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Community Cultural Wealth Within New Latinx Destinations:
Mexican American Narratives of College Completion in Oregon

By
Anthony Villarreal

Claremont Graduate University and San Diego State University

2022

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Approval of the Dissertation Committee

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Anthony Villarreal as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

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Abstract

Community Cultural Wealth Within New Latinx Destinations:
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By

Anthony Villarreal

Claremont Graduate University and San Diego State University: 2022

With dramatic population growth and redistribution, Latinx are becoming increasingly dispersed across the country, particularly in states that previously had very few Latinx residents. Considering this phenomenon, there is a need for educational research that does not attempt to operate under the same assumptions within regions where the Latinx presence is long-standing, but rather carefully examines educational outcomes and experiences within the new Latinx destination context. This study explores the college access experiences of 20 Mexican American students within Oregon through a Community Cultural Wealth framework (Yosso, 2005). Participants were recruited through a purposeful sampling approach, accompanied with snowball sampling, that was used to locate rich key informants (Patton, 2014). Oregon is situated as an important new Latinx destination with a unique history and context that continues to be influenced by regional sociopolitical and economic factors that need to be considered to understand the educational trajectories of Mexican American students. Furthermore, Community Cultural Wealth is an asset-based perspective that allowed for the identification of participants' strengths across two broad categories in this study: foundational forms of capital and driving forms of capital. Foundational forms of capital included aspirational, familial, and linguistic capital, which grounded students' educational pursuits in their family, community, and linguistic

histories. Navigational, social, and resistance forms of capital drove participants through their successful trajectories. Most significant was how participants' priorities in their personal, educational, and professional journeys were rooted in family and community legacies and inspired them to reinvest in their communities through advocacy and cultivation of the next generation of Latinx students and community leaders. Foundational forms of capital included capital related to participants' self-motivation, family support, and multilingual resources. The driving forms of capital refer to those that influenced both college search and choice, instrumental college pathway educational programs, such as Science and Math Investigative Learning Experiences (SMILE) and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), and how participants found ways to give back to their home communities both personally and through their professions. Their reflections provide unique insights for enacting culturally affirming/sustaining practices and policies, not just in Oregon, but in other new destination contexts, which may be unprepared to serve rapidly growing Latinx populations.

Keywords: Latinx, new Latinx destinations, Community Cultural Wealth, immigrant students, college access

Dedication

To my parents Mariano & Alejandrina Villarreal who have always been and continue to be my greatest teachers in life. To my sisters Bricieda and Sandy Villarreal, my best friends, who are the greatest gifts my parents have given me.

Para mis padres Mariano & Alejandrina Villarreal quienes han sido y serán siempre mis maestros en mi vida. Para mis hermanas Bricieda and Sandy Villarreal mis mejores amigos quienes son los mayores regalos que me han dado mis padres.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iv
Dedication.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures.....	xii
Chapter 1: Purpose and Introduction to the Study.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Theoretical Perspectives	4
Cultural & Social Capital.....	4
Funds of Knowledge	6
Community Cultural Wealth (CCW)	8
Purpose of the Study.....	12
Research Questions.....	12
Significance of the Study.....	12
Definition of Terms	14
Organization of the Dissertation.....	15
Chapter 2: Review of Literature	17
Situating Oregon as a New Latinx Destination	17
Latinx College Access	24
Education Pathways within New Latinx Destinations.....	26
Immigrant Students.....	29
Latinx Immigrants of Indigenous Backgrounds	30
Undocumented Students	31
Latinx College Transitions and Experiences	33
Conclusions Drawn from the Literature	35
Chapter 3: Methodology	37
Study Purpose & Research Questions	37
Epistemological & Theoretical Perspectives	37
Positionality	39
Research Design and Methodology	40
Data Collection	40
Data Sources	41
Analyses.....	43
Conclusions Guiding the Research.....	44
Chapter 4: Findings.....	45
Research Participants.....	45
Setting the Context & Defining New Latino Destinations	47
Context Narratives	48

Qualitative Connections to Community Cultural Wealth.....	51
Foundational Forms of Capital: Aspirational, Familial, & Linguistic.....	54
Driving Capitals: Navigational, Social & Resistance	74
Summary of Findings.....	94
Chapter 5: Conclusions, Discussion, and Implications.....	97
Revisiting the Study Purpose & Framing	97
Conclusion & Discussion.....	98
Connecting Forms of Foundational Capital.....	98
Connecting Driving Forms of Capital.....	100
Implications for the Field.....	104
Practice and Policy Recommendations	104
Recommendations for Future Research	107
References.....	110
Appendix.....	132
Interview Protocol.....	132

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Questionnaire Data	48
Table 2. Participation in K-12 and College Programs	82

List of Figures

Figure 1. Chronology of Latinos in Oregon.....	19
Figure 2. Percentage of Latinx Population Growth 1980-2020.....	22
Figure 3. Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) Themes/Subthemes	53

Chapter 1: Purpose and Introduction to the Study

Statement of the Problem

The rapid growth of the Latinx population in the United States—referring to people and communities associated with the ethnic labels Latina, Latino, Latin@, and Hispanic—is well documented as the nation’s second-fastest-growing racial or ethnic group (Flores, 2017). In 2019, there were 60.6 million Latinx in the United States compared to 2010 when there were 50.7 million Latinx, according to the Pew Research Center (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020). Furthermore, the U.S. Census population projections expect the number of Latinx in the nation to nearly double by 2060 (Vespa et al., 2018). Latinx who were once concentrated in a handful of “established” Latinx settlement states such as California, Texas, and Florida, are now becoming increasingly dispersed across the country, in states that previously had very few Latinx residents (Fry, 2011). Educational research in the 1990’s began to focus on the “New Latino/a/x Diaspora” as encompassing areas where “where increasing numbers of Latinx (many immigrants and some from elsewhere in the United States) are settling both temporarily and permanently in areas of the United States that have not traditionally been home to Latinx” (Murillo et al., 2002, p. 1). Examples include areas within the Pacific Northwest (PNW), such as Oregon, where the Latinx population increased 144% between 1990 and 2000 and 64% between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census 2000, 2010). This growth continues to expand to other regions of the United States with Latinx populations growing faster in the South than in any other U.S. region between 2010-2019, which outpaced national Latinx population growth during this same time period (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020). The dispersion across the nation is more widely seen at the state level, with North Dakota (129%), South Dakota (66%), Montana (50%), and New Hampshire (48%) ranking amongst those with the fastest Latinx growth 2010-2019, yet all of these states had

Latinx populations of less than 80,000 in 2019 (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020). While the overall nation-wide growth of Latinx populations has slowed since the onset of the Great Recession in 2007 (Stepler & Lopez, 2016), Latinx numbers in the PNW have remained strong within Oregon where 22 of the 36 counties experienced high Latinx growth (>25% increases). In fact, two Oregon counties are among the 3.6% of counties across the nation that have 100,000 or more Latino residents (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020). The legacy of rapid growth and sustained Latinx presence over the last four decades marks Oregon as a key new Latinx destination (NLD) to examine educational outcomes to inform efforts in states who more recently gained NLD status. The dramatic Latinx population growth and redistribution have reshaped the racial and ethnic landscape in new destination communities and emphasizes the importance of understanding Latinx educational attainment, which will be essential to sustain economic and social well-being in the United States. (Kelly et al., Schneider, & Carey, 2010) .

Latinx in the United States are the youngest of the nation's largest racial/ethnic groups with a median age of 30 in 2018, which compare to Whites who had the highest median age of 44, followed by Asians and African Americans with a median age of 37 and 34, respectively; furthermore, the mode or the most common age for Whites was 58, which is a staggering comparison to 11 for Hispanics, 27 for blacks and 29 for Asians (Schaeffer, 2019). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2020), the average high school graduation rate for Hispanic students (81%) was eight percentage points lower than White students (89%), and the dropout rate for Latinx (8%) 16-24 years old was nearly double that of their White (4.2%) peers in 2017–18. Unfortunately, the equity gap is even more exacerbated when disaggregating dropout rates across U.S.-born and foreign-born Latinx with a staggering 14.6% dropout rate for Latinx born outside of the United States (Hussar et al., 2020). In 2018, Latinx continued to lag behind in

college enrollment with a lower enrollment rate for 18-24-year-old Latinx (36%) in comparison to their Asian (59%), White (42%), and Black (37%) counterparts (Hussar et al., 2020).

While college enrollment increased in 2018 among 18-24-year-old Latinx, up 14 percentage points from 2000 (Hussar et al., 2020), this has not kept pace with the overall population growth of the Latinx. Empirical findings indicate that contrary to national trends, demographic growth is negatively associated with changes in college enrollment equity for Latinx students over the last decade (Hatch et al., 2016). Thus, despite this increase, Latinx remain underrepresented in college (Gay, 2014) and less likely to complete associates and bachelor's degrees (Krogstad, 2016). For example, as of 2019, only 21% of Latinx ages 25 to 29 have a bachelor's degree or higher in comparison to 71% of Asian Americans, 45% of Whites , and 29% of African Americans in the same age group (Hussar et al., 2020). Disaggregating across country of origin, the Pew Hispanic Research Center (2020) found that recent Latinx immigrants ages 25 and older from Mexico had some of the lowest rates (17%) for those that hold at least a bachelor's degree in 2018, only surpassing those from Honduras (12%), El Salvador (8%), and Guatemala (6%) and were well below the countries of origin with the highest rates, which included Venezuela (65%), Argentina (64%), and Columbia (41%). These data emphasize the need to acknowledge the heterogeneity among Latinx sub-groups and the need to avoid treating Latinx as a homogenous group in higher education research (Arellano, 2020). Thus, it is important to further understand how the contexts within new Latinx destinations impact college access and attainment for Latinx and specifically for Mexican American students.

The historical underrepresentation of Latinx in college stems from the structural inequities in K-12 education (2005). Latinx often attend segregated school settings that are overcrowded and under-resourced (Yosso & Solórzano, 2006). Undertrained and under-

resourced teachers work under racialized structures, policies, and practices that assume students come with a variety of deficits rather than acknowledging and nurturing students' cultural advantages (Valenzuela, 2010). Negative dominant narratives can impact Latinx educational trajectories as students internalize these narratives as explanations for their level of academic achievement rather than attributing challenges and lack of access to institutional and structural barriers (Nunez, 2017). Therefore, it is important to counter these narratives and the societal and educational structures that perpetuate deficit perceptions which have real consequences for Latinx and other marginalized student populations.

Theoretical Perspectives

It is important to first understand the foundational perspectives that are key to understanding the evolution of critical frameworks that challenge the deficit discourse related to explaining the attainment and college access gaps among marginalized populations, such as Latinx. The concepts of cultural and social capital are useful for understanding the inequities that we see in our educational system.

Cultural & Social Capital

Cultural capital. Cultural capital refers to the resources that are inherited through an individual's social position. Bourdieu (1986) conceptualized cultural capital as the attitudes, expectations, and experiences that help define a person's class and are often inherited from one's family (McDonough, 1998). Bourdieu (1986) highlighted how stratified social systems are maintained through the value placed on knowledge of the "dominant classes" (i.e. upper and middle classes) in a hierarchical society (Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Yosso, 2005) and can perpetuate social inequities (Reay, 2004). Consequently, the cultural capital of the dominant class is the capital that is highly valued, rewarded, and perpetuated through educational systems

(DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985). Furthermore, Isserles & Dalmage (2000) situated cultural capital in the context of power and described the set of tools and skills developed through experience. Consequently, individuals who cultivate the type of cultural capital that is valued are presumably more likely to succeed in navigating these structures that are shaped by dominant norms (McDonough, 1998). Cultural capital theory suggests that students from marginalized communities (i.e., students of color, low-income, and first-generation college going students) have historically been denied access to college, as students from these groups have unequal access to the information, experiences, and important college preparatory resources (Welton & Martinez, 2014).

Social capital. Social capital is related to the concept of cultural capital and corresponds to the advantages gained through social and personal networks that are often developed in schools and the home (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998). Social capital is based on relationships and networks that can be converted into socially valued resources and opportunities (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). In the U.S, the uncertainty of social classes requires social capital to advance from working class to middle- or upper-class levels of income. Thus, social hierarchies are reinforced through social capital and perpetuated in our educational systems. In contrast to their peers whose socioeconomic and racial background align with the dominant society, low-income and minority students may possess low-levels of the type of stable networks, recognition, and institutionalized relationships that provide access to resources necessary for accessing and navigating higher education systems (Lin, 1999). In considering college access, positive peers, mentors, high school counselors, external community organizations, and college outreach programs are vital social networks that assist students along the pipeline to college (Welton & Martinez, 2014).

Critique of cultural & social capital. The concepts of cultural and social capital are useful for understanding the inequities that we see in our educational system. However, these concepts are often used to perpetuate deficit framing about Latinx first generation college students. The focus is often on achievement gaps in comparing Latinx first generation college students to their White and more affluent counterparts, without acknowledging the asset-based strengths these students possess, having made considerable gains in surpassing their parents' educational achievement and attainment (Welton & Martinez, 2014). This can be especially true within the context of new Latinx destinations, because these contexts continue to be unprepared to serve the rapidly growing Latinx populations (Carrillo, 2016a, 2016b; Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2015; Wortham et al., 2002) therefore, they default to deficit approaches to serving these populations. I seek to apply a critical approach to my research by distinguishing the power dynamics that put Latinx in disadvantaged scenarios, acknowledging historic trends of inequality, and emphasizing the need to focus on new Latinx destinations. Aligned with this critical approach are the frameworks of funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005), which I will employ to better understand avenues for successfully college navigation within new Latinx destinations.

Funds of Knowledge

Gonzalez and Moll (2002) note that people are capable and knowledgeable, emphasizing that their life experiences are the bases of that knowledge. The funds of knowledge framework has been used by researchers to record and document the wealth of information existing in low-income Mexican households. The concept was introduced by anthropologists Vélez-Ibañez and Greenberg (1992) as part of their household investigation of working-class Mexican families in the southwestern states of the United States. Funds of knowledge was expanded upon and

defined by Moll and colleagues (1992) as: “these historically-accumulated and culturally-developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (p. 133). Within the context of capital, funds of knowledge provide an in depth understanding of the process of translating it into different forms of capital within educational settings. This has contributed to teachers connecting school curriculum and the lives of students (Basu & Calabrese Barton, 2007; Mercado, 2005). It has also been used to challenge the deficit model that has characterized the assumptions of low-income children and families (Olmedo, 1997). Teachers need to engage in critical thinking and in constructive dialogues that challenge their misperceptions about minoritized students. Engaging teachers in working with families can extend their understandings of and connection to the communities of color and provide them with the tools to become effective teachers (Riojas-Cortez & Flores, 2009).

Social and cultural capital both can be helpful in enriching funds of knowledge and provide a lens that can help link broader contextual issues such as the power in the classroom, social class, and household dynamics. Lubienski (2003) notes that when discussing diversity, we are combining cultural capital and funds of knowledge, which acknowledges that everyone has cultural capital and avoids the educational associations of inequities and economic injustice. Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) advocate that both funds of knowledge and social capital play a significant role in minoritized students’ educational access. One of the greatest strengths of funds of knowledge is that it emphasizes and values the resources rooted in students, families, and communities and contradicts the deficit perspective (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011). Yosso (2005) coined the concept of Community Cultural Wealth, which incorporates funds of knowledge, to criticize and re-articulate Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital in ways that are more comprehensive of the cultural experiences of communities of color. This study will focus

on and utilize Community Cultural Wealth as its theoretical lens, because it extends the concepts of funds of knowledge and is most relevant in its application to college access processes.

Community Cultural Wealth (CCW)

Community Cultural Wealth is a useful framework that describes “an array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression” (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). Community Cultural Wealth stems from Critical Race Theory (CRT) which posits that race and racism are central to understanding how the U.S. society functions (Bell, 1992). This perspective can be used to examine the role of race and racism in implicitly and explicitly impacting social structures, practices and discourses, particularly in education (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). CRT can be used to explore how racism continues to permeate postsecondary institutions and collegiate interactions for students of color, including Latinx students (Yosso et al., 2009).

Community Cultural Wealth expands upon notions of social and cultural capital and critiques the assumption that People of Color lack the social and cultural capital required for educational attainment and social mobility (Yosso, 2005). This deficit-based perspective often permeates our school assumptions and leads to a focus on structuring ways to help so-called disadvantaged students whose race and class background has left them lacking necessary knowledge, social skills, abilities, and cultural capital (Valenzuela, 2010). The notions of CRT and Community Cultural Wealth recognize the limitations of discourses that omit and thereby silence the multiple experiences of People of Color (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). These perspectives acknowledge and legitimize the experiential knowledge of People of Color (Yosso, 2005) and inform research that draws explicitly on these lived experiences through storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuentos, testimonios, chronicles and narratives

(Bell, 1992, Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). Yosso (2005) argues that cultural capital strengthens the Latinx community's resiliency and resistance to racism and other forms of oppression.

Yosso (2005) theorized six forms of capital found in communities of color, which have the potential to support students along their educational pathways: 1) aspirational, 2) linguistic, 3) navigational, 4) resistant, 5) social, and 6) familial. It is important to understand that Yosso (2005) did not conceptualize these forms of capital as mutually exclusive and static, but rather argued that Community Cultural Wealth is fostered through a dynamic process whereby one form of capital may be sustained by other forms of capital. Aspirational capital is parental transmission and maintenance of dreams and goals "beyond present circumstances" throughout the children's educational journeys, despite real or perceived barriers and often without resources (Yosso & Solórzano, 2005, p.). Latinx parents maintain consistently high aspirations for their children's future and migration to new destinations is often driven by the aspirations and desires for new avenues toward upward mobility in education, employment, and living (citations). The aspiration of Latinx in new destinations is often driven by the desire for a better life for future generations, and education is one avenue for achieving this goal. Despite having limited knowledge, the resources, or experience of how to reach these goals, Latinx parents often communicate aspirational capital through sharing of their own life stories about overcoming adversity and provide support and advice emphasizing the importance of education and how perseverance can result in a better life. Through these stories, parents serve as role models and instill a sense of hopefulness with their children, which, in turn, foster their children's aspirations.

Linguistic capital is the intellectual and social skills learned through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style. Bilingual Latinx youth can serve as language brokers for their families and build “connections between racialized cultural history and language” (Yosso, 2005, p. 132). These real-world communication skills are intellectual and social tools that are transferable and aid in navigating social settings across languages and linguistics styles. Within new Latinx destinations, students experience predominantly White educational contexts which often did not value their emerging bilingual skills. Students may experience negative, deficit perceptions, microaggressions, and overt discrimination about their language skills. While many are susceptible to accepting these deficit perceptions, there is great significance within their bilingualism and their Spanish and English skills allow them to communicate, form relationships, and navigate multiple contexts and communities that require different forms of language expression.

Navigational capital is the set of social-psychological skills to maneuver through social institutions and dominant structures; it also acknowledges individual agency within structural constraints. Latinx students’ navigational strategies to circumvent the system can be informed by a consciousness of resistance (Yosso, 2005). These navigational skills are valuable as students utilize them to progress through our educational systems. Navigational capital comes from Latinx families’ immigrant legacies in navigating new environments or countries. The legacy of resistance among their families and communities can also inform students’ navigational strategies in moving through stratified educational systems.

Resistant capital is the awareness, knowledge, and skills developed in opposition to oppression and inequality. Resistant capital acknowledges agency or willingness to challenge and transform inequalities and is grounded in the legacy of resistance to subordination exhibited

by Communities of Color (Yosso, 2005). Students' families may face many challenges within new Latinx destinations and through these experiences of oppression, they gain useful skills. Parents can foster resistance capital in their children by encouraging them to continue in their educational pathways despite the barriers they may encounter.

According to Liou and colleagues (2009), social capital emphasizes the networks of people and community resources that can help students and families draw instrumental and social support to navigate social structures. Familial capital is the cultural knowledge cultivated within families and nurtured through kinship networks that carry a sense of cultural identity, community history, memory, and cultural intuition (Yosso, 2005). Familial capital recognizes the experiential knowledge of Latinx as legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Through dialogue, narratives, biographies, storytelling, and family history, we are able to identify and challenge deficit labels and promotes asset-based recognition of historical familial strength and the acknowledgment of resilience through appropriate positioning.

The accumulation of various forms of capital can provide the springboard for Latinx to navigate through educational systems within new Latinx destinations. Latinx navigating educational systems within new Latinx destinations are encountering systems that are unprepared to serve their new and growing communities (Carrillo, 2016a, 2016b; Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2015; Wortham et al., 2002). To inform educational practice, focusing on different forms of capital can help affirm the values inherent within Latinx communities and develop better strategies for accessing and completing postsecondary education. Schools need to recognize the power dynamics that may continue to perpetuate inequities for new immigrant communities.

Thus, Community Cultural Wealth gives us different constructs of cultural value, knowledge, and wealth to reframe deficit discourses.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Mexican American students' college access within Oregon, a key new Latinx destination, through a Community Cultural Wealth lens.

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed:

1. What role did Community Cultural Wealth play in Mexican American college students' pursuits of higher education within new Latinx destinations?
2. What K-12 programs, individuals, resources focused on college access did students and families utilize?
 - a. In what ways (if any) did these validate or invalidate students' Community Cultural Wealth?
3. What college programs, individuals, and/or resources promoted students' higher education pursuits?
 - a. In what ways (if any) did these validate or invalidate students' Community Cultural Wealth?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the important contributions to the literature and the critical theoretical perspectives that enhance the field's understanding of Latinx college access and navigation within new Latinx destinations. First, scholars have called for disaggregation and acknowledgement of the difference across Latinx subgroups and the diverse educational

experiences of Latinx students, because the majority of educational research treats Latinx as a homogenous group (Arellano, 2020; Rendon et al., 2000). Grouping students under a larger aggregate race/ethnicity minimizes the understanding of within-group differences among Latinx. This study answers the call for a more nuanced understanding of Latinx college access through a targeted examination of Mexican American students' unique immigration histories within new Latinx destination communities in Oregon.

Second, there is a dearth of scholarship that employs a critical perspective that focuses on critiquing the structures in our society that distribute power and how individuals experience and negotiate these structures. This study addresses this gap through Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Community Cultural Wealth (CCW). CRT scholars "redefined racism as not the act of individuals, but the larger, systemic, structural conventions and customs that uphold and sustain oppressive group relationships, status, income, and educational attainment" (Taylor, 2009, p. 4). Thus, CRT in education is used to explore how oppression continues to perpetuate P-20 institutions and educational interactions for Latinx students. CRT is useful when examining students of color as scholars often employ "storytelling, narrative, autobiography, and parable as a way to expose and challenge social constructions of race, in addition to refuting notions of merit and colorblindness" (Taylor, 2009, p. 8). This critical lens allows for the centralization of participants' experiences to examine structural barriers and sources of support within new Latinx destinations. Furthermore, CRT provides a framework to interrogate the power dynamics within new Latinx destinations that maintain historic trends of inequality and put Latinx in disadvantaged scenarios. This study attempts to account for historical community, racial, and economic contexts and the Latinx legacy of resistance to provide new insights to the literature on new Latinx destinations.

The cultural assets and forms of capital identified in Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) deconstruct the hypothesis that Latinx lack social and cultural capital and reframe our understanding of Mexican American student's college pathways through anti-deficit perspectives. The framework of community culture wealth acknowledges the abilities, skills, and contacts obtained by communities of color. Yosso (2005) contends that these forms of capital are informed by a consciousness of resistance and the legacy of resistance to subordination exhibited by communities of color. Therefore, the unique historical contexts of new Latinx destinations cannot be divorced from the contemporary context of Latinx educational experiences within these areas. More research is needed to give voice to the stories of students and their families' historical legacy of resilience and to learn from the agency that they exhibit in actively resisting deficit notions that others attempt to impose on their educational journeys.

Lastly, aligned with anti-deficit perspectives, the research design seeks to fill an existing literature gap by highlighting the stories of students who successfully navigated postsecondary access and attained college degrees within new Latinx destinations. This provides a unique opportunity to learn from the journeys of successful students to illuminate how these forms of capital served as strengths in accessing college, transitioning into postsecondary education, and persisting through completion. Furthermore, by asking participants to reflect on both their K-12 and higher education experiences, this study has potential implications for P-20 education practice, policy, and future research within new Latinx destinations.

Definition of Terms

Here, I describe specific terms and their definitions that I use within the context of this study. *Latinx*: There is significant dispute regarding the terms Latinx/o/a/@ and Hispanic, and many groups that belong to this population often reject the interchangeability of these terms,

considering that “Hispanic” is often imposed on communities and is too broad of a term (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). Thus, Latinx is utilized, specifically ending the term with an “x” in place of Latina/o for gender-inclusivity purposes (Ramirez & Blay, 2016). The terms Hispanic and/or Latino/a will only be used when directly citing researchers and quoting participants. New Latinx destinations are defined as areas where the Latinx population rapidly increased in recent decades (Murillo et al., 2002) The study site, the state of Oregon, is among the 22 states that meet this criterion, with increases of 144% between 1990 and 2000 and 64% between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census 2000, 2010).

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is comprised of five chapters. Chapter One consists of an introduction and broad overview of my inquiry, the current state of the problem, and the need to better understand the educational experiences of students in new Latinx destinations. Chapter Two outlines the prior literature in six areas: a) Latinx College Access b) Education Pathways within New Latinx Destinations, c) Immigrant Students, d) Latinx Immigrants of Indigenous Backgrounds, e) Undocumented Students, and f) Latinx College Experiences and Supports. This chapter also defines the Latinx contextual history in Oregon and identifies and elaborated on the theoretical foundations and concepts that underlie the framing of this dissertation study. Chapter Three presents the research design, along with the rationale for the methodology, my positionality, and establishes the research context within the state of Oregon. The chapter also details the study's methodology including data collection and procedures, data coding, analysis procedures performed in NVIVO, and how the Community Cultural Wealth theoretical framework was integrated into the research design to guide the study analysis. Chapter Four presents the key findings with a contextual description of the environments within new Latinx destinations and

details the themes and subthemes that emerged from this research in connection to the Community Cultural Wealth framework. Chapter Five concludes with conclusions and discussions situated within the knowledge base of literature and theory, along with implications for practitioners, policy makers, and researchers.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This dissertation focuses on the college access experiences of Mexican American students' within new Latinx destinations. This chapter begins by situating Oregon as a new Latinx destination and provides the history of Latinx populations and the important connection to educational outcomes for Latinx students. Next, six areas of educational research are highlighted: a) Latinx College Access, b) Education Pathways within New Latinx Destinations, c) Immigrant Students, d) Latinx Immigrants of Indigenous Backgrounds, e) Undocumented Students, and f) Latinx College Experiences and Supports. I specifically focus on scholarship that utilized asset-based perspectives such as Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005).

Situating Oregon as a New Latinx Destination

Initiated in the 1990s, the study of education within the New Latinx Diaspora (NLD) called for researchers to undertake comparative analyses of the overlaps and dissimilarities in educational policies and experiences among regions where the Latinx presence is long-standing and places with more recently emerging Latinx populations. Therefore, this work acknowledged that educational research cannot operate under the same assumptions as in the nine states that have been deemed as the traditional Latino diaspora—Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, and Texas (Hamann et al., 2002). This study focuses on the changing educational context of Oregon, specifically for students with Mexican origins. For those of Mexican descent, states that border Mexico (i.e., California, New Mexico, and Texas) dominated historical patterns of regional concentration (Saenz, 1991); yet, in more recent decades, they have dispersed and grown rapidly in new Latinx destinations, such as Oregon where the majority of Latinx are of Mexican descent (Ruffenach, 2016). The study's designation of Oregon as a new Latinx destination, primarily acknowledges the recent

exponential growth of Latinx in the state to uniquely account for how these demographic shifts influence educational outcomes. Acknowledging this era of unprecedented growth does not erase the rich history of Latinos in the Pacific Northwest and Oregon specifically.

Latinx have a long history of immigration, movement, and settlement in the Pacific Northwest. Spanish explorations in Oregon are marked as early as 1541 and until 1846, the Mexican border extended to just south of what is now the City of Ashland in Southern Oregon (Garcia, 2016). Thus, it is important to note that there was trade, commerce, and people moving back and forth through this area well before the early 1800s, which is the common starting point for much of the documented history of Mexicans/Latinx in Oregon. Stephen and Mendoza (2008) provided a chronology of this early history in Figure 1, including the presence of Mexican mule packers who moved supplies (Gamboa, 1991) and those who came to tend to livestock as vaqueros (Clayton et al., 2001) in the 1800s. Thus, Oregon was historically connected to Mexico and the integrated political economy of the region through the labor influences of the mining and ranching industries, but also the developing transportation corridors based on railroad lines (Stephen, 2013). The 1900s brought several waves of Latino immigrants. The 1917 Immigration Act allowed temporary workers to be contracted seasonally to work in the United States and this allowed Mexican labor recruitment during World War I and was extended until 1922 (Stephen & Mendoza, 2008). This would serve as the blueprint for the Bracero program enacted later during World War II.

CHRONOLOGY

1850s	During the Rogue River war, Mexican mule packers supply the Second Regiment of the Oregon Mounted Volunteers, who are fighting against Oregon's native peoples.
1869	Mexican vaqueros bring up large herds of cattle driven up from California to eastern Oregon.
1910	Oregon ranks seventh among states outside the Southwest with Mexican-born residents working on farms and railroads.
1910–1925	Mexican workers are contracted to work on sugar beet farms and on railroads in Portland, eastern Oregon, and other parts of the state. The first Mexican families settle permanently in the state.
1942–1947	More than 15,000 bracero workers come to the state to work in agriculture. Other bracero workers are employed on railroads.
1950s	Mexican and Mexican American families settle in several areas of the state.
1955	The Portland Catholic Archdiocese establishes a Migrant Ministry to serve the Mexican migrant population. In 1964 the name of the organization changes to Oregon Friends of Migrants.
1964	The first Fiesta Mexicana is held by the Mexican committee in Woodburn, Oregon. The Valley Migrant is formed. It is later known as Oregon Rural Opportunities (ORO), and it ends in 1979.
1971	The Commission for Chicano Affairs is established. In 1983 the group is renamed Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs.
1973	Colegio César Chávez, the first Latino four-year college in the United States, is created on the former campus of Mt. Angel College in Silverton, Oregon. It closes in 1983.
1977	The Willamette Valley Immigration Project opens in Portland. It then moves to Woodburn to protect and represent undocumented workers.
1979	The Salud de la Familia Medical Clinic is established in Woodburn, Oregon.
1981	<i>El Hispanic News</i> begins publication.
1985	Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN, or in English, Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United) forms as Oregon's only farmworker union.
1995	The Chicano/Latino Studies Program is established at Portland State University.
1996	CAUSA, the Oregon Immigrant Rights Coalition, is formed.
2005	The census shows that Latinos compose 9.9 percent of the state's population.

Note. From Stephen, L., & Mendoza, M., (2008). Oregon. In M. Overmyer-Velázquez, (Ed.). (2008). *Latino America: A State-by-State Encyclopedia* (Vol. 2, pp. 667-686). Greenwood.

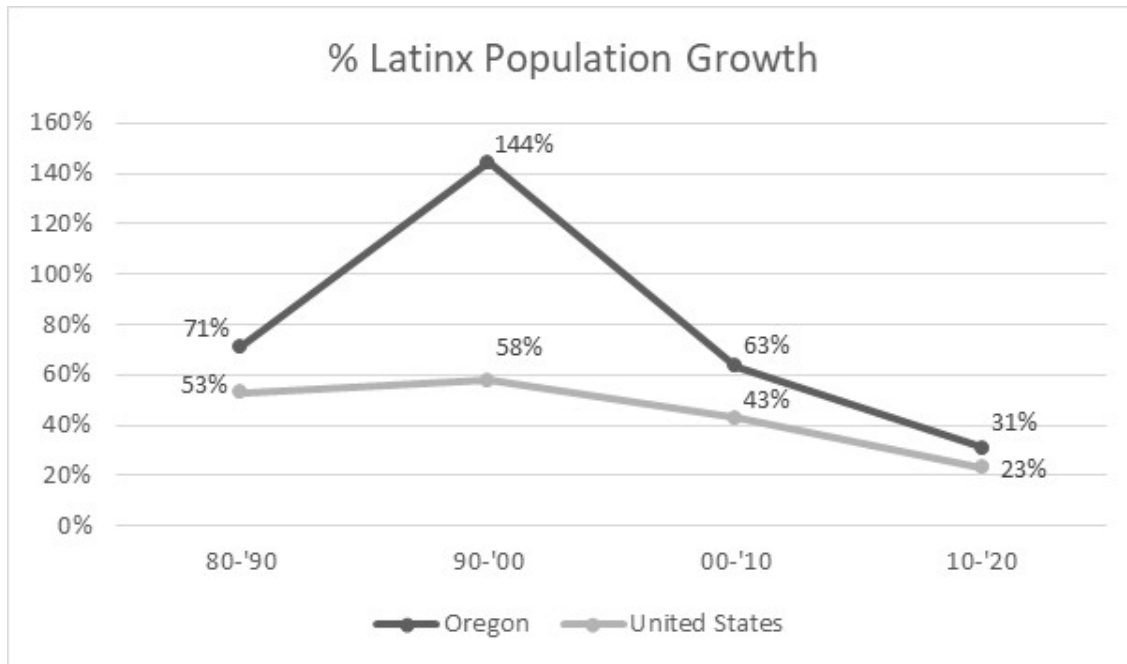
Figure 1
Chronology of Latinos in Oregon

Tracking the Latinx population has its limitations because of the inconsistent categorization of the population of Hispanic origin (of any race), which was not comprehensively established until the 1970 U.S. Census. The Latinx population grew slowly during the early 20th century as the economy struggled and as more restrictive immigration policies were enacted (Bussel, 2008). The Immigration Act of 1924, for the first time, made illegal entry into the United States a crime, provided for the deportation of illegal entrants, and established the Border Patrol (Stephen, 2001). In the 1920 Census, Mexicans were listed under the category of foreign-born whites and 569 Mexicans are estimated (based largely on data on place of birth) as residing in Oregon at the time (Gibson & Jung, 2002). The 1940 Census was the first to include “tabulations on the White population of Spanish mother tongue” with 1,280 noted in this category in the state of Oregon, which experts acknowledge as a somewhat low estimate of the population of Hispanic origin overall (Gibson & Jung, 2002).

Mexican migration to Oregon increased sharply under the 1942 Bracero Program, which was established to address wartime agricultural labor shortages and was extended to 1965. At the same time, anti-immigration rhetoric and calls for mass deportation intensified and was formalized through “Operation Wetback,” a program focused on preventing entry and deporting undocumented people from the United States. (Stephen & Mendoza, 2008). Stephen (2001, pg. 10) described how this history set up a contradiction that continues to exist: “while official U.S. immigration policy states that its purpose is to discourage and remove ‘illegal workers’, growers and ranchers continue to depend upon and desire their labor.” In contrast, efforts to improve the lives for Latinx were being undertaken by individuals and organizations and gained momentum, parallel to the civil rights movements of this era. Documented in Oregon history is the work of churches, community organizations, political and labor movements and even the establishment

of the Colegio Cesar Chavez in Mt. Angel, Oregon in 1973 (Garcia, 2016). This was the first four-year independent, accredited, degree-granting institution for Latinos in the country, which also operated a GED (high school equivalency) program, an Adult Basic Education Program, a childcare center, and a migrant summer school (Maldonado, 2013).

By 1970, Hispanic origin population in Oregon was estimated at 34,577 by the Census. The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and the Special Agricultural Worker's Program (SAW) drove significant influxes in the Oregon Latino population by providing both a path to legal status for workers and a related provision that permitted family reunification through allowing these workers to apply for residency status of family members. (Gonzales-Berry & Mendoza, 2010). This resulted in the legalization of nearly three million people nationally and had a large hand in setting up the accelerated growth in Latinx populations that begins to be seen in the 1980s (Durand et al., 2000). The patterns of Latinx growth over the last four decades are presented in Figure 2.



Note. Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of decennial census counts. P.L. 94-171

Figure 2
Percentage of Latinx Population Growth 1980-2020

Since the 1980s, the Latinx population growth in Oregon has outpaced the growth rate of Latinx nationwide. Immigration in the 1980s and 1990s was the principal driver of Latinx population growth (Stepler & Lopez, 2016). In the early 1990s, immigrants faced less favorable conditions in California with IRCA sanctions and economic conditions restricting opportunities and wages, while at the same time Mexico was experiencing profound economic crisis which drove new migrants to enter the binational labor market, with many shifting away from California and opted for nontraditional destinations, like Oregon (Durand et al., 2000). During this time the Mexican migrant population changed significantly in Oregon with family reunification that extended family and clusters of members from the same community of origin and permanent settlement in communities (Stephen & Mendoza, 2008). In addition to seasonal work, many newcomers were able to find more year-round opportunities in tree farms/nurseries and in cannery, packing, and even forest industries, which allowed those who had traveled

through Oregon for work to settled permanently in communities across the state (Sifuentez, 2016). Exponential growth was seen in Oregon between 1990-2000 with a 144% increase in Latinx representation compared to just 58% nationally.

Latinx growth remained strong in the next decade with the Latinx population increasing 63% in Oregon between 2000-2010, which continued to be well above the 43% growth overall across the nation. However, experts have noted that the U.S. Latinx population growth and dispersion has slowed since the onset of the Great Recession (Stepler & Lopez, 2016). This downturn in the growth of Latinx between 2010-2020 in Oregon more closely resembled the Latinx growth at the national level in comparison to the heightened levels in previous decades; yet, was still eight percentage points higher with 31% growth vs. 23% respectively. Furthermore, at the county level, 22 of the 36 counties in Oregon experienced Latinx growth greater than 25 percent and two of those counties are among the 3.6% of counties across the nation that have 100,000 or more Latino residents (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020). This growth is driven by both immigration and U.S. births. Latinx in Oregon still overwhelmingly represent those of Mexican origin (85%), but there is growing representation from Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Cuba, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and other countries of origin (Garcia, 2016). Clearly, Oregon is a key new Latinx destination (specifically for those of Mexican descent) where we need to uniquely account for the contextual factors that can influence educational outcomes.

Latinx school enrollment in Oregon increased 7% between 2016 and 2020 (Gill, 2020). While Latinx made up 13.9% of the Oregon population in 2020 (U.S. Census, 2020), Latinx are projected to make up over 23% of the high school graduating class by 2030 (Bransberger et al., 2020). Furthermore, Oregon, is among the 18 states with kindergarten student populations that were at least 20% Latinx in 2018 (Krogstad, 2019) and 23.7% Latinx in 2019 (Gill, 2020).

Despite the growing student populations, educational equity gaps continue to persist among Latinx in Oregon. The high school dropout rates for Latinx are higher in comparison to their Whites peers in 2019. The 5.3% Latino male dropout rate is significantly higher than the 3.2% White male dropout rate in Oregon (Gill, 2020). These inequities at the K-12 level are exacerbated by the lack of same race/ethnicity teachers. Latinx represented 23.7% of students while, only 5.6% percent of teachers identified as Latinx. This disparity starkly contrasts with the 89.2% White teacher population, as White students represent 61.5% of the student body (Gill, 2020). According to a Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) in 2019, only 31% of Latinx adults (25 and older) have an associate's degree or higher, compared to 55% of White adults in Oregon (HECC, 2021). Thus, this is important research because the participants' experiences are set within the context of an education system that needs to make major changes to serve large Latinx student populations that were not previously present.

Latinx College Access

Overall, Latinx students experience tremendous challenges in successfully accessing and transitioning to college as enrollment trends indicate that they are less likely to immediately enroll in college after high school (Perna, 2013). The college choice literature identifies factors that influence Latinx students' postsecondary enrollment including secondary school preparation, academic consultation, family involvement, financial resources, postsecondary information, and recruitment (Perez & Ceja, 2015). More broadly, college access and completion for Latinx students in the United States is impacted by current and historical social, political, and economic contexts. Historically in the United States, Latinx have been excluded from full civil and human rights through structural constraints and policies enacted through education, housing, and labor

institutions (Zavala & Pérez, 2016). It is critical to acknowledge how these historical contexts impact Latinx educational opportunities today.

Nunez (2014) describes four social contexts—organizational, representational, intersubjective, and experiential—that can hinder or enhance the educational potential of Latinx students. The organizational dimension acknowledges the structural inequities in K-12 education (Solórzano et al., 2005). Latinx often attend segregated school settings that are overcrowded, lack relevant high school academic programs, and are under-resourced in terms of college preparation course availability, teacher qualifications, college counseling, and spending per student (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Yosso & Solórzano, 2006). The representational dimension includes how Latinx are represented in public, media, educational research and policy discourses. Historically it has been assumed that Latinx students come with a variety of deficits rather than acknowledging and nurturing students' cultural advantages (Valenzuela, 2010).

The intersubjective dimension translate into how Latinx students are treated by undertrained and under-resourced teachers who work under racialized structures, policies, and practices that compromise Latinx academic preparation, opportunities for academic and leadership experiences, and access to financial support for college (Núñez & Gildersleeve, 2016). Research indicates that negative stereotypes are associated with lower academic expectations for student of color (Reddick et al., 2011); counselors' perceptions of students as unmotivated may led to a lack of support for Latinx students' postsecondary interests (Savitz-Romer, 2011); and the overarching dominant ideology and history of racial discrimination of a school can ostracize Latinx students from college readiness opportunities (Valdez, 2008). The experiential dimension describes how Latinx student might internalize negative dominant narratives about their academic achievement rather than attributing challenges and lack of access to institutional and

structural barriers (Nunez, 2017). Negative stereotypes and deficit perceptions by school personnel can impact students' academic identity and the development of a college-going identity (Hooker & Brand, 2010).

Beyond these external contexts, home and community contexts play a role in Latinx college access. While a large percentage of Latinx have parents with minimal to no college experience, many Latinx parents and families highly value education and support college going (Zambrana & Zoppi, 2002), yet may be less able to offer information and other kinds of support (e.g., advice about courses, application processes) that are necessary in the college admission process (Cabrera & Padilla, 2004). In comparison to their peers, Latinx college decisions often prioritize family (Sy & Romero, 2008). Familial contexts and activities, such as spending time, fulfilling family obligations, contributing financially, and caring for family members, are important factors impacting students' high school and college experiences (Rodriguez et al., 2003). Latinx students rely heavily on parent and family support and inspiration (Montiel, 2017), which is particularly important for students in new Latinx destinations with small populations and limited culturally-relevant resources.

Education Pathways within New Latinx Destinations

The emerging literature focused specifically within new Latinx destinations has primarily focused on K-12 settings. The newness of the immigrant population presents both challenges and opportunities within community and educational contexts (Hamann, et al., 2015; Zúñiga & Hernández-León, 2005). Some scholars question the capacity of schools in new immigrant destinations to teach newcomer and non-English-speaking children (Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2015) as they may lack the networks, resources, and established systems necessary to meet the new Latinx population's needs. Research focused on the new Latinx diaspora has highlighted an

absence of trained bilingual teachers and staff and adequate programming to address the needs of English language learners (ELL) (Wortham et al., 2002).

ELL programs and services may be left up to teachers or paraprofessionals who have limited credentials and often have little prior exposure to Latinx culture (Wortham et al., 2013). Furthermore, tracking in ELL programs limits participation in college preparation courses, which prevents students from meeting admission requirements to four-year colleges (Rogers et al., 2010). Beyond the classroom, engagement and communication with parents and families is severely hindered when there is a dearth of bilingual and bicultural teachers and staff (Gallo & Wortham, 2012). This deficiency in culturally-relevant resources is critical to Latinx college access, as it is well documented that a lack of teachers, counselors, and college preparation curricula contribute to Latinx having limited access to college guidance (Rogers et al., 2010). Other studies have critically investigated how underinvestment in Latinx education, deficit framing, racial/ethnic stereotypes, and racial discrimination are byproducts of historical community, racial, and economic contexts (Smolarek, 2018).

A few studies have begun to examine college access and completion in new Latinx destinations. Carrillo (2016a) examined working class Latinx male college students in North Carolina who navigated multiple cultural worlds and excelled academically. This work counters anti-deficit notions by acknowledging that “intelligence is a social construct deeply tainted by the definitions of those in positions of power” (Carrillo, 2016a, p. 159). Instead, it emphasizes the various forms of linguistic and cultural straddling that Latinx students engage in to ultimately produce academic excellence. The identity development of immigrant Latinx youth is being shaped within regional contexts where Latinx history, culture, and political landscapes are

limited and provide little validation and empowerment of cultural assets and strengths (Carrillo, 2016b).

The unique policy contexts within New Latinx destinations are another important consideration. Contreras (2009) examined the experiences of undocumented students considering the current political immigration policy in Washington State and Washington's House Bill 1079(HB 1079) designation for undocumented students access to higher education. While similar state policies in traditional Latinx states, such as AB540 status has had a sustained, empowered impact on undocumented students in California, (as cited in Contreras, 2009) her study did not capture that same sense of empowerment in Washington State. She asserted that greater policy considerations, oversight, and professional development is needed in both K-12 level and postsecondary settings within New Latinx destinations.

Within this context, it is important to consider that Latinx are not a homogenous group but rather have varying experiences. National efforts, including the U.S. Census have provided space for Latinx to identify with various subgroups. For many years, scholars have called for the need to recognize the heterogeneous nature of Latinx and the need to acknowledge ethnic subgroups and the range of positionalities that impact education research (Rendon et al., 2000). Rendón and colleagues (2000) encouraged us to “conduct culturally and racially based studies [to] uncover new variables...that can offer insightful and meaningful findings to transform institutional structures that preclude academic success [and college life satisfaction] for minority students” (p. 143). The educational experiences of Latinx are shaped by their multiple identities including Latinx ethnic and indigenous subgroups, language, immigration histories, and citizenship status, which are relevant considering the unique communities within new Latinx destinations.

Immigrant Students

Immigrant families today face numerous barriers in pursuing higher education including securing employment, healthcare, housing, and other basic needs (Baum & Flores, 2011; Perez et al., 2010). Immigrants come to the United States from multiple backgrounds and for various reasons and may have left extreme poverty or violence to seek opportunities for their families (Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2003). Regardless of the reasons for immigration or country of origin, many immigrant families stay in the United States and share an American dream, to see their children live successful, well-educated lives, but are often confronted by prejudice, racism, and discrimination (Sánchez & Machado-Casas, 2009). Many immigrants come to the U.S seeking educational opportunities (Baum & Flores, 2011; Perez, 2011) with postsecondary aspirations. However, many immigrant students are vulnerable due to legal and financial constraints (Guarneros et al., 2009). Even if they do not know how to promote their children's educational success, these families value and encourage hard work and high academic achievement. Unfortunately, our educational system often views immigrant students' cultural norms as inferior, and subsequently, places less emphasis on pedagogical strategies that support cultural and linguistic diversity (Borjian & Padilla, 2010) and instead seeks to replace immigrant youth's cultural norms with more "acceptable" ones (Valenzuela, 2010). This may be particularly true with new Latinx destinations where schools are not culturally informed on the best practices for supporting immigrant youth and may lead to more negative social and psychological experiences with the education system.

Many of the psychological experiences that immigrant students in the United States face are intertwined with identity and the adjustment required to survive in a new context (Suárez-Orozco, 2004). Despite the optimism that is at the very heart of the immigrant experience, there

is emotional and psychological stress associated with the multiple losses of migration that may impact parents, families, and ultimately academics of immigrant youth (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). For immigrant youth who are in the key identity developmental stage of adolescence, it can be difficult to maintain a positive ethnic identity in schools that may or may not promote multiculturalism and tolerance and within anti-immigrant environments (Perreira et al., 2010). Sustained contact within ethnic communities fosters a sense of affinity with one's culture of origin across generations (Suárez-Orozco, 2004), which is evident in large ethnic neighborhoods and enclaves often found in traditional Latinx areas. Within new Latinx destinations, where the population is just beginning to emerge, it may be more difficult to replicate the strength of the collective co-ethnic identity, the community's cohesiveness, and the availability of cultural role models, which are determined by the density of the local ethnic population. In addition, community support across the various Latinx sub-groups (i.e., countries of origin), intersectional identities (i.e., indigenous backgrounds), and unique situations (i.e., immigration status), may be even more rare in the new Latinx diaspora.

Latinx Immigrants of Indigenous Backgrounds

The growing trend of Latinx indigenous immigrants settling throughout the United States is often ignored (Sánchez & Machado-Casas, 2009). We need to acknowledge that indigenous people who exist within the label of Latinx have considerably distinct cultures, languages, and lifestyles (Machado-Casas, 2009). It is important to consider this intersectional identity as the 2014 National Survey of Latinx (NSL) found that one-in-four (25%) Latinx adults consider themselves indigenous (Parker et al., 2015). Mixtec, Nahuas, Purepechas, Triques, and Otomi have been noted as historically the largest indigenous groups migrating to the United States (Zabin et al., 1993). Youth may face negative and racial stereotypes because of their immigrant

or indigenous backgrounds that may cause them to internalize low social and academic expectations (Fuligni et al., 2005). Indigenous immigrant youth encounter structural barriers in accessing critical resources and deficit discourse (that may even be perpetuated among their non-indigenous Latinx peers), which may lead to feelings of shame about their identity (Kovats, 2010). Machado-Casas' (2009) longitudinal qualitative study countered this deficit narrative and explored the ways in which Latinx indigenous immigrant parents transmit transnational funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992). More research is needed that examines the intersectional identities of Latinx populations.

Undocumented Students

Immigrants come to the United States for various reasons; many are seeking opportunities for their families. Significant driving forces behind many undocumented immigrants entering the country include failed U.S. immigration policies and economic factors (Gonzalez, 2001). Many immigrants left extreme poverty or violence to seek opportunities in the United States and emerging literature has more recently begun to bring these circumstances among undocumented students to the forefront (Gildersleeve et al., 2010). In addition, scholars cite the fact that these students' parents make decisions for their children and thereby their children are not in a position to come willfully or with the full understanding of the legal ramifications (Contreras, 2009; Pérez et al., 2009). Furthermore, numerous research studies have been conducted focusing on access and retention of undocumented students in higher education and the lived experiences of undocumented students within those institutions, both public and private (i.e., Contreras, 2009; Pérez et al., 2010).

The research focused on undocumented students in higher education continues to grow since Pérez's (2009) seminal work examining the academic resilience of undocumented Latinx

students. Three main indicators of academic success were investigated: 1) grade point average, 2) number of academic awards, and 3) number of academically rigorous, honors, and AP classes. The study hypothesized that, due to legal and social marginalization, undocumented students were at high risk of academic failure. The results from regression and cluster analyses (N = 110) indicated that undocumented students who have high levels of personal and environmental protective factors (e.g. supportive parents and participation in school activities) reported higher levels of academic success than did students sharing similar risk factors and lower levels of personal and environmental protective factors. Examples of the risk factors the undocumented students overcame included low parental education and high employment hours during school. Furthermore, as a group, college-eligible undocumented students demonstrated academic achievement, high leadership participation, and civic engagement with over 90% who reported volunteer and community service participation, and 95% participated in extracurricular activities. The study also found that undocumented students exhibited high levels of psychological resilience, perseverance, and optimism.

While literature focused on undocumented students has analyzed the effects of in-state tuition on education access of undocumented students (Frum, 2007; Gildersleeve et al., 2010) and other studies examined the college experiences of undocumented students (e.g., Flores & Horn, 2009; Juaregui et al., 2008; Perez et al., 2009), there are more recent studies that have begun to investigate the experience of undocumented students through asset-based perspectives (Chang, 2016; Montiel, 2017). Most recently, Montiel (2017) examined the experiences of undocumented Mexican students at private universities through a funds of knowledge lens (Moll et al., 1992). Her analysis identified the concept of *hacerle la lucha* (hard work; remaining in the struggle) as a skill and resource that students possessed, which helped them to succeed and how

family, in particular, the parents of these Mexican students, served as examples of hard work to motivate them in their pursuit of higher education. These findings support literature using a CCW lens that highlights parents and families as sources of support and inspiration for undocumented Latinx college students (Enriquez, 2011; Perez, 2009; Perez & Rodriguez, 2012) and counters the myth often perpetuated in research that Latinx families, especially Mexican families, do not value school (Valencia & Black, 2002). Other important relationships that serve as supports for undocumented Latinx are faculty and staff (Muñoz, 2008). Peers can also serve as one of the greatest sources of support for students, particularly on campuses where there is an established culture that is supportive of undocumented students (Herrera & Chen, 2010). Research has emphasized the need for welcoming campus climates (Hurtado & Carter, 1997), particularly for undocumented students (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010; Pérez Huber, 2010). Within new Latinx destinations, there may be less awareness and support for undocumented students. There is a need to fill the void of literature that examines the undocumented student population specifically within this context.

Latinx College Transitions and Experiences

Although various higher education models exist to examine college transition, retention, and persistence, the majority do not account for the experiences of Latinx first-generation low-income college students (Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2012). One notable exception is Nora's (2004) conceptual model of student engagement, which identifies factors that are relevant to Latinx persistence in college: 1) precollege/pull factors, 2) sense of purpose and institutional allegiance, 3) academic and social experiences, 4) cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes, 5) goal determination/institutional allegiance, and (6) persistence. The first component acknowledges that students join institutions of higher education with varied lived experiences, and in turn, these

experiences influence how the student interacts with the educational setting. The second aspect of the model focuses on students' commitment to enroll and continue to be enrolled at the institution, as well as their initial degree aspirations. Third, Nora et al. (2006) acknowledge the importance of academic and social experiences within the institution on students' continued persistence. The fourth component of the model refers to the cognitive (academic and intellectual development) and non-cognitive (appreciation of the arts, increased self-esteem, etc.) gains which are achieved when the student is immersed within the educational institution. Goal Determination and Institutional Allegiance is the fifth component in the model and addresses the students' sense of belonging and the resulting experiences which includes both the academic and social experiences. The five components of the model highlighted above culminate in the sixth component – persistence. Persistence is defined by continuous enrollment or graduation.

Rendon and colleagues (2014) exemplify that first-generation Latinx college students navigate multiple worlds when adjusting to college, including family, peers, work, and college. Latinx students experience several obstacles when transitioning to campus, including various forms of exclusion in higher education that hinder the development of college integration and persistence. For example, racially hostile campus climates contribute to a decreased sense of belonging for Latinx (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Moreover, Latinx often experience racial microaggressions in college settings, which create a sense of not belonging on the college campus (Yosso et al., 2009).

While first-generation and Latinx students are less likely to integrate within college, studies find that non-traditional approaches can support Latinx college transitions (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Yosso et al., 2009). Even within a hostile campus climate, faculty members who show genuine interest in students' development and display a sense of obligation to community

positively impact the sense of belonging for Latinx (Nuñez, 2009). Studies also highlight the importance of college faculty and staff members in creating welcoming environments and counter spaces that can serve as comfort zones within alienating college campuses and allow Latinx to seek support (Nunez, 2009). Scholars argue that building community and social support networks are important for successful college transitions (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Nuñez, 2009). Engagement in social-community organizations, community service, religious clubs, student government, sports teams, in-class and out-of-class discussions with peers and faculty, and tutoring can contribute to higher senses of belonging for Latinx students (Hurtado & Carter, 1997).

Conclusions Drawn from the Literature

Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) provides useful concepts that highlight the cultural assets that students possess. Through the framework of community culture wealth, we acknowledge the abilities, skills, and contacts obtained by communities of color. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is used to explore how oppression continues to perpetuate postsecondary institutions and educational interactions for Latinx students. Through critical examination of the foundational theories and literature, we are able to deconstruct the hypothesis that Latinx lack social and cultural capital and reframe understanding through anti-deficit perspectives. A review of existing literature that examines college transition and college persistence for Latinx students reveals that more research is needed to better understand these experiences, particularly within the growing Latinx populations in new destinations. There is a dearth of scholarship that employs a critical perspective that focuses on critiquing the structures in our society that distribute power and how individual's experience and negotiate these structures. Through a CRT lens, this study, like others (i.e., Smolarek, 2018), can interrogate the power dynamics within

new Latinx destinations that maintain historic trends of inequality and put Latinx in disadvantaged scenarios. Yet, students' navigational strategies in moving through stratified educational systems can be informed by a consciousness of resistance and the legacy of resistance to subordination exhibited by communities of color (Yosso, 2005). More research is needed that gives voice to the stories of students and their families' historical legacy of resilience and to learn from the agency that they exhibit in actively resisting deficit notions that others attempt to impose on their educational journeys.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research methodology. The following are reviewed: (a) the study purpose and research questions; (b) epistemological and theoretical perspectives; (c) positionality; (d) data collection; (e) analyses; and guidance from the literature.

Study Purpose & Research Questions

This qualitative study explores the college access experiences of Mexican American students within Oregon, a key new Latinx destination, through a Community Cultural Wealth lens (Yosso, 2005). The following research questions guide this dissertation:

1. What role did Community Cultural Wealth play in Mexican American college students' higher education pursuits within new Latinx destinations?
2. What K-12 programs, individuals, resources focused on college access did students and families utilize?
 - a. In what ways (if any) did these validate or invalidate students' Community Cultural Wealth?
3. What college programs, individuals, resources promoted students' higher education pursuits?
 - a. In what ways (if any) did these validate or invalidate students' Community Cultural Wealth?

Epistemological & Theoretical Perspectives

Before undertaking any study, it is important to examine one's epistemology or worldview of existence or knowledge, because it impacts how we approach our research (Jones et al., 2014) and our selection of the theoretical perspectives that we utilize to guide our analysis (Merriam, 2009). While there are several types of epistemological lenses identified, my

worldview most aligns with critical theory and perspectives. In general, I seek to understand how individuals learn and make meaning by connecting new knowledge to existing knowledge (Jones et al., 2014). Critical research seeks to go beyond uncovering an individual's interpretation to critique and challenge to transform and empower (Merriam, 2009). Critical theory focuses on critiquing the structures in our society that distribute power and how individual experiences and negotiate these structures. This unveils the distribution of power and how it is negotiated among those who hold a position of power (Merriam, 2009). I apply a critical approach to my research by distinguishing power dynamics that put Latinx in disadvantaged scenarios and perpetuate historical trends of inequality and emphasize the need to focus on new Latinx destinations.

Aligned with this critical approach is the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framework (Yosso, 2005), which stems from Critical Race Theory (CRT) and is useful for examining the power dynamics inherent in new Latinx destinations. Community Cultural Wealth is comprised of six forms of capital found in communities of color, which have the potential to support students along their educational pathways: 1) aspirational, 2) linguistic, 3) navigational, 4) resistant, 5) social, and 6) familial. This study employed a critical lens to interrogate the racialized history and contexts within Oregon to understand how Mexican Americans navigated college access and completion within new immigrant destinations that are impacted by community context, economic forces, and societal power structures (Smolarek, 2018). Community Cultural Wealth provided an anti-deficit framework that guided the research design, including the framing, interview protocol, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and implications for research, practice, and policy.

Positionality

I utilized bracketing in the research process, to examine my personal bias with my positionality, dispositions, beliefs, and assumptions and to minimize my personal involvement with the subject material (Patton, 2014). My positionality in this research is influenced by my professional and personal experience. As the eldest son of immigrant parents from Nayarit, Mexican American, U.S citizen, low-income, first-generation college student, my upbringing positions me as closely tied to my research topic. I am also bilingual and hold deep roots in my Latinx culture, traditions, and language, despite growing up in a new Latinx destination during my adolescent years. I have personal experience navigating the New Latinx context to complete postsecondary education successfully; therefore, I bring unique insights to this work, as I keenly understand the contexts and power dynamics. Not only do I have personal experience, but I also have a wealth of professional experience as an educator within schools that have a rapidly growing Latinx population. Through my experience as a K-12 college counselor, I have focused on college access working with low-income, first-generation student populations that were majority Latinx and collaborated with administrators, university representatives, and community organizations to develop programs to promote Latinx students in postsecondary education. Examining my dispositions, beliefs, and assumptions helps me to be transparent about my positionality and develop strategies to maintain a more unbiased focus on the research.

I recognize that while I have some similar experiences, I need to remain open to hearing and empowering the voice of my participants to share their unique experiences. As a U.S.-born Mexican American, my experience and perspective may significantly differ than that of my participants, who are indigenous, multilingual, and grew up in Mexico, for example. Therefore, I emphasize the importance of bracketing the beliefs and assumptions that stem from my own

experience throughout the inquiry process to remain open-minded, look at different points of views, and being willing to change position when reason leads to do so (Jones et al., 2014).

Research Design and Methodology

This section describes the design and procedures for this study. I employed a narrative approach to discover the lived experience of the study participants (Creswell, 2013). The following sections provide a detailed description of the research design, including data collection and analyses procedures.

Data Collection

This research is set in Oregon, a key new Latinx destination, where the Latinx population dramatically increased over the past four decades. While there is a long-standing presence of Latinx in Oregon and the population continues to grow, it is a predominately a White state. The required criteria for participation in the study included: 1) Have attended at least four years of K-12 in Oregon; 2) Racially/ethnically identify as Latinx, Hispanic, and/or Chicanx; 3) Have obtained a college degree in a New Latinx Destination. A purposeful sampling approach, along with snowball sampling, was used to locate rich key informants (Patton, 2014). Through my networks of educators and professionals in Oregon, I identified a list of participants who might meet the study criteria. I then sent the recruitment email to this initial list of potential participants with the study information. This email invited them to participate in my study and/or forward the study information to potential participants. After completing interviews with these initial participants, I again asked them to identify individuals within their networks that might fit the study requirements and requested that they forward the recruitment and study information to potential participants. My initial goal was to engage with up to 15 participants. After twenty

were interviewed, I determined that saturation (e.g., no new information) had been reached (Creswell, 2013).

Data Sources

Demographic Questionnaire. Once individuals agreed to participate in the study, they were sent a brief demographic questionnaire to complete prior to the interview. The survey began by providing the electronic consent form and verified that the respondent met the participant criteria for inclusion in the research study. If anyone responded “no” to participant criteria questions, the survey was terminated with a thank you statement letting them know they were not eligible for the study. Demographic measures included gender, racial/ethnic identification, Latin American region of heritage, country of birth, marital/parental status, parental education, languages spoken, K-12 educational experiences, colleges attended, degree attainment, and current professional/career. The demographic data allowed me to get a concise picture of my participants’ various identities, educational trajectory, pre-college and college experiences prior to the interview. The questionnaire also enabled me to be prepared based on an individual’s data with personalized prompts to deepen the conversation during the interview.

Interview data. Utilizing a semi-structured approach, the interview protocol questions were open-ended to allow for the flow of conversation to be flexible and to be guided by the participant (Creswell, 2013). The interview question protocol was developed utilizing Yosso’s (2005) CCW framework and centers around the six forms of capital. The interview protocol focused on participants’ family history, educational background, bilingual and English language acquisition; educational experiences, students and interactions with educators; experiences with racism and/or discrimination; school and/or cultural barriers; and the role of family and community; and other questions informed by Community Cultural Wealth and the six forms of

capital. The questions were piloted during a qualitative research methods course in my doctoral program and in a pilot study and further refined for this study based on the dissertation committee feedback. A copy of the interview protocol can be found in the Appendix.

Interviews ranged from 60-120 minutes and averaged 90 minutes. Participants were sent the interview protocol and questions in advance so they could reflect on them prior to the interview. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and reviewed for accuracy. Before recording the interview, I introduced myself and briefly shared my educational trajectory to build trust and rapport with my participants. I focused on being an objective interviewer by listening carefully to their stories, asking clarifying and follow-up questions, and creating opportunities for joint conversations. Part of my research responsibility was to represent the participants' narratives in an ethical manner. To protect the confidentiality of the participants' identity, I assigned pseudonyms and refrained from providing in-depth information in my results/findings section about each participant that could make my participants personally identifiable. Protecting their privacy was important, because the participants may have encountered oppression in their educational journeys and may have continued to confront it in their daily experiences as professionals. Drawing from a critical perspective that values the empowerment of my participants through the opportunity to give voice to the participants' stories (Merriam, 2009), I utilized member checking to ensure accuracy, engage participants in the research, and gain further clarity on the emerging themes (Jones et al., 2014). Applicants were provided an electronic copy of their transcribed interview for verification and an invitation for a follow-up conversation to gain their feedback on my interpretation and to ask clarifying questions, if desired. Six participants, all of whom were educators, followed up informally primarily to express how the study allowed them to reflect on how their own educational experiences drive

their professional work and elaborated on the ways things have changed or how they continue to see the same barriers perpetuated with Latinx communities. Participants were also provided with a copy of the study findings.

Analyses

Narrative analysis perspective. The interviews were imported and analyzed in NVivo qualitative software drawing on a narrative approach that places emphasis on stories, understanding lived experiences, and holistic narratives (Jones et al., 2014). Jones and colleagues (2014) proposed four steps to narrative analysis that guided my process. The first step was to discover general themes through an overall reading of each interview and returning to specific parts of each transcript to develop meaning, with an awareness of how these contribute to understanding the overarching narrative. During analysis, my positionality and personal experience within new Latinx destinations provided a unique perspective. Memoing was an important tool in this initial review and that I continued to build on throughout the analysis, which aiding in documenting how I was making meaning of the data. This process included: 1) memos as an additional source of data that was recorded directly into NVivo's memo feature and could be coded along with interviews (Hoover & Koerber, 2011), and 2) memoing techniques allowed for greater engagement with the data and a record of the decision-making process (Birks et al., 2008). Second, multiple readings of each transcript provided a deeper analysis of how the narratives relate to one another. During this second reading (and further developed through subsequent readings), I formalized the coding architecture in NVivo by highlighting text and assigning a descriptive code name. The third step involved parsing out the emerging patterns across multiple narratives, while capturing the relationship to the overarching narrative. Using code frequency in NVivo to further identify salient perceptions and subsequent partial readings, I

fine-tuned some codes, re-coded some text, added new codes, and identified corresponding subthemes (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The last step emphasized the theoretical research to deepen the interpretation of emerging stories. Utilizing my prior knowledge from the concepts outlined in the theoretical framework of Community Cultural Wealth with attentiveness to the intersections of race, class, and gender (Yosso, 2005), the final review prompted me to: 1) re-code some material into new codes, 2) rename other codes, and (3) consolidate some codes to ensure consistency and uniformity with the theory.

Conclusions Guiding the Research

Drawing on the theoretical foundations that challenge the deficit discourse, this study is guided by several conclusions generated from previous educational research. Latinx matriculation through the U.S. educational system is not a monolithic experience. There are key areas of heterogeneity, including differences across subgroups, citizenship status identities, and geographic contexts. Thus, when considering the college access experiences of students of Mexican descent, it is important to fully explore the nuanced historical legacies of these communities within the state of Oregon. Tracing the economic and sociopolitical influences on immigration histories within the state provided context for understanding how practices and policies shaped participants' educational experiences during the 1990s/early 2000s as a time of exponential growth in Latinx populations. Literature on Latinx college access identifies the barriers with the lack of resources and supports and deficit approaches that can hinder college access and completion. Thus, Community Cultural Wealth provides an asset-based lens for reframing and identifying the strengths of Mexican American students who successfully navigated college access and completion and are reinvesting in new Latinx destinations, which will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings

This study examined the experiences of Mexican American students' college access within the new Latinx destination of Oregon, through a community cultural lens. This research highlights how Yosso's (2006) six forms of capital—aspirational, familial, linguistic, navigational, social, and resistance—were integral to the successful college pathways of students within new Latinx destinations. This chapter presents the key findings from 20 Mexican American participants who took part in one-on-one, in-depth interviews, and completed a demographic questionnaire. The qualitative results address the following overarching research question: What role does Community Cultural Wealth play in first-generation Latinx college students' higher education pursuits within new Latinx destinations? This study produced several themes describing the experiences of Mexican American students who navigated college pathways in new Latinx destinations. First, I present an overview of the qualitative findings and contextual description of the environments within new Latinx destinations. Then, I introduce the themes and subthemes that emerged from this research and how they are connected to Community Cultural Wealth (CCW). To organize the data and to clarify the college process, I divide these themes into two sections: 1) Foundational Forms of Capital: Aspirational, Familial, & Linguistic and 2) Driving Forms of Capital: Navigational, Social & Resistance.

Research Participants

In this chapter, I explore data from 20 Mexican American participants who successfully completed a college degree within a new Latinx destination. The questionnaire data for the study respondents are available in Table 1. All participants identified Mexico as their country of origin, although most were born in the United States; only eight were born in Mexico. Most participants had parents who worked in agriculture and were part of the migrant program. Most identified

Spanish as their first language (n=17), but all participants were fluent in both Spanish and English. A few participants also identified as indigenous with their parents or themselves speaking an indigenous language (n=3). The overwhelming majority came from low-income, two-parent households, and most were first-generation college students (n=18). While I did not ask for their citizenship status in the questionnaire, a few participants in the study disclosed that they were undocumented students and navigated Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policies. All participants had completed their baccalaureate from a public or private university in Oregon at the time of the interviews. The majority of the sample was highly educated, with 13 participants completing a master's degree and two completing a PhD. One participant completed a Juris Doctoral degree in pursuit of a law career. However, not all participants were traditional students. Some participants' paths were not straightforward and they took more than four years to complete their baccalaureate degree, due to various circumstances such as navigating community college, working full-time and/or becoming parents early in their college years. Despite the broad age range among participants (Range=28-45; Mean=38.4), there were many similar experiences and patterns identified across the narratives of their college trajectories.

Table 1
Participant Questionnaire Data

Pseudonym (Age)	Place of Birth	Highest Degree	1 st Language	Career
Abril (32)	Mexico	MBA	Spanish	Operation Analyst
Anabelle (35)	United States	M.Ed.	English	School Counselor
Alvaro (28)	United States	M.E	Spanish	Consulting Engineer
Ariana (33)	United States	BS	English	School District Support Staff
Camila (37)	United States	MBA	Spanish	Director of Workforce Initiatives
Carla (33)	Mexico	MSW	Spanish	Medical Social Worker
Cesar (45)	United States	M.Ed.	English	School Counselor
Damian (29)	Mexico	M.Ed.	Spanish	College Administrator
Juan (35)	United States	MBA	Spanish	Eligibility Specialist
Lonzo (40)	Mexico	M.Ed.	Spanish	College Administrator
Luciana (30)	United States	BA	Spanish	Family Support Specialist
Maximo (30)	United States	JD	Spanish	Lawyer
Rodrigo (40)	United States	M.Ed.	Spanish	Higher Education
Salome (36)	United States	PhD	Spanish	Ed Research Assistant
Salvador (37)	Mexico	BA	Spanish	Entrepreneur
Santino (33)	United States	M.Ed.	Spanish	Service Coordinator
Sofia (35)	Mexico	M.Ed.	Spanish	School Counselor
Valentina (33)	Mexico	PhD	Spanish	Ed Research Assistant
Valeria (35)	Mexico	MSW	Spanish	School Social Worker
Vicente (40)	United States	BA	Spanish	Sales Consultant

Setting the Context & Defining New Latino Destinations

In Chapter Two, I presented the history of Latinx, specifically those of Mexican descent, to situate Oregon as an important research site for this study. In this section, I present the participants' narratives of their experiences within the predominately White state and the changes they experienced as they completed their K-12 and college experiences during the decades of Oregon's drastic demographic shift. Considering the participants' overall average age (noted in

the preceding table) of 38, the majority of participants were matriculating through elementary and secondary school during the 1990s, when Oregon saw exponential growth (144%) in its Latinx population. Furthermore, they represented unprecedented shares of Latinx representation in the high school graduating classes of the early 2000s and went on to attend colleges in Oregon, which historically had minimal numbers of Latinx or students of color overall. Participants completed their undergraduate degrees in both public and private institutions within Oregon, including the University of Oregon (U of O) located in Eugene, Oregon State University (OSU) located in Corvallis, Western Oregon University located in Monmouth (WOU), all in rural areas, and Portland State University (PSU) that is in the metropolitan area. Some participants also graduated from private colleges such as Linfield College and George Fox University, which are both in rural areas. Participants completed their graduate degrees both in state and out of state. Four-fifths of the participants went on to earn a master's degree to advance their careers, and two went on to complete a doctorate. Thus, they provided unique insights into the dramatically changing landscape of education and the state overall.

Context Narratives

Participants described the demographic makeup of new Latinx destinations in Oregon, the migration histories of their families and communities, the racial history embedded within these spaces, and how these contextual factors impacted their educational experiences. Most of the Latinx communities represented in this study were predominantly Mexican/Mexican American and agricultural communities. One participant, Alvaro, further explained how the critical mass of Mexicans/Mexican Americans allowed community members to support each other across cultural ties to preserve their language and other funds of knowledge.

My family ended up there just due to job opportunities in agriculture and-- yeah, mainly that and then connections. And then, the community it was mostly Mexican migrant

workers. Tightly knit, a lot of people, a lot of families are connected in some way. And so, it was comfortable in a way because they preserved a lot of the culture and language.
~ Alvaro

Some participants identified other immigrant populations within their communities. A large portion of the study participants were from a unique community in Oregon with a significant population of Russian immigrants. For example, Damian described his experience immigrating to Oregon undocumented at the age of three.

Similar to like a lot of people in the area, [my parents] keep their main source of income, and worked agriculture...we've been doing that, seasonal work, mostly with one individual, doing berries, grass field, hazelnuts, filberts. [rural Oregon community] is a very working-class community. The majority of the population is Mexican-American, Latinx, specifically Mexican-American or Mexican. And a lot of the working class, especially first generation, a lot of their work that they've been doing there is also agricultural work. [...] As far as diversity [in the educational system], there was a lot of students of color but mostly Latinx individuals, white, and then a large group of Russian Old Believers Orthodox as well. ~ Damian

Damian's community was heavily influenced by the Russian population, with White Americans and Russian immigrants being the primary land and farm owners. In contrast, Salome described the historical context and racial dynamic in her community, which was on the other side of the state from Damian's community.

It was definitely still a migrant farming town. So, I always say--about [rural Oregon community] all the time is that if you don't own the farm, you work the farm. And I would say there's very little diversity in terms of Latinx identities. You're pretty much Mexican, or you're indigenous to Mexico. Yeah. So that's it. We have a really racial history. Japanese farmers were given the land after internment. The tensions between Japanese Americans and Mexicans in rural Oregon has occurred because of the fact of internment. So, when Oregon reversed internment camps, part of the land of rural Oregon was given to those who were interned. [...] that creates a very interesting dynamic. My dad worked for a Japanese farmer versus white farmers, so I think that those dynamics are very different for my father because there was a lot of sympathy, a lot of like, I was locked up. I have also been oppressed and so the relationship dynamics were-- they're still the power. Somebody still owns the land and you're still working the land. But there was a lot of shared understanding of the oppression that was happening at the same time. If you're Japanese American in rural Oregon growing up, 9 out of 10 times your family owns a farm. That's just the way it was, or you were white and your family owned a farm. [...] We plowed the fields. Our community was naturally very divided. ~ Salome

Salome highlighted the need for a critical race lens that recognizes the historical underpinnings of the racial inequities that impact our students today. Several participants also recalled how they experienced and recognized racialized boundaries and divides within their communities. For example, Salvador, whose family immigrated from Michoacán to California and then to Oregon to work in the orchards, described the physical markers of the racial divides that he observed every day he attended school.

My high school was kind of interesting because on one side we have an orchard and on the other side we have a golf course. It was interesting to see the reality of both, when you would come in summer you see a lot of Mexican migrant workers working picking the orchards with the pesticides, a lot of the chemicals that get sprayed. And then on the other side you saw just mostly white golfers stepping on it and playing something golf. ~ Salvador

Participants noticed the racial dynamic as equity gaps became clear early on in their educational journeys. Many expressed the difficulty in seeing and believing that college was for them, like Carla. She struggled to see her potential for higher education attainment as she observed the divides in college-going populations.

The majority of the school population when I was going to school, at least in high school, the majority of the population were Latino students. But from my experience, the majority of folks going to college was the non-Latino students, you know, the white American kids or whatnot. So, although the school is full of Latinos, those that were moving on to a postsecondary education was not the Latino population. ~ Carla

In addition to student observations of who college was meant for, they also identified a lack of role models among teachers and educational leaders. Nearly all participants mentioned not having any Latinx teachers in their entire K-12 experiences and many also missed this opportunity in their college experience, as Juan relays:

The majority were white. Teachers were white. I remember growing up, I never had any Latino or Latina as a teacher. And if there were, they were maybe a teacher aide, but never a teacher or a principal, nothing like that. No counselors. So predominantly white, at least the staff. Classmates, it was the same. It was a mix. A lot of white kids, majority Mexican kids, and Russian. There was a high Russian population. ~ Juan

Unfortunately, many did not receive intentional support, and low expectations and deficit perceptions were common as educators in new Latinx destinations struggled to meet the needs of the growing immigrant student body. For example, Camila describes bilingual education as focused on isolated efforts that removed children from the standard curriculum and left many falling behind or excluded them from college-going opportunities (i.e., advanced/AP courses). She reflected on how the English as a second language (ESL) curriculum was not rigorous enough, and assumptions were made about her abilities, which led to her being held back a grade level.

There were a lot of bilingual students. [...] I ended up in the ESL classes. And my sister and I actually loved it there. And so, both of us got held back one year because we didn't speak the language. And they want to make sure that we feel more comfortable versus going into the grade that we were supposed to. So, when we got held back, we got put into ESL classes. And they were really, really easy for us in terms of the content that was given. It was just mostly memorization and practice for us. ~ Camila.

Overall, the unique context within new Latinx destinations, with the quickly rising Latinx populations, contributed to the racialized educational experiences of the study participants. As a result, they were able to reflect on and connect their community history and the racial dynamic that shaped their trajectories. While it may have been difficult for them to see their individual and community strengths at the time, many now acknowledge how their experiences drove their successes and their continued passion for community impact. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will explore the major themes as they connect to students' Community Cultural Wealth and its impact on their college access and completion journeys.

Qualitative Connections to Community Cultural Wealth

In this section, I connect the participant narratives to Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth. The qualitative findings are organized around the six forms of capital—aspirational, familial, linguistic, navigational, social, and resistance—to explicitly answer the overarching

research question: What role did Community Cultural Wealth play in Mexican American college students' higher education pursuits within new Latinx destinations? For this study, I divided the six forms of capital into two subsets: 1) foundational capitals and 2) driving capitals. The Community Cultural Wealth themes and subthemes are outlined in Figure 3. The themes/subthemes overlap and are not mutually exclusive and answer the study's research questions 2 and 3 by providing examples of K-12 and college programs, individuals, and resources that supported students as they relate to the six capitals.

Foundational Forms of Capital		
<p>ASPIRATIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirational Journeys • Nurturing Aspirations 	<p>FAMILIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Consejos/Dichos • Family Support & Family Involvement 	<p>LINGUISTIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative Connotations • Missed Opportunities • Positive Affirmations
Driving Forms of Capital		
<p>NAVIGATIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Predisposition • College Search & College Choice 	<p>SOCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-12 Programs • College Programs 	<p>RESISTANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance Origins • Representation • Giving Back

Note. CCW capitals and themes overlap and are not mutually exclusive.

Figure 3
Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) Themes/Subthemes

Foundational forms of capital include aspirational, familial, and linguistic capitals, which grounded students' higher education pursuits. **Aspirational capital** consists of two subthemes 1) *aspirational journeys* and 2) *nurturing aspiration*. The first subtheme details aspirational journeys, which draw on immigration, familial, & community oral histories and illustrates how participants connected these to their values, morals, and work ethic. The second subtheme describes how participants' aspirations were continuously fostered throughout their educational

pathways by cultural role models within their family or community and by others who took the time to develop meaningful relationships with students and their families. **Familial capital** emerged through 1) *family consejos/dichos* and 2) *family support and family involvement*. Family consejos/dichos reflected the use of Mexican sayings, adages, and/or proverbs which can provide advice and convey truth and often invoke decades of oral history as an integral part of regional culture and identity. Familial culture knowledge and inspiration transmitted through consejos/dichos guided participants' pursuits in education and life overall.

The second subtheme illuminates how families were able to provide support and the efforts (or lack of) educators made to engage family involvement in culturally appropriate ways. **Linguistic capital** manifested in three ways through 1) *negative connotations*, 2) *missed opportunities*, and 3) *positive affirmations*. Negative connotations were conveyed through both subtle and overt forms that led to internalized negativity toward bilingualism and affected language development at the individual level, and had adverse linguistic consequences for the community at large. Furthermore, there were missed opportunities to foster linguistic capital with students being misplaced or tracked and due to the lack of or complete absence of linguistic resources for them within academic programs or for their families. Conversely, participants discovered positive affirmations from Latinx educators who acknowledged the value of their language skills, which aided them to progress personally and professionally in ways that allowed them to fulfill the communal responsibility of bilingualism to strengthen cultural connections.

Driving forms of capital were identified as navigational, social, and resistance capitals, which propelled participants through their successful trajectories. **Navigational capital** is situated across two stages 1) *college predisposition* and 2) *college search and college choice*. During the predisposition phase, various factors influence students before entering college.

Participants realized the information and resources available to them were limited compared to their peers, and they had to develop navigational strategies without the context that was necessary for many first-generation college students. In the college search and choice process, participants built up their navigational capital through resources and supporters beyond the school counselor or outside school altogether. **Social capital** was examined throughout educational pathways and across sectors with 1) *K-12 programs* and 2) *college programs*. Some K-12 programs provided exposure to campuses and college life, while others, like migrant education programs, provided culturally affirming programming and provided an opportunity for participants to expand their social capital and networks through bilingual/bicultural mentors. College programs offered academic and financial support, spaces for long-term relationships/mentorship, including peer relationships, and personalized and culturally appropriate advising. **Resistance capital** included the three subthemes of 1) *resistance origins*, 2) *representation*, and 3) *giving back*. Resistance origins refer to how this capital is rooted in community and family histories and legacies. Representation was an essential form of resistance capital, with many seeking to increase visibility to dismantle stereotypes. Furthermore, participants actively sought ways to contribute to diversity efforts at the individual level and contribute to more substantial efforts within their professions and communities. A shared commitment to “giving back” permeated participant narratives as they recognized their impact through advocacy, which often led them to pursue helping professions, specifically within their home communities.

Foundational Forms of Capital: Aspirational, Familial, & Linguistic

The foundational forms of capital -aspirational, familial, and linguistic-grounded students in their family, community, and linguistic histories. It is from these roots that participants grew

and developed as individuals. The strength of this base is what allowed them to preserve and withstand various hardships.

Aspirational Capital

Aspirational capital is parental transmission and maintenance of dreams and goals “beyond present circumstances” throughout the children’s educational journeys despite real or perceived barriers and often without resources (Yosso & Solórzano, 2005). The aspiration of Latinx in new destinations is often driven by the desire for new avenues toward upward mobility in education, employment, and living. Despite having limited knowledge or no experience of how to reach these goals, Latinx often seek a better life for future generations and education is one avenue for achieving this goal.

Participants shared two main themes related to aspirational capital: First, their parents constantly shared their history of how they got to new Latinx destinations, which was commonly tied to their pursuit of a better life. Reasons for moving to new Latinx destinations were often driven by word of mouth information about job opportunities (often specifically within agriculture/domestic jobs industries); potential for accessing a permanent job position that did not require seasonal relocating; and resources for families and children, including education. These stories relaying participants' immigration history served as motivation as they were uniquely aware of the challenges and sacrifices of their parents and family members. Participants recognized their parents' strengths in overcoming challenging times, and these testimonios served as motivation when they faced their own barriers, particularly in their educational pursuits. Furthermore, the oral history of familial journeys is connected to participants' values, morals, and ethics. Their familial stories guided their moral development and desire to “do the

right thing”, their value of education, and the work ethic that drove their ability to overcome educational barriers and eventual success.

The second theme explores how participants' aspirations were nurtured. Familial, community, and culturally affirming role models seemed to provide the greatest motivation for students to persist. Unfortunately, culturally relevant resources and support for families and students, such as Spanish-speaking staff or bilingual materials, were limited within K-12 settings. Cultural resources and bicultural individuals to provide college-going guidance were more often found among community members or within community organizations and higher education institutions than within schools. However, some participants identified school staff and teachers who made intentional efforts through community engagement, learning about community needs, and by building personal relationships with them and their families to provide individualized support.

Aspirational Journeys. The following quotes reflect the stories that families would tell to remind participants where they come from and the sacrifices they made to provide opportunities to them that their parents did not have as adolescents. Oral histories included the journeys of their families and communities and their narratives of seeking a better life for their children or future family. These accounts included the immigration stories of their parents and/or grandparents, the separation of families, and the struggle to reunite families and bring families to the United States. These chronicles also included how they navigated a new country, sought employment, endured extreme working conditions, excessive hours, low wages, and the constant uprooting of their families to follow the harvest seasons. Finally, participants recounted their family stories as they were looking to establish themselves in Oregon, their persistence to

continue, and how the work ethic of their parents translated into the participant's pathway toward postsecondary education.

Several of the participants were born in Mexico and their immigration status and pathway to citizenship were a significant part of their families and their own personal stories. Some received their citizenship earlier in life, while others were still undocumented at the time of the interview. Damian, who came to the United States as an infant, described his journey and his family's motivation for immigrating.

I just recently became a citizen like five years ago, six years ago. And a permanent resident when I was like 17. So, I haven't had a chance to go back [to Mexico], but from what they tell me, it was just really impoverished over there. We lived in a really rural area where even my sisters, when they were growing up, they didn't have electricity in their home. So, it was really rural. There was a lot of suffering. And I think my parents just wanted a better life. So, they just left what they had which was little and with the hopes of it being better over here from the stories that they heard. Decided to bring up their family. And I think, first, my dad would come up here and he would work here and then send money back, and eventually, he'd kind of like tested the waters kind of thing and then eventually moved everyone down here. ~ Damian.

Like Damian, many recounted their parents' memories of the impoverished living conditions they had back in Mexico, which led them to move the family to the United States. Damian mentions that his dad "tested the waters," which was a common experience for fathers or male family members to be the first to migrate seeking employment before reuniting the family within a new Latinx destination. Some were even part of government programs, such as the Braceros program, which increased the numbers of those coming to the U.S to work due to the employment demand during World War II.

My parents, originally, came from Michoacán, Mexico. And when they first came to the United States, they ended up in, California because my grandpa was part of the Bracero program back in World War II. And so, he was part of the farmers that came over during World War II during the war to help with the effort. He ended up working over here in the United States and ended up getting, I believe, I think it was-- I don't know if it was a war visa or if it was straight up citizenship at that time. But he ended up coming over here to California and then from there ended up going up to Oregon. ~ Juan.

Juan's parents came to the United States through the Bracero program, which brought Mexicans to work in agriculture by contract due to the U.S having a shortage of workers in agriculture. Those like Juan's parents stayed in Oregon longer than expected due to the demand for employment, which contributed to them becoming citizens. Many of the participants and their families usually made stops in California and most often in northern California for its agricultural community before making Oregon their destination.

My father is an educated man. He has a master's level of education in Mexico. Although he has an education in Mexico, it still wasn't enough to provide for the family which is why he decided to migrate to the United States. So, he left everything behind. ~ Carla.

Most parents primarily had work experience in agricultural and domestic industries, but others, like Carla's father, had formal education and professional backgrounds. Unfortunately, the professional certification they acquired through their formal education in Mexico did not always transfer to the U.S and many had to rely on agricultural and domestic employment options.

Across all these types of familial journeys, participants made connections to how these stories influenced their values, morals, and work ethic.

That education is very important drilled in our head or my head that the education is a way out, education is the only way to go, and if there is-- I had to go further than anyone else in my family to move up and to move out of poverty because we lived in poverty most of my life. And that's how I started streamlining my focus, how my identity shaped in education and being exposed to all of that. How I started moving forward. ~ Ariana.

Ariana knew the level of importance that receiving a college degree held within her family. She knew the way to get out of poverty, which she lived most of her life, was through higher education. Many of the participants came from low-income families and were first-generation college students. She was driven by her family's acknowledgment that she could go beyond what anyone in the family had achieved in education.

Camila was born in Mexico and came to Oregon with a middle school education background. Entering middle school in the U.S she was automatically placed in ESL classes and she was held back one year due to her limited English proficiency. However, her parents always emphasized the importance of education. She was highly advanced academically from an early age and thrived as she progressed through upper-grade levels.

I feel like my parents have always been extremely hard workers there. I mean, they have always taught us to do the right thing. And this is something from growing up in a Latino environment. And family, it's extremely important. So, when I went to school, I knew that my parents were working in the fields. I knew that in order for me to kind of pay back my parents for the sacrifices, I wanted to do good in school. So, I did really great in high school.. ~ Camila.

Camila explained how she acknowledged her parents' work ethic as a trait she inherited to use in her education as motivation. Her parents' job experiences reminded her that she needed to focus entirely on her education as it was how she felt she could pay her parents back for their work. She also described her Latinx community as sharing similar traits as her parents.

My parents would always tell us that education was the best thing you can do for your future, that education was valued and valuable. Also, they encouraged us to continue learning, to continue kind of looking for opportunities. They couldn't help us with school, so they encouraged us to look for the opportunities. And the values were also around hard work, or hardworking, being hard workers. And I think that's some more of the reason why they would take us out to the orchards, so we could see what hard work was like if you didn't have an education. It was kind of more like without an education, this is the reality that you're looking at. ~ Salvador

Many of the participants, similar to Salvador, had parents who would take their children to work with them in agricultural jobs to remind them physically what it would be like if they did not continue with their education. The hard work ethic that they put into the fields with their parents also translated into the hard work needed in their education. Parents were limited in helping their children but aspired to figure things out.

Nurturing Aspirations. Participants' aspirations were grounded in their family/community histories, which aligns with the critical race and funds of knowledge acknowledgment of the legitimacy and strengths of community and familial orientations. Furthermore, participants' educational ambitions were fostered throughout their educational pathways and were most often nurtured through cultural role models.

When I was in high school, I didn't really have mentors. I had nobody pushing me really hard. I had older brothers who told me, "You should do this. You should do that." And I always had my Tios telling me, "You've got to work your ass off," and so I knew I had to do that and it came kind of simple for me in that sense, but I had no one pushing me to go above and beyond, I think, and that's what-- I look back on it and I'm like, - especially now working in higher ed - "Why didn't I apply for more scholarships?" Or, "Why didn't I do this?" or "Why didn't I do that?" ~ Santino

While Santino's family members did not have the educational background to guide him through the college process, they consistently drove his persistence. Similarly, other participants attributed their academic success to their siblings, parents, or other family members who urged them to continue working hard and prioritizing their education. However, while these community-based mentors provided a strong sense of purpose and motivation, they often could not provide specific information and support on how to traverse educational systems. Several participants, like Santino, described the limited support they had access to within educational settings and the nearly complete lack of culturally specific nurturing of their aspirations from school staff. For example, Abril found it challenging to communicate with her counselor or other school personnel who did not speak Spanish and were unable to communicate with her family and this communication barrier hindered her college application process. Also, many did not understand her situation as a DACA-eligible student nor could they provide her with resources. Others similarly described their aspirations being stymied by staff who dismissed their eligibility for four-year colleges based on their documentation status despite their high academic abilities.

Thus, not only did students encounter deficit assumptions about their abilities, but even undeniably high achieving students could have their college path wholly dismissed due to educators' lack of knowledge and resources for DACA students.

I didn't have a counselor that spoke Spanish or that understood what it was to be an undocumented student and trying to go to school. And so, I think that I didn't have that access. I couldn't talk about it until I graduated being a valedictorian, and here, it's April, and I haven't applied to college. So, I eventually found it was a community member, it wasn't a school employee that connected me to [a Latina staff member] at a PSU. And she arranged a meeting for my parents and I to meet with her, so that she was able to guide me through that process ~ Abril.

As valedictorian, Abril clearly had high aspirations, yet she had limited knowledge about how to make her college dreams a reality after high school graduation as a DACA student. It was not until a community member connected her to a Latina staff representative at PSU who was able to communicate with her family and give her specific resources for navigating the college process as an undocumented student. This example demonstrates the powerful ways that bicultural staff and culturally relevant support can promote students' aspirations.

While these cultural brokers were limited, especially within K-12 setting, there was some staff that made intentional efforts to cultivate Latinx students' college aspirations. In the following quote, Salvador describes how those who tried to truly get to know the Latinx community and them personally were able to provide the most valuable and individualized guidance.

Those were the critical role models, teachers, or just community members that stand out. Also, my architect teacher. He's the one that would say, "Yeah. If you like drawing, architecture is an opportunity for you. And the U of O has architecture classes." He's the one I remember in those PTA classes, when meeting with the parents. There were some teachers that I remember talking to parents that talked about the future potential about picking a career even much better than the high school counselors. Because high school counselors just kind of gave you like, "This is what we suggest you should do. These are the potential career options." But the teachers that saw you in class or saw your passion, those were the ones that I think gave better feedback or advice to you and your parents.

Because they saw your potential and then they kind of guided you in what they thought would be best career matches with you and your personality and your passion. ~ Salvador

Salvador's talent and capacity to attend a four-year college were recognized by his teacher, who knew his strengths and provided more specific career advice. Unfortunately, he did not receive the same level of support from his counselors. Nevertheless, his teacher took the initial time to invest in him and his future aspirations, highlighting the importance of intentional mentorship and the ways that educators can disrupt dismissive educational systems.

Familial Capital

Cultural knowledge, in the form of familial capital, is cultivated within families and nurtured through kinship networks that carry a sense of cultural identity, community history, memory, and cultural intuition (Yosso, 2005). The familial capital that participants drew from was either acquired through those related by blood, community members, K-12 educators, or college employees who built relationships with families and helped participants cope with difficult situations in the postsecondary journey. The first theme related to familial capital involves *consejos* or *dichos* as stories/metaphors conveying expectations and values from those identified as familia. These include inspiration in the form of guidance and stories of hard work that provided recommendations for how to approach situations both personally and academically. This study narrates how familial capital facilitated the development of self-confidence and skills to determine their college pathways in new Latinx destinations. The two main patterns of familial capital that emerged from the narratives involved how those identified as family members helped support participants in their education journey and what family values were implicated in their educational trajectory.

Family Consejos/Dichos. Cultural knowledge transmitted through consejos and dichos gave participants purpose and inspiration. They communicated the family's hopes, expectations, and values. Alvaro described how his great grandfather expressed the potential that he saw in his young grandson.

My great grandpa, who I grew up with around when I was a kid, that he saw my hands, and he saw that they were big, and he's like, "este niño va ser trabajador o he's going to make something." And so that always stuck with me. I'm like, "Oh, dang, since birth I'm meant to do something, to work harder. So that story always kind of stuck with me. ~ Alvaro

Alvaro's cultural identity and aspirations were shaped by his grandfather using a tangible illustration based on his physical features, which provided Alvaro an understanding of the importance of work ethic from an early age. He inspired him to believe that he was destined to accomplish great things from birth. These kinds of stories from family stuck with him as he always felt that his present career as an engineer was meant to happen. Many participants shared similar stories of how their families motivated them.

I think the biggest message that I ever received from my parents was-- I told them that I wanted to go to college. My dad said, *esta bien chingale* The chingale to me was important because it's what they've always known. To be successful, you a que chingarle. Whether it's on the job, whether it's in your relationship, whether it's education. ~ Lonzo

Lonzo was given advice by his father to "chingarle" which in English translates into "give it your all." This familial capital consejo was important to Lonzo, because it was his motivation to stride forward. Lonzo's father gave him this advice in the sense that whatever career you choose, make sure to give it your all. This consejo translated not just in education but also in career and relationships. Thus, moving forward was tied to wanting something better for future generations, as Luciana describes:

She wanted better for us. *que un dia no endemos ahi como ella, matandose.* And then just tired all the time and she wants to see us do better than what they've done. Or my

dad is saying siempre decía que no quiere que lleguemos todos mugrosos como el llega (would always say he didn't want us coming home dirty like him). He would show us his hands. ~ Luciana

Luciana's mother and father used their personal work experience as a consejo in "un día no endemos ahí como ella, matándose." Translating to one day, I don't want you to end up killing yourself at work with hard and long hours like her mother had to endure. "Que no quiere que lleguemos todos mugrosos" means that her father did not want his kids coming home dirty from work. Many of the participants' parents had a range of education completion from elementary to high school, with few who earned a college degree. However, the vast majority of parents knew the value of a college degree whether they enrolled in college or not. Education was often upheld as the path to an easier life or toward a professional career.

My dad specifically, he said, "Education is the only thing that nobody can ever take away from you." And so, I think that that's-- like I said, that's been engraved in me. Once I've earned it, once I have that diploma, that shows that I earned it, then it's mine, and no one would be able to take that, especially, during this political times, where being a DACA recipient, sometimes it's like, "Oh, what am I going to do?" ~ Abril

Abril's father knew how valuable education was and reminded his daughter that it was something no one could take away. Abril described how obtaining an education was not only an individual accomplishment, but it symbolized resistance. This outlook was critical for Abril as she was a DACA student who knew of the hurdles she would encounter, particularly within a tremulous political climate. Therefore, dichos and consejos served as critical funds of knowledge that relayed intergenerational values and ideals through family discourse, which both grounded participants and advanced them forward to persevere.

Familial Support & Family Involvement. While all participants described the strong value of education that their families communicated to them throughout their lives, the support provided to them often looked very different than that of their White peers. With the vast majority of participants being low-income and first-generation college students, their parents did not have the privilege of a flexible job or the firsthand experience of navigating the educational system.

My family didn't have a lot of financial support or freedom. So, my mom didn't go to PTA conference, PTA meetings. My mom didn't do any of this stuff. But my mom when I would go home, she would say like, "Echale ganas, mijo. Y no sufras." And she would say, "Ay, mijo, estas sufriendo mucho." And send me home with sopes and picaditas with beans, queso fresco. ~ Damian

Damian's parents could not take time off to attend school events, but they used motivational sayings in Spanish to relay their deep commitment to his educational success. Like Damian, many participants held fond memories of the meaningful gestures, gifts, and food that their families provided to convey their support of their educational efforts.

Furthermore, participants also reflected on the lack of culturally affirming ways that their parents and communities were engaged in the educational process and how schools were not always welcoming or safe spaces. This void was due to the limited representation of bilingual/bicultural educators and limited exposure and cultural sensitivity. However, some participants, like Carla, identified ways that attempts were made to foster family involvement.

There were a few teachers who, although they were not Latino, they spoke the language because either in their past, they traveled and did all that. But you just felt the connection that you felt like you mattered or that they involved your parents because they knew the lifestyle that we live and how hard life could be when they're working. ~ Carla

Despite the absence of Latinx professionals in their K-12 education, some participants provided insights on how educators can capitalize on familial capital by approaching family

involvement in culturally specific ways. These non-Latinx educators provided insights on postsecondary education and took a personal approach to help Latinx students prepare for college. Establishing these personal relationships allowed students and families to trust their expertise and feel more confident about the college choice process. While some staff had exposure to the Latinx culture by traveling to Mexico or through previous work experience with Latinx students, schools need to be intentional in how they train staff and shape family and community outreach initiatives.

Familial capital played an important role in the progression toward a college degree, as noted in the quotes above. Yosso (2005) declared that this capital cultivates cultural knowledge that Latinx families carry in pursuit of higher education but is not recognized in schools or college institutions. Cervantes-González (2015) addressed how this can sometimes lead to the assumption that families are not engaged or supportive of their children's education. Participants demonstrated the vital role that familial capital plays in college journeys and the ways that educators can recognize and connect cultural and family knowledge and supports to advance students' postsecondary goals.

Linguistic Capital

Linguistic capital refers to the intellectual and social skills learned through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style. Bilingual Latinx youth can serve as language brokers for their families and build “connections between racialized cultural history and language” (Yosso, 2005, p. 132). Linguistic capital implies that multilingual individuals arrive in new Latinx destinations with various valuable forms of language and literacy based within their funds of knowledge. Their linguistic capital was used in multiple capacities, including translating for family members in both Spanish and English, networking

with peers, and navigating their postsecondary education. I took a critical race lens to the participant narratives to describe the ways that language and cultural exclusion perpetuated educational inequities. Their linguistic capital also came with labels and negative perceptions that they were not capable of exceeding in college readiness courses or that their Spanish language would not be of any use in the future. Many participants described being discouraged from speaking their first language (Spanish), assuming that assimilating was for their own good (even though many later understood their bilingualism benefited their career and overall life). Participants were misplaced in pathways that did not lead towards admission to a four-year college. The following quotes highlight their experiences as native Spanish speakers encountering negative connotations. While some received positive affirmations from their community recognizing the value in their bilingualism, unfortunately, there was resistance and/or a lack of effort to foster their linguistic strengths within educational settings.

Negative Connotations. Participants described how their linguistic capital was discouraged in both overt and covert ways and played out in individualized and systemic ways. All instances were harmful, and even subtle forms of language discrimination and microaggressions often had lasting consequences and led to internalized dismissal of linguistic capital.

My name was changed during fifth grade when I first got to school. And my teacher either refused to-- and I never asked her. I could, but I haven't made the time-- whether she didn't want to say my name as Lonzo or whether she didn't know how to pronounce it, or whether she was unwilling to try. So, she changed it to Larry. And when you're nine years old and you're taught to respect your parents, your elders, your teachers, you're not supposed to question it. And you're taught to go along with it. And at that point, what I wanted to do was fit in. And if fitting in meant giving up my given name for the interest of fitting in, I accepted it. But I also realized that accepting it came with a price. ~ Lonzo

Unfortunately, Lonzo's experience was not an isolated case; this type of language discrimination was more pervasive. Several participants recalled their names being altered by both educators and peers to be more "Americanized." In some cases, like Lonzo's, these alterations went unchallenged as some accepted the teacher's pronunciation. Lonzo feared that correcting the teacher meant challenging authority or adults, which did not align with his upbringing. He never questioned why his name was changed until he was in college and had more support. Unfortunately, the convenience or comfort level of non-Spanish speakers was often prioritized within schools, as Luciana recalls:

I had a lot of great teachers. I never really had a bad teacher. The only thing that was a negative when we were in school was when we were in high school, when I was hanging out with people que hablaba español, some of the teachers at times would tell us not to speak Spanish because it made the other kids uncomfortable because they couldn't understand us. ~ Luciana

Several participants recalled that speaking Spanish was frowned upon at school, despite the fact that it was their first language and the only way to communicate with their peers outside of class, especially those who were more recent immigrants and may have been more comfortable and better able to communicate in Spanish. Luciana's experience demonstrated how the school system marginalized Spanish speakers and prioritized the feelings of non-Spanish speakers despite the cultural benefits of fostering and valuing students' first languages.

I had a first grade teacher, Mrs. Alvarado, who was a white woman who married a Latino man, so she spoke Spanish. And she would always kind of pull the brown kids in our class aside and told us, "If you want to be successful, you have to adapt. You have to speak Spanish but speak it quietly. She didn't discourage us. She was never like, "You can't speak it in my classroom." She was definitely like, "You need to be quiet about it. Don't be so loud. Know when it's okay." ~ Salome

Even educators who saw themselves as allies, like Mrs. Alvarado, gave clear messages that speaking Spanish was inappropriate. Unfortunately, these negative connotations made it

more difficult for students to affirm their cultural identities and foster their native language fluency.

It was kind of like you were around it, but there were some groups, some white people or white teachers, that just didn't want to hear Spanish. And there were some even Latinos that they didn't want to speak Spanish because they didn't want to feel that awkwardness or they didn't want to be labeled. So, they would only speak English. ~ Salvador

Salvador highlighted that the negative signals associated with bilingualism affected Spanish-speaking individuals who may have felt ashamed or sought to avoid discrimination. Thus, even within the Latinx community, there was a spectrum of opinions on the use of the Spanish language. Furthermore, the projection of bilingualism as undesirable also had an impact on how indigenous languages were valued, as Vincent explains:

I think it was second grade when we went there. Because the teachers would be like, "Well, you guys, you've got to learn English. They have to learn English. That's got to be their primary language here in the States." And I'd view that kind of like not speaking in Spanish or any other language. That's where my mom was like, "We can't teach them this Purépecha language because it's not going to be useful to them." Vicente

A few indigenous participants, like Vincent, described how they missed the opportunity to be trilingual or had little fluency in their native language because of the rampant devaluing of linguistic capital. Vincent's experience further highlights the detrimental impact that these negative experiences can have, not only on individuals, but on entire communities with future generations of language loss. Participants relayed the harsh realities where both blatant and covert forms of language discrimination can lead to internalized rejection of one's linguistic strength.

Missed Opportunities. Negative assumptions about language abilities not only had harmful effects on Latinx self-perceptions, linguistic advancement across languages, and their overall well-being, but carried real consequences for their academic development. Unfortunately, being flagged as an English language learner often meant they missed out on the educational activities afforded to most other students thereby furthering equity gaps. Depriving students of educational opportunities based on language demonstrates the ways that deficit-perspectives and focusing on fixing so-called linguistic challenges can go beyond covert microaggressions to more harmful ways that school systematically exclude Latinx students.

Being pulled to go to these groups. A lot of students were not sure of like, "Why are we getting pulled? Are they getting pulled because they're not as smart as us or--?" You know what I mean? So, there was that about being pulled out from the majority of the class. And it was on a daily thing. ~ Sofia

Being pulled out of traditional classrooms resulted in many students falling behind on assignments and exacerbating their academic insecurities. Furthermore, their progress was stymied as they did not have the same access to instructional time, teacher assistance, and materials as their peers.

In middle school, I was placed in ESL classrooms. I remember the entire morning, I was in the same ESL classroom, and in the afternoon, we would go to what would be the regular English classroom. And there was four of us, four students who were coming from those ESL classes. And so, we would always be sat-- we'd sit in the corner, and we would have one of our fellow classmates who's fluent in English and Spanish translate and help us do the assignments. ~ Abril

ESL efforts were so minimal and under-resourced that students were often ignored or left to rely on bilingual peers due to the lack of Spanish-speaking staff. Many recalled spending excessive amounts of time in subpar programs that tracked English language learners into pathways that did not mirror those of their college-going classmates.

Both of us got held back one year because we didn't speak the language. And they want to make sure that we feel more comfortable versus going into the grade that we were

supposed to. So, when we got held back, we got put into ESL classes. And they were really, really easy for us in terms of the content that was given. It was just mostly memorization and practice for us. ~ Camila

Some participants, like Camila, were improperly evaluated and erroneously placed in ESL courses based on false assumptions surrounding her English proficiency. Despite her high academic competencies, she was withheld an entire grade level and was not challenged to maximize her potential.

When we had the parent-teacher meeting, a lot of the-- because the school had like 40% Spanish-speaking students. All the teachers-- or the parents would come to the meeting, all the translators that were assigned were always booked. So, they were always saying, "If you have one of your children that is old enough to translate, bring them because all our translators are booked." So, I remember I would have to go in and translate for my brother's meetings with his teacher and my parents. And he would have to translate for my teacher meeting with my parents [laughter]. ~ Salvador

In addition to not receiving adequate resources and preparation for college, students described also being burdened with sometimes providing uncompensated translation services. The consequences of limited bilingual services were not just confined to the classroom. Salvador recalled being expected by school staff to translate not only for peers in school, but also for his parents or other adults. This should have been a red flag to increase bilingual professionals with such a large Latinx population.

Positive Affirmations. Highlighting the strengths of bilingualism (multilingualism in some cases) in their narratives, many professed positive affirmations related to careers, translating for families, and helping those who came from Latin America. An overarching sentiment was the widely held responsibility that being bilingual/multilingual carried in relation to their communities. They knew the value of their linguistic capital and were grateful when they found spaces and individuals who reaffirmed these important funds of knowledge. Alvaro described how a Latina educator was a consistent source of inspiration for her bilingual students.

Ms. Munoz because most of us took this class in Spanish and she would stress that we had a lot of value to add to the community and just our surroundings because we spoke Spanish and English, and we had all these opportunities in this country. So, she stressed a lot about like, "You guys have a responsibility because of how well you have it and because of all the resources that you have access to. ~ Alvaro

Participants were encouraged by Latinx educators who acknowledged the value of their bilingual skills in education and obtaining a career. Having K-12 educators like Ms. Munoz was vital for students to see a role model and to have someone reinforce the value of their linguistic capital so they could see the potential benefits for their future. It was these early foundations that allowed them to situate their current linguistic navigation as an asset in their current experiences and in imagining the possibilities for the future. Several described how this played out later in life in the opportunities that their bilingualism afforded them.

I think that being bilingual has opened a lot of doors for me. I think that I was able to work to get that job. So, when I started looking for jobs, I was looking at packing houses, right, with my mom, to go work with my mom like packing cherry and the ciruela. And then the office that was in the apartment complex, they talk to my dad and asked him, and told him that they needed somebody to help them because the person who was working there was leaving, so they needed somebody who spoke English and Spanish to help him at the office during the summer. And they needed somebody who spoke English in Spanish. That's how they hired me because they talked to my dad. So, they asked me if they could give me a job. And my dad said sure. ~ Valentina

Valentina began to see her bilingualism as an asset as it created a job opportunity and a way for her to assist community members at an early age. The ability to move between languages not only provided access to entry-level jobs and positions that might not otherwise have been afforded to them, but it also provided them an opportunity to further develop their language proficiency in multiple languages.

I think my Spanish has probably improved over the last 10 years since I stayed in [my community] where I work. In order to communicate with a lot of these parents that we have in our district, I just started using it more. Learning the correct phrases for things that I never knew the correct phrases for or the correct word. So, I would say that I'm bilingual, but certainly, I know that both in speaking and in writing there are certainly quite a few learning edges in Spanish. ~ Cesar

Cesar noted that speaking Spanish in his profession enabled him to improve his own language skills and his overall effectiveness within his career. Thus, participants' multilingual abilities continued to benefit them across their workforce trajectories by amplifying their professional skills and opportunities for career advancement.

I always thought it would be useful. But yeah. I didn't think it would be this useful. Firms have literally given me jobs. I mean, it's not on a subject that I enjoy working on, but I got to be grateful for not having to look for jobs. ~ Maximo

For Maximo, being bilingual came with the prospect of advancing his career rapidly in areas where professional bilingual lawyers were needed. Many of those interviewed highlighted the ways they were able to have a greater impact in their professions through their ability to communicate with their constituents.

You understand English and you understand Spanish so you're going to be the middle man for the translating of everything, right. And I think that working in the education, it allows us to communicate what our parents are not able to communicate to our teachers. I mean I think that's huge for a bilingual educator. So, I think being bilingual benefits many of our community members who are not. ~ Sofia

Like Sofia, many focused on helping others and giving back to their community. In this way, several participants connected their linguistic capital not just to their own advancement, but to how they would be able to uplift their communities as bilingual/multilingual professionals.

I focus on a lot of the Latino families. So, you can talk to them in the language that they feel comfortable with without struggling with trying to tell you what they need. I think that's huge. I remember when we first moved, having somebody that spoke Spanish, that was helping us navigate systems like food stamps or like or housing, that was huge for us. Being able to communicate and not feel like you were just on the outside. ~ Valeria

Participants made meaningful contributions because their efforts were so deeply tied to their own experiences with English as a second language. This not only allowed them to have empathy, but to truly understand the needs of community members.

Being bilingual helped me out not only in communicating across-- Oh, and also when I meet with students, I can communicate with them and I could build that trust right away

by just saying like, "Oh, you speak Spanish. Cool." But I think it also helped me communicate in nonverbal ways and being able to operate in this white society in a way.
~ Damian

Damian's linguistic capital enabled him to better connect with his students and form deeper relationships. Similarly, others like Lonzo, elaborated on the positive aspects of navigating multiple languages and forms of communication.

We had to be able to function in different systems. In Spanish-speaking systems, English-speaking systems, in public, in private, in politics, in business. So, the language itself has always fascinated me as a skill set that we always need to be honing, developing because it's going to be a lifelong skill that we develop. Ultimately, it opens up doors to how many people we can communicate with. When we are communicating, it also allows for empathy and it allows for unspoken communication where there's a lot of acculturation that comes with language that language itself can't explain. Only the experience of speaking that language can. So, I think being bilingual or trilingual - however you want to phrase it - has been hugely influential for me. Lonzo

Lonzo further explained how linguistic capital was used in a variety of environments and took on many forms of communication. Multilingualism established numerous lines of communication that enabled participants to traverse multiple worlds as cultural brokers. Lonzo echoed a common sentiment where most focus on language as the facilitator of relationships, which allowed them to build connections across cultures and created opportunities for themselves and their communities.

Driving Capitals: Navigational, Social & Resistance

While the previously presented qualitative data highlighted aspirational, familial, and linguistic forms of capital as the foundations for students' higher education pursuits, this section identifies navigational, social, and resistance capital as the driving forms of capital that propelled participants through their educational trajectories.

Navigational Capital

Navigational capital is the set of social-psychological skills to maneuver through social institutions and dominant structures and acknowledges individual agency within structural constraints. Latinx students' navigational strategies to circumvent the system can be informed by a consciousness of resistance (Yosso 2006). Navigating the decision of going to college for Latinx begins in high school. According to Hossler and Gallagher (1987), the decision of where and what college is defined in phases—predisposition, search, and choice—whereby students move from being interested in seeking higher education to finding a set of suitable institutions. Therefore, the data in this section are presented in relation to how students maneuvered across these phases through navigational capital.

College Predisposition. It is during the first phase of predisposition where Hossler and Gallagher (1987) identify the characteristics and factors influencing students prior to entering college. Predisposition is strongly influenced by socioeconomic status (parental education and income), geographical factors, high school curriculum/academic offerings, peers, and extracurricular activity (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Predisposition is also further impacted by early educational opportunities, such as in middle school when students have the possibility of registering for college preparatory classes. Research by Oakes (2003) concludes that students entering high school and coming from middle school are placed on pathways that become vital for college access. Latinx begin to create these pathways by sharing their goals and identifying what academic classes best fit them. Most participants mentioned having high aspirations to pursue higher education; however, many did not have the college courses in high school or other college preparation resources—even those who did still described the difficulty in wayfinding independently through uncharted territory.

I wanted to go either to New York or Boston because the instructors from the Summer Bridge programs were very wealthy. And so, the schools that they were accepted into were those schools, and that was your Harvard or your Princeton. And so that's where I wanted to go. But I had no idea other than the interactions that I had for the past three summers. ~ Abril

Abril attended a summer bridge program for three years and was exposed to instructors that were alumni of ivy league schools. Harvard and Princeton expectations were set within the summer program. Still, they provided little to no context for first-generation college students in how to get there or the reality of what it meant to pursue an ivy league education. The support and information that she was receiving in her high school did not align with or set her up to fulfill the lofty aspirations of the program. Ultimately, she was able to reflect on the unequal access to resources available at her school and the mismatch with the high expectations envisioned by the summer program. Despite intention for support, short-term summer experiences could not fully address the systemic barriers that fueled unequal access to resources. Others, like Cesar, identified inequities early on in their college access journeys.

I remember talking to kids when I started at U of O that they're like, "Oh, I already have 15 credits," or, "I already have these credits," and they said they had taken AP courses in high school, and I didn't know what an AP course was. "My God, what's that?" because in my high school they didn't have AP courses. They didn't have any college credit courses, so I remember feeling like, "Oh, I feel like maybe these kids know more than I do." ~ Cesar

Like many others in low-income schools, Cesar had limited or no access to any college preparatory course at their high school. Unfortunately, this eliminated the possibility of earning college credits in high school and being college-ready.

So, I remember having honors courses and things like that but I just remember it being really easy. I don't know if that makes sense. I felt like not being that challenged, I guess, most of the time and I remember, it was really easy to kind of get away from a challenge, too. I feel like if I had a hard class, I could be like "Ah, I'm just going to do something different," or there was nobody-- I don't know. ~ Santino

Looking back at their high school experience, many participants acknowledged how their perceptions about college (or the process to get there) were distorted by the limited experiences and resources available to them. Santino further elaborated on this, noting that he often felt discouraged despite excelling in school. An incomplete picture of the college search process and the absence of school staff invested in promoting his academic potential impacted his navigational journey. Despite having a limited foundation to shape their college-going predispositions and encountering systemic barriers, participants nonetheless persevered by building on their navigational capital.

College Search & College Choice. The two remaining stages, search (information delivered to students about college) and choice (based on the information received about how they decided where to attend), are intertwined. One of the navigational strategies that stood out in both the search and college choice processes was the participants' initiative to seek out resources and supporters, particularly beyond the school counselor or outside school altogether. Due to the limited support for Latinx within new Latinx destination schools, many participants had scant opportunities for early college exposure. Therefore, they did not think about higher education until their senior year compared to their white peers who began the planning process since freshman year or much earlier. The late search resulted in participants applying at most up to three colleges and for most of them to only one university. Many that applied to one university were also prepared to apply to a community college.

Our MEChA adviser, I would say he was probably my mentor. I used him more than I would use my counselor. And he would advise to me on what classes to take. He was to push me to apply for certain scholarships. He was the one that pushed me to focus on colleges and to really look at different degrees that I will be good in. He definitely made a huge impact on my life. ~ Camila

A Latino teacher who advised the cultural student club, encouraged Camila to investigate the different types of colleges available and what degrees they offered. He advised her on what classes to take in high school so that she could fulfill prerequisites for college. Rather than their formal counselors, it was often Latinx, other individuals of color, or culturally sensitive educators that made the most significant impacts on their postsecondary journey. This navigational strategy was often necessary due to the shortage of culturally affirming resources and mentors within predominately white contexts and schools with minority-majority student populations, but minimal diversity among staff and teachers. The sophisticated ways that participants navigated college going resources provides a powerful counter narrative to deficit assumptions about the college going process for Latinx students.

The third and final stage is college choice, which includes the final college selection, applying, and financial aid (Carolan-Silva & Reyes, 2013). The college choice was shaped by the influence (or lack of influence) from teachers, school counselors, staff, and college students (who were alumni of the high school that participants graduated from), university employees, and family. While some participants mentioned having good relationships with high school staff in helping them go to college, others mentioned needing to seek out help from outside of their high school. These college advisors and coordinators met with the participants outside of school. They helped participants fill out college applications, FAFSA, scholarships, meet with parents to answer college questions, and encouraged students to apply for a 4-year college because they surpassed requirements. Without these personal relationships, many admitted that they would not have made it to college.

So, she, [a Latina college representative], came to a resource fair at the high school and she was on the booth, and she looked like me. She's brown like me. And she was also doing some recruiting for Western Oregon University (WOU). She talked about this diversity scholarship, and she helped me fill it out. She helped me fill out my FAFSA.

She came from Western to meet me in [my community], and we sat in the library to fill out the FAFSA. And she brought with her-- there was these scholarship applications. And so, I also applied there, and I got accepted, and I ended up going to Western because I got a better financial aid package. – Carla

Carla, like other participants, sometimes did not have a teacher or counselor who would help her with her college process. Several participants found the most success in getting college information from opportunities to connect with individuals with the same cultural background. These individuals were often willing to go above and beyond in providing support and often did so in culturally responsive ways. The college representative not only helped Carla with her college application but provided college specific information on scholarships, programs, and secure financial aid package overall that facilitated her choice to attend college there.

In high school we had a really good counselor and she's the one who asked me, "Are you going to college?" She helped me a lot with the process of applying for college. Porque pues I'm a first generation college student. So, I didn't know how to apply for college. So, she really helped me out a lot. Like on how to fill out applications and what to do. And this is the information that you need to apply y todo eso. So, she helped me out a lot with finding programs and just everything. And she's the one that really was like, "Are you going to go? Deadlines are coming up for you to send your application." ~ Luciana

Luciana received help from her counselor, who went above and beyond by consistently following up with her throughout the entire process. Participants recalled college information being provided in bulk presentations or sessions, which felt like a one-way transmission and where individualized follow-ups were rare. Luciana's counselor was a rare example who not only provided resources but made sure she was turning in things before the deadline. Luciana, like many other participants, was first-generation and found the college process very foreign; therefore, it was necessary to find additional navigational guidance. Personalized support, such as mentors providing personal insights from their own college experience, benefited Latinx students in narrowing down a college choice or specific major. Thus, navigational capital across all three predispositions, search, and choice stages, was developed through a relational process

where students found their way not only through seeking and receiving information but also through culturally responsive connections.

Social Capital

Bourdieu (1986) traditionally described, social capital emphasizes the networks of people and community resources that can help students and families draw instrumental and social support to navigate social structures (Liou et al., 2009). This theme and the data presented in this section directly address the study research questions two and three focusing on the programs that developed participants social networks in K-12 and college, which were vital in navigating both their path to college access and in their completion and in pursuing higher education. All participants participated in at least one K-12 and one college support program. The most referenced K-12 and college programs are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Participation in K-12 and College Programs

Program	# Participants
College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)	6
Equal Opportunity Program (EOP)	6
<i>Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA)</i>	11
Migrant Education Program (MEP)	11
Multicultural Center (MCC) and/or Multicultural Student Union (MSU)	9
Science and Math Investigative Learning Experiences (SMILE)	3

Participants noted that they built their social networks through outreach and college access programs, such as the Migrant Education Program (MEP; 11 participants) or the Science and Math Investigative Learning Experiences (SMILE; 3 participants). These programs provided

initial exposure to college and clarified the college going process. In some cases, programs went beyond that with intentional efforts to provide culturally relevant curriculum and/or culturally affirming experiences. Once in college, several participants noted programs such as the Equal Opportunity Program (EOP; 6 participants), College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP; 6 participants), and others that provided targeted services, including bridge support in the transition to college. In addition, to academic-based programs, social support, affinity-based, and other holistic student services programs and organizations, like the Multicultural Center (MCC) and/or Multicultural Student Union (MSU; 11 participants), Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA; 9 participants), and Greek membership at the university also bolstered students' social capital. These college-based programs not only nurtured the strengths of Latinx students but fostered the students' development in college and career readiness. College supports promoted retention, financial understanding, social and academic integration, and college completion. Further, many of the social networks established through these programs served as a bridge to other resources and networks that remained with them throughout their college journeys. Participants gave credit to this social capital for narrowing down their college choice, revealing resources, and being instrumental in their ability to navigate social and institutional structures in the college access process and throughout their college completion.

K-12 Programs. While interviewees referenced several programs, two K-12 programs stood out as reoccurring among narratives: 1) the Science and Math Investigative Learning Experiences (SMILE) and 2) Migrant Education programs. According to Davis-Butts and Collay (2003), Oregon State University's SMILE Program is an enrichment program for minority students in grades 4-12. Usually, SMILE members are from low-income households and are the first in their families to go to college. The program targets and enhances students' STEM skills

with the hopes to fill the growing need for STEM majors, especially among underrepresented populations. The program provided college-bound STEM students interactions with college students that supported the success of pre-college youth. Many of the participants who were in SMILE were familiar with OSU. Some of them graduated from OSU with the help of SMILE and others got exposure to college life, which made going to college seem more like a reality. The program enriched the social capital of students' families, schools, and communities. It addressed what hindered students' academic success, influenced student choice, and offered learning opportunities. Through SMILE, students were more prepared to persist and develop a concrete pathway toward college. The following quotes reflect the participants' experiences in SMILE.

I was in SMILE club from sixth till I graduated. It was a cool program because they'd take us to Western Oregon and Oregon State, and that was the first time that I was ever exposed to the college life. I'd be like, "Whoa. This is what? This is college. This is how people live?" And so, I used to do that stuff. Every year, they used to do a challenge. And so, we'd go spend the night at Western Oregon, and then the following day, we'd go to Oregon State and go visit the campus. And so, every year from sixth grade to my senior year, we used to go over there. So that's why I chose Oregon State because it was like a home for me. ~ Juan

Juan shared his experience in SMILE from middle school until high school graduation.

Other participants shared similar experiences and remembered visiting colleges in Oregon and sometimes staying in the dorms to experience life as a college student. These experiences allowed them to understand college expectations. According to Juan, SMILE was highly beneficial. He attributed his familiarity with the campus as a key factor in his acceptance to OSU and described it as his second home.

SMILE, was the first college access program that I had ever experienced. [...] In middle school I was in Smile, and all the brown kids did it, and we got to go to Oregon State for Smile challenge weekend. The military challenge at Western, and then do the challenge weekend. And so, I did that. I was super involved in that. And while it was that catered-- why it wasn't like-- it was mostly brown kids. And while it wasn't a cultural, like, "Oh

this is how we're learning about your culture," it was definitely like this is what all the brown kids did. So, Oregon State was really smart in that sense, right. We started to learn about college. We started to learn about Oregon State specifically. And so, I got involved with that pretty early on. ~ Salome

Salome also identified SMILE as contributing to her exposure to college during high school. While it did not emphasize her cultural background in ways that Migrant Education did, it still served primarily students of color, which allowed her to learn about college alongside peers of similar backgrounds. This created shared experiences that encouraged students to be more open about the possibilities for future college opportunities.

Migrant education programs were also a common experience among many participants and, given their history, were well established within the rural agricultural communities where many grew up. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed in 1965 as part of President Johnson's battle against impoverishment. It was aimed at schools with a high poverty population and supported migrant students. A year later, in 1966, ESEA was rewritten, and the Migrant Education Program was approved. John D. Perry (1997) mentions that migrant education funding was used for summer education programs, after-school programs, teacher aides, health programs (i.e., medical & dental), parent programs, transportation, and other basic necessities. The focus on Latinx students and the cultural components of these programs resonated with the study participants.

One of the things that I remember us talking about was that we didn't have to be ashamed of who we were. You kind of identify yourself or how you saw yourself or even how you saw your family. We should be proud of where we are coming from, about our language, our customs or traditions and all that. And one of the things they talked about was leadership. How you could come up within the school, because that's one of the things that they wanted to kind of bring more to light, bring more participation, and for you to represent not only your school but your community. ~ Valeria

Valeria shared her experience in the migrant education program and the significance way it affirmed her cultural identity. She elaborated on how the program reinforced her pride in her culture, bilingualism (Spanish & English), and traditions from Mexico. In addition, the program provided a sense of belonging and underscored the value of community representation. The program also provided opportunities for them to step into leadership roles and represent their communities in various ways.

I think that the benefits of [the migrant program] that we probably got out of it was just understanding the resources that were available within the community of [rural Oregon community] for us, whether it's to ensure that we're getting fed, to ensure that we're getting health care, to ensure that we were getting the same opportunities that other kids in the district were too. ~ Camila

Camila explained the multiple benefits (beyond academic outcomes) of being in the Migrant program. They provided resources to ensure families obtained healthcare, enrolled in food programs, and provided information on their eligibility for family programs. It was sometimes difficult for migrant families from Mexico to find resources or simply know what questions to ask.

My parents were farm workers and we did travel to Mexico a few times to visit family. My parents would qualify to have a summer school program. And a lot of these summer programs had like a cultural component to it. They would bring teachers from Mexico. And, I mean, I loved it because we had times where we did just cultural activities and just things that excited me about my culture. And then we qualified for other farmworker resources that were offered in the community because of that. So, I was able to be a part of some of those programs due to my parents being migrants and farmworkers. ~ Carla

Carla shared more about the cultural components of the program in their education curriculum and how teachers from Mexico were recruited to teach the education curriculum in Spanish. The program taught students to be proud of their heritage and how it was an integral part of their education. In addition, it fostered a sense of belonging through culturally relevant programming and educators with whom participants could relate and connect.

I wasn't the same. Like I was with people that were darker than me, that looked like me that cared about me, that wanted me to go to college. They were like 'you can go to college'. To find somebody outside of my mom to say 'you're going to go to college; that you know you can do these things'. It was reaffirming, the sense of belonging was definitely there because I had people that look like me that represented me. For the first time I had other Latinas. I never had that before. They were like yeah 'I'm in college and I'm doing that'. I was like you could do that. And we talked about issues that I cared about. We read books about Sandra Cisneros. What was that like. I was exposed to people that looked and cared about things I care about, especially social injustice. ~ Salome

In the migrant education program, Salome shared the value of meeting other high school students who shared similar goals as well as college students who were Latina. They introduced her to literature written by other Latinas that she didn't know of and topics that interested her, such as social justice. Having a Latinx professional in her school was rare, and it meant a lot to her to find out that Latinas like her existed outside of various spaces. Lonzo had a similar experience in bonding with peers from similar backgrounds through programs like MECHA.

I always felt more comfortable with the other Mexicans because we were all kind of growing up together, learning English together in Migrant Ed and ESL. And since it was a small community, we all went through middle school and high school together. We were on the same soccer team. We were on the same football team. Do you know what I mean? We were very active beyond school, and engaged in MEChA, in athletics, in after-school clubs. So, to me, it was mostly very positive, with the exception of my name. ~ Lonzo

These programs fostered a sense of belonging and affirmed their racial/ethnic identity development through both academic and social programming. Lonzo and others sought out these types of connections in college and were often highly involved in and/or established student organizations like MECHA on their campuses.

College Programs. Two programs that stood out in participants' college careers were Equal Opportunity Programs (EOP) and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). In 1972, under Title IV, Section 481A of the Higher Education Act through the U.S Department of Education, CAMP was established. Its mission was to deliver both education and support

services, such as outreach to eligible migrant and seasonal farm working families and their children's first year of college (Oregon Education Investment Board, 2012). Farm or seasonal workers who worked in any job relating to the production of crops, dairy, poultry, livestock, cultivation or harvesting of trees, nursery, forestry work, or fish farm work were eligible. Educational services provided to eligible families included assistance with college applications, financial aid, registration for courses, tutoring, and building a long-term support system. The two primary goals of CAMP were to boost the success of migrant students in completing their first year in college and promoting persistence through successful completion of their college degree (Araujo, 2011).

EOP was created in 1969 to overcome financial and social difficulties that stopped minorities and underrepresented students from attaining a college education, according to the California State University EOP history website (n.d). EOP supports low-income, first-generation, and students of color at four-year colleges. Services depend on the institutional pledge, but overall, it is intended to guarantee college success by providing both academic and financial support and resources for mastering study skills.

Participants shared their experiences in both CAMP and EOP and how they contributed to their education.

I started learning how important that financial aid piece-- that at that point, CAMP kicked in. And CAMP kind of got rid of whatever loans I had for my first year. And they paid for our books. And in that year, I learned that I didn't really need all that loans that they were offering me, that I could reject some and take parts of others so I could support myself. So, it was not really until my second year that I started to realize what it meant to have a good financial aid package. And how what pieces they needed and what pieces I didn't especially when it came to loans. So, my first year, I just accepted all the loans whatever loans I had. But then luckily, CAMP kind of covered all of those things, and by the time I got to my second year, I knew a little bit more that I didn't need all these loans. ~ Valentina

Valentina shared what many participants encountered in college without sufficient information about financial aid in college. Thanks to CAMP, she received financial assistance in navigating her school, including how to use her loans. CAMP was able to provide financial aid, along with some financial education, going into her second year. She went on to describe how she also benefited from the social networks within targeted support programs.

The thing with CAMP is that although CAMP supports you financially your first year, it's like you have a family the entire time you're in college. I think if I was in graduate school and I would go meet with [former CAMP director] for something, he would be like, "Let me check on your grades." I was like, "What do you mean? You're still checking out my grades. I'm in graduate school already." So, it's like having parents that are always looking out for you. You know, definitely having a family away from home because they're supporting you even if you're kind of out of the program, they're always there. ~ Valentina

Valentina acknowledged CAMP as her family in college, second to her real family. The long-term relationships formed through these programs provided social capital and a variety of supports through college and beyond in their career and graduate school trajectories.

That's why I'm so glad with CAMP. I got the opportunity to go to college three weeks early before it actually started. And so, I got to make those relationships with some people beforehand. So, when actual classes started, I already knew some people, I already knew where some stuff was. I already knew how to navigate campus a little bit. Before the actual day. Because when you go, a lot of people move in, move into student housing, the weekend before school starts, or the week before. And that's it. I got three weeks. ~ Luciana

The program's structure afforded opportunities for first-generation students to participate in on-campus activities in the summer before the start of their freshmen year. For Lucia, this gave her the advantage to build her social networks and social capital early on. Furthermore, it provided awareness of campus resources and access to program staff that would be able to assist her in navigating this new academic setting.

I actually preferred to do the CAMP or the EOP advising more than my department advising. Because I feel like the EOP and CAMP really tried to personalize your-- the way you wanted to go. Like what classes you wanted to take. And y todo eso, you felt

like they were really focused on you. And I feel like the advising program in your department, because there are so many students that go through it-- we're just like, these are the questions that come next. And things like that. And my sessions were short and stuff like that and not compared to EOP and CAMP. If you did advising with one of them it was like they really listened to you more of what you wanted to take and what you were more interested in and taking for classes, for courses, than your-- just the general advising, your department. ~ Luciana

Luciana described how both CAMP and EOP personalized her college experience.

General advising was available from the department, but advisors could not relate to what Luciana was going through as a first-generation Latina in college. However, thanks to the social capital of both programs, she was able to navigate what courses to take in order to graduate from college and what degree to receive according to her interest.

Resistance Capital

Resistance capital is the awareness, knowledge, and skills developed in opposition to oppression and inequality. Resistance capital acknowledges agency or willingness to challenge and transform inequalities is grounded in the legacy of resistance to subordination exhibited by Communities of Color (Yosso, 2005). Several scholars have outlined resistance as a continuum of multiple levels with a progression toward transformational resistance, where individuals enact resistance based on their recognition of the need for social justice (Revelo & Baber, 2018; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Yosso 2000). Initially, one might pursue social change within the existing social structures and conventions (Revelo & Baber, 2018); yet, transformational resistance requires a critique of systems of oppression to advance systemic change (Yosso, 2000). Furthermore, Solórzano & Delgado Bernal (2001) defined transformative change as “political, collective, conscious, and motivated by a sense that individual and social change is possible” (p. 320). Resistance manifested in participant narratives through three

overarching themes: 1) resistance origins, 2) representation, and 3) giving back is presented in the next section.

Resistance Origins. Just as Yosso (2005) emphasized the community roots of resistance, the narratives of resistance are tied to both participant community and family histories and legacies.

The only reason I'm here in college was because she sacrificed her education. It's just tearing me up because I'm like-- I think about this, right? But I never really told someone. I owe my college education because my sister sacrificed her education so she could take care of us at home, and she dropped out of high school to do so because my parents were working. So just stories like that is what really motivated me.-Damian

Damian's motivations for resisting and transforming the education system for those who followed him were grounded in the sacrifices his family made for his education. He acknowledged his family's sacrifices and specifically how his sister forwent her own education to look after her siblings. His story represents the overall shared goals and collective family sacrifices that many participants described. Damian's sister took on a role to benefit her siblings and family overall; Damian was driven by a sense of purpose and benefit for the entire family, which helped him through tough times. Thus, many of the participants attributed their goals for social change, and to contribute to their communities specifically, as being grounded in family and community *collective* resistance and thereby defined by community reciprocity.

Representation. Drawing on their own experiences, participants deeply understood that representation mattered; therefore, being a role model and building a critical mass of Latinx educators, professionals, and community leaders was an essential goal for many.

In law school, I became the president of my school. [...] I put my name in, and I ended up winning the election. And I just wanted to do that so that everybody would know who I was, and everyone would just show me respect for who I am, not for who they think I am because I'm Mexican. -Maximo

Many participants, like Maximo, sought to increase Latinx visibility by holding

leadership positions, with some beginning early in college and others as professionals after college. Several explicitly stated that they ran for those positions to dismantle Latinx stereotypes. This form of resistance capital aligns with Yosso's (2000) conceptualization of transformational resistance, where students confronted negative/deficit portrayals and were driven to prove them wrong. It was not just the symbolism of holding these positions but also the power they carried to inspire others and to open up opportunities for the Latinx following them.

I think the motivation was always just to be that role model that I didn't see to prove that, as Latinos in this country, we're equally as worthy of being successful, and we're talented and gifted. And sometimes we just need someone to tell us, to show us what we're capable of. So that's really motivated me and continues to motivate me to this day. Just proving that our culture's not something that should hold us back. ~ Alvaro

Alvaro emphasized his sense of cultural pride and hoped to demonstrate to others how his story challenged racialized narratives of Latinx populations. Participants recognized sharing their stories with Latinx youth countered the negative messaging and historical inequities that impact their perceptions about their own culture and what they might imagine is possible for future goals. Alvaro pointed out that these role models can “show us what we're capable of” and how he wanted to fulfill that role for others. This desire to promote antideficit perspectives that centered culture as an asset rather than a deficiency was commonly expressed.

So how my identity influences it, I am now at a point where I will not compromise my identity like once happened in K-12 because this is who I am and I'm proud of it. I don't leave it at the door anymore. I am giving a TED talk about people mispronouncing my name. I'm giving tips. I'm calling people out. You know what I mean? I'm very out and open about it, and I think more students just like me need to hear it because they too need to be validated about their experiences. And I don't think that's happening currently in our universities, or at least not enough of it. - Lonzo

Lonzo, like many of the participants, used their education experience to encourage other Latinx not to compromise their identities. Through their accumulated experience and perseverance despite facing discrimination, they often described this shift to being unapologetic

in how they addressed race and racism in their lives and work. Furthermore, several described their transitions from individual-level efforts to actively seeking to contribute to larger, more substantial efforts to increase representation.

I'm taking a course in Strategic Diversity Management in Inclusion-- no, Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Management from Georgetown University throughout the years that I've been on my job because I realize that I'm very passionate about diversity inclusion, especially in the business world and allowing them-- or paving ways so other citizens of color can actually become professionals in the city. - Camila

As she advanced in her career, she intentionally pursued venues for advancing equity initiatives within her organization. As a result, participants enacted resistance capital by amplifying their efforts at the systemic level through broader professional and community spaces. In this way, they had multiple levels of impact to advance both individual and systemic change.

I have my niece who is going to college, who has dropped out and goes back. Things like that. I'm always like, "You need to do this. You need to do that." And I make sure that I'm available to people so they know. Even my co-workers, I'm like, "You know what? Tell me when you want to go back to school. I'll help you what to do, I'll help you register. I'll help you this. I'll help you that." Because I feel like if they don't have someone there, it's easy to just be like "Ah, whatever, I don't have to. – Sofia

Sofia demonstrated how participants' efforts to uplift their community were infused into their daily lives. Everywhere she went, she tried to share her knowledge to help others navigate college. Participants' efforts were constant and spanned a variety of contexts across their personal and professional lives.

The other connection that I have that I talk about in my current role. So, whenever I go in, I talk about the importance of hiring teachers of color and teachers that look like our students. It's because when I think about my experience, I did not see a teacher that looked like me. And when I said a teacher, I mean a classroom teacher, somebody that is going to assign a grade. Not an ESL, educational assistant, or have classified staff, just like an actual certified teacher. - Abril

Abril further exemplified the depth of diversity efforts as many recognized the need to

address representation. She acknowledged that Latinx youth needed to see teachers and higher-level educational leaders from their own cultural backgrounds; therefore, she led initiatives to hire more diverse staff and administrators. Others also described the need to “grow your own” educators from within the community. Thus, their efforts to increase representation were tied to building capacity for young community members to give back to the community as future educators.

Giving Back. Participants demonstrated a strong identification with loyalty, responsibility, solidarity, and reciprocity to their communities and a shared commitment to giving back.

At the point, I knew I needed to do it for something bigger than me, not just for my career goals but I felt like I need to go be a counselor because students need somebody like me. And not even that I felt like I had any special talents or gifts to give anybody, but just somebody who they could relate to who's been through it, on a really winding road, I guess, to understand that it's not an A to B type of a journey. You're going to go everywhere. -Anabelle

Anabelle highlighted the calling to a higher purpose of contributing to the community more broadly. Many participants knew that their personal experience was valuable in easing the path for those who came from similar backgrounds.

Also, my community because we don't have many people as we would've liked, right, from high school graduating and going to pursue higher education and coming back to your community and do something where you can give back or be at least somebody that they can look up to, to say, "I want to be better than she is," right, "and go and do more things that are very impactful." And so, I will say those are my biggest motivations. -Camila

Camila described how she wanted to inspire others to build a larger movement for transformational change. While many struggled with and felt the burden of slower systemic change, they understood the power of their own journey and what it meant to have someone from their communities leading and working directly with others for the good of the community.

But I really like my job right now. I have a really cool job where I get to support students who are underserved and from low-income communities. But that's the main reason why I decided to do education because I realized how powerful education, higher education was for me and how powerful it could be for other people. -Damian

Damian made a career choice based on the impact he could make by helping others seek higher education. While many did go on to education-focused careers, all participants, despite their career fields, underscored the value of education for social mobility and sought to promote that within their communities.

My greatest accomplishments have been-- that I have put in my degree to good use where-- I get to do things that I really am passionate about. For example, for now, for me, I get to talk to families and parents about mental health and mental health services.- Valeria

Many of the Latinx participants sought careers that allowed them to contribute to societal benefit; therefore, many ended up in helping professions. Like Valeria, many worked in community-based organizations either professionally as their full-time career or volunteered or established partnerships to engage in advocacy work.

I ended up choosing my career because I felt like I knew how to do this. I know how to be a social worker based on the experience that I've had. So, I mean, I knew that I wanted to help people, and I knew that I wanted to make a difference in people's lives and I knew that I wanted to be an advocate for people, especially the Latino population. And so, I think that that really helped me to become the social worker that I am now. - Carla

Carla's career choice reflects the overarching perspective of wanting to be a change agent in the community. Carla connected her role as a social worker as being deeply embedded in and shaped by her own experience of hardships, which allowed her to understand the needs of her clients. Furthermore, as someone intimately engaged in the community every day, she was able to identify culturally relevant resources. Thus, participants' altruistic values were often rooted in purposely contributing to their home communities, as Sofia explained.

That was my goal, I wanted to work at [my local] high school and help students who are

facing the same situation as myself. I have a lot of students who feel like none of their family members graduated so why should they graduate? Or why should they try if nobody cares? I want students to know that we do care. We care for their well-being. We care for them to do well in school. We care for them to go beyond high school. And then, want them to make a difference in their life. And if nobody graduated in your family, then why not be the first one? You know what I mean? -Sofia

Sofia is an example of how many situated themselves and their life goals within the context of their home communities. She wanted to contribute to society and Latinx populations more broadly; however, she was intentional about pursuing a career that would specifically impact future generations within her hometown. Several directly mentioned the importance of coming home and how success often necessitated leaving their communities and the importance for them to return. In other words, their positionality as community representatives required their visibility as cultural role models for the next generation. Thus, the overarching themes of representation and giving back as resistance capital worked hand in hand.

Summary of Findings

The findings related to aspirational, familial, and linguistic capital were rooted in family, community, and linguistic histories. These foundational forms of capital consist of cultivating what Gandara (1995) calls cultural possibility through which participants develop their aspirations, which are deeply connected to their family and community values. Cultural knowledge, which was fostered and transmitted within families, shaped how they constructed college ideologies (Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2019). Within Oregon's emerging Latinx community, there were missed opportunities to recognize and build off of students' familial, cultural, and linguistic strengths that systematically perpetuated racial inequities and had significant impacts on students' trajectories. However, a few participants were able to share examples of the significant ways and specific individuals who provided culturally and linguistically affirming experiences. This support was often found in bilingual/bicultural

educators or those who made intentional efforts to get to know students/families personally or who pursued meaningful community engagement.

While the foundational forms of capital served as the roots for students' higher education pursuits, navigational, social, and resistance were conceptualized as the driving forms of capital that propelled participants through their educational trajectories. Participants' narratives relative to navigational capital encompassed the various stages of the college search and choice process. They reflected on their predispositions and the access to information and resources that they were afforded and how that shaped their college decision. They identified how the absence of robust support within their schools required them to develop navigational strategies to ensure their own success. There were several K-12 and college programs that focused on developing social capital, which enacted culturally sustaining programming and pedagogies, extended participants' networks through bilingual/bicultural mentors, and provided personalized and comprehensive support. Perhaps the most powerful findings centered on how resistance capital was grounded in family histories and legacies, which inspired them to reinvest in their communities. Participants actively sought ways to contribute to diversity efforts, cultivate the next generations, and engage in advocacy through their professions. All of these findings were carefully situated within the many layers of a new Latinx destination and how that context matters for our work as educators seeking to utilize asset-based perspectives that acknowledge the strengths within students' home communities.

In the next chapter, I will summarize the findings within the existing literature and in relation to Yosso's (2005) original theory of Community Cultural Wealth. After situating this research in the knowledge base of our field, I will provide suggestions for the advancement of

future research in this area. Lastly, I will offer implications for practice and policy, particularly within the context of new Latinx destinations.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Discussion, and Implications

In this chapter, I revisit the study's purpose and its anti-deficit framing. I then discuss the significance of the findings from the previous chapter and make connections to what we already know from the prior literature about Latinx students' college access and completion. I frame this discussion within the context of Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth, which provides a unique understanding of Latinx students' experiences within new Latinx destinations. Next, I offer implications for practice and policy, along with recommendations for future research. Finally, I provide some concluding thoughts.

Revisiting the Study Purpose & Framing

This study examined the experiences of Latinx students' college access within new Latinx destinations through a Community Cultural Wealth lens. To better understand the gap in the literature for Mexican Americans in new Latinx destinations, I examined the college access and completion trajectories of 20 Mexican American degree recipients within the state of Oregon. Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005), which is rooted in Critical Race Theory (CRT) and incorporates funds of knowledge, was used to counter deficit perspective with new Latinx destinations. Deficit-based perspectives are typically implicit and privilege majoritarian norms, while distorting the narratives of communities of color by framing challenges as cultural deficits rather than acknowledging the structural causes rooted in racism and other systems of oppression (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The CRT foundations within Community Cultural Wealth guided this research in focusing on how Mexican American students experience and respond to racism and other forms of oppression within new Latinx educational systems. This approach centered the experiential knowledge of marginalized communities to highlight unique forms of funds of knowledge where education systems are encountering large student

populations that were not previously present in such high numbers. Many within these contexts may not have fully considered the ways in which educational systems privilege the predominately White students for which it was established while marginalizing the rapidly growing Latinx populations of students. Therefore, funds of knowledge and Community Cultural Wealth provide assets-based lenses to contrast deficit-based views which obscure the role of educators in undermining the success of marginalized students. Asset-based frames allow educators to identify ways to disrupt systemic oppression rather than simply focusing on “fixing” students (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

Conclusion & Discussion

In this section, I utilize Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth as a theoretical lens to draw conclusions and make connections across the findings, literature, and theory. Following the qualitative findings and the two overarching themes, I organize this discussion into two subsets of forms of capital: 1) foundational forms of capital and 2) driving forms of capital.

Connecting Forms of Foundational Capital

The qualitative findings related to the forms of foundational capital - aspirational, familial, and linguistic capital - were rooted in family, community, and linguistic histories. Participants’ heavy emphasis on family reflecting aspirational capital was not surprising, given the vast college access scholarship on familismo (Alvarez, 2015; Martinez, 2013). While the significant role of the family in impacting the aspirations of Mexican American/Chicanx students is also well-documented (Acevedo-Gil, 2017; Ceja, 2004, 2006), the narratives described a direct connection to the family and community histories and journeys to new Latinx destinations. Immigration, familial, and community oral histories were tied to participants' values, morals, and work ethic and how they constructed college ideologies (Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2019). These

connections provide insights and add complexity to how familismo—the cultural value emphasizing interconnectedness and family unity; reciprocity in familial relationships, obligations, responsibilities; and the well-being of family members (Cuevas, 2020; Vega, 1990)—functions in college access and completion within new Latinx destinations. Just as research has noted the various dimensions of familial capital (Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2019), the types of family support that promoted college-going and completion varied among participants' families. While all participants described their family's unwavering value of education and unconditional support, they acknowledged their parents often lacked the financial and/or human resources to assist them. It often took culturally aware educators to recognize and strategically build off these familial strengths. In each case, however, participants described a collective process prioritizing family needs, even if it resulted in personal sacrifice (Hernández, 2015). Participants heavily weighed their family's advice, and their aspirations were grounded in their family's high value of education.

In the college access and completion process, families used dichos or Mexican sayings, which have extended metaphorical cultural significance and consejos to convey cultural wisdom and guidance about how to live and act. The study findings align with the literature on Latinx families cultural communicative resources, which include pláticas, dichos, refranes, consejos, testimonios, and other cultural and linguistic resources (Durán et al., 2020). These cultural communicative resources allowed parents and family members to: 1) communally reflect on and engage in critical dialogue about children's educational needs (Durán et al., 2020), 2) transmit moral teachings, and 3) provide motivational metaphors and stories (Espinoza-Herold, 2007). Participants remembered and utilized these resources when they faced challenges. In addition, the cultural significance and meaning of these communicative resources often do not translate

outside of the Spanish language. Thus, these communication channels cemented a linguistic tie to participants' home communities that connected to how they collectively made sense of their educational journey and how they would come to embrace and build upon their linguistic capital.

Participants described a journey of linguistic resilience as they overcome many significant barriers as bilingual individuals. Despite multilingualism being seen as an asset in many areas of the world and the evidence of its cognitive benefits (Hakuta, 1983), participants (especially those for who English was a second language) had to combat negative connotations, which included both subtle messaging and overt discrimination that had real consequences on their lives and self-perceptions. Perhaps the most prevalent and detrimental repercussions were due to the racial and linguistic dynamics inherent in U.S. schools' tracking system (Kanno & Kangas, 2014). Participants recounted being excluded from educational opportunities and placed in lower track courses which greatly affected their academic potential. Participants prevailed despite these barriers and reclaimed their linguistic strength, many in part, through the support of bicultural educators who validated their experiences as language brokers (Morales & Hanson, 2005) and instilled a sense of responsibility for them to use those skills to help their communities. Confirming similar findings on Latinx college students (Pérez, 2014), later in their development as young adults, participants drew on this linguistic capital to affirm their ethnic identity. This validation of their identity as bilingual individuals was critical to minimizing the harmful effects of microaggressions and negative messaging that they received about their bilingualism.

Connecting Driving Forms of Capital

Navigational, social, and resistance capital emerged in the participant narratives as forces that moved their educational trajectories forward and were categorized as driving forms of

capital. Navigational capital is arguably one of the less researched and understood forms of capital, perhaps because it is closely interconnected to other forms of capital (Acevedo & Solórzano, 2021; Yosso, 2005). This study's examination of navigational capital sought to purposely understand the college choice process. In trying to understand the factors that shape students' predispositions toward college-going, it was clear that participants' navigational strategies were directly shaped by and dependent on the information and resources available to them. Acquiring informational capital in the form of high-stakes information that would allow them to better access college-ready resources (i.e., honors courses, extracurricular activities, key enrichment programs) was critical to their long-range academic success (Liou et al., 2009). Reflecting on their experience, many noted that the information they were able to access was often incomplete or out of context, given their limited reference points as first-generation college students. Consequently, this knowledge was still inaccessible without mentors who could explain and walk them through the process. Thus, many realized the need to develop an essential navigational strategy in seeking mentors who could interpret and assist them in translating this information into action (Liou et al., 2016). Unfortunately, many needed to seek out mentors outside of their school due to the limited availability of educators and staff who were attuned to their needs and could provide culturally responsive support.

The findings related to social capital focused on answering the programming aspects of the study research questions two and three to identify the types of programs that supported students and validated their Community Cultural Wealth at both the K-12 and college levels. Very few college outreach programs were noted in the review of participant narratives. Perhaps, given the context within a new destination state, there may not have been many programs in operation, or there may not have been targeted efforts to recruit Latinx students. There were,

however, two programs that several participants mentioned. The SMILE program seemed to leverage partnerships with diverse schools to recruit large numbers of Latinx students; however, participants noted that they did not intentionally employ culturally affirming practices to engage these populations or have representation of bicultural/bilingual staff. Migrant education programs stood out by providing college information/support and culturally validating spaces. Participants noted the programs' asset-based efforts in legitimizing their home experiences, which increased engagement in the learning process by building off students' cultural backgrounds (Gildersleeve, 2009). Additionally, they provided bilingual staff with migrant backgrounds who could personally relate to students' experiences of discrimination and cultural and linguistic marginalization, which is another vital aspect of migrant programs (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009). These intentional cultural components are associated with the program's successful outcomes in increasing college awareness and enrollment (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Nuñez, 2009)

Migrant education programs also provided bridged support from college outreach to college persistence with the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). CAMP and other college support programs like the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) provided financial, academic, and emotional support, particularly during the first two years of college. Notably, they provided dedicated mentors, counselors, advocates, academic tutors, and role models and built students' support networks with faculty/staff and peers, which were critical for social and academic adjustment (Grant-Vallone et al., 2003). These support networks offered diverse types of instrumental (i.e., advising, feedback, tutoring) and psychosocial support (i.e., emotional support, encouragement, friendship) to students (Grant-Vallone et al., 2003), which were especially effective when implemented in culturally affirming approaches and curriculum

(Nuñez, 2009). Furthermore, financial support for tuition, books, housing, and other educational costs was an essential part of these programs (Araujo, 2011), which served as “lifelines” for participants who were low-income college students.

Lastly, one of the most significant findings of this study relates to how resistance capital was demonstrated in participants' narratives. Aligned with Solórzano & Delgado Bernal's (2001) assertion that individuals enact resistance based on their recognition of the need for social justice, participants' motivations to uplift their communities were rooted in their community and family histories and legacies narratives of resistance within new Latinx destinations. This collective identity shaped their drive for social change and instilled a sense of reciprocity where they saw their success as a product of their family's and community's collective sacrifice, which held a responsibility to give back (Gonzales, 2012). Given their critical awareness of the severe lack of Latinx educators, professionals, and community leaders, participants sought to fill this gap by serving as community role models for future generations. They strived to increase visibility and confront and dismantle the negative stereotypes permeating social and educational systems within new Latinx destinations. Throughout their academic and professional journeys, their work to impact representation shifted from individual efforts toward transformational resistance, which critiques systems of oppression to advance systemic level change (Revelo & Baber, 2018; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001).

In seeking broader transformational change, many participants enacted a communalistic orientation that compelled them to give back by working in collaboration with and for the good of their home community (Luedke, 2020). The majority of participants pursued careers working in education or community-based organizations, where they could serve as change agents. They described how they served as cultural brokers utilizing culturally and linguistically responsive

approaches to respect, honor, and empower families and communities to engage them in meaningful and authentic ways.

Utilizing a critical lens, the findings demonstrated the unique funds of knowledge that Mexican American students possess and draw upon in pursuing their educational goals. Their success was achieved in spite of the challenges rooted in their unique racialized histories and contexts of new Latinx destinations. Their experiences with racism and systemic barriers spanned from implicit deficit assumptions to overt forms of discrimination. Yet, participants not only persevered but highlighted the powerful familial/community strengths that were drawn on to develop robust strategies to navigate educational systems that were not created for them. The participants' stories of their evolution into the next generation of educators and leaders demonstrate the significant impact that increasing representation and building capacity from within communities can have for generations to come.

Implications for the Field

In this section, I provide an overview of the implications for educators, leaders, policymakers, and researchers. First, I present practice and policy recommendations, specifically within the context of new Latinx destinations. Second, I offer recommendations for future research and scholarship to expand on this dissertation work.

Practice and Policy Recommendations

This section offers several implications for policy and practice to improve educational outcomes within new Latinx destinations. First, considering the large emphasis on family that emerged in the participant narratives, there are significant implications for family outreach and engagement. The ways in which family influences all stages of the Latinx college choice process—from developing attitudes toward attending college, to what institutions to consider,

and finally to the school they decide to attend—is well documented in the literature (Acevedo-Gil, 2017). Research has shown that for Latinx students, college choice is not seen as an individual process but a collective one, where parents and students must have frank discussions about mitigating the costs and realizing the benefits of college attendance (Alvarez, 2015). Therefore, educators must do more to engage parents, siblings, and other relatives in the college-going process early on in K-12 by providing culturally relevant programming and linguistically appropriate resources (i.e., bilingual materials).

Confirming prior research (Carreón et al., 2005), many participants described educational settings and schools as overall unwelcoming for their parents and families, and minimal efforts were undertaken to engage them and provide culturally-specific college access information. Unfortunately, deficit viewpoints of Latinx family engagement prevail where parents are perceived as uninvolved and/or disconnected as they may not adhere to middle-class White norms (Fernández & Rodela, 2020). Parental involvement looks different depending on an individual's background, experiences, and culture (Carreón et al., 2005); therefore, it is short-sighted to assume that all must adhere to the traditional parental involvement expectations of participation in school committees, PTA, school events, buying educational materials for the home, and seeking tutoring for their children (Daniel-White, 2002; De Carvalho, 2000).

While the role of the family has been well-documented in the academic success of Latinx students at the K-12 level and the college-choice process, less attention has been paid to the continuous support and role that parents, siblings, and other relatives play in college persistence and completion. Family engagement at the college level contributes to students' sense of belonging on campus, yet family involvement is often limited to orientation, graduation, and family weekends. Furthermore, higher education family programming is often not inclusive or

strategically focused on engaging diverse families (Harper et al., 2018). Institutional policies and practices need to be examined as colleges and universities continue to develop parent outreach programs and family-friendly initiatives on campus to be more inclusive overall (Kiyama & Harper, 2018) and ensure that they address the unique needs of Latinx families.

Part of the challenge in engaging Latinx families in new destination states is that educators are adjusting to the rapidly growing Latinx populations and the shifting demographics within schools. Study participants noted that the most helpful individuals were those who had experience with Mexican/Mexican American communities outside of educational settings and those who took the time and effort to get to know them and their families personally. Therefore, the first step toward professional development for educators unfamiliar with Latinx populations is to understand the community. Training for educators should include the history of Latinx communities within their region to encourage a more intimate understanding and combat deficit stereotypes or views. Unfortunately, educators often fall back on deficit views that place blame on the students or their parents, focusing on so-called individual and cultural deficiencies rather than systemic influences that shape disparities in social and educational outcomes (Davis & Museus, 2019; Valencia, 2012). Thus, training culturally competent educators within new Latinx destinations requires an understanding of the communities they serve and must include a deeper inquiry into the larger historical and sociopolitical contexts that perpetuate educational inequities in these regions. To do this, community engagement is required with educators who build trust and see Latinx families as their partners who bring unique contributions to collaboratively identifying strategies that capitalize on cultural strengths by empowering families (Fernández & Rodela, 2020). This takes not only individual efforts, such as those noted by participants, but

also institutional commitment to make this a priority and to review and implement policies centered on culturally specific family involvement.

In addition to building capacity through professional development, a critical mass of diverse educators is necessary. Representation made a tremendous impact on participants and motivated many of them to seek educational careers. Research shows that while there is a critical shortage of Latinx teachers, they are well equipped to meet the needs of and impact Latinx student outcomes and are more likely to value students' cultural knowledge (Amos, 2018; Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012; Monzo & Rueda, 2001). Furthermore, because they are deeply connected Latinx communities and, like other teachers of color, they typically enter the profession with a heightened awareness of the sociopolitical contexts in which students of color are educated (Caldas, 2021; Quirocho & Rios, 2000). This grassroots level of expertise is far more valuable than any professional development could provide for teachers who are disconnected from their student populations. Considering the unique contexts of new Latinx destinations, it is imperative to champion more sustainable, funded teacher of color pipelines that recruit from and build capacity from within local Latinx communities is imperative. While there are many challenges in recruitment, preparation, and graduation of students in the Latinx teacher pipeline and the need for more robust efforts (Ocasio, 2019), the participants in this study are proof of the tremendous contributions and potential for growing your own from within the community.

Recommendations for Future Research

The research findings have significant implications for how we understand the processes in which Latinx think about, pursue, and choose where to attend college. Building upon the foundations of college choice models, scholars (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Tierney & Sablan,

2014) have critiqued and expanded upon the longstanding Hossler and Gallagher (1987) college choice model to be more inclusive of students of color. Others have theorized Latinx college choice models as family-centered with a constant negotiation between their individual and family expectations while maintaining a solid sense of familismo—culturally specific dedication and commitment to family (Hernández, 2015). Further exploring the college access experiences of Mexican American/Chicanx students specifically, scholars have outlined the culturally specific ways families support their children’s enrollment in college (Acevedo-Gil, 2017; Ceja, 2004, 2006). This underscores why we should not examine Latinx as an aggregated, homogenous group, but rather more research is needed that teases out the nuanced experiences across Latinx racial sub-groups; particularly as recent literature has revealed differences across Latinx sub-groups within new Latinx destinations (Ramos et al., 2021).

Furthermore, we know there are geographical differences that can impact the experiences across Latinx populations. Thus, Latinx educational trajectories vary depending on whether students are located within established Latinx settlement states versus new Latinx destinations. Even within new and emerging Latinx destinations, there are different sociohistorical economic and political factors at play. For example, students in new Latinx destinations continue to struggle to establish collective representation and equal access to education, which may be even more amplified in areas historically operating under a Black-White paradigm (Deguzmán, 2011), such as in the Nuevo South, which includes: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. Therefore, we need more representation across regions to gain a complete picture of Latinx educational experiences in the United States. Beyond simply ensuring the inclusion of various geographical areas are in Latinx research, it is vital to explore the ways in which context matters and shapes experiences. Emerging research

has begun to focus on the impact of new Latinx destination contextual factors (Camargo et al., 2022; Ramos et al., 2021). Thus, future research should take a multilayered approach to examine how Latinx students are making sense of their experiences based on their positioning within specific geographic locations, historical contexts, and current political cultures.

This dissertation study not only began to scratch the surface on how Mexican American students made sense of their educational journeys through new Latinx destinations, but how they are currently or hope to have an impact on their communities. Due to the snowball sampling techniques and the interest in the study, the majority of participants pursued educational careers. There are currently very few studies that center Latinx educators within the new Latinx diaspora and much less specifically within the Pacific Northwest (see exceptions Amos, 2016; Rodela et al., 2019; Rodela & Rodriguez-Mojica, 2020). The emerging research in this area begins to document the cultural strengths of Latinx educators, which enhance work with diverse populations, particularly Spanish-speaking Latinx students and families of color, through culturally responsive approaches (Rodela et al., 2019). More scholarship is needed to move this work forward and to fully illuminate the contributions of Latinx educators within new Latinx destinations.

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Appendix

Interview Protocol

Interview Questions:

1. How was it growing up in a new Latinx destination?
 - a. How did your family end up in a new Latinx destination?
 - b. Describe your community
 - c. Describe the educational environment in your community
2. Describe your racial and ethnical identity? What in your life impacted your identity and how?
 - a. What influence did your racial and ethnical identity and cultural values have on your education?
3. Are you bilingual? If so, how did being bilingual play a role in your education and the community you identified with? (i.e. code switching)
4. Tell me about your education experience in the K-12 education system?
 - a. Describe your K-12 trajectory (schools/locations in chronological order).
 - b. Did you participate in any special programs (e.g. newcomer center, bilingual education, ELD)?
 - c. Describe your relationships with teachers or other school personnel.
 - i. Do any stand out as those who made education meaningful and important?
 - d. In what ways (if any), did these school programs or individuals acknowledge or validate your ethnic/racial identity?
 - e. Did you have any negative school experiences? If so, please describe an example.
 - f. Are there any other K-12 resources/supports that you did not have that you wish were provided?
5. When did you begin thinking about attending college? Prompt: Whom or what, positive or negative.
 - a. Did you participate in any special programs in high school that focused on college access?
6. What colleges did you apply to and what influenced you to specifically apply to the colleges you did?
7. What influenced your decision to attend the college you choose?
 - a. If you attended more than one college for undergrad, what influenced you decision to attend subsequent colleges?
8. Before attending college, tell me about the educational goals you hoped to have accomplished?
 - a. How far have you accomplished these goals?
 - b. Was there any times when you thought you might not achieve them?
 - c. How did you stay motivated to achieve these goals?
 - d. What accomplishments are you most proud of? Why?
9. Who are the people who supported you during college and how? Family, peers, community
 - a. What role did your family play in going to college and receiving your college degree?

- i. Was education a priority in your family? Follow-up: If so, how did it help or complicate your college experience?
 - ii. Any messages, stories [cuentos], proverbs, (dichos) you have received from your parent(s)/guardian(s) or other people (i.e., educators, peers, etc.) about the importance of doing well in college? And in life?
- 10. What on-campus supports influenced your college experience?
 - a. Were there any individuals on-campus (i.e., faculty, staff) who supported you during college?
 - b. What resources, programs supported your success in college?
 - c. Were you part of any social/organization groups? If so, how did these groups/organizations contribute to your college experience?
 - d. In what ways (if any), did these on-campus supports acknowledge or validate your ethnic/racial identity?
 - e. Did you have any negative on-campus experiences? If so, please describe an example.
 - f. Are there any other on-campus college resources/supports that you did not have that you wish were provided?
- 11. Do you think you did well in balancing academic, social, and other commitments during college? Please explain. Follow-up: How did you learn to do this?
- 12. What skills, knowledge, abilities or resources did you build to navigate college and to excel academically?
 - a. Which of these skills, knowledge, abilities or resources, if any, did you gain from non-academic experiences (i.e., familial, community), but translated into your academic life.
- 13. Did the institution, where you earned your undergraduate degree, meet your expectations about college? If so, how?
- 14. Was there a time that you witnessed or experienced prejudice, discrimination, or oppression at the institution you attended? How did you respond and how did this affect your academic achievement?
- 15. Was there any other challenges you encountered while in college? Please explain. Follow-up: How have you been able to overcome these challenges?
- 16. . If you could go back in time, what would you change about your college experience?
- 17. What opportunities have you been afforded (or have you taken advantage of) as a result of your academic achievement? What benefits have you received from obtaining a college degree compared to others who did not earn a BA?
- 18. Describe your current career and future life goals?
 - a. What influence did your racial and ethnical identity and cultural values have on your current work and future goals?
 - b. What influence does community have on your current work and future goals?
- 19. Is there anything you would like to elaborate on or add that I did not ask you about?