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Los Angeles

*Adelante y Pa'lante:*

College-Educated Chicana/o and Puerto Rican Family Educational Oral Histories

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Education

by

Nichole Margarita Garcia

2016

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## **ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

*Adelante y Pa'lante:*

College-Educated Chicana/o and Puerto Rican Family Educational Oral Histories

by

Nichole Margarita Garcia

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles 2016

Professor Daniel G. Solórzano, Chair

A significant amount of research argues that once an individual completes a bachelor's degree it will increase their likelihood of securing a well-paying occupation, not only for the college graduate, but also for their children. However, it is unclear how this may or may not be different for racial and ethnic populations. This study examines college-educated Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families' undergraduate and graduate college experiences. Critical race theory, Chicana feminisms, and pedagogies of the home inform the transformative convergent mixed-methods design of the study. A transformative convergent design has two distinct processes of methods and data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, with the integration of the two occurring in the findings. In particular in studying Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated families, quantitatively, I conduct a secondary analysis of a national higher education survey, and qualitatively, I document 16 educational oral histories. These findings expose how household knowledge from one succeeding generation is passed to the next generation, and how it can enhance academic success and college participation for Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families.

Specifically, the findings move beyond deficit perspectives to an assets based approach on achievement for Chicana/o and Puerto Rican parents and children.

The dissertation of Nichole Margarita Garcia is approved.

Dolores Delgado Bernal

Noreen M. Webb

Tyrone C. Howard

Daniel G. Solórzano, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016

### **Dedication**

To my grandmother, Blandina Margarita Govea, I kept my promise.

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## **Vita**

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## **ACADEMIC HONORS AND AWARDS**

- 2016 Alternate Candidate, Dissertation Ford Foundation Fellowship
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## Chapter 1

### An Introduction

All communities value storytelling in some fashion, but for marginalized communities storytelling can be a necessity, a strategy for emotional, historical, and cultural survival. Story becomes an integral part of family and community life, a didactic tool for navigating through hostile environments and a form of cultural affirmation. However, the separation between home culture and school is often stark. (Rina Benmayor, 2013, p.ix)

The truth, these stories are nothing but story, bits of string, odds and ends found here and there, embroidered together to make something new. I have invented what I do not know and exaggerated what I do to continue the family tradition of telling healthy lies. If, in the course of my inventing, I have inadvertently stumbled on the truth, *perdoname*.  
(Sandra Cisneros, December 2012)

Within Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families,<sup>1</sup> storytelling is foundational to our<sup>2</sup> survival, resistance, and knowledge. However, as mentioned in the epigraph, the validity of our knowledge is questioned, challenged, and often dismissed in educational institutions. Although “formal institutions” may not recognize the power of storytelling, it is intertwined as normalcy within Chicana/o and Puerto Rican households. Storytelling and stories are used as a pedagogical tool to “tell healthy lies” that save our own lives when encountering racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression. In acknowledging that race and racism exist in our society, we “inadvertently stumbled on the truth.” We remain unapologetic (*perdoname*) and actively resist oppression. Dolores Delgado Bernal (2006) describes pedagogies of the home as:

---

<sup>1</sup> Latina/o refers to men or women whose origins are rooted in Latin America (i.e. Guatemalan or Puerto Rican) and reside in the United States despite immigration status. Further, Latina/o is used as an umbrella term that is inclusive of Chicanas and Chicanos. Chicana/o men or women can be defined as those who are of Mexican origin that reside in the United States despite immigration status. Among the Latina/o population, Chicanas/os compromise the largest origin group in the United States, accounting for 65% of the Latina/o population (Pew Hispanic Report, 2012). For this study, Puerto Rican men or women are defined as residents of the United States who are born in Puerto Rico or can trace ancestry to Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans compromise the second largest origin group of the United States, accounting for 9% of the Latina/o population. I focus on Chicana/os and Puerto Ricans since they are proportionally the largest Latina/o groups in the U.S.

<sup>2</sup>I do not approach my research objectively detached. Rather, it is informed by my epistemological orientation and cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998).

...community and family knowledge [that] is taught to youth through ways as legends, *corridos*, storytelling, and behavior. It is through culturally specific ways of teaching and learning that ancestors and elders share the knowledge of conquest, segregation, labor market stratification, patriarchy, homophobia, assimilation, and resistance. This knowledge is passed from one generation to the next (p.624).

Among Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families, it is unclear how knowledge is passed from one generation to the next in households that have at least one college-educated parent. This study examines college-educated<sup>3</sup> Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families' undergraduate and graduate college experiences. I offer my own familial educational pipelines and pedagogies of the home to introduce my research agenda.

### **The Garcia Family**

My educational oral history begins with my paternal family's educational pipeline as displayed in Figure 1.1, my grandmother, Blandina Tuero Govea, was a Mexican American single mother of nine children from two separate marriages. She raised her family in Salt Lake City, Utah. My grandmother completed the eighth grade, but stressed the importance of education to her children. Of her nine children, all but one<sup>4</sup> graduated from high school. Of those nine children, five went on to attend and graduate from four-year institutions of higher education. Of those five college graduates, three pursued graduate education and attained master's degrees. My father, Richard Garcia Sr., was one of those three children and holds a M.Ed. and MSW. My father also pursued a PhD in Education for 10 years, but was unable to complete his degree. Among the five children that attained bachelor degrees, they had 14 children. Of those 14 children, only two have attained a bachelor's degree, and one is enrolling into college in Fall 2016. On my paternal side, I am the first and only individual to pursue a

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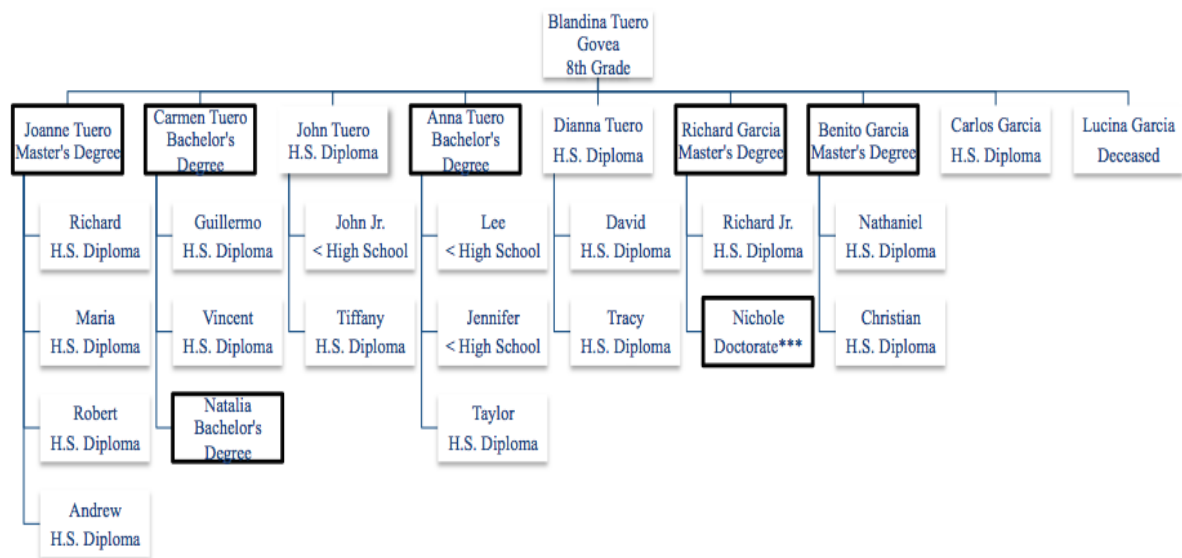
<sup>3</sup> In this study, college-educated refers to having at least one parent and child having attained a bachelors degree granted in the United States.

<sup>4</sup> Lucina Garcia died at the age of 3 due to unforeseen circumstances.

graduate education and attain a master's and doctoral degree. This stark discrepancy is alarming and critical to examine among Latina/os because within the Latino community, education has long been viewed as the vehicle for economic and social mobility (Contreras, 2011). It is increasingly important to examine those students that are considered "high achievers," "successes," and that are not the first in their family to attend a four-year institution. Personally, due to my father attaining a higher education, I am not considered a first-generation college student. However, if we look at both my paternal and maternal familial educational pipelines, one parent with a college education may not be enough to transmit the skills necessary to be successful in the United States higher education system.

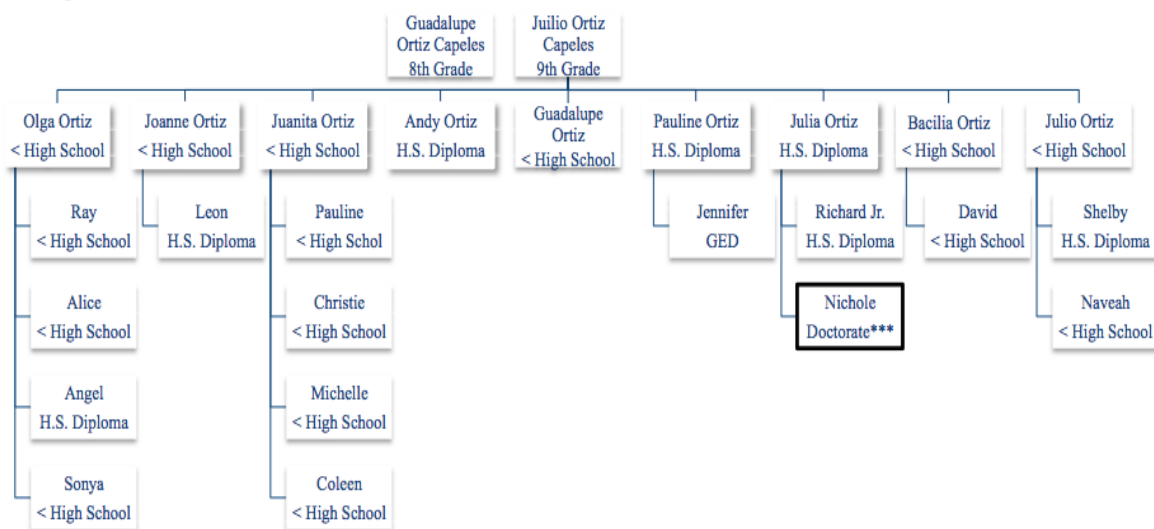
On my maternal side, as seen in Figure 1.2, my grandparents, Julio and Guadalupe Ortiz Capelles, were Puerto Rican parents of nine children and raised their family in Salt Lake City, Utah. Adapting to this state as migrants was difficult for my grandparents, and learning a new educational system was even more challenging. My grandmother had an eighth grade education and my grandfather completed the ninth grade education. Due to the lack of understanding the educational system, it was a more difficult progression in educational attainment for my mother's familial educational pipeline. Of my grandparents nine children, only three graduated from high school. My mother, Julia Ortiz Garcia, was one of them. Among these three children, all three of their children graduated with a high school or equivalency diploma. As one of those three, I am the first and only family member on my maternal side to graduate from a four-year institution in both undergraduate and graduate studies.

**Figure 1.1**



1

**Figure 1.2**



Despite being on the path of “success,” I often reflect and contemplate how I was able to persist and graduate from multiple institutions of higher education, despite none of my nuclear or extended family members doing so, including my own brother. As I contemplated this, I asked my parents to participate in this study and offer their educational oral histories as a way to grasp the pedagogies of the home they offered me. My parents shared the following with me in a collective interview:

Dad: I told you I was in the middle of my college [career] getting [racially and politically conscious], taking Chicano studies. I said, “No, fuck that.” I am going to go see what the fuck is going on [in the classroom and with your guys teachers].

Nichole: Oh my god.

Dad: No, I am telling you. We advocated for you guys as best we could which was really different from our parents because our parents were hands off. My mom’s perspective was [that teachers were] the experts. [Teachers are not] going to lie.

Mom: Yeah, [my parents expected that as a student] you do what you are told. Be quiet. We do not want any problems.

Dad: That was not right. So we made sure when it came to our kids we were involved and we went [to] every freaking thing. We never missed a parent teacher conference, performances [or] science fair. We did everything. [However]... education is important, but you know as well as I do it is not the great equalizer that everyone talks about either.... what you are learning its not only about working hard but also working smart which means learning how to navigate the system. That is probably the lesson that we try to impart on you guys [your brother and you] the most.

My parents demonstrate that based on their educational experiences, they became active participants in my educational endeavors as well as my brother’s. My father articulates that an education is important, but not all educational institutions provide justice to students. Therefore, as his children, we needed to learn how to navigate the educational system. Consequently,

examining my parents' familial educational pipelines suggests that there is not a linear progression in educational attainment among Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families in our experience. For example, in my father's familial educational pipeline, we see educational attainment decline across generations among those parents with a college education and their children. Similarly, in my mother's familial educational pipeline, we see an array of attainment from declines to slight progressions.

I believe systemic oppression is indoctrinated as normalcy within the United States and permeates itself in educational institutions. Educational institutions were not designed for /or with Communities of Color in mind (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Yosso, 2006). In fact, Ceballos (2004) asserts that "although parenting styles and demographic characteristics, such as parental income, education, and family structure, are consistently related to academic performance of white students, they are not as reliable predictors of scholarly achievement among Students of Color" (p.172). The differential educational trajectories within my family seem to simultaneously align with and contradict this trend. Are our experiences merely coincidental deviations or might the narrative of college-educated Puerto Rican and Chicana/o families be more complex than research might suggest?

Given the high rates of attrition at every part of the educational pipeline amongst all Latina/os, it is worth investigating whether the social, racial, and gendered stratification of Puerto Rican and Chicana/o students hinders paths of persistence in higher education despite the fact that these students have college-educated parents. In order to capture the experiences of Puerto Rican and Chicana/o college-educated parents and their college-educated children in higher education, specific research questions guide this process.

### **Research Questions**

This research seeks to answer questions regarding varying aspects of pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 1993) as constructed in college-educated Puerto Rican and Chicana/o households and its function in U.S. higher education. For the purpose of this study, pedagogies of the home are defined as the unique navigational and cultural mechanisms taught within Latina/o households that cultivate knowledge to allow Puerto Rican and Chicana/o college students to disrupt the hegemonic notions that their culture, traditions, and customs are inferior to white society (Delgado Bernal, 1993). The concept of pedagogies of the home recognizes that Puerto Rican and Chicana/o families provide “strategies of resistance that challenge the educational norms of higher education” (Delgado Bernal, 1993, p.635). As mentioned before, Ceballo (2004) posits that Students of Color do not have the same experiences, recourses, and/or access to educational institutions as their white counterparts; therefore, variables such as demographic characteristics, parental income, education, and family structure are not as “reliably predictive of scholarly achievement among racial minority youth” (p.172). It becomes increasingly important to analyze the educational system to understand how race and racism affect institutions, discourse and educational practices and the impact both have on Students of Color (Yosso, 2006). Therefore, the concept of pedagogies of the home provides us with a framework to begin understanding the experiences of Puerto Rican and Chicana/o college educated parents and their college educated children. Thus, the questions guiding this research are:

#### **Quantitative**

1. What are the differences between Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated parents (with at least one with a bachelor’s degree) and their college-educated children’s aspirations?

### **Qualitative**

#### **Parent**

2. How do Chicana/o college-educated parents *impact* their college-educated children's college-related experiences?
3. How do Puerto Rican college-educated parents *impact* their college-educated children's college-related experiences?

#### **Children**

4. How do Chicana/o college-educated children *perceive the impact* of their college-educated parents on their college-related experiences?
5. How do Puerto Rican college-educated children *perceive the impact* of their college-educated parents on their college-related experiences?

### **Dissertation Overview**

I have organized this dissertation into seven chapters. The first chapter is the introduction that contains the significance and research questions that guide the work. Chapter 2 provides an extensive literature review that informs this study. I organize Chapter 2 into three sections: historical underpinnings that shape the dominant discourse of Latina/os in education institutions, the role of Latina/o families in relation to academic achievement, and synthesis of the fragmented educational literature on college-going students with college-educated parents. In Chapter 3, I identify my theoretical frameworks, Critical Race Theory and Chicana Feminism, and the transformative convergent mixed method I utilized to gather my data. In Chapter 4, I examine a secondary data set, discuss methodological tensions of a secondary analysis, and propose the solution of a critical race transformative convergent mixed method. Chapter 5 examines Chicana/o families' educational oral histories of their college experiences. Similarly, Chapter 6 focuses on Puerto Rican families' educational oral histories of their college experiences. Finally, Chapter 7 offers a conclusion, contributions, and implications of the study.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

Latina/os comprise the largest minority group in the United States (Fry & Taylor, 2012). However, despite their significant numbers and rapid, growth they are not economically or educationally improving in comparison to their white counterparts. Perez Huber, Huidor, Malagon, Sanchez & Solórzano (2006) found that Latina/os students have the highest drop-out rates of any minority group in the United States throughout primary, secondary, and post-secondary education. Among Latina/os students, Chicana/os and Salvadorans have the lowest educational attainment at every level of the educational pipeline (Perez Huber et al, 2006). Scholars (Fry, 2003; Lockwood Secada, 1999) have begun to recognize this alarming pattern of poor retention rates, and much of their work focuses on the problems and obstacles that result Latina/os being pushed-out. The racialization of Latina/os in educational contexts in the U.S. contributes to low attrition rates and warrants exploration.

The racial narrative of Latina/os in the United States is complex and many times Latina/os are not defined by their ethnicity or race distinctively in educational institutions (Gomez, 2008). The historical racial discourse that has transpired frames Latina/os as the problem, placing the blame on their culture, language, and traditions. Therefore, this literature review is threefold: 1) I will discuss the literature pertaining to the historical underpinnings that shape the dominant discourse of Latina/os in education institutions, 2) I will focus on the ethnic, racial, and cultural socialization practices among Latina/o families in relation to academic achievement, and 3) I will synthesize the fragmented educational literature on college-going children with college-educated parents to reveal the urgency of researching the knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Latina/os in cultivating high educational

aspirations within the family (Yosso, 2005). Each of these sections informs the others and in inverse order aligns with my guiding research questions.

### **Historical Discourse on Latina/os in Education**

The Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project (2011) reports that Mexicans comprise 33.5 million, Puerto Ricans 4.9 million, and Cubans 1.8 million of the overall U.S. Hispanic population of 51 million. The majority of the educational research focuses on these three Latina/o groups because collectively they constitute the highest proportion of the overall Latina/o population in the United States. Quantitative and qualitative research that has been conducted by social scientists and policy makers on Latina/os has traditionally been focused on *between group* relationships, *within group* relationships, and *comparing* the educational achievement of immigrants versus U.S. born Latina/os (Soto, 2006). Research *between groups* analyzes the longitudinal educational experiences of Latina/os in comparison to their high achieving white counterparts and documenting the difference of unequal achievement among African Americans and Asians (Soto, 2006). Research *within groups* focuses primarily on the educational heterogeneity of Mexicans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans, and more recently, Central Americans (Soto, 2006). Finally, research comparing immigrant and U.S. born Latina/os documents how citizenship, class, gender, and race affect educational attainment. The majority of these research projects of Latina/o students in higher education documents underachievement and unsuccessful patterns of persistence, and often center on the experiences of first generation college students (Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella & Nora, 1996), undocumented students (Perez, W, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, & Cortes, 2009; Huber, & Malagon 2006), and more recently community college students (Greene, Marti, McClenney, 2008; Rendon & Nora, 1989). Examining academic models that analyze the process of achievement among Latina/os is

necessary to portray how these students are characterized and understood in educational institutions.

Academic models explaining the achievement of Latina/os provides a historical synthesis of how institutions of law and education have racialized, discriminated against and maintained Latina/os as inferior. Montero-Sieburth & Batt (2001) in “An Overview of the Educational Models Used to Explain the Academic Achievement of Latina/os Students: Implications for Research and Policies into the New Millennium” explores the historical trajectory of Latina/os in education. Montero-Sieburth & Batt (2001) offer a typology in chronological order to provide a theoretical understanding of how Latina/os are viewed in educational institutions. I will utilize their three-part typology<sup>5</sup> of: 1) Segregationist Educational Explanations 1800s-1930s, 2) Cultural Explanations 1930s-1970s, and 3) Sociological Explanations 1970s into the present. These time periods are not to be viewed in isolation from each other or as static. In fact, these explanations build upon one another and intersect to reproduce deficit notions of Latina/o students and their families in the United States educational system into the present day.

#### Segregationist Educational Explanations 1800s - 1950s

Segregationist educational explanations were rooted in overt racist notions justified through “scientific evidence.” Proponents of Social Darwinism and Eugenics constructed a hierarchy based on a typology of biology and race. Social Darwinist ideology argues for the “survival of the fittest,” meaning that in any given human society, individuals, groups, and cultures collectively determined as weak will ultimately be eliminated, while those understood as strong will rise to power and maintain cultural influence over the disenfranchised (Hofstadter, 1992). Following suit, Eugenics is the science of intentionally improving a human population by

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<sup>5</sup> Montero-Sieburth & Batt (2001) original typology consists of five parts. For the purpose of this literature review I have restricted it to three because of the salience and importance to my own research agenda.

controlled breeding to increase the occurrence of desirable heritable characteristics (Galton, 1869). Within this Western, pseudo-scientific movement, a convenient racialized typology cultivated the biological superiority and purity of Anglo Saxons resulting in a spectrum of phenotype and inferiority of Communities of Color. Racial histories of the 1800s tend to focus on the strict racial categorization of Blacks in relation to the one-drop rule of hypo descent. However, Latina/os (specifically Mexican Americans) were neither defined by their ethnicity or race distinctively.

The systemic categorization of Latina/os in the United States originated within the institution of law that rendered them racially ambiguous (Gomez, 2008). The ambiguous nature of Latina/o racialization greatly influenced their status and subsequent treatment within U.S. educational institutions. Legal scholars (Gomez, 2008; Haney Lopez, 2006) have documented the ways the law has been utilized to construct and deploy “race” as a vehicle for determining the social experiences of communities of color. For example, Haney Lopez (2006) contends that the “...law constructs race at every [societal] level: changing the physical features borne by people in this country, shaping the social meanings that define races, and rendering concrete the privileges and disadvantages justified by racial ideology” (p.104). Commenting on the materialization of these processes amongst Latina/os, Gomez (2008) asserts that the involuntary descendants of Spanish and Portuguese slavers and colonizers have been depicted as a monolithic “ethnic” group that will eventually benefit from “straight-line” integration into the melting pot of U.S. He does not regard uncomplicated ethnic amalgamation as a viable outcome for Latina/os. Instead, Gomez (2008) argues that Latina/os have been (and will continue to be) regarded, analyzed, understood, and treated rigidly as a distinct and distinctly marginalized racial group. In comparison to Native and African Americans, the racialization process for Latinas/os

has varied widely due to the disparate manifestations of colonization amongst these groups. Further complicating these differences, European-American settler-colonists leveraged the law diabolically and effectively to legitimize artificial racial formations, construct inequitable resource allocations by race, and ferment conflict amongst Latina/os, Native American, and African Americans (Omi & Winant, 1994). This conflict pitted Communities of Color against one another helping sustain white supremacy (Omi & Winant, 1994).

The signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 that ended the Mexican American War marked a historical moment for Mexican Americans and Latina/os in general because it granted the U.S. ownership of the Southwest, and, of particular importance, facilitated the racial ambiguity of Mexican Americans. After the signing of the treaty, Mexican nationals in the Southwest automatically became citizens, whereas, the 14th Amendment legalized African Americans as citizens in 1868. Unfortunately, many early 19<sup>th</sup> century Mexican Americans engaged in racial bargains that served to disenfranchise and distance them from Native Americans and African Americans, *and*, simultaneously, elevate Latina/os in the racial hierarchy; ostensibly out of second-class citizenship status (Gomez, 2008). Gomez (2008) states, “groups [came] to be identified and to identify themselves in racial terms and learn their place as deserving or underserving in the racial hierarchy” (p. 2).

Similarly, The Spanish-Cuban-American War in 1898 dictated the fate of Puerto Rico and its relationship to the United States. On December 10, 1898 the Treaty of Paris was signed ensuring the end of the Spanish Empire. As a result, Spain relinquished Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Guam. The U.S. government undertook the notion of manifest destiny coupled with racial superiority to drive U.S. expansion and colonial rule into Puerto Rico. As a result, the U.S. enforced a military occupation from 1898 to 1900 and issued the Foraker Act (first Organic Act

of 1900-1917), which granted Puerto Ricans civilian rule, while strategically displacing their participation in their own government. Under the Foraker Act political representation shifted political power directly to U.S. government officials. The U.S. President, U.S. appointed governor, and the U.S. congress all had the power to veto local legislation.

Nieto (2000) further articulates colonial rule as she states, “Given its status as a colony of larger world powers for almost 500 years, Puerto Rico has always been at the mercy of policies and practices over which it has had little control”(p.7). In 1917, the U.S. Congress passes the Jones Act (second Organic Act), declaring all Puerto Ricans citizens of the United States and English as the official language of the island. During this time, Puerto Rico encountered drastic economic change between World War I and World II, and the United States restricted emigration among Europeans. Consequently, Puerto Ricans as newly designated U.S. citizens became a preferred source of low wagedworkers for jobs in the states. Whalen and Vazquez-Hernandez (2008) emphasize that the Puerto Rican people were “displaced by economic change at home, recruited as a source of cheap labor, and seeking work to improve their lives, Puerto Ricans boarded steamships and came to the States in large numbers” (p.13).

Therefore, for many Latina/os in the 1800s, seeking and/or embracing the legal designation “white” had less to do with a genuine endorsement of a white racial *identity* and more to do with their acknowledgement of the importance of a white racial *positionality* in a society that determined citizenship and granted related rights through a rigid, racially hierarchal lens. Thus, Latina/os utilized jurisprudence in an attempt to be legally understood as white in order to obtain citizenship and hopefully gain access into institutions, like education, to which they had previously been denied entry. For example, Mendez v. Westminster (1946) is an influential case that demonstrated the utilization of white racial positionality within the context

of law (Valencia, 2008). Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez resided in Westminster, California and wanted their three children to attend Westminster Elementary School with their cousins in 1944-1945. However, when Soledad Vidaurri, aunt of the three children, went to enroll them, they were denied admissions. Soledad later discovered that her children were permitted to attend because of their French last name and light complexion. This discrimination by phenotype and surname became a key issue in the Mendez case (Valencia, 2008). The winning argument of the trial was an intuitive premise that strategically did not address race, but rather argued that the “segregation of Mexican students deprived them of their federal right to equal treatment by the state” (p.61). The argument would ensure that California state law recognized Mexican Americans as white, and as a result Mexican children gained access into schools (Valencia, 2008; Strum, 2010).

Ironically, Latina/os were *legally* defined as white, yet *socially constructed* as decidedly non-white. The U.S. law defined African Americans as non-white through the rule of hypo descent. The one-drop rule served Latina/os rather differently, “One drop of Spanish blood allowed them to claim whiteness under certain circumstances” (Gomez, 2008, p. 5). The racial ideologies that were constructed for Latina/os and African Americans during this time period expose the complexities and inconsistencies of white supremacy (Gomez, 2008). Ultimately, “both ideologies reproduced the racial subordination of blacks and Mexicans, but they did so in very different ways. Without understanding how they worked— and how they worked in tandem—we cannot fully understand American racial dynamics in the twentieth century and beyond” (Gomez, 2008, p. 6). Illuminating the multilayered racial history of Latina/os during the 1800s to 1950s reveals the complex social positions they occupied within the law and education institutions. By law some Latina/os benefited and gained access to specific arenas but

were still deemed as inferior to their white counterparts and socially not accepted. As a result, the inferiority of Latina/os would transmit into the education system and the Latina/os family, culture, and values were cited as the root cause of their “underachievement.”

#### Cultural Explanations 1960s-1970s

The Latina/o racial discourse underwent a significant shift at the turn of the 20th century and centered on cultural explanations of Latina/o underachievement. Cultural deficit, cultural deprivation and cultural differences assert that disappointing learning outcomes amongst Latina/os are cultivated within ill-prepared and unmotivated Latina/o families and under-resourced Latina/o homes. During the 1960s and 70s, dominant groups in the US considered Latina/o families as deficit compared to white middle class families. Latina/os were seen as “failing [due to] not having access to reading, writing, computing and ways of speaking that mainstream white students had” (Soto, 2006, p.12). Theories to back up these claims were produced by scholars such as Oscar Lewis (1966) who coined the term “culture of poverty” after conducting an ethnographic study of Mexican communities. Lewis suggested that due to poverty Mexicans were prone to violence, lacked of a sense of history, and neglected to plan for the future. Lewis’s (1966) findings were based on stereotypes and unfortunately still endure as systematic explanations of why Latina/os families are lagging behind whites and other racial groups. As explained by Lourdes Diaz Soto (2006):

The cultural deficit and cultural deprivation theories fell into misuse because they tended to place the blame on the families and students and presented a passive picture of the agency of these parents and students to act on their behalf. Latina/os parents are engaged in the education of their children, yet accessing that education requires understanding the infrastructure of educational policies as well as practices. In this regards, identifying the culture of the home as static and non-adaptive is in itself problematic (p.13)

Lewis' study had an impact on the degree to which educational researchers have focused on culture in reproducing society. Educational institutions (appearing impartial) tend to legitimize certain forms of knowledge, ways of speaking, and ways of relating to the world (i.e. cultural capital) that privilege the dominant class. On the other hand, educational institutions marginalize and devalue the knowledge, ways of speaking, and ways of relating to the world that come from the subordinate classes. A prominent example of this is the Americanization programs that Mexican Americans were subjected to. Gilbert Gonzales (1997) argues that early Americanization programs enforced segregation and the dismantling of the Mexican culture, language, and customs. The United States government was convinced that "traditional ethnic culture rejected external governmental methods to achieve social relations characteristics of modern societies" (Gonzales, 1997, p.32).

Americanization programs were one path the U.S. government took within the educational system to target Latina/o immigrants. The educational system served as the fastest means to achieve Americanization due to the fact that children spent the majority of their day in school. The key goal was to take away the Spanish language because the "lack of a common language makes social cohesion impossible" (Gonzales, 1997, p.33). The U.S. government came to the conclusion that language and identity coincided; you could not have one without the other. Therefore, the Mexican American home was viewed as, "a source of Mexican culture and consequently a reinforcer of the 'Mexican educational problem' " (Gonzales, 1997, p.47). Thus, government officials targeted mothers and daughters within the household as sites of assimilation. Mexican daughters and mothers could enforce Americanization homemaking and the likelihood of the creation of an American-like home could be achieved. Gonzales (1997) states, "Americanization proponents identified the Mexican girls as a potential carriers "of

American culture, the social gene who upon her marriage and subsequent motherhood could create a type of home in which the next generation could be raised in an American cultural atmosphere” (Gonzales, 1997, p.48). Villenas (2009) argues that deficit perspectives have “historically served to label Latina/os parents as backward, incompetent people who do not care about their children’s education” (p.129). These perspectives dismiss the heterogeneity that exist in Latina/o communities and essentializes them as homogenous (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). Thus, educational institutions reproduce class inequality by privileging the culture of dominant class and marginalizing the culture of the subordinate classes in this case Latina/os.

#### Sociological Explanations 1970s-present

Sociological explanations from the 1970s to the present focus on the upward or downward assimilation of Latina/os in the United States. Assimilation theories, while having undergone some important revisions in the past seventy years, are still shaped by a preoccupation with culture as a measure of social inclusion and boundary maintenance. Because assimilation is heavily linked to measures such as language, values, and customs, it often presupposes strictly cultural accounts for why assimilation is or is not occurring. Traditional assimilation theory hinges on the assumption that social inclusion is a replicable process. Immigrant groups are expected to move into the mainstream within the first two or three generations of arriving (Perlmann 2005). If integration doesn’t happen, we begin to question whether the group is lacking some sort of cultural capital.

Gordon (1964) was the first scholar to assert that the social structure in the United States encourages ethnic groups to create their own enclaves because often institutions outside of these established enclaves are shut off to those not assimilated or part of the dominant group. Not assimilating would, in turn, prompt cultural pluralism, in which ethnic groups live next to the

dominant group but do not assimilate. However, assimilation was viewed as a solution for the incorporation of white ethnic groups into the United States during the World War II era, and biological determinism began to lose its legitimacy. Although Gordon (1964) warns that ethnic groups not assimilating into the dominant group will promote racial prejudice, he feels that the systematic formation of the United States hinders assimilation of ethnic groups, and in turn, promotes the conservation of their separate ethnic identities and enclaves. Interestingly, although Gordon emphasizes the inevitable creation of ethnic communities, he also states that social class is more important than ethnicity, and that ethnic-groups will begin to identify with others according to their class, not their ethnicity. This directly contradicts his earlier statement, and this contradictory argument has remerged into contemporary assimilation arguments for Latina/os (Wilson, 1980; Alba & Nee, 2003; Lacy, 2007; Jimenez, 2009). Gordon's major pitfall was that he was solely concerned with white-ethnic communities who during that time period were able to assimilate into White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPS) society, and he essentially subsumes ethnicity to race.

Omi and Winant (1994) critique particular ideas of traditional assimilation and ultimately disagree with Gordon's (1964) structural assimilation argument. Omi and Winant (1994) argue that race has been classified into three common paradigms within the United States: ethnicity, class, and nation. Omi and Winant (1994) categorize the ethnicity paradigm into three major stages: 1) pre-1930s ethnic groups were able to assimilate into U.S. society challenging the social Darwinism and eugenics; 2) 1930s to 1965 progressive/liberal "common sense" approach to race with the themes of assimilation and cultural pluralism come to the forefront; and 3) Post-1965 in which the ethnicity paradigm was used to defend and sustain white supremacy (p. 14-16). Omi and Winant (1994) challenge the notion of structural assimilation as functioning in a straight-line

convergence. They state, “Yet this assumption is quite unwarranted with respect to racial minorities, whose distinctiveness from the white majority is often not appreciably altered by adoption of the norms and values of the white majority” (p. 21). In other words, in spite of the ability that people of color have to adopt the dominant groups norms, the capability to assimilate is not a straight-line integration as it is for white immigrants due to *race* and not ethnicity.

Moreover, while Gordon provides one of the first conceptualizations of classic assimilation and Omi and Winant critique his scholarship incorporating race and racism, the construction of these theories are deeply rooted in the context of a white/black paradigm, which places Latinas/os in a liminal space. Telles and Ortiz (2008) move beyond these limited notions to look at how groups such as Mexican Americans fall outside conventional explanations of immigrant or ethnic integration in the United States. In particular, assimilation and ethnic integration might be processes with no clear end, with bumps, contours and unforeseen outcomes that previous theories do not account for. In other words, there are multiple dimensions by which to measure the extent of assimilation, which may not always be cohesive. As Telles and Ortiz (2008) argue, assimilation is also about participation, the process of participating in the institutions of a new place. When the failure to assimilate happens, the explanation that is offered is that the group does not share the mainstream belief system. Social inclusion is not just about values, but integrating into institutions such as the educational system. It is not enough to value education, there also is the process of going to school and being able to navigate through this sort of institution to move ahead, a trajectory that has a lot to do with social structures and the particular way societies distribute privilege and status. Thus, studies of assimilation of Latina/os in education need to separate ethnicity and race in order to reveal systematic oppression that could be blocking paths of persistence.

In unraveling the historical discourse of Latina/os in education through a three-part typology it is evident that Latina/o students have been positioned and socially constructed as inferior and incapable of academic achievement due to their race and/or ethnicity. Deficit discourses remain ingrained in the very fabric of educational institutions and often reproduce unsuccessful patterns of educational achievement as a problem among Latina/o students' culture, tradition, and family processes. While deficit discourses remain an institutional problem, other factors that contribute to academic achievement among Latina/o students' need to be considered. In the next section, I consider ethnic, racial, and cultural socialization practices among Latina/o families in relation to educational achievement. By analyzing the family unit we can begin to understand how Latina/o households function to promote ethnic identity, educational achievement, and how they prepare their children for discrimination that they may encounter in educational institutions.

### **Ethnic, Racial, and Cultural Socialization Practices among Latina/o Families and Educational Achievement**

Parent-child socialization and children's educational achievement

Within Child Development and Family Studies, parent-child relationships are examined in the context of socialization. Parent-child socialization refers to "the manner by which a child, through education, training, observation, and experience, acquire skills, motives, attitudes, and behaviors that is required for successful adaptation to a family and a culture" (Spera, 2005, p. 126). The socialization process is reciprocal between parent and child, as parents transmit messages to their children, their children can vary in their "level of acceptance, receptivity, and internalization of these messages" (Spera, 2005, p. 126). More recently, scholars have become interested in parent-child socialization and the relationship between the child's home environment (i.e. family), school environment, and educational attainment (Brown & Iyengar,

2008; Davis-Kean, 2005; Spera, 2005). For instance, research has steadily demonstrated that parents' education and income are significant in predicting children's achievement, but how parents' practice socialization in the household in relation to their children's academic achievement warrants further exploration (Brown & Iyengar, 2008; Davis-Kean, 2005; Haveman & Wolfe, 1994; Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994; Spera, 2005). Parenting practices and parenting styles are two different mechanisms that can be categorized as parent-child socialization.

Spera (2005) conducted an integrated literature review to examine parent-child socialization through an analysis of the relationship among parenting practices, parenting styles, and adolescent school achievement. In describing the research, Spera (2005), argues that researchers have often used the labels of parenting styles and parenting practices interchangeably. However, Darling and Steinberg (1993) and Spera (2005) suggest that to better understand socialization processes it is important to distinguish between parenting practices and parenting styles. Parenting practices are defined as particular actions that parents utilize to socialize their children (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Spera, 2005). For example, actions can be activities such as doing homework with their children, reading aloud to their children, and/or attending school functions. Such actions model performance that parents wish for their children to adopt to be successful in the world. Whereas, parenting styles refers to the emotional climate or strategies utilized by parents to raise their children. Diana Baumrind (1966) established 3 types of parenting styles: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative. A permissive parenting style refers to parents that behave in a non-punitive, accepting and affirmative manner towards the child's impulses, desires, and actions. An authoritarian parenting style refers to parents that act to shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set

standard of conduct. An authoritative parenting style refers to parents that behave in a manner to direct the child's activities in a rational issue-oriented manner. The relationship between parenting practices and parenting styles on children's educational achievement and attainment varies (Davis-Kean & Sexton, 2009; Dubow, Boxer, & Huesmann, 2009; Pettit, Yu, Dodge, & Bates, 2009; Sepra, 2005).

Spera identifies three areas of parenting practices that effect children educational outcomes: 1) parental involvement, 2) parental monitoring, and 3) parental goals, values, and aspirations. For these parenting practices, the research suggests that when parents are involved in their children's education and monitor their children's after-school activities, they facilitate academic achievement and educational attainment. With respect to parenting styles, the research indicates that authoritative parenting styles are associated with higher levels of adolescent school achievement. Spera (2005) concludes that these findings among about parenting practices, parenting styles, and adolescent school achievement are not consistent across ethnicity, culture, or socioeconomic status. Further, Hauser-Cram (2009) argues that more attention is needed to moderation or group analysis among parents and their children. He suggests that tests of moderation "can lead to conclusions about whether findings from some groups are stronger than others, and from a policy and practice perspective, the findings related to subgroups that are more at risk for low educational attainment deserve careful scrutiny" (p.355). At this critical juncture, I shift direction to analyze this inconsistency in the literature to examine how families of color use racial and ethnic parenting practices<sup>6</sup> in relation to their children's educational outcomes.

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<sup>6</sup> Due to the lack of distinction in Developmental Psychology of parenting practices and parenting styles I refer to the terminology that is presented by researcher. Most if not all the literature in this section refers to parenting practices and not parenting styles. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to illuminate the differences within each study presented.

## Parent practices of racial and ethnic socialization and children's educational achievement

In the previous section, I identified a considerable amount of research on parenting practices, parenting styles, and adolescent school achievement that centered on white families and the processes that are important for success in those families (Davis-Kean & Sexton, 2009). Less research has been conducted that examined different race/ethnicity groups to determine whether similar processes are important for success in these groups. Thus, there is little understanding of the complex role that socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and parenting practices may play in the development of children (Davis-Kean & Sexton, 2005; Conger & Donnellan, 2007). As previously mentioned, families and parents play a critical role in socializing children to enter a world where they may encounter stigmatization due to their race or ethnicity. Therefore, it is important to ask how Latina/o parents communicate with their children around issues of racial discrimination, prejudice, and negative stereotypes. How do racial or ethnic socialization messages impact Latina/o children's educational persistence or their understanding of their social positions in the educational system?

Scholars (Pessar, 1995; Rodriguez & Sanchez Korrol, 1996; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Urciuoli, 1996; Waters, 1990, 1994) have become more interested in these relationships as the percentage of People of Color in the United States will surpass their white counterparts. According to the 2014 U.S. Census, Children of Color constitute a numerical majority in enrollment in public elementary and secondary school. Therefore, understanding how parents' levels of education and practices of ethnic and racial socialization among families of color influence their children's educational achievement is necessary as these children are our future. The following section is comprised of 1) definitions of ethnic, racial, and cultural socialization and how families of color utilize these strategies to prepare their children for a

world where race and racism exist, 2) how parent practices of racial and ethnic socialization affect their children's educational achievement, and 3) how Latina/o families ethnic or racial socialization practices influence their children's academic achievement.

Literature pertaining to ethnic, racial, and cultural socialization practices among families of color is complex, limited, and in contention. Child Development scholars often conflate race, ethnicity, and culture as if they were synonymous (Chao & Otsuki-Clutter, 2011; Quintana, Aboud, Chao, Contreras-Grau, Cross, Hudley, Hughes, Liben, Nelson-Le Gall, & Vietze, 2006). Quintana et al (2006) state, "Development research has been attempting to disentangle the various components associated with ethnic and racial minority children by examining the individual contribution of each sociocultural characteristic (e.g. race, culture, social class) as well as the interactions of multiple sociocultural features" (p.1131). Racial socialization and ethnic socialization are broadly defined as the transmission of messages from parents to children about their ethnicity or race (Hughes et al, 2006). Hughes et al (2006) found that there is a lack of consensus among scholars as they use different terminology when explaining similar processes for families of color. In fact, researchers (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes et al, 2006; Peters, 1985; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990) consistently refer to *racial socialization* when discussing African American families, whereas, research on *ethnic socialization* analyzes the experiences of Latina/o, Asian, and Native American families (Hughes et al, 2006; Knight, Bernal, Garza, Cota, & Ocampo, 1993; Ou & McAdoo, 1993; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Quintana & Vera, 1999). Hughes et al (2006) due to the conflation in defining ethnic and racial socialization opts to combine ethnic-racialization and operationalizes the two as "a class of adaptive practices that ethnic minority parents use to promote children's functions in a world that is stratified by ethnicity and race" (p.16). Ethnic-

racial socialization within the family assists children to prepare for racial bias and discrimination and prepares them to cope with these experiences. Quintana et al (2006) further complicates the definition of terms as their research identified that racial and cultural socialization were often separated when studying African American families. Cultural socialization refers to teaching children about their heritage and/or history while promoting culture customs and traditions and instilling a sense of pride in association to a child's race, ethnicity or culture (Hughes et al 2006; Quintana et al, 2006). Quintana et al (2006) found that racial socialization was more strongly related to negative outcomes (e.g. external locus of control) and less strongly related to positive outcomes (i.e. cognitive development) than cultural socialization. Quintana et al (2006) urges scholars to make a clear distinction between racial and cultural socialization among families of color, as race and culture are not one in the same.

Furthermore, in addressing the discrepancies in the literature, Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew, and Freeman (2010) provide an integrated literature review in the field of Family Studies entitled, "Critical Race Theories, Colorism, and the Decade's Research on Families of Color," where they discuss the racial socialization of children in the United States. They are concerned with two issues: 1) the role of demographic changes that will contribute to People of Color becoming the majority of in the population resulting in literature and research pertaining to the racial socialization of children and 2) how critical race and colorism<sup>7</sup> can inform new conceptualizations about the racialization of children. They put forth their own definition of racial socialization as "a set of overt and covert behaviors parents' use, over and above those responsibilities shared by all parents, to prepare children psychologically for success in a racially stratified American society" (Burton et al, 2010, p.452). After presenting this

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<sup>7</sup> Burton et al (2010) use the definition of Burke and Embrich (2008) to explain colorism as the allocation of privilege and disadvantage according to lightness or darkness of one's skin (p.17).

definition, Burton et al (2010), respectfully challenge the fields of Child Development and Family Studies to integrate critical race theory, and make several advances. First, they identify that researcher's lack attention in regards to how colorism shapes within group race/ethnic socialization practices of families. Second, studies of racial socialization assume that people of color will encounter racism, but studies do not examine the socialization process that lead white people to discriminate. They argue that by only focusing on families of color, the representation of whites as a non-racial group sustains color-blind ideologies that privileges white children in comparison to children of color. These perspectives are important in examining the racial socialization practices across diverse groups as the conflation of terms limits our understanding of how parenting practices and beliefs of different ethnic groups have different impacts on and relationships to child educational achievement

Latina/o families ethnic or racial socialization practices influence their children's academic achievement

In general, children with a strong sense of ethnic identity and high self-esteem are more likely to be academically successful (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002; Chavous, Bernat, Schmeelk-Cone, Caldwell, Kohn-Wood & Zimmerman, 2003; Hughes et al, 2006). Hughes et al (2006) found that there have only been a few studies that address ethnic-racial socialization practices among children in relation to academic achievement. These studies frequently focus on the parenting practices within African American families. Marshall (1995) studied the relationship between ethnic socialization and academic achievement among middle class African American mothers and their 9-and 10-year-old children that attended predominantly white schools. Marshall (1995) found that African American children whose parents addressed race in their parenting practices appeared to be further along in their identity development, but performed poorly in schools. Marshall (1995) concludes that ethnic socialization may be predictive of

lower grades and further explains, “that the data are cross-sectional and one cannot determine whether socialization leads to lower grades or lower grades brought about more ethnic socialization”(p.395). Contrary to Marshall (1995), Caughy, O’Campo, Randolph and Nickerson (2002) examined parent racial socialization and child competence among a socioeconomic diverse group of African American parents and their preschool aged children. Caughy et al’s (2002) findings suggest that African American parents who provide homes that stress the importance of African American culture had children who demonstrated more instances of factual knowledge and problem-solving skills. Similar to Caughy et al., Smith, Atkins and Connell (2003) examined family, school and community factors in relation to racial-ethnic attitudes and academic achievement among 98 African American fourth-grade children. Smith et al. (2003) found that having more educated parents was related to higher levels of children’s racial ethnic pride. Community context also influenced children’s racial-ethnic attitudes. Increased educational attainment and mobility in their communities was related to children feeling more confident of their own possibilities for achievement.

Villenas and Deyhle (1999) apply critical race theory to examine Latina/o schooling and family education as portrayed in seven ethnographic studies among Latina/o adolescents and their parents. The findings revealed that despite the school rhetoric of parent involvement and deficit framing of Latina/o parents they are really kept out of schools by the negative ways they are treated by insensitive administrative requirements. Administrative views of parent involvement resulted in disregarding Latina/o knowledge and culture bases. Relatedly, Dumka, Gonzales, McClain, and Millsap (2013) review theory and evidence regarding family influences on Mexican American adolescents’ academic success. They conclude that results of research on the impact of parents’ ethnic socialization of their children to date have been equivocal (Hughes,

Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, & Spicer, 2006). Dumka et al (2013) found that Mexican American parents' ethnic socialization "predicted adolescents' later ethnic pride which, in turn, was related to higher levels of traditional Mexican American values, which mediated the effects of discrimination on adolescents' academic efficacy" (p.169). Lastly, Ceballo (2004) examined the role of parents and home characteristics on the academic success of Latina/o first generation college students from low-income immigrant families who attended Yale University. Ceballo (2004) concluded that four characteristics contributed to their academic success: a strong parental commitment to the importance of education, parental facilitation of their child's autonomy, an array of non-verbal, parental expressions of support for educational goals and tasks, and the presence of supportive faculty mentors and roles models in their lives.

Therefore, it seems that the findings within these studies (Marshall, 1995; Caughy et al., 2002; Smith et al., 2003) are mixed with respect to ethnic, racial, and cultural socialization practices and academic achievement among families of color. Different educational levels of African American and Latina/o children were examined, which could potentially have an impact on their development in relation to their racial identities and academic achievement. As a result, the research seems to be inconclusive and warrants further exploration especially in the examination of other racial groups. Despite these inconclusive findings, families of color discussed in this literature consistently demonstrate that they are active participants in their children's academic trajectories, which counteracts the deficit framing of Latina/os in education as presented in the first section. Thus, for the purpose of this dissertation, I am interested in examining the racial socialization practices among Latina/o families in relation to academic achievement in higher education. Examining Latina/o college-going children of college-educated parents may provide critical insight to how racial practices solidify into adulthood and

whether there is a relationship to academic achievement.

### **College-going Children of College Educated Parents**

Research examining differences in the educational experiences of college students by generational status often examines large national samples with a low number of Latina/o students, making it difficult to understand the experiences of Latina/os with college educated parents. Despite the lack of research there have been a small number of studies conducted on the experiences of students with college-educated parents in comparison to students that do not have college- educated parents. Despite this colloquial understanding, researchers seem to lack nomenclative clarity regarding those individuals with parents who have obtained a post-secondary degree in the United States. For example, various scholars presently utilize terminology such as, “traditional college student” (Terenzini et al., 1994), “second-generation college student” (Pike & Kuh, 2005), “continuing college student “(Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005), and “non-first generation college student” (Ramos Sanchez & Nichols, 2007) somewhat interchangeably to define college students who have at least one parent who graduated from and/or attended a four-year institution.

Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella, and Nora (1994) analyzed the pre-college characteristics of first generation college students and how they differ from those of traditional students. Their sample consisted of 2, 685 students (825 first-generation and 1,860 traditional students) across 23 public institutions in the United States that had completed their first year of college. Terenzini et al. found that first generation students differ from their traditional peers in both entering characteristics and college experiences. Traditional college students are less likely to come from low-income households, not be Latina/o, have stronger cognitive skills (i.e. reading, math, and critical thinking), have high degree aspirations, and to be more involved with

peers and teachers in high school. This could potentially mean that their findings may not hold true for Latina/o students with college-educated parents. Further, Pike and Kuh (2005) compare first generation college students to second-generation college students in terms of their intellectual development and outside factors (i.e. institutional access). They found that first generation college students were more apprehensive when entering their college environments due to feeling a lack of support. In addition, they progressed more slowly in terms of learning and intellectual development. Between both groups, living on campus had the greatest total effect on learning outcomes. More specifically, if a student, regardless of generation, lived on campus they were more likely to have positive learning outcomes. Overall, they did not find significant statistical differences to argue for generalizability between first generation college students and second-generation college students.

Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) identify a gap in educational research examining the differences between first generation college students and continuing generation students. They define first generation college students as those who have not had parents attend a four-year institution. Continuing generation students are defined as having at least one parent attend a four-year institution. Very few studies examine the differences of persistence in regards to first generation college students and continuing generation student. Utilizing the national data sample, Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, Lohfink and Paulsen (2005), collected data specifically to examine persistence in and completion of post-secondary education and the effects post-secondary education has on individuals. Ultimately, they found that there were significant differences in persistence between first generation college students and continuing generation college students. The finding that was most significant was that "...being Hispanic and first-generation is an example of how race and ethnicity intersect with parental

education to negatively impact persistence” (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005, p.418). This finding suggests that if Hispanic parents had higher levels of education it will positively impact the persistence of their children in higher education.

Ramos-Sánchez and Nichols (2007) apply social cognitive theory to understand self-efficacy among first-generation and non-first-generation college students. They define self-efficacy as “beliefs about one’s ability to successfully execute a behavior required to produce a certain outcome” (p.8). Using a sample of 192 freshmen students at a private liberal arts university on the West Coast, they found that non-first generation colleges students do generally perform academically better than first-generation colleges students. Thus, non-first generation college students are more likely to engage in self-efficacy in comparison to first generation college students.

Overall, the literature on college students with college- educated parents does not focus on Latina/o college students with college-educate parents but rather focuses exclusively on the experiences of first-generation college students. This discrepancy in the literature may not be purposeful, but could potentially reflect the current state of Latina/o education in regards to representation of college students with college-educated parents in higher education. Gandara and Contreras (2009) state, “Mexican-origin students tend to hit a glass ceiling with respect to college-going and do not improve their situation over time. This is contrary to patterns established by other immigrant groups where succeeding generations tend to convert increasing family economic well-being into higher educational attainment across generations” (p. 96). Thus, it is imperative to research the inherit wealth that Latina/os possess in cultivating high educational aspirations within the family and paths of persistence through higher education among Latina/o second generation college students.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined the historical underpinnings that shape the dominant discourse of Latina/os in education to demonstrate how Latina/o students have been studied in the context of education. It is evident that Latina/o students have been positioned and socially constructed as inferior and incapable of academic achievement due to their race and/or ethnicity. Deficit discourses remain ingrained in the very fabric of educational institutions and often reproduces unsuccessful patterns of educational achievement as a problem among Latina/o students' culture, tradition, and family processes. Due to the deficit framing of Latina/o families in the context of education it was critical to understand how Latina/o families utilize ethnic, racial, and cultural socialization practices in relation to academic achievement among their children. By analyzing the family unit we can begin to understand how Latina/o households function to promote ethnic identity, educational achievement, and how they prepare their children for discrimination that they may encounter in educational institutions. The literature pertaining to ethnic, racial, and cultural socialization practices among families of color is complex, limited, and in contention. As a result, the research seems to be inconclusive and warrants further exploration, however, despite inconclusive findings, families of color within this literature consistently demonstrate that they are active participants in their children's academic trajectories, which counteracts deficit framing of Latina/os in education. Examining Latina/o college-going children of college-educated parents may provide critical insight about how racial practices solidify into adulthood and whether there is a relationship to academic achievement. Research examining differences in the educational experiences of college students by generational status often examines large national samples with a low number of Latina/o students, making it difficult to understand the experiences of Latina/os with college educated parents. As aforementioned, it is imperative to

research the inherit wealth that Latina/os possess in cultivating high educational aspirations within the family and paths of persistence through higher education among Latina/o students who have college-educated parents.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Theory, Methods, and Data**

The overarching theoretical frameworks that guide this dissertation are critical race theory in education and Chicana feminism, which informs the tool of pedagogies of the home to ensure this dissertation accounts for intersections of race, class, and gender forms of subjugation (Delgado Bernal, 1993; Garcia, 1997; Solórzano, 1998; Perez, 1999; Delgado Bernal, 1998 Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Hurtado, 2003; Blackwell, 2011). Critical race theory, Chicana feminisms, and pedagogies of the home inform the transformative convergent mixed-methods design of the study. A transformative convergent design has two distinct processes of methods and data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, with the merging or integration of the two occurring in the findings. In particular in studying Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated families, quantitatively, I conduct a secondary analysis of a national higher education survey, and qualitatively, I document educational oral histories.

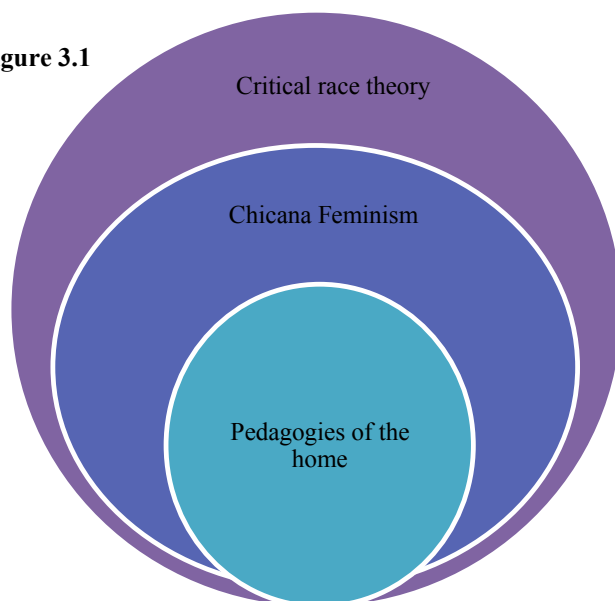
### **Theoretical Frameworks**

A substantial amount of the literature that examines the educational experiences of Latina/o students relies on a cultural deficit models that contends that Students of Color are ill-equipped to attain educational mobility due to their inability to assimilate into mainstream society (Kretovis & Nussel, 1994; Solorzano, 1997). Given the narrow scope deficit models provide, it is critical to examine frameworks that capture the complexities and strengths that Latina/o college students and their families' possess.

As shown in Figure 3.1, the overarching framework that is employed in this dissertation is critical race theory in education (Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001), Chicana feminisms (Anzaldúa, 1987; Garcia, 1997; Perez, 1999; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Hurtado, 2003; Blackwell, 2011), which informs pedagogies of the home

(Delgado Bernal, 1993) to ensure this dissertation accounts for intersections of race, class, and gender forms of subjugation. A critical race theory in education framework allows for the recognition of inequities that Puerto Rican and Chicana/o families experience and offers solutions to overcome injustices. Chicana feminisms centers the voices of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated families to be a central component of this study to examine the capability to survive and adhere in the face of oppression due to an individual's race, class, or gender, in their successful navigation through four-year institutions. As a tool of Chicana feminism, pedagogies of the home exemplifies the unique navigational and cultural mechanisms taught within Puerto Rican and Chicana/o households that cultivate knowledge and allow Puerto Rican and Chicana/o families to disrupt the hegemonic notions that their culture, traditions, and customs are inferior (Delgado Bernal, 1993). Linking and intersecting these concepts allows a space to theorize about Puerto Rican and Chicana/o college-educated families' ways of learning and teaching with the goal of honoring the diverse experiences within these communities. My purpose is to shift the lens away from deficit theories that focus on negative educational outcomes that fail to account for structural forces of discrimination.

**Figure 3.1**



This dissertation centers critical race theory, Chicana feminisms, and pedagogies of the home theoretical frameworks to conceptualize and answer the following research questions:

**Quantitative**

1. What are the differences between Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college educated parents (with at least one with a bachelor's degree) and their college educated children's aspirations?

**Qualitative**

**Parent**

2. How do Chicana/o college-educated parents *impact* their college-educated children's college-related experiences?
3. How do Puerto Rican college-educated parents *impact* their college-educated children's college-related experiences?

**Children**

4. How do Chicana/o college-educated children *perceive the impact* of their college-educated parents on their college-related experiences?
5. How do Puerto Rican college-educated children *perceive the impact* of their college-educated parents on their college-related experiences?

## Critical Race Theory and Education

Critical race theory (CRT) is rooted in the civil rights movement and legal scholarship and dates back to the early 1970s (Delgado, 1995). Post the civil rights movement legal scholars, lawyers, and activists became aware that the momentum for equity had dwindled. Foundational legal scholars Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Mari Matsuda and Kimberle Crenshaw established CRT in Law in the 1970s, building upon critical legal studies, radical feminism, Eurocentric philosophy, and American radical tradition (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Critical race theory in Law served as a precursor for CRT in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano, 1997). In education CRT is a theoretical tool applied in research to account for the systemic racism faced by People of Color in the U.S. The goal of CRT is to provide a critical lens through which to identify and challenge multiple forms of subordination based on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in order to reach equality.

Important to the discussion about equity is developing an understanding of the concept of race. The concept of race often is theorized as either an enigmatic illusion or a fixed social problem (Omi & Winant, 1994). Taking this into account, for the purpose of this research, race functions in the United States to impact the social and economic mobility of People of Color. Historically, the social construction of race has shaped law, policy, and educational institutions. Psychologist Beverly Tatum (1997) explains race as understanding the ways in which socializing agents in nation states construct, shape, and impact individuals in a negative or positive manner based on perceived pigmentation, phenotype, and ethnicity.<sup>8</sup> Race is an objective condition that falsely generalizes and stereotypes skin color, or any other biological marker that society

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<sup>8</sup> It is important to note here that the category of ethnicity is also socially constructed. Ethnicity is used to categorize those that share a common cultural heritage and to differentiate people of different cultures. Ethnicity may be defined by but not limited to language, rituals, nationality, and geographic units. People of similar ethnic backgrounds may follow diverse traditions and cultural practices.

understands as race to explain phenotype differences (Zamudio, Russell, Rios, and Bridgeman, 2010). It is critical to examine historically how race and racism manifests in the context of institutions (i.e. law, education) to understand how Puerto Rican and Chicana/o college educated families experience barriers to social and economic mobility.

As discussed in chapter 2, the systemic categorization of Latina/os in the United States originated within an institution of law that rendered them racially ambiguous (Gomez, 2008). This litigious nature of Latina/o racialization greatly influenced their status and subsequent treatment within US educational institutions. Gomez (2008) argues that Latina/os have been and will continue to be regarded, analyzed, understood, and treated rigidly as a distinct marginalized racial group. In comparison to Native and African Americans, the racialization process for Latinas/os has varied widely due to the disparate manifestations of colonization amongst these groups. Further complicating these differences, European-American settler-colonist leveraged the law diabolically and effectively to legitimize artificial racial formations, construct inequitable resource allocations by race, and ferment conflict amongst Latina/os, Native American, and African Americans (Omi & Winant, 1994). Dating back to the 1800s, the fact that many Latina/os sought and/or embraced the legal designation as “white” had less to do with a genuine endorsement of a white racial *identity* and more to do with their acknowledgement of the importance of a white racial *positionality* in a society that determined citizenship and granted rights through a rigid, racially hierarchal system. Thus, Latina/os utilized jurisprudence in an attempt to be legally understood as white in order to obtain citizenship and hopefully gain access into institutions, like education, which they had previously been denied entry. Utilizing critical race theory is one avenue to analyze the effects of race and racism on Puerto Rican and Chicana/o college-educated families as a racial group in the United States.

Critical race theory acknowledges that race plays an integral role in how U.S. society functions and challenges notions of colorblindness and meritocracy. It has been adopted within the educational system as way to understand how race and racism affect institutions, discourse and educational practices (Yosso, 2006). Critical race theory helps us recognize the inequities that Communities of Color experience and offers solutions to overcome injustices. CRT in education is comprised of five tenets:

- 1) *Intercentricity of race and racism* upholds race as central in our understanding of how historically race has functioned as a social construct that has oppressed Communities of Color. Even though race and racism are central it is important to understand that intersections of class, gender, sexuality, etc. still play an integral role in understanding the experiences of Students of Color; these intersections are not silenced or dismissed.
- 2) *Challenging dominant ideology* acknowledges that the educational system is invested in objective, meritocratic, color-blind ideologies that all students have equal opportunity. A critical race praxis makes inquiries in regards to schooling that acts as if it is neutral or standardized while implicitly privileging, White, U.S. born, monolingual, English speaking students.
- 3) *Commitment to social justice* ensures that principles of equality and solidarity are actively engaged in schools and society.
- 4) *Centrality of experiential knowledge* recognizes that Communities of Color possess a variety of knowledge that can disrupt the majoritarian narrative, and bring to the forefront the experiences of marginalized groups. These experiences can be analyzed through oral traditions, poetry, films, and/or humor. In addition, CRT scholars can present or teach their research in imaginative and non-traditional ways, through storytelling, chronicles, scenarios, narratives, and parables.
- 5) An *interdisciplinary perspective* embraces a plethora of academic fields, methods, and pedagogies to analyze racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia from a historical and contemporary stance.

The first tenet of CRT, intercentricity of race and racism, focuses on discrimination based on phenotype systemically or individually in the context of the United States. Within this tenet, the concepts of race and racism are examined as they intersect with other forms of subordination, such as gender and class. This tenet guides this study in examining the disparities in educational resources offered to Puerto Rican and Chicana/o college-educated families.

The second tenet helps to challenge dominant ideologies in the educational system such

as objectivity, meritocracy, and color-blind ideologies (Solórzano, 1998). CRT serves to understand how the aforementioned concepts perpetuate white supremacy. As explored in the literature review, Burton et al. argue (2010) that by acknowledging that race and racism exist, Critical race theory can inform new conceptualizations about the racialization of children in the United States. Studies of racial socialization assume that People of Color will encounter racism, but studies do not examine the socialization process that lead white people to discriminate. Burton et al. (2010) argue that by only focusing on families of color a reproduction of whiteness as a non-racial group sustains color-blind ideologies and privileges white children in comparison to Children of Color. For the purpose of this dissertation, Puerto Rican and/or Chicana/o college-educated families are the foci in examining parent racial socialization practices and beliefs in relation to their children (s) educational achievement.

The third tenet, commitment to social justice, is an investment in achieving equity for marginalized communities. This tenet informs the conceptualization of this study. This study is committed to social justice and chooses to examine Puerto Rican and Chicana/o college-educated families because the Latina/o population is not homogenous, but rather heterogeneous. Frequently, educational institutions take a “one size fits all approach” that, for the purpose of this project is not the case. By examining the differences and similarities within Latina/o community, educational institutions can better serve this population of students.

The fourth tenet, centrality of experiential knowledge, utilizes the experiences and voices otherwise dismissed and silenced by white supremacy. This tenet is essential to the study because it ensures the centering of the experiences of the participants within this study. The goal of this dissertation is to understand how instances of marginalization over time may or may not deter the educational attainment of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated families in the

United States as to address potential shortcomings and/or highlight strengths of institutions of higher education.

Finally, the fifth tenet calls for CRT scholars to utilize an interdisciplinary approach when conducting research. This tenet challenges the ahistoricism found in the analysis of research and situates race and racism in a “historical and contemporary context” (Solórzano, 1998, p. 123). In order to do so, this study will utilize a transformative convergent mixed methods approach. A transformative convergent mixed methods approach has a goal of social change at levels ranging from the personal to the political (Creswell, 2002; Mertens, 2007). A transformative paradigm addresses oppression that marginalized communities experience on individual and systemic levels. The use of mixed-methods provides the historical and contemporary context that shapes the intersection of educational attainment of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated families in the United States.

Critical race theory allows us to center the experiences of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated families as a diverse group that is racialized in the United States educational system. Latina/o students have historically faced race-based stigma that positions these students as not having the ability to successfully navigate institutions of education. Furthermore, Chicana feminist have been influential in our understanding of alternative epistemologies and practices of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families to be validated and unraveled. Chicana feminisms provide an asset-based approach in understanding the sources of support for Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families.

#### Chicana Feminism and Pedagogies of the Home

Chicana feminism emerges from the historical exclusion of women of color by men and white women in the United States context. It is a point of contention of when Chicana feminists

named their own agenda, however, it became highly publicized out of the U.S. Third World Feminist movement in the 1960s to early 1980s (Sandoval, 2000; Perez, 1999; Blackwell, 2011). The earliest foundational texts such as *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981), *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), and *Making Face/Making Soul: Haciendo Caras* (1990) interrogates the intersection between power and colonialism, race, class, gender, and sexuality (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981; Anzaldúa, 1987; Anzaldúa, 1990). Chicana feminists engage their scholarship through their lived experiences as a valid source of knowledge (epistemologies), in turn, creating historical interventions that have otherwise gone unrecognized by white hegemonic perspectives. They challenge and question notions of objective truth as they (re) center the mind, body, and spirit that colonial forces have detached in order to erase alternative knowledges of communities of color. Chicana feminism conceptualize the (re) connectedness laying claim to the complexities, connections, and contradictions within the lived experiences of Chicana/o and Latina/o communities. Delgado Bernal (1998) explains:

[A Chicana feminist epistemology] questions objectivity, a universal foundation of knowledge, and the Western dichotomies of mind versus body, subject versus object, objective truth versus subjective emotion, and male versus female. In this sense, a Chicana epistemology maintains connections to indigenous roots by embracing dualities that are necessary and complementary qualities, and by challenging dichotomies that offer opposition without reconciliation (p.560).

Delgado Bernal (2001) conceptualizes pedagogies of the home by addressing the borderlands in between space of the home and institutions of education. Delgado Bernal utilizes the work of Chicana feminist scholars (Anzaldúa, 1987; Elenes, Gonzales, Trinidad & Villenas, 2000) who have studied everyday forms of resistance that are subtle, less visible, and often go unrecognized. Chicana feminist scholars theorize from their lived experiences and use this knowledge to identify, challenge, and analyze multiple forms of oppression while acknowledging the intersections of race, gender, class, and/or sexuality that inform the experiences of Latina/os and

Chicana/os (Anzaldúa, 1987; Perez Huber & Cueva, 2012). Chicana feminist pedagogies refer to epistemologies that are taught and learned in informal sites such as the home embracing knowledge outside of institutions of higher education, and argue that ways of knowing are equally produced within the home and that the home should be recognized as a site of knowledge.

More specifically, Delgado Bernal draws from the work of Gloria Anzaldúa and her notion of Mestiza Consciousness. Mestiza refers to mixed ancestry of Native American, European, and African groups (Delgado Bernal, 2001). A Mestiza Consciousness has become a new consciousness for Chicanas that “straddles cultures, races, languages, nations sexualities, and spiritualities-this is living with ambivalence while balancing opposing powers” (Delgado Bernal, 2001, p.626). For Chicana feminists this state of ambivalence is considered strength in order to understand the multiple realities that Latina/os and Chicana/os face as they experience oppression. Delgado Bernal states, “I am most interested in an internal transformational resistance in which an individual’s behavior is subtle or even silent and might go unnamed as resistance. These subtle resistance strategies that are learned in the home and community can serve as a cultural knowledge base that can help Chicana students overcome the challenges and obstacles they confront in their educational trajectory” (p.625). Evidence for this resistance is based on how Chicana students negotiate and embrace their bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to communities and spiritualities. I have adapted Delgado Bernal’s (2010) four resistance strategies, defined as follows, for this study:

1. *Bilingualism* is how an individual experiences and constructs language throughout one’s educational trajectory and community interactions, and how these experience influences a person’s own life.
2. *Biculturalism* is how an individual navigates in and out of one’s culture and how multiple perspectives can support social and academic development in the home, school and community.

3. *Commitment to Communities* is the ability of an individual to find support within one's community of origin or the community one has created throughout their educational trajectory (i.e. cultural clubs). These communities serve as inspiration and motivation to overcome educational barriers.
4. *Spiritualties* is the connection to one's internal, community, familial spirit as a form of learning and self care through one's educational trajectory.

Resistance, as exemplified in Pedagogies of the home, are transformative responses that work to improve the lives of Puerto Rican and Chicana/o students to counteract the psychological pain, suppression, and hopelessness caused by frequent encounters of with race and racism. Examples of these resistant actions include but are not limited to: sharing testimonies (individual and communal), expression through art, poetry, dance, music, singing, reflective writing, and obtaining a college or graduate degree. As mentioned previously, this study answers questions regarding varying aspects of pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 1993) constructed in college-educated Puerto Rican and Chicana/o households and its function in U.S. higher education. For the purpose of this study, pedagogies of the home is defined as the unique navigational and cultural mechanisms taught within Latina/o households that cultivate knowledge and allow Puerto Rican and Chicana/o college students to disrupt the hegemonic notions that their culture, traditions, and customs are inferior (Delgado Bernal, 1993). The concept of pedagogies of the home recognizes that Puerto Rican and Chicana/o families provide “strategies of resistance that challenge the educational norms of higher education” (Delgado Bernal, 1993, p.635). Therefore, critical race theory, Chicana feminism, and the tool of pedagogies of the home provide a guiding lens in the transformative convergent mixed-methods used within this study. Critical race theory puts into question how quantitative data is collected and analyzed, while bridging Chicana feminism and the tool of pedagogies of the home centers the voices of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated families through critical race educational oral histories.

## **Methodology**

### **Cultural Intuition: My Standpoint**

Chicana feminist scholar, Dolores Delgado Bernal defines cultural intuition as, “a personal quality of the researcher based on the attribute of having the ability to give meaning to data” (1998, p.563). Four sources contribute to Chicana researcher’s cultural intuition: personal experience, the existing literature, professional experience, and the analytical research process itself (Delgado Bernal, 1998). The cultural intuition I bring to this study as a Chicana/Puerto Rican of a college-educate Chicano father, informs the guiding epistemology for this work. I am strategic in positioning Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families as knowledge holders and creators, as they have navigated institutions of higher education effectively. As an insider, I can relate to and understand the experiences of my participants in my study due to my own life experiences. I bring to my research a high degree of sensitivity. As a Chicana/Puerto Rican my feminist epistemology “goes beyond quantitative versus qualitative methods, and lies instead in the methodology employed and in whose experiences and realities are accepted as the foundation of knowledge” (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p.558). Therefore, I am not detached from the creation of my study. Rather, it is informed by my epistemological orientation and cultural intuition.

### **Convergent Transformative Sequential Mixed Method<sup>9</sup>**

In this investigation, I will employ a transformative convergent mixed methods approach with a goal of social change at levels ranging from the personal to the political (Creswell, 2002; Mertens, 2007). A transformative paradigm addresses oppression that marginalized communities

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<sup>9</sup> I became interested in quantitative research after taking two quantitative methodology courses with Dr. Noreen Webb. As a Student of Color I have more than often been discouraged from doing quantitative research because I may not be “competent enough” or “People of Color do not do numbers.” Regardless of these statements, I pursued these classes and Dr. Webb created a very welcoming environment. She allowed me to ask fundamental question to develop confidence in my abilities to conduct quantitative research. My experiences in her classes inform the discovery and new conceptualization in chapter 4 of this methodology.

experience on individual and systemic levels. Mertens (2007) argues that four characteristics generally guide a transformative paradigm/method:

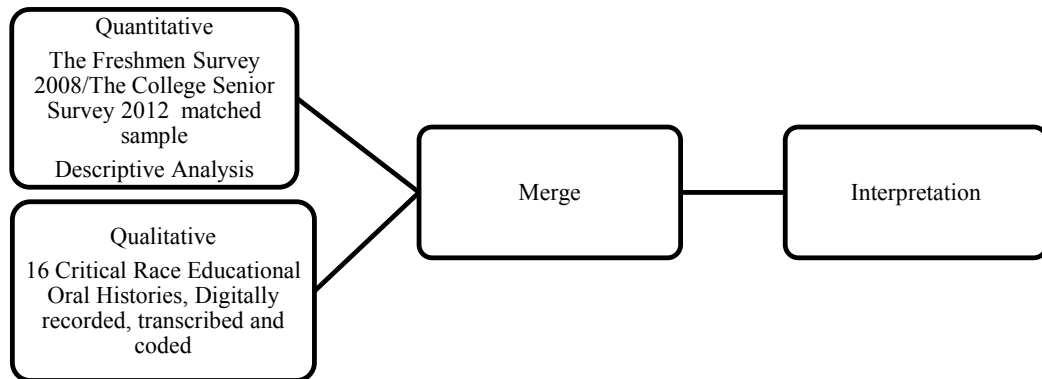
- The lives and experiences of marginalized communities are placed at the center as knowledge holders. In turn, there is an acknowledgement that oppressed group's lives are constrained by the actions of oppressors.
- It analyzes how and why disproportionate power relation exist to create inequities based on gender, class, race, and/or sexuality.
- It examines how research in relation to inequities is associated with political and social action.
- It is grounded in transformative theory (i.e. critical race theory) to examine why a set of beliefs exists or why a problem occurs.

These four characteristics guide my dissertation, and are further developed in chapter 4. This transformative convergent mixed methods dissertation has two distinct processes of methods and data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, with the merging or integration of the two occurring in the findings as a means of validation (Creswell, 2015). In combining both qualitative and quantitative findings in this study it allows for multiple angles and perspectives to be examined on the experiences of college-educated Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families. In short, quantitative results offer general trends and potential relationships, which provide a macro understanding, while qualitative findings draw on the in-depth personal perspectives of individuals, delivering a micro understanding (Creswell, 2015). The rationale for mixing methods is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to capture the trends and details of an issue as complex as intergenerational achievement of college-educated Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families. When used in combination, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for more complete analysis (Creswell, 2002).

Furthermore, the first form of data, quantitative, utilizes the Higher Education Research Institute's 2008 The Freshmen Survey (TFS) and the 2012 College Senior Survey (CSS)

matched sample. The, second, form of data, utilizes, educational oral histories of 4 Chicana/o and 4 Puerto Rican college-educated families for total of 16 participants. A visual model is provided to understand the transformative convergent design specific to my study as displayed in

**Figure 3.2**



## **Data Collection**

### **Quantitative**

The quantitative data collection used the national higher education survey: Higher Education Research Institute's 2008 The Freshmen Survey (TFS) and the 2012 College Senior Survey (CSS) data. This phase compares college-educated Puerto Rican and Chicana/o students with college-educated parents in identifying differences and similarities of educational aspirations after graduation between these two populations. To date there is a lack of analysis of Chicana/o and Puerto Ricans who have attained a bachelor's degree and their post-baccalaureate aspirations (Centra, 1980).

### **Data Source and Sample**

The longitudinal study utilizes the matched sample of the Higher Education Research Institute's 2008 The Freshmen Survey (TFS) and the 2012 College Senior Survey (CSS), 2008/2012 (TFS/CSS) data, which tracks undergraduate students' growth and development throughout their four year experiences. The matched sample includes responses from 12,345 students from private and public liberal arts colleges throughout the United States (HERI, 2013). Frequently, large data sets will classify and provide data on "Hispanic" as though this were one homogenous category without taking into account the heterogeneity among this population (Teranishi, 2007). Therefore, I disaggregated this sample to those students that identify under race/ethnicity as "Chicano/Mexican American" or "Puerto Rican."

### **Measures**

Chicano/Mexican American and Puerto Rican students' aspirations are the dependent variables (DV). These measures incorporate students' self-reported responses regarding aspirations (highest academic degree planned). Student's association with parental level of education is the

primary independent variable, (IV). The independent variable is parents' highest level of education completed. A detailed description of the variables used is as follows:

#### Independent Variable

*Father Level of Education* (FATHEDUC): What is the highest level of education you have completed?" 1= "Grammar school or less" or 2= "Some high school", 3= "High school graduate," 4= "Postsecondary school other than college," 5= "College degree," 6= "Some graduate school," and 7= "Graduate degree"

*Mother Level of Education* (MOTHEDEC): What is the highest level of education you have completed?" 1= "Grammar school or less" or 2= "Some high school", 3= "High school graduate," 4= "Postsecondary school other than college," 5= "College degree," 6= "Some graduate school," and 7= "Graduate degree"

#### Dependent Variables

*Aspirations* Highest academic degree planned (DEGASP) / Highest academic degree planned at this college (HIDEGREE): 1= None, 2= Vocational certificate, 3= Associate (A.A. or equivalent), 4= Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.), 5= Master's Degree (M.A., M.S., etc.), 6= PhD or EdD, 7=MD, DO, DDS, DVM, 8= JD (law), 9= BD or MDIV (Divinity), 10= Other Aspirations are a composite variable composed of highest academic degree planned by the student. It will be constructed by using student questionnaire data (DEGASP) and recoded (DEGASPRECOD) from a scale of 1 to 3: 1= "BA or BS," 2= "MA or MS," 3= "PhD, JD or MD"

#### Procedure

The first research question examined similarities and/or differences in educational aspirations among Chicana/o and Puerto Ricans students with parents who had varying educational levels. The four main TFS 2008/CSS 2012 educational variables utilized for this analysis were 1) students' educational aspirations as undergraduate freshmen in 2008, 2) students' educational aspirations four years later having attained a bachelor's degree as college senior graduates in 2012, 3) mother level of education in TFS 2008, and 4) father mother level of education in TFS 2008. Variables were recoded. Once the variables were recoded, cross tabulations and frequencies were performed through IBM SPSS predictive analytics software to identify differences in educational aspirations and parent level of education.

Qualitative

### Chicana Feminism informing Critical Race Oral Histories

Chicana feminists have been central in recovering, writing, and sharing history through oral narratives. Emma Perez (1999) states:

We want so much to unearth the documents and organize the ‘facts’ that will disclose the real truth. And what we know, what we discover as we venture into other worlds, is that we can only repeat the voices previously unheard, rebuffed, or underestimated as we attempt to redeem that which has been disregarded in our history (p.xv).

Emma Perez in unearthing previous disregarded history conceptualizes *sitios y lenguas*

She argues that spaces within the borderlands (*sitios*) are where decolonized discourses (*lenguas*) can unfold. *Sitios y lenguas* “rejects colonial ideology and the by-products of colonialism and capitalist patriarchy-sexism, racism, homophobia, ect” (Perez, 1999,p.161). As such, by centering race and challenging ahistoricism through the tools of Chicana feminism, critical race educational oral histories provide a history from the margins that sheds light on the multiple realities of educational institutions and the repercussions of underfunded, under-resourced schools and/or racial barriers faced by students of color. Similarly, Maylei Blackwell draws upon Diana Taylor’s the archive and repertoire to explain her conceptualization of retrofitted memory as a form to reclaim oral histories of disenfranchised communities.

Taylor (2001) describes the archive as the actual physical objects that one possesses. For example, an individual can document their lives through pictures, journals, and/or newspapers creating a physical archive. Whereas, the repertoire is the living memory in which one embodies knowledge to pass on through the physical act of remembering. Blackwell explains, “Taylor’s beautiful conceptualization of the repertoire...represents the gestures, tones, sighs—the literal performance of memory” (p.10). As such, Blackwell argues that in combing the archive and

repertoire in oral history, retrofitted memory becomes, “part of the repertoire of resistance to colonialism injustice, and oppression...a radical art of re-membling, [and] becoming whole in ways that honor alternative or non-normative ways of being” (p.11). Therefore, in the conceptualizations of Chicana feminism critical race educational oral histories act as a tool to recover the past and take into account the present. The ways in which history is accounted for has excluded communities of color, especially within educational settings.

Critical race educational oral histories serve as a timeline for people to reflect, remember, and document ways of life. Individual oral histories of parent(s) and child will offer a holistic overview of how participants live, negotiate and interact in their everyday lives. If we look for the inherent strengths of culturally diverse families and reject the deficit model of describing Latina/o communities and families, we find sociocultural meaningful organization of daily life from which we can (re) conceptualize Chicana/o and Puerto Rican familial knowledge production as an asset base cultural framework. In this sense, the accumulated knowledge base that Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families have derived from their historical, cultural, and social traditions puts families in the best positions to guide the direction of research. Finally, as Flores Carmona and Delgado Bernal (2012) state, “data suggests that collecting oral histories [of communities of color]... produce[s] intergenerational knowledge...to center the epistemologies of parents and their children” (p.13). Thus, Chicana feminism informing critical race educational oral histories as method can inform researchers about the generational forms of inequity or access that inhibit or promote student’s achievement in educational settings.

In order to find the participants within this study I used inclusion criteria as described:

Participant Selection Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

1. Self-identified Puerto Ricans and/or Chicanas/os who have attained a bachelors in the United States and have at least one parent with a bachelors degree attained in the United States.
2. Participants should be between ages of 21-40
3. Participants should be from California, Illinois, or New York
4. Participants can be either male or female.
5. Parent (s) willing to participate.
6. Participants and their parent(s) proficient in the English language.
7. Parent and child willing to be interviewed for a 60-90 minute duration of time.

I began recruitment with a flyer<sup>10</sup> with the aforementioned information, and used social media such as email and Facebook to tap into the networks that currently exist for me as a Puerto Rican/Chicana student at the University of California, Los Angeles and an active participant in Latina/o communities. The participants were identified by snowball sampling (Patton, 2002) as well as through email list serves from the following organizations: National Associations of Chicana and Chicanos (NAACS), Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social, Puerto Rican Studies Association (PRSA), and the University of California, Los Angeles Chicana/o Studies Department. In addition, network sampling (Delgado Bernal, 1997) was also used as peers asked if they could forward the flyer to their networks as many thought they knew families who matched the criteria.

The children participants contacted me at their own accord, and I screened<sup>11</sup> each participant to make sure that they as well as their parent were willing to participate. After screening the participants, I chose four Chicana/o and four Puerto Rican families to participate in educational oral histories that were anticipated to last 60-90 minutes. The following families and residence are provided in Table 3.1:

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<sup>10</sup> Please refer to the appendix A.

<sup>11</sup> Please refer to the appendix B.

**Table 3.1**

| Families  |                  |              |                     |
|-----------|------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Chicana/o | Residence        | Puerto Rican | Residence           |
| Morales   | California       | Fernandez    | New Jersey/Illinois |
| Rodrigo   | California       | Gonzales     | New York            |
| Rios      | California/Texas | Santiago     | California          |
| Ramirez   | California       | Baez         | New York            |

The participants that choose to be involved in this study reviewed and signed an in-depth consent form. The interviews took place in a mutually agreed-upon and comfortable location such as UCLA, in a private room, or an off-campus location with a private room. For participants that were located in other states and I could not meet in person we used ZOOM, an online video platform. Participants were to be interviewed separately using their respective protocols<sup>12</sup>, however, I allowed my participants to have agency in how they wanted to engage in this research process with me. Therefore, on several cases, participants had requested to be interviewed with their parents and/or sit in on the interview and are as follows in Table 3.2:

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<sup>12</sup> Please refer to appendix C and appendix D.

**Table 3.2**

| <b>Family</b>                 | <b>Interview Duration</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Morales Father                | 120 minutes               |
| Morales Daughter              | 120 minutes               |
| Rodrigo Mother                | 100 minutes               |
| Rodrigo Daughter              | 100 minutes               |
| Rios Mother and Daughter      | 180 minutes               |
| Ramirez Mother                | 90 minutes                |
| Ramirez Daughter              | 120 minutes               |
| Fernandez Daughter            | 120 minutes               |
| Fernandez Daughter and Father | 120 minutes               |
| Gonzales Son                  | 120 minutes               |
| Gonzales Mother               | 90 minutes                |
| Santiago Daughter             | 90 minutes                |
| Santiago Mother and Father    | 120 minutes               |
| Baez Son and Mother           | 120 minutes               |

### Analysis

The oral histories interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. To triangulate the data after initial transcriptions were complete I listened to the interviews an additional two or three times following the transcript. I printed out the transcribed interviews and analytically coded them by hand (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Analytical coding “comes from interpretation and reflection on meaning” (Richards, 2005, p.94). I kept in mind critical race theory (CRT) as the assertion that Puerto Rican and Chicana/o student’s experiences are often silenced or dismissed by formal institutions of education, and their families are frequently viewed as the reason for underachievement among this population. Viewing the data through the lens of CRT, Chicana feminism and the tool of pedagogies of the home, emergent themes of strategies taught and learned within Puerto Rican and Chicana/o families to survive and resist multiple forms of

oppression came to the forefront. In identifying concepts and relationships, the themes that emerged capture reoccurring patterns that cut across the data.

Several phases of triangulation took place (Merriam, 1998). After the first round of initial coding transcripts were sent back to the participants to provide input and feedback in how I was making sense of their educational oral histories. Several of the participants replied with corrections, additions, or deletions. From there I wrote educational oral histories of each family combining the information from the parent and child separate interviews as it pertained undergraduate and graduate college experiences. Each family was provided with their family education oral history, and was welcomed to provide any insight or feedback.

In concluding, I discussed the overarching theoretical frameworks that guide this dissertation as critical race theory in education and Chicana feminism, which informs the tool of pedagogies of the home to ensure this dissertation accounts for intersections of race, class, and gender forms of subjugation (Delgado Bernal, 1993; Garcia, 1997; Solórzano, 1998; Perez, 1999; Delgado Bernal, 1998 Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Hurtado, 2003; Blackwell, 2011). Through a transformative convergent design I study Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated families, quantitatively, I conduct a secondary analysis of a national higher education survey, and qualitatively, I document educational oral histories. Next, in chapter 4 I explore the quantitative methods and data collection. Chapter five and six examines the qualitative, in addressing the Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families' educational oral histories of their undergraduate and graduate college experiences.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Deciphering the *N* of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican College Students**

A great deal of research argues that once an individual completes a bachelor's degree it will increase their likelihood of securing a well-paying and satisfying job, not only for the college graduate, but also for their children. This intergenerational effect of completing the bachelor's degree has been well supported by recent literature in the field (Astin 1975, 1977, 1993; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) summarize the intergenerational effects of obtaining a BA by noting that:

In terms of impact on educational attainment, the evidence is quite clear that the benefits obtaining a college degree are passed on from one generation to the next. Having a bachelor's degree or above appears to have a positive influence on the educational attainment of sons and daughters even when controls are made for such factors as income, family size, and offspring's intelligence (p.421).

As such, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) neglect how this may or may not be different for racial and ethnic populations. Therefore, this chapter uses longitudinal data to determine if parental educational level has an influence on the educational aspirations of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college students, and addresses the following research question:

1. What are the differences between Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college educated parents (with at least one with a bachelor's degree) and their college educated children's aspirations?

This chapter includes: (1) a descriptive analysis of the Higher Education Research Institute's 2008 The Freshmen Survey (TFS) and the 2012 College Senior Survey (CSS) matched sample, (2) a discussion of methodological tensions in analyzing secondary data, (3) and my conclusion, which contains a solution by proposing a Critical Race Transformative Convergent Mixed Method.

### **The Freshmen Survey 2008 and The College Senior Survey 2012**

Research examining differences in the educational experience of college students by generational status often examines large national samples with a low number of Latina/o students, making it difficult to understand the experience of Latina/os with college educated parents (Kouyoumdjian, Guzmán, Garcia, & Talavera-Bustillos, 2015). Research in general suggests that compared with their first-generation counterparts, college students with college-educated parent(s) overall tend to come from households with higher socioeconomic status (MacAllum, Glover, Queen, & Riggs, 2007; Terenzini et al., 1996). They are more likely to start their educational careers at four-year institutions at a younger age as freshmen and therefore mirror the general U.S. student population. Moreover, college students with college-educated parents are more likely to be academically prepared for the college environment (Pike & Kuh, 2005; Richardson & Skinner, 1992; Riehl, 1994; Terenzini et al., 1996), which in turn can influence college completion. The purpose of the section is to use a descriptive analysis to examine the following research question:

1. What are the differences between Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college educated parents (with at least one with a bachelor's degree) and their college educated children's aspirations?

#### **Data Source**

The Freshmen Survey was initiated by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) in the fall of 1966 and is a project of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), the longest-running and largest continuing longitudinal study of the American higher education system. The Freshmen Survey instrument is revised annually to reflect the changing concerns of the academic community and others who use the information. The College Senior Survey (CSS) was developed and is administered through the CIRP. When used in conjunction The Freshman

Survey and The College Senior Survey generates valuable longitudinal data on students' cognitive and affective growth during college as well as important information on the impact of the college experience. In this study, I utilize the matched sample of the 2008 The Freshmen Survey (TFS) and the 2012 College Senior Survey (CSS). From hereafter, I will refer to the data TFS 2008/CSS 2012 data.

### Sample

The TFS 2008/CSS 2012 matched sample includes responses from 12,345 students from private and public colleges throughout the United States, which followed them across four years as entering freshmen to graduating seniors (HERI, 2013). Specifically, in disaggregating by racial group, the sample has representation of 76.8% white students whereas, Asian is 8.2%, Black is 3.2%, Hispanic is 4.7%, and mixed race is 7.2%. Among the race group "Hispanic", I disaggregated for students that identified as Chicano/Mexican American and Puerto Rican<sup>13</sup>. The sample of Chicano/Mexican American college students consists of  $N=459$ . For Chicano/Mexican American students, 95 % reported they were U.S. citizens. Twenty-five percent are male and 75% are female with 98% entering as freshmen between the ages of 18 and 19. Ninety-six percent of Chicano/Mexican American students came from two-parent households and 55% of them reporting their home state as California. For Puerto Ricans  $N=123$  with 98% of Puerto Ricans reporting that they were U.S. citizens. Twenty-seven percent of male and 73% are female with 98% entering as freshmen between the ages of 18 and 19. Ninety-three percent of Puerto Rican students came from two-parent households with 31% of the students reporting their home state as New York.

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<sup>13</sup> These terms were created by researchers of Higher Education Research Institute, and are what I use in reporting these findings.

## Measures

Chicano/Mexican American and Puerto Rican students' aspirations are the dependent variable (DV) or outcome measures. Students' aspiration measures incorporate students' self-reported responses regarding highest academic degree planned. Students' association with parental level of education is the primary independent variable, (IV). The independent variable is parents' highest level of education completed and while collecting descriptive statistics (i.e. mean, median, mode, standard deviations), I control for student demographic characteristics (citizenship status, language, sex, income, race, and socioeconomic status). Refer to chapter 4, to see a detailed description of the variables. Table 4.1 provides a description of how I used the variables in my study.

**Table 4.1**  
**Description of Independent and Dependent Variables Used in the Study**

| <b>Study Variable</b>   | <b>TFS 2008/CSS 2012 Item Description</b>                             | <b>Year Measured</b> | <b>Study Response Coding or Recoding</b>                                                                                               |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Father's Education (IV) | What is the highest level of education you have completed?"           | 2008                 | 1= Less than high school<br>2= High school graduate<br>3= Some college<br>4= Bachelor's degree<br>5= Graduate degree                   |
| Mother's Education (IV) | What is the highest level of education you have completed?"           | 2008                 | 1= Less than high school<br>2= High school graduate<br>3= Some college<br>4= Bachelor's degree<br>5= Graduate degree                   |
| Race (IV)               | Please state your racial/ethnic background<br>1= Not Marked 2= Marked | 2008                 | 1=White<br>2= Black<br>3= American Indian<br>4= Asian<br>5= Pacific Islander<br>6= Mexican/Chicano<br>7= Puerto Rican<br>8= Mixed Race |
| Race Group (IV)         | Race/Ethnicity Group                                                  | 2008                 | 1=American Indian<br>2= Asian<br>3= Black<br>4= Hispanic<br>5=White<br>6= Other<br>7= Mixed Race                                       |
| Degree Aspirations (DV) | Highest academic degree planned at any institution                    | 2008/2012            | 1= Bachelor's Degree<br>2= Master's Degree<br>3= PhD, MD, JD                                                                           |
| Degree Attainment (DV)  | Highest degree earned as of June 2012                                 | 2012                 | 1= Bachelor's Degree<br>2= Master's Degree<br>3= PhD, MD, JD                                                                           |

## Procedure

The two main TFS 2008/CSS 2012 educational variables utilized for this analysis were students' educational aspirations as undergraduate freshmen in 2008 and students' educational aspirations four years later after having attained a bachelor's degree as college senior graduates in 2012. Both variables were recoded into three standard response choices: (a) BA or BS, (b) MA or MS, (c) PhD, JD, or MD. Once the variables were recoded, cross tabulations and frequencies were performed to identify descriptive statistics that capture differences or growth in educational aspirations and attainment from 2008-2012. For this exploration, all racial groups were included in the cross-tabulation tests except for Native Americans who constituted less than 1.0% of the sample. The data reported in this section is specific to the research question and focuses on Chicano/Mexican American and Puerto Ricans where necessary. For detailed tables refer to the appendix when appropriate.

## Results

### Parent Level of Education

As displayed in Table 4.2, 32.1% of Chicana/o students had mothers who were college graduates and 47.9% of Puerto Rican students had mothers who were college graduates. Comparatively as displayed in Table 4.3, among Chicana/o students, 29.8% had fathers who were college graduates and 35.4% of Puerto Ricans students had fathers who were college graduates. Chicana/o and Puerto Rican mothers have more higher education than fathers, and Puerto Rican mothers have a higher number of bachelors and graduate degrees than their Chicana/o counterparts. Among these subgroups, Puerto Ricans are more educated than Chicana/os, which aligns with national trends (Solórzano, Villalpando, Oseguera, 2005).

**Table 4.2****Mother's Level of Education by Race***TFS 2008, CSS 2012 Longitudinal dataset (N=12,199)*

|                                 | <b>College Graduate</b> | <b>Graduate Degree</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
|                                 | Percent                 | Percent                |
| <b>All</b>                      | 41.6                    | 22.6                   |
| <b>Chicano/Mexican American</b> | 23.3                    | 8.8                    |
| <b>Puerto Rican</b>             | 36.1                    | 11.8                   |

**Table 4.3.****Father's Level of Education by Race***TFS 2008, CSS 2012 Longitudinal dataset (N=12,145)*

|                                 | <b>College Graduate</b> | <b>Graduate Degree</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
|                                 | Percent                 | Percent                |
| <b>All</b>                      | 33.3                    | 30.6                   |
| <b>Chicano/Mexican American</b> | 20.1                    | 9.7                    |
| <b>Puerto Rican</b>             | 18.6                    | 16.8                   |

**Student Degree Aspirations and Race**

As seen in Table 4.4, every racial/ethnic group had high aspirations of attaining a master's degree, a PhD, MD, or JD. As freshmen, 31.7% of white students aspired to attain a PhD, MD, or JD. Similarly, 36.9% of Puerto Rican students aspired to attain a PhD, MD, or JD. Both white and Puerto Rican students lag behind their counterparts as entering freshmen wanting to attain a PhD, MD, or JD, with Asian at 46.2%, Black at 44%, Hispanic at 41.9%, Mixed race at 41.1%, and Chicana/os with 40.7%. As seniors, all racial/ethnic groups' aspirations saw slight declines ranging from 4 to 7 percent difference.

**Table 4.4**

| <i>Student Degree Aspirations by Race</i>                 |                                   |                            |                        |                                   |                            |                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>TFS 2008, CSS 2012 Longitudinal dataset (N=12,145)</i> |                                   |                            |                        |                                   |                            |                        |
|                                                           | <u><i>TFS 2008 (N=11,473)</i></u> |                            |                        | <u><i>CSS 2012 (N=10,364)</i></u> |                            |                        |
|                                                           | <b>Bachelor's<br/>Degree</b>      | <b>Master's<br/>Degree</b> | <b>PhD, MD,<br/>JD</b> | <b>Bachelor's<br/>Degree</b>      | <b>Master's<br/>Degree</b> | <b>PhD, MD,<br/>JD</b> |
| <b>All</b>                                                | 19.8                              | 43.4                       | 34.4                   | 12.5                              | 46.7                       | 33.2                   |
| <b>Asian</b>                                              | 10.2                              | 41.2                       | 46.2                   | 13.7                              | 39.3                       | 39.0                   |
| <b>Black</b>                                              | 13.4                              | 38.2                       | 44.0                   | 17.8                              | 36.4                       | 40.7                   |
| <b>White</b>                                              | 22.1                              | 44.0                       | 31.7                   | 16.0                              | 48.3                       | 31.5                   |
| <b>Chicano/Mexican<br/>American</b>                       | 14.3                              | 42.5                       | 40.7                   | 14.8                              | 44.6                       | 35.1                   |
| <b>Puerto Rican</b>                                       | 14.6                              | 45.6                       | 36.9                   | 14.6                              | 47.9                       | 32.3                   |

#### Students' Degree Aspirations by Parental Level of Education and Race

Student degree aspirations by race and parental level of education ranged across the board for all racial/ethnic groups from 2008-2012. Specifically, when analyzing Chicana/o and Puerto Rican students, findings suggest that these students have high aspirations, but depending on the level of education of their parents, their aspirations shifted from freshmen to senior year. For example in Table 4.5 and 4.6, while Chicana/o students had parents that were the least educated in the sample, they had higher aspirations than their Puerto Rican counterparts. In Table 6, 40.6% of Chicana/o students with mothers who held a bachelor's degree aspired as freshmen to attain a master's degree, but by senior year only 33.0% of these same students aspired to attain a master's degree resulting in a decline of 7.6%. Similarly, 36.1% of Puerto Rican students with mothers who earned a bachelor's degree aspired as freshmen to attain a master's degree, but by senior year just 28.9% of these same students aspired to attain a master's resulting in a 7.2% decline. Of similar interest, 41.7% of Puerto Rican students that had mothers with a graduate degree aspired to attain a PhD, MD, JD, but by the senior year only 28.6% had the same aspirations resulting in a difference of 13%. Also in Table 7, 47.1% of

Puerto Rican students with fathers who held a graduate degree as freshmen aspired to attain a PhD, MD, JD, but by the senior year only 37.5% had the same aspirations resulting in a 9% decline.

**Table 4.5**

| <i>Students Degree Aspirations by Race and Mother Level of Education</i> |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <i>TFS 2008, CSS 2012 Longitudinal dataset (N=12,145)</i>                |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
|                                                                          | <i>TFS 2008</i>   |                 |                    | <i>CSS 2012</i>   |                 |                    |
|                                                                          | <i>Bachelor's</i> | <i>Master's</i> | <i>PhD, MD, JD</i> | <i>Bachelor's</i> | <i>Master's</i> | <i>PhD, MD, JD</i> |
| <b>Mexican American/Chicano</b>                                          |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Less than high school                                                    | 8 (8.2)           | 43 (43.9)       | 46 (46.9)          | 9 (10.0)          | 39 (43.3)       | 38 (42.2)          |
| High school graduate                                                     | 16 (19.0)         | 35 (41.7)       | 31 (36.9)          | 10 (12.8)         | 38 (48.7)       | 23 (29.5)          |
| Some College                                                             | 11 (14.3)         | 38 (49.4)       | 23 (29.9)          | 13 (19.1)         | 31 (45.6)       | 19 (27.9)          |
| College Graduate                                                         | 20 (20.8)         | 36 (37.5)       | 39 (40.6)          | 16 (18.2)         | 40 (45.5)       | 29 (33.0)          |
| Graduate Degree                                                          | 2 (5.1)           | 16 (41.0)       | 20 (51.3)          | 4 (12.5)          | 12 (37.5)       | 15 (46.9)          |
| <b>Puerto Rican</b>                                                      |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Less than high school                                                    | 1 (14.3)          | 5 (71.4)        | 1 (14.3)           | 1 (16.7)          | 2 (33.3)        | 2 (33.3)           |
| High school graduate                                                     | 2 (11.1)          | 8 (44.4)        | 7 (38.9)           | 2 (15.4)          | 5 (38.5)        | 5 (38.5)           |
| Some College                                                             | 4 (14.8)          | 12 (44.4)       | 11 (40.7)          | 3 (13.0)          | 9 (39.1)        | 9 (39.1)           |
| College Graduate                                                         | 5 (13.9)          | 16 (44.4)       | 13 (36.1)          | 5 (13.2)          | 22 (57.9)       | 11 (28.9)          |
| Graduate Degree                                                          | 2 (16.7)          | 5 (41.7)        | 5 (41.7)           | 2 (14.3)          | 7 (50.0)        | 4 (28.6)           |

**Table 4.6**

| <i>Student Degree Aspirations by Race and Father Level of Education</i> |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <i>TFS 2008, CSS 2012 Longitudinal dataset (N=12,145)</i>               |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
|                                                                         | <i>TFS 2008</i>   |                 |                    | <i>CSS 2012</i>   |                 |                    |
|                                                                         | <i>Bachelor's</i> | <i>Master's</i> | <i>JD, PhD, MD</i> | <i>Bachelor's</i> | <i>Master's</i> | <i>JD, PhD, MD</i> |
| <b>Mexican American/ Chicano</b>                                        |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Less than high school                                                   | 10 (9.4)          | 48 (45.3)       | 45 (42.5)          | 8 (8.5)           | 44 (46.8)       | 36 (38.3)          |
| High school graduate                                                    | 19 (24.7)         | 29 (37.7)       | 26 (33.8)          | 8 (10.5)          | 40 (52.6)       | 19 (25.0)          |
| Some College                                                            | 9 (11.5)          | 33 (42.2)       | 33 (42.3)          | 20 (25.6)         | 30 (38.5)       | 26 (33.3)          |
| College Graduate                                                        | 15 (18.8)         | 33 (41.3)       | 32 (40.0)          | 12 (17.4)         | 29 (42.0)       | 26 (37.7)          |
| Graduate Degree                                                         | 4 (9.5)           | 19 (45.2)       | 18 (42.9)          | 4 (13.8)          | 12 (41.4)       | 12 (41.4)          |
| <b>Puerto Rican</b>                                                     |                   |                 |                    |                   |                 |                    |
| Less than high school                                                   | 4 (26.7)          | 6 (40.0)        | 4 (26.7)           | 1 (6.3)           | 7 (43.8)        | 5 (31.3)           |
| High school graduate                                                    | 3 (10.7)          | 14 (50.0)       | 9 (32.1)           | 4 (16.7)          | 12 (50.0)       | 7 (29.2)           |
| Some College                                                            | 2 (12.5)          | 9 (56.3)        | 5 (31.3)           | 0 (0.0)           | 10 (62.5)       | 6 (37.5)           |
| College Graduate                                                        | 3 (15.0)          | 8 (40.0)        | 9 (45.0)           | 4 (22.2)          | 7 (38.9)        | 7 (38.9)           |
| Graduate Degree                                                         | 2 (11.8)          | 7 (41.2)        | 8 (47.1)           | 2 (12.5)          | 7 (43.8)        | 6 (37.5)           |

## Discussion

The findings presented here demonstrate a range of information available through the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) 2008 The Freshmen Survey (TFS) and the 2012 College Senior Survey (CSS) matched sample. In addressing the research question: What are the differences between Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college educated parents' (with at least one with a bachelors degree) and their college educated children aspirations? The results suggest that Chicana/o and Puerto Rican students have high aspirations regardless of their parental level of education as freshmen entering institutions of higher education. As graduating seniors, Chicana/o and Puerto Rican students had various shifts in their educational aspirations. This sample allows for an example of *what* is happening at a fundamental level in a national sample in institutions of higher education, but does not provide an adequate representation of *why*. I did not conduct a test of significance for two reasons: 1) I believe the sample size was too small and only represented students from specific institutions that have a low number of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican students. These institutions tended to be small liberal arts colleges not truly accounting for where Latina/o students actually attend college, and 2) Due to the conflation of race/ethnicity as a variable, it is difficult to make accurate assumptions of who fits in these categories. Therefore, I shift the discussion in the following sections to decipher the race/ethnicity variable through an analysis of The Freshmen Survey from its inception in 1966 to present day. This is followed by an analysis of the TFS 2008/CCS 2012-matched sample to understand what institutions are represented, and the difficulty in making assumptions or generalizations of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican students through a select sample of students.

## Methodological Tensions

### Race and Quantitative Research

Social scientists have initiated how to examine race in applying quantitative methods while researching different groups. In 2001, Zuberi wrote a seminal piece entitled *Thicker than Blood: How Racial Statistics Lie*, in which he dismantles the assumption that statistics are “neutral,” but rather play a significant role in the social construction of race and racism. Zuberi (2001) examines how the social concept of race affects how researchers interpret quantitative representations of racial reality. Many quantitative studies of racial differences fail to place race within a social context. As a result, they allow for false assumptions that the existence of race relations is benign (Zuberi, 2001). He argues statistical methods are used as a way to “prove” between-group differences based on racial categories through statistic tests of means (i.e. T-Test’s or ANOVA), which enhance between-group differences while minimizing intra-group differences. Further, Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva (2008) in *White Logic, White Methods* provide an insight of how statistical analysis and the interpretations of studies are framed to sustain white supremacy in the social sciences. In their collaborative effort, they examine how statistical analysis cannot be done without separating *analysis* and *analysts* as these two are not detached in approaching research. Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva provide the roots of a paradigm shift that changes how “critical” is used and defined in social science research. Critical race theory scholars of education emulate what is being done in the social sciences by asking how educational researchers of quantitative methods are questioning the use of statistics to undermine and challenge the unexamined notions of the white supremacy. Gillborn (2010), Covarrubias, (2011), Covarrubias & Lara (2013), and (Covarrubias & Velez, 2013) integrate a critical race

theory analysis as they conduct or analyze quantitative research. As a whole, they urge educational scholars, practitioners, and policy makers to reconsider how “quantitative approaches often encoded particular assumptions about the nature of social processes and the generation of educational inequality that reflect a generally superficial understanding of racism” and perpetuate white supremacy (Gillborn, 2010, p.4). However, all of these scholars are clear that statistical methods are beneficial if a researcher does not misconstrue findings and results as objective truth, especially for communities and students of color.

Gillborn (2010) puts forth an analysis of secondary education in the United Kingdom and how statisticians manipulate data furthering a majoritarian narrative, which sustains unequal material conditions for students of color. He calls for an analysis of the intersections of class, gender, and race when using quantitative data. Covarrubias (2011) introduces quantitative intersectionality by disaggregating data by race, class, gender, and citizenship status among Chicana/os in relation to the educational pipeline. By disaggregating the data, Covarrubias, confirms what other Chicana/o scholars have found that Chicana/o educational outcomes are alarming and need to be addressed at all levels of the educational pipeline. Similarly, Covarrubias and Lara (2013) argue for a quantitative intersectionality in studying Chicana/os and undocumented people of Mexican origin and educational attainment. By controlling for citizenship status they reveal heterogeneity within-group educational outcomes. Covarrubias and Velez (2013) provide critical insight to recognize that “white logic has formed in quantitative methods, blinding social scientists in their contemporary research regarding racism especially, its casual findings and its applications” (p.270). Finally, Covarrubias and Velez (2013) argue that an integration of a critical race quantitative intersectionality is necessary to problematize and critically analyze quantitative data because “numbers do not speak for themselves” (p.278).

Therefore, as critical race scholars conduct quantitative research, they provide practitioners, researchers, policymakers and educators a way to address educational inequities within population subgroup, which as previously stated, is not necessarily acknowledged in quantitative scholarship. Further, by analyzing intersections, power is unraveled as it is played out in different forums of an individual's social identities, and how it may or may not impact an individual's educational outcomes. In the next subsection, I analyze race/ethnicity as a variable in The Freshmen Survey through its inception in 1966 to present day. Followed by an analysis of the TFS 2008/CCS 2012-matched sample while employing a critical race theory framework.

#### Race/Ethnicity as a Variable in The Freshman Survey

Race continues to be seen as [a] biological and demographic variable by many scholars, even though it has been argued for years that race is, biologically and demographically speaking, an exceedingly complex matter and that subjective predispositions and biases, more than biology or demography, govern the way people think about it. Racial statistics are not biologically or demographically based, because both demography and biology developed ideas about race under the sway of [the] eugenics movement. This continued bias results from the acceptance of statistical definition of race as real rather than as a simple reflection on the classification process itself. (Zuberi, 2001, p. 105)

The Freshmen Survey was created and first administrated in 1966 by Dr. Alexander Austin who, at the time, worked for the American Council on Education in the early 1970s he brought and housed the survey at UCLA where it has since remained. This particular survey has been administered to over 15 million students at over 1,900 institutions (HERI, 2016). Given the history of higher education, this survey is important because it allows us to see who had access to institutions and the internal racial climate of the American higher education system specific to how these researchers constructed it. Omi and Winant (1994) provide a language to contextualize the fluidity and/or staticity of race and racism as a racial project. A racial project is defined as:

...simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines. Racial projects connect what race *means* in a particular discursive practice and the ways in which both social structures and everyday experiences are racially *organized*, based upon that meaning.

Race and ethnicity as a combined variable or a variable in general is not as simplistic as marking a box that researchers put into categories and run statistical testing to prove significance. Race and ethnicity in the United States have deeply historical connotations that are different for every race and ethnic group. It becomes important to ask critical questions about the construction of variables and the meanings behind how these questions are asked. Specifically, in this section I analyze the Higher Education Research Institute's The Freshmen Survey and its construction of race/ethnicity as a variable from 1966 to present day. This is significant because it allows researchers to contextualize and complicate how this specific item has evolved and may not be as "objective" as it appears, especially when we collect national data across a series of states and institutions. Race and ethnicity is socially constructed and manifests itself in different ways depending on location and who occupies those spaces. Therefore, I approach the race/ethnicity variable as a racial project paying close attention to the categories of "Hispanic"<sup>14</sup>, "Latino,"<sup>15</sup> "Mexican/Chicano,"<sup>16</sup> and/or "Puerto Rican."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Hispanic is a U.S. Census term referring to men or women who are of the origins of Spain and/or who are Spanish speakers.

<sup>15</sup> Latina/o refers to men or women who origins are rooted in Latin America (i.e. Guatemalan or Puerto Rican) and reside in the United States despite immigration status. Further, Latina/o is used as an umbrella term that is inclusive of Chicana/o and Puerto Ricans.

<sup>16</sup> Chicana/o men or women can be defined as those who are of Mexican origin despite immigration status that reside in the United States. Among the Latina/o population Chicanas/os compromise the largest origin group in the United States, accounting for 65% of the Latina/o population (Pew Hispanic Report, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Puerto Rican men or women can be defined as those who are residents of the United States and born in Puerto Rico or can trace ancestry to Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans compromise the second largest origin group of the United States, accounting for 9% of the Latina/o population.

I do this because the complex racial histories of People of Color in the United States provide insights to how specific groups have been able to gain access into institutions of higher education in different ways, which allow for different educational outcomes. How quantitative items are asked can influence how a sample is taken or who chooses to answer a question. As such, I begin my historical analysis of the race/ethnicity variable for The Freshmen Survey from 1966 to present day.

The survey administrated in 1966-1968, question 11 asked, “What is your racial background? (Circle one) “Caucasian,” “Negro,” “American Indian,” “Oriental,” and/or “Other.” There are several complexities in this question. First the question asks for racial background, but only provides ethnicity options. As discussed in chapter 3, race is defined as an objective condition that falsely generalizes and stereotypes skin color, or any other biological marker that society understands as race to explain phenotype differences (Zamudio, Russell, Rios, and Bridgeman, 2010). Ethnicity is used to categorize individuals that share a common cultural heritage such as language, rituals, nationality, and geographic units. People of similar ethnic backgrounds may follow diverse traditions and cultural practices. Asking participants to only circle one limits and dismisses the possibility that a student is of one or more racial or ethnic backgrounds. There is no representation of Latina/os on the survey, which results in not being able to accurately account for this student population. “Other” is also a very broad term making it difficult to account for students that identify as categories existing outside of the survey. From 1969 to 1970 the question remains the same, with the options of: “White/ Caucasian,” “Black/Negro/African American,” “American Indian,” “Oriental,” “Other”. These options begin the conflation of race *and* ethnicity for the survey. Conflating race and ethnicity is an act of erasure and homogeneity. There remains no representation of Latina/o.

From 1971 to 1975, the question changes to number 16 as: “Are you: (Mark all that apply)” with options of: “White/Caucasian,” “Black/Negro/African American,” “American Indian,” “Oriental,” “Mexican American/Chicano,” “Puerto Rican American,” and “Other.” These options further conflate ethnicity and race because the participant is allowed to mark as many options as possible, which provides more information that remains unclear. Mexican American/Chicano and Puerto Rican American are added options during these years representing Latina/os, but only two groups discounts the diverse experiences that exist among Latina/os. However, this survey is one of the first to disaggregate paying attention to Chicana/o and Puerto Rican populations. More interestingly, Mexican American/Chicano is added as one item, despite being two different ethnic identities as discussed in Chapter 2. Also as discussed in Chapter 2, Latina/os have a complex history of racialization. For example, if you were to instruct a Puerto Rican to mark “all that apply”, they may mark Black/Negro/African American and Puerto Rican American, providing two ethnic identities and one racial identity which could potentially confuse researchers who are trying to measure specific experiences of these groups separately. The 1960s also represent the height of the Civil Rights Movement leading to access to institutions of higher education through various pathways for Communities of Color. As discussed in chapter 2, Chicana/os and Puerto Ricans were very active in gaining access into institutions of higher education through the Chicana/o Student Movement and Puerto Rican Student Movement.

From 1976 to 1990, the question remains the same but relisted as question number 21: “Are you: (Mark all that apply)” with options of: “White/Caucasian,” “Black/Negro/African American,” “American Indian,” “Asian American/Oriental,” “Mexican American/Chicano,” “Puerto Rican American,” and “Other.” The only addition during this time period is “Asian American” which may offer a new politically correct term for this specific group. In addition,

deficit terms are still present such as “Negro” and “Oriental” these terms still being present post-civil rights movement is an alarming indication of how higher education may not be culturally responsive to these groups.

From 1991 to 1993, question 21 remains the same and is written as: “Are you: (Mark all that apply)” with options of: “White/Caucasian,” “Black/African American,” “American Indian,” “Asian American/Oriental,” “Mexican American/Chicano,” “Puerto Rican American,” and “Other.” The options remain the same with the exception of “Negro” being removed. This is distressing as it is rather late in the racial climate of the United States to still have the word “Negro” present as a racial or ethnic marker through 1990, as this term is highly offensive and racist.

From 1993 to 1997, the question remains the same and is relisted as question 22 which states “Are you: (Mark all that apply)” with options of: “White/Caucasian,” “Black/African American,” “American Indian,” “Asian American,” “Mexican American/Chicano,” “Puerto Rican American,” “Other Latino,” and “Other.” For these options “Oriental” is removed and “Other Latino” is added. Similar to the removal of “Negro,” the term “Oriental” can be asserted in the same context. The addition of “Other Latino” allows for Latinos who do not identify Mexican American/Chicano or Puerto Rican to mark a category particular to their experience. Despite the addition of this important term, it can still be improved by taking into account the heterogeneity of Latina/os in the context of region, state, and cities. For example, adding an item such as “Central American” and disaggregating as “Honduran” or “Argentinian” can help researchers clearly articulate which groups they are referring to. Again, adding “Other Latino” in the early 1990s dismisses a long history of migration of these groups into the United States, and does not accurately represent them.

In 1998 the question remains the same and is relisted as question 28: “Are you: (Mark all that apply)” with options of: “White/Caucasian,” “Black/African American,” “American Indian,” “Chinese American/ Chinese,” “Filipino American/ Pilipino,” “Japanese American/ Japanese,” “Korean American/Korean,” “Southeast Asian (Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian etc.),” “Other Asian American/Asian,” “Mexican American/Chicano,” “Puerto Rican American,” “Other Latino,” and “Other.” It is unclear why the disaggregation of Asian happened during this year, but it provides an example of how educational researchers can begin to separate ethnic groups to better understand the experiences of these groups from one another. This same approach can be applied to each item in this survey on race *and* ethnicity. Of course these groups can be categorized into smaller subgroups, but the survey move towards collecting more representative samples. From 1999 to 2001, the question remains the same and is relisted as question 24: “Are you: (Mark all that apply)” with options of: “White/Caucasian,” “Black/African American,” “American Indian,” “Asian American/Asian,” “Mexican American/Chicano,” “Puerto Rican American,” “Other Latino,” and “Other.” The disaggregation of Asian is removed for unknown reasons, but allows for an erasure of these experiences once again.

From 2002 to present, the question remains the same and is question 24: “Are you: (Mark all that apply)” with options of: “White/Caucasian,” “Black/African American,” “American Indian/Alaska Native,” “Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander,” “Asian American/Asian,” “Mexican American/Chicano,” “Puerto Rican American,” “Other Latino,” and “Other.” The options of “Alaska Native” and “Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander” are added. Adding these two categories is critical, as the survey now begins to recognize various experiences of these groups.

In approaching the race/ethnicity variable as a racial project, The Freshmen Survey demonstrates how the conflation of race and ethnicity have evolved over time in one national

sample relevant to the conditions of students in institutions of higher education in the United States. As a racial project, race *and* ethnicity, dictate communities' material conditions based on how we interpret, represent, and explain specific groups' experiences, especially with in higher education.

#### Complicating the Matched Sample in The Freshmen Survey 2008 and The College Senior Survey 2012

A 1982 report was conducted by the Ford Foundation on Puerto Ricans in the U.S., Higher Education: Current Status and Recent Progress, in conjunction with the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles to examine four disadvantaged racial/ethnic groups and educational outcomes. What is unique about this report is the examination of how data collection and reporting take place, and the assertion of the following:

One serious problem was that of sample size. Since most of the sources used in the project rely on sample surveys, the absolute number of persons surveyed was so small as to raise serious questions about the reliability of results; this was certainly true for Puerto Ricans. A related problem is that of representativeness of various samples; again, this problem [is] especially acute in the case of the smaller minority groups (Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and American Indians).

Unfortunately, in 2016 we are still encountering the same problem for Latina/o students. Despite the TFS 2008/CCS 2012 being a national matched sample, it yields disproportionate representation of white students in comparison to other racial and ethnic groups. I argue it is challenging to make generalizations of Latina/o students in higher education if there is a low representation of sample size. In particular, in disaggregating "Hispanic" from the TFS 2008/CCS 2012 composite RACEGROUP variable yields varying results; it disrupts sampling results and generalizability and exposes differing educational attainment among populations (Terenishi, 2001). For example as seen in Table 4.7, in analyzing "Hispanic within this sample", 66% of "Hispanic" respondents in the match sample come from 15 institutions accounting for

16% of the sample. Fourteen of the 15 are private schools with six of the 15 institutions residing in California. Forty-one out of 90 (45%) of the schools have five percent or fewer “Hispanics” in their sample, and 20 schools out of 90 (22%) schools in the sample have zero “Hispanics” in their sample. Table 4.7 further provides a breakdown of which four-year institutions the “Hispanic” students in the sample attend. Based on this sample, “Hispanic,” students are attending private liberal arts schools. The National Center for Educational Statistics in 2009 reported 14.1% of “Hispanics” enrolled in public institutions as compared to 9.8% enrolled in a private institution. We can infer that the TFS 2008/CCS 2012 has an overrepresentation of private institutions, and is not generalizable for the Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college students.

**Table 4.7**

| <i>Institutions with 10 or More Hispanics in TFS 2008\CSS 2012 Matched Sample</i> |              |            |              |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Institution</b>                                                                | <b>Count</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>State</b> | <b>Control</b> |
| <b>Mount St Mary's College (CA)</b>                                               | <b>61</b>    | <b>11%</b> | <b>CA</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>Fordham University</b>                                                         | <b>54</b>    | <b>9%</b>  | <b>NY</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>UC San Diego</b>                                                               | <b>47</b>    | <b>8%</b>  | <b>CA</b>    | <b>Public</b>  |
| <b>College of Saint Mary (NE)</b>                                                 | <b>37</b>    | <b>6%</b>  | <b>NE</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>Saint Mary's College of California</b>                                         | <b>35</b>    | <b>6%</b>  | <b>CA</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>Fairfield University</b>                                                       | <b>24</b>    | <b>4%</b>  | <b>CT</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>California Baptist University</b>                                              | <b>23</b>    | <b>4%</b>  | <b>CA</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>Mills College</b>                                                              | <b>15</b>    | <b>3%</b>  | <b>CA</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>Gonzaga University</b>                                                         | <b>15</b>    | <b>3%</b>  | <b>WA</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>Marymount Manhattan College</b>                                                | <b>13</b>    | <b>2%</b>  | <b>NY</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>Chapman University</b>                                                         | <b>12</b>    | <b>2%</b>  | <b>CA</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>Creighton University</b>                                                       | <b>12</b>    | <b>2%</b>  | <b>NE</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>St Lawrence University</b>                                                     | <b>12</b>    | <b>2%</b>  | <b>NY</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>Texas Christian University</b>                                                 | <b>11</b>    | <b>2%</b>  | <b>TX</b>    | <b>Private</b> |
| <b>Saint Mary's College (IN)</b>                                                  | <b>10</b>    | <b>2%</b>  | <b>IN</b>    | <b>Private</b> |

### ***Conclusion: A Critical Race Transformative Convergent Mixed Method***

In the previous section, I employed a critical race theory framework to examine a national secondary dataset in higher education to better understand the categories a national data set has on Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college students. Based on my analysis, I argue that educational researchers need to be weary of how they create items for racial and ethnic demographic purposes. In addition, educational researchers need to be cautious of sampling and assertions of generalizability. I have found that educational researches typically collapse Chicana/o and Puerto Rican (along with other Latina/o) populations into one “Hispanic” category and report on data regarding our diverse experiences as though we are one racially and ethnically homogenous group. Therefore, I disrupt this troubling trend by proposing a Critical Race Theory Transformative Convergent Mixed Method as a methodology acknowledging that race and racism permeate educational institutions and marginalize Communities of Color. In using a mixed method approach with the incorporation of a critical race theory framework, we can capture a macro level of what is quantitatively happening narrow it down to a micro, qualitative understanding as to why. In this section, I provide a brief history of mixed methods, and a working integration of how I implement critical race theory and a transformative convergent mixed method approach in educational research.

#### *A Brief History of Mixed Methods*

Historically, Campbell and Fiske (1959) are attributed with converging qualitative and quantitative methods in the social sciences to ensure that variance was explained in the research process. Specifically, prior to the coined term “mixed methods”, they employed “multitrait-multimethod matrix” as an expression to define the various components of validation emphasizing “multiple operationalism” as a triangulation technique in which researchers

implement more than one method to validate an occurring phenomenon (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). Campbell and Fiske's (1959) ideas have been extended and developed by various scholars throughout the last few decades who have created a canon for utilizing mixed methodologies (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest, 1966; Denzin, (1978); Jick, 1979; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Mertens, 1998; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Creswell 2015). As a result, multiple definitions of mixed methods have emerged; Creswell (2015) puts forth a comprehensive definition of mixed methods as:

An approach to research in the social behavioral, and health sciences in which the investigator gathers both quantitative (close-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates the two, and then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems. (p. 2)

Based on this definition, researchers, have argued that mixed methods provides an innovative way to understand complex research agendas by incorporating both numerical data (e.g. descriptive statistics) and text data (e.g. digital recordings transcribed into words) that involve the “collection, analysis, and integration of *both* quantitative and qualitative data” (Creswell, 2015, p.3). Recently, building upon his previous scholarship, Creswell (2015) has concisely outlined the integration of mixed methods designs into three basic categories: convergent, explanatory sequential, and exploratory sequential (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, Creswell & Mertens, 2014, Creswell 2015). A convergent design has two distinct processes of methods and data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, with the merging or integration of the two occurring in the results as a means of validation (Creswell, 2015). An explanatory sequential design begins with quantitative methods and data collection followed by the use of qualitative methods and data collection to explain the quantitative findings (Creswell, 2015). An exploratory sequential design begins with the qualitative methods and data collection, which informs the building of a second quantitative methods and data collection. Creswell (2015)

further explains that these basic designs are enhanced by “building them into a larger framework or to build them into an overall program of inquiry that spans over a period of time” (p.122). Common forms of advanced designs are intervention, social justice or transformative, and multistage evaluation.<sup>18</sup>

As mixed methodologies are evolving and are being use widely, very few studies have to assess different cultures as it applies to students of color in higher education. In fact, Canales (2014) comments:

[Critical race theory]...Arguably, the best transformative framework encompassing its origins in the law and primary commitment to social transformation of power-based inequities between the “races” make CRT and its variations, including LatCrit, FemCrit, and QueerCrit, ideal for mixed methods research stemming from an advocacy worldview (p.13).

As displayed in Table 4.8, critical race theory integrated with transformative-mixed methods paradigm principles offers researchers a critical lens at all levels of the research process. Specifically, Critical Race Transformative Convergent Mix Method is a social justice or transformative advanced design addressing oppression that marginalized communities experience on individual and systemic levels (Creswell, 2002; Mertens, 2005).

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<sup>18</sup> The focus of this study articulates and develops a transformative convergent design. For further explanation of intervention and multistage evaluation, see Creswell (2015).

## Critical Race Theory Tenets and Transformative Paradigm Principles

**Table 4.8**

|                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>The centrality of experiential knowledge and A challenge to dominant ideology</i>        | The lives and experiences of marginalized communities are placed at the center as knowledge holders. In turn, there is an acknowledgement that oppressed groups' lives are constrained by the actions of oppressors. |
| <i>The centrality of race and racism and the intersections of other forms of oppression</i> | This analyzes how and why disproportionate power relations exist to create inequities based on gender, class, race, and/or sexuality.                                                                                |
| <i>A commitment to social justice framework</i>                                             | It examines how research, in relation to inequities, is associated with political and social action.                                                                                                                 |
| <i>An interdisciplinary perspective</i>                                                     | Grounded in transformative theory (i.e. critical race theory), it examines why a set of beliefs exists or why a problem occurs.                                                                                      |

### A Critical Race Transformative Convergent Mixed Methods Definition

A Critical Race Transformative Convergent Mix Methods is a social justice advanced design that has two distinct processes of methods and data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, with the merging or integration of the two occurring in the results as a means of validation. I frame the design of a transformative convergent mixed methods grounded in critical race theory for the following reasons (Mertens, 2007):

- 1) *Ontological*, I understand race and racism as a social construction sustaining white supremacy privileging different groups in how data is collected and understood. As a result, creating multiple realities for different groups and having real repercussions of material conditions (Mertens, 2007).
- 2) *Epistemological*, as a scholar of color, I possess varying degrees of race and ethnic sensitivities as I acknowledge the relationship between researcher and participant and power relations that exist for us (Mertens, 2007).
- 3) *Methodological*, this convergent mixed method interprets quantitative data with a lens specifically attuned towards disrupting white supremacy, and qualitatively, collects

data to affirm and empower participants through hearing and honoring their voices and experiences (Mertens, 2007).

- 4) *Axiological*, as a scholar, I am guided by three principles within the ethics of research: respect, beneficence, and justice (Mertens, 2007). I deeply *respect* the communities I engage with as a researcher and consistently reflect on my privileges. I *beneficently* pursue research agendas as *social justice* projects to improve the material conditions of Communities of Color.

Further, the use of a Critical Race Transformative Convergent Mix Methods provides the historical and contemporary context that shapes the intersections of educational achievement, attainment, and outcomes of students of color in the United States. In the previous sections, I have demonstrated how to analyze a secondary set while employing a critical race theory framework, which is the quantitative phase of the convergent mixed method. In the qualitative phase, critical race educational oral histories informed by Chicana feminisms and the tool of pedagogies of the home are conducted. Critical race educational oral histories emerge out of Critical Race History and challenge ahistorical perspectives of Communities of Color in educational settings (Aguilar, 2013). In challenging ahistoricism, the educational oral histories in Chapter 5 of college-educated Chicana/o families and Chapter 6 of college-educated Puerto Rican families allow for the heterogeneity of these groups to come to the forefront. Based on the information they share, the findings can provide a lens for how to reconstruct quantitative surveys to best address the educational inequities among Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college students.

## Chapter 5

### *Adelante: Chicana/o Intergenerational Educational Oral Histories*

Retrofitted memory is a practice whereby social actors read the interstices gaps, and silences of existing historical narratives in order to retrofit, rework, and refashion older narratives to create new historical openings, political possibilities, and genealogies of resistance (Maylei Blackwell, 2011, p.102)

The focus of this chapter is to examine multigenerational educational oral histories of four Chicana/o college-educated parents and their four Chicana/o college-educated children. In recovering and reworking their own retrofitted memories, the Chicana/o parents and their children in this study display an embodied memory,<sup>19</sup> reclaiming historical space as it pertains to their educational trajectories. This chapter includes: (1) the research questions, (2) families' educational oral histories of their college experiences, (3) and my conclusion, which contains thematic codes of parent and child undergraduate and graduate college experiences and a theoretically grounded analysis of their experiences. I critically engage the following research questions:

1. How do Chicana/o college-educated parents *impact* their college-educated children's college-related experiences?
2. How do Chicana/o college-educated children *perceive the impact* of their college-educated parents on their college-related experiences?

I document how Chicana/o families explain their individual educational trajectories and how these critical lived experiences remerged from one generation to the next. Figure 5.1 introduces the family dyads in detail, and is followed by Figure 5.2, which details how the dyads were interviewed. The structure of the interviews and factors in how they were conducted allowed for a variation in findings.

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<sup>19</sup> Embodied memory is alive, and exceeds a material archive's ability to capture it (Taylor, 2007).

**Figure 5.1 Chicana/o Families' Demographics**

| Chicana/o         |     |                 |                            |            |                    |                 |             |                                        |
|-------------------|-----|-----------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------------|
| Family Name       | Age | Self-Identity   | Generation in the U.S.     | Residence  | K-12 Education     | Degree Attained | Field       | Current Occupation                     |
| Daughter, Morales | 40  | Chicana/Serbian | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation | California | Private            | PhD             | Education   | Assistant Professor                    |
| Father, Morales   | 67  | Chicano         | 1 <sup>st</sup> Generation | California | Private            | MFC             | Education   | Instructor & Community College Advisor |
| Daughter, Rodrigo | 29  | Chicana         | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Generation | California | Public             | PhD             | Education   | Post Doctoral Fellow                   |
| Mother, Rodrigo   | 60  | Chicana         | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation | California | Public             | BA              | Education   | Substitute Teacher                     |
| Daughter, Rios    | 32  | Chicana/Irish   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Generation | California | Private and Public | PhD             | Education   | Assistant Professor                    |
| Mother, Rios      | 72  | "I am just me." | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation | Texas      | Private            | BA              | Education   | Retired, Elementary Teacher            |
| Daughter, Ramirez | 32  | Chicana         | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Generation | California | Public             | EdD             | Education   | Assistant Professor                    |
| Mother, Ramirez   | 66  | Chicana         | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation | California | Public             | MSW             | Social Work | Retired, Social Worker                 |

**Figure 5.2 Chicana/o Educational Oral History Details**

| Family                   | Interview Type | Interview Duration | Interview Format     |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Morales Father           | Online Video   | 120 minutes        | Interviewed Alone    |
| Morales Daughter         | In-Person      | 120 minutes        | Interviewed Alone    |
| Rodrigo Mother           | In-Person      | 100 minutes        | Interviewed Alone    |
| Rodrigo Daughter         | In-Person      | 100 minutes        | Interviewed Alone    |
| Rios Mother and Daughter | In-Person      | 180 minutes        | Interviewed Together |
| Ramirez Mother           | In-Person      | 90 minutes         | Interviewed Alone    |
| Ramirez Daughter         | In-Person      | 120 minutes        | Interviewed Alone    |

### **College-Educated Chicana/o Family Educational Oral Histories**

EVERY MAN is in certain respects

- a. like all other men,
- b. like some other men
- c. like no other man.

Henry A. Murry and Clyde Kluckhohn (1953) in their seminal piece *Personality in Nature,*

*Society, and Culture* describe the heterogeneity that exists among mankind as men being like “all other men,” “like some others,” and “like no others.” Daniel G. Solórzano applies this concept to his study of Chicana/o PhDs in the 1990s to early 2000s as described below:

Chicana/o PhDs are in certain respects

- a. like all Chicana/o PhDs,
- b. like some other Chicana/o PhDs,
- c. like no other Chicana/o PhDs.

Similarly, to capture the complexities and nuances of the Chicana/o parents’ and their children’s college-related educational experiences, the findings within family take *account of and value* the heterogeneity *and* homogeneity among them. As follows:

Chicana/o college educated parents and their college-educated children are in certain respects

- a. like all...
- b. like some...
- c. like no other...

### *An Important Note*

In light of the educational oral history interview type, duration, and format, dyads shared a hybrid of embodied memory (Taylor, 2001; Blackwell, 2011). As the interviewer or witness, my interpretations/writings of the participants' educational oral histories differed based on how I narrated and witnessed their storytelling. As participants shared their educational oral histories, they dictated how they wanted to transform their emotional memory into situated knowledge for documentation (Benmayor, 2012). Taylor (2001) specifically describes this as the repertoire memory that requires presence as people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by being actively present and part of the transmission. As a result, the findings of these families vary in length, detail, as well as coverage of and references to historical time periods.

### **The Morales Family**

The Morales family resides in California, and is a father/daughter dyad. The father, Emilio, was born in Mexico and is the youngest of his three siblings. Emilio identifies as Chicano. Due to his father's death in Mexico, Emilio's mother became a widower and single mother. As the family faced financial hardships at home, previously settled family in the United States sponsored them to immigrate in the 1950s. Emilio came of age in the Latina/o barrio of Mission District in San Francisco, California. His mother secured work as a housekeeper for a convent that was located in the wealthy white Marina District, an enclave of San Francisco. Due to his mother working for the convent, Emilio was able to attend subsidized private Catholic school in the Marina District from kindergarten through eighth grade. As a teenager, he showed great talent in sports and academics, and was admitted on scholarship to an all-boys private school ran by the Christian Brothers. He was influenced greatly in his formative years by the

Christian Brothers and Catholicism, which led to his adoption of a social justice mindset in his early teens. Despite growing up extremely poor, Emilio accredits his mother's strong work ethic, appreciation for possessing less than more, and tough love to his development as a Chicano. Emilio described his mother's aspirations and expectations of him to attain a high school diploma. His mother had a sixth grade education, but she knew the importance of education and job security for her children.

As a high school athlete and social justice activist, he was granted several athletic scholarships to attend various out-of-state, four-year institutions. However, due to his mother's financial responsibilities and limited knowledge of the college-going process and true nature of the opportunities these scholarships provided, he had to decline all offers and pursue college through an alternate pathway. Emilio provides an experience of what it means to be a first-generation college student and what it meant for him to work through gendered expectations. Of equal importance, he contextualizes what it meant for his mother to not understand what college actually was. He often brought up, "You do not know, what you don't know." Emilio states:

(Laughing) This is a little bit embarrassing. I was receiving all these scholarships to play football in college - Colorado State, Arizona State - and my mom, bless her heart - she said, "College? Sports. No, no." She ripped them all up and she said, "Listen you would do a good job selling cameras." My brother got me into the camera trade so I worked after football season 20 hours a week or more at a camera store. I learned photography and as far as my mom knew that was my future. I was set for life. What was I going to do? I am not working at a camera store. I told my mom, "I really want to go to college." She said, "Hijo look, you have a great job as long as you are working full-time you can do anything you want" That is what I did. I did not regret not taking advantage of those scholarships. I kind of accepted what my mom had done - she meant well. She did not know any better.

Emilio's experience is complex and sheds light on the disconnect between a parent who had no prior knowledge of what college was, but who knew the importance of having a stable job to support his family. Emilio experienced a double-edged sword since he was unable to accept

his scholarships, but was able to negotiate with his mother on attending the local community college as long as he also worked. He clearly stated that he did not have regrets because he knew his mother meant well, but could not understand the true value of what was being offered to her son. As a first-generation college student, Emilio began his higher education experience at a local community college while working full-time. He transferred after two years to a local four-year state school and majored in Spanish Literature with a minor in Linguistics. While attending community college, he met the Serbian woman he would later marry while attending a four-year institution in the California State University system. After getting married and graduating, he was admitted into a teaching credential program, attained his credential, and began instructing at a private Catholic school.

As a recently wed high school teacher, Emilio desired the attainment of a graduate education to stay committed to his social justice praxis and help his community. Therefore, he pursued and completed his master's degree in Family and Therapy Counseling at a public four-year institution. During that time, Emilio and his wife became parents with the birth of their first daughter, Riya. Based on his academic performance in his master's program, Emilio was encouraged to complete the PhD in Education Counseling Psychology. He describes:

I'm just guessing - '72 to '77, something like that. Riya was born during that time. There was pressure for me to get a doctorate and that was really by people who knew me in the master's [program] and so on. They really felt that I would really benefit by going to get a doctorate and I started. I am ABD. I realized our marriage was having difficulties and we divorced by the way - I know the whole pressure of the school was a big issue and I hated being in the doctorate [program]. It was the University of San Francisco and my dissertation was going to be on sexual attitudes and behaviors comparing Mexican Catholics to Irish Catholics. I reluctantly did all those doctoral coursework, more out of pressure to get more education and in fact, I did not it want anymore. I had no interest. I was offered if I get my doctorate to teach at blah blah university level - and it is not what I really wanted. And I realized [I] was going for the doctorate only for maybe the prestige. I had no idea - I had no intention of leaving community college.

Emilio withdrew from his doctoral program after being designated as “all but dissertation.” The dissolution of his marriage took place around the same time. Despite divorcing from his wife, Emilio maintained joint custody of his daughters and made sure they were taken care of throughout their lives.

Riya Morales, born and raised in San Francisco, California, is the eldest of Emilio’s two daughters. She identifies as a Chicana/Serbian and accredits the ability to embrace her dual identity to her Chicano father and Serbian mother. Her mother’s parents immigrated to the Sunset District of San Francisco to escape the Bosnian War. Riya described her parents meeting at community college in their early years, and discussed their educational attainment. Her mother attained an associate’s degree and has a career as an X-ray technician. Due to the dissolution of her parents’ marriage, Riya split her youth and teenage years evenly between both parents and was with both of them every week while growing up. She came of age in the late 1980s through the 1990s and attended private Catholic school from kindergarten through her 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduation. She emphasized that her father, Emilio, was 100% committed to providing her with a quality education. Riya reflected that her father’s social justice consciousness and religious involvement were critical components of her upbringing and greatly informed her schooling experiences. As an elementary and junior high school student, she faced obstacles from her peers such as bullying and encountered multiple teachers with a limited investment in her education. As a high school student, she became politically active and founded several multicultural and social justice clubs. According to Riya, her father always expected her to graduate high school and pursue higher education. She encountered an unexpected reaction from her parents when she debated attending a well-known UC versus a less well-known UC. She describes her interactions with her father:

I think it really was kind of what his expectations was that I would graduate high school and I think seeing anything beyond that was hard for him. I don't think he knew how to –help support that process and I don't know- if it was just because he didn't go away and he did not experience that. When it came to apply to college he would not have anything to do with it. I do not understand. He works at a community college - he deals with people transferring, he sees people, he saw people go away and come back, and he would say, “You are not ready - you cannot do this.” Like you know there was a lot of that and so when I think about it I know it was my dad that really did value education out of my parents - it was no doubt he knew the importance of it but it was my mom who was like, “You have to leave,” and there were lots of reasons she wanted me to leave -and I do not think she knew why it was so important for me to go to college- except for physically to leave home and be somewhere else and have some peace...the less well known UC was the best decision. I got there. It was the first time I had the same room to sleep in. I did not have to live out of a suitcase. I did not have to deal with anyone's drama. It was just me and it was the most secure, safe, and best I ever felt. I found really good people there. I loved it.

Riya explains that her father had expectations of her, but she did not feel fully supported when it came to the college application process or in deciding what institution to attend.

She describes frustration, as she knew her father possessed the knowledge of how to apply and graduate from a four-year institution of higher education. She makes an interesting distinction between her parents. She observes her father being fully invested in her educational trajectory while being passive in the college decision process, and her mother being divested in that trajectory while fully active in her college decision process.

Emilio remembers this experience differently from Riya, as he states:

It was just the expectation that they were going to go to college- you know which is not what I had- hell no, it was the opposite as a matter of fact - right? For Riya - it was almost like they were going to go to college. I do not know if you know but she applied and I did not push. Being in education I knew enough to let them grow as much as they could. When Riya applied to colleges, she got into a very well-know[n] UC. I remember she talked to me and I remember saying, “Riya it has to be your decision,” and maybe because she did not want to be too close to home-whatever the reason was. I am really proud that she –no matter how prestigious this UC was- she wanted to go to a less well-known UC. Of course my friend said, “What kind of crazy parent are you- why did you let her go to the less well-known UC?” I said because that is what she wants. I got a bad time as an educator from my colleagues.

Emilio viewed his hand-off approach as a means for Riya to gain her independence. As an educator, Emilio describes that he knew enough not to over engage in Riya's decision-making process when it came to applying and college choice. Emilio viewed his actions as fully supporting whatever Riya wanted despite others' comments on his parenting style. Regardless, Emilio was immensely proud of Riya's accomplishments and her stern decision of attending a UC that was less well-known but a good fit for her.

As an undergraduate, she continued with her commitment to social justice and became an active member of Movimiento Estudiantil Chicana/o de Aztlan (M.E.Ch.A.), and other student-run organizations. She majored in Sociology with a law emphasis, minored in Chicana/o Studies, and graduated in the late 1990s. She was exposed to the idea of graduate school by a Chicana professor who saw promise in her academic abilities, and later received the application to apply via email. Riya states:

They [graduate program] emailed me the brochure and I looked at it. It was like the day before Thanksgiving when the application was due and I was at home. My dad was there but he did not know what I was doing. I was checking what program to apply to. Through M.E.Ch.A. I was in the classroom and was exposed to working with students. I love the classroom. I thought I will be a teacher, and I always thought about being a teacher. I saw all these boxes -MA, PhD- and I did not know what the PhD was. I really did not know what those letters were or what they meant. I checked MA and I saw the teaching credential and I was like, "Oh yeah, I can do that." So then I checked that box, so I applied to that program. It was a teaching credential and master's program. Later I knew somewhere in [my partner's] PhD program that I was craving that school again and that I wanted to go back for a PhD...I started right away - I loved it. I mean I started right away.

While Riya did not ask her father for assistance in the application process, he informally influenced her, as he was an educator as well. Riya comments that she had no prior knowledge of what a PhD was or what it meant. Interestingly, Emilio's pursuit of the doctoral degree was not something he exposed Riya to until later in life, as she states:

Riya: I forgot about this -when I was talking- he does not really talk about it too much. He was enrolled at UC in a PhD program and I do not know - I did not really know that. Like a year or two ago he mentioned he was ABD. I was like, “What are you talking about?”

Interviewer: Do you know what program? Was it an EdD?

Riya: No –it might have been like anthropology or something- I do not know.

Riya exposes a silence that occurs in her family about her father’s pursuit of a doctoral degree. It is unclear how much Riya knows to this day about what Emilio had shared during his interview. However, it is clear that Riya knows her father did embark on the PhD track and did not share significant details of what was happening for him during that time. Despite some of the silences between Riya and Emilio, they are accountable to each other as educators. Emilio states:

Riya has been influential for me being an educator because my words to Riya when she wanted to go into teaching were, “Are you going to be effective as an educator? Otherwise get the hell out of it.” It is too important not be effective. Then jokingly, but not really, Riya used that line with me. She questions me if I am still being effective! She sits me down in June and wants to know what I taught, what I facilitate, what staff development did I attend, and so on. We have a tenure review every few years and at the committee’s meeting with me - they had written an evaluation. You have to sit there and read it in front of the committee and all of a sudden I yell out, ‘Oh great I cannot wait to put this in the folder for June,’ and they go, “Excuse me what are you talking about?” I said I have to let Riya know how effective I’m still being.

Just as Emilio had expectations of Riya to be an effective educator, she expected the same. Emilio reflects that they have check-ins at the end of the academic year to ensure that they are still being impactful educators to this day.

The Morales family had various experiences in their higher education trajectories. Emilio as a first-generation college student had started his education at the community college and transferred into a four-year institution. Not traveling a straight trajectory into a four-year institution may have potentially shaped how he made educational decisions for his daughter. Riya knew the deep investment her father had in her education, but felt a sense of neglect when it

came to her college choice and ultimate decision in attending a UC not close to home. Emilio felt it was his duty as an educator to allow his daughter to make her own life decisions. When it came to graduate school, Emilio thoroughly enjoyed his experience. However, in his PhD program, he found that he had no desire to complete the degree. This proved a critical moment, as his experience was not a transparent one for Riya who embarked on the same path. Riya emphasized it was a mentor of color and an intervention program that exposed her to graduate school where she ultimately pursuing and attaining her PhD. Despite their challenges as a father/daughter dyad, the influence of social justice commitments to communities of color assisted them in sharing and being fully invested in their career as educators. Currently, Emilio is in his late 60's and has a long-standing career as an instructor and counselor at the local community college that he attended. He is engaged with the Latina/o community and dedicated to improving the educational conditions of Latina/o students. Emilio firmly believes this mission begins at the community college level. He emphasized how proud he is of Riya. Riya is in her early 40's, a tenure-track assistant professor at a UC campus in California, and exemplifies a social justice educator and researcher. She is invested in examining Latina/o adolescents' perceptions of teacher support, the role of maternal expectations on education communication, and student trajectories into higher education.

### **The Rodrigo Family**

The Rodrigo family resides in California, and is a mother/daughter dyad. The mother, Raina, was born and raised in the Inland Empire by a first-generation Mexican American mother with a second grade education and Mexican immigrant father who completed the fifth grade. Raina is the second youngest of eight siblings, and the youngest daughter. As a self-identified Chicana, she came of age in the late 1950s and resided on the east side of a racial segregated

city, which consisted mostly of Latina/o and Black populations, whereas, the west side was predominately white. Raina possesses a critical understanding of what it meant to grow up as a Chicana at the height of the Civil Rights Movement; this allowed her to describe her educational/life experiences in the context of race and class oppression. Her mother was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and was bedridden throughout Raina's whole life. Due to her mother's disability, as the youngest daughter, Raina became the primary caretaker for her mother. As a result, Raina's schooling experiences were limited due to her intensive and consistent household responsibilities. Despite being affected by her mother's illness, she valued her education and attended school as much as possible. She emphasized her father's aspirations and expectations for her as pivotal in her educational attainment, though he struggled to intervene on her behalf because he was monolingual in Spanish.

Raina describes her K-12 experiences as attending segregated schools. She does not recall being provided with a quality education. However, Raina knew the importance of education, and did well in school. After graduating high school, Raina did not enter directly into college. She worked full-time in multiple roles at various occupations, and eventually met her husband while they worked together at the same establishment. She had two children, Javier and Elisa, over the course of her late 20's and 30's despite being estranged from her husband. Raina stressed the importance of her kids being happy, exposing them to opportunities, and both children having a quality education. As a single mother, she struggled to financially support and house her family. Raina applied and received state assistance throughout her children's lives. At the time, California state assistance required Raina to either attend school part-time, work part-time or both. To comply, Raina pursued college at a four-year institution in the California State University system. As a first-generation college student *and* a non-traditional student, Raina

vividly reflects upon her college experience as a collective one with her daughter Elisa. She recalls:

The thing is that, *when we were in* college, I could not turn off the computer, because I was barely learning to use it. Elisa already knew how to use computers from school and she was in elementary. I would let her know, "You know what? You are only a kid and stuff, but I need you to shut off my computer." I could not, and I let her. I could have talk to the professors, but I would tell my daughter, "You help me do it." I put it on her [so] she would gain confidence and realize that she is helping an older person. To me, that was a good thing, when you rely on your children. You let them know that what they do is good. It could be very helpful. I think a lot of parents should do that.

Raina describes that she empowered Elisa to become independent by having her take on tasks that were difficult for her to complete on her own. She did this to expose her daughter to real life situations and to value those situations. Raina would more than often take Elisa with her to classes, meetings, and various college events. Elisa reflects:

I went to classes with her my whole life. I would go to school and she would pick me up or I would meet her on the bus. My whole life has been going to college. I remember she involved me. She would say, "Your notes are better than mine, can you take notes for me?" She was always so flattering and made me feel so smart. I remember her experiences. I took Chicano Art Studies courses when I was a kid when I was 10 years old. She took a longer time [in college]. I remember a lot of [faculty] were really nice -a lot of them were Chicanos- or people of color.

Elisa provides insight about her ability to take initiative and how her mother aided her in this by building her confidence. Elisa was also exposed to an enriched curriculum at a young age, which had an impact later on in her own educational trajectory. She was able to experience college at a young age by routinely attending classes and activities with her mother. In many ways, Raina provided her daughter with important college exposure very early on in her life. Raina majored in Liberal Studies with an emphasis in Cross Cultural Studies and secured a teaching credential.

Elisa is the youngest and only daughter of Raina. She was born and raised in the Inland Empire in California. Elisa self-identifies as a Chicana and attributes this to her mother's vocal

socialization of race and class throughout her childhood. She does not have any vivid memories of her father, but has enjoyed the stories of him that her mother provides. Elisa came of age in the late 1990s through 2000s. Similar to her mother, she attended K-12 public school in an Inland Empire school district. However, due to her own negative educational experiences, Raina ensured that Elisa attended the best schools possible throughout her childhood and adolescence. Even with this guidance, Elisa states that Raina allowed her complete agency in determining important factors for her life with education being the most important. In elementary school and junior high school, Elisa was identified as gifted/talented and tracked into academically rigorous courses. She describes her schooling experiences as an escape from the racialized and material-deficient conditions she encountered with her mother while living in U.S. society. She recalls being homeless, and at times, the unbearable living conditions of housing provided through Section 8 vouchers. This caused her family to often move around the Inland Empire, which resulted in an inevitable switching of schools at various times.

Elisa first entered high school at a historically white, high achieving, college-going, well-known public school. She would take daily public transportation for two hours to attend. In addition, she felt hyper-visible due to her race and class status, which caused social isolation from her peers. This took a toll on her desire to consistently attend, but despite these challenges, she still performed well in academics. After one of many moves, Elisa was reassigned by the district to attend what many deemed a “low-achieving” high school that historically served students of color. There, Elisa encountered a different set of challenges, as school staff doubted her academic abilities. She explains:

We ended up being homeless for a while. Where we were living they sold the building. At that time my mom had a friend who had an outhouse - like a shed. It was attached to the house. The three of us slept in a little cot. There were cockroaches everywhere. I started to not want to be there [high school] anymore.

It was not worth the two-hour bus ride. I prayed to God that we would find Section 8 housing. I remember this place was near another high school. I just prayed. I did not want to live there anymore. I am going to go to whatever school they assign me (crying), and I will finish. We got housing and I left my previous high school to attend the other high school near our new place. At the new high school they did not have Honors classes so it was AP or regular. I said put me in all AP. The counselor there was ridiculous - she was a white lady and she goes like, "I do not know if you can do that, it is really hard." I said, "Put me in the classes!" And even my mom was like are you sure – because the counselor started talking me out of taking AP. Then my mom is like, "It is up to you." I got a 4.5 GPA but I never relied on any of the counseling. I applied to four UCs, and I got into all of them. I was like screw you people [high school staff]. I graduated at the top of the class and I went to a UC in Southern California. Of course my mom supported me. She was scared that I was going to leave home. She cried, but she drove me and cried all the way. She asked, "Are not you afraid?" And I was like, "No-just take me."

Elisa captures what it meant to transfer high schools and be doubted in her academic abilities due to her race and class. She was determined to do well and graduate from where she was relocated to attend high school. As she finished high school, she applied to four institutions in the University of California system. When she opted to attend a UC away from her home, her mother inquired if she was afraid, but Elisa had no reservations about leaving and did so. Raina echoes her long-standing support for her daughter to make her own decisions as she states:

I remember, she always took the initiative about what she was going to do. Like, in high school, let me tell you what happened in high school. She was signing up for all these AP classes and I got scared. I thought, "Oh my God, Elisa. That is a lot..." And then, we went to talk to the counselor and the counselor, she said, "No." and Elisa said, "No, that is what I am going to take. I am going to sign up for those courses." And, I said, well, if she says that she is going to do it, then I am... of course, I am on her side, right?

Raina explains that her daughter always took initiative and would do whatever she put her mind to. It is evident through her memory that she has concrete examples of Elisa enacting her determination even when she was doubted by outside factors. Raina was always in support of Elisa's choices because she entrusted Elisa to make the best decisions for herself. Elisa carried this agency with her throughout her undergraduate trajectory.

As an undergraduate, she socially experienced racism and classism from her peers, and had difficulty relating to them. Academically, she did very well and was a Chicana/o Studies major. A faculty member, who was also a woman of color, encouraged her to apply to the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program. The McNair program is designed to prepare undergraduate students for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities, which exposed Elisa to graduate school. Elisa describes her participation in an intervention program that assisted her preparation for and application to graduate school:

I felt prepared because of McNair. McNair told me you do not need a master's degree and go straight into the PhD. So it was easy. I applied and got in two master's programs just because I needed it for the McNair requirements. Those programs were just cash cows - I would be paying for the name. I had already got admitted into a PhD program. I was like, "That is where I am going. That is what I am going to do." A woman of color professor pretty much got me through undergraduate [along with] the entire Chicano Studies faculty. I was A+++ in every class and so engaged. So a professor in education decided to receive me and I went. That was a whole 'nother pile of shit for a whole other story....

Elisa demonstrates confidence and readiness in applying to and attending a PhD program directly from finishing her undergraduate studies. She credits the McNair program and a woman of color mentor for assisting her with this preparation. However, Elisa is hesitant to share her graduate school perspective as she quickly remarks that is a, "...pile of shit for a whole 'nother story." She completed her PhD in the mid 2010s in Education. Despite limited knowledge of Elisa's graduate school experience, her mother comments:

I mean, really, I have already accepted that my daughter, she is... Like they say, leaders are born, not made.

Raina makes a powerful statement, as she acknowledges that her daughter is a natural born leader and has taken initiative in regards to her education throughout her life. While Raina may not be aware of all that Elisa went through as a college student, she has an idea of her as a self-actualized human being that possesses positive characteristics.

The Rodrigo family had a challenging yet powerful experience in their pursuits to attain higher education. As a single mother, Raina pursued her degrees as a first-generation and non-traditional woman of color college student. She and her family engaged in a collective-college going process as she took her children to college classes with her. Her daughter, Elisa, witnessed Raina's struggles and heard her stories of inequities early on. Elisa gained a critical consciousness which provided her with a language to understand her experiences early in her educational trajectory and take initiative for herself. Even though Elisa had a college-educated parent, her transition to and through undergraduate was difficult. She experienced culture shock, but resisted and persisted through race, gender, and class oppression. Elisa accredits mentors of color and intervention programs with introducing graduate school to her. As a first generation graduate student of color, she was unable to provide her story. However, her mother knew that Elisa was a natural born leader and could defeat challenges that arose in life just as she did earlier in her own life. Currently, Raina is in her early 60's and a substitute teacher in a public school district in the Inland Empire. She is dedicated to improving educational conditions of Latina/o students at the high school level. Elisa is in her late 20's and is a post-doctoral fellow at a UC institution. She is dedicated to examining the strategies of Latino men pursuing undergraduate and graduate engineering degrees.

### **The Rios Family**

The Rios family resides in California and Texas and is a mother/daughter dyad. The mother, Tina, was born and raised in a border city in Texas to a first-generation Mexican American mother and a Mexican immigrant father. Tina chose not to identify herself as she

stated, “I hate that question. I am just me.” Tina’s parents both left school after the third grade, and she recalls her father consistently stressing the importance of attaining an education. She is the eldest of six siblings and the only female. Tina came of age in the mid to late 1940s, attended private K-12 Catholic school, and had a strong desire to learn. Exposure to and self-identification with Catholicism had a lasting impact on how Tina lived her life. According to her, a nunnery that adhered to strict structure ran the predominately Mexican private Catholic elementary school she attended. Tina encountered corporal punishment due to speaking Spanish in school, and eventually learned not to speak it while on the premises. In elementary school, Tina was vocal as to what was “right” and what was “wrong” which she would carry with her throughout her educational trajectory. In high school, she began teaching Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) to elementary school students, an experience that would follow her later in life. Tina aspired to attain a college education after graduating high school, but due to societal expectations of women in the 1950s, she was restricted in her pursuit of college. Tina had no intention of getting married or having a family in her earlier years, and was able to attend secretarial school.

Upon completing her vocational training, Tina began working at an insurance company. She strategized to work full-time, save money, and attend college at night. As she pursued this endeavor, she moved out of her parents’ house to a new city, and was temporarily renounced from her family. Due to challenging circumstances, Tina withdrew from college and continued to work full-time. She switched jobs and was hired by General Motors where she states she “earned a quality salary.” By the time she reached her early 30’s, Tina was able to buy her own house on her terms. She would travel back and forth to visit home for holidays and special occasions before eventually moving back to the area she grew up. Upon her return, she regularly

attended church and became part of the choir. While attending her parish, she met her husband, Tim, an Irish immigrant. Tim attained an EdD in pursuit of his academic career. They had Elena, their only child, in their early 40's. As Tim worked as an academic, Tina had the opportunity to attend college once more as a non-traditional student. Tina attended a public four-year university in North Texas. As a first-generation and non-traditional college student, Tina often took Elena to college with her; it became a way of life for both of them for several years. Together, they discuss the following:

Tina: Elena went to school with me. She sat on my lap for many classes.

Interviewer: That is something you grew up with?

Elena: Yes, I remember going. I remember your graduation [looking at her mother].

Tina: Yeah and [that one] bad incident. I think you still remember [looking at her daughter] is when Bertha...

Elena: I remember... I do not remember any other conflict for schooling except for that.

Interviewer: Were these faculty members?

Elena: Yeah she was ugly.

Tina: She was very ugly. Bertha Smith and this woman [were] going on and, on and, on and... I thought what the [hell] – and I said, “You know what Dr. Smith, I do not have to do this right now. We will talk about it and we will do something about it later!” I walked out and left the woman there.

Elena: I remember that because I remember you.

Tina: I met her [Bertha Smith] the other day at the grocery store.

Elena: Oh you did? Was she nice to you?

Tina: She has always been nice to me since that incident. Always been nice after that incident.

Elena: (laughing)

Tina and Elena had the opportunity to share the same experience and a few decades later, were able to remember it as a collective. This occurrence demonstrates how they were able to negotiate conflict and navigate faculty at four-year institutions together. Despite challenges, Tina due to previous teaching experiences in high school as a CCD teacher, continued to develop her passion for educational instruction. She majored in Financial Planning and earned a teaching credential. After graduating undergraduate, she began to work at a private Catholic school where she taught history and religion.

Elena is the only child of Tina. She was born and raised in North Texas. Elena identifies as Chicana/Irish. Elena's father immigrated from Ireland to the United States in his early 20's, and attained his EdD. He currently works as a university professor in North Texas. Elena came of age in the 1990s into the 2000s, and attended private Catholic and public schools. Due to her parents' deep religious affiliation, she went to elementary school where Tina worked from kindergarten through seventh grade. Disliking the conservative climate of the school led Elena to ask her parents if she could transfer to public school. Tim and Tina agreed, sending her to a public magnet school from eighth through twelfth grade. Tina ensured that the curriculum was academically rigorous enough to prepare Elena for college. During their interview, Elena described her elementary school and high school experience as academically rigorous, interesting, and "overall good". Throughout that time period, she was prone to social justice and advocating for change. She and a friend cofounded the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and other multicultural groups on their high school campus. However, Elena faced some internal racial and ethnic conflicts due to her blended Chicana and Irish heritage. She recalls being tracked into high achieving classes because of her light complexion and non-Spanish surname until later in life. Elena had an enjoyable high school experience and became

excited about pursuing college. She emphasized that college was always an expectation of her parents since she was a little girl. As a senior, she applied to many out-of-state undergraduate institutions, and decided to attend a private liberal arts college in Boston. Elena selected this institution because it promoted its diverse student body. She was the only participant to attend college outside the state and as an only child, experienced a difficult transition in adapting to college life:

Interviewer: You left home to go to college - how was that experience for you?

Elena: Horrible.

Tina: Aww. They took her out!

Elena: I was devastated - I was lonely too. It was less positive than my high school and I was pretty disillusioned. I thought all colleges were like Berkeley. Berkeley in my mind was about people really wanting to make these radical changes to improve society and shape things up. I was not drinking the Kool-Aid of international relations - I was frustrated with a lot of the people. Even though I was sad. And I remember one of my friends she came home after a semester and I remember I wanted to do that so badly, but my mom's motto was like, "When you start something - you have better finish it."

Tina: (Nodding in agreement)

Elena experienced culture shock and a lack of college socialization as she describes being very lonely. She arrived to campus with assumptions about the institution she had been admitted to, not realizing that it was very different from her ideal college, UC Berkeley. As she voices, she was not "drinking the Kool-Aid of international relations," which lacked analysis and critique of U.S. colonialism and hegemony. Elena desired to move back home after her first semester, but she knew her mother expected her to finish what she started. Elena and her parents adapted to long-distance communication, and emotional support from afar.

Elena majored in International Relations and unexpectedly encountered a curriculum that was based on separatism, but was able to really connect with several professors. An Ethnic Studies professor, a friend and a woman of color, exposed Elena to the idea of graduate school. After graduating with her bachelor's, she enrolled into a master's program for teacher education at the same institution. There, she gained invaluable teaching experience in the Boston area and met many colleagues who were from Northern California. Through her California peer group, Elena was introduced to a leading academic with a focus on teacher education in the urban context. Unlike the other Chicana/o children in this study, Elena had two college-educated parents. Elena and Tina share in an interesting dialogue regarding Elena's pathway into her PhD, as they state:

Elena: So I started asking him [leading academic with a focus on teacher education in the urban context] about PhD programs or whatever. I was like cool. After an hour of that conversation I was like cool, I am going to apply. I did not ask anyone for help-

Tina: No you did not.

Elena: I just kinda did it. I applied to PhD programs the totally wrong way. I did not have any idea [how] you were supposed to. I did not contact any professors-

Tina: And she would not listen to her dad or I.

Elena: Because in my mind nobody gave me any advice and I am not saying that you did not, but I did not hear it. You know? I applied all the wrong ways. I got into a program on the East Coast and I had gotten waitlisted at the program on the West Coast.

Tina: [mouth dropped] now this is one thing I did not know. I did not know you had been waitlisted at the program on the West Coast - you never shared that with dad and I.

Elena: Oh. It is not that I was hiding it from you.

Tina: I just remember asking you what happens if you do not get into the West Coast program. "Well," you said, "probably next year."

Elena: If my dad explicitly told me...[how to apply to PhD programs]

Tina: Your dad has explicitly told you many things because I have been the witness -

Elena: I do not think he explicitly told me that. I just want to say.

Tina: I really do not think that.

Elena: I am just telling you what I think.

Tina: And by the way this is our banter -

Elena: If our parents have these degrees or whatever, there is still so much that we do not know and it changes. The way my dad - it is very different for my dad because he is a white man and because it is just different. Now I will ask him for advice and I hear him out and I ask him a lot about navigating relationships with colleagues and he is very good at helping me. I think we have different career goals. It is just different.

Elena and Tina exchange dissimilar perceptions of the graduate school application process.

Elena did not ask for help or did not listen to what her parents were offering as advice. Tina is clear that Elena did not listen to her or her father. In their conversation, Tina learns new information about Elena being waitlisted at the graduate program she eventually attended, and displays shock in not knowing. Elena makes a powerful statement as she provides a distinction between having college-educated parents and being college-educated herself by stating, "...there is still so much that we do not know and it changes." She describes her graduate school experiences as challenging because she became a single mother and was once again far from her family network. However, she persisted and graduated with a PhD in Education from a UC institution.

The Rios family had diverging paths into higher education. Tina, as a first-generation and non-traditional college student, pursued higher education later in life while being a mother. Tina and Elena engaged in a collective college-going process, allowing them to share Tina's

undergraduate experiences together. Through their collective engagement, they persisted and resisted instances of race and gender oppression. Elena attended an out-of-state college, which facilitated culture shock and a lack of college socialization. Her undergraduate institution emphasized international relations, limiting her ability to identify with the curriculum as a Chicana growing up in the U.S. context. However, Elena had mentors of color that exposed her to graduate school. Despite having a father with an EdD, she felt she did not have nor embraced advice from him. As a result, she applied to PhD programs blindly, yet was accepted and attained her PhD. Currently, Tina is in her early 70's, a retired elementary school teacher, and enjoying time with her family. She remains very close with Elena and frequently visits her in California. Elena is in her early 30's and a tenure-track professor in the California State University system. She is dedicated to teacher education and equipping teachers with the skills needed to support and assist students of color.

### **The Ramirez Family**

The Ramirez family resides in California, and is a mother/daughter dyad. The mother, Carmela, was born and raised in a border city in California to a Mexican immigrant mother and first-generation Mexican American father. Carmela identifies as a Chicana. Her mother had a sixth grade education and her father, a high school diploma. She recalls her father highlighting the importance of attaining an education throughout her life. Carmela is the eldest of nine siblings. As the oldest, she had specific responsibilities at home to attend to, most focused on caring for her younger siblings. Carmela reflects that her parents' expectations of her were to attend and graduate from high school. She came of age in the mid 1950s to early 1960s and attended public school for her K-12 education. In elementary school, she attended a predominately Mexican school with white teachers and administrators. Carmela vividly

remembers not being allowed to speak Spanish throughout her elementary school experiences, which resulted in the loss of the language for her until later in life. She was expected to assimilate into American culture by leaving behind her Mexican culture and traditions. Despite describing herself as an average student, Carmela was very fond of reading, which exposed her to informal knowledge. For junior high and high school, she was bused to predominately white schools that served families in the military. She recalls the racial climate of the schools often being hostile to the Mexican students, but she managed to persist and graduate.

After graduating from high school, Carmela did not immediately attend college. Due to United States' societal notions of what a woman should be, she was expected to get married and become a traditional housewife. However, this was not the path for Carmela. Due to taking care of her younger siblings in her earlier years, she did not have desire children or marriage until much later in life. She worked in various settings and was exposed to the idea of higher education through her cousin who was attending the local junior college. Carmela states:

I did not go to college right away. [I was] having a good time, partying, and having a few different jobs. I have a cousin - we are the same age, and she was kind of like my role model. She was going to college - junior college. We would go out and I kind of saw that it was important. She never said, "Carmela you should go to college." It was just what I was thinking. The biggest thing - if we would go out dancing and [men] would say, "So what do you do?" (Laughing) I was always embarrassed. [My cousin] would say, "Well I go to college." [putting her hand to her face in a thinking manner] So hmm [I would think], "I want to be like her." I started at the local junior college [and] I really was not sure what I wanted to do. I knew that I liked helping people. Growing up in a small community, I saw a lot of substance abuse and my friends overdosing. That really hurt.

Carmela explains that it was her cousin who informally exposed her to college as they routinely socialized. She had a desire and knew school was important, and decided to enroll in the same community college her cousin attended. As a first-generation college student, Carmela lacked

knowledge about how to complete requirements and transfer to a four-year institution. As she sought out academic advising, she experienced the following:

I remember two things that happened [in junior college]. At the end of my second year I was trying to transfer [and] I went to see the counselor, a white older man. I told him I wanted to transfer to a university, and he goes, "You will never make it, you do not have the grades." I got mad. I said to myself, "*Si se puede*, I'm going to do it." I did transfer! I did two years at the junior college - then the two years at a California state school and got my bachelor's in Social Welfare.

Carmela demonstrates resistance and persistence through race, gender, and class oppression as her academic advisor who was a white male told her she would never complete her college education. She did not let this internally deter her from her ultimate goals as she enacted resistance by stating, "*Si se puede*," a common saying among the Chicana/o community to empower individuals, which literally translates into, "Yes we can." With diligence and persistence, she transferred to a local four-year institution in the California State University system after two years. During her time at the junior college, she became involved with a mentor program through a UC campus and was exposed to careers in the healthcare field. In addition, she wanted to help her community since she witnessed a lot of substance abuse and had majored in Social Welfare. Carmela was also an active member of the Brown Berets, a social justice activist group of the Chicana and Chicano Movement. During undergraduate years, she met the man who is now her husband and moved in with him as she transitioned into graduate school.

Carmela does not have any memory of how she was exposed to the idea of graduate school nor does she recall having anyone help her with the application process. On her own, she applied to three social work programs in California. She was accepted into all of them and attended one in the California State University system. She was placed in a health concentration

due to her previous work in community college, and was the only Latina in the track. She describes:

I got my bachelor's and then I said, "You know what, I cannot get a good job with a bachelor's. If I want to be a real social worker I need a master's." I applied to three schools. I got accepted to all three. (Laughing) I still was afraid to leave home. I went to a [UC] campus and met with the counselor there. It sounded great, but I could not take that step to leave. I just could not. Then I got a call from some professor at the [local California state college]. She said, "Oh you got into this special program and we would like to offer you a stipend for the next two years." I said, "Oh, okay." That made up my mind (laughing). I could not work because it was a two-year full-time program. The internship was like 32 hours a week. It was kind of tough, and again I struggled a little with statistics, but I did it. They had four concentrations - health, administration, aging, and family. I was the only Latina in the health concentration. At first it was overwhelming, but then I was the only one driving a Corvette (laughing). I wanted a Corvette for my birthday. I bought myself a brand new '71 Corvette Stingray. I paid [for] it on my own. My father did not help me, and I even saved the money to purchase it. So yeah I was driving a Corvette going to college.

Carmela reveals that for her profession, she needed to attain education beyond a bachelor's degree, and that sparked her interest in graduate school. Carmela also pursued graduate school without children and was dating her husband at the time. This allowed Carmela to experience earning her MSW without any external, competing factors. It is very interesting to examine how Carmela decided where to attend. She comments that she "was afraid to leave home." It is not clear why she felt this way, but it is something that remains in her memory. Leaving home for Carmela could represent leaving her family, a factor that acts in many ways for Chicana/o students as a direct connection to a support network that is not recognized by institutions of higher education. As the one and only Latina in her program, she experienced isolation and hyper-visibility, but demonstrated resistance by making herself visible in a unique way by purchasing a car that represented her hard work and dedication.

After graduating with her Master's in Social Work (MSW), she attained her license and started a full-time position in a local hospital to provide services to patients. While working full-

time, she married and began a family. In her early 30's, Carmela had two daughters, Marisol and Mari. She believed that exposure to reading and resources were very important for her daughters' educational achievement. Marisol is the eldest daughter of Carmela. She was born and raised in a border city in California and identifies as a Chicana. Her father is a first-generation Mexican American and has a high school diploma. He also served in the military and pursued a career as a police officer. Marisol came of age in the late 1990s to 2000s and attended K-12 public school. She expressed that it was her mother who exposed her to reading and the love of learning very early on in life.

I knew my mom had gone to college but I did not know what that meant. I was surrounded by books ever since I was little. We would read together. My mom was always the one that would take me out places. She socialized me to [the] mainstream. I do not know if my mom was being conscious or unconscious, but I feel like she was socializing me or taking me to spaces that people of color do not necessarily go. I attribute that to her being educated and having a career. She is a social worker, a licensed clinical social worker. She makes me emphasize [that] (laughing) *"I am not just a social worker, but I am a licensed clinical social worker!"* I always thought that it was interesting she would put me in these very white spaces. I eventually started recognizing the difference between races - I started feeling uncomfortable - that was one thing I remember growing up.

It is possible that based on Carmela's own racial incidents, she found it important for her to foster Marisol's race consciousness by integrating her into communities other than her own. Marisol attributes this socialization process to her mother being college educated, and emphasizing her formal title, a title Carmela rightfully earned. Marisol recalls her mother's stories of social justice activism as a Brown Beret. This, along with her participation in the Chicana and Chicano Movement, greatly resonated with Marisol.

As an elementary student, she remembers reading and winning awards for doing so. She was not identified as gifted/talented and was not targeted for tracking into any special programs. As an elementary and high school student, she was bullied and lacked self-esteem. Despite these

challenges, she performed very well in academics and as a straight-A student, did not fit in with most members of her peer group who were identified as “troubled” and “rebellious.” However, the courses in which she excelled were not classified as Honors or Advanced Placement. Marisol remembers not knowing she needed A-G requirements or placement into more rigorous courses to be competitively eligible for admittance to a four-year institution. She exposes the limits of what it means to have a college-educated parent while applying and going to a four-year institution as she describes:

The fact that my mom was college educated, but still did not have that capital to tell me what I needed to do for college- especially because our generations were so far apart- so I just think she assumed because I was getting good grades that I was going to go to college.

Marisol understood early on that due to her mother attending and graduating a four-year institution in a different era, it was difficult for that social and cultural capital to transfer to her as she began her college admissions process. Marisol felt that Carmela assumed the qualifying grades she earned made her college bound. In fact, a friend of the family exposed her to the idea of junior college. Similar to Carmela, Marisol began her college experience at the local junior college. The same family friend became her mentor and guided her into The PUENTE Community College Program which is an academic, counseling and mentoring program of support for students to build the skills necessary for success in both academic and career goals while in community college. Students enrolled in the PUENTE program work closely with their Counselor, English Instructor and Mentor to prepare for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. The PUENTE program exposed Marisol to a cohort of peers, mentors of color, the local community, and a culturally relevant curriculum. As an English major, Marisol applied to three four-year institutions, and was admitted into two. In deciding where to transfer, she encountered unexpected challenges, as she expresses:

I came back home and I remember seeing my mom's face. I was expecting for her to be happy and excited. She was a little disappointed and I did not know why. She stayed quiet, and asked, "Does this mean you are moving away?" I was like well the options are a UC or a Cal State. I want to go to a UC. We told my dad and he was so pissed -that I would even consider moving away from home- very macho. I remember my parents were mad at me, for two weeks they did not talk to me. I remember feeling so hurt because I was like wow - you guys have been talking about going to college for all these years, but when it came down to it, they meant college here. They meant, "We want you to go to college but just in our hometown." It hurt. I remember going to my counselor and just crying and I was like I do not know what to do. I remember him telling me, "Do not think about your parents. Do not think about your friends. What do you want to do?" I was like, "I want to go." He was like, "Well then just go."

In transferring to a university that was not local, Marisol triggered various frustrations for herself and her family. She did not anticipate her parents' negative response to her college acceptance as she reflects that they always had this as an expectation. Yet, in their minds it looked very different for her than she had envisioned, something that was not communicated to her growing up. Ultimately, Marisol had to make a decision by herself and for herself. In transferring to a UC far from home, she recalls:

Academically I experienced transfer shock. My GPA went down. I think I transferred with a 3.7 and my first semester it dropped to a 2.9 maybe. After that, I think it dropped down to a 2.3. Eventually I got called into the advising center. They told me that if I didn't raise [my GPA] to at least a 2.5 they would kick me out so I was like shit ok. And they talked about their schooling -my school wasn't bad but it wasn't great either- but it was never as bad [as] people describe their own pre college experiences. I knew that I'd grown up in a middle class family so I think internal struggles feeling like I didn't fit in or when people would, ask, "Are you first generation?" I would lie sometimes. Like, "Yeah - of course I'm first generation." So I would find myself doing that.

Marisol experiences transfer and culture shock, identity conflict, and lack of college readiness and socialization. She recounts that academically she was not prepared by her community college, which resulted in a drastic shift in her GPA her first semester. She also experienced identity conflict as she was not a first generation college student and came from a different class background than her Latina/o peers, which caused isolation.

Her mother Carmela describes in-depth details from her perspective:

Yeah, it was kind of a rejection you know. I thought -she doesn't love me- she is leaving me now. She struggled. She will tell you she struggled. The first semester - I think I flew her home every other weekend. Then to make it worse she was in an all-girls dorm- and she had her own room and they were all white so she was really isolated- okay. I have a niece, which is her cousin, which is 12 years older than her, who lives in the area of the UC. So she was there all the time for her. She would pick her up on the weekends -take her to her house, to dinner- so that kind of helped. I think she was ready to probably drop out the first semester. She didn't feel like she fit in -it was so much harder- she did it!

Carmela expresses her emotions that stemmed from Marisol leaving home to attend college.

Despite Carmela being college educated herself, she still held reservations about her daughter moving to attend school at a university that was not close to home. Regardless of these concerns, Carmela still supported Marisol as much as possible while she attended college through frequently flying her home and connecting her with family that lived in the area. Carmela created a supportive network for her daughter to ensure that she successfully matriculated as an undergraduate.

In attending the UC, Marisol also developed a very strong relationship with a Chicana director of the campus multicultural center. Through the mentorship of this administrator and support from her peers, Marisol was exposed to graduate school. She applied to PhD programs while an undergraduate, but lacked critical knowledge about the application. As a result, she was rejected by all programs. After graduating with a degree in English, Marisol returned home to work at the community college she had attended. As an outreach counselor, she worked in the local high schools and exposed students to community college. While working at the college, her mentors from The PUENTE program mentioned that she would need a master's degree in counseling to continue success in her position. As a result, Marisol applied to and attended a local private school where she attained her master's in counseling with an emphasis in

community college. As a master's student, Marisol demonstrated great promise and a professor of color suggested that she continue on to complete a PhD. Marisol recollects that she never expected to attain a master's degree or, better yet, a doctorate. She credits the professor of color for exposing her to the doctorate option in her master's program, as she expresses:

I did not know I was going to get my master's degree - never thought of a doctorate program. So when I was in my master's program it was my advisor -my mentor- he was the only Latino faculty in a private white Catholic institution. He took me and maybe five other Latino students under his wing. He taught us about research and put us on different grant programs that he was doing, and we just started talking about doctorate programs. Even though I had professors in undergraduate, he was the first person I ever called Dr. like Dr. Gomez. In undergraduate everyone was on a first name basis for some reason. He encouraged us to look into doctorate programs - putting that little seed in our heads.

Marisol had a mentor of color intervene on her educational pathway. This was crucial for her because it was the first time she saw a Latino PhD and called him Dr. Gomez. This resonated with her and eventually influenced her to pursue and attain her EdD. Carmela shares similar reflections:

I never thought she would be teaching at the university. I thought she would be like a college counselor, but she had a lot of mentors. In her master's program and her doctorate program. I am so proud of her. I brag her about her you know? This is Dr. Ramirez, my daughter! It is such an accomplishment, and having a master's is good but having a doctorate - is much better.

Carmela powerfully exemplifies how proud she is of her daughter and often demonstrates her pride by stating, "Have you met 'Dr. Ramirez'" when they are out together. She also points out that a master's degree is good, but a PhD is superior, thus placing higher value on the doctorate and what her daughter has accomplished.

The Ramirez family began their paths to four-year institutions at community college. Carmela attended junior college as a first-generation college student and in the face of race and gender oppression, resisted and persisted to transfer and graduate from her undergraduate

institution. In graduating with a degree in Social Welfare, she knew she needed to attain her licensure and pursue graduate school. As the only Latina in her graduate program, she experienced isolation, but again demonstrated resilience by graduating. Even though Carmela was college-educated, her daughter, Marisol, began higher education in community college instead of a four-year institution. Marisol expressed culture shock, identity conflict, and lack of college readiness and socialization while transferring. She found support through her mother and a Chicana administrator. The Chicana administrator and mentor exposed her to graduate school, rather than her mother, revealing a disconnection of what experiences her mother shared with her. Even though these contradictions existed within and between their generations, Marisol attained her EdD, and her mother could not be prouder. Currently, Carmela is a retired social worker in her early 60's. Despite being in retirement, she is still active in her work and provides her services to families in the community via home visits. Marisol is in her early 30's and a tenure-track professor in the California State University system. She is dedicated to research and assisting students through examining factors impacting the success of male students of color, particularly Latino and African American men, in the community college sector.

### **Conclusion: Expanding and Further Developing Pedagogies of the Home for College-Educated Chicana/o Families in Higher Education**

In this chapter, college-educated Chicana/o family educational oral histories were presented to examine their undergraduate and graduate college experiences. In addressing the research questions:

1. How do Chicana/o college-educated parents *impact* their college-educated children's college-related experiences?
2. How do Chicana/o college-educated children *perceive the impact* of their college-educated parents on their college-related experiences?

As previously stated, the Chicana/o college-educated parents and their college-educated children are in certain respects:

- a. like all...
- b. like some...
- c. like no other...

The four Chicana/o parents in this study came of age between the 1940s and 1970s in the Southwest United States. Their parents differed in regards to generational designation of U.S. immigration, citizenship status and educational attainment. The majority of their parents were self-taught or only attained an elementary level education. Due to their parents' educational attainment, their schooling experiences varied; two of the four were educated in the K-12 state public school systems, whereas the other two were educated in K-12 private Catholic schools. As they pursued higher education, all were considered first generation and underrepresented minority college students, and lacked knowledge of the college-going process. Two of the four parents attended local community colleges and transferred into local four-year institutions of higher education. The remaining two parents attended a four-year institution later in adult life, and were designated as non-traditional students. All of the parents graduated with their baccalaureate degrees. Two of the four parents pursued graduate school and attained master's degrees. The parents' professions were based in education or social work, and they are either still actively working or have retired.

The four Chicana/o children came of age between the 1980s and 2000s in the Southwest United States. All had at least one parent with a bachelor's degree attained in the United States higher education system. One of the four attended private K-12 Catholic school, and one attended private K-7 Catholic school and transferred to public school for eighth grade through high school graduation. Two of them attended K-12 public school. None of the children were

considered first generation college students upon entering institutions of higher education. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, to date institutions of higher education systemically lack nomenclature in identifying students who have at least one college-educated parent. While all the children attended four-year institutions as traditional college students, they lived diverse experiences. One of the four children attended a local community college and transferred to a four-year institution, another attended a private-liberal arts college out of state, and two attended in-state four-year institutions. Upon entering their respective four-year institutions of higher education, they were designated as underrepresented minority students. All of the children attained a bachelor's degree, master's degree, and a PhD or EdD. To date, all four are working in institutions of higher education as tenure-track professors or as a post-doctoral fellow in transition into a tenure track position

### **Chicana/o Parent and Child undergraduate and graduate Educational Oral History**

#### **Codes**

The Chicana/o parents exhibit very important themes as first-generation college students of color. They were the first in their families to attend and graduate from a four-year institution, The Chicana/o parents evoke what was important for them as college students, and these memories became the stories that lived within and between generations. Their memories became the backbone of what their children could and would expect in entering an institution of higher education. At times, the children experienced college hand-in-hand with their parents and were exposed to college very early on in their lives. Two of the Chicana/o parents were able to pursue graduate school and attain a graduate degree. They were the first in their families to do so and were considered first generation graduate students of color. How they were exposed to graduate school and how they enrolled were also different for these parents. The Chicana/o

college-educated parents had a clear understanding of their educational experiences. As a direct result, there were five thematic codes that emerged for their undergraduate and graduate college experiences. More importantly, in honoring their heterogeneity, one or several of those themes are addressed through the Chicana/o college-educated parents' educational oral histories and are as follows:

**Parent undergraduate and graduate Thematic Codes**

| <b>13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> + Undergraduate Experiences</b>            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Resistance/Persistence in the Face of Discrimination                          |
| Collective College-Going Process                                              |
| First-Generation College Student <i>and/or</i> Non-Traditional Student Status |
| <b>17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> + Graduate School Experiences</b>          |
| First-Generation Graduate School Student and Underrepresented                 |

While Chicana/o college-educated parents shared educational oral histories of experiencing varying situations within their collegiate experiences, these salient stories were transmitted within the home, and became a part of an educational narrative to their children.

Despite having at least one college-educated parent, the Chicana/o college-educated children still encountered barriers in entering and being retained through graduation in four-year institutions of higher education. The following seven themes emerged from one or several of their educational oral histories:

| <b>13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> + Undergraduate Experiences</b>       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Culture Shock                                                            |
| Identity Conflict                                                        |
| Lack of College Readiness and Socialization                              |
| Resistance and Persistence through Race, Gender, and Class Oppression    |
| <b>17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> + Graduate School Experiences</b>     |
| Intervention Programs for Students of Color in Accessing Graduate School |
| Exposure to Graduate School by Mentors of Color                          |
| First-Generation Graduate School Students of Color                       |

One or several of the above themes are addressed through the Chicana/o college-educated children's educational oral histories. The Chicana/o children college were exposed to the college-going process, but remained unprepared when they attended their respective universities as underrepresented students. They journeyed different paths into four-year institutions due to the intersections of race, class, gender, and/or religion, often influenced by their Chicana/o parents' first hand experiences. The Chicana/o children were less prepared for graduate school, as some of them were the first in their family to pursue a graduate education or as undergraduates, lacked knowledge of what graduate school required. All of the Chicana/o children surpassed their parents' educational attainment by graduating with master's degrees and/or PhD/EdDs. All were either exposed to graduate school by mentors of color or participated in intervention programs specifically geared to assist underrepresented students in exposure to the graduate school application and admittance process. Their experiences in graduate school careers varied.

Even though the Chicana/o children had challenges in their college experiences due to having a college educated parent, they were able to access various sources of support not recognized by institutions of higher education. Therefore, in this chapter, critical race theory (Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001), guided the concept of pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001, 2010) to ensure that accounts of race, racism, and other forms of subjugation were recognized and challenged. Pedagogies of the home represent the unique navigational and cultural mechanisms taught within Chicana/o households that cultivate knowledge and allow Chicana/o college students to disrupt the hegemonic notions that their culture, traditions, and customs are inferior (Delgado Bernal, 1993).

Similar to Delgado Bernal's (2001; 2010) original study, the Chicana/o parents and children within this study provided "strategies of resistance that challenge the educational norms of higher education" (Delgado Bernal, 1993, p.635). As described in Chapter 3, Delgado Bernal employed Chicana feminism and the concept of mestiza consciousness to explain majority Chicana first-generation college students possessing a consciousness that "straddles cultures, races, languages, nations sexualities, and spiritualities-this is living with ambivalence while balancing opposing powers" (Delgado Bernal, 2001, p.626). For Chicana feminists, this state of ambivalence is considered a strength, which is utilized to understand the multiple realities that Chicana/os face as they experience oppression. Delgado Bernal (2001; 2010) identifies four themes of pedagogies of the home as bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to communities, and spiritualities<sup>20</sup>. Due to the Chicana/o parents in this study being first-generation college students, the aforementioned themes profoundly resonated with their experiences. All the parents were bilingual regardless of whether or not they attended schools that enforced English language-only policies, and they adapted quickly in navigating their educational institutions. The Chicana/o parents were very well grounded in their biculturalism as the majority of the parents grew up in neighborhoods with high concentrations of Mexican and Mexican American residents. In their educational trajectories, they became aware of what was culturally acceptable in schooling environments, and what was cultivated in the home remained an outside source of support. All of the Chicana/o parents possessed personal commitments to the communities they came from as they witnessed and/or encountered inequities in their lives. They knew that securing an education was packaged with a duty to pay it forward. Two of the Chicana/o parents had an explicit investment in their spiritualities as they were deeply influenced by Catholicism, which influenced their pursuit of social justice.

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<sup>20</sup> Refer to Chapter 3 to see these themes clearly defined and outlined.

While the Chicana/o parents demonstrated similarities found in Delgado Bernal's original study, pedagogies of the home, these findings did manifest differently. For example, Delgado Bernal originally only studied Chicanas, but I did have one father who participated. In fact, he was very aware of his male privilege and emphasized repeatedly that in regards to his daughter, he did not want to place societal expectations of what a Chicana should be. He actively fought against patriarchy and stated in his educational oral history:

First of all, I really was so blessed to have two children [daughters]. I was not ever -concerned about male or female. My mom of course wanted boys you know and so there was [this expectation of] you got to carry the tradition [regarding surnames]. Fortunately because of my exposure to social justice since day one, that was never an issue for me. I made that clear. I believe they [his daughters] have that sense that that does not make a difference to me. That's not an issue. If anything when I give talks on gender I begin my presentation by saying to the audience, "On behalf of my gender I want to apologize, we might mean well, but we are so evolutionar[il]y behind you."

Emilio provides an example of how Chicana/o fathers are active participants in their daughters' lives, and this is increasingly important as recent scholarship emerging out of Chicana feminism analyzes the assets within the Chicana/o household paying particular attention to mother/daughter relationships ((Elenes, Gonzales, Delgado Bernal, Villenas, 2001). Unfortunately, the Chicano father/daughter relationship has yet to become the foci of conversation. In examining the Chicano father/daughter relationship, it is possible to dismantle patriarchy as a collective entity that informs educational research and practice of how these relationships offer emotional and physical survival of Chicana/o students. Further, due to the Chicana/o parents having at least a bachelor's degree granted in the United States, they were able to transmit messages about and detail the privileges of institutions of higher education to their children early on.

The expectations of attending college were a strong set of consistent messages in Chicana/o households because the parents were aware of college as a concept and an actual establishment. More often than not, the Chicana/o parents broke patriarchal norms by choosing to attend a four-year institution. The contradictions doing so caused for them in the household foregrounded how they would shape their own children's learning opportunities and agency in their eventual educational trajectories. However, the perceptions of what the children heard while growing up varied depending on the intersections of race, class, and gender between child and parent. Unfortunately, I was only able to recruit and have Chicana daughters participate in this study. Therefore, pedagogies of the home for the Chicana college-educated children with a college-educated parent were different from those of Chicana first-generation college students in institutions of higher education and are as follows:

1. *Relearning and Reclaiming of Language*: an individual's pursuit as an English dominant speaker to recover the Spanish language, and educate others as to why the loss of language occurred in their educational trajectories.
2. *Ownership of Privileges*: the ability to acknowledge specific access or advantages due to having a college-educated parent, and problematizing privilege and access based on race and gender.
3. *Acts of Departure*: an individual's ability to embrace the contradictions of leaving home despite societal expectations of women of color and the willingness to challenge these notions.
4. *Rendering a Collective commitment to Communities*: cultivating and learning, from one generation to the next, the importance of social justice praxis in communities of color, and embarking *en la lucha* as a collective.

Delgado Bernal (2001; 2010) makes an imperative point in asserting the significance of pedagogies of the home in stating, "understanding these strategies will allow us to develop educational policy and practice the values and builds on household knowledge in order to enhance Chicana academic success and college participation" (624). These findings expose how

household knowledge from one succeeding<sup>21</sup> generation to the next generation can enhance academic success and college participation for not just Chicana/os or Latina/os, but students of color. Specifically, the findings in this chapter move beyond deficit perspectives on achievement by highlighting persons, programs, and resources that help Chicana/o parents and children succeed across a range of college and university contexts.

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<sup>21</sup> How success is defined has been a point of contention for communities of color. However, in terms of this study, I define success in an anti-deficit perspective by centering on academic achievements of Chicana/os students that are often overlooked and dismissed by institutions of higher education.

## Chapter 6

### ***Pa'lante: Puerto Rican Intergenerational Educational Oral Histories***

My name is Maria Christina  
I am a Puerto Rican woman born in el barrio  
I speak two languages broken into each other  
but my heart speaks the language of people  
born in oppression  
I teach my children how to respect their bodies  
so they will not o.d. under the stairway's shadow of shame  
I teach my children to read and develop their minds  
so they will understand the reality of oppression  
I teach them with discipline and love  
so they will become strong and full of life  
(Excerpt *A la Mujer Borriquena*, Sandra Maria Esteves, 1997)

The focus of this chapter is to examine multigenerational educational oral histories of four Puerto Rican college-educated parents and their four Puerto Rican college-educated children. The Puerto Rican college-educated parents taught their *children to read and develop their minds to understand the reality of oppression* while their college-educated children became *strong and full of life*. As families, they laid claim to their educational trajectories. This chapter includes: (1) the research questions, (2) the families' educational oral histories of their college experiences, (3) and my conclusion, which contains thematic codes of parent and child undergraduate and graduate college experiences and a theoretically grounded analysis of their experiences. I critically engage the following research questions:

3. How do Puerto Rican college-educated parents ***impact*** their college-educated children's college-related experiences?
4. How do Puerto Rican college-educated children ***perceive the impact*** of their college-educated parents on their college-related experiences?

I document how Puerto Rican families explain their individual educational trajectories and how these critical lived experiences remerged from one generation to the next. Figure 6.1 introduces the family dyads in detail, and is followed by Figure 6.2, which details how the dyads were

interviewed. The structure of the interviews and factors in how they were conducted allowed for a variation in findings.

**Figure 6.1 Puerto Rican Families' Demographics**

| Puerto Rican        |     |                             |                            |            |                |                 |           |                                        |
|---------------------|-----|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------------------------------|
| Family Name         | Age | Self-Identity               | Generation in the U.S.     | Residence  | K-12 Education | Degree Attained | Field     | Current Occupation                     |
| Daughter, Fernandez | 34  | Puerto Rican                | 1 <sup>st</sup> Generation | Illinois   | Private        | MA              | Education | Doctoral Student                       |
| Father, Fernandez   | 58  | Puerto Rican                | Migrant                    | Illinois   | Public         | BA              | Business  | Personal Accountant                    |
| Son, Gonzales       | 35  | Nuyorican                   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Generation | New York   | Private        | MA              | Sociology | Doctoral Candidate                     |
| Mother, Gonzales    | 60  | Puerto Rican                | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation | New York   | Public         | MS              | Education | Retired, Bilingual School Psychologist |
| Daughter, Santiago  | 28  | Puerto Rican/<br>Salvadoran | 1 <sup>st</sup> Generation | California | Public         | MA              | Education | Doctoral Student                       |
| Father, Santiago    | 56  | Puerto Rican                | Migrant                    | California | Public         | MBA             | Business  | Director of Sales                      |
| Son, Baez           | 35  | Nuyorican                   | 4 <sup>th</sup> Generation | New York   | Public         | MS              | Education | High School Teacher                    |
| Mother, Baez        | 59  | Nuyorican                   | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Generation | New York   | Public         | MS              | Education | Retired, Elementary Teacher            |

**Figure 6.2 Puerto Rican Educational Oral History Details**

| <b>Family</b>                 | <b>Interview Type</b> | <b>Interview Duration</b> | <b>Interview Format</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Fernandez Daughter            | Online Video          | 120 minutes               | Interviewed Alone       |
| Fernandez Daughter and Father | Online Video          | 120 minutes               | Interviewed Together    |
| Gonzales Son                  | Online Video          | 120 minutes               | Interviewed Alone       |
| Gonzales Mother               | Online Video          | 90 minutes                | Interviewed Alone       |
| Santiago Daughter             | In-Person             | 90 minutes                | Interviewed Alone       |
| Santiago Mother and Father    | Online Video          | 120 minutes               | Interviewed Together    |
| Baez Son and Mother           | Online Video          | 120 minutes               | Interviewed Together    |

### **College-Educated Puerto Rican Family Educational Oral Histories**

Similarly to Chapter 6, to capture the complexities and nuances of the college-related educational experiences of Puerto Rican parents and their children, the findings within each section take *account of and value* the heterogeneity *and* homogeneity among them. As follows:

Puerto Rican college-educated parents and their college-educated children are in certain respects

- like all...
- like some...
- like no other...

#### *An Important Note*

For Puerto Rican families, educational oral histories focus on the actual experiences of participants, the way they perceive the broader reality around them, and the way they make decisions and take action to assert control over their circumstances (Olmedo, 1997; Seixas, 1993). As the interviewer or witness, my interpretations/writings of the participants' educational oral histories differed based on how I narrated and witnessed dialogues across generations. As a result, the findings of these families vary in length, detail, as well as coverage of and references to historical time periods.

## **The Santiago Family**

The Santiago family resides in California and is a father/daughter dyad. The father, Nestor, was born in Brooklyn to migrant<sup>22</sup> Puerto Rican parents and is the eldest of three siblings. Nestor came of age in the 1960s to 1970s and self-identifies as Puerto Rican. His mother had a 6<sup>th</sup> grade education and his father earned a high school diploma. Throughout his entire life, his parents stressed the importance of education and attending college despite not having done so themselves. Nestor attended public school from kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade in New York. He struggled during his first year of public school due to his parents not being familiar with the U.S. public school system, however, they adapted. His teachers and administrators later deemed as smart and talented. Like to other Puerto Rican children, Nestor, is considered a migrant student - an individual who returned to the island after studying in the United States and then returned to the mainland. Nestor returned to the island with his parents and attended a private Catholic high school for ninth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. He recalls his high school creating a college-going culture and encouraging all students to apply to private or public colleges or universities. Nestor demonstrates a unique perspective on being a first generation college student attending a United States designated accredited university in Puerto Rico as he states:

I think the importance of education comes from my parents. Directly or indirectly, they always talked about school and going to college and what have you. Neither one of them went to college, but they placed an importance on school. I went to college in Puerto Rico, and in Puerto Rico it was such a smooth transition from high school to college, because the majority of Puerto Ricans get into college. I am not going to say majority, but [for] a lot of Puerto Ricans, it is a natural transition. They go to high school and they go to college. Everybody does the same thing. Instead of SATs, they take what they call the college course. Everybody's talking about the college course, so you fill out your application and you all take the test at the same time. You could apply to multiple schools at one

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<sup>22</sup> In Puerto Rico, the term migrant is embedded in the patterns of mobility from the Island (Puerto Rico) to the mainland (United States) due to Puerto Ricans having legal U.S. citizenship status.

time with one application. You just have to tell them what your first, second, and third choice was. The system was so much smoother and easier. Plus, the teachers in school were talking about, "Hey, you can fill this out. You can fill that out."

For Nestor, college was an expectation and he felt fully supported and guided in regards to how to get there. Nestor experienced a different college application process on the island because the students took a college course and filled out one common application that was used for admissions to multiple universities. He attended the second largest university campus of the University of Puerto Rico system and majored in General Business. After graduating, a family member who was settled in California encouraged him to leave Puerto Rico. Nestor left Puerto Rico to pursue a life on the mainland. In arriving and first settling in California, he met his wife Ramira. They married and had three children. Mariana is the eldest of Nestor's three children. She remembers her father sharing his experiences:

My dad he grew up so until eighth grade and then for one reason or another I think it was my *abuelo* was going to help out with the business or something, they moved to Puerto Rico. Then my dad did high school and college in Puerto Rico. It was funny, he would always tell like that was a life-changing moment for him of moving back to Puerto Rico because for him, he was always with the intention of going back. He was going to come back to New York, which was his intention. He ended up going to California. He talks about the island and it is just a great place and all of his memories make me want to go and live there. Then after he finished college he was very ambitious. He did not want to stay in the island. I do not know if you know about the politics behind what's happening economically over there at the time, but he left. It is funny. I think that after I went to college, my dad started telling me his dreams.

Mariana details that her father explained his life changing moment was of moving to Puerto Rico to complete high school and college. For him, it was a positive experience and he had every intention in returning to New York, but as she explains, he was ambitious and ended up in California. Despite coming back to the mainland, he carries the spirit of Puerto Rico in his heart and transmitted this experience to his daughter. Interestingly, Mariana states that it was after

undergraduate experience that her father began to tell her his dreams, but she does not specify what these dreams are. Further, while Nestor was raising his children, he applied to and enrolled in a Masters of Business Administration graduate program at a small liberal arts college in California. His experiences in graduate school were not disclosed in this interview, but rather his investment in his daughter's educational trajectory.

Mariana was born and raised in Southern California and identifies as Puerto Rican/Salvadoran. Her mother, Ramira, emigrated from El Salvador in her teens and finished high school in Southern California. Mariana described her parents meeting through a mutual friend and as complete opposites in personality type. Both her parents emphasized the importance of attending college at a very young age and did their best to expose Mariana to opportunities. Mariana moved frequently as a child, resulting in various schooling experiences for her in both private and public school education systems in California and Connecticut. She completed her fourth through 12th grade education in Southern California's public school system. Mariana expresses that she was an average student and not considered gifted or talented by teachers or administrators. She attributes her father to keeping her on the path to college as he meticulously outlined A-G requirements and provided college counseling for her inside the home. Together, they applied to several schools in the University of California and California State systems. Mariana was accepted to a UC in Southern California and as a team, they decided she would attend. Mariana faced academic challenges and had to switch majors due to not meeting GPA requirements. She explains:

I was [a] Sociology and Women Studies major - Spanish minor but then I dropped it because I wanted to graduate in four years and I didn't want to take any more classes and my academic experience is funny because [I] just looked at my transcripts recently (laughing) so my first semester was really bad. I never got [on] academic probation but I feel looking at my GPA, I was really close to it. I came in as a Psychology major and I took some classes. It was typical getting

weeded out so that is when I got my first C and first D and then I felt very defeated so I no longer pursued that and then I found Sociology...It was not until the end of my sophomore year [that] I did really well but I think it was because I got deeper into my major and I got deeper into topics that I was passionate about and then I kind of learned the rhythm of what school [was].

Mariana depicts her understanding of why she changed majors, and how she became passionate about her final majors through engaging in her upper division. At the time, Mariana's father provided her with information and became a critical source of kinship support, as he explains:

We went through a lot of learning and I think once she got into college - I think I was able to help her more, because I went through it. I struggled in college. I remember my first year in college. I was alone in bed in my apartment and I was crying because I was getting Cs and Ds. I was there. I was able to help her better. What I tried to emphasize to Mariana in the first quarter is that going to college, it was [not] a marathon. There is no such thing as you have to finish in four years. I said, "You go to college. Yeah, I would like for you to finish in four years, but if it takes 5 years, so what?" I also tried to say it is not important to finish college with a 4.0. Right now, you've taken all of your GE classes. They are going to be harder and what have you, because the university is trying to filter you out. The university is trying to get the low performing students out. These classes are going to be harder. Once you get into your concentration, once you get into your major and what have you, believe it or not, your classes are going to get easier.

Nestor demonstrates what he would tell Mariana when she encountered challenges within her undergraduate experience. He was able to transmit knowledge about the college-going process inside the home that the institution did not help her facilitate in navigating. He provided her with invaluable kinship support in order for her to stay on track in completing college. She double majored in Sociology and Women's Studies. Mariana graduated in four years and was recruited to participate in Teach for America.

As a participant for Teach for America, she was assigned to instruct in an elementary school in Los Angeles, and that is where her passion for education began. Teach for America offered the opportunity to attain a master's degree at a private liberal arts school which she took full advantage of. After teaching for several years, her and her husband decided they wanted to

return to school for a PhD or EdD. Mariana applied to PhD programs while her husband applied to EdD programs, she explains:

We both decided to apply to programs together and then yeah and so then he applied to EdD programs and that is where he is at a UC. I applied to PhD programs. My interests are very specific - where I want to look at comparative international transnationalism. I like [my graduate program it] is a happy place (laughing). I knew what I wanted. I knew what I deserved. I knew what I needed to excel, and I needed an advisor who was going to be there to hold my hand every step of the way. You know what I mean? I got that. Honestly I have been supported every single step of the way...I work really closely with my professor. I feel like I have been so blessed, but then again my life had to happen the way it happened for me to have the agency. I do not think if I had gone to undergrad [straight] to my [graduate] program I would have been a fit the way I am now.

Mariana explains that through her kinship with her partner, they applied to graduate schools together. In applying to graduate school, she approached the application process differently than as a prospective undergraduate. This time around, she knew exactly what she needed in attending an institution of higher education. Based on her previous experiences as an undergraduate, Mariana needed faculty support and mentorship. She explains that if she had not gone through her undergraduate experiences, she would have not known what she needed to succeed in graduate school. In pursuing her PhD, she has exceeded her father's expectations, as he expresses:

I think what Mariana learned [in undergraduate] is her passion for her community and a passion for her culture - a passion for her Latino culture. I think that is what I saw with the time that she was teaching for Teach for America. Now especially in her PhD program I think they [her and her husband] all goes towards a goal of helping the Chicano [and] Latino community. I think that is what her focus is on right now and her passion is. She is lucky enough. Or maybe I should not say lucky enough, but the thing is her husband is there, also. I think her husband and her share that passion. The reason why he is in the EdD program and the reason why she is in the PhD program is that at the end of the day, what they want to do is that they want to help the Chicano [and] Latino community. No, I did not expect Mariana to get into a master's degree. I surely did not expect her to get into a PhD program.

Nestor expresses how in undergraduate school Mariana found her passion for social justice for the Latina/o community. Pursuing a teaching career through Teach for America further developed her insight on the needs of the Latina/o community. Nestor commented that through Mariana's kinship support of her husband, they both pursued PhDs together, and this far exceeded any expectations he had of her. He understands that her and her partner have a deep investment in social justice praxis and they are on this journey as a team.

The Santiago father/daughter dyad had direct paths from their high schools to their respective four-year institutions. Nestor as a first generation college student attended college in Puerto Rico, his path to college was different from other college going parents in this study as he had a peer support group and teacher expectations that he was going to attend and graduate. Mariana did not have the same experience as she lacked knowledge of college readiness and socialization. Yet her father intervened on her behalf and together they overcame various barriers. For Marianna, Teach for America granted access to a master's program and as a classroom educator, she found herself furthering her commitment to social justice for the Latina/o community. Currently, Mariana is in her late 20's and in her second year of a doctoral program in Education. She has a deep commitment to Latina/o students in assisting them in their academic achievement and wishes to pursue a tenure track position after the completion of her degree. Nestor is in his mid 50's and the Director of Sales at a small company in Northern California. He is dedicated to assisting his three children in pursuit of their dreams and supports them fully. As a family, they are still witnessing and learning from one another as Mariana completes her PhD.

### **The Gonzalez Family**

The Gonzalez family resides in New York, and is a mother/son dyad. The mother, Rosario, was born in Brooklyn, New York to migrant Puerto Rican parents. Rosario self-identifies as Puerto Rican and is the younger of two siblings. Rosario's parents divorced early on and she lived full-time with her mother. Her mother had a third grade education, but consistently stressed the importance of education to Rosario. Rosario came of age in the 1950's and attended public school in New York from first through third grade. She explains this experience as isolating since "English only" communication was enforced, and even though she was deemed a good student, she was only given this title by being able to memorize and regurgitate what the teachers wanted. Rosario is considered a migrant student, an individual who returned to the island after studying in the United States, and then came back to the mainland. Rosario completed fourth grade on the island and attended a private Catholic bilingual elementary school. She credits exposure to a bilingual curriculum, as the main source of retaining the Spanish language. Rosario recalls her teachers being very supportive and nurturing of her development of both languages. For fifth through 12th grade, she returned to the mainland and attended public school in New York.

Unlike the other participants, Rosario was identified as gifted and talented in high school by her counselors, which led to participation in ASPIRA. ASPIRA was founded by a prominent Puerto Rican social worker and activist by the name of Antonia Pantoja. She established a college access program to serve Puerto Rican youth in New York high schools. Rosario benefited greatly from her participation in ASPIRA as it put her on the path to college. Rosario expresses how she came to understand what it meant to be a first-generation college student and participant of ASPIRA, as she states:

In high school I was enrolled in the college bound ASPIRA program. The teachers recommended it because they looked at each individual student. They recognized potential, which I was very grateful for. They tried to guide you in terms of what you needed to do. For instance, the whole college application process, oh my God. My parents could not help me with that. They had no idea. My sister had done it before me thankfully, but we did it all on our own. We did everything on our own. Everything in terms of the application process. You can go ask the guidance counselor a question. Because I was college bound, which was another lucky break. Nobody was giving me a hard time about applying to four-year colleges and they were actually encouraging me.

Rosario experienced a college-going environment where she was encouraged to apply to four-year institutions. Despite not having parents who knew the college application process, she did have a network of support. She applied to several private and public colleges and universities in New York. She recalls being accepted into both private schools she applied to while having a deep desire to attend one of the private schools that was away from home. Due to financial hardships and family obligations, she was unable to attend her top choice. Instead, she attended the other private college and endured a difficult transition as a first generation college student as she exemplifies:

Undergraduate was difficult because most of the population were white. There were a lot of people that felt that they were better qualified to be there than the Puerto Ricans or by that time Chicanos or African Americans. I gravitated toward the Puerto Rican Studies Department because there I found Latino professors and a group of friends. Actually many of the students in the Puerto Rican Studies department were Vietnam veterans that had gotten some money to continue their education. I was still young, but a lot of my friends were older because they had different life experiences. That was more of the activist group on campus. That was what really helped in terms of my college experience, that I was able to have a group of people that were like me. I still felt in many of my courses inadequate, like I had not been prepared adequately. Looking back now, I think it was also an attitude that a lot of the other students had. They had an attitude of entitlement or an attitude of, 'Yeah, I got this.' Whereas I was not that secure. That had a lot to do with it.

Rosario explains how she entered the university with a lack of college readiness, but overcame that through culturally relevant peer groups. She expresses her experiences of culture shock in

attending a predominately white campus and how she felt unprepared in her courses due to the climate of the campus and curriculum. However, Rosario found a safe space of acceptance in the Puerto Rican Studies Department where she was able to find a peer-group that supported her.

Rosario double majored in Sociology and Psychology with a minor in Puerto Rican Studies and graduated in four years. After completing her undergraduate degree, she worked in a hospital caring for the geriatric population and also got married. She became a mother and cared for her son, Ramon, while working part-time in social service settings. She became fully invested in exposing her son to educational settings as much as possible in order for him to learn. After having her second son and attend kindergarten full-time, she decided to pursue a full-time job. Her older sister, who had attended college for education and advanced her way into administration, encouraged Rosario to invest in a career in education. Rosario had no interest in becoming a teacher but at the time there was a high demand for bilingual school secretaries. After securing her job as a bilingual school secretary, she knew she wanted to go back to school. What's more the Department of Education had a need for bilingual school psychologists and was creating programs for people to apply for and attain their master's degree. Rosario applied to one such program and was admitted on full scholarship. Rosario provides insight of how she was able to pursue graduate school through a scholarship program promoted for employees by the Department of Education. She states:

At that time I was working already for the Department of Education. I learned that there was a scholarship program for bilingual school psychologists. I applied and I was awarded the scholarship. That's how I got into the program. I went back to school and I graduated in 1998. That was like 20 years after graduating undergrad. I really found my niche in that I felt that I was helping these parents help their kids. Without that support, they would not know where to begin. It was really something that I really wanted to do because I felt that I was helping other Puerto Rican kids get the education they were entitled to. There is like a thread in my whole history from my mom's deprivation to my own and my kids and the helping [of] others. It is because education is a right. It is a right that everyone

has. Then in graduate school, the challenge was getting [assigned to] those professors that were so intelligent in their material that they really did not have intelligence for human beings.... I did have a couple of Puerto Rican professors so that was really good. It helped to validate that, yes; we are entitled to be here. Yes, we could be scholars. Yes, we could be contributors to this course. It really did help.

In applying and being accepted into a program, Rosario attended graduate school on scholarship. She returned to school after 20 years and graduated in two. She found a way to assist the Puerto Rican community through being a bilingual school psychologist as she sought to break generational depravation of educational access for the population. Rosario recognizes that by having Puerto Rican professors, she could be validated and represented in institutions of higher education. She graduated with her Master's of Science in Education with a concentration in School Psychology and Bilingual Spanish. Rosario exemplified a deep commitment to helping Puerto Rican families navigate the New York public school system by making sure they had a source of support. As such, her son Ramon would carry similar characteristics as his mother throughout his life.

Ramon is eldest of Rosario's two sons. He was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York and self-identifies as a Nuyorican. Ramon's father migrated from Puerto Rico at the age 15 and stayed in the Brooklyn area. His father attained a high school diploma and went on a vocational path, which allowed him to financially support his family while Ramon was growing up. Ramon came of age in the late 1980's into the 1990's. Due to his mother being college-educated and understanding the New York educational system, she enrolled him in K-12<sup>th</sup> private Catholic school. Ramon's elementary experience academically went well, but he often found himself responding to people about his ethnic identity as a Puerto Rican. In entering his all-boys private and very affluent Catholic high school, he began to question the social constructions of race, class, and gender. This set him apart from his peers and especially the white administrators. He

recalls his mother advocating for him when unjust situations would arise, and providing him a space to develop his consciousness. In fact, his mother recalled the following:

I always had to advocate for Ramon. Ramon would not shy away from expressing his opinions. Let us put it that way. He was always very, very polite about it. He would always do it with good language. He would not back away from his position and I think that was a very good thing...He went to a high school that was mostly white. There was too much testosterone because most of the staff members were male. He was Puerto Rican. My children always knew who they were. Their identity was always sound. "Yeah, I'm Puerto Rican" if anybody asked them. He was very Puerto Rican in a very white school. He would get into debates, let us say, with his [teachers] about different topics. They would say to me things like he can be argumentative and I would say, "Yeah because he is a thinker. He has ideas and he has been taught to express his ideas."... They knew that I would go up and just have his back.

Ramon knew he had the support of his mother and was able to navigate difficult situations that would arise for him as a Puerto Rican male. His high school stressed the concept of the scholar athlete with which Ramon strongly identified and carried throughout his educational trajectory. When it was time to apply to college, Ramon submitted applications to several in-state and out-of-state schools. He had a strong desire to attend college outside of New York, but felt he did not have the financial support. As a result, Ramon attended the same private liberal arts college his mother did in New York.

Ramon had a difficult transition in attending his undergraduate institution. He felt unprepared and could not relate to his peers. Ramon shares his experience of being pushed out of his undergraduate institution, as he states:

Yeah it was different for me for a couple of reasons. One, because I did not really know what to expect. For all of the talk that we had in high school about excellence and going to college, I do not remember really being taught about what to expect in college. My interests [were sparked] in Ethnic Studies and in Political Science [by faculty of color]. That was also right before I got pushed out of [my first undergraduate institution]. I am thankful that I had that experience before I had to leave college [because] that kept me interested in college. If I had to leave college when I was still disillusioned and confused about my path, I do not know what would have happened. Those two classes really captured my imagination

and interest in me. I spent that whole year that I was outside of school reading on my own. That was the gateway to that class. I [was] exposed to books and things that I can change or study on my own. While I was out of school that year, I read all of Malcolm X's speeches. I started reading Puerto Rican history books - the few that I could find at the time. Then that really solidified my decision to not only go back to college [but] I wanted to go [to an institution that had a legacy of Puerto Rican Studies] so I could study Puerto Rican and Africana studies. I know they [undergraduate institution] had a long history of student activism.

Ramon found a curriculum that was culturally relevant to his experience as a Puerto Rican before his departure and transferring from one institution to the next. Despite being pushed out of his first undergraduate institution, he still gained exposure to Ethnic Studies and Political Science, which would prompt his choice of major at the next institution where he enrolled. Ramon was very strategic about the next college he decided to attend, paying close attention to their Puerto Rican Studies program and history of student activism. Ramon's mother reflects on this transition:

Interestingly enough, he started at his first undergraduate institution where I attended and he hated it. It was not integrated. There were not many Latino professors. He was doing liberal arts at that time. He ended up transferring to [an institution in the CUNY system] and he has been affiliated with [that institution] for a very long time, as he explained to you. That was a little difficult. It was a little financial burden for us there because since he had received some scholarship monies, I ended up having to pay it back to the college. Again, I was willing to make that sacrifice because I said, "If you are not happy then you are wasting your time there. Why go through the motions if you are not happy? It has to be dynamic. It has to be something that you are really invested in."

Rosario acted as the kinship support for Ramon in assisting him with his transfer decision. It was important for her as a mother to see that her son happy. Rosario was more concerned about his wellbeing rather than Ramon pursuing an educational track he had no investment in. He transferred and double majored in Africana and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies and Political Science. He was exposed to the idea of graduate school through a faculty member of color who encouraged him to apply to the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program that

demystified the graduate school application process. He applied and was admitted into a public university in New York for a PhD in Sociology. Ramon had an even more difficult transition into graduate school as he experienced culture shock and an academically rigorous course load.

He explains:

My first two years were very hard. I fell behind academically. I racked up a lot of incompletes. I was struggling financially. I got put on academic probation. Ultimately decided to take a leave of absence. My paperwork got messed up - it did not get it in go through the proper channels. I wound up getting withdrawn from university completely. Then I wound up taking four years off. I was out of the program for four years.

Ramon fell behind academically and struggled financially. After being put on academic probation he decided to take a leave of absence. In taking the leave, Ramon worked part-time as a research assistant at the university with mentors of color who consistently supported him, which he accredits as the only reason why he re-enrolled four years later. In returning to his graduate program, Rosario's aspirations for him are high. She states:

My prayer to the universe is that he does [graduate] and I know he will accomplish the track that he's chosen. He will have his PhD, which he has worked very, very hard toward accomplishing. There have been many hurdles that he's been able to get over. There's still more and I see how hard he works. That he will be happy wherever he decides he wants to be. I know his dream is to be a college professor and to continue his work, which is working with Latinos and being able to be a model for other young men and women. We still have a lot of work.

Rosario acknowledges the trials and tribulations her son has encountered. She demonstrates pride in his accomplishments and wishes for him to be happy in whatever he decides to do in his life. As Ramon is currently still in his graduate program, his mother knows his social justice investments in the Latina/o community are most important to him.

The Gonzalez mother/son dyad had the same path in attending their respective four-year institution directly after high school. As a first generation college student, Rosario experienced a lack of college-readiness, but found her support network in the Puerto Rican Studies Department.

Her graduate school experience happened later in life, but was fully funded by the Department of Education and helped her pursue being a bilingual school psychologist. Currently, Rosario is in her early 60's, and is enjoying life being newly retired while supporting both of her sons in their life endeavors. Although Ramon attended the same undergraduate institution as his mother, his path diverged when he was pushed out and ultimately transferred to another university. In graduate school, he again experienced a difficult transition and took a leave of absences for four years. At the time of our interview he had been back for a year in his program, and was doing well. Ramon is in his mid 30's and is a doctoral candidate in Sociology. He is in the process of writing his dissertation on the Puerto Rican student movement in New York City in the 1960's and 1970s. Ramon has a deep investment in grassroots organizing, and in serving the Puerto Rican community, he aspires to become a tenure-track professor.

Unlike any of the other family participants, after Rosario and Ramon were finished being interviewed, Ramon still wanted to share what he had learned from his mother through this study. In a post-interview email exchange, Ramon sent the following:

Mom spoke with me a little while ago about some of things you all talked about yesterday. When she said that she mentioned that she was a member of ASPIRA, we had a little fight about whether or not she had ever mentioned that to me before lol [laugh out loud]. After a while I remembered that she had in fact told me that before, but it was only within the last year or so! She also told me that she minored in Puerto Rican Studies and participated in some meetings and protests that the older Puerto Rican students had organized in response to discrimination on campus. Although, she could not remember exactly what the protests were about. I never knew this! Mind you, I was Mr. Puerto Rican Studies in college and very involved in student activism. I am surprised that she did not share all that with me when I was in college. But that goes back to what you and I talked about regarding 1st gen college-going parents not talking about their college experience with their children. I am not angry with her, though. She reminded me that she was only 22 when she graduated, so it was all very new to her. Plus, as she said, she and the other Puerto Rican students "were just trying to get by." So it is not like she was a seasoned activist or ever felt truly comfortable in college. She just did not have time to acquire that much knowledge about

higher education. We both came to the conclusion that ***one generation is not enough.***

In his powerful reflection, Ramon unearths not knowing his mother participated in ASPIRA until much later in life which elicited shock and excitement. More importantly, he was unaware that his mother had minored in Puerto Rican Studies or participated in activism. This came as a shock for him since he identifies deeply with activism in the Puerto Rican community, and describes himself as “Mr. Puerto Rican Studies.” Ramon also explains what it means to have a college-educated parent and the absence of transmitted knowledge. Powerfully put, the Gonzalez family agrees that having one generation of college-education is not enough to pass on to the next.

### **The Fernandez Family**

The Fernandez family resides in Illinois and New Jersey and is a father/daughter dyad. The father, Renaldo, was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois to migrant Puerto Rican parents. Renaldo came of age in the 1960s to 1970s and self-identifies as Puerto Rican. His mother had a sixth grade education and his father had a second grade education. Renaldo attended public school from kindergarten through sixth grade in Illinois. He had to repeat kindergarten and from that point forward, was placed on a remedial track, in which he did not feel academically challenged. In fourth grade, he won a science fair and was taken out of the remedial track by a teacher who thought he showed great promise. Similar to other Puerto Rican children, Renaldo is considered a migrant student, an individual who returned to the island after studying in the United States, and came back to the mainland. Renaldo completed seventh through ninth grade on the island and returned to Illinois where he completed the rest of high school. As a high school student, he pursued a vocational track and became a mechanic after he graduated. While

working as a mechanic, he learned how to bookkeep from an elder because he did well at math and eventually become the office manager of a local business.

Due to Renaldo's experience with bookkeeping, he aspired to go attend college for accounting. He was also married and had two children with his wife. He applied to and attended a private liberal arts school in Illinois while raising his family. In an interview with his daughter, Alanna, Renaldo's experience reflects what it means to be a first generation and non-traditional college student, and how this formed his expectations for his children. He recalls the following:

Renaldo: I remember my dad, he never said it, but I always knew he felt his obligation was that we got through to high school. As long as I made it to high school that was fine. There are reasons why I went to college, but you know what I did for my kids? I always felt that if I did college they had to do a step above me. I went two steps above [my parents] so that is good. I was going to get my master's, but circumstances changed that you know?

Interviewer: Yeah?

Alanna: You were already a dad.

Renaldo: I was a dad already. I had a family. Like I said, I graduated in '91. When Alanna was already 11 years old you know?

Interviewer: How was it going back to school while being a dad?

Renaldo: You know I liked it because when I went to undergraduate, it was geared towards adults. We had some 20 year olds, *pero* most of the classes I took, it was geared toward the adult population so a lot of the people there were my age, in their 30's and it was not bad for me.

As a non-traditional first generation college student, Renaldo recalls having a positive experience. At the time, his college catered to a non-traditional college population. Renaldo had aspirations to attend graduate school, but he did not attend due to having a family and being the primary provider. However, he did have an enjoyable experience in his undergraduate career. Renaldo's parents' expectations were for him to attain a high school diploma, but he expresses that by going to college, his expectations for his own children shifted. He believed that if he

were to attain a bachelor's degree then his children needed to outpace him by attaining a graduate degree. His expectations were a strong message within his household, as Alanna describes:

The biggest messages that come to my mind [from my dad] are, "Every generation has to be better than the next" and "Don't ever leave for tomorrow, what you can do today" to keep me from procrastinating and then that famous saying in Spanish, "*Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres*" or "Tell me who you walk with and I will tell you who you are."

Alanna illuminates how her dad specifically shared these messages within their household. These sayings acted as set expectations that Alanna would pursue in academic career.

Alanna is the eldest of two siblings and Renaldo's only daughter. She was born and raised in Illinois and self-identifies as Puerto Rican. Alanna's mother is also Puerto Rican and had a high school education. Alanna came of age in the 1980s to 1990s and describes her upbringing as Americanized by only speaking English in the household and assimilating into dominant culture. Due to her father being college-educated, he was strategic in sending Alanna to private Catholic school. Alanna attended kindergarten through 12th grade at private Catholic schools and describes her elementary experience as positive overall. Her peer-group was diverse since they all came from the same neighborhood or predominately Puerto Rican and African American communities. However, in high school the demographics changed. Alanna attended an all girls school and would take the bus to a more affluent neighborhood 40 minutes from where her family lived. Alanna excelled in high school and was identified as gifted and talented. She remembers receiving a lot of guidance from her college counselors in applying for college. While her dad assisted her with college visits, logistically, she relied heavily on her counselors as the following conversation reveals:

Renaldo: I do not think I pushed her to go into anything – I am not sure - she may say differently but just the expectation to get the college degree - and then

whatever happens, happens...I do not remember much helping you [looking at Alanna] with the [application]. You filled it out. You did whatever you had to do. I just signed wherever I needed to sign you know (laughing) as far as that part of it you know? I do not remember being too deeply involved in that part as far as the applications and stuff.

Alanna: I figured it out on my own.

Renaldo: Yeah, Alanna did most of that by herself.

Even though Alanna had a college-educated parent, she essentially applied to colleges on her own. She submitted applications to several public and private institutions in Illinois, and decided to attend a private liberal arts school. As an undergraduate, Alanna experienced culture shock and academic challenges. Alanna and her father demonstrate a unique exchange about her undergraduate path to and through college. First, I interviewed Alanna alone, during which time she revealed culture shock and a lack of college-readiness. She states:

College was hard. It was academically hard. Like I had mention[ed], I thought I was going to be medical doctor so I started premed and I was intimidated by the chemistry professor who wrote the textbook. [Laughter] I am just like I cannot pass chemistry. I cried because I called my dad and said I cannot do this. I need to find another major. He was fine with that...I was trying to connect to the student organizations too. However, I still just did not feel like I connected with anyone. I know partly it is because of my own ethnic identity. At that time I still thought I was white, but I [did not] fit in with the white people. I did not understand the politics or the political stuff of the proud Latinos that I encountered in the clubs. I just tried to get out of there as soon as I could....[At home] I was left alone to study and do my work. That is what I did. [My parents] did not know, they did not understand the emotions that I was going through. I probably did not tell them because in my family we just do not talk about feelings that much. You just keep your head down and you do your work and you do your best. It was isolating at home too.

Alanna found herself unfamiliar with the curriculum as a designated pre-medical student, and lacking the necessary college-readiness to complete college level chemistry. She was hesitant to share with her father that she needed to switch majors for her own mental health, but once she did he approved of her decision. She also found herself struggling with her ethnic identity and

straddling where she belonged in terms of peer group. At home, she felt isolated as her parents did not know what she was going through. Alanna seemed to have a desire for a kinship support, but was this not established. However, this study provided the opportunity to express this to her father as she sat in on his interview. This exchange is prompted in the following dialogue by “later in the interview.” Renaldo reminiscences on Alanna’s undergraduate:

Interviewer: Okay, do you remember any barriers that she experienced as an undergraduate and how you supported her through that?

Renaldo: Wow- undergrad? In some ways I was like - I do not want them to fulfill my dream. I want them to fulfill their dream so once the college thing came more evident -yeah I pushed it. For awhile she was talking about being a doctor so I kind of pushed that a little bit. I tried - I think I did not try to push it too much you know. Only when she said chemistry was a little bit too difficult for her and the medical doctor field, that she was going to change her major and I said yeah that is fine. Whatever you want to do, but no. I mean I do not think so because I know she lived on campus, and then I guess she decided she wanted to live home or something. I do not remember one of the girls was a real slob or something. I do not remember. But...[Alanna interrupting him]

Alanna: There was probably a reason...

**[Later in ending the interview]**

Alanna: I think I will add -when you asked the question of barriers in college that [looking at her dad]- since we did not talk about discrimination or anything, I did not fully understand at the time what I was experiencing in college being with mostly white students and all them being super smarter than I was. We did not have the language in the house to talk about discrimination or culture clash so I did not talk to him about it. [It was not} until I got into graduate school that I started understanding like oh maybe there was racism and culture clash that I was experiencing not knowing because we never talked about it. So like you never knew my barriers because we did not have that language to talk about it. But that was one reason I moved home also because I never felt integrated at that culture at that school. You know? I do not have any friends from that school. I did the same thing he did [looking at her dad and then the interviewer] - get in and get out. (Laughing) Get my degree and move on.

Renaldo: If I would have gone to college right after high school - then that might have been different.

Alanna: Right.

Renaldo: Like you said - I already had my family.

Alanna: Yeah.

Renaldo: A lot of the students I dealt with were in the same area I was. They had families already. I was part of a study group and since I was always the good one in math -I was the tutor for math- and then another kid would be the one in English. It was different races- white kids, black kids. And that is the reason why we never spoke of racism in the house because to me it was never a barrier. It was never something that bothered me. I never felt that held me back in any way. I do not know if that is typical for other Puerto Rican or Hispanic families, but I mean thinking about it now as an adult about some of the things that happened. I bet you that – the fact that they kept me back in kindergarten – the fact that they put me in that room, you know – there had to be racism.

Alanna and Renaldo share a powerful recovery of memory resulting in transparency for both of them. When I as the interviewer asked Renaldo if she had any barriers in her undergraduate trajectory, Alanna prompts her father by stating, “There is probably a reason.” He seems not to notice this taking place until she brings the question back up at the end of the interview. She addresses her father as to why he did not know her barriers because as her parent he did not provide the language to name her racial or ethnic identity experiences. As Renaldo listens and reflects on what she shares, he comes to the realization that he actually did not possess the language to name his own experiences of racism, and is learning in the moment from Alanna.

Ultimately, Alanna majored in Psychology and was exposed to research while working in a lab as an undergraduate researcher. As a Psychology major, she became interested in counseling and searched for master’s programs that could meet her needs. She does not remember getting assistance or who exposed her to the idea of graduate school. Alanna completed the application process on her own. She was admitted to a master’s in Counseling Psychology at a private institution in Chicago and indicated a very positive experience by stating

that she loved the program and her cohort. After graduating, she worked full-time and married her husband and explains her transition into her PhD program as follows:

I got my master's and I worked in the field as a counselor for four years. Within those four years, I got married and I moved to New Jersey. So, when I was here in New Jersey, after the fourth year of being in the field, I just got burnt out. I had the privilege that my husband could financially support us so I was able to quit my job because I was burnt out. I just had this itch to get my PhD, and I knew it was something, again, from my college experience that I was going to do eventually and it just came back to me, the feeling of, "I need to get my PhD." Now, I am going to go to school full-time and it was all paid for... The advisor that I have now is really the one who started awakening my knowledge about ethnic identity and racism, and the critical race stuff. The friends that I have now are all women of color so we talk about race all the time. I am always being pushed to figure out my ethnic identity and all that. I cannot escape it anymore but we definitely - I definitely - learned in that core program, who to trust, who not to trust. I always go to school dressed nicely. I always have a smiling face. I always say I am doing fine. Sometimes, I know I do not always ask for help when I should ask for help.

Alanna always knew she had aspirations of attaining her PhD and for her it was a seamless transition. In her PhD program, she is in the process of coming to her critical consciousness as a Puerto Rican woman in the context of the United States. In addition, Alanna is learning how to navigate and negotiate the politics of graduate school. In attaining her master's degree and pursuing her PhD, she in fact met and exceeded her father's expectations of "every generation has to do better than the next." Renaldo expresses his pride:

Pretty soon she will get her doctorate and you know it is kind of cool to tell people, "Yeah my daughter is working on her doctorate." You know? "Oh she is going to be a doctor!"

The Fernandez family took diverging paths into their respective four-year institutions. Renaldo, as a first generation non-traditional college student, pursued higher education later in life while a father. Due to his undergraduate experience, he had a "hands off approach" with Alanna's transition from high school to undergraduate because he lacked the knowledge of the application process, as he did not go through the same process. When Alanna attended

undergraduate, he assumed that she only had academic challenges, but as revealed through their interview, he was incorrect. Even though Alanna had a college-educated father, this did not prepare her for the culture shock or lack of college readiness she experienced, and as she expressed to her father, he did not provide her the language to name her experiences as a woman of color. However, through participating in this study, Renaldo and Alanna were able to communicate thoroughly about their undergraduate experiences and make powerful connections while learning together. Currently, Renaldo is an accountant for the Puerto Rican community within a well-known neighborhood with an exceptionally high concentration of Puerto Ricans in Illinois. As previously read, he is very proud of his daughter who is pursuing her PhD. Alanna is in her mid 30's, a doctoral student in Education at a public institution in New Jersey and is in the process of writing her dissertation proposal to become a candidate. Her research focuses on how Latina doctoral students pursuing degrees in Counseling Psychology negotiate their racial and ethnic identities. She aspires to pursue a tenure-track faculty position after graduating with her PhD.

### **The Baez Family**

The Baez family resides in New York and is a mother/son dyad. The mother, Lucia, was born and raised in Bronx, New York to a first generation Puerto Rican migrant mother and second-generation Puerto Rican father in the United States. Lucia self-identifies as Nuyorican and came of age in the late 1950's to 1960's. She is the second youngest of four siblings. Her father attended high school, but did not finish and it is unclear what grade he went to. Her mother attended high school and did not graduate. She was 60 years old when she earned her GED. Lucia emphasized her mother as "the driving force" and her biggest supporter of her education. Lucia grew up in the projects in the Bronx and had a strong awareness of the racial segregation

in her neighborhood. She attended K-12 public school in the New York. In elementary school, she remembers having two influential teachers, one in the third grade and another in the sixth grade, who showed care and had high expectations of her. In high school, Lucia was not exposed to college nor did she take courses to prepare her for higher education. She expresses:

In high school I had friends that went into the college bound track but I never felt I was college bound. Do not ask me why. I should have had a counselor or somebody to advise me, but no I did not. My parents, you know, they were just happy if I graduated high school.

Lucia reflects on the expectations her high school had of her as a non-college bound student. She expresses disappointment in her schooling, as she knows a counselor or advisor should have informed her of college and the application process. Since Lucia was not “college bound” directly out of high school, she graduated and began to work full-time. She met her husband, got married, and had one child. While being married, the couple decided to attend college together. Lucia applied and attended a public college in the City University of New York system. She states:

My husband kept saying, babe, you are so smart. Go to college. I really was not interested whatsoever. My goal was to go home, cook, and clean. I was like, oh, when I think about this it is just so funny and then a light went off in my head... It was disastrous enrolling. I felt like a fish out of water. I did not know what to do. It was like [there are] so many questions I had that my parents really could not help me with. I had friends so they helped me but, I just kept asking, what do you do, how do I do it, but you know, when you are frightened again – [my undergraduate institution] is a large campus so, you know, it was intimidating in the beginning.

As a first-generation non-traditional college student, Lucia describes what this status means for lack of college-readiness. If Lucia would have been exposed to college earlier, she may have not felt the intimidation factor of being on a college campus so strongly. Due to working as a paraprofessional, she was able to have union benefits pay for her undergraduate career as she explains:

I was in the union that would pay for certain credits to go to college. I worked as a paraprofessional and I started going to school. I loved to learn. Once I got the bug. Forget it. I had to be on the dean's list, all right? Once I started educating myself, something took me over and I was focused. I had to do my work. I would leave my papers in the middle of the night even if I thought they were perfect. I would stop and then the next day you [would] find me editing. I did crazy hours. I would go take a nap after work and then get up in an ungodly hour and start studying and *do not interrupt me*. I was really very, very motivated and I had to do the best that I could. [I proved it by making] the dean's list. I had a high GPA throughout college, 3.8, you know what I mean so I worked....I got my degrees [referring to her bachelor's and master's degrees]. Thirteen years it took me to graduate because I was a mother. I was going to school, taking care of my house even though my husband helped me a lot, but once I got that bug, you could not stop me.

Lucia learned, adapted, and became motivated to be the best student possible by working towards being on the dean's list. She took her schoolwork very seriously and achieved her goals despite taking a total of 13 years to graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Education and a Master of Science in Early Childhood Education. Lucia taught high school in the New York public school system, and while her experiences in graduate school were not disclosed, she revealed her investment in her son's educational trajectory.

Rocio is the only child of Lucia. He was born and raised in Bronx, New York, and self-identifies as Nuyorican. Rocio's father is Puerto Rican and attained a bachelor's degree alongside his mother. His father had a long career as a police officer for the New York Police Department. Rocio came of age in the 1990s to 2000s, and attended public and private catholic school. Due to his parents being aware of the public school system, they made sure he attended the best schools possible.

For [my parents] school was the way. You got to go to school. That's the earliest message I remember from my parents. You are going to go to college and I saw them both go, because both of my parents were the first in their families to graduate from college. Both did it part time, you know, while I was alive. So I remember seeing them. I was at both of their college graduations as a teenager so you know, I was like very proud of them so of course naturally, I had to take that

next step and they really tried to hammer that message on, so school is very important.

Due to Rocio's parents being first-generation non-traditional college students, he was able to witness and experience college with them. This had a lasting effect on him as his parents' expectations were for him to attend and excel in college. As an elementary student, Rocio was in the exceptionally gifted program and recalls having an overall positive experience. In entering an affluent all boys private Catholic high school, Rocio came into his Puerto Rican identity. He describes his teachers, administrators, and the majority of the student body as all white males. Due to his racial and ethnic identity, he experienced racism from his teachers, administrators, and peers. His parents were often called in, and fought on his behalf for equal treatment. As Lucia describes:

Lucia: Did he have any troubles? I always taught my son to express himself even if it was a teacher, but do it tactfully and respectfully. All right. But this one teacher, Mr. Robins, right? [Looking at her son] This one man teacher just hit him the wrong way, the way my son's personality was, so we had a meeting - my husband and I with my son and he thought we were going to attack Rocio as soon as he told us what he saw in him and whatever. Meanwhile, my son said that [the teacher] put him in the back of the room and would not call on him. [Asking Rocio] is that right? Many times?

Rocio: Yeah. He definitely was like – all the things you should not be as a teacher with certain kids. He would find things to like to pick on me [about], knowing that I will say something back and he would kick me out of the classroom and you know, so my parents were often brought in to talk to him.

Lucia: He [the teacher] was in attack mode even with us. When he started to tell me about how my son is, I said, "Well, we have taught our boy to express himself. Even if it is a teacher. Even with me." Express yourself as long as you are doing it respectfully. So he [the teacher] did not think we were going to come out like that. He was like, "What?" So I said, "We will definitely keep track of what he needs to do but there has to be respect, mutual respect. He is a student, but he is a human being and you have to respect him. He has to respect you." You know, that was my firm thought. My mother was just like that. So again, a chip off the old block. My mom did not let anybody disrespect us as long as we also respected them.

Lucia describes equipping her son with the skills to assert himself as long as he demonstrated respect. For Rocio, as a high school student this was not well received, but his mother ensured he could express himself by supporting his efforts. When his college application season arrived, Rocio did not feel his high school adequately prepared him due to the faculty's low expectations of him. As Lucia and Rocio reflect on the college application process together, Lucia expresses her expectations of Rocio:

Lucia: I wanted him to go to college. And then you know we took him to the colleges and all that. We went. All of us went, and you basically did it yourself, right, Rocio?

Rocio: My high school college adviser, he certainly was not pushing me to do anything important. He was not pushing me to go to an Ivy League, [like] the other kids that were in my school - they were going to Ivy League schools... I feel I had both perspectives, like even though my parents went [to college], I was the first to go after high school and [my now wife] was going to be the first in her whole family to go. Even though my parents sort of did blaze that trail, there was a lot of newness to it also. Yeah, they were involved but they were happy that [my now wife] was there as a guide. She picked my classes for me. I would say I just want to be with you. It was not like she did my work because I actually did do the work...When I took time off of college, my parents, I am pretty sure were panicking behind closed doors or to anyone that was listening besides me. It was the first time [my now wife] ever got really mad at me. She said, "You can go [to college] and your parents can afford to send you." She had three jobs to pay for her school. My parents were helping me and I had some loans. She was like, "Dude, I have to bust my ass to pay for college. Your parents are really helping you and you are not really taking advantage. You need to go back to school." I went back, stumbled a little at first, but here I was about to graduate. I was like, I need a job because I want to marry this woman and I want to start saving for a ring. So I said, what can I do? I'm majoring in English. I guess, maybe I can become a teacher.

Lucia credits Rocio for applying to colleges on his own. He provides an example of how he was the first in the family to go directly from high school to undergraduate, which created a lack of college-readiness and socialization. His parents were non-traditional students resulting in a experience for him devoid of a standard route or guidance. While in college, Rocio experienced stopping-out. Through kinship support from his wife, he was able to return and finish his

undergraduate degree. Rocio majored in English and graduated in five years. Due to his mom being a teacher, he was exposed to the career and a family friend suggested he become a teacher too.

You know my mom being a teacher, I remember hearing you know [looking and acknowledging his mother] when I was growing up and visiting her. “Oh, you should become a teacher. You are a big guy. You are from the Bronx. People will love you. You get a job anywhere in school.” And so my wife did some research and found like these two alternative certification programs for teachers, Teaching Fellows and Teach for America because my GPA crazy...Long story short, I got denied at first for Teach for America because I wanted to be an English teacher and they were trying to funnel people into Special Education, Math, and Science so some random throwaway advice I got from one of my mom's friends was put down Special Ed. I did that on the Teach for America application. It was June and I had been denied already and then I got an email saying, “You have been accepted, but only if you can do Special Education.” I needed a job, and I said, “Hell yeah, I'll go and do whatever.” ...[By participating in Teach for America] I ended up eventually going to get my master's...I sort of fell into teaching. Even though my mom is a teacher, I did not know that was my career path. I did not really think about that and here I am 10 years later and I love it.

Rocio describes how he became an educator. He expresses that after undergraduate, he did not have a strong enough GPA to apply to graduate programs, but his wife found alternative teaching programs he could participate in. He applied and was admitted into Teach for America. As a participant for Teach for America, he was assigned to teach in a New York City high school, and that is where he found his true passion for teaching. Teach for America offered the opportunity to attain a master's degree at a private liberal arts college which he took full advantage of.

The Baez family had varying paths into their respective four-year institutions. Lucia, as a first generation non-traditional college student, pursued higher education later in life as a mother. Due to her undergraduate experience, she had a “hands off approach” with Rocio's transition from high school to undergraduate because she lacked the knowledge of the application process, as she did not experience the same process. Rocio lacked college readiness and socialization, but had kinship support through his wife. His parents fully supported his endeavors and expressed

concern when he took time off from college, but he eventually returned and graduated. His pathway into graduate school was through Teach for America, and it is through this program that he found his social justice investment in the Latina/o community. Currently, Lucia is in her late 50's and is newly retired. She has a deep commitment to the Puerto Rican community, and supports her son in his career. Rocio is in his mid 30's and is a social justice high school educator. He is dedicated to improving the educational conditions of students of color in the New York public school system.

**Conclusion: Expanding and Further Developing Pedagogies of the Home for College-Educated Puerto Rican Families in Higher Education**

In this chapter, College-educated Puerto Rican family educational oral histories were presented to examine their undergraduate and graduate college experiences. In addressing the research questions:

3. How do Puerto Rican college-educated parents *impact* their college-educated children's college-related experiences?
4. How do Puerto Rican college-educated children *perceive the impact* of their college-educated parents on their college-related experiences?

As previously stated, the Puerto Rican college-educated parents and their college-educated children are in certain respects:

- a. like all...
- b. like some...
- c. like no other...

The four Puerto Rican parents in this study came of age between the 1960s and 1970s in the Midwest and East Coast of the United States. Due to Puerto Rico being a commonwealth of the United States, all of their parents were U.S. citizens. This allowed for their families to be migrants between the island and mainland. The majority of their parents had attained an

elementary or secondary education. Due to their parents' educational attainment and ability to migrate between the island and mainland, their schooling experiences varied. Three of the four parents experienced return migration where they started their schooling in the United States and returned to the island to continue their education. While on the island, the three parents attended private Catholic school versus on the mainland they attended public school. As they pursued higher education, all were considered first-generation and underrepresented college students. Due to this designation, they lacked knowledge of the college-going process. Two of the four parents attended a four-year institution later in their adult lives, and were considered non-traditional college students. One of the four parents attended an accredited four-year institution in the University of Puerto Rico system. All of them graduated with their baccalaureate degrees. Three of the four parents pursued graduate school and attained master's degrees. The parents' professions were based in education and business, and they are either still actively working or have retired.

The four Puerto Rican children came of age between the 1980s to 2000s in the Midwest and East Coast of the United States. All had at least one parent with a bachelor's degree attained at an accredited institution designated by the United States government. Two of the four children attended K-12 private Catholic school and the other two attended both public and private schools during their K-12 education. As previously mentioned in chapter 2, to date there is systematic lack of nomenclature in identifying students who have at least one college-educated parent within institutions of higher education. While all the children attended four-year institutions as traditional college students, they had diverse experiences. Two of the four are men of color who took longer to graduate due to being pushed out of college for academic or financial difficulties. One of the children attended a private liberal arts college, and the other

three attended public four-year institutions. Upon entering their respective four-year institutions of higher education, they were all designated as underrepresented minority students. All of the children attained a bachelor's degree and master's degree. Three of the four children are currently enrolled in doctoral programs and aspire to become tenure-track faculty in an institution of higher education. Only one of them is working full-time; he is a social justice high school educator.

### **Puerto Ricans Parent and Child undergraduate and graduate Educational Oral History**

#### **Codes**

The Puerto Rican parents display significant themes as first in their families to attend institutions of higher education. All were first generation college students, and two were non-traditional students exposing a variety of experience for their college-going processes. The Puerto Rican parents initiated a dialogue across generations to their children based on their own experiences. Their memories served as tactful tools to expose their children to the expectations of pursuing and attaining a baccalaureate degree in their childhoods. While three of the four parents attended graduate school, only one was able to fully delve into her experiences. Several reasons could have resulted in not being able to document these stories. For example, the other two parents that were unable to share participated in interviews with their child or spouse, which limited the time they were able to speak and recollect. Another potential contributors were the questions I asked as the researcher, which did not prompt specific inquiries around their graduate school experiences. Due to the nature of educational oral histories, the participants decided what they were willing to share and/or could remember at the time the interviews took place. Despite these hindrances, the one parent that was able to document her experiences with me divulged a powerful story. The Puerto Rican college-educated parents had a clear understanding of their

educational journeys. As a direct result, there were five thematic codes that emerged for their undergraduate and graduate college experiences. More importantly, in honoring their heterogeneity, one or several of these themes were addressed through the Puerto Rican college-educated parents' educational oral histories and are as follows:

#### **Parent undergraduate and graduate Thematic Codes**

| <b>13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> + Undergraduate Experiences</b>            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Culturally Relevant Peer Support                                              |
| Lack of College-Readiness                                                     |
| First-Generation College Student <i>and/or</i> Non-Traditional Student Status |
| <b>17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> + Graduate School Experiences</b>          |
| Scholarship Programs for Employee of the Department of Education              |
| Presences of Professors of Color and Validation                               |

Three of the Puerto Rican children were very transparent in sharing the trials and tribulations of their undergraduate trajectories with their parents. In only one case, this did not happen, but through this study, the facilitation and ability to be transparent took place for that parent/child dyad. At times, some stories of the Puerto Rican children never reached their parents or their parents were just discovering them through this educational oral history. The Puerto Rican children's college experiences were similar as they were not the first in their family to attend a four-year institution of higher education, but the interventions of support varied for each dyad. The Puerto Rican children were exposed to the college-going process, but remained unprepared when they attended their respective universities as underrepresented students. The following six themes emerged from one or several of their educational oral histories and are as follows:

### Child 13<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>+</sup> Thematic Codes

| 13 <sup>th</sup> -16 <sup>th</sup> + Undergraduate Experiences |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lack of College Readiness and Socialization                    |
| Culture Shock                                                  |
| Kinship Support                                                |

| 17 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> + Graduate School Experiences |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Access to Graduate School Through Teaching Programs              |
| Social Justice Investments in the Latina/o Community             |

The Puerto Rican children in this study were all exposed to graduate school through their parents, whether this was through direct observations of their parents attending graduate school or through conversations based on professional programs exposing the idea of graduate school. Three of the four Puerto Rican children had parents with master's degrees and had reached the equivalent educational level. One of the four surpassed her/his parent by attaining a master's degree. Two of the Puerto Rican children were able to pursue graduate school through participating in Teach for America, which partners with graduate schools across the United States to offer fiscal assistance for advanced degrees. Three of the four had surpassed the educational level of their parents by currently being enrolled in doctorate programs. All three have social justice investments in the Latina/o community and research agendas focused on equity and access.

Even though the Puerto Rican children encountered challenges in their undergraduate experiences, due to having a college-educated parent, they were able to access various sources of support not recognized by institutions of higher education. As in chapter 5, this chapter utilizes critical race theory (Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001), and guided the concept of pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001, 2010) to ensure that accounts of race, racism, and other forms of subjugation were recognized and

challenged. Pedagogies of the home<sup>23</sup> represent the unique navigational and cultural mechanisms taught within Chicana/o households that cultivate knowledge and allow Chicana/o college students to disrupt the hegemonic notions that their culture, traditions, and customs are inferior (Delgado Bernal, 1993). The concept of pedagogies of the home has been initially applied to the educational experiences of Puerto Ricans in the context of the United States (Castillo-Montoya & Torres-Guzman, 2012). Therefore, this study provides a unique opportunity to expand on this recent body of literature by examining Puerto Rican college-educated parents, and their college-educated children's "strategies of resistance that challenge the educational norms of higher education" (Delgado Bernal, 1993, p.635). Further, Sonia Nieto (2000), a prominent Puerto Rican educational scholar, articulates the need to build on family strengths as they have a positive impact on Puerto Rican student attitudes and achievement (Hidalgo, 2000)

As first generation *académicas puertorriqueñas* (female Puerto Rican academics), Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzman (2012) build upon and expand Delgado Bernal's original four themes of pedagogies of the home of bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to communities, and spiritualities.<sup>24</sup> They define the four themes while acknowledging nuances and add a fifth one as it applies to their Puerto Rican lived experience as:

1. *Bilingualism*: through the understanding of more than one language, facilitates the ability to conceptualize and frame ideas differently. For them the Spanish language is a tool to create nuances within and expand on existing theoretical terms in the dominant literature.
2. *Biculturalism*: the naming of two cultures through *charlas* allowing for the development of a sociopolitical consciousness. In turn, learning to dismantle and challenge erasure of communities of color.
3. *Commitment to Communities*: a commitment to oneself is an extension to the larger community. (Re)centering the commitment of self is to acknowledge the worry and sense of responsibility of commitments to the larger community. An individual cannot act for the collective without taking care of oneself first.
4. *Human Spiritualities*: the invoking of an internal growth of individual spirit through physical interactions with things such as objects, place, scents and sounds. Specifically,

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<sup>23</sup> Refer to chapter 2 for an in-depth description of Chicana feminism and pedagogies of the home.

<sup>24</sup> Refer to chapter 3 to see these themes clearly defined and outlined.

they share, “we could not avoid noting the sound of the *coquí* (a frog native to Puerto Rico) being a good-night melody that feeds our souls” (p.553)

5. *Lucha*: naming the colonial relationship of Puerto Rico and the United States from which Puerto Ricans draw so much of their identities. *Lucha* is the source of resistance against the ongoing colonialism of Puerto Rico.

Within my study, based on Delgado Bernal’s original themes and Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzman (2012) expanded themes, the Puerto Rican parents share similar sentiments and possess their own nuances. As first generation college students, the Puerto Rican parents had to create space and find their own sense of belonging in institutions of higher education, both as undergraduates and graduate students. These parents discussed their bilingualism and biculturalism as intersecting since all of them were born in the United States and raised in enclaves with high concentrations of Puerto Ricans. Three of the parents were migrant students who returned to the island after having studied in the United States, and returned to the mainland. These parents also identified as Puerto Rican and not with other terms such as Nuyorican or Boricua. They explained their experiences of migrating as the ability to reconnect to the Spanish language on the island, as it was not well received in the U.S. educational system. Their Spanish improved by having this experience and they remained bilingual throughout their lives. One parent who identified as Nuyorican did not have this experience and grappled with her bilingualism and biculturalism she states:

I wish I had more culture. My mom spoke excellent English. She spoke to us in English most of the time. It was my grandma that gave us whatever Spanish I did speak. My parents both spoke Spanish but they did not speak to us in Spanish [and] did not encourage [us to do so]! We were so comfortable in speaking English...I did not go to Puerto Rico till I was an adult, grown. So, as far as that I did not have enough guidance in cultural things.

For one parent the absence of the Spanish language was present, but this did not limit her desire to learn the language. Further, gender differences of biculturalism emerged, as the Puerto Rican

mothers were more prone to engage their sociopolitical consciousness, and speak to these experiences, whereas, the Puerto Rican fathers had limited sensibilities to this issue. All the Puerto Rican parents displayed commitments to communities, but the mothers were more transparent than the fathers regarding these experiences. The two Puerto Rican mothers worked in the New York educational system, which allowed them to engage with students and their parents' daily. They formed significant relationships as they fought for equity and access for Puerto Rican students, and named this in their educational oral histories several times. Whereas, one Puerto Rican father was not as conscious of his engagement with the Puerto Rican community, as a personal account for only Puerto Rican owned businesses in Illinois, he exemplified a commitment to his community. For the other Puerto Rican father, geographic location had a direct effect on his commitment to communities in regards to accessing Puerto Ricans. Due to living in a suburb of Southern California, he found himself engaged with the Mexican American, Salvadoran, and African Americans communities as he explains:

I am a manager at work. I have had conversations with employees that are minorities. Latinos or African Americans or what have you...I have explained to them that as Latinos we have to work twice as hard. I have explained that to them.

Three of the Puerto Rican parents exhibited human spiritualities, however, these were the same parents that were migrants and had exposure to private Catholic school on the island. The island cultivated a nurturing atmosphere in their educational experiences, which allowed them to develop as students. One mother reflects:

When we went to Puerto Rico my mom put me in a Catholic school. They [nuns] were very, very nurturing. Sometimes I hear people talk about the horrors of Catholic education and how mean nuns were. I am like, "My God." I was not there that long but that was not my experience. They just embraced us.

A common slogan from the Young Lords Party<sup>25</sup> is *Tengo Puerto Rico en mi Corazon* (I have Puerto Rico in my heart), consciously or unconsciously; all of the parents carried the spirit of what it means to be Puerto Rican in their hearts and within their households. One of the children states, “[My father] talks about the island and it is just a great place and all of his memories make me want to go and live there.” Unfortunately, none of the Puerto Rican parents in their educational oral histories identified or named *Lucha*.

Delgado Bernal (2010) and Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzman (2012), focus on the experiences of Latinas and a singular generation’s experiences. Chicana/Latina epistemologies offer alternative knowledge bases to produce and develop current educational theories, methods, and pedagogies. In this study, the four Puerto Rican families were mother/son and father/daughter dyads complicating how we intergenerationally understand pedagogies of the home while taking into account gender differences. The Puerto Rican families came from diverse backgrounds, vividly documenting the wide range of knowledge bases, skills, and teaching capacities that parents use with their children at home that enriched their children’s education. The Puerto Rican children provide particular insights on how Puerto Rican children of college-educated parents experience institutions of higher education and are as follows<sup>26</sup>:

1. *Sin Pelos en la Lengua*: a form of speaking to verbally express exactly what an individual is experiencing without hesitation or sieve.
2. *Ownership of Privileges*: the ability to acknowledge specific access or advantages due to having a college-educated parent, and problematizing privilege and access based on race and gender.
3. *Lucha as a form of Activism*: to enact resistance against the on-going colonialism of Puerto Rico within the Puerto Rican community through grassroots activism on the mainland through educational spaces (Castillo-Montoya & Torres-Guzman, 2014).

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<sup>25</sup> The Young Lords Party was a radical activist group emerging out of Chicago in the 1960s that served the Puerto Rican community.

<sup>26</sup> One of these themes was discussed in chapter 5, but also emerged in the Puerto Rican children narratives.

4. *Commitment to Communities*: learning the meaning of “*Tengo Puerto Rico en mi Corazon*” as a spirituality of the island while transforming and translating this from one generation to the next, engaging in social consciousness building.

This chapter strengthens our understanding of the personal and collective struggles of college-educated Puerto Rican families in the context of the United States. The educational oral histories paint struggles and triumphs over adversity but also recognize the intolerance of racial, cultural, and language differences still present as formidable barriers to Puerto Ricans from one generation to the next. The findings in this chapter move beyond deficit perspectives on achievement as they demonstrate Puerto Rican parents as active agents in enhancing their children’s success.

## Chapter 7

### ***Pláticas*<sup>27</sup> y *Charlas*<sup>28</sup> as Home Based Knowledges: College-Educated Chicana/o and Puerto Rican Family Educational Oral Histories**

#### **Conclusion**

You just don't see as much of that out West, he concluded, his fascination at the phenomenon betraying both admiration and perplexity. Together, we groped for explanations, recognizing that it was important to account for this notable divergence between two groups—Nyoricans and Chicanos—otherwise so compatible and constituent of a common “Latino” identity (Juan Flores, 1993)

In *Divided Border: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity*, Juan Flores creates a platform to discuss the multi-layered findings within this study, as there is an urgency to “account for notable divergences” between Puerto Rican and Chicana/o groups. Flores encourages scholars to research and document heterogeneity between Latina/o groups that are often studied as a homogenous group. Following a similar logic as Flores, in this dissertation, I examined college-educated Puerto Rican and Chicana/o families through a transformative convergent mixed-methods approach. A transformative convergent design has two distinct processes of methods and data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, with the integration of the two occurring in the findings. This constitutes my personal intervention in three fields: Higher Education, Chicana and Chicano Studies, and Puerto Rican Studies. Rather than engaging these fields independently, my work brings these fields into conversation, seeking to explain how each expands and contributes to the others. In this concluding chapter, these fields are in conversation to make methodological and theoretical contributions that move beyond deficit perspectives of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican families. Therefore, I discuss the implications this study provides to these fields, and explain future directions of this scholarship.

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<sup>27</sup> Spanish term for informal conversations in the Chicana/o community.

<sup>28</sup> Spanish term for informal conversations in the Puerto Rican community.

## **Contributions**

### Methodological

In Chapter 4, I provided a descriptive analysis of The Freshmen Survey 2008 and The College Senior Survey 2012 matched sample answering the quantitative question:

1. What are the differences between Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated parents (with at least one with a bachelor's degree) and their college-educated children's aspirations?

The results indicate that Chicana/o and Puerto Rican students have high aspirations as freshmen entering institutions of higher education regardless of their parental level of education. Four years later as graduating seniors, they had experienced various aspirational shifts. For example, while Chicana/o students had parents that were the least educated in the sample, they had higher aspirations than their Puerto Rican counterparts. Unfortunately, due to the conflation of race *and* ethnicity as variables and the overrepresentation of private institutions, I argued that this particular data was not generalizable to Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college students. As a result, I argue for a critical race transformative mixed methods approach, and put forth a methodological contribution for Higher Education researchers. This methodological contribution advances a critical race transformative convergent mixed method. Critical race theory integrated with transformative-mixed methods paradigm principles offers researchers a critical lens at all levels of the research process. Specifically, a Critical Race Transformative Convergent Mix Methods is a social justice advanced design that has two distinct processes of methods and data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, with the merging or integration of the two occurring in the results as a means of validation (Creswell, 2002; Mertens, 2005).

## Theoretical

In Chapter 5, I provided four critical race educational oral histories of college-educated Chicana/o families and addressed the following:

2. How do Chicana/o college-educated parents *impact* their college-educated children's college-related experiences?
3. How do Chicana/o college-educated children *perceive the impact* of their college-educated parents on their college-related experiences?

In analyzing the critical race educational oral histories with the tool of pedagogies of the home, the Chicana/o parents demonstrated similarities found in Delgado Bernal's (2010) original study. As described in Chapter 3, Delgado Bernal employed Chicana feminism and the concept of mestiza consciousness to explain majority Chicana first-generation college students possessing a consciousness that "straddles cultures, races, languages, nations sexualities, and spiritualities-this is living with ambivalence while balancing opposing powers" (Delgado Bernal, 2001, p.626). For Chicana feminists, this state of ambivalence is considered a strength, which is utilized to understand the multiple realities that Chicana/os face as they experience oppression. Delgado Bernal (2001; 2010) identifies four themes of pedagogies of the home as bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to communities, and spiritualities<sup>29</sup>.

Due to the Chicana/o parents in this study being first-generation college students, the aforementioned themes profoundly resonated with their experiences. All the parents were bilingual regardless of whether or not they attended schools that enforced English language-only policies, and they adapted quickly in navigating their educational institutions. The Chicana/o parents were very well grounded in their biculturalism as the majority of the parents grew up in neighborhoods with high concentrations of Mexican and Mexican American residents. In their

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<sup>29</sup> Refer to Chapter 3 to see these themes clearly defined and outlined.

educational trajectories, they became aware of what was culturally acceptable in schooling environments, and what was cultivated in the home remained an outside source of support. All of the Chicana/o parents possessed personal commitments to the communities they came from as they witnessed and/or encountered inequities in their lives. They knew that securing an education was packaged with a duty to pay it forward. Two of the Chicana/o parents had an explicit investment in their spiritualities as they were deeply influenced by Catholicism, which influenced their pursuit of social justice.

While the Chicana/o parents demonstrated similarities found in Delgado Bernal's original study, pedagogies of the home, these findings did manifest differently. For example, Delgado Bernal originally only studied Chicanas, but I did have one father who participated. In fact, he was very aware of his male privilege and emphasized repeatedly that in regards to his daughter, he did not want to place societal expectations of what a Chicana should be. This is an example of how Chicana/o fathers are active participants in their daughters' lives, and this is increasingly important as recent scholarship emerging out of Chicana feminism analyzes the assets within the Chicana/o household paying particular attention to mother/daughter relationships (Elenes, Gonzales, Delgado Bernal, Villenas, 2001). Unfortunately, the Chicano father/daughter relationship has yet to become the foci of conversation. In examining the Chicano father/daughter relationship, it is possible to dismantle patriarchy as a collective entity that informs educational research and practice of how these relationships offer emotional and physical survival of Chicana/o students.

Further, due to the Chicana/o parents having at least a bachelor's degree granted in the United States, they were able to transmit messages about and detail the privileges of institutions of higher education to their children early on. Therefore, pedagogies of the home for the Chicana

college-educated children with a college-educated parent were different from those of Chicana first-generation college students in institutions of higher education and are as follows:

5. *Relearning and Reclaiming of Language*: an individual's pursuit as an English dominant speaker to recover the Spanish language, and educate others as to why the loss of language occurred in their educational trajectories.
6. *Ownership of Privileges*: the ability to acknowledge specific access or advantages due to having a college-educated parent, and problematizing privilege and access based on race and gender.
7. *Acts of Departure*: an individual's ability to embrace the contradictions of leaving home despite societal expectations of women of color and the willingness to challenge these notions.
8. *Rendering a Collective commitment to Communities*: cultivating and learning, from one generation to the next, the importance of social justice praxis in communities of color, and embarking *en la lucha* as a collective.

Delgado Bernal (2001; 2010) makes an imperative point in asserting the significance of pedagogies of the home in stating, "understanding these strategies will allow us to develop educational policy and practice the values and builds on household knowledge in order to enhance Chicana academic success and college participation" (624). These findings expose how household knowledge from one succeeding<sup>30</sup> generation to the next generation can enhance academic success and college participation for not just Chicana/os or Latina/os, but students of color.

In Chapter 6, I provided four critical race educational oral histories of college-educated Puerto Rican families and addressed the following:

4. How do Puerto Rican college-educated parents **impact** their college-educated children's college-related experiences?
5. How do Puerto Rican college-educated children **perceive the impact** of their college-educated parents on their college-related experiences?

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<sup>30</sup> How success is defined has been a point of contention for communities of color. However, in terms of this study, I define success in an anti-deficit perspective by centering on academic achievements of Puerto Rican students that are often overlooked and dismissed by institutions of higher education.

My findings illuminate that the concept of pedagogies of the home has only recently begun to be applied to the educational experiences of Puerto Ricans in the context of the United States (Castillo-Montoya & Torres-Guzman, 2012). Within my study, based on Delgado Bernal's original themes and Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzman (2012) expanded themes, the Puerto Rican parents shared similar sentiments, and had their own nuanced theoretical contributions to pedagogies of the home. They define the four themes while acknowledging nuances and add a fifth one as it applies to their Puerto Rican lived experience as:

6. *Bilingualism*: through the understanding of more than one language, facilitates the ability to conceptualize and frame ideas differently. For them the Spanish language is a tool to create nuances within and expand on existing theoretical terms in the dominant literature.
7. *Biculturalism*: the naming of two cultures through *charlas* allowing for the development of a sociopolitical consciousness. In turn, learning to dismantle and challenge erasure of communities of color.
8. *Commitment to Communities*: a commitment to oneself is an extension to the larger community. (Re)centering the commitment of self is to acknowledge the worry and sense of responsibility of commitments to the larger community. An individual cannot act for the collective without taking care of oneself first.
9. *Human Spiritualities*: the invoking of an internal growth of individual spirit through physical interactions with things such as objects, place, scents and sounds. Specifically, they share, "we could not avoid noting the sound of the *coquí* (a frog native to Puerto Rico) being a good-night melody that feeds our souls" (p.553)
10. *Lucha*: naming the colonial relationship of Puerto Rico and the United States from which Puerto Ricans draw so much of their identities. *Lucha* is the source of resistance against the ongoing colonialism of Puerto Rico.

As first generation college students, the Puerto Rican parents had to create space and find their own sense of belonging in institutions of higher education, both as undergraduates and graduate students. These parents discussed their bilingualism and biculturalism as intersecting since all of them were born in the United States and raised in enclaves with high concentrations of Puerto Ricans. Three of the parents were migrant students who returned to the island after having studied in the United States, and returned to the mainland. These parents also identified as Puerto Rican and not with other terms such as Nuyorican or Boricua. They explained their

experiences of migrating as the ability to reconnect to the Spanish language on the island, as it was not well received in the U.S. educational system. Their Spanish improved by having this experience and they remained bilingual throughout their lives. For one parent the absence of the Spanish language was present, but this did not limit her desire to learn the language.

Further, gender differences of biculturalism emerged, as the Puerto Rican mothers were more prone to engage their sociopolitical consciousness, and speak to these experiences, whereas, the Puerto Rican fathers had limited sensibilities to this issue. All the Puerto Rican parents displayed commitments to communities, but the mothers were more transparent than the fathers regarding these experiences. The two Puerto Rican mothers worked in the New York educational system, which allowed them to engage with students and their parents daily. They formed significant relationships as they fought for equity and access for Puerto Rican students, and named this in their educational oral histories several times. Whereas, one Puerto Rican father was not as conscious of his engagement with the Puerto Rican community, as a personal account for only Puerto Rican owned businesses in Illinois, he exemplified a commitment to his community. For the other Puerto Rican father, geographic location had a direct effect on his commitment to communities in regards to accessing Puerto Ricans. Due to living in a suburb of Southern California, he found himself engaged with the Mexican American, Salvadoran, and African Americans communities. Three of the Puerto Rican parents exhibited human spiritualities, however, these were the same parents that were migrants and had exposure to private Catholic school on the island. The island cultivated a nurturing atmosphere in their educational experiences, which allowed them to develop as students. Unfortunately, none of the Puerto Rican parents in their educational oral histories identified or named *Lucha*.

Delgado Bernal (2010) and Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzman (2012), focus on the experiences of Latinas and a singular generation's experiences. Chicana/Latina epistemologies offer alternative knowledge bases to produce and develop current educational theories, methods, and pedagogies. In this study, the four Puerto Rican families were mother/son and father/daughter dyads complicating how we intergenerationally understand pedagogies of the home while taking into account gender differences. The Puerto Rican families came from diverse backgrounds, vividly documenting the wide range of knowledge bases, skills, and teaching capacities that parents use with their children at home that enriched their children's education. The Puerto Rican children provide particular insights on how Puerto Rican children of college-educated parents experience institutions of higher education and are as follows<sup>31</sup>:

5. *Sin Pelos en la Lengua*: a form of speaking to verbally express exactly what an individual is experiencing without hesitation or sieve.
6. *Ownership of Privileges*: the ability to acknowledge specific access or advantages due to having a college-educated parent, and problematizing privilege and access based on race and gender.
7. *Lucha as a form of Activism*: to enact resistance against the on-going colonialism of Puerto Rico within the Puerto Rican community through grassroots activism on the mainland through educational spaces (Castillo-Montoya & Torres-Guzman, 2014).
8. *Commitment to Communities*: learning the meaning of "*Tengo Puerto Rico en mi Corazon*" as a spirituality of the island while transforming and translating this from one generation to the next, engaging in social consciousness building.

This chapter strengthens our understanding of the personal and collective struggles of college-educated Puerto Rican families in the context of the United States. The educational oral histories paint struggles and triumphs over adversity but also recognize the intolerance of racial, cultural, and language differences still present as formidable barriers to Puerto Ricans from one generation to the next.

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<sup>31</sup> One of these themes was discussed in chapter 5, but also emerged in the Puerto Rican children narratives.

### **Implications and Future Directions**

This study has implications for the fields of Higher Education, Chicana and Chicano Studies, and Puerto Rican Studies. This final section provides implications for policy makers and educational researchers to better address what is successful to enroll, retain, educate, and graduate Chicana/o and Puerto Rican students of college-educated parents. Asking Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated families what assisted them in their persistence is vital to shift deficit perspectives to an asset-based approach (Harper, 2012).

#### **Policy Makers**

Educational policy and institutions of higher education in the United States should be mindful of how they operationalize students that are non-first generation college students as it affects their retention, financial aid, and programming. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, educational researchers seem to lack nomenclative clarity regarding those individuals with parents who have obtained a post-secondary degree in the United States. For example, various scholars presently utilize terminology such as “traditional college student” (Terenzini et al., 1994), “second-generation college student” (Pike & Kuh, 2005), “continuing college student” (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005), and “non-first generation college student” (Ramos Sanchez & Nichols, 2007) somewhat interchangeably to define college students who have at least one parent who graduated from and/or attended a four-year institution. Identifying a common term for this population will better assist in allocating resources to these students in navigating their respective institutions. Once a common term is identified it will be important to also disaggregate students who have college-educated parents by racial and/or ethnic group. In this study the Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated children identified that, due to the intersections of their race, gender, and class, they experienced marginalization. They often

commented that it did not matter if their parents had a college degree because they encountered hostile racial college climates, microaggressions, and lack of culturally relevant curriculums and knowledge of college-readiness.

Moreover, higher education scholars (Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996) provide evidence that retention programs work well for first-generation college students of color. I encourage post-secondary institutions to be cautious in only granting access to students who are identified as first generation college student *and* from a minority group in participating in retention groups only. As demonstrated in this study, despite Chicana/o and Puerto Rican children having a college-educated parent, they still encounter formidable barriers in their college experiences. Retention programs provide academic, peer, and mentoring support in assisting students who are underrepresented in universities and college in succeeding. Currently there are a few programs that do not exclude Chicana/o and Puerto Rican students based on not being a first-generation college student such as the Federal Trio Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program. The McNair program prepares undergraduate students who are identified as first generation *and/or* from an underrepresented group to complete their undergraduate requirements. Further, the program encourages participants to enroll in graduate programs to increase the attainment of PhD degrees among marginalized groups. Policymakers and institutions of higher education would benefit greatly in developing similar programs earlier on in the educational trajectories for Chicana/o and Puerto Ricans with college-educated parents.

#### Educational Researchers

In this study by examining a matched sample of a higher education data set, I argue that post-secondary researchers should also take into consideration how they conduct national surveys. I found that educational researchers typically collapse Chicana/o and Puerto Rican

(along with other Latino/a) populations into one “Hispanic” category and report on data regarding our diverse experiences as though we are one racially and ethnically homogenous group. This is problematic as the histories of the Chicana/o and Puerto Ricans in the context of the United States vary in social, economic, and educational mobility. Surveys dedicated to disaggregating Latina/o groups to the specific racial and ethnic subgroups will present vast findings among these populations. An example of this is found in the 1979 Chicano Survey, which compiled a statistically representative and comprehensive body of empirical information about the social, economic, and psychological status of Chicana/os (Arce, 1981). In light of the 1979 Chicano Survey, I would recommend another survey focusing on Puerto Ricans, as of today there has yet to be a national survey like this. For Puerto Ricans their experiences are similar yet very different than Chicana/os, they are U.S. citizens allowing them to migrate from the mainland to the island, and encounter a different racialization process. In examining Chicana/o and Puerto Rican populations through quantitative research will allow for a national examination of social, economic, and educational patterns, and researchers can identify challenges and sources of support for both groups.

The implications for Chicana and Chicano Studies and Puerto Rican Studies are the creation and reformulating of new knowledges about the diversity among and between both these communities. As seen in Chapter 2, the racialization process of Latina/os in the United States is complicated and needs to be re-articled. European-American settler-colonist leveraged the law diabolically and effectively to legitimize artificial racial formations, construct inequitable resource allocations by race, and ferment conflict amongst Latina/os, Native American, and African Americans (Omi & Winant, 1994). Dating back to the 1800s, the fact that many Latina/os sought and/or embraced the legal designation as “white” had less to do with a genuine

endorsement of a white racial *identity* and more to do with their acknowledgement of the importance of a white racial *positionality* in a society that determined citizenship and granted rights through a rigid, racially hierarchal system. In producing more studies on the racialization process of Chicana/o and Puerto Ricans the heterogeneity of knowledge that exists can be applied to research to improve the material conditions of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican communities.

### *Pláticas y Charlas*

In attesting to the complexities this study encapsulates, I refer to these contributions and implications between Chicana/o and Puerto Ricans as *pláticas y charlas*. As described by Juan Flores in the epigraph, Chicana/o and Puerto Ricans in the United States share a compatible and constituency of a common “Latino” identity. While Spanish is the official language of Latina/os in the United States, the ways in which they use language among them fluctuates. The Chicana/o community uses *pláticas* as a way to name informal conversations, whereas, Puerto Ricans use *charlas*. It is the perfect juxtaposition of what these findings and contributions capture, as there are similarities and differences of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated families.

There are notable similarities as the quantitative data reflects that Chicana/o and Puerto Rican students hold high aspirations regardless of parent educational level. Through qualitative findings, we are able to distinguish the difference as to *why* for both Chicana/o and Puerto Ricans parents and their children. The Chicana/o and Puerto Rican parents were all first-generation college students. Their respective educational oral histories demonstrated numerous paths to and through four-year institutions as transfer, traditional, or non-traditional students. Based on their experiences, they transmitted knowledge to their children, in turn, exemplifying intergenerational pedagogies of the home. The Chicana/o and Puerto Rican children were not

considered first-generation college students, and experienced their own sets of trial and tribulations.

While my findings provide unique insights, key-limiting factors should be acknowledged. Quantitatively, as I began to understand the data at hand and the limitations in using it, I could have requested another matched sample and/or work with the institute to collect primary data. Qualitatively, the Chicana/o children were all female and identified as heterosexual, thus limiting our understanding of other marginalized groups within this subpopulation. The Puerto Rican children all identified as heterosexual, which may also limit our understanding of heterogeneity among this subpopulation. Despite these limitations, this study presented *pláticas y charlas* as home based knowledges of college-educated Chicana/o and Puerto Rican family educational oral histories.

## Appendix A Recruitment Flyer

**Are you a Puerto Rican or Chicana/o college graduate with a parent(s) with a bachelor's degree granted in the United States?**

**Are you willing to share your experiences with the inclusion of your parent (s) perspectives?**

This study will examine how potential instances of marginalization may or may not deter the educational achievement, attainment, and outcomes of Puerto Rican and Chicana/o children who have attained a bachelor's degree and who have at least one parent with a four-year college degree granted in the United States. This study aims to complicate educational discourse concerning the social and educational status of Latina/os, moving it away from a narrative of historical failure to one of multi-generational Puerto Rican and Chicana/o student achievement. Research will be conducted through one-on-one interviews with the principal investigator during the year of 2015-2016. Participation will take between one or two hours, on a one-time-basis.

### **Participation Criteria:**

1. Self-identified Puerto Rican and/or Chicana/o who have attained a bachelors in the United States and at least one parent with a bachelors degree attained in the United States.
2. Participants should be between ages of 21-40 and have parent (s) alive and willing to participate.
3. Participants should be from California, Chicago, or New York City **AND** currently live in the same state as their parent(s).
4. Participants can be either male or female.
5. Participants and their parents should be proficient in the English language.

Location of the interview will be contingent on the participant's preferences.

To learn more about this research, contact Nichole M. Garcia, M.A. at 801-867-5467 or [nmgarcia15@ucla.edu](mailto:nmgarcia15@ucla.edu). Protocol ID: IRB#15-001362

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## **Appendix B Screening Email**

Name:

Age:

Educational Degree (s) and University (ies) attended:

Parent (s) Name:

Age:

Educational Degree (s) and University (ies) attended:

Is at least one of your parent (s) willing to partake in an individual interview: Yes or No

Best Available Dates to conduct interviews for you and your parent (s) in your respective location:

Additional Comments:

**Appendix C**  
**Parent Protocol**

**PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

Hello, my name is Nichole Garcia. Thank you for participating in a study focuses on self-identified Puerto Rican and Chicana/o who have attained a bachelor's in the United States and at least one parent with a bachelor's degree attained in the United States. I will be asking a series of questions about your education and how your experiences influenced your child's educational trajectory. Your responses will be confidential. The interview may last about 60 to 90 minutes. May I record the interview?

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewee:

Please state your whole name.

**Demographics**

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your background?
2. Where were you born?
3. How old are you?
4. Where do you currently reside?

**Parental Education**

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your parents' background?
2. Where were they born?
3. What are their ages?
4. What do they do for work?
5. Did your parents advise you to pursue higher education? If so, what kind of recommendations did they make?

**Educational Trajectory**

1. Can you please describe your educational trajectory and critical moments within this experience?
2. Did you ever experience barriers due to your race, gender, class and/or sexual orientation within your educational experiences?
  - a. If so, how did you respond to these experiences?
  - b. If so, what lessons did you learn from these experiences?

**Child information**

1. Can you describe your child? What kind of child is he or she?
2. What do you enjoy most about your child?

3. What kind of adult did you want your child to grow up to be? What sorts of qualities did you want your child to possess, as he/she grew older?
4. What are your goals as a parent?
5. What are your worries as a parent?

#### **Educational aspirations/expectations of child**

1. How much influence do you feel parents have in shaping a child's educational aspirations?
2. How have lessons you taught within your household influenced your child's educational aspirations?
3. What type of expectations did you set upon your child in regards to educational attainment?

#### **Racial/Ethnic Identity shaping of Child**

1. What has it been like raising a Puerto Rican or Chicana/o boy or girl?
2. What challenges have you faced?
3. Do you think that Puerto Rican or Chicana/o parents face particular challenges raising their children that other groups may not face?
  - a. Have you faced any of these challenges?
  - b. Do you feel the challenges that you face are different from those your parents faced?
4. In what ways do you attempt to protect your child from racism or discrimination?
5. How often do you and your spouse find yourself talking to your child about race, racism, or about being Puerto Rican or Chicana/o?
  - a. Can you give me some examples of what you might talk about?
6. What kind of stories do you tell your children about what it means to be Puerto Rican or Chicana/o—either about you, other family members, or well-known Puerto Ricans or Chicana/o? (Probe for personal stories about self, ancestors, friends.)
  - a. Did you educate your child about Puerto Rican or Chicana/o history or encourage them to learn about the history?
  - b. Does your child ever tell you stories about experiences he/she has had related to race? Can you give me some examples?
7. What is your understanding of your child's current level (i.e., high/low, shallow/deep) of racial awareness? How does the child feel about this or what does it mean for him/her?
  - a. Does your child ask questions about race?
  - b. Are things any different for you now that your child is in an adult as they progressed through school?

**Appendix D**  
**Student Protocol**

**STUDENT PROTOCOL**

Hello, my name is Nichole Garcia. Thank you for participating in a study focuses on self-identified Puerto Rican and Chicana/o who have attained a bachelor's in the United States and at least one parent with a bachelor's degree attained in the United States. I will be asking a series of questions about your education and how your experiences were influenced by your parents educational trajectory. Your responses will be confidential. The interview may last about 60 to 90 minutes. May I record the interview?

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewee:

Please state your whole name.

**Demographics**

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your background?
2. Where were you born?
3. How old are you?
4. Where do you currently reside?

**Parental Education**

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your parents' background?
2. Where were they born?
3. What are their ages?
4. What do they do for work?
5. Did your parents advise you to pursue higher education? If so, what kind of recommendations did they make?

**Educational Trajectory**

3. Can you please describe your educational trajectory and critical moments within this experience?
  - a. Where did you attend elementary, high school, undergraduate/graduate school?
  - b. Did you have an influential teachers or mentors?
  - c. How were your interactions with your peers?
  - d. What kind of advice did your parents share with you about your education?
4. Did you ever experiences barriers due to your race, gender, class and/or sexual orientation within your educational experiences?

### **Aspirations/Expectations**

4. How much influence do you feel your parents had in shaping your educational aspirations?
5. How have lessons you were taught within your household influenced your educational aspirations?
6. What types of expectations were upon you as a child in regards to educational attainment?

### **Racial/Ethnic Identity**

8. What has it been like raised as a Puerto Rican or Chicana/o boy or girl?
9. What challenges have you faced?
10. Do you think that Puerto Rican or Chicana/o parents face particular challenges raising their children that other groups may not face?
  - a. Do you feel the challenges that you may face are different from those your parents faced?
11. In what ways did your parents attempt to protect you from racism or discrimination?
12. How often do you remember as a child and now adult about race, racism, or about being Puerto Rican or Chicana/o?
  - a. Can you give me some examples of what you might talk about?
13. What kind of stories were you told about what it means to be Puerto Rican or Chicana/o—either about you, other family members, or well-known Puerto Ricans or Chicana/o? (Probe for personal stories about self, ancestors, friends.)
14. What is your understanding of your current level (i.e., high/low, shallow/deep) of racial awareness? What does this mean for you?

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