



Unrecognized Assets: Latina/o Parents, Their Children, and College Financial Aid

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Purpose

To understand the experiences of Latina/o parents with college financial aid planning and to document the cultural assets the parents employed to help their children

Research Questions

- How do Latina/o parents experience the financial aid process with their high school student, as the first in their family to attend college?
- What forms of community cultural wealth do Latina/o parents utilize in helping their high school student with the financial aid process?

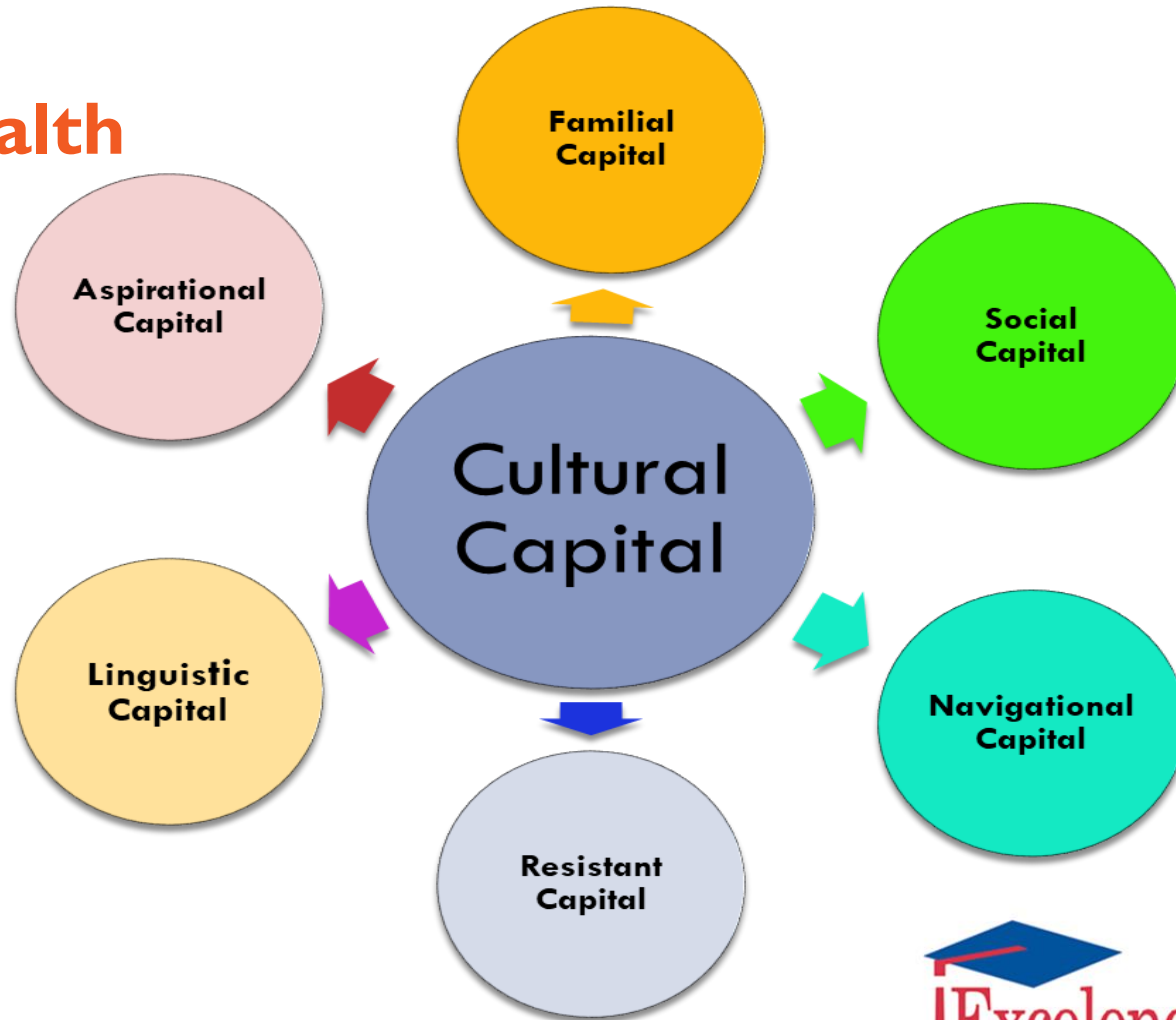
Theoretical Framework

Community

Cultural Wealth

Model

(Yosso, 2005)



Methodology & Methods

Participants

- 3 Latina mothers, whose students were:
 - Seniors in high school
 - Eligible to submit FAFSA
 - Planning to attend college the fall after high school graduation
 - First-generation college students

Methodology & Methods

Data Collection & Analysis

- Individual one-on-one interviews
- Open-ended questions to capture feelings, experiences, and thoughts
- Employed elemental and affective coding to focus on structural, process, emotion, and value
- Determined themes for the data and combined with *testimonios*

Findings

How do Latina/o parents experience the financial aid process with their high school student, as the first in their family to attend college?

- Latina mothers are unfamiliar with financial aid planning and processes.
- Latina mothers consider FAFSA most difficult step of the financial aid process.
- Latina mothers employed various resources of financial aid information, guidance and assistance beyond that offered by high schools.

Findings

What forms of community cultural wealth do Latina/o parents utilize in helping their high school children with the financial aid process?

Navigational Capital

- Latina mothers used skills to maneuver through social institutions, even if unfamiliar and high difficulty of process.
- Latina mothers used their own agency to access information about how a system/process works.



Testimonios: **Navigational Capital**

“I feel like it was more on the parent’s part to be more active and to talk to teachers and to call...It’s been more doing, figuring it on my own.”

“They don’t know what is going on...we have to do the research, and we have to make calls to find out what he needs. And that becomes frustrating...”

Findings

What forms of community cultural wealth do Latina/o parents utilize in helping their high school children with the financial aid process?

Social Capital

- Latina mothers identified multiple sources of information, guidance, and assistance within and external to high schools.
- Latina mothers drew upon their social contacts and networks to find resources.

Testimonios: **Social Capital**

“In the process, we came to talk to Alicia and Andres (pseudonyms). And the additional information provided, directed me to be able to ask more questions. [They] opened our eyes to see that it [4-year private university] would be a possibility. “

“...so he went to sit to talk to his counselor [at the university]. He gave us a breakdown of all the scholarships and what is the amount that we will have to repay...explained what we are supposed to do.”

Findings

What forms of community cultural wealth do Latina/o parents utilize in helping their high school children with the financial aid process?

Familial Capital

- Latina mothers felt it was very important to help their students and took active roles.
- Latina mothers offered help to others within their circles of *comadres* and their students' friends.
- Latina mothers admitted that a lack of financial aid would impact their childrens' college choices.



Testimonios: **Familial Capital**

“But although I have had the setbacks, I still feel like it is my job and my responsibility to give my son the support for him to feel like attending a university is an option.”

“I know that a lot of the students, like his friends, even the ones that aren’t his friends, will ask him and then I’ll find out the information and I will send it back to them.”

Findings

What forms of community cultural wealth do Latina/o parents utilize in helping their high school children with the financial aid process?

Aspirational Capital

- Latina mothers maintained hopes and dreams for their students' future even when facing uncertainty.
- Latina mothers exhibited a nurturing culture of possibility that their students attain more education than they and students' grandparents.

Testimonios: Aspirational Capital

“It would have been harder for us to figure out how we were going to get him to school [without financial aid]...we don't have very much to spare...”

“There is no way he can't go to college....My poor father and all he had to do to get to this country...and then all I and his father have done and sacrificed...”

Conclusion

- Latina/o parents are an asset that should be recognized, valued, and included in their student's college & financial aid planning:
 - As a means to have more informed “consumers.”
 - As a means to increase college enrollment, persistence, and completion.
 - As a means to honor *familia*.



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