialogue to determine if there are any errors that need to be corrected. This will ensure the data collected is accurate which adds credibility to the study. I will forward the transcript to you. Please forward any notes or corrections with the transcript.
- Do you have any questions or anything you would like to add?
- Thank you for participating in this interview.

Appendix F: Campus-Based Walking Tour Interview Protocol and Instructions

Thank you again for your willingness to volunteer in this study on the experiences and reflections of Latino students on the college admissions process and adjustment to campus environments. I am looking forward to sharing your stories on your reflection and experiences with the topic.

1. Attached is a campus map of your institution.

- Please identify and create a visual itinerary of the places, service venues, and location of campus-based individuals representing environmental components and support features which impacted your transition and adjustment (positively or negatively) to campus environments. Include the location of personnel/campus divisions/campus programming which impacted (positively or negatively) in addressing your needs as part of diverse student populations.
  (approx. 30 minutes)
- Please do not feel stressed about selecting the 'right' locations. This is your story. The reasons for selecting each destination for the walking tour will be explained by you during the sharing of stories associated with these locations/venues along the walking tour interview route.

2. Please submit the campus map with the visual itinerary via email within seven (7) days of receipt.

- At this time, we will arrange the date for the walking interview at the participant's convenience.
- We will also discuss confidentiality. Maintaining participant confidentiality may present a challenge during the walking interview. A discussion beforehand between the researcher and participant will allow the participant to identify how they would be most comfortable in addressing the presence of the researcher during the walking tour interview. The participant, at the time of this pre-conversation, can choose to instead conduct the environment-based interview in a sit-down format if they prefer, thereby maintaining confidentiality.
- Similarly, the presence of participant concerns, such as physical limitations or the occurrence of inclement weather, can be addressed with shifting the prescribed walking interview route and its accompanying storytelling component to a sit-down interview format.

3. On the day of the walking interview, this visual itinerary will be used to guide a participant-led, unstructured walking tour interview.

- The walking tour route will highlight and develop stories regarding key environmental components which define the role of an institution's campus climate for minoritized students.

- The walking interview will be concluded with a summarizing brief discussion, allowing for unstructured researcher questions of interest generated during the walking tour. The duration of the walking interview will be determined by the participant's listing of key venues, services, and individuals (approximately 60-90 minutes).
- An audio recording device will be used throughout the walking interview.

Do not hesitate to contact with any questions or clarifications. I can be reached at the below email address.

Thank you again for participating in this study!

Linda
linda.zamoraepstein@uga.edu

CAMPUS MAP ATTACHMENT

Appendix G: Juan's Memes

Appendix G

Meme Icebreaker – Sorted by Participant Participant: Juan
Yosso's Wealth Capitals

1. Aspirational Wealth Capital

2. Linguistic Wealth Capital

3. Familial Wealth Capital

4. Social Wealth Capital

5. Navigational Wealth Capital

6. Resistance Wealth Capital

Appendix H: Alejandro's Memes

Appendix H

Meme Icebreaker – Sorted by Participant Participant: Alejandro
Yosso's Wealth Capitals

1. Aspirational Cultural Wealth Capital

2. Linguistic Cultural Wealth Capital

3. Familial Cultural Wealth Capital

4. Social Cultural Wealth Capital

5. Navigational Cultural Wealth Capital

6. Resistance Cultural Wealth Capital

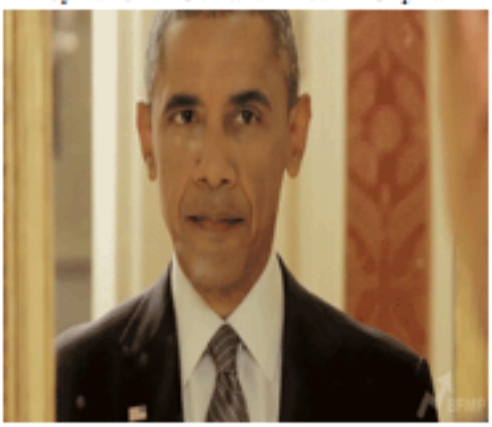
Appendix I: Valentina's Memes

Appendix I

Meme Icebreaker – Sorted by Participant Yosso's Wealth Capitals

Participant: Valentina

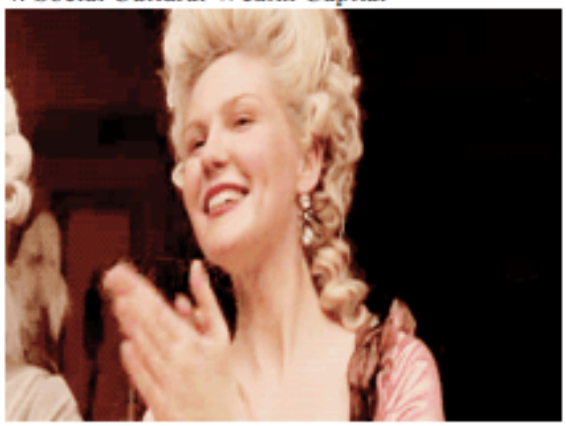
1. Aspirational Cultural Wealth Capital



2. Linguistic Cultural Wealth Capital

3. Familial Cultural Wealth Capital

4. Social Cultural Wealth Capital



5. Navigational Cultural Wealth Capital

6. Resistance Cultural Wealth Capital

Appendix J: Oscar's Memes

Appendix J

Meme Icebreaker – Sorted by Participant Participant: Oscar
Yosso's Wealth Capitals

1. Aspirational Cultural Wealth Capital

2. Linguistic Cultural Wealth Capital

3. Familial Cultural Wealth Capital

4. Social Cultural Wealth Capital

5. Navigational Cultural Wealth Capital

6. Resistance Cultural Wealth Capital

Appendix K: Sara's Memes

Appendix K

Meme Icebreaker – Sorted by Participant Yosso's Wealth Capitals

Participant: Sara

1. Aspirational Cultural Wealth Capital

2. Linguistic Cultural Wealth Capital

3. Familial Cultural Wealth Capital

4. Social Cultural Wealth Capital

5. Navigational Cultural Wealth Capital

6. Resistance Cultural Wealth Capital

Appendix L: Rosa's Memes

Appendix L

Meme Icebreaker – Sorted by Participant Participant: Rosa
Yosso's Wealth Capitals

1. Aspirational Cultural Wealth Capital

2. Linguistic Cultural Wealth Capital

3. Familial Cultural Wealth Capital

4. Social Cultural Wealth Capital

5. Navigational Cultural Wealth Capital

6. Resistance Cultural Wealth Capital

Appendix M: Individual Participant Themes
Per Wealth Capitals and Environmental Components

Themes from Juan's Story on College Access and Campus Environments

ASPIRATIONAL CAPITAL
Message of Education as a Foundational Requirement

LINGUISTIC CAPITAL
Language as a Tool to Cultural Understanding

FAMILIAL CAPITAL
The Role of Latino Parents as Emotional Support

SOCIAL CAPITAL
The Challenges in Existing Between Two Worlds
The Search for Bicultural Peers

NAVIGATIONAL CAPITAL
Lessons from the Hardships Endured by Immigrant Parents

RESISTANCE CAPITAL
The Importance of Community as Extension of Family

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENTS
Financial Aid Services
Housing Community
Identity Groups and Diversity Programming
Latino Staff as Extension of Family

Themes from Alejandro's Story on College Access and Campus Environments

ASPIRATIONAL CAPITAL
Serving as the Family's Educational Role Model

LINGUISTIC CAPITAL
Language Options for Communication

FAMILIAL CAPITAL
Family as the Source of Strength in Accomplishing Communal Achievements

SOCIAL CAPITAL
Social Networking with Others from Similar Backgrounds

NAVIGATIONAL CAPITAL
Resiliency and a Fighter Mentality

RESISTANCE CAPITAL
Remembering the Sacrifices of Loved Ones

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENTS
First Generation Peers as Family on Campus
Financial Aid Office
Coping with Academic Stress
Work Study Providing Access to Hispanic Professional Mentors

Themes from Valentina's Story on College Access and Campus Environments

ASPIRATIONAL CAPITAL
Idolized Professions

LINGUISTIC CAPITAL
Bilingual Empowerment and its Positive Impact on Sense of Identity

FAMILIAL CAPITAL
The Resourcefulness of Latino Families as a Source of Emotional Strength

SOCIAL CAPITAL
Latino Peer Encouragement

NAVIGATIONAL CAPITAL
Overcoming the Vulnerability in Asking for Guidance

RESISTANCE CAPITAL
Resiliency in Facing Challenges

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENTS
Spanish Language Student Organization and Community
Peer Mentoring Program/ Campus Mentors
Latino Studies Courses/ Supportive Non-Latino Faculty
Venues to Counter Emotional/Logistical Stressors

Themes from Oscar's Story on College Access and Campus Environments

ASPIRATIONAL CAPITAL
Educational Plan Driven by Family Dreams and Sacrifices
LINGUISTIC CAPITAL
Language as a Display of Cultural Identity and Pride
FAMILIAL CAPITAL
The Reliability and Limitation of Constant Family Presence

SOCIAL CAPITAL
Latino Peers as an Extension of Family
NAVIGATIONAL CAPITAL
Social Relationships and Peer Groups as Protective Shields

RESISTANCE CAPITAL
Facing Social Injustices and Political Tension with Humor and Openness
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENTS
Supportive Financial Aid Offices
Identity-based Courses and the Interaction with Latino Professors
Latino Staff on Campus
Latino Social Events and Peer Group Cultural Activities
2016 Political Climate

Themes from Sara's Story on College Access and Campus Environments
ASPIRATIONAL CAPITAL
Family Expectations Defining Personal Goals

LINGUISTIC CAPITAL
Functionality of a Unique Blended Language Identity

FAMILIAL CAPITAL
Personal Space Versus Familial/Cultural Roles

SOCIAL CAPITAL
Females as a Primary Source of Support

NAVIGATIONAL CAPITAL
Overcoming Obstacles Through Focus on Resilient Forward Motion/Momentum

RESISTANCE CAPITAL
Feminine Empowerment/Latina Understanding

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENTS
Roommates and Cultural Differences
Latino Student Group for Community Building and Peer Bonding
Latino Studies Courses and Supportive Non-Latino Professors
Study Abroad Programs for Personal Growth

Themes from Rosa's Story on College Access and Campus Environments
ASPIRATIONAL CAPITAL
Motivation from Parental Hardships

LINGUISTIC CAPITAL
Bilingual Public Speaking Skills and Bicultural Interaction with the Arts

FAMILIAL CAPITAL
Cultural and Religious Values and Childhood Messages

SOCIAL CAPITAL
Overcoming Societal Disinterest or Disconnect by Seeking Individuals from Similar Socioeconomic Dynamics

NAVIGATIONAL CAPITAL
Existing In-between Latino and Non-Latino Communities

RESISTANCE CAPITAL
Persistence as a Familial Expectation

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENTS
The Complexities with Public Transportation Logistics
Community Gathering Areas
Challenges with Impersonal Financial Aid Offices

Appendix N: Aspirational Wealth Capital Memes

Appendix N

Meme Icebreaker – Sorted by CWC Yosso's Wealth Capitals — Aspirational Cultural Wealth Capital

1. Juan

2. Alejandro

3. Valentina

4. Oscar

5. Sara

6. Rosa

Appendix O: Linguistic Wealth Capital Memes

Appendix O

Meme Icebreaker – Sorted by CWC Yosso's Wealth Capitals	Linguistic Wealth Capital
1. Juan 	2. Alejandro 
3. Valentina 	4. Oscar 
5. Sara 	6. Rosa 

Appendix P: Familial Wealth Capital Memes

Appendix P

Meme Icebreaker – Sorted by CWC Yosso's Wealth Capitals — Familial Wealth Capital

1. Juan

2. Alejandro

3. Valentina

4. Oscar

5. Sara

6. Rosa

Appendix Q: Social Wealth Capital Memes

Appendix Q

Meme Icebreaker – Sorted by CWC Yosso's Wealth Capitals

Social Wealth Capital

1. Juan

2. Alejandro

3. Valentina

4. Oscar

5. Sara

6. Rosa

Appendix R: Navigational Wealth Capital Memes

Appendix R

Meme Icebreaker – Sorted by CWC Yosso's Wealth Capitals

Navigational Wealth Capital

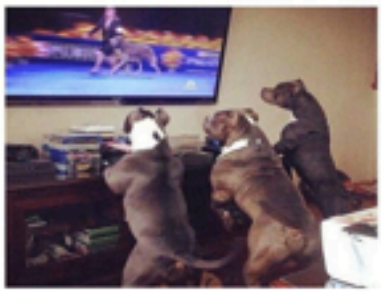
1. Juan

children of immigrants are so protective of their parents and are so nurturing. our parents get ridiculed for their accents or lack of English, get talked down to at their jobs, get side eyed in white spaces. I'll fight anyone on behalf of my parents.

7/18/18, 4:35 PM

2. Alejandro

When one of your homies out the hood makes it 😂



🙌🙌🙌😂😂

3. Valentina

when your lecturer asks if you have any questions

4. Oscar

5. Sara

6. Rosa

Appendix S: Resistance Wealth Capital Memes

Appendix S

Meme Icebreaker – Sorted by CWC Yosso's Wealth Capitals

Resistance Cultural Wealth Capital

1. Juan

2. Alejandro

3. Valentina

4. Oscar

5. Sara

6. Rosa

Appendix T: Themes in Common Across Wealth Capitals and Environmental Components

Aspirational Capital

Familial Educational Messages and Expectations
Family Sacrifices and Hardships
Surrogate/Secondary Sources of Aspirational Support

Linguistic Capital

Language as an Instrument of Cultural Identity and Pride
Bilingualism as an Empowering Communication Skill
Language as Cultural Understanding Tool
Biculturalism Portrayed Through the Arts

Familial Capital

Family as Constant Presence/Source of Strength, Support, Values and Messages
Daily Phone Calls Home/Weekends at Home
Lack of Institutional Connection with Latino Family

Social Capital

Peer Groups and Peer Support from Similar Background and/or Salient Identities
Existing Between Two Worlds
Latino & Non-Latino Supportive Campus Staff

Navigational Capital

Sources of Resiliency
Mentors as Navigational Tools

Resistance Capital

Sources of Focus
Mentors as Sources of Resistance Strength

Environmental Components

Supportive Financial Aid Services
Peer Identity Groups, Spaces, Events, Programs, Mentoring, and Community
Latino Studies Courses and Latino/Non-Latino Supportive Instructors
Housing and Latino Roommates
Overcoming Competitive and Politically Tense Environments

Appendix U: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

Tucker Hall, Room 212
310 E. Campus Rd.
Athens, Georgia 30602
TEL. 706-542-3199 | FAX 706-542-5638
IRB@uga.edu
http://research.uga.edu/hso/irb/

Office of Research
Institutional Review Board

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

July 31, 2018

Dear Merrily Dunn:

On 7/31/2018, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Latino Student Voices: From College Access to Reflections on Campus Climate
Investigator:	Merrily Dunn
Co-Investigator	Linda Epstein
IRB ID:	STUDY00006326
Funding:	None
Review Category	Exempt, FLEX (7)

The IRB approved the protocol from 7/31/2018 to 7/30/2023.

This is an exempt study, so it's not necessary to submit a modification for minor changes to study procedure. You can keep us informed of changes that don't affect the study scope by using the Add Comment feature.

Please close this study when it is complete.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

William Westbrook, IRB Analyst
University of Georgia