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# Latino Men and their Fathers: Exploring How Community Cultural Wealth Influences their Community College Success

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## **Keywords**

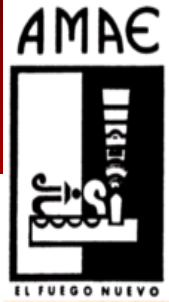
Latino men, fathers, educational success, community cultural wealth, persistence, community college

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**Latino Men and their Fathers: Exploring How Community Cultural Wealth  
Influences their Community College Success**

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**Abstract**

Academic scholarship has demonstrated the importance of father engagement in fostering early educational success of their children, but little exploration in this area has focused on the role that fathers play in the college success of their Latino male sons. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the role of fathers in the educational success of Latino men attending community colleges. Using community cultural wealth as a lens for this study, the experiences of 130 Latino men at community colleges in Texas were highlighted. Results demonstrated how fathers provided support, *consejos* (advice), and encouragement to their sons. Nonetheless, fathers also expected their sons to work and contribute to the family finances. These complications influenced the way in which Latino men viewed the college-going process and interacted with their fathers.

*Keywords:* Latino men, fathers, educational success, community cultural wealth, persistence, community college

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## Introduction

The role of family has been positively linked to increased levels of academic achievement, school attendance, positive perceptions of school, college aspirations, and overall sense of well-being (Holcomb-McCoy, 2010). Studies on college persistence indicate positive family involvement can increase the likelihood of enrollment and persistence for Latina/o students (Auerbach, 2004; Bourdieu, 1986; Gándara, 1995; Tierney, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Research on Latina/o parental involvement shows “parental support and encouragement is one of the most important—if not *the most* important—indicator of students’ educational aspirations” (Fann, Olivares-Ureuta, De La Pena, & Pulido, 2011, p. 75). For Latina/os, family is instrumental in instilling values such as resilience, persistence, and hard work—values that are deeply rooted in cultural identity and passed on from generation to generation (Kiyama, 2010). In fact, for many Latina/o students, *familismo*, or a sense of family unity and connectedness, is a central component of their lives, deeply influencing their decision-making process (Ovink, 2017; Ovink, Rios-Aguilar, & Deil-Amen, 2012).

Much of the extant research devoted to Latina/o families centers on the role of mothers as chief arbiter of all educational endeavors within the family while the role of fathers, particularly at the higher education level, is rarely addressed (Moreno & Lopez, 1999; Sáenz, García-Louis, Mercédez, & Rodríguez, forthcoming; Terriquez, 2013). Understanding how Latino fathers engage in their children’s education is important given their unique influence in the home. Studies indicate fathers—of any race—who are actively involved in their children’s education tend to positively influence their academic achievement, school attendance, grades, and foster a college-going habitus (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Jeynes, 2007; Terriquez, 2013). Although scholarship focused on the specific role Latino fathers play in the educational pathways of their children is scant, Quiñones and Marquez Kiyama (2014) underscore how at the K-12 level, Latino fathers cultivate educational success as a family endeavor, critique the dominant parent-school-district dynamics, and acknowledge their critical role as fathers resisting racism and invisibility in schools. Research is still needed to understand how these elements might continue on to influence a Latino man’s college-going process.

Community colleges continue to serve as the most important entry point for Latina/o students pursuing higher education (Fry, 2011). Latina/os have made significant strides in enrollment and graduation rates, yet Latino men continue to be underrepresented within higher

education, making up just 6% of the total undergraduate population (*Excelencia in Education*, 2015). Although scholarship concerning Latino men in community colleges is growing in terms of addressing masculinities, peers, faculty, and other issues (see Rodriguez, Massey, & Sáenz, 2016; Sáenz, Bukoski, Lu, & Rodriguez, 2013; Sáenz, Mayo, Miller, & Rodriguez, 2015), fewer studies have focused on the role fathers play in the community college educational experiences of their sons. Given the transformative nature of the community college experience and meaning making that takes place during this transition, it is imperative that practitioners and scholars understand how Latino men use cultural community wealth from their fathers to navigate their community college experiences.

Using Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework, this study explored the influence that fathers have on the educational experiences of Latino men attending community college. Two research questions framing this study were:

- 1) How do community college Latino men perceive the influence of their fathers in their educational pursuits?
- 2) What forms of community cultural wealth passed down from their fathers do Latino males use to navigate their community college experience?

### **Background**

Early research on Latina/o families was largely characterized by a deficit perspective, accusing Latina/o parents of being uninvolved and unengaged (Ada, 1997; Valdes, 1996; Valencia & Black, 2002). Recent studies have refuted these claims, showing Latina/o families are involved in both academic (e.g. preparation, accountability) and nonacademic ways (e.g. *consejos*/advice, *educación*/manners/values) (Quiñones & Marquez Kiyama, 2014; Yosso, 2005; Zarate, 2007). Teaching children to have *respeto*, (respect for their parents and for others regardless of age or gender), is one of the most salient cultural values (Calzada, Fernandez, & Cortes, 2010). Demonstrating *respeto* in this case, may show the role of the father as someone who makes sacrifices, works hard, and provides an example for his son (Valdes, 1996). Latino fathers value their role as teachers or mentors and thus teach their children *respeto*; most feel they are egalitarian with high aspirations for their children (Cabrera & Bradley, 2012). Through *consejos*, or advice, from their fathers, young men are often taught about the role of men and the importance of hard work (Valdes, 1996).

Latina/o family members believe parental involvement and moral guidance shape educational experiences and behavioral expectations of their children (Zarate, 2007). Parents, in particular, play a critical role in creating a college-going culture by shaping attitudes towards school and decisions about college attendance early on in the lives of Latino males (Sánchez et al, 2010; Gonzalez, Stoner, & Jovel, 2003; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey & Sander, 1995). Delgado-Gaitan (1994) claims “involving Latino parents is an ongoing process by continuously assessing and revising the parent involvement program” (p. xii). Ultimately, this leads to engaging the entire family in the educational endeavors of the children. Latina/o parents are no longer asking themselves “whether [their children] *should* go to college...[but rather] *which* college they will attend” (Tierney, 1999, p. 83).

Families may socialize their children in gendered ways connecting *familismo* and traditional, patriarchal values (Ovink, 2017). An understanding of what it means to be a man, including proper behavior for men, may be reinforced by their families (Ovink, 2017). Historically, Latino fathers have been viewed as exhibiting *machismo* and inciting fear into their children (Mirandé, 1997). Recent studies demonstrate how Latino fathers rely greatly on *familismo* which is characterized by family unity and reciprocity manifesting itself in purposefully spending quality time with their children (Terriquez, 2013; Cabrera, Cook, McFadden, & Bradley, 2012).

Most of the aforementioned studies center around the K-12 educational experiences of Latino fathers but few highlight how they remain engaged in their children’s post-secondary educational endeavors. Within the community college context, the relationships between Latino men and their parents is emerging (see Sáenz, Bukoski, Lu, & Rodriguez, 2013; Sáenz, García-Louis, Mercédez, & Rodriguez, in press; Vasquez Urias, 2014), but none provide an in-depth examination of how Latino men see the role of their fathers in their higher education pathway. Furthermore, numerous past studies have employed deficit framing, rather than anti-deficit or value-added framing to address the educational experiences of Latino males. This study seeks to address the gap in the literature by utilizing an anti-deficit approach in order to understand the influence of fathers on their community college Latino male sons’ educational experiences through the voice of Latino males enrolled in Texan community colleges.

## Theoretical Framework

This study utilized Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework to explore how Latino men in community colleges see the role of their fathers in their higher education journey. Contrasting Bourdieu's' (1986) traditional theory of social capital, which has often been cited for its deficit thinking (Valdez & Lugg, 2010), Yosso's (2005) theoretical framework applies Latina/o critical race (LatCrit) theory to establish the concept of community cultural wealth where students of color have various funds of knowledge and are creators of knowledge (Valdez & Lugg, 2010). Community cultural wealth consists of six distinct forms of capital: *familial, linguistic, aspirational, social, navigational, and resistant capital*. These varied forms of capital build upon each other and are interconnected. For the purposes of this study, familial, aspirational, and resistant forms of capital were explored in depth given their noted importance.

Familial capital is strongly linked to *familismo*, which is characterized by family unity and sense of connectedness to the family unit (Ovink, 2017; Yosso, 2005). Latino parents have a strong sense of responsibility to give advice or *consejos* to their children along with the need to be actively "involved in their children's lives and provid[e] moral guidance" to their children (Zarate, 2007, p. 9). Aspirational capital is the ability to hold onto hope in the face of adversity (Yosso, 2005). These aspirations are often "developed within the social or familial context" (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). As a result of their experiences, Latina/o parents play a significant role in passing on aspirational capital to their children. Resistant capital relates to the way in which Latino men may leverage their higher education experiences to produce more equitable outcomes for their communities. This form of capital, which often derives from parents and other community members, inspires students to engage in social justice. The dynamic interplay and reliance on the noted forms of capital lead to an increased sense of autonomy on campus.

## Methods

This qualitative study conducted 23 focus groups with 130 Latino men at seven Texas community colleges to understand how fathers influenced the educational experiences of Latino men as expressed by community college Latino male students. Utilizing phenomenology, this study centered on the personal and subjective experiences of the students in the study and how community college Latino male students personally understood and made sense of their experiences with their fathers. A phenomenological approach was selected in order to address



the nature of father-son relationships for Latino men in community colleges and distill individual student experiences to essential concepts or ideas. This approach allowed the researchers to understand the essence of these experiences and consider how participants made sense of these experiences (Creswell, 2013). Although traditionally associated with interviewing, scholars have recently argued for the use of the focus group method within interpretive phenomenological analysis (Palmer, Larkin, de Visser, & Fadden, 2010; Rodriguez et al., 2017; Sáenz et al., 2013; Sáenz et al., 2015).

All participants met the following criteria: (a) identified as Latino men and (b) were enrolled either part- or full-time at one of the community college research sites. In terms of demographics, students mostly came from homes where fathers had educational backgrounds of grammar school or less (34%) or had completed some or all of high school (36%) and mothers who had educational backgrounds of grammar school or less (39%) or had completed some or all of high school (39%). For the majority of participants, English was their first language and more than half of participants came from homes with total incomes less than \$40,000 per year (65%). The majority of participants had grade point averages above 3.0 (72%). More than half of participants were working part- or full-time while going to school (59%) (see Table I for more information).

Table I

*Participant Background Information*

<b>Background</b>	<b>Participant Information</b>
Father Education Level	Graduate Degree – 5% Some Graduate School – 1% College Degree – 9% Some College – 15% High School Diploma – 19% Some High School – 17% Grammar School or Less – 34%

Mother Education Level	Graduate Degree – 6% Some Graduate School – 0% College Degree – 16% Some College – 17% High School Diploma – 31% Some High School – 8% Grammar School or Less – 39%
English as First Language	Yes – 61% No – 39%
Family Income Level	Up to \$40,000K – 65% \$40,001-\$99,999 – 30% \$100,000 and Above – 3%
Grade Point Average	Below 2.5 – 14% 2.51-2.99 – 13% 3.00-3.5 – 34% 3.51-4.0 – 38%
Work Status	Full-time – 13% Part-time – 46% Unemployed – 40%

The study utilized existing professional relationships with research site administrators to recruit participants via institutional listservs. Led by research team members, focus groups utilized a protocol to center the conversation around how Latino males perceived the role of their fathers in their higher education pathway. Each group included 4-8 participants, lasted around one hour, and was digitally recorded and later transcribed by the research team. The researchers then identified significant statements which highlighted individual experiences of the phenomenon. Once the significant statements were identified, the researchers created a list of these experiences, taking care to assign equal worth to all statements. From there, significant statements were then grouped into larger “meaning units” or themes (Creswell, 2013, p. 193). The meaning units centered around Latino male’s perceptions of their father’s involvement in

their higher education pathway. This process allowed the researchers to identify the meaningful experiences of the research participants and discover emerging themes within the data set.

### **Trustworthiness and Research Positionalities**

To ensure trustworthiness of the study, team members reviewed transcripts, exchanged ideas on coding and analysis, and engaged in memoing activities. Reading through the collected information allowed the researchers not only to review the collected data but also allowed the researchers to begin understanding participant experiences in more detail and begin drawing connections between the data. Each researcher wrote analytical memos throughout their research and analysis activities. Memoing allowed the researchers to capture initial perspectives on the data as well as pose possible patterns or additional questions (Saldaña, 2009).

Furthermore, each of the four research team members utilized memos to explore their positionalities as related to the study. The research team consisted of the principal investigator (PI) who identifies as a Latino man and three research team members who each identify as Latina women. Team members come from a variety of personal and professional backgrounds, including experiences in K-12, community college, and university settings. Each of the research team members also explored their varying experiences with their own fathers; these experiences varied from experiences with double-parent households and single-mother households to experiences with absent fathers. Although each member of the research team brings a slightly different perspective to the study, the team worked together to engage in multiple conversations around analyses and possible interpretations to ensure that findings were trustworthy.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Similar to all research studies, this study has limitations. Despite their role in the educational process, other family members were not included in this study. Focusing on how Latino males view the role of their fathers in no way suggests that other family members do not play a significant role in the decision-making process or persistence towards a college degree. The scant literature on the involvement of Latino father's in their children's higher education journey is still a growing area in postsecondary educational research. Delimitations were

chosen to facilitate an in-depth understanding of how Latino males at community colleges speak about their fathers and the influence they have on their postsecondary educational goals.

This study was both delimited and limited by its focus primarily on fathers within the traditional heterosexual family structure. When asked about their fathers, the men within this study did not indicate that they had experiences beyond this traditional structure. And, while the research team encouraged an open discussion, some students may not have felt comfortable sharing these experiences. Future research should address these limitations in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Latino men and their fathers.

### **Findings**

The role of familial, aspirational, and resistant capital was evident as Latino men shared stories of how their fathers influenced their college choices, provided support and motivation as they navigated the community college environment. Strong familial ties and *consejos* led the Latino males in this study to enroll in college and ignited their passion to persist. Fathers were identified as role models and enthusiastic motivators who encouraged Latino males to consider future career possibilities. Fathers encouraged students' college-going aspirations and inspired them to persist towards degree completion mostly through conversations at home with their sons. In some cases, the role of fathers was complex, causing some students to reconsider their educational goals in light of economic and family pressures to work and be a provider. These complexities were often the result of differing perspectives from fathers and sons about the role of men, working, and the educational process.

### **Fathers' Struggles as Familial and Aspirational Capital**

Latino males expressed benefiting from their fathers' encouragement and learned from their use of familial and aspirational capital to remain focused towards degree completion. Latino fathers were also identified as being instrumental in teaching their sons drive and motivation, ultimately increasing their intrinsic drive towards academic success. Although some participants expressed encountering significant economic barriers, they described the desire to achieve because of (and in spite of) socio-economic barriers, a value learned through observing their fathers.

As a student shared, the desire to live a better life without being forced to endure the same hardships as their father, serves as an illustration of how aspirational capital was passed on from father to son.

So I went to work with him and I realized I don't know how my dad does it. 8-9 hours a day, it's hot inside; I was getting a little depressed thinking, 'Wow this is what my dad goes through and he wants me to do something better.' So that's one factor; they want me to have a better life than they did because they struggle a lot. I saw what education could do.

This quote demonstrated how the father's love for his family—also a form of *machismo*—pushed him to withstand difficult working conditions for the benefit of his entire family. This father was serendipitously motivating his son to seek a better future through a college education. Latino males understand the importance of a college education. They draw motivation from struggles, difficult working conditions, and economic barriers they witnessed their fathers undergo.

Students also recalled conversations where their fathers promoted higher education as a way to secure a better future and livelihood.

My father, he didn't graduate high school and he's working construction. And, we're... struggling financially. And he's always told me to graduate, and go to college and be somebody so you can have better than what he did.

Encouraging words such as these prompted students to pursue a college education to avoid similar hardships. This quote also highlighted the importance of *consejos* in a father-son relationship. Although the father may not understand how to navigate the college system, he recognized the pathway to a better life was through formal education. Another student witnessed the conditions under which his father worked and he gained a critical understanding of the value of an education.

...I slowly started realizing he didn't go to go college...I saw that he was still suffering, and I know me, seeing that he suffered, and I know I didn't want to be like that. I didn't want to be in the same position that he is, earning only a few

bucks to get him by every month, and then some...I honestly did not want to see myself suffering...

Aspirational capital is evident though maybe not easily implied. Fathers intentionally exposed their sons to their complicated working conditions as a way to teach them that life could be easier through an education. Often, Latino fathers in the study lacked formal education but recognized the value of a college degree. As witnesses to their fathers' financial struggles, these students reported aspiring to achieve more. Students grew up seeing the physical labor and financial strain that their fathers experienced while trying to make ends meet and working in labor-intensive jobs. Students attributed noted hardships to a lack of formal education. By witnessing their fathers' struggles, these students formed their familial and aspirational capital and found the motivation to continue their education.

### **Fathers Use *Consejos* to Inspire Resistant Capital in their Sons**

Latino males expressed feeling motivated by the stories of their fathers. Their stories were filled with barriers but they always managed to persist. Encapsulated in these stories were forms of resistant capital passed on from father to son. Not only were students motivated by the financial struggles they witnessed their fathers endure, fathers also overtly encouraged their sons to gain an education as a form of resistance. Latino males noted their fathers did not want them to endure what they had, so they provided their sons with *consejos* to ignite their desire for a better future.

My dad does construction, too. He does sheet rock and has to go to work in the cold weather or hot weather...He always had a saying, "You see that I'm struggling and I don't have a degree or anything; well you have to do better than me. Be more... upper... like, higher than the American people. Have the money to spend and buy your stuff, not like me that I have to go to work and I barely do it with the bills. Be higher than what I did, do something for your life and do more than what I did." He always told me that and I always had it in mind, that's why I came to college.

Through sharing his life experiences and *consejos* with his son, this father provided a unique form of resistant capital when he states, “do more than I did.” Though not specifically stating how to do it, the father motivated his son to do better economically rather than “have to go to work and...barely do it with the bills.” This student’s father encouraged his son to resist being forced into a lower waged job, like other Latino men might, in favor of becoming equal with “American people.” The sentiment of equality carries much significance given most participants were U.S. born but still felt like outsiders.

Similarly, another student related the *consejos* his father gave him regarding the relationship between education, work, and future careers.

Even when I was younger and used to go to work with my dad, when I could, I remember him telling me, “Well, what do you want? This is what you’re going to face every day. Do you want to be like me working for the man, or do you want to be in the office?”

By asking thought-provoking questions, this father motivated his son by showing him the type of life he could lead after earning a college degree. The father uses himself as an example in his advice displaying resistant capital, telling his son that he could lead a life “working for the man” or a better life “in the office.” The quote demonstrates this father’s perspective that most outdoor work is labor intensive and indoor jobs are less physically demanding. The father illustrates the job options he perceives as available, and asks the critical question, “what do you want?” The son takes these lessons from his father and is motivated to do better for himself. In both of these instances Latino males utilized the *consejos* and life stories of their father’s as resistant capital to propel them towards degree completion. Through candid conversations of their own personal struggles (and their own resistant capital), fathers transmit both aspirational and resistant capital to their sons. Most importantly, it highlights the selfless investment of their father’s to a successful future for their children—yet another form of *machismo* not regularly recognized.

Latino men also discussed how their fathers encouraged them to delay full-time employment and to focus on their education.

My dad always said, it doesn’t matter if, as much as a job sounds tempting right out of high school, he said, of course it’s good to have a part-time if you want to

have money to buy stuff that you want, but school is more important in the long run.

Fathers encouraged their sons to postpone immediate gratification and to focus on the long-term rewards by earning a college degree. Fathers contributed to the college-going process because they emphasized the importance of a college degree in their sons' future career plans. Regardless of their personal educational experiences, fathers promoted college enrollment and encouraged Latino men to earn their college degrees. Once again fathers are passing on aspirational and navigational capital to their sons. Understanding the importance of patience, planning, and the value of education allows Latino fathers to gain an appropriate understanding of how important a college degree is for a successful future.

### **Complications with Familial Capital of Fathers**

Although fathers expressed a need for their sons to attend college and built aspirational and resistant capital within their sons, fathers sometimes set up conflicting expectations concerning educational decisions, professional work, and financial responsibility. While Latino men felt that their fathers valued education, they also expressed that their fathers held a more traditional perspective of Latino male work responsibilities (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Latino men described conflicting messages from their fathers regarding educational decisions and the expectation to work. One student noted:

My father he works every day and everyday he sees me going to college he wants me to finish college but at the same time he wants me to work. He wants me to do both. And sometimes I have discussions with him because of that.

Fathers wanted their sons to enroll and graduate from college, but they also wanted them to contribute financially. This shows a unique interdependence between Latino fathers and their sons; the fathers need the sons to help contribute to the family finances and the sons need their fathers to serve as strong role models and counselors. Because fathers often lacked an understanding of the time and effort needed to be successful in college, many fathers expected their sons to balance their academic responsibilities and their familial obligations to work and contribute to the household.



Latino men felt as though their fathers shamed them for enrolling in community college while not having a full-time job. Rather than think about the future gains that his son would experience by obtaining an education, fathers were concerned with present costs and their sons' lack of work experience. One student related:

My father on the other hand, when I first started, as soon as I started college, he automatically thought about, "That's going to cost money and you're not going to work full-time anymore..." He was pretty negative about it; he always kept telling me, "By the time I was six, I was already working 10 hours a day and you just finished high school and you still haven't gotten a full-time job."

This man's relationship with his father was strained as a result of his enrollment in community college. His father's extensive experience in the workforce contrasted to his decision to forgo his previous full-time employment in order to focus on his educational journey.

Fathers encouraged their sons to begin work, using their own experiences as the benchmark for their sons' lives. Latino men described how their fathers insisted that they work, not only to earn money or gain experience, but also because, as a man, working was expected. One student remarked, "My father, 'Oh, I don't know m'ijo. I work, and that's what I do, and that's what you need to do, too. You need money. You have to work.'" Another student remarked that his father has "always been a worker and that's why he wanted me to just go work, work, and work; just make money." For these Latino men, their fathers drew a clear connection between established norms and the need of men to work in order to gain financial security. Because these fathers had worked immediately, without a college experience, they believed their sons should, too. For these reasons, the familial, aspirational, and resistant capital that fathers nurture through their presence in their sons' lives becomes complicated when confronted with the actual process of earning a degree.

### **Summary of Findings**

As findings demonstrated, Latino men were influenced by their fathers' struggles and utilized those challenges as familial and aspirational capital for success. Furthermore, fathers instilled a sense of resistance within their sons through the use of *consejos*, sharing their desire to see their sons succeed despite their economical or educational backgrounds. In contrast,

Latino men also experienced complications with the familial capital of their fathers as a result of encouragement to attend college but to also work. The tension of the conflicting expectations of attending college and also contributing to the family finances often impacts Latino males' persistence in school (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Familial, aspirational, and resistant capital was evident through varied forms of motivation for achievement. Fathers also showed support for their sons through their providing them with advice and encouraging resistance. As fathers showed high educational expectations for their sons, Latino men then aspired to achieve. Despite the conflicts between financial and work expectations that some students experienced, Latino men still felt their fathers supported their educational endeavors and motivated them towards success.

### **Discussion & Implications**

Study findings bring to light the role community cultural wealth has as Latino men shared how their father's role of providing familial, aspirational and navigational capital along the educational pipeline helped them succeed (Yosso, 2005). This study demonstrated how fathers served as strong sources of support throughout the college or university experiences of their sons. These experiences connect *familismo* to familial capital by reinforcing how fathers serve as sources of strength and support for their sons throughout their lives. In fact, the *consejos* (advice) from fathers play a key role in setting expectations and establishing aspirational capital for Latino males. Thus, the significance of applying certain aspects from the framework of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) in a plan of action for Latino student success is shown. This study also affirms that Latino male students in postsecondary education are more likely to persist in their postsecondary pursuits "because" of their family and neighborhood support than "despite" them (Tierney, 1999, p. 86).

This study also revealed the more complicated nature of father-son relationships and the building of community cultural wealth. The demographics of the participants within this study may inform the way in which fathers and sons view educational opportunities and transmit forms of capital. For instance, many of the participants had fathers (and mothers) who possessed lower educational levels, came from low income households, and worked either part- or full-time while completing classes. Because most of their fathers did not attend college and held blue collar jobs, they may not understand how to best support their sons educational endeavors. Nonetheless, participants acknowledged the various forms of support given to them

by their fathers. The various forms of cultural capital these fathers utilized may require their sons to translate it as relevant to the college context as aspirational capital (maintaining dreams of success) or resistant capital (opposing inequities seen). Working part- or full-time while attending college may be an attempt by these men not only to balance finances or seek opportunities but as a way to draw on forms of capital from their fathers regarding finances. This challenges the assumptions that some might have about the social inequities faced by Latinos in community colleges and demonstrate that Latino men and their fathers are uniquely positioned for success. It is through this motivation and their success that students validate the sacrifices that their fathers made.

Although participants felt as though their fathers provided aspirational and resistant capital for them during their college journeys, these Latino men also articulated how their fathers pressured them to remain tied to traditional views of Latino men as hard-working providers. These pressures may be more pronounced within the community college setting as Latino men are often in close proximity to their families while attending college and may often work in order to make college attendance affordable. In addition, community college students are often more likely to come from lower socio-economic, immigrant, or first-generation backgrounds. In these instances, concepts of hard work and providing may need to be reframed in order to show how Latino men might take their fathers' concepts and translate them to their new educational contexts. Through the incorporation of findings from this study and extant literature highlighting the value Latina/os place on family, culture, and community, this study advances an asset based understanding of how Latino father's support their son's educational journeys through forms not traditionally acknowledged.

The majority of Latino men in this study were high-achieving and early in their community college and higher education journeys. This may indicate that although the role of fathers and various forms of capital may be complicated, Latino men are finding a way to balance and channel that cultural community college wealth early in their academic careers. Although this study does not directly address how this might change over time, or during the transfer process, one might see that Latino men continue to refine the way in which they enact these various forms of capital. In addition, one might also see that Latino fathers, who, over time may be engaged with the college-going processes of their sons or other children, may find new and creative ways of conveying cultural community wealth to their children.

## **Implications for Policy and Practice**

In terms of policy and practice, our findings suggest several implications for the nature of Latino and Latino male-specific programming and student development at community colleges. Community colleges should recognize the importance of recognizing the role of family as an asset for Latino male enrollment and persistence in college. In particular, the integral role of Latino fathers in the overall academic success of Latino males cannot be denied. Our findings revealed that fathers play an important and perhaps decisive role in their Latino male student's college going decisions and expectations for success. Fathers, in particular, provide a network of support and encouragement that provides a strong foundation for Latino males in their pursuit of postsecondary degrees.

Community colleges should also explore how they approach Latino male student development, especially in the early years of college, and implement various forms activities to build different types of capital and promote cultural community wealth. For all students, but especially Latino males, having students identify and acknowledge various sources of capital could allow students to understand the sources of capital that they possess and how to maximize those sources. Institutions might integrate these exercises in first-year experience or introductory courses in order to maximize the understanding first-time in college students have about their cultural community wealth. These exercises could be introduced in the form of writing assignments, group activities, or discussion points, depending on class size, type, and instructor expertise.

Onus is on the community college to ensure that Latino men are successful. Our study demonstrates that fathers are active in their sons' education and provide cultural community wealth in their own ways. While parental engagement is often seen in at the university level, community colleges often fail to fully engage parents in the college-going process. As such, institutions can engage fathers in dialogue and also provide family members with information on how to continue to talk to their student as challenging situations arise during their college years, such as academic progress, social and economic dilemmas, and health and wellness issues. Keeping the role of the Latino family, particularly the role of Latino father, in mind can positively impact success. Community cultural wealth offers a way to explain key cultural values that can help institutions understand what the Latino community values, and thus provide

programming that is properly suited. Encouraging a college-going culture and involving Latino families in the education of their children may eliminate some of the barriers Latino males face while in the college pipeline.

Community colleges should consider implementing meaningful experiences for Latino men and their fathers like those done for young college bound Latinas and their mothers. Programs like *Con Mi Madre* in Central Texas, which serves college-bound Latinas and their mothers in multiple activities around becoming college-ready, could serve as a model for community colleges interested in serving Latino men. Before Latino males even get to college, institutions should seek to engage Latino fathers in the college-going culture through college-readiness discussions, college visits, etc. Programs such as Fathers Active in Communities and Education (F.A.C.E) in South Texas seek to build communities of fathers and create systemic change at the campus, district, and interdistrict levels. As a result of its GEAR UP STAR Partnership, this program has offered college tours aimed at fathers and their sons and a model for father and son leadership teams at the secondary level. Programs such as this one, could allow fathers of Latino males to actively participate in the college-going culture and educational decision-making process, rather than passively participating in activities in which they have little to no input. Implementing programs which actively involve fathers could also mitigate the level of fear Latino male fathers may have about the unfamiliar spaces and new experiences that their sons will encounter while in college. Group activities and/or discussions related to what college is like and what they need to do to prepare not only allow students to create that shared safe space for discussion, but also have the benefit of connecting Latino men to other students and fathers who may have similar experiences and backgrounds. These activities might enhance cultural community wealth and enable Latino male students and their peers to better understand how their experiences can benefit their future.

Institutions may operationalize these ideas during outreach activities with the Latina/o community as well as during pre-college activities with parents and prospective students. Outreach events that particularly focus on the Latina/o community can provide opportunities for targeted events or messaging to fathers and their sons, while pre-college activities may be an opportunity for colleges and universities to address underlying fears and misconceptions that fathers have about their sons and the college experience. Our study reveals an opportunity for colleges to enhance the messaging geared toward Latina/o families, and, more specifically to

fathers, who need to understand the type of work that their sons are doing in college and what returns these young men can expect for their efforts. Fathers, especially those of first-generation college students, may be unfamiliar with college workload expectations, so providing context about their son's experience or future experiences may prove helpful. Making the connection to a return on their investment of a college degree may also be helpful to first-generation Latino men engaging with their fathers about college enrollment or financial responsibility. Administrators should seek to generate greater levels of participation for fathers of Latino men by making these spaces of interaction more inviting to men and at flexible times to accommodate working schedules. By having fathers present on the outset, Latino males can share learning about the educational experience with their fathers and build an understanding of the expectations of college.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Future research should seek to include the perspectives of the fathers of college-going Latino males in order to gain a much richer understanding of the capital these fathers bring to their sons. Understanding the educational experiences of Latino males from multiple perspectives would add a unique perspective to the work that has been completed thus forth. In addition, future research studies should investigate how the institutional context affects the environment in which these father-son interactions take place. For example, researchers may want to explore how father-son interactions differ for Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), and Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) or how rural, urban, and suburban contexts may influence these experiences. Finally, future studies may also want to address these father-son relationships under a variety of different lenses, especially those around critical race theory (CRT) and Latino critical studies (LatCrit). Understanding these relationships in multiple ways may further enhance the way that we encourage Latino male student development and involve fathers in the process of higher education.

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