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Discourse about Latino male college students centers on their low enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates. Two asset-based theoretical frameworks were used to understand how 21 Latino males' academic determination was nurtured and sustained by cultural wealth at selective institutions. Although most participants entered college with unclear educational goals, they aspired to become ideal college students who effectively balanced personal, academic, and social commitments. Most participants relied on peer networks instead of faculty and administrators to achieve their educational goals. Implications for research, policy, and practice focus on the role cultural wealth can play in Latino male college students' academic determination.

Little is known about Latino males' academic determination in higher education. Academic determination is characterized by students' motivation to succeed and willingness to invest effort to achieve their goals in college (Schreiner, 2010). Most studies about Latino male college students focus on their low enrollment, persistence, and completion rates (Clark, Ponjuan, Orrock, Wilson, & Flores, 2013; Gloria, Castellanos, Scull, & Villegas, 2009; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Although Latino males contend with structural forces that undermine their success (Noguera, Hurtado, & Fergus, 2012), educators are likely to conclude that they are unmotivated, lack appropriate educational goals, and are unlikely to succeed in higher education. These deficit-latent assumptions can shape Latino males' educational aspirations and perpetuate conditions that contribute to their underrepresentation and attrition at selective institutions.

Latino male students' high aspirations do not always result in positive educational outcomes (Hurtado, Sáenz, Santos, & Cabrera, 2008). In comparison to most racial/ethnic groups, Latino males are more likely to drop out of high school, pursue employment versus educational opportunities, and leave college before graduating (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Despite the gains Latina/os* have experienced in college enrollment and graduation rates, the proportion of Latino males continues to decrease relative to Latina females (Snyder & Dillow, 2011). Sáenz and Ponjuan (2009) attributed these outcomes to "underlying social, cultural, structural, and systemic issues that . . . perpetuate the gender gap in college enrollment and degree attainment" (p. 56). For example, subtractive schooling practices (i.e., educational tracking) do not account for the values, knowledge, and resources Latina/os possess and utilize to achieve their

* In this article, the terms *Latina/o* and *Hispanic* are used interchangeably when referring to individuals of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central American, and South American descent. The use of the terms *Hispanic*, *Latino*, and other subcategories (i.e., sex, ethnicity) was determined by how they are referred to in the literature.

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educational goals (Valenzuela, 1999; Yosso, 2005). Recognizing the capital Latino males possess is essential to nurturing and sustaining their dispositions to succeed at selective institutions (Pérez & Taylor, 2015).

This qualitative study extends Pérez's (2012) research by exploring how 21 Latino male achievers employed cultural wealth to nurture and sustain their academic determination at two selective postsecondary institutions. This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What educational goals do Latino male achievers possess for college?
2. To what extent are Latino male achievers' educational goals sustained during college?

This study contributes to research on racial/ethnic minority students' academic determination in higher education (Schreiner, Kammer, Primrose, & Quick, 2009). Despite the increased attention given to academically determined African American males (Harper, 2014), researchers have not advanced similar perspectives about Latino males in higher education (Pérez & Taylor, 2015). For this study, Schreiner's (2010) thriving quotient and Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth (CCW) framework provide the theoretical basis to understand how Latino male college students' academic determination can be nurtured and sustained. While Schreiner reported that "students' backgrounds before entering college were not as important to understanding their success as was their level of thriving" (p. 6), the perspectives offered by participants in this study reveal how background characteristics shape their educational goals. To this end, advancing Latino male success in higher education demands more theorizing and practical solutions that account for the knowledge, skills, and resources students possess and utilize to achieve their goals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section highlights studies relevant to understanding how academic determination is nurtured and sustained among Latino males at selective institutions. Broadly, these studies address the role students' expectations, cultural values, and structural forces play in formulating educational goals. Additionally, studies that focus exclusively on Latino male college students are addressed to highlight important contributions and limitations in this emergent body of research.

Students' expectations play a key role in formulating educational goals and determining whether to pursue or abandon goals (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). In psychology, the term *possible self* describes "the future oriented aspect of one's self-concept that is believed to serve as a motivational source and guide to behavior" (Turcios-Cotto & Milan, 2013, p. 1401). Measures of possible selves account for what students hope to (and fear they will not) accomplish in the future (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006). Students' possible selves predict increases in grade point average (Anderman, Anderman, & Griesinger, 1999) and are positively correlated to academic outcomes during adulthood (Crockett & Beal, 2012).

Cultural values such as *familismo* (familism) and *ser buen educado* (being well educated) impact Latinos' educational attainment. Familism is reflected in Latino children's sense of responsibility, solidarity, and loyalty to immediate and extended family members (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). For Latino males, this sense of responsibility can translate into expectations to provide financially for one's family, which may lead some young men to delay or forgo educational plans (Fry, 2005). Although Latinos believe that a college degree promotes economic and social mobility, financial pressures to support family deter many Latino children from enrolling in

college (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). Research indicates that Latino males are susceptible to these cultural expectations (Torres & Fergus, 2012). In response to socioeconomic pressures and cultural expectations, Latino males are more likely to join the workforce or military, leaving their educational aspirations unfulfilled (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009).

Being *buen educado* (well educated) within the Latino community extends beyond one's educational credentials. Latino parents also seek to instill important values—*respeto*, *caballerismo*, *verguenza* (respect, chivalry, humility)—that are incongruent with the individualistic and competitive culture in US schools (Hill & Torres, 2010; Valenzuela, 1999). The cultural values espoused by Latino parents may influence children to develop social goals instead of academic goals, which include assisting their family (Turcios-Cotto & Milan, 2013); however, studies on Latinos at selective institutions also highlight unique strategies parents use to nurture their children's educational aspirations. For example, Ceballo (2004) found that children were excused from doing chores and given "a blank check regarding all academic matters" (p. 178). Consistent with Cabrera and Padilla's (2004) study on Mexican American graduates from Stanford University, Easley, Bianco, and Leech (2012) reported that *ganas*—students' motivation to succeed academically—was sustained by a desire to honor parental sacrifices.

Structural forces contribute to the cumulative disadvantages Latino males experience in the US educational pipeline (Noguera et al., 2012). In addition to experiencing poverty, many Latino males attend impoverished schools where they are more likely to be misdiagnosed with a learning disability, held back, and suspended in comparison to White students (Meade, Gaytan, Fergus, & Noguera, 2009; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2011). Moreover, Latino males are less likely to receive the academic preparation needed for higher education (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). When students are alienated at school, they become demotivated about working toward their goals. "Starting with an alienated orientation, such students may wait for educators to draw them in . . . before motivation rises to a level that propels achievement-oriented activity" (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012, p. 4). Yet, many educators lack effective strategies to support Latino males' educational pursuits (Clark et al., 2013).

Latina/os tend to report less frequent and fewer personal interactions with faculty at selective institutions (Kim, Rennick, & Franco, 2014). While these interactions are important for college students in general (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), studies have shown that student–faculty interactions can foster Latina/os' self-efficacy, learning, and academic achievement (Cole, 2008; DeFreitas & Bravo, 2012). These outcomes are dependent on the quality versus quantity of interactions Latina/o students have with faculty (Cole, 2010). For example, Lundberg and Schreiner (2004) found that student–faculty interactions contributed more to learning for Latina/o students than White students at 4-year institutions. Latina/os worked harder to meet the expectations of faculty they perceived to be approachable, helpful, and encouraging. More recent studies indicate that faculty can play an integral role in Latino males' academic and social transition to college (Huerta & Fishman, 2014; Morales, 2008). Dominican American males in Morales's (2008) study reported that mentors served as "approvers [by] legitimizing, encouraging, and facilitating . . . participants' educational plans" (p. 395).

The influence of peers on college student outcomes has also been well documented (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Some researchers contend that Latina/o students' interactions with peers are more important than student–

faculty interactions and familial ties during college (Rodriguez, Mira, Myers, Morris, & Cardoza, 2003; Torres, Reiser, LePeau, Davis, & Ruder, 2006). Using grounded theory, Torres et al. (2006) found that first-generation Latina/o college students relied on peers for academic information because they viewed similar interactions with advisors as risky. Participants did not wish to experience discomfort or appear foolish when interacting with advisors. The fear associated with confirming a negative stereotype about one's social group can diminish Latina/o students' academic performance (Guyll, Madon, Prieto, & Scherr, 2010). Peers can play an integral role in Latina/o students' ability to cope with similar stressors at selective institutions (Lopez, 2005). Whether these interactions contribute to Latino male college students' academic determination has not been acknowledged.

Although studies cited in this section provide insights about Latino males' academic determination, there are several limitations within this growing body of research. First, the majority of these studies do not address the experiences of Latino male college students. Fewer than 10 empirically grounded studies have been published about Latino males in higher education within the last decade (Carrillo, 2013; Gloria et al., 2009; Guardia & Evans, 2008; Huerta & Fishman, 2014; Morales, 2008; Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Moreover, few scholars have employed asset-based frameworks to identify factors that contribute to Latino male success at selective postsecondary institutions (Pérez, 2012; 2014; 2016). For this study, two asset-based theories were used to elucidate how Latino male achievers employed different forms of capital to exercise academic determination in college.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study extends Pérez's (2012) research on Latino male achievers by using two asset-based theories, Schreiner's (2010) thriving quotient and Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth (CCW) framework, to explain how Latino males' academic determination was nurtured and sustained by cultural wealth at two selective postsecondary institutions. Rooted in positive psychology, Schreiner's thriving quotient describes students who are intellectually, socially, and emotionally engaged in college. The thriving quotient includes five factors that contribute to student success; however, this article focuses exclusively on academic determination. This dimension of academic thriving is reflected in the "ability to manage one's time and the multiple academic and personal demands of the college environment, . . . motivation to succeed, and the intentional pursuit of one's goals" (p. 4). Although Schreiner's analysis controlled for typical predictors (i.e., gender, ethnicity, parental education) of collegiate success, these factors can play an important role in students' academic determination. For instance, Pérez and Taylor (2015) found that Latino males' dispositions to succeed were rooted in the knowledge, skills, and resources they accumulated prior to college.

Yosso's (2005) CCW framework advances the thriving quotient by highlighting different forms of cultural wealth that nurture and sustain Latino male college students' academic determination. Familial capital is reflected in Latino parents' emphasis on maintaining strong relational ties, which also plays a role in nurturing aspirational capital (Burciaga & Erbstein, 2010). Pérez and Taylor (2015) found that Latino males' aspirations to graduate from a selective university were nurtured by hearing stories about the hardships parents endured in the US. In this instance, academic determination was nurtured by linguistic capital (i.e., oral histories, stories, advice) and sustained by resistant capital—

adopting oppositional behaviors that enhance Latino males' abilities to cope with adversity in college (Gloria et al., 2009). Latino males also benefit from social capital that facilitates access to networks, information, and resources (Huerta & Fishman, 2014; Morales, 2008). This latter form of capital is essential to racial/ethnic minority males exercising navigational capital at PWIs that are unresponsive to their academic and social needs (Harper, Williams, Pérez, & Morgan, 2013).

Collectively, these frameworks highlight factors that contribute to Latino males' success in higher education. Whereas Schreiner's (2010) thriving quotient challenges educators to assume greater responsibility for the conditions that facilitate student success, Yosso's (2005) framework highlights different forms of capital that go unrecognized and play a central role in fostering Latino male college students' academic determination. Thus, the success of Latino male college students is dependent on educators capitalizing on the knowledge, skills, and resources students bring with them to college.

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Using the phenomenological approach to qualitative inquiry, this study focuses on understanding and describing the lived experiences of research participants (Patton, 2002). A phenomenological account describes what participants have experienced, how they have experienced it, and the meanings they make of their shared experiences (Moustakas, 1994). I explored how Latino males' academic determination was nurtured and sustained by their cultural wealth at two selective institutions.

Sample

This study was conducted at two postsecondary institutions, Private University (PU) and State University (SU; both pseudonyms), located in the northeast region of the US. Both institutions are selective, 4-year, residential campuses. During the 2010–2011 academic year, approximately 49,000 undergraduate students were enrolled at each university. Latina/os comprised 5.0% of the undergraduate student population with a range of 4.2% at SU to 5.8% at PU.

Twenty-one Latino male undergraduates participated in this study. Latino males were nominated by faculty, administrators, and student leaders using a criterion sampling strategy, which involves the selection of participants who meet predetermined criteria needed to identify information rich cases (Patton, 2002). Latino males were eligible to participate in this study if they were: (a) born or raised in the US since age five, (b) traditional-age college students, (c) enrolled as full-time students, (d) entered the institution as freshmen, (e) had junior or senior standing, and (f) maintained a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher during the time of the study (see Table 1). I sought Latino males who maintained a 3.0 GPA because similar academic credentials are used to identify and select students for merit-based scholarships, undergraduate research experiences, and internship programs.

Data Collection

Data collection was completed during the 2010–2011 academic year. Nominated students who chose to participate in this study were asked to complete an online survey to gather basic demographic and academic information. Participants also submitted an electronic copy of their academic transcripts to verify their cumulative GPAs. Additionally, each student participated in a face-to-face interview that ranged between 2 and 3 hours. The interview protocol included open-ended questions guided by Yosso's (2005) CCW framework, and also aligned with aspects

TABLE 1.
Profiles of Latino Male Achievers

Pseudo-nyms	Ethnicity	Family Income ($ thousands)	First-Generation Student	Class Standing	Major	GPA at Inter-view
Adam	Mexican	40–49	Yes	Senior	Political Science	3.16
Geraldo	Nicaraguan	70–79	No	Junior	Forensic Science	3.33
Gilberto	Puerto Rican	10–19	Yes	Senior	Electrical Engineering	3.35
Hector	Salvadoran	80–89	Yes	Senior	Political Science	3.15
Leo	Puerto Rican	30–39	Yes	Senior	Biobehavioral Health	3.05
Luis	Guatemalan	30–39	Yes	Senior	Biochemistry	3.84
Lupe	Puerto Rican	60–69	Yes	Junior	Criminal Justice	3.10
Marcos	Dominican	30–39	Yes	Senior	Comparative Literature	3.57
Mateo	Colombian	20–29	No	Senior	Finance	3.37
Melvin	Mexican	80–89	No	Junior	Economics	3.45
Micael	Peruvian	70–79	No	Junior	Journalism	3.80
Miguel	Puerto Rican	> 100	No	Senior	Economics	3.85
Noe	Cuban	20–29	Yes	Junior	Elementary Education	3.29
Oscar	Mexican	10–19	Yes	Junior	Psychology	3.25
Rafael	Colombian	60–60	Yes	Senior	Info Science & Tech.	3.36
Ricardo	Cuban	> 100	No	Junior	Communications	3.99
Samuel	Cuban	> 100	No	Junior	Mech. Engineering	3.64
Silvio	Cuban	> 100	Yes	Junior	Earth & Mineral Sci.	3.69
Tito	Dominican	10–19	Yes	Senior	Urban Studies	3.30
Vicente	Mexican	> 100	No	Junior	Anthropology	3.16
Victor	Puerto Rican	40–49	No	Senior	Psychology	3.02

of Schreiner's (2010) thriving quotient. For example, I asked participants questions about their goals prior to college, support they received during college, and whether they were achieving their educational goals.

Data Analysis

Adhering to Moustakas's (1994) recommendations regarding the analysis of qualitative data, a step-by-step technique was used to analyze the interview transcripts. I began data analysis by engaging in *epoché* to identify my preunderstandings about the phenomenon under investigation. Although Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2014) contend that it is impossible for researchers to set aside their preunderstandings, I annotated each transcript with reflective comments and questions to become more aware of my preunderstandings and the ways in which they influenced my interpretations. This process allowed me to actively reflect on my positionality as a researcher.

In addition to identifying as a Puerto Rican male, I recognize how being raised by a middle-class single parent and attending underresourced public schools in Brooklyn, New York, influenced my educational trajectory. Although I was expected to attend college, the Posse Foundation played an integral role in facilitating my access to

Vanderbilt University. The Posse Foundation provided me with an extensive network of peers, faculty, and administrators who fostered my academic determination.

After identifying my preunderstandings of academic determination, I analyzed the interview data by adapting several techniques from Moustakas's (1994) guidelines for phenomenological research. Using a deductive approach, I employed Yosso's (2005) CCW framework to interpret and develop textural and structural descriptions of each participant's experience of academic determination. In particular, I used Yosso's framework to examine the holistic and integrated nature of cultural wealth, which allowed me to see the interplay of the six forms of capital that comprise CCW. In other words, rather than studying each form of capital separately, I considered the six forms of capital collectively in relation to academic determination. While reading interview transcripts, I annotated the margins of each transcript with comments and phrases drawn from participants' own words that reflected their experiences of academic determination and highlighted forms of capital within the CCW framework. I compared annotations and developed a preliminary list of codes—or what Moustakas termed *horizons of the experience*—to guide future data analysis; that is, I identified, abstracted, and labeled participants' expressions that revealed essential aspects of Latino males' experience of academic determination. This process ultimately resulted in the identification of invariant constituents (i.e., subthemes) that emerged across participants (Moustakas, 1994). The invariant constituents were helpful in identifying the educational goals Latino males possessed for college as well as how their educational goals were sustained during college. Ultimately, I used the invariant constituents to create a composite description of the experience of academic determination for participants as a whole. Throughout this process, I reflected on my positionality as a researcher in order to remain aware of how my identities were influencing my interpretations.

For the findings, I selected at least two participants to illustrate the breadth and depth of each theme for the group as a whole. Although I present two participants' experiences in detail for each theme to provide a rich, contextualized description, the focus is not on the individuals per se but rather on the convergences and divergences among the participants' descriptions for each theme. To this end, I drew connections to other participants in each findings section. Through these convergences and divergences, the complexities and nuances of the theme for the group as a whole emerged.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was enhanced in this study by addressing issues of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Jones et al., 2014). To establish credibility, I engaged in negative case analysis whereby evidence that disconfirmed or diverged from my initial findings was purposefully examined; this process ensured that counter patterns were explored within the data. Second, to establish transferability and ensure that "the findings are meaningful to the reader" (Jones et al., 2014, p. 37), I present rich, detailed descriptions of participants and their experiences for readers to determine the extent to which the findings apply to other context. Finally, to enhance both dependability and confirmability, I maintained an audit trail and remained aware of my subjectivities through journaling activities.

FINDINGS

Four themes are presented regarding Latino males' academic determination. While participants possessed high educational aspirations, the

first theme—Unclear, But Evolving Goals—addresses how Latino males' initial goals evolved during college. The second theme, Being the Ideal College Student, highlights participants' aspirations to be ideal college students, which were reflected in their curricular and co-curricular involvement on campus. The third and fourth themes, Absence of Faculty and Administrative Mentors and [Over]reliance on Peers, respectively, draw attention to the role faculty and peers played in sustaining Latino males' academic determination. How participants' academic determination was nurtured and sustained by cultural wealth is addressed at the end of each section.

Unclear, But Evolving Goals

Aside from maintaining strong academic records, most participants could not recount educational goals they planned to accomplish during college. This was surprising considering their high educational aspirations. With exception to two participants, Latino males in this study expected to graduate from college and pursue advanced degrees. Although Lupe was a first-generation college student, his mother played an integral role in nurturing his educational aspirations. She wanted him to "have a better life." Although he was initially unable to articulate clear educational goals, Lupe expressed a sincere interest in helping others:

> I wanted to go to college and help people in the criminal justice system, because I feel like [there is] inequality. I always felt that way. It's one of the biggest things I wanted to do. I don't know if that's for me now, because things change, but I always wanted to help people for some reason—I don't know, I guess it was my upbringing.

Lupe did not have the "best childhood" growing up in Philadelphia. At the age of 9, Lupe's parents divorced due to his father's alcoholism. He did not have many positive male role models. His uncle was awarded a scholarship to attend St. John's University, but he was later incarcerated for stealing and reselling narcotics. These childhood experiences informed Lupe's decision to pursue a career in the criminal justice system. Lupe gained clarity about his educational goals as he reflected on the hardships his family endured.

Although most participants did not possess clear goals, the hardships they experienced helped them to cement their goals during college. Melvin's parents were college graduates, but he was the first member in his family to attend an Ivy League institution. Melvin believed that graduating from a reputable university would provide "the means to take care of [his] family." Although Melvin's aspirations were realized when he gained admission to PU, he didn't have specific goals for college, which affected his initial transition and academic performance:

> I just never had any goals for college—I wish I had, because it would have helped me. I'm assuming you haven't seen my transcript, but you will notice my first year was pretty bad. I averaged about a *B*. My second year, I averaged about an *A*–. And this year, I'm hoping to get an *A*. It looks like I can pull that off. Freshman year was a pretty rough. . . . If I had goals, I feel like my progression in college would have been different.

Melvin attributed his lack of progress to unclear goals, but his academic performance improved over time. He added, "If someone would have talked to me [about my goals] I would have made way fewer mistakes." Melvin turned to his family as he reflected on his shortcomings:

> Obviously, my mom was upset with my performance. I was upset [too]. That whole summer, I spent time trying to figure out what I could do better, because in my mind, unless I'm getting a 4.0 there's always something I can do better.

> So, I went home, talked with my mom [and] brothers. . . . That's why I changed so dramatically.

Melvin likened this process to "soul-searching" and articulated educational goals that were aligned with his faith: "The biggest tenet of the Christian faith is to serve others." After reflecting on the hardships he endured as a first-year student, Melvin "stopped thinking about [himself] and started focusing on the needs of others." He volunteered at a local soup kitchen, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and a college access program. Through his volunteerism, Melvin identified skills needed to work in the nonprofit sector: "I can't help nonprofit organizations until I hone my consulting skills." To pursue this goal, Melvin became involved with the Business School's community-partnership initiative, which uses business practices to serve nonprofit organizations. Melvin attributed his academic determination in college to getting involved in the surrounding community.

Lupe and Melvin draw attention to one shared goal among Latino male achievers: a sincere desire to serve others. In addition to aspirational capital, participants' academic determination was dependent on familial capital, which manifested in the ties they maintained with family members. Latino males' commitment to serving others reveals how academic determination is sustained by familial capital; thus, academic determination is not dependent exclusively on aspirational capital. Participants exercised academic determination by maintaining familial ties that sustained their educational aspirations, identifying goals that aligned with their values, and persisting when they encountered opposition.

Being the Ideal College Student

Being engaged academically and socially on campus was an important goal for Latino male achievers. In addition to maintaining strong academic records, participants were involved in a range of campus activities (i.e., student leadership, undergraduate research) that enhanced their educational experiences. These activities were consistent with Geraldo's "motto . . . [of being] an ideal college student" at SU:

> The ideal college student is a person who balances their academic and social life, and who's physically healthy. . . . My grades haven't been the best. I have a 3.33 GPA right now, but it wasn't like that in high school. I graduated with a 3.9, . . . so, it's been tough. . . . But socially, I definitely tried everything. I love stepping and joined [the SU Step Team]. I've emceed at [pep rallies]. . . . I know all these important people at [SU].

While Geraldo excelled as a leader, he struggled to maintain his academic achievement at SU. His remarks underscore the tensions other first-generation participants experienced in balancing their academic, social, and personal commitments. For example, Ricardo experienced tension as the first member in his family to attend a major university on scholarship. Although his parents were supportive, this did not diminish the pressure he felt to excel:

> It seems positive. "Oh, we want you to succeed in school." But on the flip side, that's a lot weighing on your shoulders, and that played a part in why I was scared to death my freshman year. Because I wouldn't be able to return home, look my parents in the eyes, and say, "I couldn't do it." It's almost like a little piece of them is on campus with me right now. And that's a good thing and a bad thing, because I know at the end of the day that I'm not just doing this for myself. . . . So, it's a double-edged sword.

In addition to honoring his parents' sacrifice, Ricardo's academic determination was motivated by a fear of failure. He was "terrified" about losing his scholarship. Ricardo coped

with his fears by waking up at 6:00 a.m. to study, eat breakfast, and prepare for class. He lost 20 pounds due to stress his freshman year and shouldered these burdens on his own.

These tensions were not as pronounced for Miguel who embodied the qualities of an ideal college student. Miguel "got everything [he] wanted" at PU. He attributed this, in part, to advisors who helped him balance his academic and social commitments. Miguel was engaged in co-curricular activities that aligned with his intellectual interests and addressed inequities he observed at PU. For example, he collaborated on a project with minority-based student organizations to address concerns about the campus racial climate. His disposition to serve others was nurtured by his parents. Miguel's mother was a PU alumna who used her private dental practice to treat undocumented immigrants. At an early age, Miguel learned that a good education would give him the "tools to give back, serve others, and make a life for [himself]."

Being an ideal college student required different forms of capital. As noted by Ricardo and Miguel, familial capital played an integral role in exercising academic determination. Although Ricardo's parents inspired him to succeed, he relied heavily on aspirational capital to overcome his fear of failure at SU. In contrast, the relationships Miguel established with peers on campus served as a vital source of social capital. In addition to achieving his goals, Miguel's peer networks nurtured and sustained the resistant capital needed to improve PU's racial climate. Thus, the academic determination displayed by participants was dependent on cultural wealth nurtured before and sustained during college.

Absence of Faculty and Administrative Mentors

Less than one quarter of the participants in this study reported having meaningful connections with faculty and administrators on campus. In most instances, the relationships Latino male achievers established with faculty mentors were facilitated through undergraduate research programs. Luis established a long-term mentoring relationship with Dr. Sloor through the McNair Scholars Program. In addition to collaborating on research, Dr. Sloor challenged Luis to reflect on whether his actions aligned with his educational goals:

> I fell asleep in our lab meetings repeatedly and [Dr. Sloor] talked to me. . . . I knew it was wrong, but I didn't do anything about it. She noticed it was harming the lab environment. . . . and I may have fixed a thing or two, but there were still a lot of issues, and she told me again. . . . She didn't have to tell me twice, but Dr. Sloor [did]. . . . Hearing how it was affecting everyone really helped me change things around.

Luis joined a chemistry fraternity during this period and developed a reputation as the "pledge drunk that maintained [his] grades." Despite his strong academic record, Luis was unable to maintain his productivity in Dr. Sloor's laboratory and also received a citation for underage drinking. Dr. Sloor played an integral role in Luis's decision to engage in more educationally purposeful activities. Based on her feedback, Luis dropped out of the fraternity and devoted greater attention to conducting research and preparing for graduate school. He was later admitted to an MD/PhD program at an Ivy League institution.

Most participants did not receive support from faculty in formulating or achieving their educational goals. Leo established a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship with the Director of Upward Bound at SU. Mrs. Mellet engaged him in a range of educationally purposeful activities that aligned with his career aspirations. Leo was also considering medical school and desired to work with marginalized communities. He

served as a summer resident assistant, tutor, and community volunteer through Upward Bound. Based on his extensive record of service, Mrs. Mellet invited him to become an AmeriCorps Fellow:

> I participated in AmeriCorps because I could help kids who don't have support. I'm all about that. . . . So, she just gave me the opportunity. . . . I didn't have to do much, except fill out clearance forms. It was one [opportunity] that was literally handed to me. She told me, "You already work with all these students." It was just an opportunity for me to [serve] and kind of get known for it.

Contrary to most participants in this study, Leo's contributions on campus were acknowledged and rewarded by a university administrator. Mrs. Mellet presented Leo with opportunities to serve populations that mirrored his own community. Leo believed it was important to help other "first-generation and low-income students who don't have the resources to attend college." Upward Bound helped Leo actualize his goal of serving marginalized communities.

Latino male achievers benefited from mentoring relationships with faculty and administrators. Unfortunately, less than one quarter of the participants in this study received guidance from faculty and administrators on how to work toward their goals. The relationship Luis established with Dr. Sloor served as a vital source of social capital and navigational capital. She challenged him to reflect on his educational goals and helped him navigate the graduate application process. Leo relied on an administrator as a source of social capital, but did not derive the same benefits from this network. Although Mrs. Mellet presented Leo with opportunities to work with underserved populations, which required familial and navigational capital, these experiences did not facilitate his transition to graduate school.

[Over]reliance on Peers

In most instances, Latino male achievers relied on peer networks to sustain their academic determination. Victor joined a Latino fraternity and dance troupe to "expand [his] horizons." He considered these groups to be members of his "extended family outside of New York City." Victor added, "Whether [we're] cooking dinner for each other, decompressing before we get back to studying, or just dancing, . . . we are there for each other." Victor's fraternity also motivated him to succeed academically:

> In the fraternity, if you call [someone] your brother, you're going to look out for them in every aspect of the word—academically or emotionally. . . . When I was pledging, I took a statistics course and had I not been in close proximity with the brothers, I would have actually failed, because [they] were in the Business School. . . . On nights after [fraternity initiation meetings, they] would stay up with me until my homework was done. . . . I actually passed the class.

Although Victor derived numerous benefits from his peer networks, he highlighted some unintended consequences associated with his involvement in Latino student organizations:

> I think there is a high correlation between Latinos who do well and [those] put in positions of leadership. But I think that it's a gift and a burden: . . . If you show interest in student organizations within the Latino community, you're targeted [for] different leadership positions. For example, I joined [the dance troupe] and automatically there was talk about, "We should offer you this Board position even though you are a freshman." . . . And the same thing with [the fraternity]: . . . on one hand, I was honored—I always felt so much had been given to me that I wanted to give back to my community—but on the other hand, it becomes a real burden and inhibits your own success.

While his cumulative GPA declined, Victor was unable to explore other educational opportunities as he ventured "deeper and deeper into the Latino community" at PU. Victor wished he had received more guidance about undergraduate research experiences. He did not feel prepared to pursue graduate studies and postponed his plans based on his academic progress, limited research experience, and lack of contact with faculty.

Marcos experienced less dissonance working toward his educational goals. Although he encountered similar challenges making the transition to college, Marcos developed a "sense of agency and belonging" from his interactions with peers:

> In these paradoxical spaces of marginality, I recognize that I am not a marginal subject. . . . Having peers, faculty, and staff members in these spaces to sort of validate me for who I am and what I'm already coming to them with has been very formative. . . . Going to these spaces, I'm able to let go because [they] tell me: "You're doing just fine. . . . Reap the benefits of your hard work and acknowledge that you are doing well." So [they] allow me to pause [and] sort of celebrate; but then at the same time [they] say, "Let's keep working [and] aspiring for more."

Within the Latino and queer community, Marcos's peers held him accountable for achieving his educational aspirations. They reminded him, "You are here, first and foremost, to be a student. Cut back on the activities and get to work." Their feedback motivated him to devote greater attention to activities that aligned with his intellectual interests. For example, Marcos participated in three undergraduate research programs. In addition to conducting research on the intersections between Latino literature, history, and politics, Marcos explored his interest in academia as a McNair Scholar and Mellon Mays Fellow. These experiences provided Marcos with the scaffolding needed to achieve his goals. During his senior year, Marcos was admitted to a doctoral program in Comparative Literature at a research university.

Latino male achievers relied heavily on their peers as sources of familial capital and social capital. The support Victor received from his fraternity and dance troupe reinforced his sense of responsibility to the Latino community at PU. Unfortunately, Victor overextended himself as a first-year student, which contributed to his poor academic performance. Unlike Marcos, his peers did not provide the same level of accountability and guidance needed to fulfill his educational goals. Marcos's interactions with peers involved in research helped to sustain his aspirational capital and nurtured the navigational capital needed to prepare for graduate school. Although peers served as vital sources of capital, Latino male achievers were overreliant on these networks to sustain their academic determination.

DISCUSSION

Despite their high aspirations, most participants entered college with unclear educational goals. These goals evolved into aspirations to become ideal college students, which participants equated with being academically and socially engaged on campus. Although a few Latino males in this study were able to identify faculty and administrators who supported them in working toward their goals, participants relied primarily on peer networks to translate their aspirations into tangible outcomes.

Educators are often ill-equipped to nurture and sustain Latino male college students' academic determination (Clark et al., 2013). Participants' motivations to succeed were nurtured and sustained by a desire to serve others. Yosso's (2005) CCW

framework provides a useful lens to examine the "knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro- and micro-forms of oppression" (p. 77). In addition to his mother's high expectations, Lupe's academic determination was nurtured and sustained by a desire to escape poverty. Similar to other participants, he viewed education as a means to provide for his family. Educators' inability to recognize the roles familial capital and aspirational capital play in fostering academic determination hinders the success of Latino male undergraduates (Pérez & Taylor, 2015). While Melvin attributed his underperformance to unclear educational goals, he gained clarity through conversations with family members and volunteerism in the community.

At first glance, Latino male achievers appeared to effectively balance their personal, academic, and social commitments. Schreiner (2010) argued this is an important antecedent of academic thriving; yet, participants' success with being ideal college students masked the pressures some Latino males experienced striving toward their educational goals. These tensions were pronounced for Ricardo and other first-generation college students in this study. This did not deter participants from exercising what Gloria et al. (2009) characterized as "positive planned action" (p. 326). Ricardo was proactive in managing multiple responsibilities, but his "fear of failure" never dissipated. Examining generational differences among participants was not central to this study; however, this highlights one challenge participants faced in exercising academic determination. Whereas Ricardo relied on aspirational and familial capital he possessed, Miguel's access to social capital on campus also sustained the navigational and resistant capital needed to achieve his goals.

While Latina/o college students can benefit from student–faculty interactions (Cole, 2008), less than one quarter of the participants reported that faculty and administrators helped them achieve their goals. Luis noted how his faculty mentor served as a vital source of social capital. Dr. Sloor challenged Luis to reassess his priorities in preparation for graduate school. On the other hand, Leo relied on an administrator to sustain his navigational and familial capital. Mrs. Mellet engaged Leo in service activities through Upward Bound, but these activities did not advance his aspirations to pursue graduate studies. Most participants shared similar educational aspirations, but only three of the Latino male achievers were admitted to graduate programs during the time of this study. Although student–faculty interactions can enhance students' sense of belonging and decision to persist (Strayhorn, 2012), Schreiner et al. (2009) revealed that these interactions have no direct effect on Latina/o students' thriving. Whereas faculty interactions contributed to other racial/ethnic groups' thriving, the only factors that yielded similar outcomes among Latina/o students included psychological sense of community and involvement in campus activities.

In the absence of faculty and administrator mentors, Latino male achievers turned to peers to sustain familial capital and social capital, which enhanced their academic determination to a degree. It should be noted that some Latino males attributed their limited interactions with faculty to feelings of discomfort. For example, Victor was concerned about "appearing stupid" in the presence of faculty and relied on his peers for academic support. Guyll et al. (2010) reported that the mere threat of fulfilling a negative stereotype diminishes Latina/o students' educational outcomes. Yet, Marcos found "paradoxical spaces of marginality" among his peers that provided the social, aspirational, and navigational capital needed to sustain his academic determination. Victor's fraternity brothers provided similar

support, but his over involvement in student organizations compromised his academic performance and pursuit of graduate studies. The relationships participants established with peers, particularly other Latino students, confirmed that peers constitute a "powerful socializing agent in shaping persistence and degree completion" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 418); however, educators often center their attention on peers as a source of social support and fail to recognize how minority-based organizations contribute to students' motivation, development, and degree attainment (Guardia & Evans, 2008; Harper & Kuykendall, 2012).

For the participants in this study, familial capital was essential to nurturing and sustaining Latino males' academic determination. Familial capital manifested in two distinct, but interrelated ways in this study: (a) a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to serving others; and (b) maintaining strong ties with immediate and extended family members. Additionally, familial capital overlapped with other forms of capital that nurtured and sustained participants' academic determination during college. This is consistent with Yosso's (2005) argument that "aspirations are developed within social and familial contexts, often through linguistic storytelling and advice . . . that offer specific navigational goals to challenge . . . oppressive conditions" (p. 77). Fostering Latino males' academic determination requires researchers, policymakers, and educators to recognize and capitalize on the cultural wealth these students bring to college.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Although the reports offered by participants in this study highlight intersections between Schreiner's (2010) thriving quotient and Yosso's (2005) CCW framework, future researchers could examine the intersections that exist within these frameworks. For example, participants relied heavily on familial capital to achieve their goals, which highlights the intersection between aspirational capital and familial capital. Similarly, Latino male achievers noted how social connectedness and academic determination intersect. This study addresses a limitation in Schreiner's analysis by highlighting how background characteristics play an important role in academic determination. Nonetheless, studies that explore intersections within each framework could yield additional insights about Latino male success in higher education.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

Considering that familial capital played a central role in nurturing and sustaining participants' academic determination, faculty and administrators can create conditions that foster student success. For instance, the emphasis Latino male achievers placed on serving others could be sustained by instituting service-learning requirements into the curriculum. Service-related experiences have been linked to increased engagement and academic achievement among racial/ethnic minority students (Scales, Roehlkepartain, Neal, Kielsmeier, & Benson, 2006). Moreover, exploring what compels faculty to serve as mentors to racial/ethnic minority students could inform policies related to promotion and tenure (Fuentes, Ruiz Alvarado, Berdan, & DeAngelo, 2014). Instituting policies that reward faculty for engaging students in research can enhance faculty productivity and promote the academic determination of Latino males. In addition to offering grants and other financial incentives, broadening promotion and tenure requirements to account for faculty efforts to engage racial/ethnic minority students in undergraduate research

could foster mutually beneficial mentoring relationships (Griffin, 2012). These policies have the potential to sustain the academic determination of Latino male achievers and increase their representation in graduate school.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Employing appreciative advising practices can also sustain college students' academic determination (Hutson & He, 2001). Fostering Latino males' academic determination is equally dependent on educators recognizing the knowledge, skills, and resources students bring to college. For example, participants like Melvin would have benefited from course assignments that provided opportunities for self-reflection. These assignments could include "writing about obstacles to higher education, identifying personal factors that have facilitated [students'] academic success, and recognizing . . . idiosyncratic coping responses that allowed [students] to overcome challenges" (Cavazos, Johnson, & Sparrow, 2010, p. 201). Educators could also reenvision co-curricular activities that are intended to foster social interactions into programs that help Latino males adjust to the academic demands of college (Harper & Kuykendall, 2012).

LIMITATIONS

This phenomenological study highlighted important intersections between Latino male achievers' cultural wealth and academic determination. Although Schreiner (2010) contends that a student's success in college is more dependent on levels of thriving than background characteristics, Latino male achievers shared how cultural wealth was essential to nurturing and sustaining academic determination. This explains how background characteristics play a central role in students' motivation to succeed and to serve others. While this study provides rich accounts of participants' lived experiences, exploring the intersections of race/ethnicity, class, and generational status could offer additional insights about Latino male achievers. Additionally, the reported findings are based on participants at two selective PWIs and cannot be generalized to all Latino male college students. It is conceivable that Latino males at less selective institutions may possess and utilize different forms of capital to nurture and sustain their academic determination. Despite these limitations, the findings provide important insights about Latino male college students' academic determination.

CONCLUSION

Integrating asset-based theoretical frameworks can advance research, policies, and practices that foster the success of Latino males in higher education. Although participants employed different forms of capital to nurture and sustain their academic determination, Latino male achievers also identified challenges associated with translating their cultural wealth to selective institutions. While many participants entered college with unclear goals, they drew on different forms of capital to cement and achieve their goals. Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek (2007) questioned whether "we have the will to . . . [develop] promising policies and effective educational practices . . . [to] increase the odds that more students get ready, get in, and get through" (p. 130). The reports offered by Latino male achievers indicate that this continues to be a pressing issue. Most participants relied on peer networks instead of faculty and administrators as they worked toward their educational goals. Thus, the success of Latino male achievers was dependent on cultural wealth rather than institutional conditions that supported their academic determination.

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