

Chapman University

Chapman University Digital Commons

Education (Ph.D) Dissertations

Dissertations and Theses

Spring 5-18-2018

Counter-stories of First-Generation Latinx Alumnae: A Critical Race Theory Analysis

Pamela Ezell

Chapman University, ezell@chapman.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/education_dissertations



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ezell, P. (2019). *Counter-stories of first-generation Latinx alumnae: A critical race theory analysis* (Doctoral dissertation). <https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000039>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Dissertations and Theses at Chapman University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Education (Ph.D) Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Chapman University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact laughtin@chapman.edu.

Counter-stories of First-Generation Latinx Alumnae: A Critical Race Theory Analysis

A Dissertation by

Pamela Ezell

Chapman University

Orange, CA

Donna Ford Attallah College of Educational Studies

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

August 2018

Committee in charge

Kris T. De Pedro, Ph.D., Co-Chair

Geraldine McNenny, Ph.D., Co-Chair

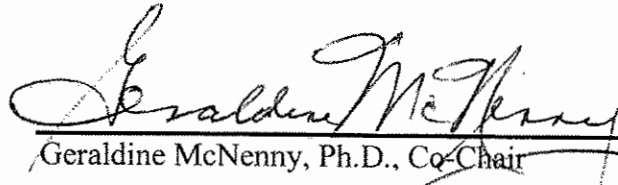
Marisol Arredondo, Ph.D.

Suzanne SooHoo, Ph.D.

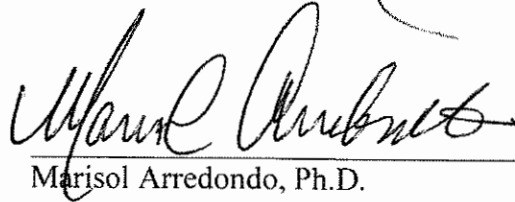
The dissertation of Pamela Ezell is approved.



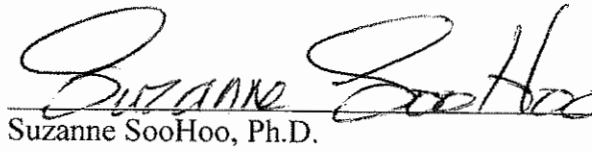
Kris T. De Pedro, Ph.D., Co-Chair



Geraldine McNenny, Ph.D., Co-Chair



Marisol Arredondo, Ph.D.



Suzanne SooHoo, Ph.D.

August, 2018

Counter-stories of First-Generation Latinx Alumnae: A Critical Race Theory Analysis

Copyright © 2018

by Pamela Ezell

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have not done this on my own. Many people have helped and supported me. First, to the women in this study: Alicia, Catalina, Natalie, Phoenix, Raquel, and Sylvia. Your open-heartedness and your trust in me is deeply appreciated. Your lived experiences and counter-stories have made an indelible impression on me. Thank you for agreeing to be part of this process. You are each in your own way changing the world.

Three other people in particular deserve special acknowledgement: Jim Lichacz, my husband, for his unconditional love, assistance on several creative projects, and preparation of many family meals; Jane, our fiercely-intelligent daughter and Ivy Leaguer who said I was her inspiration; and Cooper, our keenly-observant and creative son, who begins his own higher education journey soon on this very campus. You three are so dear to me. Thank you for giving me the space and time to do what I thought for so long I could never do.

I have one other family member to thank for all her encouragement: my sister, Sandi. Your love sustained me. Thank you for reading the papers I sent you, driving me to that conference in Rhinebeck, listening to me give a presentation, and giving me a “focus” bracelet last Christmas. Every bit has helped. I love you.

My list of friends in the doctoral program is long: Elizabeth, CJ, Chris, Gregory, Jackie, Giselle, Michael, Angie, Margaret, and many more. I must especially acknowledge Miznah. Whether it was checking my APA, emailing me highlighted articles for my methodology chapter, or sending me voice notes and emojis on your way home from Soul Cycle (the strong arm, the praying hands), your insistence that “we can do this!” has propelled us both up this mountain.

I have a host of friends outside the academy and many professional colleagues who have probably heard more than they would have preferred about my progress in this program. I will not attempt to thank them all by name, but I would like to acknowledge Susan, Gabrielle, Ann, Dana, Junie, Michelle, Diane, Irene, Lucinda, and Sharon. We are lucky pups, as Susan likes to say. At work, whether it was the Post-It notes of encouragement on my door or the high-fives in the hallways, thank you all for accommodating and encouraging me on this journey. Special thanks to Josh who, at one moment, helped prepare this document.

I would like to acknowledge the faculty, leadership, and staff of the Attallah College. You have demonstrated to me what it truly means to be an educator. Thank you to Dawn, the program director, for all the assistance, including with help with numerous forms, answering so many questions, and the accountability prizes on the way to the defense.

Now, to my esteemed doctoral committee members: Gerri, thank you for your friendship and help with my writing – for teaching me to separate A tasks from B tasks. Thank you, too, for teaching the discourse analysis and narrative inquiry course. Kris, every article you ever gave me has opened my mind. Thank you especially for telling me, “You should read Tara Yosso.” Your patience with my topic-hopping is deeply appreciated. Marisol, the day I found your dissertation online was kismet. I so appreciate your work on first-generation students. The work continues. Suzi, you taught me a new level of humanity. I can never repay the work the four of you have done on my behalf.

ABSTRACT

Counter-stories of First-Generation Latinx Alumnae: A Critical Race Theory Analysis

by Pamela Ezell

This qualitative study is an attempt to add to the literature the perspectives and lived experiences of six first-generation Latinx alumnae who attended three private, predominantly-White universities in Southern California. It applied a critical race theory (CRT) framework and an anti-deficit ideology to their experiences. Importantly, because the participants and the researcher are of different identities, the study employed principles of culturally responsive methodologies (CRM). Most quantitative research and existent theory concerning first-generation Latinx collegiate women excludes the voices of first-generation Latinx alumnae, so this study included the telling of their counter-stories concerning their undergraduate experiences. These experiences included identity-threat, microaggressions, and the enactment of White privilege. Additionally, their counter-stories contradict majoritarian stories concerning first-generation students and their families, as well as institutional values of fairness, meritocracy, colorblindness, and diversity. The methodology of the study was CRT counter-storytelling. Concepts of narrative inquiry informed the research design. Counter-stories of the participants were shared during conversations and interviews, then interpreted using the framework of CRT and a method of thematic analysis. All members of the study have graduated with a bachelor's degree, and their experiences provide direction for additional research concerning first-generation theory as it applies to Latinx collegiate women, as well as implications for policy and praxis regarding the future experiences of Latinx students on U.S. higher education campuses.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction	2
A Journey Toward Criticality	2
Part One: I Do Not Know That I Do Not Know	2
Part Two: I Know That I Do Not Know	3
Part Three: I Know More Than I Thought I Knew	3
Part Four: So, What Now?	5
Statement of the Problem.....	10
Purpose of the Study	16
Definition of Terms.....	17
Organization of the Dissertation	19
Chapter 2: Literature Review	22
First-Generation Departure and Tinto’s Theory	26
First-Generation Persistence and Astin’s Theory of Student Involvement	31
Support for First-Generation Involvement, Learning, and Persistence	34
The Getting of College Knowledge	36
The Turn to Active Learning	39
Commercialization of Education and Commodification of First-Generation Students.....	42
CRT and the Lived Experiences of First-Generation Students.....	46
An Overview of CRT	46
Summary	53
Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods	56
Methodology	56
CRT Counter-Storytelling.....	58
History and Process of CRT Counter-Storytelling	58
Narrative Inquiry Methodology	60
History and Process of Narrative Inquiry	60
Justification for Chosen Methodology.....	62
Culturally Responsive Methodologies	64
Site Selection	66
Participants.....	68
Data Collection	70
Member Checking.....	73
Ethical Considerations	74
Statement of Subjectivity and Researcher Positionality	75
Trustworthiness.....	77
Chapter 4: Counter-stories	81
Sylvia, 32, Pinnacle University, B.A., M.A.....	81
Natalie, 21, Eminence University, B.A.....	87

Alicia, 24, B.S., M.S. in progress	91
Phoenix, Summit University, B.S., M.S.	95
Raquel, 36, Pinnacle University, B.A., M.B.A.	100
Catalina, 33, Pinnacle University, B.A., J.D., Ph.D. candidate	102
Chapter 5: A Researcher Story	112
Chapter 6 – Data Analysis.....	117
Transcription.....	118
Transcripts.....	118
Reflexive Journal	118
Coding.....	120
NVivo Software	120
First-Cycle: Holistic Coding	121
Second-Cycle: Concept Coding.....	123
Third-Cycle: Values Analysis Coding.....	126
Theming the Data.....	131
Chapter 7: Discussion	138
The Value of the First-Generation Journey	138
Family	139
Collectivism	140
College Knowledge.....	141
Financial Aid and Scholarships	142
The Need to Enact Personal Identity	142
Microaggressions, Identity-Threats, and White Privilege	143
First-Generation Persistence	144
Allies, Mentors, and Friends.....	144
Family Ethics of Determination and Commitment.....	145
Theoretical Implications	145
Implications for Future Research.....	147
Implications for Praxis and Policy.....	149
Limitations of the Study.....	150
Benefits of the Study.....	151
Conclusion	152
References.....	155
Appendices.....	186

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Forty-Year Comparisons: Demographic Characteristics of Selected Post-Secondary Students.....	5
Table 2. Southern California PPWI Selected for the Study.....	68
Table 3. Participants in the Study	68
Table 4. Summary of Three Coding Strategies Employed for Data Analysis	121
Table 5. Holistic Codes.....	122
Table 6. Concept Coding Resulted in Six Concepts.....	125
Table 7. Values Analysis Resulted in Eight Different Values.....	130
Table 8. Three Emergent Themes and Nine Sub-Themes	136
Table 9. Theoretical Constructs Inform the Development of a Qualitative Theory	137

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy	42
Figure 2. Tenets of Critical Race Theory.....	47
Figure 3. Reflexive Journal Cover	71
Figure 4. Reflexive Journal Sample Pages	72
Figure 5. Coding Schematic.....	129

“Humility is being comfortable with knowing one cannot know everything.”

– Suzanne SooHoo

Chapter 1: Introduction

A Journey Toward Criticality

When I tell friends outside academia the topic of this dissertation, they ask me, “Why?” I think I understand their question: It is because I am White. Regardless of their identities, they do not see the connection between this topic and me. I explain that I was a first-generation college student myself 40 years ago (coincidentally, at the same institution where I am finishing this doctoral degree and where I have been employed, off and on, since the 1980s). Truthfully, I do not know if anyone else will question my interest and motives as much as I have questioned them myself. Yes, there is the first-generation connection but there is more.

Part One: I Do Not Know That I Do Not Know

As a first-generation scholarship student who worked as a waitress to put herself through school at what was then a small, private college, I remember the intellectual awakening of my undergraduate years. In classes such as Political Science, Sociology, and Film History, I learned about socialism, feminism, and semiotics – ideas that inspired me and frightened my father. I was often out of my depth and did not grasp what professors were talking about much of the time. However, I am a quick study – someone with a lifetime of pretending as though I know what I do not know.

I excelled in college. I was a sorority president, an orientation leader, and the Outstanding Senior Woman. I graduated within four years, including a semester travelling aboard the S.S. Universe with Semester at Sea. I gained a sense of criticality about the world, about art, film, and literature, but very little about myself.

Part Two: I Know That I Do Not Know

To sum up the lived experience of the intervening decades between my bachelor's degree studies and my doctoral degree studies in a few lines is daunting. This is a doctoral dissertation, not a memoir, so I will avoid extended explanations and omit nearly all autobiographical details. In short, by 2014 when I re-entered a classroom as a Ph.D. student, I was a married mother of two high schoolers who had moved back to Orange County after 20 years of living in Los Angeles. Even so, to get to the point of this section, I had heard the term "White privilege" for the first time only six years before, in 2008, when I worked as a documentary producer supporting the election and policies of Barack Obama. I was profoundly politically-unaware, despite my liberal education, professional achievements, and life experiences. I did not know how a doctoral program would change the way I made sense of the world, but when I sat down for the first class, I was ready to learn as I had never been ready before.

Part Three: I Know More Than I Thought I Knew

The investigation of my positionality and privilege as a White middle-class, middle-aged, cis-gendered, heterosexual, enabled woman proceeded through courses such as Action Research (De Pedro), Ethics (Bryan), Qualitative Methods (Monzó), Culturally Responsive Methodologies (SooHoo), Current Controversies in Education (McLaren & SooHoo) and more. Reading Cahill (2006), Fine (2013), Harper (2012b), Herr (1999), Ladson-Billings (2006), Smith (2012), Yosso (2005), and others, my critical consciousness grew stronger. The process of knowing more about my place in the world accelerated on April 2, 2017, when Christine Sleeter addressed the Orange County Ethnic Studies Conference. Of her career as a White multi-culturalism educator, Sleeter

(2017) said, “I do not come to this work with a legacy of innocence.” I thought to myself, neither do I. Sleeter (2017) urged the audience members to locate our family histories within historical contexts, informed by critical theory, critical race theory, and critical Whiteness studies. Sleeter (2017) quoted Faulkner: “The past isn’t dead; it’s not even past.”

Again, to summarize a legacy in a paragraph is challenging. In this case, the legacy is not only my own but my late father’s. In the 1980s, he was a commissioner for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). On the one extreme, his work with immigration included oversight of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 – better known as Amnesty. On the other, he was a co-author of the controversial California ballot proposition, Proposition 187. Officially named the *Illegal Aliens Ineligible for Public Benefits*, Proposition 187 passed, was never implemented as a law, but has had an impact on our national discourse ever since (Rubenstein, 2011).

He would often say his only mission was to uphold the law. The law was sometimes beneficent: he recruited thousands to sign up for Amnesty and presided over the naturalization ceremonies of thousands more. The law was also harsh: he oversaw interdiction and deportation efforts during raids on factories, farms, restaurants, and along the border. There should be nothing ambiguous about obeying the law and yet, I do not believe he could ever see that the law is not always just – that the match between the most powerful nation on Earth and humanity’s most vulnerable members is not a fair fight.

Through it all, he was my dad. I loved him then and I love him now, 20 years after his passing. I also feel an obligation to be a counter-presence in the world today – to tell my own counter-story as I have asked the women in this study to tell me theirs.

Part Four: So, What Now?

In my professional work and doctoral studies, I came across the term “first-generation student” and realized I had been one. During the 1970s, there were approximately 11 million college students in the U.S. and all but approximately two million of them were White (Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2018). As a point of interest related to this dissertation topic, in 1976, less than 2% of all college students were identified as Latinx women and nearly 40% were identified as White women (Snyder et al, 2018). (See Table 1 for an overview of post-secondary student demographics concerning these cohorts, then and now).

Table 1

Forty-Year Comparisons: Enrollment of White and Latinx Women in Post-Secondary Education

	1976	2015	Difference
Variable	(N=10,985,600)	(N=19,977,300)	(N=8,991,700)
White (all)	9,076,100 (82.6%)	10,937,100 (54.7%)	1,861,000
Latinx (all)	1,033,000 (9.4%)	2,675,400 (13.4%)	1,642,400
White women	4,262,400 (38.8%)	6,089,000 (30.5%)	1,826,578
Latinx women	174,100 (1.6%)	1,904,900 (5.5%)	1,730,800

Note. Adapted from Snyder et al., 2018.

My years in college had been as Ladson-Billings (1998) described. In a system where Whiteness, with all its privileges and access, was positioned as the norm, I had been well

within the margins of the majority, despite my status as a first-generation student who had to work to put herself through college.

Now, with my raised critical consciousness, I know that racism is a fact of life in America, even within the progressive bastions of U.S. higher education (Delgado, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001/2012; Harper, 2012b; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015; Yosso, 2017; Yosso et al., 2009). With my critical remembering (Smith, 2012), I consider the lived experiences of people other than myself. What was it like to be a Student of Color in a private, predominantly-White institution (PPWI)? To be a Woman of Color? To be a Latinx woman? How were they included or excluded? How did they find themselves reflected in the policies, practices, and curricula? These questions became the basis of this dissertation.

After the study commenced, Catalina (a pseudonym) asked, “I’m curious about what made you interested in this population” (personal communication, January 15, 2018). She added, “I’m very critical of White folks doing research on other races.” By then, I was used to the question, but still wondered about my motivation. Why was I interested? Was it professionally-motivated, due to my concern that the institution where I am employed and earning my doctorate should diversify, become less White-normative, and more reflective of the surrounding community? Was it racist to believe that I, a White woman, could help solve the problem of systemic racism I observed in White-normative society? Was I actually qualified to conduct this study? I was uncomfortable with my positionality in respect to this problem, but something kept bringing back to the subject of the Latinx student’s baccalaureate experience inside a predominantly-White private university. I acknowledged my historical and my contemporary position of

privilege and access in higher education to myself and to the prospective participants. I shared my thought that, if they would share their counter-stories through this study, their experiences could make a difference in higher education policy and praxis.

Each of the participants were willing to overlook my unknowing and my inexperience as a researcher. They entrusted me with their truths. These are the lived experiences of six Latinx women who have each earned a bachelor's degree within six years of study. Qualitative research findings may not be considered generalizable in comparison to quantitative research findings (Creswell, 2009), yet the counter-stories of these six women provide trustworthy insight about living in, persisting through, and graduating from a PPWI.

This qualitative study originated from self-reflexive criticality about the researcher's lived experiences and observations about the lack of diversity and equity in U.S. private higher education. In terms of selectivity, U.S. higher education remains segregated: 82% of incoming White students attend the nation's 468 most selective colleges, while 72% of incoming Latinx students attend the nation's 3,250 two-year and four-year open-access colleges (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013). In an effort to understand the lived experiences of first-generation Latinx alumnae who attended selective, predominantly-White universities, the researcher conducted a study with the participation of six first-generation Latinx alumnae who earned their bachelor's degree within six years at three Southern California PPWIs.

According to researchers, evidence of structural racism is still found on U.S. higher education campuses (Harper, 2009; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015; Yosso, Parker, Solórzano, & Lynn, 2004). In fact, incidences of microaggressions, identity-

threat, stereotyping, and implicit bias occur more often on predominantly-White campuses than at any other type of institution (Harper, 2009; Harper, 2012b; Robertson, Bravo, & Chaney, 2016; Robertson & Chaney, 2017; Yosso et al., 2009). Research concerning the experiences of Latinx undergraduates at historically White universities has revealed that these students felt not only unwelcome but under assault at their institutions due to a continual barrage of microaggressions (Yosso et al., 2009).

The theoretical framework of this study is critical race theory (CRT) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993). The methodological approach of the study is CRT counter-storytelling (Delgado, 1989). Additionally, principles of narrative inquiry as advanced by Chase (2011), Clandinin (2013), Daiute (2014), and Merriam (2002) were applied. As developed by CRT scholars (i.e., Delgado, 1989; Harper, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), counter-stories are experiential accounts told by members of minoritized and marginalized communities.

Counter-stories critique and contradict majoritarian narratives, which in this instance, include institutional claims of meritocracy, equality, and race neutrality (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Often, the experiences of minoritized students within higher education are unacknowledged (Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). The experiences of campus Women of Color, in particular, are often devalued or ignored (Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Wood, 2016). In previous studies, Latinx students on higher education campuses have indicated that faculty and administrators demonstrate a lack of interest in their counter-stories (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Delgado Bernal (2002) wrote that students outside a Eurocentric perspective are “holders and creators of knowledge [but]

they often feel as if their histories, experiences, cultures, and languages are devalued, misinterpreted, or omitted within formal educational settings” (p. 106). By recognizing the positionality of the participants as university women and as experts concerning the PPWI they attended, this study aimed to document their epistemologies, cultural intuition, and perspectives.

Additionally, as Smith (2012) advocated, this study aimed to critique and avoid the perpetuation of theories that oppress and “others” those who identify as different from or in resistance to White-normative. Instead, this study was undertaken with the goal of developing emancipatory theory that illuminates the lived experiences of the participants. In writing about decolonizing methodologies, Smith (2012) stated that such theories of resistance are “inextricably bound” (p. 40) to epistemologies and stories.

At this time, according to Snyder et al. (2018), more than 1.9 million Latinx females are enrolled full-time in U.S. post-secondary institutions. As a cohort, they represent the second largest group of women students in U.S. higher education (Snyder et al., 2018). Nuñez & Sansone (2016) estimated that half of these women are also first-generation students. According to some studies, first-generation students have lower rates of persistence, college engagement, and degree completion than their continuing-generation peers (Engle & Tinto, 2008; The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Education, 2011)

However, CRT scholars have resisted explanations of deficit-thinking concerning the performance of Latinx women in higher education (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002). Research has demonstrated that conditions of structural and institutional racism have led to the exclusion of, the lack of opportunity for, and the

perceived shortcomings of Latinx women at all levels of education (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Likewise, these conditions have contributed to the devaluing of the epistemologies, funds of knowledge, and community cultural wealth of Latinx women (Delgado Bernal, 1998; 2002; Hogg, 2014; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Yosso, 2005). Within American higher education as throughout U.S. society, White middle-class standards are the standards by which all other communities are judged (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Yosso, 2005). In contrast to deficit-research, anti-deficit scholarship focuses on epistemologies, experiential knowledge and the various forms of capital Latinx women bring with them to higher education (Delgado Bernal, 1998; 2002; Fernández, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Rather than concentrate on students' perceived deficiencies, an anti-deficit study focuses on their demonstrated successes, while acknowledging problems within the system of education itself (Peña, Bensimon, & Colyar, 2006; Harper, 2012a; Howard, 2013).

Currently, there are nearly one million first-generation Latinx women enrolled full-time in higher education. Despite this, Delgado Bernal (1998, 2002) and Reyes and Nora (2012) found that the experiences of first-generation Latinx women were understudied. Therefore, this study sought to add the voices of first-generation Latinx alumnae to the literature by sharing their lived experiences concerning earning their bachelor's degrees at a PPWI.

Statement of the Problem

Within 25 years, People of Color will outnumber Whites in the United States (Williams, 2014). Still, there is a continuing disparity between the increasingly diverse

U.S. population and the composition of U.S. higher education. Post-secondary student enrollment and faculty representation throughout higher education remain predominantly White (Brown & Dancy, 2010; Espinosa, Gaertner, & Ordfield, 2015; Ponjuan, 2011; Snyder et al., 2018).

Many institutions are attempting to address this issue of changing demographics through institutional commitments to diversity (Breland, Maxey, Gernand, Cumming, & Trapani, 2002; Hubain, Allen, Harris, & Linder, 2016; Miller, 2014). A study of 451 post-secondary institutions revealed that 74% espoused diversity in their mission statements (Breland et al., 2002). These values include a view to the importance of various perspectives and experiences, institutional ethics to increase accessibility to higher education for underrepresented communities, and institutional prerogatives to expand the number of applicants by recruiting greater numbers of students from minoritized groups (American Council on Education, 2012; Mitchell, 2014; Pippert, Essenburg, & Matchett, 2013). However, admissions policies which espouse affirmative action are illegal in eight states, under court challenge in others, and unpopular in some sectors of public opinion (Backes, 2015; Potter, 2014). This can serve to limit recruiting efforts concerning Students of Color (Potter, 2014).

Meanwhile, there is competition for higher education enrollments (Bok, 2009). There is also a steady decline in the number of White students enrolling in college over the last several years (Brown, 2015). In this competitive environment, one category of students of interest to many college and university administrators is first-generation students, as evidenced by the numerous programs established to recruit and support these students (“Colleges,” 2017; Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, & Leonard, 2007). Within higher

education, first-generation students are seen by some administrators as an *untapped market* (Pippert et al., 2013). Despite a decline in the number of first-generation students overall, caused in part by an increase in the number of adults in the U.S. who have earned a bachelor's degree, approximately 24% of all incoming post-secondary students are first-generation students (Redford & Hoyer, 2017; Saenz, Hurtado, Barrera, Wolf, & Yeung, 2007; Snyder et al., 2018).

Among higher education administrators, according to Backes (2015), because the majority of first-generation students are also Students of Color, the designation "first-generation" is often code for minoritized students (Atherton, 2014; Engle & Tinto, 2008). According to some studies, these first-generation students are more likely to live at home versus on-campus, to be older than traditional college age, to be parents themselves, to be from lower-income families, and to work while attending college (Engle & Tinto, 2008; Saenz et al., 2007). Such criteria are considered by some researchers as risk factors for college departure prior to earning a bachelor's degree (Astin, 1984, 1999; Engle & Tinto, 2008).

First-generation students enrolled at private institutions have demonstrated a higher persistence rate than first-generation students attending any other type of institution (i.e., public universities, religious colleges, and non-sectarian colleges) (DeAngelo et al., 2011; Saenz et al., 2007). At private universities, 68.3% of first-generation students earn a bachelor's degree within six years as compared to 79.6% of their continuing-generation peers at the same institutions (DeAngelo, et al., 2011). This is possibly due to the relatively smaller size of private institutions with their increased level of faculty attention, financial aid, and the likelihood that many first-generation

students live on campus, which promotes engagement and academic success (Saenz et al., 2007). Also, DeAngelo et al. (2011) pointed out that private universities enroll the most academically-prepared students; for example, students with high grades in high school are more likely to complete college than students with lower grades. The same is true for students with high SAT scores (DeAngelo et al., 2011).

However, the majority of research concerning first-generation Students of Color, like most empirical research about minoritized students, appears to reveal what can be defined as deficits within the students themselves, their families, and their communities (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Deficit-informed research assigns responsibility for the success of Students of Color *on* the Students of Color (Harper, 2016; Howard, 2013). Such deficit-informed research is often evaluated as objective data (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Furthermore, the specific forms of community capital students possess, which could be added to the higher education community to offset any supposed deficits, are often misunderstood or disregarded (Yosso, 2005). Such so-called objective findings seem to suggest that some groups are genetically predisposed to success in higher education while others are destined for failure (Harper, 2016). These narratives and perspectives ignore systemic deficits within institutions of higher education which allow for racism, sexism, and oppression to continue unseen and unquestioned by higher education leaders (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Capper, 2015; Harper, 2016; Howard, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Too often, the qualities of success or failure in higher education are reduced to measurable, quantitative data, which denies the totality of the experiences of Students of Color (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013).

Meanwhile, deficit-informed research continues to be used to explain the so-called achievement gap between Asian Americans and White Americans with their larger percentage of high test scores, high grade point averages, and advanced degrees and the lower performance of all other minoritized groups (Harper, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Some researchers have resisted the definition of this phenomenon as the achievement gap, re-naming it the education debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006), the receivement gap (Chambers, 2009), or the opportunity gap (Harper, 2016; Pendakur, 2016). Critical race scholars use these terms to redefine the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral contexts concerning Communities of Color in this country (Ladson-Billings, 2006). These alternative terms are also meant to acknowledge the White-normative, often unwelcoming, and exclusive culture of higher education and the deficit view of minoritized students that have caused some Students of Color to leave higher education without earning a degree or to defer higher education college enrollment altogether (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Harper, 2016).

Even on campuses where there is a stated commitment to diversity, the lived experiences of Students of Color often fail to be reflected in either the university curriculum or the campus culture (Delgado , 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). What persists instead are White majoritarian narratives and *monovocal* stories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). On many campuses, experiences of discrimination and prejudice continue (Ware, 2016). Such experiences can be perceived by first-generation Students of Color as both a lack of care from the institution (Raisman, 2013) and a lack of acceptance throughout U.S. higher education (Murphy & Destin, 2016). In a predominantly-White environment, Students of Color may perceive themselves as a marginalized *outgroup*

(Delgado, 1989). As scholars of CRT have demonstrated, unless the objective of diversity is accompanied by an embracement of social justice and full inclusion of minoritized and marginalized students, combined with an effort to eliminate racism, sexism, stereotyping, and other forms of oppression on campus, the result will be the perpetuation of racism, sexism, stereotyping, and other forms of oppression on campus (Harper, 2012b; Yosso et al., 2004, 2009).

First-generation Latinx women represent a large cohort within U.S. higher education (Snyder et al., 2018; Nuñez & Sansone, 2016). Therefore, there is a need for qualitative research that centers on the experiences and perspectives of first-generation Latinx alumnae who attended PPWI and persisted until bachelor's degree completion (Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2002; Reyes & Nora, 2012; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). More specifically, the counter-narratives of Latinx first-generation alumnae who attended PPWI and persisted until bachelor's degree completion could provide an increased understanding of the problems of racism, sexism, stereotyping, and other forms of oppression faced by Latinx women on predominantly-White U.S. higher education campuses (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso et al., 2009). These counter-narratives could be useful for praxis and policy concerning pre-college interventions, recruitment efforts, and support programs throughout the degree process designed for first-generation Latinx students (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Minikel-Lacocque, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002; Yosso et al., 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to focus on the lived experiences and counter-stories of six first-generation Latinx alumnae who persisted to the attainment of a bachelor's degree within six years while attending a PPWI. In most instances, the lived experiences of such women are missing from the data (Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2002; Reyes & Nora, 2012). Deficit-informed research assigns responsibility to students themselves for challenges within the higher education system (Harper, 2010, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). While the deficit-focused researcher asks how first-generation Latinx women are failing the system, the anti-deficit researcher asks how the system is failing first-generation Latinx women.

Anti-deficit research concentrates on participants' successes while acknowledging whatever challenges minoritized students face (Harper, 2012a). The intention of this study was to hear from Latinx women who had navigated through the higher education system and had persisted through to bachelor's degree completion. The aim of this study was to hear, in the participants' own words, what it had been like to attend one of three private PWI institutions in Southern California. The primary research question guiding this study was, what was it like to be a first-generation Latinx student attending a PPWI in Southern California? In this way, the counter-stories of these six alumnae may be added to the literature. I hope that I can serve as the conduit through which their lived experiences may be expressed to higher education policy makers and practitioners. In this way, together, we can affect real change.

Definition of Terms

To increase understanding of the study, the following terms are defined. *First-generation* refers to any student whose parents (or guardians) have limited postsecondary education, meaning neither parent (or guardian) holds a bachelor's degree, although they may have attended some college or university classes beyond the high school diploma (Davis, 2010). Therefore, in this study, *continuing-generation* refers to undergraduate students with at least one parent (or guardian) who holds, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree. While *Latinx* is as a gender-neutral term used in lieu of Latina (Morales, 2018), the term *alumnae* indicates that these women have earned, at minimum, a bachelor's degree from a four-year degree-granting institution. *Degree persistence* indicates continuation of studies toward completion of a bachelor's degree (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). In the context of this study, *degree attainment* refers to completion of a bachelor's degree within six years (The Pell Institute, 2011). A *predominantly-White institution* (PWI) is a college or university with a student body of 50% or more White students (Brown & Dancy, 2010), meaning that a *PPWI* is specifically a private, predominantly-White institution. *Minoritized* (Harper, 2012b) is used instead of *minority* to refer to the categories and definitions placed on individuals and groups of individuals to separate them from Whiteness and its acceptance as the prevailing social norm (Ladson-Billings, 1998). *Microaggressions*, a term first introduced by Pierce (1970), refers to offenses designed to minimize and make irrelevant those targeted by this form of oppression, including individuals who find themselves the object of racial jokes, verbal affronts, and non-verbal affronts (Yosso et al., 2009). *Identity-threats* (Murphy & Destin, 2016) are barriers against the performance and fulfillment of a student's full identity and

capabilities, i.e., feeling a sense of belonging in a classroom, which is crucial to high achievement, or feeling safe enough to share one's authentic experiences regarding class, income, and family life. *Stereotypes* (Solórzano, 1997) are beliefs – sometimes expressed but often unsaid – about People of Color regarding their character and background. As is customary with some CRT scholars (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993), identities such as *People of Color* and *Students of Color* are capitalized. *Onlyness*, as defined by Harper et al. (2011) is the condition of having few, if any, same-identity mentors, peers, and colleagues. Drawing from theories of psychology, sociology, and education, an *anti-deficit view* considers Persons of Color without attempting to define them in terms of failure (Bensimon, 2005; Harper, 2010; Harper, 2012a; Howard, 2013). *Community cultural wealth* (Yosso, 2005) and *funds of knowledge* (Moll et al., 1992) include the relationships, communal affiliations, competencies, resources, skills, and knowledges held by first-generation Students of Color based on their experiences prior to higher education and their memberships in various communities outside of higher education. *Majoritarian stories* (Delgado, 1993) are the master narratives of culture or totalizing social theories used to establish and perpetuate predominant social norms (Russell, 2011). *Counter-stories* are based on the direct experiences of minoritized members of society whose perspectives sometimes challenge and contradict prevailing ideologies and assumptions espoused within the dominant culture (Delgado, 1989; Delgado, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Matua, 2012). *College knowledge* refers to the specialized language and infrastructure of higher education (Stuber, 2011; Vargas, 2004). Higher education *insiders* (Sherry, 2012) are individuals with college knowledge, usually faculty members, administrators, and

continuing-generation students who understand and/or have direct experience with the culture of higher education. In this context, higher education *outsiders* (Sherry, 2012) are those without college knowledge.

Organization of the Dissertation

Following this introduction in Chapter One, a review of literature in the field of first-generation studies is presented in Chapter Two. This includes theories of college persistence and departure. Also included is literature concerning the commercialization of higher education, its influence on the commodification of first-generation students, and an overview of CRT, specifically as it relates to first-generation Latinx women enrolled in higher education.

There is a need for the voices and experiences of first-generation Latinx alumnae in the literature (Reyes & Nora, 2012). The CRT methodology of counter-storytelling is suitable to generate data in the form of first-person Latinx alumnae lived experiences (Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso 2001). Also, this study incorporated a method of thematic analysis based on coding structures described by Daiute (2014) and Saldana (2016). Narrative methods employed in the study included conversational interviews, the stance of the researcher as a part of versus apart from the study, and the creation of reflexive journal (Chase, 2011; Clandinin, 2013; Josselson, 2012; Schwandt, 2015). These methods were applied with an anti-deficit approach to the experiences of first-generation Latinx alumnae (Bensimon, 2005; Delgado , 2002; Harper, 2012a; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002). Specific information concerning methodologies and methods comprises Chapter Three.

The counter-stories of the women in the study comprise Chapter Four. As is appropriate for a study with the intention to add the voices of first-generation Latinx alumnae to the literature, these stories are told in their own words. In fact, as often as possible in this document, the actual words of the participants are used.

A reflection of the researcher comprises Chapter Five. Chapter Six includes the data analysis and description of coding processes employed. The dissertation concludes with a discussion and recommendations for praxis and further research in Chapter Seven.

“Critical research can be understood best as research that attempts to create conditions for empowerment and social justice. Inquiry that aspires to the name ‘critical’ must be connected to an attempt to confront structures of oppression.”

– Kincheloe, McLaren, Steinberg, & Monzó

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Before the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, more commonly known as the G.I. Bill, students attending U.S. colleges and universities were mostly male, White, affluent, and the children of people who had also attended college (Brown & Dancy, 2010; Davis, 2010; "G.I. Bill," 2017; Parsons, 2016). Today, the composition of students on U.S. college and university campuses has changed: by 2016, of the 19.8 million students enrolled at more than 4,000 undergraduate post-secondary institutions in the United States, 11.2 million were women (Selingo, 2013; Snyder et al., 2018). Women so outnumber men that some institutions have established a practice of affirmative action for men, accepting lower test scores, less community service, and lower grade point averages from male applicants while denying females with equivalent or superior credentials (Britz, 2006; Conger & Dickson, 2016; Gibbs, 2008; Jaschik, 2006.) There are additional opportunities for students from low-income families (meaning their families earn less than \$25,000 per year) as well as added opportunities for African American, Asian American, Latinx, and Native American students (Davis, 2010; Knight-Diop, 2010; The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity, 2011). In fact, Latinx enrollment has increased by 240% and African American enrollment has increased by 72% since the 1990s ("Today's student statistics," 2017).

Amidst all of these statistics, there is one category of student who has been identified as emergent, and that is first-generation college students (Aspelmeier, Love, McGill, Elliott, & Pierce, 2012; Davis, 2012; London, 1989). As early as 1989, Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin (1998) estimated that 43.4% of all incoming college students were those whose parents had no higher education experience. Still, at this time, in the

literature, no standard definition for the term “first-generation student” exists: Toutkoushian, Stollberg, and Slaton (2018) uncovered eight different working definitions of the term in various studies (e.g., students without any familial college experience, students whose parents attended college but never earned a degree, etc.). As a consequence, according to researchers, this category is possibly undercounted and underserved (Aspelmeier et al., 2012; Davis, 2010; Murphy & Destin, 2016; Wilbur & Roscigno, 2016).

Based on the lack of an acceptable standard definition of first-generation status, there is widespread belief that the majority of these students are low-income women who identify as a member of a minoritized community (Atherton, 2014; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). Latinx women represent the second-largest group of women on campus (Snyder et al., 2018), therefore, it is reasonable to estimate that many first-generation students are also Latinx women.

One reason researchers contend that the attainment of a bachelor’s degree is crucial for first-generation students is that it confers many personal benefits, including, according to Murphy and Destin (2016), increased health, career advancement, and income. Ward, Siegel, and Davenport (2012) wrote that higher education was the great “social equalizer” (p. 70). Toutkoushian et al. (2018) stated that college education is one way to raise the national standard of living. Additionally, individuals with a bachelor’s degree have an opportunity to earn approximately \$1 million more over the course of their lifetime than peers with a high school diploma (Carnevale, Rose, & Cheah, 2011; Tinto, 2012). Carnevale et al. (2011) estimated that a bachelor’s degree is worth an average of \$2.3 million in lifetime earnings.

However, some theorists posit that certain sociocultural factors are to blame for comparatively low first-generation college degree attainment. For instance, according to some studies, many first-generation students are financially independent, have dependents of their own, and are aged 23 or older when they first enroll in college (Atherton, 2014; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Ross, 2016). As a consequence of financial independence and supporting dependents, first-generation students were found to be more likely than their continuing-generation peers to work full-time while attending college, live at home as opposed to on-campus, and attend college near their home (Ross, 2016; Saenz et al., 2007; Stuber, 2011; Wilbur & Roscigno, 2016). These conditions are all thought to mitigate against degree persistence and degree attainment; for example, according to Wilbur and Roscigno (2016), living at home is a risk factor that decreases the likelihood of degree completion by 35%.

Such characterizations of first-generation students overlook the possibility that they may possess various forms of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). With aspirational capital, first-generation students may demonstrate reserves of resiliency (Yosso, 2005). Familial capital may include a close-knit, extended family (Yosso, 2005). Social and navigational capital can inform agency, persistence, and alternative methods of achieving a goal (Yosso, 2005). Finally, resistant capital may enable the first-generation student to resist the dominant narratives concerning People of Color even while attending a predominantly-White institution (Yosso, 2005). These multiple intelligences may include diverse funds of knowledge about their home communities – knowledge of religion, *real world* economics, and the industries where their parents and they themselves are employed (Moll et al., 1992).

Additionally, working-class students may exhibit working-class values of collaboration and interdependence (Banks-Santilli, 2014; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012). While they may be less familiar with the individualistic orientation of higher education, they may value collectivist behaviors (Storlie, Mostade, & Duenyas, 2016). Researchers Storlie et al. (2016) documented that the first-generation Latinx alumnae in their study expressed a strong commitment “to give back to [their] community and family based on the respective career path” (p. 312). One Latinx woman stated this value as “give to other people if you already have enough” (Storlie et al., 2016, p. 312). Another said, “If somebody needs help, help them if you can. Because you never know when you are going to need it one day” (Storlie et al., 2016, p. 312).

Other studies, such as Atherton (2014) and Johnson and Castrellon (2014), focused on the academic needs of first-generation students that may have resulted from attending under-resourced high schools and possessing limited college knowledge (Vargas, 2004) before enrolling in a post-secondary institution. Petty (2014) reported that first-generation students may require extrinsic motivation and urged institutions to “provide a range of programs to help these students face their challenges and weaknesses” (p. 262). However, according to Bensimon (2005), such a focus on insufficiencies within a minoritized group, even for the purposes of supporting compensatory programming such as those that attempt to benefit and *fix* first-generation students, indicates a deficit cognitive frame on the part of the researcher. Elsewhere, Peña, Bensimon, and Colyar (2006) wrote:

In deficit thinking, the unit of analysis and intervention is focused on the students, who are viewed as having a learning deficiency that can be addressed with new

teaching techniques, supplementary programs, and add-on academic support systems to compensate for the deficiency (p. 48).

Meanwhile, other researchers, instead of focusing on deficits within the first-generation students themselves, have focused on deficits within their parents and family. Wilbur and Roscigno (2016), while indicating that lower SES parents could, in fact, be supportive of their first-generation students, wrote, “Maintaining family ties has proven to be more difficult for first-generation and lower income students than for traditional students” (p. 3). Also, according to Wilbur and Roscigno (2016), “First-generation students, on average, are significantly more likely to experience personal and family related stressful life events during their college years” (p. 6). Overall, Wilbur and Roscigno (2016) concluded that first-generation status in and of itself was “consequential and negative” (p. 7).

In contrast, Yosso (2005) critiques such deficit theorizing and data that assess deprivation in Communities of Color in particular. Communities of Color are the off-campus communities of most first-generation students. Yosso’s (2005) findings do not support deficit theorizing. Yosso (2005) wrote: “Deficit thinking takes the position that minority students and families are at fault for poor academic performance because: (a) students enter without the normative cultural knowledge and skills; and (b) parents neither value nor support their child’s education” (p. 75).

First-Generation Departure and Tinto’s Theory

Within higher education, there is concern that too many first-generation students depart higher education without earning a bachelor’s degree (Atherton, 2014; The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, 2011; Petty, 2014; Wilbur &

Roscigno, 2016). First-generation students at private universities have a higher degree completion rate than at any other type of institution (DeAngelo et al., 2011). Still, even at private universities, first-generation students experience lower graduation rates (approximately 11% lower) than their continuing-generation peers (DeAngelo et al., 2011).

Although the overall problem of student departure from higher education has been studied for nearly 90 years, it was Tinto who, in 1975, developed a theoretical model to explain the phenomenon and started a national conversation on the topic within higher education (Demetriou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011). According to Tinto (1993), more students leave college without earning a degree than persist to completion and only 25% of all institutional departures were a result of academic dismissal. In fact, Tinto (1993) wrote, about half of all full-time, four-year college students will earn a bachelor's degree within five years. Tinto (1993) found that the first year of college is especially important; the highest proportion of institutional leaving occurs during the first year and prior to the beginning of the sophomore year. In the years following the introduction of Tinto's theory, his work became the most widely discussed and explored model in higher education (Milem & Berger, 1997).

Tinto (1993) drew from four different sources to develop the theory of student departure: The National Longitudinal Survey, High School and Beyond studies, American College Testing Program survey of institutions, and the Survey of Retention at Higher Education Institutions. Tinto's Interactionist Theory (1975) posits that the individual characteristics of student, his/her/their pre-college education and experiences, the socioeconomic status of the family, and parental level of education influence student

departure (Braxton, 2000). Goal commitment includes a personal commitment to achieve the degree, as well as an institutional commitment to the college or university where s/he/they are enrolled (Tinto, 1993). So-called legacy students may have a higher institutional commitment to a college or university that their parents attended (Tinto, 1993). However, there is not one particular personality type that is more likely to persist than another (Tinto, 1993).

Every student coming to college for the first time may experience a period of adjustment, and most will experience some amount of difficulty during this transition, but some students will find it so difficult to adjust to college that they withdraw altogether (Tinto, 1993). Others will leave due to academic difficulty (Tinto, 1993). Tinto (1993) wrote that many of these students are unprepared for college due to “disadvantaged” (p. 49) backgrounds or “lower quality public schools” (p. 49). Tinto (1993) also wrote that some students may be unprepared to “act out the largely middle-class role of the ‘college student’” (p. 49). The mission, the culture, the social system, the intellectual life, etc., may cause the student to perceive that s/he/they are incongruent with the life of the institution (Tinto, 1993). Furthermore, the institution itself may be “irrelevant” (p. 52) in the student’s judgement (Tinto, 1993).

According to Burrus et al. (2013), Tinto’s (1975, 1993) Theory of Student Departure prioritized the importance of institutional norms over personal norms: in order for the student to persist, s/he/they had to forsake the values of a previous community and adopt the values of the institution. The more integrated with the institution a student became, the more likely s/he/they would persist at that institution until graduation. Bean and Eaton (2001) wrote that Tinto’s theory was predicated on the idea that students leave

college because of three types of failure on the part of the student: failure to withdraw from a prior socializing agent such as the student's home community, failure to negotiate the transitional period of adjustment to college, and failure to incorporate the values of the institution into their lives.

Braxton, Sullivan, and Johnson (1997) developed Tinto's (1975) theoretical statements into 13 propositions and, after testing, found that some aspects of the theory were stronger than others. In Braxton et al.'s, (1997) findings, the strongest indicators against departure were a student's initial commitment and continuing commitment to the institution, a high degree of social integration, and a high commitment to the goal of graduation. Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon (2004) issue a report with the stated intention to "seriously revise Tinto's theory and to propose other theories" (p. 2). Braxton et al. (2004) concluded that no single theory of student departure is effective for all institutions.

Tinto's (1975) theory has been critiqued by researchers on behalf of Latinx students by Hurtado and Carter (1997) and Yosso et al. (2009). In their test of Tinto's theoretical model, Hurtado and Carter (1997) found that perceptions of a hostile racial climate on campus have a direct effect on Latinx students' sense of belonging on campus. Furthermore, Tinto's theory, which as originally conceived stated that separation from a student's home community and integration in the university community led to persistence, overlooked the experiences of historically marginalized students who neither wish to abandon their home community nor want to adopt the values and norms of their new higher education community. As Hurtado and Carter wrote (1997), "Participation in mainstream organizations may not promote the kinds of support that Latino students need

to be successful” (p. 327). Also, Hurtado and Carter (1997) found that full-time Latinx college students derive support from the maintenance of family relationships; in fact, these prior communities actually facilitate the students’ transition to and success in college. Hurtado and Carter (1997) noted that rather than participate in large-scale, whole-campus organizations, many minoritized students join smaller groups (i.e., cultural organizations) and form social niches.

Like Hurtado and Carter (1997), Yosso et al. (2009) challenged Tinto’s theory on the basis that it ignored hostile conditions of campus climate experienced by Latinx students. In a qualitative study, Yosso et al. (2009) brought together focus groups of Latinx students attending elite PWI and found that the students were subjected to microaggressions on a regular basis. Yosso et al. (2009) documented the participants’ experiences of rejection, disregard, and hostility from throughout their institutions. Therefore, these students sought the support of communities outside of the institution (Yosso et al., 2009). Many students in the study, however, instead of seeing themselves as victims of oppression, resolved to fight harder to prove wrong all assumptions, low expectations, and insults (Yosso et al., 2009). Despite the lack of institutional support, many such students have achieved academic and professional excellence (Yosso et al., 2009).

Similarly, Rendón (1996) wrote of her own experiences as a Latinx first-generation community college student, university student, doctoral student, and, eventually, a faculty member. Rendón (1996) recalled the struggle of leaving her home, of losing community with her family and friends while she entered the academic world, and of “coming to terms with... [the] kinds of psychological losses [that] led to my

newfound identity as a college student and later as an academic professional” (p. 15). Rendón (1996) described herself as a “border woman who lives between two spaces, two cultures, two languages” (p. 14). Today, Rendon is professor emerita of higher education at the University of Texas, San Antonio. As the demographic population within higher education has changed to include more Latinx women within the ranks of students, Tinto’s (1975, 1993, 2012) theory may be less applicable to the experiences of current students and how they are persisting through until degree completion.

First-Generation Persistence and Astin’s Theory of Student Involvement

A later theory regarding student persistence toward attainment of the bachelor’s degree was Astin’s (1984/1999) Theory of Student Involvement, which Astin (1984/1999) described as *simple* because it required no intricate models, mazes, or arrows to explain. At its foundation was the premise that involved students – those who spent time studying, engaging in extra-curricular activities, and interacting with other students and faculty – persisted until graduation and those who were less involved with the institution, its faculty, their peers, and their studies did not. Astin’s (1984/1999) theory of student involvement evolved from longitudinal research of 200,000 college students and “college dropouts” (p. 523) conducted in the 1970s. It is unclear how many individuals in the sample were first-generation students.

Astin (1984/1999) discussed the impetus for the development of his theory as “exasperation at the tendency of many academicians to treat the student as a kind of ‘black box’” (p. 519). The black box approach begins with the input of campus policies and programs and ends with an output of a high-grade point average or score on a standardized test. Within the black box paradigm, Astin (1984/1999) enumerated three

implicit pedagogical theories: the subject-matter theory, the resource theory, and the individualized (eclectic) theory. Popular among professors, the subject-matter approach to learning attempts to expose the student to as much of the *right* subject matter as possible (Astin 1984/1999). In this effort, the most prestigious professors are the most knowledgeable in their field, and learning takes place largely through lectures, reading, and individual research (Astin 1984, 1999). In Astin's (1984/1999) estimation, this type of learning is passive. Next is the resource theory, wherein administrators and policymakers believe that, with enough of the right mix of resources (i.e., lab equipment, libraries, advisors, financial aid, etc.) learning and student development will occur. In this theory of student learning, high achieving students are viewed as a valuable resource and their presence on campus is thought to enhance the campus environment for everyone (Astin 1984/1999). The third pedagogical theory related to the black box approach to education is the individualized theory, which emphasizes electives, choice of curricula, individual student advising, and independent study (Astin 1984/1999). In Astin's (1984/1999) view, the costliness of this approach is its most obvious limitation, however, there may be some connection to the individualized theory and the relative success of first-generation students at private universities, which can provide a more personalized approach to education (DeAngelo et al., 2011).

In response to these findings, according to Terenzini (1987), Astin developed five basic postulates: 1) involvement required the investment of both physical and psychological energy; 2) involvement was defined as continuous; 3) involvement included both qualitative and quantitative features; 4) learning by the student and development of the student was directly proportional to the student's involvement; and 5)

the effectiveness of any policy or practice is related to its capacity to inspire student involvement. Additionally, on the topic of student involvement, Astin (1984/1999) cautioned that student time is the most important institutional resource. Student time is finite and administrators and faculty must consider student time when making every decision and policy related to the student experience – from class schedules to parking regulations (Astin, 1984/1999).

Astin's (1984/1999) recognition that students' time is both *precious* and limited is applicable to first-generation students who, due to potential preferences concerning their home communities, employment, and families may have fewer opportunities for campus involvement (Engle & Tinto, 2008). Furthermore, in this research, Astin (1984/1999) described several environmental factors that supported or undermined persistence, the most important being the student's residence. Regardless of all other factors (sex, race, ability), simply living on campus was positively related to persistence (Astin 1984/1999). There may be a correlation between this finding and the experience of first-generation students, many of whom live off-campus while pursuing higher education (Engle & Tinto, 2008).

Similarly, Astin's (1984/1999) other findings may be reflected in the experience of first-generation students. Astin (1984/1999) connected student persistence to membership in clubs as well as social fraternities or sororities; participation in an honors program; holding a part-time job on campus; and involvement in faculty research activities. In fact, participation in any kind of extracurricular activity positively affected a student's persistence until graduation (Astin 1984/1999). According to Engle and Tinto (2008), because of financial responsibilities and familial commitments, first-generation

students were more likely to work full-time while attending college than their continuing-generation peers. Full-time working students have significantly less time to devote to extracurricular or co-curricular activities.

Support for First-Generation Involvement, Learning, and Persistence

Within the field of American higher education, specific support to increase the involvement, learning, and, ultimately, persistence until degree completion for first-generation students can be traced to the establishment of the federally-funded TRIO programs in the mid-1960s (McElroy & Armesto, 1998). This effort began with the establishment of Upward Bound, a pre-college preparatory program for first-generation prospective college students in grades 9-12, and grew to include three programs (thus, the moniker “TRIO”) (McElroy & Armesto, 1998). Today, TRIO includes nine initiatives supporting not only first-generation students but also veterans (Veterans Upward Bound), students with disabilities (the Educational Opportunity Centers program), underrepresented students seeking doctoral degrees (the Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement program), and other initiatives (“50th anniversary fact sheet,” n.d.; Greenfield, Keup, & Gardner, 2013; McElroy & Armesto, 1998). The Department of Education awards grants to both private and public institutions to help fund TRIO programming (“Federal TRIO program,” 2017; McElroy & Armesto, 1998).

The involvement, learning, and, persistence of first-generation students continues to be of concern to the leaders of many higher education institutions, as evident by the ubiquity on U.S. campuses of first-generation recruiting and support programs (“Colleges,” 2017; Greenfield et al., 2013; Inkelas et al., 2007). These efforts include pre-college programs designed to prepare first-generation students for the process of

applying to, financing, and attending college; summer bridge programs, which serve as an academic and social bridge between high school and the first semester of the freshman year; orientation programs, which introduce new students to a particular institution; and residential living learning communities that bring together first-generation students into a community (Inkelas et al., 2007). Optimally, the value these programs provide is the opportunity to acquire what Vargas (2004) termed college knowledge, or greater fluency with the structure, culture, and opportunities within higher education.

College knowledge is not only considered crucial for first-generation persistence to degree completion, it can prevent the phenomenon of *undermatching* (Sherwin, 2012; Stuber, 2011). Undermatching occurs when a first-generation student enrolls in a college for which they are academically overqualified (Sherwin, 2012). Undermatching is also responsible for highly-capable first-generation students foregoing college entirely (Sherwin, 2012). Also, some first-generation students attend not the college of their choice, but the one they can afford (Stuber, 2011). Typically, large numbers of middle- and upper-class U.S. students apply to as many as 20 or 30 colleges, in search of the best *fit* financially, socially, and culturally, but many first-generation students will apply to only one institution, thereby limiting their options (Banks-Santilli, 2014; Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009; Kaminer, 2014). Wilbur and Roscigno (2012) reported that middle-class, continuing-generation children rarely contemplate foregoing a college education – for them, it is a question of where to attend, not if. However, college attendance is not automatic for some first-generation students (Vargas, 2004; Wilbur & Roscigno, 2012).

The getting of college knowledge. According to some existent research, K-12 schools serving first-generation students provide limited opportunities to learn how to apply for, be admitted to, and finance a bachelor's degree (Vargas, 2004). In other instances, first-generation students find themselves unable to acquire the necessary courses to prepare for college-level learning (Atherton, 2014; Augustine, 2015; Relles & Tierney, 2014). For example, Banks-Santilli (2014) found that one fifth of first-generation middle- and high-school students attended schools where gateway courses such as Algebra and college-preparatory courses such Advanced Placement options were unavailable.

To help provide college knowledge, some higher education institutions and non-profit organizations have experimented with outreach programs in their surrounding communities (Relles & Tierney, 2014; Vargas, 2004). These interventions begin as early as kindergarten in some cases (Field, 2017; Martin, 1999; Vargas, 2004). An example of this type of program is the American Dream Academy in Arizona's Title 1 elementary and secondary schools, where 85% of the parents speak Spanish (Field, 2017). Sponsored by Arizona State University, this eight-week course is designed to empower parents to act as college advocates in their children's lives (Perilla, 2010). Since its inception in 2006, the program has graduated 35,000 first-generation parents (Field, 2017). All educational materials are branded with the Arizona State University logo and colors (Field, 2017). To date, 80% of the students whose parents were involved in the program went on to college, with 25% enrolling at Arizona State University (Field, 2017).

Another example is University of Southern California's (USC) Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI). NAI enrolls 3,500 school-aged students and 600 pre-school aged children each year (Bruni, 2017; "Communities," 2017; Tierney & Jun, 2001). The mission of NAI is to reach out to families living in South and East Los Angeles where the majority of students are first-generation (Madrid, 2016). NAI programs include opportunities to take college-prep courses on the USC campus, bi-weekly meetings for parents, and the promise of a full-scholarship to USC for any student completing the program in good standing (Bruni, 2017; "Communities," 2017; Tierney & Jun, 2001). Since 1997, approximately 1,000 students have completed the NAI curriculum; 35% of these students have enrolled at USC and, as recently as 2016, 100% of the students completing the NAI program went on to enroll in college ("Communities," 2017; Madrid, 2016).

Summer bridge programs continue the transference of college knowledge during the summer immediately preceding the first-generation student's freshman year. Components of these programs vary from one institution to another (Cooper et al., 2017; Stole-McAllister, 2011). Many programs include placement exercises, academic advising, campus orientation, registration, academic assignments, and social interaction with new and returning students (Cooper et al., 2017; Greenfield et al., 2013; Kezar, 2000, Strayhorn, 2010; Stole-McAllister, 2011). Sometimes these programs function as a sort of *college boot camp* and even offer courses for academic credit (Stolle-McAllister, 2011). Although no research studies were discovered which attempted to estimate the total number of summer bridge programs on U.S. university and college campus, several studies were located which attested to their overall efficacy to increase college readiness

and persistence in relationship to first-generation students (Cabrera, Miner, & Milem, 2013; Cooper et al., 2017; Kezar, 2000; Murphy, Gaughan, Hume, & Moore, 2010; Relles & Tierney, 2014; Stolle-McAllister, 2011; Strayhorn, 2010; Strayhorn, Travers, & Lo, 2017; Tomasko, Ridgway, Waller, & Olesik, 2016). However, there may be mitigating factors for first-generation students concerning their participation in a summer bridge program, including their prior commitments to work, family, and community, which may prevent them from participation in such opportunities (Engle & Tinto, 2008).

New student orientations, with their emphasis on learning about the courses and facilities of a particular institution, have existed on university and college campuses for decades (Greenfield et al., 2013). However, the effort to connect specifically and meaningfully with first-generation collegiate students and their families during orientation events is a more recent occurrence (Arzuaga, 2016; Pendakur, 2016). As the higher education population is diversifying, the trend in orientation programs at many institutions has been to provide targeted, specialized programming (Greenfield et al., 2013). For example, at Smith College, one of the oldest and largest women's colleges in the U.S., 17% of the undergraduate students are first-generation collegiate women (Mangan, 2015; "Smith at a Glance," 2017). Among the many options for incoming new students is a first-generation track, which is advertised as a means to learn the sometimes *difficult* to understand, *unspoken rules* of college life in general and Smith in particular ("Orientation programs," 2016). Smith's orientation program includes a parent component with sessions dedicated to financial aid, college transitions, and setting reasonable expectations ("Parent orientation," 2016). Arzuaga (2016) explained that when orientation programs focused only on the student experience, and excluded parents

and family members, first-generation students were placed in the uncomfortable position of not only needing to build support systems on campus, but also to play the role of teacher for their parents. For first-generation students, enrollment in higher education may not include detachment from their family and community (Arzuaga, 2016).

In an effort to provide greater support for all students, many institutions have created residential living-learning programs, including some specifically designed for first-generation students (Greenfield et al., 2013; Inkelas et al., 2007). These programs sometimes include peer-to-peer mentoring (Greenfield et al., 2013; Noble et al., 2007). In other programs, students reside together in learning communities and attend the same first-year seminar (Greenfield et al., 2013). Greenfield et al. (2013) found that these types of interventions improve persistence and retention for all students, while Inkelas et al. (2007) found living-learning communities were especially effective in facilitating the success of first-generation students.

The turn to active learning. A further benefit to all students, which studies show supports first-generation students in particular, is the turn from passive to active learning throughout public and private institutions of every type (Eagan et al., 2014). For some first-generation students, there is a distinct difference between high school and college academic expectations (i.e., college writing styles, lecture note-taking) (Cooper et al., 2017; Relles & Tierney, 2014; Stolle-McAllister, 2011). In many instances, college pedagogy and teaching techniques are different from high school pedagogy and teaching techniques (Conley, 2005; Van Blerkom, 2013). For example, an estimated 86% of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) higher education faculty employ the class lecture more than any other mode of teaching, while approximately half of

university faculty in all disciplines lecture during some or all of their class sessions (Eagan et al., 2014; Herreid, Schiller, Herreid, & Wright, 2014). This practice of lecturing – of passive learning (Piaget, 1973) or banking (Freire, 1968/2000) – has continued on college and university campuses, despite research which has indicated that all student learning is improved through the processes of active learning (i.e., co-constructed writing assignments, group work, participatory discussion), and that first-generation students in particular experience achievement gains in active learning environments (Eddy & Hogan, 2014; Haak, HilleRisLambers, Pitre & Freeman, 2011; Pennebaker, Gosling, & Ferrell, 2013; Westermann, 2014).

However, not all institutions enrolling first-generation students rely extensively on lecture-based learning (Kuh et al., 2005). In a study of institutions of all types and sizes, Kuh et al. (2005) uncovered various pedagogies and relevant assignments (Kuh et al., 2005). These philosophies included the problem-based curriculum at California State University at Monterey Bay (CSUMB), where more than half of the students are first generation (“First generation,” 2017). By valuing students’ prior experience and funds of knowledge, faculty foster in students a sense of agency concerning their education (Hogg, 2011; Moll et al., 1992). In certain classes, Kuh et al. (2005) found, CSUMB students wrote life histories and collected primary documents related to their experiences. As one CSUMB student said, “Here we tell how the reading relates to our life – our history and background. It is more personal and has feeling. I would not be able to relate otherwise...” (Kuh et al, 2005, p. 1).

Rendón (1996), who has studied first-generation and Latinx students, has found that educators do not, in fact, expect these students to succeed. Rendón (1996) found that

educators are drawn to the students who appear to best perform the role of the student. Often, this means that the students express or adopt White norms (Rendón, 1996). Meanwhile, educators are unaware or unappreciative of the depths of resilience and initiative these first-generation and Latinx students bring to the academy. What these students need, according to Rendón (1996), is affirmation that they can, in fact, succeed. These students need assistance with learning the language and customs of academic life – the college knowledge that continuing generation students may be accustomed to (Rendón, 1996). They are looking for how they might become involved with and contribute to the university. Rendón (1996), who advocated for the inclusion in the pedagogy of stories, including the personal stories of every student present in classroom, argued for a convergence between “what these students bring and what higher education has to offer” (p. 19). Rendón also urged a turn to *connected teaching*: “Connected teaching fosters community as opposed to separation and competition. It liberates students to express themselves openly and to know that the way they construct knowledge is as valid as the way others think and learn” (Rendón, 1996, p. 20).

Additionally, Haak et al. (2011) posited that first-generation students coming to college may have had previous experience learning at Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy Levels 1 and 2 but less experience working at the higher levels – the type of functions required for success in post-secondary education (see Figure 1). Active learning strategies not only require higher Bloom’s Taxonomy functions, they also operationalize many of the tasks students are likely to encounter in the career and employment sphere (e.g., public presentations, working collaboratively, problem solving) (Anderson, Krathwohl, & Bloom, 2001; Bergmann & Sams, 2014; Fulton, 2014). Furthermore,

active learning promotes student engagement, an important quality for retention and persistence (Astin, 1984/1999; Kuh et al., 2005; Tinto, 2012).

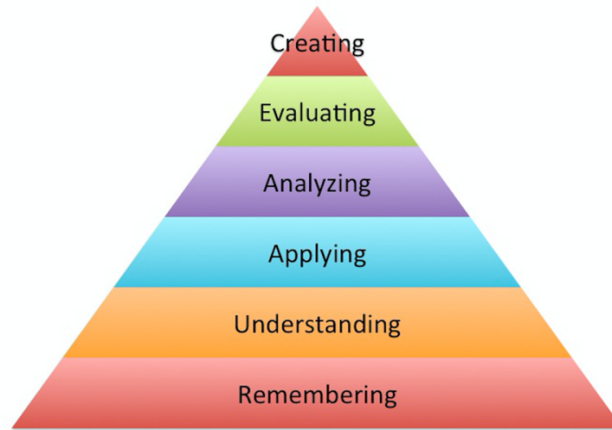


Figure 1. Bloom's Revised Taxonomy illustrates the progression of learning from the most passive functions, at the bottom of the pyramid, to the most active, at the top (Anderson et al., 2001; Hernandez, 2011).

Commercialization of Education and Commodification of First-Generation Students

The commercialization of U.S. higher education is not new. It has intensified since 1975 as universities have become more *aggressive* about earning financial dividends from the research, athletic, and educational activities that occur on their campuses (Bok, 2009). In the literature, researchers have cited this increase in the commercialization of U.S. higher education as a possible cause of students' perceived lack of care for them on the part of the institution (Bok, 2009; Raisman, 2013).

This is in contrast to the feminist psychological theory of caring as a form of moral reasoning developed by Carol Gilligan and the feminist concept of the ethic of care developed for educational application by Nel Noddings (Sander-Staudt, n.d.). Gilligan (1982) wrote that a care perspective was a creditable form of moral reasoning but was obscured by a masculine morality of justice focused on autonomy and independence (Sander-Staudt, n.d.). Noddings described two types of caring: caring-for and caring-

about (Sander-Staudt, n.d.). Caring-for is the application of services, however caring-about is the nurturing of ideas and intentions (Sander-Staudt, n.d.). One way to practice the ethic of care within education is provide more opportunities for students and teachers at all levels to spend the sort of time together and form the type of relationships that doctoral students and their advisors spend, over long periods of time (Murphy, 2013). In a 2013 interview with Murphy, Noddings, who described education as a multi-faceted enterprise, said:

Now at least in the U.S. today I hate to say it but I think we've regressed badly because we seem to have only one aim and that is to get as many people through college as possible so they will get paying jobs. So, we've reduced almost everything to competition and money, and there's so much more to education than that... [W]e ought to be concerned with preparing our students for satisfying and satisfactory lives in all three big domains: the personal family, ... the occupational, and the civic. (p. 187)

Concurrent with the increase in commercialization of higher education has been an increase in the number of marketing departments within higher education institutions (Anctil, 2008). The purpose of these departments is to create, maintain, and promote an institution's image (Anctil, 2008). At some institutions, there are specific and targeted efforts to appeal to first-generation Latinx students (Johnson & Castellon, 2014).

The commercialization of higher education has also extended to the admissions process at many institutions (Colarusso, 2015). The more applications an institution receives, the more applicants its admissions officers can deny, thereby enabling the institution to improve its selectivity ratio – an important component of the national

college rankings (Bok, 2009; Colarusso, 2015). Meanwhile, the most selective institutions – those with the highest number of applications, issuing the largest number of rejection letters – earn millions of dollars annually in application fee revenue (Gutierrez, 2016). In 2016, for example, according to Arnold (2017), University of California, Los Angeles, collected \$5,369,840 from rejected applications.

As this process indicates, despite some resistance from scholars within the academy, American higher education functions as a competitive enterprise and not a charity (Anctil, 2008; Bok, 2009; Pippert, Essenberg, & Matchett, 2013). Even so, Gibbs (2011) argued that higher education marketers should be held to – or hold themselves to – a higher ethical standard than other marketers. Elsewhere, Gibbs (2007) argued that, in some instances, higher education advertising actually subverts the goals of higher education, which include autonomy, critical thinking, and independent action. Gibbs (2007) found this to be the case when the primary intent is to persuade the prospective student versus to inform him/her/them. Bok (2009) observed that higher education and advertising have differing values, because advertisers engage in hyperbole, may omit important facts, and attempt to shape the customer’s perception of the product. Gibbs (2007) cited these practices as manipulative, exploitative, and morally problematic.

Additionally, such processes are expensive: for example, the admissions marketing firm, Ruffalo Noel Levitz reported that in 2015, four-year private colleges and universities spent an average of \$2,232 per student they enrolled (“Cost of recruiting,” 2016). Alternatively, Raisman (2009) estimated that the cost to recruit a student is \$5,640. As explained by scholar and professor emeritus, John P. Bean (personal communication, May 6, 2017), it is *cheaper* to retain a student than to recruit her.

Meanwhile, Pippert et al. (2013) demonstrated that manipulative marketing is not only widespread but intended for prospective students from minoritized communities – specifically African Americans – many of whom are first-generation students. In a content analysis of 10,095 photographs in viewbooks¹ from 165 institutions of various types (e.g., public, private, urban, rural), Pippert et al. (2013) found that 81.2% (n = 134) of these institutions routinely over-emphasized the presence of African Americans on their campus by more than 100%. African Americans comprised a mean percentage of 7.4% of students on these 165 campuses but comprised 15.1% of the students depicted on the pages of these recruitment publications – a 104% increase (Pippert et al., 2013). Pippert et al. (2013) stated that this misrepresentation was both *intentional* and *near universal*.

Within the higher education market and between institutions, there is competition for new student enrollments (Bok, 2009; Colarusso, 2015; Pippert et al., 2013). This is especially true in recent years as, since 2008, there has been a downward trend in the overall number of students enrolling in college (Brown, 2015). According to U.S. Census Bureau data, there has been an especially sharp decline in the number of low-income students enrolling: college enrollment among low-income students dropped 10% between 2008 and 2013, the largest drop in four decades (Brown, 2015). One reason for the downward trend in higher education enrollment was cited: an improving economy with job opportunities immediately following high school (Brown, 2015). Meanwhile, there is a projected decrease in the number of White students who will be entering higher

¹ A viewbook is a term of art for a magazine-style admissions publication sent to prospective applicants.

education, and a projected increase in the available number of Students of Color (Esquibel, 2013).

The viability of American higher education depends on the successful recruitment of new students – in effect, new *customers* (Mehta, et al., 2011). Students of Color are a growing segment of the population (Colarusso, 2015; Pippert et al., 2013). For these reasons, first-generation students have been called the *life-blood* of higher education (Davis, 2010).

CRT and the Lived Experiences of First-Generation Students

Many first-generation students are also Students of Color and enrolling them has allowed administrators at even America's most selective PWI to begin to diversify their student bodies in terms of income, gender, race, ethnicity, and class (Darling & Smith, 2007; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). However, diversifying the composition of an institution has not been enough to ensure persistence until degree completion for all first-generation students (Engle & Tinto, 2008; The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity, 2011). This constitutes a gap in the research. CRT provides a theoretical lens through which to engage with the complex issue of first-generation Students of Color, their experiences of racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression on higher education campuses, and the issue of college persistence.

An overview of CRT. Based on the work of Sojourner Truth, W. E. B. Du Bois, and scholars of ethnic studies, women's studies, legal studies, history, and sociology, CRT was developed in the 1970s by Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado in response to the slow pace of change following the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s (Brizee, Case Tompkins, Chernouski, & Boyle, 2015; Yosso et al., 2005). According to

Matsuda et al. (1993), the origins of CRT are connected to Bell's departure from Harvard University – the first African-American professor at Harvard – to become a dean at the University of Oregon. Harvard students demanded a Person of Color be hired to replace Bell, who taught a course titled Race, Racism, and American Law and was a leading expert in this field (Matsuda et al., 1993). When the university declined to do so, the students protested, organized their own course, and invited Scholars and Practitioners of Color to teach each week using a chapter from Bell's text as the topic (Matsuda et al., 1993). Conferences, seminars, and study groups began to form across the country (Matsuda et al., 1993). The tenets of CRT became more formally described (see Figure 2) (Matsuda et al., 1993).



Figure 2. Tenets of Critical Race Theory. Scholars (Delgado, 2002; Harper et al., 2011; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) continue to adapt and expand these tenets to apply to various disciplines and studies. (Adapted from Matsuda et al., 1993, pp. 6-7).

CRT foregrounds race as the central theme in discussions of social structures (Brizee et al., 2015; Yosso et al., 2005). CRT scholars assert that racism persists in U.S. society, despite its illegality for more than 50 years. Regardless of public disavowal or

even denial, its presence permeates all aspects of American life (Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Bridgeman, 2011). Therefore, by definition, racism extends to include U.S. higher education (Harper, 2012a; Harper, 2012b; Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Also, CRT scholars contend that race is a social construct (Simson, 2014). By elucidating the social structure of society and White privilege, CRT demonstrates the relationship between power and race (Reid, 2006). As Ladson-Billings (1998) wrote, in a “racialized society where whiteness is positioned as normative, *everyone* is ranked and categorized in relation to these points of opposition” (p. 9, emphasis in the original).

Reid (2006) wrote that CRT challenges liberalism, which is a belief in reason, rationality, and moral fabric as the means to end racial oppression. Also, CRT scholars view the concepts of colorblindness, race neutrality, and the presumed meritocracy of U.S. higher education as devices to promote structural inequality (Reid, 2006; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Racism has shaped the U.S. education system, and according to CRT scholars, it continues to influence American education at every level (Harper, 2012a, Harper, 2012b; Harper et al., 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2017; Yosso et al., 2004). Unacknowledged, systemic racism is felt in daily life by Students of Color on U.S. higher education campuses (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015). Often, racism is felt in the form of microaggressions – both verbal and non-verbal (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015).

In 1970, when Chester M. Pierce introduced the term microaggression, he described it as a subtle action or comment that can seem superfluous or unintentional. Still, microaggressions cause grave harm to their targets, especially when repeated or

institutionalized. Microaggressions, which reveal bias and racist conceptions, are distinct from macroaggressions, which demonstrate extreme prejudice and hatred (Pierce, 1970).

In a grounded-theory study, Yosso et al (2009) identified three different types of microaggressions occurring on campus: interpersonal racial microaggressions, racial jokes, and institutional microaggressions. Verbal and nonverbal racial affronts were categorized as interpersonal microaggressions (Yosso et al., 2009). The third type of microaggressions, institutional microaggressions, resulted in feelings of self-doubt, alienation, discouragement, and disempowerment (Yosso et al., 2009).

In 1989, Crenshaw developed one of the key terms associated with CRT, which is intersectionality – the concept that discrimination is not limited to conceptions of race but encompasses various aspects of identity, simultaneously. Crenshaw (1989) critiqued the tendency of previous scholars to treat race, gender, and class as discrete categories. Furthermore, Crenshaw (1989) contested the idea that improved societal conditions for White women was evidence of increased equality for African American women. Crenshaw (1989) explained that, for African American women, “the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism” (p.140). Oppression is based on gender, income level, sexual orientation, class, culture, and ability and CRT acknowledges these multiple burdens of discrimination (Barnett & Felten, 2016; Crenshaw, 1989). Patel (2016) wrote, “Identity matters. Or, more accurately, identities matter... [and] none of us can be reduced to a single identity” (p. x).

In the 1990s, the move to apply critical race theory (CRT) to education and educational studies was based on the work and scholarship of Gloria Ladson-Billings and William F. Tate, IV (Sleeter, 2012). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) stated that their

rationale for the application of CRT to education is a continued salience of race in American society combined with a paucity of theoretical research and scholarship on the topic. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) attempted to theorize race as a means of understanding school inequity.

Also in the mid 1990s, Latino/a critical race theory, or LatCrit, developed as another discourse of CRT (Valdés, n.d.). According to Valdés (n.d.), LatCrit was a response to the “long historical presence and general sociolegal invisibility of Latinos/as in the lands now known as the United States” (para. 1). Within the context of educational research, LatCrit values Latinx students (and all Students of Color) as knowledge creators in addition to being knowledge holders (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Within formal educational settings, Latinx histories, perspectives, cultures, and languages are devalued, disregarded, or omitted (Delgado Bernal, 2002). The same is true of Latinx epistemologies, which, according to Delgado Bernal (2002), directly challenge such established paradigms as positivism and liberal feminism.

In fact, Delgado Bernal (1998) first introduced a framework of Chicana feminist epistemology that embraced the lived experience of Latinx women. Delgado Bernal (1998) described the cultural intuition that Latinx female scholars can bring to research and knowledge production and questioned both the objectivity and universality of knowledge which excludes “a useful paradigm” (p. 557) to examine the intersection of gender, ethnic, and class oppression. Existent paradigms, wrote Delgado Bernal (1998; 2002), were based on the experiences, scholarship, and perspectives of White researchers and scholars. This included, in Delgado Bernal’s (1998) scholarship, White, liberal, feminist scholarship that emanates from a perspective of commonalities based on gender

while ignoring issues of race, ethnicity, or class. However, as Delgado Bernal (1998) wrote:

...a Chicana epistemology must be concerned with knowledge about Chicanas – about who generates an understanding of their experiences, and how this knowledge is legitimized or not legitimized. It questions objectivity... and the Western dichotomies of mind versus body, subject versus object, objective truth versus subjective emotion, and male versus female. In this sense, a Chicana epistemology maintains connections to indigenous roots by embracing dualities that are necessary and complementary qualities, and by challenging dichotomies that offer opposition without reconciliation. (p. 560)

For reasons such as those described by Delgado Bernal (1998, 2002), LatCrit, like CRT, places the marginalized Latinx student at the center of educational research and analysis (Fernández, 2002). These students are often the subjects of educational research, wrote Fernández (2002), but are largely silent within the discourse. Subsequently, other branches of CRT have developed, including FemCrit, AsianCrit, and WhiteCrit (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

As described above, an aspect of CRT is the value the theory infuses into the experiential knowledge and the lived experiences of People of Color (Delgado, 1989; Delgado Bernal 2002; Harper, 2012a, 2012b; Harper et al., 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Reid, 2006; Yosso et al., 2004). Often these experiences, called counter-stories, replace deficit narratives about race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability perpetrated by the White, male, heteronormative, enabled, privileged, dominant group (Delgado, 1989; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Harper, 2012a, 2012b; Harper et al., 2009; Hiraldo, 2010;

Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT scholarship embraces these counter-narratives, which can include ancestral stories, folk tales, poetry, fiction, and revisionist histories (Delgado, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1998). These counter-stories can be used to form the basis of an anti-racist pedagogy (Leonardo, 2009). Thus, the epistemologies of People of Color can be added to the discourse of higher education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) .

An additional concept of CRT that is foundational in understanding the relationship between U.S. higher education and first-generation students is the concept of interest convergence. First explained by Bell (1980), interest convergence is the theory that the needs of minoritized people will be accommodated only when those interests converge with the interests of the White majority. Convergence theory may be a factor in the development of programming to recruit and support first-generation students (Chun, 2013; Conger & Dickson, 2016; Davis, 2010; Espinosa et al., 2015; Mauro & Mazaris, 2016; Potter, 2016). As Backes (2015) wrote, a recruiting policy based on income or generational status is less likely to *run afoul* of either the law or popular opinion. Furthermore, according to the U.S. News and World Reports' annual rankings, the more diverse institutions are also the most highly ranked (Pippert et al., 2013).

CRT and the Value of Institutional Diversity

Within the theoretical framework of CRT, there exists criticism of institutional commitments to and claims of diversity as shaped by conceptions of race and White privilege (Yosso et al., 2004; Yosso et al., 2009). For example, Yosso et al. (2004) stated that White majority interests are served when Students of Color, including first-generation Students of Color, are admitted for the purposes of assisting White students to become more assimilated to a multicultural world. Hiraldo (2010), Peña et al. (2006),

and Yosso et al. (2009) observed that simply increasing the number of Students of Color without examining campus climate and committing to institutional change is insufficient. Additionally, in the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California's online brochure titled "Equity and Student Success" (2018), the concept of increased diversity within higher education is challenged: diversity only brings more students into an unequal system. In fact, some scholars have demonstrated that access and inclusion do not guarantee equity (Peña et al., 2006). Wise (2005) also critiqued the concept of diversity as a substitute for institutional change and wrote that some diversity efforts replicate White dominance:

Never is a spotlight shone on the dominant group itself and how it came to be well positioned for so many of the best college slots and jobs in the first place.

Diversity efforts become merely a mechanism for letting a few of *them* into *our* game; but make no mistake, it is still *our* game, and we will dictate the terms of just how much change we are willing to countenance (italics in the original). (pp. 158-159)

Summary

Although first-generation Latinx students represent a significant cohort within American higher education, without a clear definition of their status and complete reporting details about their numbers, they remain understudied and emergent (Davis, 2010; Toutkoushian et al., 2018). In particular, the lived experiences of first-generation Latinx women require greater representation within the literature (Delgado Bernal 1998, 2002; Reyes & Nora, 2012). Furthermore, despite institutional commitments to increase diversity, Latinx students have expressed continued experiences of microaggressions and

unwelcoming campus climates (American Council on Education, 2012; Espinosa et al., 2015; Yosso et al., 2009). A qualitative study based on the principles of CRT which seeks to understand the perceptions, experiences, cultural intuitions, epistemologies, and recommendations of Latinx alumnae who have attended a PPWI could be useful in helping to solve this problem.

“It is not possible to describe or explain everything one ‘knows’ in language form; some things must be experienced to be understood.”

– Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

Methodology

The epistemological lenses and the research methods used to contextualize the lived experiences of six Latinx alumnae who attended PPWI are discussed in this chapter. The research question that guided this inquiry was, “What was it like to be a first-generation Latinx woman who attended a PPWI in Southern California?” The theoretical framework for the study was CRT. Here, I begin by providing a history and description of the methodology of CRT story-telling, narrative inquiry studies, and a description of the narrative methods adapted for this study. Next, is a description of the ethical framing of culturally responsive methodologies (CRM). Following, I describe the site selection process and the participants who volunteered for the study, as well as the methods of data collection and data maintenance. Also included is a description of the researcher’s reflexive journal, the methods of member checking employed in the study, and the ethical considerations of the study. Concluding this chapter is a statement concerning the researcher’s positionality and presentation of efforts to ensure trustworthiness.

Most academic work is based on quantitative research and positivist assumptions, but the academy has grown progressively more accepting of qualitative research in recent decades (Creswell, 2009; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2012; Yamauchi, 2010). The primary difference between quantitative and qualitative approaches is not that one uses numbers and the other does not; researchers working with both paradigms may use numbers (Chase, 2011; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2012). The distinction between the two types of research is that one paradigm rests on positivistic assumptions and the other is dependent

on human experience and interpretation (Bailey, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2002; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2012).

For qualitative researchers, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) text, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, provided five axioms, or basic beliefs, about the purpose and pursuit of research: 1) there is no singular reality but, instead, there are multiple, constructed realities; 2) the *knower* and the *known* are inseparable and influence each other; 3) the aim of research is not generalizability but the development of *idiographic* knowledge that is connected to context; 4) cause and effect are indistinguishable because entities influence each other continuously; and 5) research is values-bound, meaning that all aspects of the study reflect the values of the inquirer (i.e., the choice of topic, the research question, the site selection). Qualitative researchers seek to understand instead of predict human behavior (Bailey, 2007; Chase, 2011; Merriam, 2002; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2012). Qualitative researchers are interested in the interpretation of human experience in a particular context (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2002). In qualitative methodologies, a key feature is the role of the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection (Bailey, 2007; Merriam, 2002).

Qualitative investigators may adopt various approaches in their research (Merriam, 2002). This study combines an interpretative approach, which indicates an interest in understanding the participants' lives at a particular time and place, and a critical approach, which is an investigation of the social and political aspects of the context under examination (Crotty, 1998/2015; Merriam, 2002). All qualitative approaches seek to understand how participants ascribe meaning to their lives and experiences (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2002).

CRT Counter-Storytelling

Personal stories challenge the reification of textbooks and official histories (SooHoo, 2006). Many official records and texts have not only omitted multicultural voices and those whose experiences challenge mainstream ideas, they have also perpetrated stereotyping of minoritized communities (Reissman, 1993; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; SooHoo, 2006; Yamauchi, 2010). Also, for individuals in a qualitative study, the process of telling one's own story may be emancipatory and empowering (Bloom, 2002; Josselson, 2012; SooHoo, 2006).

History and Process of CRT Counter-Storytelling

Delgado (1989), who introduced the term “counter-story,” described the occurrence and importance of storytelling in legal proceedings, writing, and teaching. Although storytelling has existed as both a means of preservation and resistance for *outgroup* communities (Delgado, 1989), the insertion of storytelling into the legal and academic processes is a more recent phenomenon. Often told in the first-person, these stories may take the form of parables, chronicles, and narratives and are voiced in opposition to dominant-group narratives which provide for the superior position of the *in-group* to seem *natural* (Delgado, 1989). Counter-storytelling is an effective methodology for the advancement of social justice because stories can change minds (Delgado, 1989).

One way in which the dominant group constructs the social reality of an institution of higher education is through the use of *stock stories* (Delgado, 1989). These narratives are often framed as a commonly accepted social realities, as though they were immutable facts (Delgado, 1989). In a PPWI, for example, institutional narratives about the dearth of People of Color on campus may include prejudicial and pejorative

majoritarian views (Delgado, 1989; Yosso, 2005). For instance, some White administrators, students, and faculty may believe that minoritized students and faculty are not as smart, not as motivated, not as good a *fit* to be of true value to the institution and its dominant group (Delgado, 1989; Harper, 2016; Ponjuan, 2011). In regard to hiring and tenure decisions, the experiential knowledges, perspectives, and research portfolios of Faculty of Color are often devalued (Delgado, 1989). Majoritarian stories may also include an institution's stated commitment to diversity juxtaposed with de facto segregation or the denial of White privilege despite evidence of its continuing effects.

In 2001 and 2002, Solórzano and Yosso published research that extended inquiry methodologies within higher education to include counter-storytelling. These first-person accounts of the lived experiences of People of Color and of others oppressed by majoritarian definitions expand the knowledge base and literature concerning deficit-informed views (Harper, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002;). Counter-stories often reveal and refute so-called objective and deficit-based research underlying racialized, gendered, and classed majoritarian stories (Delgado, 1989; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Counter-stories are not fictional stories for they are grounded in reality and actual social situations (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This CRT methodology confirms that experiential knowledges concerning racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression are valid and necessary forms of data (Delgado, 1989; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Counter-stories based on these data are important to the process of social progress for four functional reasons: (1) they can help to foster community among minoritized individuals; (2) they can provide insight to majoritarian individuals that challenges perceived wisdom concerning minoritized groups; (3) they can reassure

marginalized individuals that they are not alone; and (4) they can demonstrate how to combine personal story and current reality to create an enriched worldview (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

Narrative Inquiry Methodology

One methodology within the qualitative research paradigm is narrative inquiry (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2002). As a methodology, it is both flourishing and evolving (Chase, 2011). Narrative inquiry is fluid (Clandinin, 2013). It is not a rigid set of procedures (Clandinin, 2013). As a qualitative research methodology, it affords the researcher various options and methods, including interviews and listening to personal stories (Chase, 2011).

History and Process of Narrative Inquiry

Telling and listening to stories is a foundational human experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). It can be traced to such historical figures as Aristotle and Augustine (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Although aspects of narrative inquiry have been present in human culture for centuries, as a qualitative methodology, it was developed by Michael Connelly and D. Jean Clandinin in the 1990s for their study of teacher knowledge (Xu & Connelly, 2010).

A common feature among narrative inquiry research studies is the involvement of the researcher in the process and product of the study (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Caine, 2008; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Xu & Connelly, 2010). The role of the researcher often begins with the creation of reflexive texts (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). The purpose of such texts is to discover who the researcher is in relation to the research study (Clandinin, 2013). This is especially important in culturally-responsive dialogic

encounters, where researchers commit to self-interrogation with the understanding that one's own culture, history, and identity influence both the research process and the interpretation of the results (Berryman et al., 2013b).

According to Daiute (2014), who developed a methodological version of narrative inquiry termed dynamic narrating, narrative inquiry is a social process: narratives occur in life and, therefore, narrative inquiry is an appropriate methodology for research, especially for studies that focus on experiences. In everyday life, storytelling is used to connect to others, to make sense of the world around us, and to explain the political and social structures of our lives (Daiute, 2014). It is both natural and artful (Daiute, 2014). A narrative is a tool for expressing personal experience, memories, feelings, and knowledges (Daiute, 2014). Daiute (2014) defined *narrative meaning* in a narrative inquiry study as the interplay between various participants' narratives. What provides meaning within a narrative inquiry study is not only the specific story of each participant but also the interplay – or relationship – between each participant's response to a question or topic. For example, Daiute (2014) advised researchers to design studies to include the sorts of activities that the participant(s) do in everyday life (i.e., speculating on the outcome of an election, telling one's story to a support group, or interacting with a community organization). Furthermore, according to Daiute (2014), dynamic narrative inquiry provides for a storytelling that “mediates experience, knowledge, learning, and social change” (pp. 4).

The narrative inquiry researcher studies both *what* is said and *how* it is said (Daiute, 2014). For those who narrate catastrophic or traumatic events, the effect can be soothing (Daiute, 2014). Also, wrote Daiute (2014), “Interacting with narrative can

impose sense on chaos and familiarity on strangeness” (p. 13). A method within dynamic narrating is the observation or construction of a *narrative event* (Daiute, 2014). This may consist of a simple, direct question to the participant(s), such as “What did you like best about your university?” or “Can you describe a particularly difficulty day at your university?” These narrative events are more colloquial, interpersonal in nature, and less formal than the questions of a structured interview (Daiute, 2014). The anecdotes that these types of questions inspire are both sense-making for the participant(s) and useful for the production of research (Daiute, 2014).

Typically, narrative research is marked by the selection for the study of a small number of participants (Josselson, 2012). This is done to facilitate rich discourse (Josselson, 2012). A small group of participants also allows for the researcher and the participants to develop a rapport rather than a relationship of observer and observed (Connelly & Clandinan, 1990; Xu & Connelly, 2010). Importantly, the narrative researcher must consult his/her/their own conscience regarding the undertaking and pursuit of the narrative inquiry study (Chase, 2011; Daiute, 2014; Xu & Connelly, 2010). Of concern to the researcher is how s/he/they may be helpful to the participant(s) (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). In some respects, and as applied by some researchers, narrative inquiry is a mix of art and research, but the narrative inquiry researcher must not sacrifice the rigor of the study for the creative production of the results (SAGE Publications, Ltd., 2017).

Justification for Chosen Methodology

There is a need to add more first-generation Latinx alumnae voices and experiential knowledge to the literature concerning their experiences at PPWI (Reyes &

Nora, 2012). CRT counter-storytelling seeks to include the lived experiences of individuals outside the mainstream of society whose stories have been missing from the discourse of higher education (SAGE Publications, Ltd., 2017; Yamauchi, 2010). Within the CRT framework, these counter-stories represent important empirical evidence (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Yamauchi, 2010). Counter-narratives can provide alternative perspectives to social, political, and institutional narratives (Harper, 2012b; Harper et al., 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Counter-stories are created through the collection and unearthing of data (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Of particular importance in this research process is the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Members of the majority group can enrich or revise their view of reality by listening to the counter-stories of the outgroups (Delgado, 1989). This process, which reduces ethnocentrism, can lead to meaningful dialogue, growth in humanity, and the construction of an enlarged perspective of reality together, in community (Delgado, 1989).

There is also a need to address the continuing influence of racism within U.S. higher education (Harper, 2012b; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015). The overall first-generation bachelor's degree completion rates in comparison to continuing-generation bachelor's degree completion rates provide areas for investigation (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity, 2011). The highest proportion of first-generation students are Latinx (Saenz et al., 2007). As a group, Latinx students have the lowest percentage of bachelor's degrees as compared to every other cohort (Ryan & Bauman, 2016). Utilizing narrative inquiry methods and principles, a CRT counter-storytelling study was used to theorize and problematize these issues.

Culturally Responsive Methodologies

Culturally responsive methodologies (CRM) refer to a conceptual and philosophical framework, named by Professor Suzanne SooHoo (see Eletreby, 2010, p. 81), that provides a means of working with diverse participants. CRM is a critique of *Kaupapa Maori* or colonizing research methods which occur without the inclusion of relationship building (Berryman, SooHoo, & Nevin, 2013a). CRM is working in partnership with participants. In the case of the six participants in this study, they and the researcher were of different identities. When the participants and the researcher are from different ethnic or cultural groups, CRM seeks to equalize the power status of all parties involved in the study through dialogue, the co-construction of knowledge, and the co-presentation of the resulting research (S. SooHoo, personal communication, December 7, 2016). Throughout a study, CRM honors the preferences of the participants, allowing them to modify, shape, and give meaning to the research process and production (Berryman et al., 2013a).

Berryman et al. (2013a) included a table of principles for responsive research (see pages 22-23). These principles are to gain social and/or cultural knowledge of the participants before engaging in the study; to bring one's authentic self to the study; to approach the research with a dialogical and relational conscious; to enact critical reflection throughout the research process; and to assess the relationships established throughout the research process. Fundamentally, responsive research benefits the participants not only throughout the study but also after the research concludes (Berryman et al., 2013a). Through the process of designing, proposing, and conducting this study, I have attempted to uphold these principles.

For example, through research and reflection, I attempted to gain an understanding of the sociological and institutional issues first-generation Latinx women confront as students at PPWI in Southern California. Also through reflection, I prepared to bring my authentic self and perspectives to the study and to be transparent with the participants about my interests, motives, and hopes. An early dialogical topic in the study was the discussion with each participant about how she would like to be identified in the research texts. The participants had answered a request for a study with participants who identified as Latinx women, but in interviews, the women used the terms “Latina,” “Hispanic,” and “Latinx” interchangeably. Their words are their choices, and so when they are quoted, they are quoted precisely. After additional discussion with the participants individually, there was agreement that, in the research text, the term used in the study would be Latinx.

CRM may also be described as a decolonizing approach to research (Berryman et al., 2013a; Smith, 2012). In the instance of this study, the application of CRM was done in an effort to resist the personification of the White researcher appropriating and benefitting from the stories of Women of Color. In the case of CRM, the goal is research *with* instead of research *on* the participants (Berryman et al., 2013a). The culturally responsive researcher values the contributions of the participants as equal to or greater than the contributions of the researcher (Berryman, et al., 2013a; Smith, 2012). The CRM researcher adopts a stance predicated on respectful relationships with the participants – a stance that includes humility (Smith, 2012; SooHoo, 2013).

As a White woman who is an administrator, adjunct faculty member, and doctoral candidate at a PPWI campus, I was an insider within higher education but an outsider to

the participants' experiences. I also could be perceived as a threat, an instigator, and part of the problem I sought to study. I had to extend to these women what the Maori call *the seen face* (Smith, 2012), which is both the metaphorical and the literal act of showing one's self to the participants – who are, in fact, equal members of the study.

Site Selection

Within California, 78 private, nonprofit colleges and universities are members of the Association of Independent California College and Universities (AICCU); 53 institutions are in Southern California and 25 are in Northern California (“About AICCU,” 2018). The largest number of students enrolled on all these campuses are California residents – some 76% (AICCU Factbook, 2017). In California, 38.9% of residents identify as Latinx (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Twenty-three percent of the undergraduate population in private, non-profit institutions throughout California was Latinx during the 2015-2016 academic year (AICCU Factbook, 2017). Therefore, the demographics on California private, non-profit campuses are unreflective of their surrounding communities. The largest combined cohort at these 78 institutions is Caucasian (AICCU Factbook, 2017).

Concerning first-generation students – a large number of whom are Latinx women – private, non-profit institutions have a reputation for higher numbers of retention and bachelor's degree completion rates (DeAngelo et al., 2011; Engle & Tinto, 2008; Saenz et al. 2007). It would seem advantageous for more first-generation Latinx women to enroll in and attend one of the AICCU institutions. Many of these 78 institutions offer financial aid of benefit to first-generation students and an estimated 63% of AICCU-enrolled students receive some type of institutional aid (AICCU Factbook, 2017).

With a combination of financial aid, institutional commitments to diversify, and institutional imperatives to enroll new cohorts of students, what factors were affecting the enrollment of first-generation Latinx women at California PPWIs? Application of an anti-deficit lens to the situation meant evaluating the situation from the perspective of those who had enrolled in at PPWI, navigated through the institution, and persisted until bachelor's degree completion. As a student of critical race theory, I believed that the principles of CRT (see Figure 2) could explain this situation. As a researcher committed to the principles of qualitative research, I was most interested in the lived experiences of Latinx alumnae who had attended one of these institutions and less interested in my own perspectives and observations.

In an effort to locate Latinx alumnae in close proximity for the purposes of in-person meetings, conversations, and interviews, I selected three PPWI (all AICCU members) in Southern California for further research. Using the website, Collegedata.com (2018), I was able to determine additional demographic data about these particular institutions (see Table 2).

According to the websites of each of the selected universities, extensive first-generation recruitment and programming is provided. Although attempts were made to contact these universities' first-generation program offices and recruit participants through these offices, such efforts were unsuccessful. Instead, participants were recruited via colleague referrals and closed Facebook Groups limited to first-generation membership. Some were recruited via a Facebook Group associated with a national scholarship program (See Appendix A for a facsimile of the recruiting flyer.)

Table 2

Southern California PPWI Selected for the Study

Variable	Eminence	Pinnacle	Summit
Difficulty of entrance	very difficult	very difficult	moderate
Cost of attendance	\$70,000 plus	\$69,000 plus	\$66,000 plus
Latinx students	16%	15%	28%
Sorority participation	32%	40%	13%

Note. All university names are pseudonyms.

Participants

Six participants matching the parameters of the study requirements responded to the flyer and agreed to participate in the study (See Table 3). For purposes of the study, participants had to have attended only one PPWI as an undergraduate. Each participant entered her university immediately after her senior year of high school and graduated within six years with a bachelor’s degree.

Initial communication with the researcher involved multiple emails. This provided an opportunity to try to get acquainted, share consent information and documents, and to establish an opportunity to talk at the time, place, and style of the participant’s choosing. Two of the participants lived outside California, requiring the use of FaceTime or Skype as an alternative to face-to-face meetings. One of the participants was available for face-to-face meetings. The other three participants were willing to meet face-to-face but were extremely busy with career, family, or graduate school obligations and preferred to meet via videoconferencing.

Table 3

Participants in the Study

Self-selected pseudonym	Age at time of the study	University
Natalie	21	Eminence
Alicia	24	Eminence
Phoenix	24	Summit
Sylvia	32	Pinnacle
Catalina	33	Pinnacle
Raquel	36	Pinnacle

Throughout the study, contact between the participants and the researcher varied in each case. Although each participant had agreed to one interview of 90 minutes to two hours, one interview (with Sylvia) lasted nearly three hours. In three instances, a significant amount of contact involved multiple emails. With Catalina, there have been approximately 25 email exchanges. With Phoenix and Alicia, there have 15 email exchanges. Although there have been fewer emails exchanges with Raquel and Sylvia, the relationships with these two participants are ongoing. There has been limited contact to date with Natalie. Daiute (2014) included discussion of *meaningful contexts* for narrators, such as blogs and virtual meetings to protect participants’ anonymity. This supports the inclusion of short exchanges, I believe, such as the multiple emails from five of the participants. Additionally, on page 14, Daiute (2014) wrote, “Brief anecdotes or longer sagas can be helpful in figuring out the meaning of an event and its relation to a researcher’s question...” I was cognizant that this project was to be on the timetable and

according to the terms established by the participants. With this in mind, the study commenced.

Data Collection

There were three methods of data collection in this study: 1) listening to the participants as they told their counter-stories; 2) writing in the researcher's self-reflexive journal (Clandinin & Caine, 2008); and 3) tacit knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) resulting from the emotional qualities and resonance of the exchanges between the participants and the researcher. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and data analysis in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002). To facilitate active listening, all meetings, whether in person or via FaceTime or Skype, were audio-recorded. I also made a note for myself in my reflexive journal: "Listen, listen – don't interrupt. Let her take the lead. Do not be another oppressor." I kept this note in front of me during the interviews.

Each interview began with a brief reminder and discussion of the parameters of the study – that participation was confidential, that each university had been anonymized, that the identity of the participants would not be shared with anyone, including the other participants, and that the interviews were being recorded but would be erased as soon as they were transcribed. Fifteen questions had been approved by Chapman University's Institutional Research Board for semi-structured interviews. (See Appendix B for the list of questions.) In actuality, the interviews were conversations which consisted mostly of informal narrative events (Daiute, 2014) based on just four or five of the questions, depending on the experiences and interests of the participant. In all cases, the participants shared numerous stories of their experiences at their PPWI. These stories

consisted of highlights, difficult times, memories of friends, jobs on and off campus, and family support. These conversations were dialogic: there were discoveries on both sides, as memories of college experiences came back into focus for the participant and the researcher.

Although I had to prepare to truly listen to the participants as they shared their experiences and perceptions, I had to also ensure that my research agenda and motives were transparent (Berryman et al., 2013b). I had to be willing to share my own counter-stories. I had to adopt a self-reflexive stance (Berryman et al., 2013a). This ongoing self-reflection included a reflexive journal (See Figure 3 and Figure 4) with contemporaneous response writing (Clandinin, 2013). The reflexive journal provided the second source of data collection in the study. (Content from the reflexive journal will also be discussed Chapters Five and Six.)



Figure 3. Reflexive Journal Cover. Many aspects of this research study were fortuitous, including this gift of a blank journal just a few weeks before it started. (Photo by the researcher.)

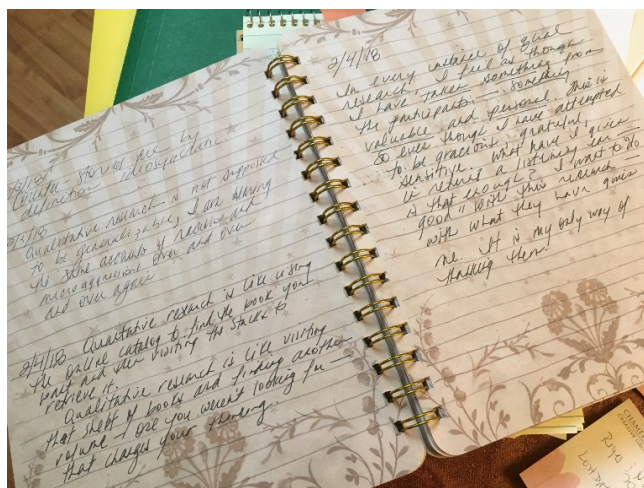


Figure 4. Reflexive Journal Sample Pages. The self-reflexive journal created meaning during the study for the researcher and led to insights that became part of the research text. (Photo by the researcher.)

The third method of data collection in the study was tacit knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Tacit knowledge was described by Lincoln and Guba (1985): “It is not possible to describe or explain everything that one ‘knows’ in language form; some things must be experienced to be understood” (p. 195). Within the study, tacit knowledge was experienced by the researcher as the emotional resonance of the experiences and counter-stories shared by the participants.

The discoveries of the participants included what appeared to be sudden recollections of significant stories, many from several years prior. Some of the women laughed as they shared these stories and others cried as they recounted difficult experiences. These moments felt to me to be particularly honest. I felt both humbled and honored by the emotional qualities of these moments. The discovery for me was an increased awareness of my positionality and privilege within higher education, a heightened sense of responsibility to see this work shared widely, and a deeper understanding of the value of qualitative research. This type of interactivity is consistent within the methodology dynamic narrating where a relational quality develops between

the teller and the listener of a narrative (Daiute, 2014). The concept of tacit knowledge connects well with the methodology of CRT counter-storytelling as well as culturally responsive methodologies. Both the framework of CRT and culturally responsive methodologies value the experiential and specific knowledges of minoritized, marginalized populations.

Member Checking

Member checking is an important component of qualitative research (Ferguson & Ferguson, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, reciprocity is a key component of culturally responsive methodologies (Berryman et al., 2013a). Throughout the study, the researcher maintained (and still attempts to maintain) frequent contact with the participants to confirm details, statements, and impressions of their recollections. Additionally, with five of the six participants, the relationships between us are ongoing and include such activities as attending the same professional conference, being consulted concerning graduate school plans, and receiving invitations to family parties.

According to their preferences, some of the participants have read and commented on interim drafts of the dissertation chapters. No corrections or changes were suggested as a result of this stage of member checking, however, such transparency was an important value throughout the study. On some occasions, after an exchange of emails to maintain contact, the participants provided more data for inclusion in the study – additional college recollections, for example. Any additional information was added to their counter-stories. One of the participants is interested in co-publishing and co-presenting this research at a major conference. Since the inclusion of the participants' perspectives in the form of counter-stories was the aim of the study, their opinions

concerning their experiences were more important to the final results than the researcher's opinions.

Ethical Considerations

All participants were 18 years of age or older and were fully informed about the parameters of the study in advance. They were advised of their rights to privacy and assured that their participation in this study would in no way impact their current or future relationship with Chapman University. Participants were also informed that they could decline to answer any question posed to them at any time.

Throughout the study, data was collected safely and securely to ensure confidentiality to all participants. Participants were deidentified through the use of self-selected pseudonyms. All data generated from the study will be discarded within seven years from the completion of the study.

What is described above are issues of compliance; however, for the purposes of this study, there were additional considerations beyond the basics of what was required by the university's institutional research board. First, there was consideration for the priorities, positionality, and preferences of the participants (i.e., their schedules and commitments, their desires to be more or less engaged with the process of the study as it progressed). Next, there was respect for and acknowledgement of the memories the participants shared with the researcher. On two occasions, with two participants, the telling of their counter-stories evoked tears. It was in these moments that I felt, as Bloom (2002) described, like an invader into the participant's privacy. I felt as though I were now a part of the problem I was hoping to help solve. I did not know what to say in response other than to say, "Thank you for sharing so honestly with me." Yet, I felt as

though this data, these counter-stories, which the participants shared so willingly with me, could, in fact, make a difference within higher education. I felt hopeful. Finally, whether we were meeting in a virtual space or a physical space and regardless of the researcher's commitment to create a culturally-responsive and equity-based study, the positionality of the White researcher with the privileges of Whiteness was between us. For these reasons, our meetings were always held at a time and in a style of the participants' choosing.

Statement of Subjectivity and Researcher Positionality

I am a constructionist who believes there are no absolute truths to be discovered. Instead, I believe that meaning and significance are created or co-created by human experience. The research paradigm that resonates for me is qualitative research because it relies on the meaning-making of individuals. As a researcher pursuing a doctoral degree, my ways of knowing include academic strategies and curricula, personal experience and perspective, and cultural and media influences.

I consider myself fortunate to have grown up in the 1960s and 1970s when the cultural norms began to expand to include People of Color, women, gays and lesbians, and a greater spectrum of gender identities and sexual expression. I embraced this increased freedom. In the ninth grade, for example, I lobbied to win a position as the first girl on the school's projection crew – the team that moved and set up the screening equipment from classroom to classroom. I had already directed my first Super 8 films, and these two knowledges were the beginning of a lifelong career in media production.

Today, as a researcher, I appreciate data, results, outcomes, and assessments. Yet, I also reserve a degree of criticality for the alternative answers – for the singular case that

may, in some ways, be of more interest than the majority. This way of knowing is a combination of practicality, a creative interest in alternatives, and my doctoral education and preparation. I have brought these knowledges with me to this dissertation study.

Traditional researchers have attempted to study groups from the outside with the goal of understanding what is occurring on the inside (Berryman et al., 2013a; Sherry, 2012). In recognition that all identities contain degrees of hybridity and intersectionality, I describe myself as both insider and outsider in relationship to the population of first-generation collegiate alumnae (Patel, 2016; Sherry, 2012). As a first-generation alumna myself, I am positioned as an insider in relationship to the participants in this study. However, as a White woman who researched with Latinx women, I am an outsider. As a middle-class, full-time, salaried administrator, alumna, and adjunct faculty member at the PPWI where I am employed, part of my responsibility is to market the institution to a variety of student groups, including, most recently, to Latinx first-generation students.

I was 20 years old before I experienced any sort of prejudice and that was, in retrospect, mild. I visited college friends in Hawaii, and, in their hometown, we were all keenly aware that I was White. One of them said to me, clearly uncomfortable, “I bet everyone wonders what we’re doing with a *haole*.” I had never heard the word before but was immediately uneasy. I returned home to California. We all graduated soon after and I have since lost contact with these friends. Now I know that microaggressions and uncomfortable moments like this occur for People of Color every day.

I was 50 years old before I heard the term “White privilege.” I have since learned to feel both the burden and the power of *the invisible knapsack* of White privilege (McIntosh, 1990) I carry. McIntosh (1990) listed 26 privileges afforded to White people

that are denied to People of Color. Even in my enlightened, doctoral phase of life, I can answer *yes* to every privilege on the list.

Trustworthiness

Instead of generalizability, the goal of qualitative research is trustworthiness (Bailey, 2007; Given & Saumure, 2008; Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Moss, 2004; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2012; Schwandt, 2015). According to Ferguson and Ferguson (2000), there are three dimensions of trustworthiness. First is the “truth value,” or resonance of the research, including its accuracy, which is achieved by collecting data from a variety of sources and explaining the research process. To prepare to achieve this level of trustworthiness, this researcher triangulated three primary data sources: the counter-stories of the participants, the reflexive journal of the researcher, and the tacit knowledge based on the emotional resonance of the conversations. The participants who have read and commented on their counter-stories and interim drafts of the dissertation have approved of everything they have read.

Second, wrote Ferguson and Ferguson (2000), the relationship between the researcher and the participant must be strong enough to support a genuine and meaningful exchange. To enable this to occur, I provided opportunities for the involvement of the participants at whatever level each felt comfortable. Also, whenever we spoke on the phone, via FaceTime or Skype, or met in person, the duration and location of our meeting was the choice of the participant. Finally, each session took the shape of a conversation versus a formal or structured interview, which allowed for a more natural exchange between the participants and the researcher. In the researcher’s opinion, the forward continuance of a relationship between five of the participants and the

researcher is also an indication that the exchanges between us have been genuine and meaningful. Although the relationship with the sixth participant has been limited and does not appear to be ongoing, it felt strong enough for the duration of the study although it has, at this time, concluded.

The third quality of trustworthiness is the utility and relevance of the research, meaning it should advance the cause of social justice and liberation (Ferguson & Ferguson, 2000). As I explained to the participants before they agreed to join the study, the goal of this research has always been to influence higher education policy and praxis. This study was designed as a critique of contemporary PPWI. I believed that if the first two aspects of trustworthiness could be achieved, it would be possible to demonstrate the usefulness of the research. At this time, my objectives are to create an executive summary to be shared with PPWI leaders. Additionally, liberatory results have included the personal benefits expressed by three of the participants (see Benefits section in Chapter 7).

To achieve trustworthiness, this dissertation study relied on the first-hand experiences and perspectives of first-generation Latinx alumnae who attended PPWIs. The inclusion of the description of the methodology, the method, the data collection, and the data analysis of the study also adds to the quality of trustworthiness. Ultimately, trustworthiness is judged by both academic and non-academic audiences (SAGE Publications, 2017; Schwandt, 2015). Trustworthiness and the inclusion of the voices of first-generation Latinx alumnae in the research could lead to changes in both policy and practice which could improve campus climate for first-generation Latinx students, especially at private, non-profit, currently-predominantly-White institutions.

Additionally, there could be changes in higher education policy and praxis as well as increased awareness of social justice within U.S. society.

This chapter has explained the research methodology and methods used in this study to answer the question, “What was it like to be a first-generation Latinx woman who attended a PPWI in Southern California?” Also, the ethical framing of culturally responsive methodologies (CRM) was described. Following, was a description of the participants, site selection processes, and the methods of data collection. Finally, the chapter closed with statements concerning the researcher’s positionality and efforts to ensure trustworthiness.

What follows in chapter 4 are the counter-stories of the participants. Identifying details concerning the PPWI’s they attended have been omitted. Also, the voice of the researcher has intentionally been omitted in an effort to allow these Latinx first-generation alumnae to speak for themselves, without interjection or interruption.

“We are not a monolith. Latinx women are not a monolith.” – Catalina

Chapter 4: Counter-stories

This study focused on the lived experiences of six first-generation Latinx alumnae who persisted to the attainment of a bachelor's degree within six years while attending a PPWI. The research question at the foundation of this study was, "What was it like to be a first-generation Latinx woman attending a private, predominantly-White university in Southern California?" To answer this question, six Latinx alumnae who had earned a bachelor's degree at a PPWI in Southern California shared their counter-stories. Their narratives are considered counter-stories by the researcher because they contradicted both the stated and unspoken majoritarian stories concerning equity, meritocracy, opportunity for all, respect for diversity, and the movement for inclusion at PPWI. The narratives of the participants follow in this chapter. The majoritarian stories they counter are described in this chapter and in Chapter Seven. The counter-stories are told in the words of the participants. Only identifying information and conversational niceties have been omitted.

Sylvia, 32, Pinnacle University, B.A., M.A.

The whole process itself of being a first-generation student, the whole idea of applying to college, nobody knew what we were doing. I didn't even know what I was supposed to fill out and mail and these deadlines and how to write about myself. The home life also affects the first-generation student's ability to succeed and also their mentality. I think, Latina females and their families, there's a lot of expectations that they're going to be helping with siblings, helping with responsibilities, just generally taking care of family. Family first. I think a large part of navigating your education is learning how to balance that.

In all honesty, Pinnacle was the last school I wanted to go. My dad really wanted me to go there and I'm not really sure why. I also received a scholarship. It was the first college acceptance letter I got and everyone was home in the living room when I got it. That moment is really hard to forget, where everybody was there and just how proud my dad was that I got into Pinnacle. So that kind of sealed it.

I had also applied to six other schools, mostly in California, public and private, and one private university in Washington. But somehow, I got the deadlines wrong, which is so weird because I was an AP student and super organized. For the top schools that I really wanted, I had written the deadline down wrong and applied late. I was so upset and sad. It came down to two choices – a University of California choice and Pinnacle.

I remember knowing that the scholarship at Pinnacle wasn't enough. But my dad promised me, I really think you should go there and we'll do whatever we can to pay the difference. The smallest things happen for a reason. I had started to get more involved in church and to learn more about my identity as a Catholic and it turns out, one of the ladies who was a leader at church was connected to Pinnacle. I heard from other friends about larger schools and feeling lost and she encouraged me, Pinnacle is great, you want to go there. Something guided me to Pinnacle.

Once I arrived, I wanted more than anything to just fit in. And that involved me not joining MECHA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) and just trying to stay away from those kinds of things. And trying to go shopping

with students there and taking out my first credit card because I wanted to try and afford the things that they could and do the things that they were doing. Which is so weird because that was never me, growing up in high school. I took pride in who I was. And I would wear my silly band shirts and my thrift store tees because that was my aesthetic, kind of tomboy-esque. So, to try and fit in there and buy very feminine, expensive purses and sunglasses and things. To suddenly question what I look like and what I was wearing was a huge thing.

At that point in time, I had never left California or even Southern California. Even the little things of hearing people talk about touring the same colleges, little things like that, it was like, wow, you spent that money to just—it didn't make sense to me. I was like, whoa.

One time, I remember reading something about a one-bedroom and I remember some people saying, it was in a class, "Who would do that. Why would you put a whole family in a one-bedroom?" And again, I reflected on my experience: "Is this not a normal thing?" Is this not okay? I was fine. In all honesty, I would give up so much now to go back to living in that one-bedroom. My family was as close as we ever were. It was like we were in this nice little house and it was fine.

I never grew up with any real awareness of my class, of my race, or any of that stuff. We lived in a one-bedroom house and even then, I didn't really associate that with anything. I knew we weren't rich but I also grew up never wanting. It was just, I was Sylvia and I had interests. I mean, my largest identity I ever had was probably that I was smart. But at Pinnacle, I was left out of an

inside joke. I didn't fit it. It is kind of that perpetual feeling that describes a lot of my college experience.

I remember in one class we did the activity where we line up and you're supposed to see everybody's privilege. It was like, if you've ever been out of the country, take a step forward. If you grew up in a house your family owned, take a step forward. If you rented a house, take a step back. If you grew up with a nanny, take a step forward. A majority of the class all ended up in front and I was the farthest in the back. It came around to how did it feel to be in the back. And I remember my statement: "Well, I'm really proud because I didn't have nearly half of what you guys had and I'm still in the same classroom as you right now."

In high school, I was the epitome of, wow, she's about to take on the world. And then college really toyed with all that. It was a question of how do I navigate this? I applied to be an orientation leader and I got rejected. I felt like this was an example of a Student of Color not fitting in, not wearing the right clothes. I remember there was not one Person of Color on my interview committee. It felt like a cool club I was not allowed to be part of. I've always had the desire to help people. I want to do things. And it's weird to think that for something like that, they would deem me as not appropriate or they would hire other people.

In my sophomore year, my father died. As he was dying, I whispered in his ear and promised that I was going to graduate. I knew that was important.

A woman in the Business Office is probably one of the main reasons I ever graduated, bless her heart. She used to talk to my dad when he would arrange

how to pay the bill and give him some leeway and all these things. And then when he died and she found out, because then I was the one who had to take care of that myself and figuring that out and how do I do this and how do I manage that and figure out what to do. And she would help me and lift my hold for a little bit so I could register and then I'd have the hold again and that would allow me so long to make a payment till the next time. Finally, I think it got to a point where her supervisor said she couldn't do anymore, she absolutely couldn't. I also went to the dean of students once and said, "I'm having a hard time. I can't pay for school, but I'm a good student. Is there anything you can do to help me?" That was a lot for me because I was not one to ask for help. And he said, "I'm not sure what you want. We can't really do anything." It was disheartening. I thought, why did I even bother. I wasn't one of the kids they put on the pictures with him with his arm around them. I don't really fit that model. But I felt that if you'd really looked and seen me: oh wow, this student came in with a 4.5 and still, after failing, she has a three point something. I just wish I'd been considered. I didn't tell anybody I had been dismissed.

I remember the realization that I had to take a whole year off and work to save money. Not only did I feel like I was left behind, on top of that, it was all the academic stuff that came with that because then my grades started slipping and then I was on probation and then from probation to dismissal and then I appealed it and then I was on probation again and up for dismissal a second time. I had to appeal again. Then they let me stay again which is good. It was a severe

degradation of my identity and anything that would allow me to remotely fit in. Gosh, I haven't thought critically about that in a long time.

There were no faculty members and barely any staff that I saw that represented who I was or anything that I could identify with or anything at all. And that was super unfortunate because I would be taking a lot of these diversity classes taught by White males and White women and nothing computed. There was only one Faculty of Color. Once, she happened to meet my mom in the hallway and she said, "Your daughter's great, your daughter's so smart, she's such a good writer." I remember hearing a faculty member talk about my academic work and I remember the weight that that carried, like oh wow, I felt seen and validated. It kind of really challenged that whole imposter syndrome, like, wow, okay, I'm getting this, I can do this, this is alright.

I went to a large demonstration once where one of the administrators of the university said he didn't see color. He was colorblind. It was huge. It was a bit of a socio-cultural learning experience for me because, at first, it was kind of weird; I didn't understand why people were upset about that. Then I remember thinking about it and kind of reflecting, wow, wait, he doesn't see me, and kind of getting it on that level. And I think that kind of opened my eyes to all the time to the White privilege that was on campus without really knowing what it was.

I would hear students talk about the ghetto. There was a shift there, at some point in time, where I became – I almost fit the stereotype, the stigma where I was very much trying to fit in and then I turned into that stereotype of that angry Woman of Color because I had to challenge that notion. And I started to speak

up and confront individuals and that didn't contribute to me fitting me. At that point in time, I was so far down the rabbit hole that I didn't really care anymore. I remember students talking about the ghetto and I said, "Do I look like I'm from the ghetto? What makes it the ghetto? Why do you refer to it as that? Because that's where I'm from."

So, I was tokenized a lot. I felt that like something I always kind of missed from my college experience was this idea of having really great friends and doing a lot of things like, oh, they would be in my wedding party or different things. It's like, no, I don't really have that. I probably have my sister and my childhood friend, that's it. I don't really have the whole social network from college which is weird. But I remember, I think, the best part was just learning about myself. I'm trying to think about the best. You wouldn't think it would be that hard.

Recommending Pinnacle is tough. It's like yes and no. It's really hard to look back at my experiences like super positive because it was a lot of challenges. I say yes because it's improved. It's better.

Natalie, 21, Eminence University, B.A.

This is actually a really rough journey. On the home side, it was just, oh, you're going to get into a good college, but not how do I do that. The Common App was confusing and just applying for aid is ridiculously hard. In terms of SAT, we bought a book and we would all study at Panera and do work. We would just go hard together, all of my high school classmates.

So much of my tuition was paid for at Eminence. So that was actually how I chose it.

About the cultural fit of Eminence, a lot of classes are participation based and I find it harder for me to participate because I didn't grow up or I wasn't taught in that kind of culture. I wasn't taught to be assertive or loud or anything like that. Very much like to be considerate of others. And I'm just more shy. Not even a shy person but when it comes to speaking up in class, that's very much a thing.

So, as a freshman, I was really turned off to the school, especially in the beginning, which is when recruitment happens for the sororities and fraternities. I wasn't turned off because I felt it was superficial or anything, because at that time, everything just communicated to me that your status was important and how much money you had was important and just the power that you and your family had. That was really off-putting. But I figured that's not everyone and it's just a few people. And money was a really sensitive topic. We were very much low income in that we struggled for food sometimes. We lived in really harsh conditions.

Also, in freshman year, my freshman seminar was research-based and I was working on this paper last-minute with this girl who was White. And we both turned it in at the same time. We started at the same time and turned it in at the same time and we had procrastinated hard. And when we got our scores back, I got a really high score, like one of the highest in the class, like maybe a 98. I did ridiculously well and I was so surprised. And when she asked for my score, I told

her. She told me her score and hers was lower. And she literally cussed me out and she said, "You don't deserve that, I'm so much smarter than you" and ridiculous things like that. And I was so taken aback. And everyone in the room was like, oh my God, what's happening. And I just stood quiet. I didn't really know what to say because I was so offended. Why would you say that? It was so hurtful. So that was a traumatic experience.

I have definitely felt like people think "the only way you got in is because of your color and you got a scholarship. You wouldn't be here if it wasn't for that."

There was one professor, I was really struggling in her class. It was lecture hall class. I went to her and told her I had been going to counseling, that I was very anxious, and I needed a special accommodation. She said, "You're just making excuses. You're not anxious. You're making it all up in your head. You're doing this to get an easy ride and take advantage." I was just so hurt. She was White. She had no form of empathy or anything for anyone.

Three professors stand out to me. They have supported me not only in terms of crisis but have valued diversity and made that clear in the classroom. Like diverse thought, diverse people, opinions - and not only said it but showed it as well in the way they taught the content like the authors they choose. I think that really made a difference. I think those were the ones I felt supported by.

The only People of Color I saw were cleaning. There aren't many Faculty of Color. My best friend, I met her Freshman year, she's also Mexican. Not like color determined my best friend but it was more that we found so much more in

common with each other that we just easily became best friends. My freshman year, especially, was really isolating. I felt like my experience—I couldn't share my experience with anyone because no one was going through a similar situation and those that I did see similar to me, we immediately became good friends.

I'm definitely not involved in leadership at Eminence like I was in high school. But I did find my spot on campus: I worked as a college mentor. I just completely and wholly dedicated myself to that and making my program a good program. I have a passion for helping anybody but like students especially. My current job is a college mentor to high school students and it's such a rewarding experience. I think that's why I think I wanted to be a teacher because I could see how much I could do and change in the lives of these capable students that just weren't being seen or didn't have the opportunities or didn't know how to craft the language to get into college. But other than that, I haven't been in the same leadership positions. I think a lot of that had to do with the insecurity I felt freshman year. When everybody was saying their achievements in high school and every time I would say one of mine, it would be like, What? Really? Like obviously being a freshman but even questioning what I'm capable of and if I could do well. Like I'm not as smart as these people, I shouldn't be here. I think those other things that other people might have thought, I also thought for myself. Also, having people come up to me and just start speaking Spanish, I was like, don't do that.

And I'm working 20 hours a week and having a full course load and even taking care of my mom. It gets difficult.

I did get to go abroad to Europe. Going abroad was huge. I had never even considered going abroad. So, I was just like, yes, I'm gonna do it. And I got a lot of pushback from my parents. They're very no, no, no. But it was very much worth it. Just like the way I saw the world changed and the opportunities that I had and how possible things are, it's like you really put yourself out there.

I think a lot of the questions you're asking are, do professors display or exhibit some kind of bias for you or not for you? I can't recall because they really don't—I feel like they don't see me. Even though they are really small classrooms. The attention wasn't really on me. And I think that's also because I didn't really draw their attention. The students they call on are mostly White males.

So, should another first-generation Latinx woman go to school at Eminence? No, I don't think she should.

Alicia, 24, B.S., M.S. in progress

A lot of students who live in rural areas that have a huge Latino population aren't offered the same resources as a city school. In my high school, we all pulled together, because there were a lot of students who would not have graduated if the whole class, most of the class, didn't support them.

Eminence offered me offered me the most financial aid, so I went there, and the unmet was met by an outside scholarship. Room and board, transportation, everything. It is an amazing scholarship. But I didn't sense a strong community for me there. It's a different environment. I don't know how to

explain that. I think my best friends on campus were the workers, the cafeteria workers [who were mostly Latinx]. They would offer if I ever needed something off-campus, just a safe space. They offered me their spaces. I would talk Spanish with them. Whenever they would see me, they'd talk Spanish. [My suite was diverse.] We had two African-Americans and one from Zambia, Africa. And one of Cuban background, one of Indian background and two Caucasians. Those are the friends that I kept throughout Eminence. All of my teachers were Caucasian. Maybe one was Asian. There were not a lot of Latinx women in my classes.

I had to go to the ER really late at night once and I stayed at the ER all night. Coming back to Eminence, I didn't have any of my friends who were able to pick me up. So, I called the school, the public safety department, and my RA and asked them could someone please pick me up because I literally had no money to take an Uber. Which was their next comment, we can't, can you please take an Uber here. And I didn't have money to take an Uber and to them, that didn't seem like a problem. They didn't follow up or anything. I was able to find a bunch of coins and I took the bus. Yeah, that was one of the things that stood out to me the most was a student over here really needs your help and there wasn't anyone to come out... It was a 40-minute bus ride.

I had an internship in college, at that same hospital. My supervisor was what they called a Department Coordinator which is the person that oversees your whole schedule for whatever department you're in. And I was in the heart/cath lab. So that department coordinator was very helpful. Later, when I got sick, instead of interning at that hospital, I was a patient. They were very

understanding. They knew that I did not want to be on that side as a patient but they were very supportive in that. And they helped me complete the program.

I think going abroad was one of the best things that happened in college. Without the scholarships I had, it wouldn't have been as easy to study abroad and be exposed to a different culture. I also had a physics professor who supported me. This professor actually wants to see you succeed. I did good in that class. I also took an art class and that professor was supportive. Like the things I would draw in class, I was motivated by my health issues and seeing the way we had to draw certain things on certain mediums, it reminded me of x-rays and MRI's and all of that. So, after I told him that's why I draw the way that I do, he was more understanding and he wanted me to keep in touch after we graduated, see how I was doing and how far I went with art and relating it to a medical career.

The best thing that happened was the support I had during my physics class because I had surgery during that time and my professor was very supportive. She even invited me to her house and bought food for my mom and me because my mom came down to help me and she bought food for us while I recovered. That was like an angel coming down during that time. It was a really hard time but I was very fortunate to have her. My financial aid advisor from my scholarship program was a mentor. I didn't even have the money to get to college. She had to go out of her way to send me an emergency loan before school started. Since then, she's just helped me if I was struggling with financial issues. She would always check in with me, see how I'm doing, and offer to pray for me. She represented the university's mission to me.

I consider myself blessed when it comes to how supportive and understanding my family has been throughout my first-generation journey. Although my parents learned along with my sisters and me about the whole "furthering your education" process, they gave unrelenting support in our decisions and motivated us to never give up. They both went above and beyond to make sure that we all had everything we needed to succeed in school. A few examples of this during my time at Eminence is when my migraines started acting up again and commuting became difficult so my parents and one of my sisters drove from [another state] to Eminence to help get me to doctors' appointments and to and from campus. My mom also flew down to be with me for one of my surgeries. I talked to my sisters and parents on the phone almost daily and especially when I needed feedback about decisions I needed to make. And, whenever funds were low, even with a full-ride scholarship, my family would do anything in their power to make sure I had enough to eat, for gas, and necessities like toilet paper. My family has always been my foundation and motivation. Their love and sacrifice are nurturing and the most crucial thing that keeps me going in my journey. Some of my friends, one of my professors, and my financial aid adviser became my family at Eminence. These people were my hope when life seemed hopeless and when my family was too far away.

What also kept me going is that I want to be a doctor and all the experiences of being sick, that gave me a view from the other side of it. You're the patient. You understand and you have more compassion. If you want to be a doctor and treating patients as well, you understand what patients are going

through. Through billing, through their symptoms and not having answers, the pain. And as hard as it was for me to struggle through classes, I know that someday I'm going to meet another young person like me that is also going through the same thing and struggling in college. Maybe it's impeding them from being the best they can be. And that's what kept me going is that, someday, hopefully, I can be more cognizant doctor and help them.

So, I would say it's a tough question about whether or not another Latinx first-generation student should go to Eminence. I think I would be very open about it and I would recommend it but I would tell my story. If they're the same background as me and if the university hasn't changed with more support and more understanding for students like me, then I would have them consider other schools.

Phoenix, Summit University, B.S., M.S.

I applied to 20 schools. I was not entirely sure of the college process. I was like, okay, let me apply. Even though I had a high GPA, I was involved, I was excelling in everything in high school, I still had personal doubts and I was just like, let me throw out my net to the schools that I would really like to go to and see what happens. And I was actually accepted to 19 out of the 20 schools. They were all in California.

I really wanted that private education mainly because of the smaller student-to-professor ratio, having that opportunity of not just being a number but being an individual. But I would say the last deciding factor was the financial aid. They offered me a full ride, which the other institutions did not.

At Summit, I think I could've been better prepared for that cultural transition in terms of not everyone is going to look alike, not everyone is going to think the same way. I did know there were different individuals, different experiences, but I wasn't aware of how much they would clash. It would've been nice to be warned that if you're in this situation, it could be that you'll be elected spokesperson for your community. Be prepared.

I remember one professor mentioning, "This is the first time I've had a Black student in my class in about four or five years. You know, we usually get two Latinos in here." Comments like that. Another professor asked, "Can you talk about the experience of feminism and women's rights in terms of the Latino perspective?" And I think that was one of the things that really affected me. Was I elected to speak on behalf of our people?

Many individuals transferred out their first or second year and some of them cited it was tuition and cost but the other reason was diversity, that they were told, oh, we're a diverse community but they didn't really see that. Summit talked about diversity and inclusion. They did try to have forums, these discussions where we could voice concerns about race or any sort of microaggression on campus, but it seemed like most of the people who did speak up would be on the defensive. Maybe 20% of the students at these forums were African American or Hispanic. These forums were Summit's go-to response, their magic bullet. Okay, let's have a forum and discuss this but other than that, they had no response.

I would purposely write my full name on reports and group reports to kind of take a stand. They would be like, your name is so long, why don't you shorten it? I would be like, no, it's long for a reason. It's a way of honoring my background, my parents, and everything. Just little things like that I noticed where I had to, in some ways, keep fighting to earn my place.

I remember the first time I met with one of my advisors, he was coming back from sabbatical and he and I decided to meet and what I thought was maybe a half an hour meeting turned into a three-hour long discussion of what I wanted to do, where I had grown up, what motivated me, and where I saw myself in the future. That really impacted because I don't think I had had anyone take such a broad interest in my whole educational career. For him to take that time to get to know me, to see it from my view, not to kind of, oh, this is a student XYZ, not to categorize you automatically but really give me the chance to portray myself through my eyes, what I wanted to do. I was blessed to have an amazing advisor plus those small student-to-professor ratios. I did get to learn and have a more individualized learning and also a relationship with them. They have supported me throughout my whole educational career. Even the struggles that I went through feeling like, okay, I'm one of five Latinos in the class and I still don't feel as valued, or I'm seen as less, or a I still have to work three times as hard because of that, because I'm a scholarship student. I still keep in contact with them and everything. And so, it's just really that relationship that I had an opportunity to build.

During one fall, I had a major accident, so I wasn't sure if I was going to return. There was a lot of physical therapy, learning how to walk again, redo things, everything. But my two advisors actually took the time to come and see me in the hospital, to see if I was alright. They kept checking up on me and on my family, almost on a daily basis, seeing if there was anything I needed. Not just moral support but anything. During my accident, I lost my glasses and one of my advisors offered to pay for them, do you need them, are you okay. Just those acts of kindness and the fact that they went to that length to come visit me at the hospital, it really showed me the type of relationship that can be built and the strength that was in them.

I was a founder of the Biological Honors Society on my campus, as well as the multicultural sorority. I think just in general, in classes, students kind of labeled me as, oh, she's so smart, she understands, we should go to her. Or in research, she has plenty of experience, let's go to her. So, it just naturally rose to those positions where students look to me or let's have her speak on our behalf in classes and in forums and things. I think it just naturally happened that way. I also worked during undergrad; I worked as a college tutor for high school students throughout undergrad. In addition, I also worked as a tutor at the Summit and as a medical assistant during the first two years of undergrad at a local clinic. I also had research internships during my junior and senior year of undergrad.

When I was at Summit, I went back to my high school and was a mentor and some of my students went to Summit. Even now in my master's program, I

have a student who just finished her first year and I served as her mentor as she went through some of those cultural challenges of fitting in, finding her niche, determining whether or not she's a good science major

Definitely, in my case, faith kept me going. Being able to hold on to something, believing in something greater, believing in a higher plan. But, also, family cohesion. Social cohesion. I had really supportive parents. Despite everything, despite my long nights of studying, of commuting, the first years of crying, of having to work harder than anyone else. I think just having that support even though they didn't go through it themselves and they couldn't really understand the extent of everything, just having them there and reaffirming me and it's going to be okay. Or even days when they didn't say anything and were just there, I think that's what made the difference and pushed me because I knew that they had come here for a better life, that they wanted their children to succeed and support themselves with an educational background so we didn't have to go through those same troubles. Having that family unity has helped me through difficult times and kept me going.

So, I would definitely say yes, another Latinx first-generation woman should attempt Summit. Despite all the challenges, I think it's a great school. Even now, they still support me. I was obviously blessed with great mentorship and with opportunities I think I would not have had at a bigger school. But I always try to make sure to and tell students to check out campuses in person and imagine can I see myself as a student here? Is this a community I want to be part of?

Raquel, 36, Pinnacle University, B.A., M.B.A.

My dad is a go-getter. He was born in Mexico. He immigrated to the U.S. and earned his citizenship by joining the military. Later in life, he started his own business and always taught me that success come before work only in the dictionary. He very much instilled that in me. Then, there is my mom, a single mother of two kids, who worked multiple jobs to support my brother and me. Seeing the work ethic of my parents is what continues to motivate me to work hard and succeed in life.

Prior to going to Pinnacle when I was touring other colleges, I actually did look at another PPWI in Southern California where I received a scholarship. Through a group like MECHA, I got to stay on that campus overnight and I was actually turned off by their group because they seemed more, what's the word, almost militant about being Hispanic making your Hispanic presence known. The group didn't present themselves as embracing other cultures. It was almost too extreme. I sensed some anger in many of the group members. Their group seemed founded on anger rather than cultural education. That is what ultimately made me decide to go to Pinnacle. While the diversity wasn't there, it was a smaller campus. It has a tight-knit, homey ambiance. That's what I liked about it.

It would have been nice if there were more people I could've culturally identified with or reached out to. Growing up, I was kind of White-washed. I would've like to join a cultural group or club, but there was none of that at that time. My roommate in the dorms all four years was my best friend from high school who is half Hispanic and half Filipino. So, it was nice to have her to live

with. I think every community we lived in, we were the only Hispanics. Now that I think about it, we were, in every community we lived in, we were the only minority. Everyone else, I believe, was White. I didn't really feel like a minority and I think a lot of that has to do with how I look. A lot of people don't think I am Hispanic and I am full, one hundred percent Hispanic.

Growing up, because I looked White, I didn't really feel like a minority and I think a lot of that has to do with how I look. If I'm with a group of Whites, they assume I'm White. I've had people make racial comments in front of me and when I would respond to the contrary, they would stare at me and ask, "Oh, you're Mexican?" I would tell them yes. Of course, the next comment was, "Well, you don't look it, you're White." I would then have to explain that not all Hispanics are dark skinned.

I wasn't really active in college. I did do rush and I accepted a bid for the most popular sorority on campus. However, I had a lot of people ask why I was joining. You're not a stereotypical sorority girl. Then, I found out you have to pay a lot of money (or at least to me it was a lot of money) to join. They also had a lot of restrictions on what you could couldn't do, especially if you were wearing your letters. I didn't care for that at all. I also didn't have a job at the time and I'd have to go to my parents to see if they'd be willing to pay for it. My dad said, "Well, mija, if this is something you really want to do, I will pay for it." And when he put it like that, I just couldn't justify the cost for him. So, I ended up dropping out before I had to pay anything.

Everyone at Pinnacle was tight-knit. You got to know everyone and you looked out for each other. I liked the one-on-one attention from teachers, which is something I needed to help me learn. (I was diagnosed with dyslexia when I was in third grade and always struggled academically.) I also liked the fact that I was able to live on campus so if I needed to go to the library at any moment, I could. If I needed to go to my professor's office, every professor had an open-door policy and a lot of them preferred you to call them by their first name which I really liked because that created a sense of you're not just my professor, you're my friend and I can go to you if I have questions. And I think just the faculty overall being so open and wanting you to learn and wanting you to excel. And if I was struggling, because I struggle in math, being able to go to my teachers in person, via email, on their phone. I mean some teachers gave you their cell phone number. I think that helped a lot in my academics. So, yes, I recommend Pinnacle.

Catalina, 33, Pinnacle University, B.A., J.D., Ph.D. candidate

When I look back, my parents, who are very Catholic, don't know a lot about college. I mean I think for them, they couldn't conceive of me - I mean, Pinnacle wasn't even a religious school but at least it had religious roots and it was private and small and so my parents thought that was the best thing even if it cost so much money. It's kind of incredible that my parents let me take on all this debt.

My parent's philosophy was, White people are the ones who are leaders, they are the ones who are making money, they're successful so we need to learn how to work in their environment. They kind of always pushed us to figure out what the White people are doing, figure out how to assimilate in White culture so that you will be successful. I have a lot of critique with that. I get that my parents came with a really good intention, but when I analyze it now, there's a lot of internalized racism there in terms of what they thought. I think I was prepped and influenced by my family so much that I thought this university is where I'm going to be more successful.

Disability plays a big role in my life, both as I identify was someone with a mental disability and, also, I have a little sister who has a disability². I was a really great student in high school and applied to three universities and received scholarships from all three. I think I should have applied to more schools. One of my biggest reasons for applying to Pinnacle was that it was very close to home. I grew up in Catholic schools, small private Catholic schools. So, the two factors were that I needed were to be close to home and I thought I would flourish better in a small, private school because that was the setting I had been in. I visited and I felt good. Like I would be happy there. I knew I couldn't be very far from home. I knew I couldn't be far away from my parents. I also served as a caregiver for my sister. Since then, I've been able to travel and live apart from my family. It probably came down to scholarships and funding.

² For reasons of confidentiality and anonymity of the participant and her sister, the disability is not specified. However, I wish to recognize the significance of the familial relationships and the people in Catalina's life.

I also grew up in a very Latino neighborhood. All my friends were Latino. Everyone was Catholic. We shared the same identity. So, my identity was heightened as soon as I got into college. There, I really felt like a minority, with people reading me as different and asking what I was and those kinds of things.

There was a small group on campus called Student Organization of Latinos, but there were only about five people in the organization. However, in the area around Pinnacle, there is a very vibrant Mexican community. My White girlfriends and I would go dancing at this Salsa bar and I met this Mexican man about 18 or 19 years old. He was a college student at another university. And I dated him. He was a Dreamer and the Dream Act stuff was really fervent at that time. I went with him to a few meetings with the Dreamers. But I remember feeling like an outsider, which is funny because these were my people, my gente. I'm not undocumented, I'm not an immigrant, but he was my first glimpse of being in touch with current politics. I wasn't very radical in terms of identifying very explicitly as being Chicana or Latinx. That didn't come until after college when I felt so othered that I really had to put on that identity.

Regarding my dating life, my friends had a better time finding people at Pinnacle and had guys hitting on them all the time. Besides once going out with this White guy from Pinnacle who completely exoticized me for being Latina, I mostly dated men of color from outside the university. The only two guys I dated from Pinnacle were like the only one Latino guy and the only Black guy in my classes and maybe with the Black guy he may have been the only in the school. I didn't have a preference for Men of Color, but White men did not hit on me.

If anything, at Pinnacle, I felt like I essentially had to assimilate. I didn't have any real cultural support or outlet to develop my Latina identity. I had one Latina professor in four years – and in Spanish classes, you would think. All of my friends were White. I didn't have one Latina friend until I studied abroad. My family is not political at all. Coming into college, there were a lot of moderate and conservative people. I don't even admit this. Oh, God, please use my pseudonym, but the first time I voted was in college and I voted for Bush instead of Gore. The identity that I espouse now and the space I live in now and the people I surround myself with now are more progressive. But that didn't really come until I was 26 or older.

My identity story in college is feeling a particular shame because I'm not a native speaker in Spanish. So, Spanish classes, where they might've been a site of feeling embraced by my culture, I think I felt almost internally shamed because I had to learn Spanish with all of these other White folks when it really should have been my native language. I did take a Mexican history class and I can't remember a lot about it. I can even remember who the professor was. Again, feeling that this is my history and I should know it and I don't and I'm in a class with a bunch of White people.

At Pinnacle, my focus was psychology. I was in the psychology honor society. I was a leader. I was a lab assistant to three professors. Most of my advisors and the people who I got very close with were in the psychology department were all White males. So, definitely there was no cultural bonding there. One of the professors was Jewish and I remember having a conversation

with him once where I was trying to do the wink and a nudge that, hey, this is a really White university. And he was like, what? It is? He thought it was a really liberal university. He was new. He had just been hired. I thought I could have that conversation with him and I couldn't even have that.

Getting thrust into [the sorority] was a super interesting experience because again, just the way sororities go, you're automatically sisters. I can hold a conversation going through rush, I can get along with people. But once it was more like I was putting on an identity that I was sisters with these people, it became even more amplified that it was a mismatch. There was like a world between us and our experiences. I remember going to some of their homes, and again, it was the class. There would be a bunch of blonde, white girls in these huge mansions. It was totally things I had not experienced, which was fine but again it goes back to that feeling of being othered in a space where you're supposed to be sisters and super close. So, I stayed in that sorority because I hate giving up. That's just my personality. I stayed in it until my junior year and I would go to the monthly or weekly meetings or whatever they were and I never made a friend in that sorority. Not one. I was always an outsider. There's like a hundred girls in that sorority and I did all the events and I paid all the dues and I did everything, I just felt uncomfortable for three years.

Plus, I had joined the most White, upper class sorority - all these things that aren't Chicana or Latinx and really from my humble roots. A huge identity at Pinnacle is class. I didn't grow up in poverty, but I definitely grew up in a lower-middle-class, middle-class family. So, I went through two other pledges to bring

other folks in and I saw the insides of it. People in the sorority were like we need to vote for all the people who are Black and Latina because we need to diversify. I got the inner sides of the politics. And it's funny, because I would appreciate the women who would do that but then it was just obvious. It was an unstated obvious thing that there are racial lines among these sororities. I remember feeling like, wow, maybe I got in because I increase their diversity and I'm a token to them. It was for their benefit. I organically made friends who were part of this other sorority, but it was the nerdy sorority and it was more mixed in terms of People of Color. There just weren't a lot of Latinas at Pinnacle. And I remember feeling like, darn it, I joined too quickly and I messed up because the way sororities go, you can't disaffiliate and join another one. When you're out, you're out.

Another thing, any money I needed, I worked for. I worked for the Alumni Office, I worked at Disneyland, I worked at—all the jobs I had, I don't even know. Home Depot. Like I had all these different jobs, right. I remember doing school, doing all my leadership, doing sorority, then going to work at Disneyland at night. And being very much aware of my money. My hard-earned money that I had to work hard for and other folks had—these sorority girls that were all about buying Tiffany's products. It was much easier for them.

I did have an experience that was kind of funny. I made two best friends who are both White. One is from Montana and the other is from Washington state. Both are very White girls. Being Latina and being from Los Angeles County was very amplified because they were new to the area and they were so

interested in how I grew up. And my family was so close by that they pretty much adopted one of them during my college years. They would come to my house, they were part of my family life. So, it's funny because they were not experienced with Latina culture. I introduced them to a lot of that.

I'm White-passing and I acknowledge that privilege. I am very intentional about claiming a Latinx or Chicana identity and also claiming a disabled identity. I wasn't that way in college. I think I very much assimilated and tried not to talk too much about it. I tried to blend in so I don't think I would've been a very good token Chicana because I wasn't Chicana-pride back then. Until my junior year, my whole life was at my university or at home with my family. Then I studied abroad and it really shook me in terms of my own identification and that I wasn't true to who I was for the first two and half years of college. And that's what gave me the strength to come back and drop out of the sorority.

But I don't have a lot of racial discrimination stories that my counterparts with darker skin have had. The closest instance I can get that I really felt othered is when one of those best friends who was White and from Montana bought a bunch of flags. Since there were four of us from four different places, she bought four flags: the Montana flag for her, the Washington flag for the second friend, the California flag for the third friend who had been born in Canada but now lived in Santa Barbara, and the Mexican flag for me. I remember feeling so angry. And I know she did it not with bad intent. But I felt so othered. I thought, if you're going to buy a foreign flag, wouldn't it have been for the friend who was born in

Canada? I wasn't born in Mexico. I was like, wow, you read me as not American. I remember being so bothered by it that I gave the flag away.

You know, years later the Canadian friend whose family had moved to Santa Barbara – we remain friends today – told me she didn't believe in racism. It was the first time we had ever talked about race. I was in law school at that time and studying critical race theory. I was just completely flabbergasted by the things she said. This same friend texted me two weeks before the 2016 election and told me she was still on the fence about who to vote for, Trump or Clinton. Again, I was just amazed that this was my best friend from college. I think she still very much lives in a White bubble and doesn't believe that racial minorities are oppressed. Though, I love her!

I had all these different identities in college - sorority life, social friends who were non-sorority, my academic department. I was also a leader in orientation, I was a resident advisor one year. From high school on, I was always a minority. I was always the only Latina, which is good and bad. I always explain there was always a burden to it but also a privilege being the only Latina in every space I've been in. The burden is that everyone always looks to you to be the representative for all Latinas. But then the privilege is you get to represent. I get to be a leader. I get pushed into these leader positions everywhere I've gone because people look at me and are like, oh, you're the Woman of Color, here's the leadership award, here's the diversity award. I know there's a Latina factor to that. I know that I've been pushed into a lot of leadership roles. I got one of those leadership awards at graduation, so that was

a big part of my identity at Pinnacle. And in my Ph.D. program I'm in now, people look to me with that burden of you're the minority so you should be the leader.

The question of recommending Pinnacle is tough. I am one of those people who doesn't look back at it as a mistake. I look at it as learning. I take the good from where I came. Certainly, there were some points in my twenties where I looked back and really regretted going there, especially as I became more critical about race and class and politics. I think now that I'm in my thirties, I think, you know what? I'm where I am because I went there and those experiences I had of being forced into those very awkward situations. So, if I were to go back, I certainly would be okay doing it again. Even though I did have a good time and, on paper, it did seem like I was involved in everything, I think deep down I was feeling like a fish out of water the entire time. I was just surviving. I felt very uncomfortable when I think about it. And studying abroad was like my first moment I was able to develop my identity in a way I think I should've been developing it at that age that other folks do. If I'm recommending it to someone else, I would absolutely have them consider all these things, meaning I probably would not encourage anyone for whom race and class and all these things are a factor, I would not encourage them to go to a private, small, White university. No, I wouldn't.

This chapter presented the counter-stories of six first-generation Latinx alumnae who earned their bachelor's degree at one of three Southern California PPWI. Their

stories were shared with only minor details omitted. This was done to preserve confidentiality and anonymize the individual alumnae to the reader.

The telling of these stories was done with laughter in some cases and tears at other times. As a researcher, I noted these emotional moments in my reflexive journal. In an effort to be present in the research, I also noted my own emotional reactions to the counter-stories. What follows in chapter 5 is my story as a White researcher conducting research with six Latinx first-generation alumnae.

Chapter 5: A Researcher Story

January 24, 2018: Until Natalie and I spoke via FaceTime for a 90-minute interview (the first full-length interview of the study), I had never asked a Latinx woman to describe her experiences to me concerning living in a predominantly-White world. After just a few minutes, as she began to recall the events of her freshman year at Eminence, she began to cry. I heard about microaggressions and identity threat in her memories. These recollections were visibly painful to her.

As Natalie shared the details of numerous injustices and offenses during those first months at Eminence, an institution with an outstanding reputation, I thought, I have never read a single unfavorable story about Eminence in any newspaper nor heard it described as anything other than an excellent environment for earning a bachelor's degree. I thought, how far removed I am from the reality of Natalie's experience. I had not expected tears. I had expected anger. Outrage. Even fury. How White I am.

*Looking at myself in the computer image and at 21-year-old Natalie in a computer lab miles away, I thought, it took tremendous courage for her to respond to the call for participants, to establish contact with an unknown White woman, and to share with this stranger so many intimate details of her life and experience. CRM methods seemed especially important in that moment. The CRM researcher may initiate a project, but she researches **with** not **on** the participants. They must be empowered to establish the parameters of the project. I was relieved that Natalie had chosen to be interviewed via FaceTime, even though we could have met in person. I felt intuitively that there was a safety for her in the maintenance of distance between us.*

There was also safety in the distance for me. How awkward I felt during that interview – how much it felt like prying. I also felt that my “IRB-approved” questions were intrusive, haphazard, and convenient for me but ridiculous for the participant.

Question #4: While an undergraduate at your university, can you describe experiences of racism in any form (microaggression, overt racism, etc.)? Question #5: What were the institutional responses to these incidents? Question #6: How would you have liked the university administration or your faculty members to respond? Question #7: Can you describe any other experiences of oppression, such as sexism or classism? And on and on. What had I been thinking when I proposed those questions? Who talks that way?

I also feared that this study was exploitative, despite my desire to be culturally responsive and personally sensitive. I also thought, in terms of compliance, Natalie is certainly old enough to be in this study, but in terms of ethics, perhaps she is too young. Was I turning into what my friend and colleague, Elizabeth, called, “the White lady with a clipboard”?

Our time together had hardly begun and I felt as though I had nothing to say. My experiences, my epistemologies, my standpoint, my class, my race – all of this served to separate me from Natalie. She mattered and I was completely irrelevant in my own dissertation study.

I was also overcome by a disequilibrium I later learned was White Fragility (DiAngelo, 2011). It was actually difficult for me to speak. After the interview had been transcribed, I listened to my voice on the recording. I heard a brittleness and an awkwardness. I was stupefied by my own White Privilege. DiAngelo (2011) described this as a response to racial stress, which “results from an interruption to what is racially

familiar” (p. 57). I live and have lived in a White-normative world. Outside of the university setting where I work and am a student, there are few if any conversations about White racism, White privilege, and especially no discussion of White culpability in the current and historic race-based, class-based, and gender-based patriarchal hierarchy.

As DiAngelo (2011) explained, because Whites have not had to develop the skills and abilities to engage across racial divides, despite White positionality in a White-normative society, White people are, in fact, the least prepared to discuss constructively the conditions and factors of racism. White fragility manifests in the silence I experienced during that first interview with Natalie. For example, most White people live segregated lives and Whites are inculcated with a sense of universalism – that their experiences and culture are the standard (DiAngelo, 2011).

This collision of Latinx alumna experience at a PPWI with White fragility was a factor in the study I was ill-prepared to face. Yet again, I did not know what I did not know. What I did understand intuitively – the tacit knowledge Lincoln and Guba (1985) described – was that in order to pursue this study, I had to allow the participants to fully dictate the terms of our engagement – not just the terms of our meetings but also what they chose – and chose not – to discuss. The ethical framework of CRM describes an equal partnership between researchers and participants (Berryman et al., 2013a). This allows for all parties in a study to have equal influence on all aspects of the process (Berryman et al., 2013a). As Berryman et al. (2013a) wrote:

Thus, transparency replaces covert agendas. This means researchers (and participants) are encouraged to clearly communicate their known intentions,

thereby lessening the possibility of manipulation and misunderstanding.

Furthermore, culturally responsive researchers resist appropriation of another culture's knowledge and ways of knowing and promote the uncovering of ideological frameworks to bring forth authenticity of mutual positionalities (pp. 17).

What did I have in common with Natalie? My first-generation journey had been so long ago. I was far removed from those days and deeply embedded within the culture of White-normative higher education that, despite fervent attempts to recruit Natalie and many more first-generation Latinx women, did not appear to be making meaningful space for them within the Academy. I also knew Natalie was probably sharing with me only a tiny fraction of what she had experienced and witnessed at Eminence. And the problem was not necessarily about Eminence. The problem was everywhere.

April 23, 2018: For the remainder of the study, I attempted to be as culturally-responsive and as equity-focused as possible. There were in-person meetings according to their needs and propensities, not according to my timetable. There were multiple discussions via FaceTime and several series of emails depending on their schedules and preferences. All six of the participants were busy and engaged in their own lives, with work, education, parenting, and family life.

I also backed away from the prepared list of questions. I had received approval for semi-structured interviews, allowing flexibility in what was asked and answered. I started to ask the participants to tell me stories. This was, after all the, the goal of the study – to hear their counter-stories. Within these counter-stories, I saw extensive offenses: racial joking and institutional racism and much more. I also saw tremendous

love, expansiveness, intelligence, and self-determination. I was honored to work with every one of the women in the study. I was humbled to be a person they trusted with their truth.

There were only three more emails between Natalie and me after that initial conversation, to thank her, to offer her an opportunity to review the interim drafts of the study (she did not reply), to confirm her age at the time of interview – 21. We have not spoken again.

Chapter 6: Data Analysis

The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand the lived experiences of six first-generation Latinx alumnae who attended one of three Southern Californian PPWI. The three primary sources of data in this study were 1) the counter-stories of the participants, which emerged during audio-recorded conversational and semi-structured interviews; 2) the reflexive journal of the researcher; and 3) the tacit knowledge of both the participants and the researcher as it was shared throughout the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Additionally, email messages between the participants and the researcher related to efforts at member-checking were added to the counter-stories and the study. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the processes used to analyze all sources of data in the study.

The participants' counter-stories comprise Chapter Four. The findings in Chapter Four revealed the participants' efforts for admission to and selection of the PPWI. The participants' counter-stories also revealed their search for inclusion and care on both an interpersonal and an institutional basis within the PPWI. In addition, the findings revealed incidents of microaggressions and identity-threats. These incidents were also experienced on both an interpersonal and an institutional level. In contrast to these experiences, the counter-stories revealed support from and closeness with some faculty and staff members, certain friends, and especially the participants' families.

A reflection of the researcher is included as Chapter Five. This is based on the researcher's reflexive journal. Writing in the reflexive journal was initiated before the study began and continued until its conclusion. Findings from this reflexive journal will also be discussed in this chapter.

Transcription

In accordance with the terms approved by Chapman University's IRB and with the full consent of the participants, each of the conversational interviews in the study was audio-recorded. Additionally, and with the consent of Chapman University's IRB, the interviews were professionally transcribed. When I had proposed the study, I had anticipated that, in the context of the dissertation timeline, I would not have time to personally transcribe the interviews. Following transcription and transcription-checking, the audio-recordings were erased.

Transcripts

The reading and thorough review of the transcribed interviews provided an opportunity for data analysis. This was so particularly because the transcribed interviews provided an extensive description of the lived experiences of the participants while attending PPWI. Even though I had listened carefully and taken notes in my reflexive journal following each conversation, by the time I reviewed the transcripts, I was ready to read with a fresh perspective. It felt as though there were rich data to absorb.

Reflexive Journal

The next method of analysis was writing and reflecting in the reflexive journal. These reflections included short snippets such as, "I am excited to talk to a participant who is so enthusiastic about this topic," and questions for consideration, including, "Why am I doing this?" I also wrote in the journal after speaking with the participants in the study. Through the audio recordings, I was creating a record of what they said. Through the reflexive journal, I was creating a record of how they said it.

For example, Catalina recalled several incidents from her time at Pinnacle. As the memories reoccurred, she seemed genuinely surprised by her own experiences and the realization of what they meant to her then and now. She concluded our one conversation by saying, “I surprised myself with what I came up with” (personal communication, February 3, 2018). Her exclamations, her gestures, her facial expressions conveyed both excitement and surprise.

At other times, specifically while talking with Sylvia and Natalie, the interviews had been more tentative, even tearful. These exchanges, too, felt honest and unfiltered. Interviews with the other three participants also resonated as true, given the complexity of their answers and the apparent spontaneity of their recollections.

In this way, I found myself reflecting in the journal on the narrative interplay of the counter-stories as well as the argument that qualitative research is not generalizable. In the case of these six participants, many of their experiences had been similar although they had attended three different PPWI at different times. On another occasion, I wrote:

In every instance of qualitative research, I feel as though I have taken something from the participants – something valuable and personal. This is so even though I have attempted to be gracious, grateful, and sensitive. What have I given in return? A listening ear? Is that enough? I want to *do good* with this research, with what they have given me. It is my only way of thanking them (February 4, 2018).

Additionally, I recorded my experiences concerning the processes of data analysis. For example:

February 11, 2018: I am teaching myself to code... I bought myself Saldaña's (2016) book, I tracked down the way to add NVivo to my computer, then I bought myself an NVivo instruction manual (Edhlund & McDougall, 2016). In this home stretch of a journey that has been remarkable, difficult, overwhelming, joyous, I am, once again, teaching myself to think and see in new, more organized, empirical ways. I am experiencing waves of admiration for the participants - they have achieved so much despite soul-crushing adversity and prejudice. They have proved the "statistics" wrong.

Coding

As I had written about coding in my reflexive journal, I had only limited experience with qualitative coding prior to beginning this study. I was encouraged by faculty and colleagues to investigate the methods of coding outlined in Saldana (2016). First, however, I felt I had to find a way to organize the data.

NVivo Software

As a means of organizing the data, I turned to NVivo software. NVivo would, I thought, allow for the next method of analysis: coding. I had read about NVivo in Harper's work (2009). I added all the typed transcripts to the software platform as raw data. I then turned to Saldaña (2016) to discern appropriate methods for coding. A summary of all three coding strategies I employed forms Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of Three (3) Coding Strategies Employed for Data Analysis

Coding Strategy	Description
1 st Cycle Holistic Coding:	Described as a preparatory approach to coding that enables the <i>chunking</i> of data into broad topics. Is especially recommended for beginning level qualitative researchers using interview transcripts, field notes, and journals (Saldaña, 2016).
2 nd Cycle Concept Coding:	Assignment of a short word or phrase to the <i>chunks</i> of data to suggest conceptual meaning or idea. Appropriate for sociopolitical or critical studies (Saldaña, 2016).
3 rd Cycle Values Analysis:	Analysis of values implied or stated by the participants within the data for the purpose of understanding their enacted norms and moral codes. Appropriate for analysis of counter-stories and other narrative production (Daiute, 2014).

First-Cycle: Holistic Coding

Reviewing Saldaña (2016), I saw that Holistic Coding was a good place to begin. It is a method of coding that enabled me to prepare to code the data more precisely. Furthermore, Saldaña (2016) recommended Holistic Coding as a strategy for beginning qualitative researchers.

Since I had added all of the transcripts to the software platform, I now reviewed them, line by line. I attempted to see and hear broad topics in the conversations. Reading closely, I then highlighted chunks of the data related to these broad topics. For example, I assigned the holistic code “mentoring” to this section from Natalie’s transcript:

I have a passion for helping anybody but like students especially. My current job is a college mentor to high school students and it’s such a rewarding experience. I think that’s why I think I wanted to be a teacher because I could see how much I

could do and change in the lives of these capable students that just weren't being seen or didn't have the opportunities or didn't know how to craft the language to get into college. (personal communication, January 24, 2018)

Likewise, I assigned the same holistic code "mentoring" to a section from Phoenix's interview:

When I was at Summit, I went back to my high school and was a mentor so some of my students went to Summit. Even now in my master's program, I have a student who just finished her first year and I served as her mentor as she went through some of those cultural challenges of fitting in, finding her niche, determining whether or not she's a good science major. (personal communication, January 27, 2018)

I continued in this fashion until all sections of all transcripts had been coded holistically. I then reviewed the list of holistic codes. Not all participants had spoken about every topic; however, each topic had occurred in conversations with three or more participants. This list contained 19 broad topics that recurred in the conversations with the participants (see Table 5).

Table 5

Holistic Codes

Choice of PPWI	Classroom experiences at PPWI
Culture of PPWI	Faculty/staff at PPWI
Faith/religion	Financial aid/scholarship
Friends/peers at PPWI	High school prep for college
Home/family/parents	Identity-threats
Institutional care/absence of care	Leadership/involvement at PPWI
Mentors/mentoring at PPWI	Microaggressions
Onlyness	People of Color at PPWI
Study abroad	White privilege
Work/internships	

Second-Cycle: Concept Coding

Holistic Coding had allowed me the opportunity to review the transcripts in terms of broad topics that occurred during conversations with the participants. An important benefit I had gained from Holistic Coding via NVivo was greater familiarity with the data. Turning again to Saldaña (2016), I read that Concept Coding helps the researcher to ascertain the ideas that emerge from the data. Saldaña (2016) wrote that it is appropriate for studies concerned with sociopolitical inquiry, cultural studies, and critical theory. This method seemed suitable for a CRM-informed CRT analysis study based on counter-stories.

I again reviewed the transcripts, looking at the “chunks” I had coded into broad topics. This time, I was looking for concepts that were embedded in the participants’ counter-stories. In other words, what ideas were their counter-stories truly about?

To illustrate Concept Coding, here again are the two sections from Natalie and Phoenix. From Natalie’s interview:

I have a passion for helping anybody but like students especially. My current job is a college mentor to high school students and it’s such a rewarding experience. I think that’s why I think I wanted to be a teacher because I could see how much I could do and change in the lives of these capable students that just weren’t being seen or didn’t have the opportunities or didn’t know how to craft the language to get into college. (personal communication, January 24, 2018)

This time, I could see that, in addition to “mentoring,” Natalie was sharing about “the ethic of care.” This had been her motivation for mentoring, her “passion for helping

anybody” (personal communication, January 24, 2018). The same concept code “the ethic of care” applied to this section Phoenix had shared:

When I was at Summit, I went back to my high school and was a mentor so some of my students went to Summit. Even now in my master’s program, I have a student who just finished her first year and I served as her mentor as she went through some of those cultural challenges of fitting in, finding her niche, determining whether or not she’s a good science major. (personal communication, January 27, 2018)

In this way, I could hear how, in a sense, the participants were speaking to each other, even though they had never met. This is consistent with Daiute (2014) who urged researchers to observe narrative interplay as a tool for understanding narrative meaning. As I had observed in my reflexive journal, this narrative interplay between the counter-stories seemed to create an additional layer of meaning because the participants had experienced many similar feelings, motivations, experiences, and events at three different PPWI, at six different times.

Continuing with Concept Coding, I reviewed all the data I had coded during Holistic Coding. As Saldaña (2016) pointed out, researchers must *force* themselves to gradually narrow their focus in order to determine what the study is truly about at its core. Therefore, I attempted to relate every segment of the data that comprised the counter-stories to one appropriate concept. For instance, now I could see that all conversations concerning high school preparation for college and financial aid/scholarships were connected to the larger concept of “college knowledge”.

Initially, many conversations with the participants seemed connected to the concept of “college memories.” However, this code did not seem adequate for all of these experiences, because it seemed more like a topic than an idea. As I reconsidered the experiences the participants had shared, I realized that these experiences were actually about “campus climate.” Meanwhile, the experiences concerning leadership and involvement were actually connected to “identity.” The holistic codes of faculty/staff at the PPWI and friends/peers at the PPWI were actually about the presence or absence of “the ethic of care.” Study abroad might indeed be related to “college memories,” but only three of the participants had studied abroad during their time as undergraduates at their PPWI. In an effort to focus, as Saldaña (2016) had encouraged researchers to do, I set aside the code of “college memories” along with the data specifically related to study abroad for consideration at another time or perhaps in another study. (Recommendations for additional research are included in chapter 7.) Concept Coding continued until I had associated all segments of the data with six discrete concepts. (See Table 6).

Table 6

Concept Coding Resulted in Six Concepts

Campus climate PPWI:	classroom experiences; cultural fit; microaggressions; People of Color; White privilege
College knowledge:	choice; aid/scholarships; high school prep
Ethic of care:	faculty/staff; friends/peers; institutional care
Home/family:	faith/religion; home/family/parents
Identity:	identity-threats; leadership/involvement; onlyness
Persistence:	work/internships

Third-Cycle: Values Analysis Coding

The first two rounds of coding had helped me organize the data from transcripts into broad topics and then into concepts. However, inquiry is value-bound (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). So, for a deeper understanding of the explicit and implicit values expressed in the counter-stories of the six participants, I applied Values Analysis as described by Daiute (2014). Values, wrote Daiute (2014), are moral codes or norms and are enacted rather than discussed. A participant (termed an *author* by Daiute) may state or imply his/her/their values, but values are present in the selection of what stories are told and how they are told (Daiute, 2014). I believed that Values Analysis would help me understand what the participants valued in connection to their lived experiences as undergraduates at a PPWI. I also anticipated that another, closer look at the data would reveal greater depth of meaning in the form of narrative inter-play among the participants.

Additionally, as Daiute (2014) wrote, “Individuals become members of their cultures by adopting values. Values are, however, dynamic, because as political, economic, cultural, and social realms of life change, so do values that organize activities and discourse” (pp. 70.). Daiute’s (2014) statement caused me to wonder how the participants’ values had been affected by their lived experiences at PPWI? This process of adopting or rejecting another’s values is called *values negotiation* (Daiute, 2014). Values Analysis can include the study of how different authors perform or contest values within a social or political context, such as a PPWI in Southern California. This seemed a useful method of analysis in conjunction with this study.

Values Analysis also seemed an appropriate strategy for determining the majoritarian stories the participants' counter-stories corroborated or contradicted. For example, how had they experienced the stock stories of higher education as a color-blind, race-neutral meritocracy? What had been their experiences of diversity, inclusivity, and equity on a PPWI campus? (These majoritarian stories will be discussed in connection with the themes and theoretical constructs of the study in chapter 7.)

Before I could apply Values Analysis to the counter-stories, however, I determined I needed a more tactile, visual representation of the data. Therefore, I returned to the concepts from Concept Coding and the chunks of data that formed the broad topics from Holistic Coding. I then entered all the concepts into an Excel database. Under each participant's name, I entered the corresponding chunks of data. Once I had added all the relevant data, I could see that the participants had discussed the concepts in various ways, to greater and lesser degrees. This was completely within the expectations of the study, given the nature of unstructured interviews and the agency of the participants within a CRM-based study.

Now, I turned back to the transcripts to ensure I had not overlooked portions of data or mis-coded chunks of data during the first and second cycles of coding. Perhaps because of my greater familiarity with the data at this time, I saw additional, relevant data in the transcripts than I had seen during previous readings and coding sessions. I filled in gaps and re-arranged some segments of data.

To apply Values Analysis as described by Daiute (2014), I reviewed each participant's counter-story (included in this document as chapter four). I identified the participant's stated and implied values within a short segment of data. I also examined

the values negotiation of each participant in relationship to the research question. For example, for the sub-concept labeled “why this university?” Sylvia had said:

In all honesty, Pinnacle was the last school I wanted to go to. My dad really wanted me to go there and I’m not really sure why. I also received a scholarship. It was the first college acceptance letter I got and everyone was home in the living room when I got it. That moment is really hard to forget, where everybody was there and just how proud my dad was that I got into Pinnacle. So that kind of sealed it. (personal communication, January 25, 2018)

For this section, the values implied were “importance of family,” “respect for father,” and “financial aid/scholarship opportunity.” My values analysis was, “Respect for her father and the importance of her family were the most important values and were even more important than the offer of a financial aid/scholarships or her own preference.” Clearly, the values negotiation at work in this counter-story had been the preference of Sylvia’s father’s values above her own personal choice. This work continued until all segments of the counter-stories in the database had been considered and value-analyzed. (Rather than include a 15-page table, I have included a representation of this data analysis tool. See Figure 5.)

Expression	Natalie	Sylvia	Alicia	Phoenix	Rasput	Catalina	
Expression	Values Analysis The journey of the first-generation Latinx student includes: arduous support from family and friends, but a lack of college knowledge and of tactical assistance. This makes it almost insurmountable. Collectivism among peers made the process possible. The value of collectivism to bridge the gap for the individual.	Expression The whole process itself of being a first-generation student, the whole idea of applying to college, nobody knows what we were doing. I didn't even know what I was supposed to fill out and mail and these deadlines and how to write about myself. The home life also impacts the first-gen student's ability to succeed and also their mentality. I think, Latina females and their families, there's a lot of expectations that they're going to be helping with siblings, helping with responsibilities, just generally taking care of family. Family first. And so I think a large part of navigating your education is learning how to balance that, right?	Values Analysis The process of being a first-generation Latinx student is challenging in part because there is a lack of college knowledge and tactical support. This was complicated by Sylvia's role in her family as a caregiver and supporter. For Sylvia, a university education is the place to learn to balance family commitments with other aspirations, but the value is "family first."	Expression A lot of students who live in rural areas that have a huge Hispanic population aren't offered the same resources as a city school. In my high school, we all pulled together because there were a lot of students who would not have graduated if the whole class, most of the class, didn't support them.	Values Analysis Although Alicia's rural high school was underfunded, the collection of the students made it possible for some to continue their education journey. Collectivism bridged the gap for the individual. The value here is the group or collectivism over self or individual.	Expression I applied to 20 schools. I was not entirely sure of the college process. I was like, okay, let me apply. Even though I had a high GPA, I was involved in high school, I still had personal doubts and I was just like, let me throw out my net to the schools that I would really like to go to and see what happens. And I was actually accepted to 19 out of 20 schools. They were all in California.	Values Analysis This Latinx immigrant family with strong, clear, and brave. This Latinx mother is committed to her children and hard-working. Despite their struggles, they did not give up. This work ethic made it possible for this first-generation Latinx student to persist. The value of the first-generation family are sufficient for the challenges of the first-generation journey.
Expression	Financial Impact of the opportunity was the decisive value and more influential than other considerations.	My dad really wanted me to go there and I'm not really sure why, but I wanted to go to it.	They offered financial aid and the Financial value and the additional opportunity represented by that scholarship. Room and board outside scholarship were the most important values. It is an amazing scholarship.	I really wanted that private education mainly because of that value, but an equally important value was the financial aid and scholarship which I wasn't offered as compared to other institutions.	Prior to going to Pismoack when I was leaving other colleges, I actually did look at another private school in Southern California where I received a scholarship. I was almost two semesters. I was some anger there and that's what ultimately made me decide to go to Pismoack. While the diversity wasn't there, it was a smaller campus. It has a tight-knit, homier atmosphere. That's what I liked about it.	Disability play a big role in my life, both as a liability to someone with a mental disability and also have a little sister who has autism and an intellectual disability. I was a really great student in high school, and applied to three universities and received scholarships from all three. I think I should have applied to more schools. One of my biggest reasons for applying was that it was very close to my home. I grew up in Catholic schools, small, private, Catholic schools. So, the best factor were that I needed were to be close to home and I thought I would flourish better in a small, private school because that was the setting I had been in. I liked and I felt good. Like I would be far away from my parents. I also served as a caregiver for my sister. Since then I've been able to travel and live apart from my family. It probably came down to scholarships and funding.	

Figure 5. Values Analysis spreadsheet, page 1 of 15. It was only by creating a visual representation of the Holistic and Concept Codes related to the counter-stories that I was able to analyze the values within the counter-stories. Also, the spreadsheet enabled me to see how values were recurring between the participants' counter-stories.

Believing I needed to create distance between the data and myself, I set the spreadsheet aside for a few days. I revised other sections of the dissertation. When I returned to the spreadsheet, I carefully re-read and studied the entire 15 pages. This time, I believed I could clarify and summarize the values implied and stated by the participants. (See Table 7.)

Table 7

Values Analysis Resulted in Eight Different Values Shared by the Participants

Code	Value
Belonging	They valued belonging
Care	They valued caring allies, mentors, and friends
Collectivism	They valued collectivism
College Knowledge	They valued college knowledge
Family	They valued family, specifically family support
Identity	The valued their personal identity
Opportunity	The valued the opportunity provided by financial aid and scholarships
Persistence	The valued persistence

Note. Values are listed in alphabetical order and not in order of significance to the participants.

After Values Analysis, I could see narrative interplay among the participants regarding their values. These various cycles of coding produced a level of clarity concerning the data. Turning again to the spreadsheet, it felt like it was time to Theme the Data (Saldaña, 2016).

Theming the Data

According to Saldaña (2016), a theme is the result of coding, categorization, and analysis and is particularly suited for application to interviews and participant-generated data. By this point in time, I had coded and analyzed every relevant segment of the data generated by and with the participants. Saldaña (2016) wrote that Theming the Data is best-suited for participant-generated data; however, Theming the Data is appropriate for all qualitative studies (Saldaña, 2016).

Specifically, a theme explains the meaning of a unit of data (Saldana, 2016). My use of Theming of the Data was to organize and categorize the values of the participants in such a way that themes and sub-themes could emerge in connection with their values and lived experiences. To do this, I looked again at the Values Analysis Excel spreadsheet, specifically at the segments of data that had been coded with the same or similar values. These values and experiences related to three different emergent themes which applied to each of the six participants: 1) the values of their first-generation journey, 2) the experiences of their first-generation journey, and 3) the persistence to complete their first-generation journey until attainment of the bachelor's degree.

Next, I looked for the sub-themes that informed these emergent themes. Not every alumna had expressed the same values in the same sections; however, the emergent themes and sub-themes were expressed in each of their counter-stories. I re-read the counter-stories (Chapter 4) and studied the Values Analysis Excel spreadsheet I had created (Figure 5). The participants had expressed that the values of their first-generation journey were their value of family, the value of college knowledge, and the value of the opportunity afforded them because of financial aid and scholarships. Furthermore, they

associated the value of collectivism and the value of personal identity with their first-generation journey.

For example, on the theme of first-generation journey, Natalie said:

This is actually a really rough journey. The Common App was confusing and just applying for aid is ridiculously hard. In terms of SAT, we bought a book and we would all study together at Panera and do work. We would just go hard together, all of my high school classmates. (personal communication, January 24, 2018)

In this statement from Natalie's counter-story, I could see her value of the collective, of pulling together to complete a task neither she nor her friends could complete alone. I could also see her value of college knowledge. Additionally, I could sense her persistence to complete her first-generation journey to attainment of the bachelor's degree. I could also see how she valued her personal identity and the belief in herself to do what her family and friends did not know how to do. The first-generation journey can be difficult and arduous. Yet, it had resulted in her admission to a selective PPWI with financial aid and a scholarship.

A similar example related to the values of family, persistence, and identity was shared by Raquel:

My dad is a go-getter. He was born in Mexico. He immigrated to the U.S. and earned his citizenship by joining the military. Later in life, he started his own business and always taught me that success come before work only in the dictionary. He very much instilled that in me. Then, there is my mom, a single mother of two kids, who worked multiple jobs to support my brother and me.

Seeing the work ethic of my parents is what continues to motivate me to work hard and succeed in life. (personal communication, January 30, 2018)

In this section from Raquel's counter-story, she had implied the value of "family" and, also by implication, the value of her "identity" concerning her work ethic and personal identity as a first-generation alumna. Raquel's persistence was also implied through her counter-story.

Sylvia, too, had connected the value of "family," "college knowledge," and "the collective" to her first-generation journey:

The whole process itself of being a first-generation student, the whole idea of applying to college, nobody knew what we were doing. I didn't even know what I was supposed to fill out and mail and these deadlines and how to write about myself. The home life also affects the first-generation student's ability to succeed and also their mentality. I think, Latina females and their families, there's a lot of expectations that they're going to be helping with siblings, helping with responsibilities, just generally taking care of family. Family first. I think a large part of navigating your education is learning how to balance that. (personal communication, January 25, 2018)

Although Sylvia had talked more about the value of identity of other portions of her counter-story, in this section, she connected her value of her identity as a "Latina female" and a daughter to her first-generation journey.

Every participant in the study had received not only financial aid but also a scholarship to attend the PPWI where she had earned her bachelor's degree. The alumnae in the study spoke of this financial aid and these scholarships as opportunities

which they valued. In fact, four of the participants indicated that the specific opportunities provided by the specific PPWI had been the deciding factor for her to attend that institution. This was a significant sub-theme within the theme of the values of the first-generation journey.

Next, I attempted to discern the emergent sub-themes connected to the alumnae's experiences of their first-generation journey. Every participant had experienced microaggressions and challenges to her identity at the PPWI. These microaggressions were both institutional and person-to-person. On the sub-theme of institutional microaggressions, Sylvia had experienced several: rejection from by the orientation committee, dismissal by the dean of students when she came to him for help, and the curricular exercise concerning class standing which left her alone at the back of the room. Also, every participant had experienced the phenomena of oneliness (Harper et al., 2011), especially in connection with being requested to represent her entire culture and community. This occurred, in part, because of the dearth of Students of Color at her PPWI.

There were some positive experiences along the journey for the women in the study. These experiences were connected to caring allies, mentors, and friends, many of whom were People of Color. These understanding persons lifted account holds to enable registration for Sylvia, visited Phoenix in the hospital after her accident, brought food to Alicia and her family when Alicia was ill, maintained an open-door office hours policy for Raquel, made clear their value of diversity for Natalie, and provided undergraduate research opportunities for Catalina. Looking back, however, only Raquel recalled her experiences at Pinnacle with so much satisfaction that she recommended the university to

another first-generation Latinx woman without qualification. The rest of the participants were either tentative or said no to that question.

As I had gotten to know the participants, the theme of their persistence to complete their bachelor's degree had become clearer. In addition to their undergraduate degrees, every one of the participants who was old enough had earned or was in the process of earning a graduate degree. They had completed their undergraduate studies within six years and, in five cases, a graduate degree without the sort of insight provided by continuing-generation parents. Yet, most of them, when they spoke of the reasons they had persisted, attributed their success to their parents and family. For example, Phoenix said:

I had really supportive parents. Despite everything, despite my long nights of studying, of commuting, the first years of crying, of having to work harder than anyone else. I think just having that support even though they didn't go through it themselves and they couldn't really understand the extent of everything, just having them there and reaffirming me and it's going to be okay. Or even days when they didn't say anything and were just there, I think that's what made the difference and pushed me because I knew that they had come here for a better life, that they wanted their children to succeed and support themselves with an educational background so we didn't have to go through those same troubles. Having family unity has helped me through difficult times and kept me going.
(personal communication, January 27, 2018)

The result of Theming the Data was the emergence of three themes and nine sub-themes based on the participants' values and lived experiences at their PPWI. The

emergence of these themes and sub-themes brought the meaning of the study into sharper focus for me. (See Table 8 for a list of emergent themes and sub-themes.)

Table 8

Three Emergent Themes and Nine Sub-themes

- I. The values of their first-generation journey.
 - a. They valued family support, which was present, extensive, and crucial
 - b. They valued collectivism and the ethic of care
 - c. They valued their personal identity
 - d. They valued college knowledge
 - e. They valued the opportunity provided by financial aid/scholarships
 - II. The experiences of their first-generation journey.
 - a. They experienced microaggressions within the PPWI
 - b. They experienced challenges to their identity within the PPWI
 - c. They experienced the care of allies, mentors, and friends within the PPWI
 - III. The persistence to complete their first-generation journey.
-

At this point, I felt prepared to develop theoretical constructs based on these themes and sub-themes. Theoretical constructs require further categorization or clustering of related themes (Saldaña, 2016) (See Table 9). As is consistent with the instructions included in Saldaña (2016), this categorization resulted in a slight re-organization of the themes and sub-themes to support the theoretical assumptions. These theoretical constructs will be used to inform the discussion Chapter Seven.

Table 9

Theoretical Constructs Inform the Development of a Qualitative Theory

Theoretical Construct 1: First-generation Latinx alumnae value their first-generation journey

Supporting themes:

Family support was present and acknowledged

Collectivism is preferable to individualism

College knowledge is valued

Financial aid/scholarships provided opportunity

Theoretical Construct 2: First-generation Latinx alumnae have a need to enact their personal identity within the PPWI:

Supporting theme:

Microaggressions, identity-threats, oneliness, and White privilege are challenges to the enactment of identity

Theoretical Construct 3: First-generation Latinx alumnae possessed the persistence to complete their first-generation journey until the attainment of the bachelor's degree.

Supporting themes:

Specific allies, mentors, and friends cared for them

Family ethics of determination and commitment enabled persistence

Chapter 7: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to focus on the lived experiences and counter-stories of six first-generation Latinx alumnae who persisted to completion of a bachelor's degree within six years at one of three Southern California PPWI's. Additionally, an aim of this study was to add the counterstories of six first-generation Latinx alumnae to the literature with the intent to dismantle majoritarian narratives concerning first-generation Latinx experience at Southern California PPWI. Therefore, in this chapter, I will argue that first-generation Latinx alumnae valued their first-generation journey, needed more opportunities for the enactment of their personal identity within PPWI, and persisted to completion of the bachelor's degree primarily because of the support they received from their family. This is clear based on the counter-stories of the participants in Chapter Four and the analysis of their counter-stories in Chapter Six. To provide support for this assertion, I will discuss the three theoretical constructs and supporting themes outlined in Table 9.

The Value of the First-Generation Journey

The first theoretical construct drawn from the study is that first-generation Latinx alumnae valued their first-generation journey. The supporting themes for this assertion are that family support was present throughout their journeys and acknowledged by each of the participants. Additionally, the participants valued collectivism as preferable to individualism. College knowledge and its value to the participants is the third sub-theme related to the first-generation journey. Fourth and finally, the financial aid the participants received and scholarships they earned provided opportunity for the pursuit of

the first-generation journey. Each of these sub-themes is discussed in the following sections.

Family

Perhaps most importantly, the participants valued the support they received from their family, which was both present and extensive. The sub-theme of family support was potentially the most significant sub-theme within the study. The findings revealed that this support was integral in these participants' first-generation journey. Parental and familial support were acknowledged by all participants. Respect for parents was demonstrated by all participants.

This sub-theme of family support counters majoritarian narratives concerning Latinx first-generation parents and families concerning higher education. Latinx first-generation families, the majority of whom are low-income, are considered too uninformed about, possibly disinterested in, and potentially against the concept of higher education to be of substantive help to first-generation college women. In fact, as reflected in the work of Yosso (2005), because of the influence of structural and institutional racism, working-class Latinx families are often judged to be inferior in comparison to White, continuing-generation families of all income brackets.

However, the findings in this study revealed that, although the forms of familial support may be other than financial, this support was present and valued nonetheless. Family was, in fact, cited as a primary factor in the persistence of the Latinx alumnae's pursuit of the bachelor's degree. Rather than holding them back in their pursuit of higher education, these families appeared to propel the participants forward. Clearly, support for higher education is unbound by class, identity, and generational status.

Collectivism

Next, the sub-theme of collectivism emerged from the study. The first-generation Latinx alumnae in the study preferred collectivism to individualism. However, individualism and individual achievement are hallmarks of university life (Stephens et al., 2012). In contrast, the participants expressed that they valued consideration of others, a willingness to work as mentors and tutors, privileging the best interests of the group, and allowing others to speak first. These behaviors demonstrate a commitment to collectivism versus a commitment to individualism. Such behaviors emerged from their counter-stories.

This value of collectivism is closely aligned with the value of collaboration associated with working-class communities. An appreciation for both collectivism and collaboration was a factor in the types of leadership and engagement experiences that the women in the study sought as undergraduates at their PPWI (i.e., mentoring others, establishing a multi-cultural sorority, attempting to serve as an orientation leader). In some instances, these opportunities were denied them, which will be discussed in a later section.

This regard for collectivism is also consistent with Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (Sander-Staudt, n.d.), who positioned the morality of care and the ethic of care as particularly feminine. Through their counter-stories, the participants in the study expressed both the moral reasoning of care and the ethic of care. This was evident in their commitments to family, their choices to serve as mentors and tutors to other first-generation Latinx students, and their appreciation of care when it was extended to them by some faculty and staff members at their former PPWI. However, their experiences of

care within the PPWI community were tempered by more commonplace experiences of othering and onliness (Harper et al., 2011). Such instances of identity-threat and microaggressions perpetrated by administrators, peers, and faculty members were in opposition to their own moral systems. In the era of competition for university rankings and new enrollments and at time of increased commercialism within higher education, the morality of care and the ethic of care suffer (Bok, 2009; Raisman, 2013).

College Knowledge

The value of college knowledge to the first-generation Latinx alumnae in the study is proportional to their need for college knowledge: the less college knowledge the participants had, the more they valued the college knowledge they had access to. It makes sense that first-generation students lack college knowledge as compared to continuing-generation students. In the case of the alumnae in the study, in some cases, the reason for this included attendance at under-resourced high schools. Yet, the majoritarian story that higher education is a meritocracy, open to all, persists.

In fact, higher education is predicated on access and this access begins with availability of college knowledge. This is confirmed in the work of Carnevale & Strohl (2013), who demonstrated that the majority of new enrollments in America's most selective institutions are White students and the equivalent majority of new enrollments in America's open-access institutions are Students of Color. Meanwhile, the majority of continuing-generation parents are White and the majority of first-generation parents are People of Color; therefore, access to college knowledge is segregated. In this way, the mostly-White U.S. higher education system perpetuates itself.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

The differentiation between financial aid and scholarships at PPWI is important to remember when considering the themes and sub-themes of this study. Financial aid is predicated on financial need. In the cases of the six first-generation Latinx alumnae in the study, this financial need was based on their parents' total income. Scholarships, however, are based on academic achievement. This type of award is referred to as merit aid by the PPWI in the study. To earn scholarships to attend a PPWI is an earned achievement. In every case in the study, the participants had more than one institution offering both financial aid and merit aid from which to choose. This speaks to the quality of their work prior to acceptance to the PPWI. However, on their PPWI campuses, the participants in the study encountered surprise and suspicion concerning their overall fitness to attend the institution. They appreciated the opportunity provided by the financial aid and scholarships, and it was an important sub-theme in the study.

The Need to Enact Personal Identity

The first-generation Latinx alumnae in the study were unprepared for the pervasiveness of White-normative, continuing-generation culture at the PPWI. Based on the PPWI websites, brochures, viewbooks, and campus tours, they had expected the PPWI's to be the colorblind meritocracies and havens for diversity the PPWIs advertised themselves to be. In fact, the actual campus climate was less inclusive than they had anticipated. Ultimately, the majority of the alumnae in the study would not recommend their institution to other first-generation Latinx women considering a higher education. The challenges to their opportunities to enact their personal identities contributed to their

dissatisfaction with the PPWI. The need to enact their personal identities within the context of the PPWI is the second theoretical construct that emerged from the study.

Microaggressions, Identity-Threats, and White Privilege

As is consistent with the findings of recent CRT scholarship, microaggressions, identity-threats, and White privilege exists through-out U.S. society, including on PPWI campuses. (See Figure 2 for a summary of the tenets of CRT.) Therefore, it is unsurprising that, on these three PPWI campuses, first-generation Latinx alumnae encountered microaggressions. These came in three forms, as defined by Yosso et al. (2009): institutional microaggressions perpetrated by administrators, faculty, and staff members; inter-personal microaggressions perpetrated by other students, and racial joking, in some instances, perpetrated by close friends. These experiences resulted in feelings of *otherness*. Furthermore, microaggressions limit the enactment of personal identity.

Additionally, the first-generation Latinx alumnae encountered identity-threats. Closely connected to inter-personal microaggressions, these identity-threats ranged from suspicion concerning personal and academic achievements to comments concerning background and place of origin. Also, both tokenism and onliness (Harper et al., 2011) served to undermine their personal identity: they were required to represent their entire culture or community, they were welcomed in to White spaces to support false definitions of diversity, and they were excluded from leadership opportunities because they did not seem like leaders to the committees responsible for making selections. These identity-threats served to create a sense of exclusion, of failure to belong.

Ultimately, as experienced by the women in the study, the microaggressions and identity-threats were fueled by White privilege. If the PPWI websites are an indication of the majoritarian narratives concerning Whiteness and White privilege at these three institutions, there is little to no recognition that White privilege is a problem; it is hardly mentioned in any official capacity and, when it is mentioned, is either found on the webpage for the campus multi-cultural programs or on the curriculum vitae of a selected number of faculty. In other words, it is ignored in connection with institutional mission statements, diversity objectives, or strategic goals. As long as PPWI culture supports White privilege while ignoring its existence, all other identities will feel unwelcome.

First-Generation Persistence

Persistence to the point of degree attainment is a necessary quality for all undergraduate students to succeed. The first-generation Latinx alumnae in this study recognize that their success in completing the important goal of degree attainment was due to their abilities to persist despite identity-threats, microaggressions, and White privilege experienced on their PPWI campuses. Possession of such persistence to achieve the bachelor's degree is the third theoretical construct of the study.

Allies, Mentors, and Friends

Caring allies, mentors, and friends were encountered on PPWI campuses. Despite microaggressions, identity-threats, and White privilege, the first-generation alumnae in the study met several compassionate staff members, highly-engaged faculty, and loving friends. The care of allies, mentors, and friends contributes to the quality of persistence.

Family Ethics of Determination and Commitment

However, family ethics of determination and commitment most enabled persistence to bachelor's degree achievement among the women in the study. This sub-theme is closely connected to the first sub-theme in the theoretical constructs, that family support was present and acknowledged. This persistence of the first-generation Latinx alumnae to achieve the bachelor's degree within six years serves to counter majoritarian narratives concerning the lack of persistence within the first-generation Latinx female student. These majoritarian stories are supported by the quantitative, seemingly objective research of Engle and Tinto (2008) and The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education (2011).

Theoretical Implications

It is well accepted within U.S. higher education that the journey for all university students can be challenging and for those students from families without higher education experience, it can be more challenging. This was consistent with the findings in this study. However, in many other respects, first-generation theory needs to be revised to more fully describe the lived experiences of first-generation Latinx alumnae. Previous critiques of first-generation theory have called for new models of first-generation theory that include the voices, epistemologies, and experiences of Latinx people. This study provides additional theoretical implications for revisions to first-generation theory concerning first-generation Latinx alumnae who have attended Southern California PPWI.

First and most importantly, this study demonstrates that nearness to home and closeness to family were critical benefits to the first-generation Latinx alumnae. Family

closeness and family ethics actually enabled them to persist until completion of their bachelor's degree, despite the challenges of the PPWI campus environment. This is in direct opposition to existent research in support of majoritarian stories concerning first-generation Latinx women. These majoritarian stories include the deficit-framed, so-called objective, often quantitative research which has resulted in the classification of first-generation Latinx families as unsupportive, the view that first-generation Latinx family commitments are impediments to degree persistence, and the calculation that residence within the Latinx home and apart from the campus is a risk factor that reduces the likelihood of degree attainment (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Wilbur & Roscigno, 2016; Yosso, 2005).

Second, existent first-generation research concerning Latinx alumnae is predominantly deficit-based, with an emphasis on their perceived failures or deficits as reflected in a lower rate of bachelor's degree attainment when compared to their continuing-generation peers (DeAngelo et al., 2011; The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity, 2011; Wilbur & Roscigno, 2016). Meanwhile, institutional solutions concerning first-generation Latinx student involvement and persistence until degree attainment are mostly limited to provisions of additional access to college knowledge and increased opportunities for financial aid (Peña et al., 2006). Such efforts, although appreciated, are offered without awareness of or institutional culpability for identity-threats, microaggressions, or White privilege occurring on PPWI campuses. Instead, the PPWI institutions propagate majoritarian stories of higher education as a color-blind, race-neutral meritocracy that values diversity (Yosso et al., 2009).

Third, although first-generation studies such as those by Engle & Tinto (2008) and Tinto (1975, 1993, 2012) include quantitative statistics concerning first-generation Latinx women, there is a paucity of research in the actual voices of first-generation Latinx alumnae. For the first-generation Latinx alumnae in the study, the experiences of microaggressions, identity-threats, and White privilege presented greater challenges to their persistence until degree completion than the challenges of financing an education at a PPWI. Theory must be revised to reflect their lived experiences, including their abilities to resist micro-aggressions, identity-threat, and White privilege on PPWI campuses.

Implications for Future Research

There is a need for additional research on the topic of first-generation Latinx alumnae who have persisted to completion of the bachelor's degree at PPWI. As mentioned previously, the most useful research would reflect their lived experiences and perspectives. Some of this research must also include new epistemologies. Many existing epistemologies are, in and of themselves, racist and sexist (Solórzano, 1998). Therefore, we need new epistemologies – ways of knowing that consider the lived experiences, cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998), and counter-stories of first-generation Latinx alumnae at PPWI.

Additional studies concerned with CRM might also consider bringing the participants together in community. The narrative interplay (Daiute, 2014) of these participants seemed to suggest a similarity to many of their experiences. The opportunity to share these experiences with other first-generation Latinx alumni could be a benefit to them and to the production of useful research. Also, providing participants in a future

study with additional agency regarding both the production and the presentation of research data and findings would further empower first-generation Latinx women within higher education.

Furthermore, this study indicates that additional research concerning the standpoint, perspective, tacit knowledge, and cultural intuition of White researchers in partnership with People of Color and first-generation Latinx women specifically should be further investigated. For centuries, White researchers have presumed to contextualize, illuminate, and benefit from the lived experiences of People of Color (Smith, 2012). This study demonstrates the importance of self-interrogation concerning White privilege, reflexivity concerning White fragility, and the personal pursuit of humility when White researchers (even the most seemingly empathetic) seek opportunities to work in partnership with first-generation Latinx women.

Finally, studies which focus more specifically on the campus climate of PPWI in and beyond the Southern California region should be considered. Diversity is an initiative on many university campuses (American Council on Education, 2012; Espinosa et al., 2015). However, there is less evidence of institutional commitments to equity. For example, reviewing the websites of the PPWI in the study and the website for the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (“About AICCU,” 2018), there were no references to either the word or the concept of equity. The responsibility to develop solutions to the differences in experiences and degree attainment among first-generation Latinx women and other first-generation Students of Color appears to rest on the shoulders of institutional leaders throughout higher

education. Additional research may convince them to more extensively take on the cause of equity.

Implications for Praxis and Policy

Administrators, faculty, and staff who pretend that microaggressions, identity-threat, and White privilege do not exist at PPWI contribute to the continuance of microaggressions, identity-threat, and White privilege. As experienced by the first-generation Latinx alumnae in the study, racial silence on the part of campus personnel also contributed to a diminishment of their ability to enact their personal identity on campus. This can lead to what may be perceived as a lack of persistence. To improve the overall campus climate for all, there must be opportunities for discovery and dialogue concerning the issues of microaggressions, identity-threats and White privilege. Additionally, there must be opportunities for and consideration of the telling of counter-stories. A PPWI that does so will become a more welcoming, inclusive, and equitable institution. As Phoenix wrote in a recent email, it is important that a university “understands the mistakes they have made, acknowledges them, and redresses them” (personal communication, May 22, 2018). Rather than racial silence, there must be frank and continuing dialogue.

Campus leaders could also access the collectivism and the collaboration valued by first-generation Latinx collegiate women by creating more opportunities for supporting efforts for juniors, seniors, and alumnae to mentor first-year and sophomore students concerning academic, social, and career advice. Such suggestions were expressed by both Alicia (personal communication, January 27, 2018) and Phoenix (personal communication, January 27, 2018). Phoenix explained, “Reaffirming they are not alone,

that there are definitely strong women ahead and strong minority groups that have successfully made it through, I think that would definitely increase the number of diverse students at Summit” (personal communications, January 27, 2018). In this way, both the institution and the first-generation Students of Color can succeed.

Limitations of the Study

A fundamental limitation of a study concerning the first-generation population is that no clear and widely-accepted definition of the term “first-generation” exists. This study has used one definition throughout: that the first-generation student is in the first-generation of her family to earn a bachelor’s degree. For this reason, the statistics concerning first-generation Latinx students and alumnae are imprecise.

This study included six participants at three Southern California PPWI. It would be interesting to compare the findings of this study to one that takes place in another region, with a larger sample size, or at another type of institution. This study provided a context for first-generation Latinx students within a region with a large population of Latinx residents. There may be other considerations in a region with a different demographic.

Another important area for research that this study did not include is the lived experiences of first-generation Latinx women who left their PPWI before receiving a degree. What were their experiences? Why did they leave? There are many questions that they might be able to answer.

Finally, this study did not attempt to fully describe the three PPWI the participants attended. The emphasis here was on the participants’ lived experiences, not on the policies, histories, and operations of the three PPWI. Also, to fully describe the PPWI

would be difficult to do without identifying them. For the purposes of this study, the lives of the participants were the highest priority.

Benefits of the Study

A CRM study must benefit not only the researcher, the higher education academy, or society at large, but also the participants themselves, who are co-creators in the research, not bystanders (Glynn, 2013; Harrison et al., 2001; Smith 2012). After each interview, I felt honored by the honesty of the counter-storytelling of the participants, but I wondered what they were receiving from me. I had always attempted to be transparent in my research agenda, beginning with the recruitment flyer (see Appendix A) and our initial contacts via the telephone and email. Even so, as the study drew to a close, I continued to ask myself, what has been the benefit to the participants? As they read and responded to interim research texts, I asked them. As this document was being prepared, they began to respond regarding the ways in which they benefitted and hoped to benefit in the future. Alicia wrote:

In participating in the study, I was able to reflect and make more sense of some of the things that happened during my undergrad. I just dealt with it and kept putting one foot in front of the other, but in reality, if I would have been able to see through the lenses of your dissertation, I may have been able to better help others of similar background going through the same thing instead of just moving on. But now, at my current campus, that's exactly what I am doing. Instead of just focusing on putting one foot in front of the other, I am focusing on helping others to get back up, understand and reflect on what their situation is, and rise.

(personal communication, April 21, 2018)

At another time, Catalina wrote to me to say that her experiences in the study had been “cathartic” and that she “knew that our conversation was the start of something” (personal communication, April 21, 2018). A third email arrived from Phoenix:

I do not believe that you are the only one benefiting from this study, even though this is for your Ph.D. I strongly feel that you have created a platform for us in allowing us to have these strong and powerful conversations. In a time in which we continue to be marginalized by institutions and in a time in which systemic racism and discrimination are trying to silence us, your study has never been more imperative. (personal communication, April 21, 2018)

Even when discussing how they had personally benefitted from the study, the responses of the participants who wrote to me confirmed their commitment to the ethic of care and the value of collectivism. Their responses further confirmed one of my realizations throughout the course of this study. Fundamentally, it is not only the Latinx alumnae who were denied the full range of opportunity and equity within the PPWI campus, it is the PPWI community that denied itself full partnership and community with the first-generation Latinx alumnae.

Conclusion

The practice of substituting quantitative, purportedly objective data in the literature for the lived experiences and perspectives of first-generation Latinx alumnae has led to a devaluing and mischaracterization of them, their families, their values, and their abilities to contribute to the community and climate of the PPWI. Twenty years have passed since the introduction of Delgado Bernal’s (1998) framework for the inclusion of a Chicana feminist epistemology in educational research; still, the Latinx

women in this study were marginalized, ignored, and discounted on their PPWI campuses instead of legitimized or considered. When they were acknowledged as Latinx females, it was in the spirit of tokenism and with the expectation that they should speak for all Latinx females concerning a particular viewpoint. Meanwhile, their continued experiences of identity-threats, microaggressions, and White privilege on PPWI campuses served to limit their participation in the PPWI community and to influence their assessment of the PPWI campus climate once they had graduated. The inclusion of first-generation Latinx alumnae in the literature is an important step toward redressing their experiences. Even more imperative is a commitment to reflexivity and equity on the part of PPWI administrators, faculty, and staff members to address the needs of first-generation Latinx women on their campus.

“Life is more than a number of facts and dates. It is also a collection of stories and memories. It is the stories that reveal truth. It is the memories that matter.”

– Pamela Ezell

References

- 50th anniversary fact sheet. (n.d.). TRIO Programs. U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/trio50anniv-factsheet.pdf>
- About AICCU (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.aiccu.edu/about/>
- AICCU Factbook (2017). Retrieved from https://issuu.com/aiccu/docs/aiccu_factbook_10-26-final
- American Council on Education (2012). Board statement on diversity. Retrieved from <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/BoardDiversityStatement-June2012.pdf>
- Anctil, E. J. (2008). Selling higher education: Marketing and advertising America's colleges and universities. In K. Ward & L. E. Wolf-Wendel (Series Eds.), *Association of Higher Education (ASHE) Higher Education Report: Vol 34, No. 2*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Anderson, L. W., Krathwohl, D. R., & Bloom, B. S. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Arnold, C. (2017, April 10). You won't believe how much colleges make on rejected applications. *USA Today College*. Retrieved from <http://college.usatoday.com/2017/04/10/you-wont-believe-how-much-money-colleges-make-on-rejected-applications/>
- Arzuaga, A. (2016). Family engagement for first-generation families and families of color. In V. Pendakur (Ed.), *Closing the opportunity gap: Identity-conscious*

strategies for retention and student success (pp. 10-24). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Aspelmeier, J. E.; Love, M. M., McGill, L. A., Elliott, A. N., & Pierce, T. W. (2012). Self-esteem, locus of control, college adjustment, and GPA among first- and continuing-generation students: A moderator model of generational status. *Research in Higher Education, 53*, 755-781.

Atherton, M. C. (2014). Academic preparedness of first-generation college students: Different perspectives. *Journal of College Student Development, 55*(8), 824-829.

Aspelmeier, J. E., Love, M. M., McGill, L. A., Elliott, A. N., & Pierce, T. W. (2012). Self-esteem, locus of control, college adjustment, and GPA among first- and continuing-generation students: A moderator model of generational status. *Research in Higher Education, 53*, 755-781.

Astin, A. W. (1984/1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development, 40*(5), 518-529.

Atherton, M. C. (2014). Academic preparedness of first-generation college students: Different perspectives. *Journal of College Student Development, 55*(8), 824-829.

Augustine, M. G. (2015). *An examination of attrition factors for underrepresented minority undergraduate students: Phenomenological perspectives of successful students and graduates* (Order No. 3723355). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1720263557).

Backes, B. (2015, October 21) What happens if affirmative action in college admissions is banned? [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown->

[center-chalkboard/2015/10/21/what-happens-if-affirmative-action-in-college-admissions-is-banned/](https://www.center-chalkboard.com/2015/10/21/what-happens-if-affirmative-action-in-college-admissions-is-banned/)

- Bailey, C. A. (2007). *A guide to qualitative field research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Banks-Santilli, L. (2014). First-generation college students and their pursuit of the American dream. *Journal of Case Studies in Education*, 5, 1-32.
- Barnett, B., & Felten, P. (2016). Working at the intersections. In B. Barnett & P. Felten (Eds.), *Intersectionality in action: A guide for faculty and campus leaders for creating inclusive classrooms and institutions* (pp. xiii-xix). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Bean, J. P., & Eaton, S. B. (2001). The psychology underlying successful retention practices. *Journal of College Student Retention*, 31(1), 73-89.
- Bell, D. A., Jr. (1980) Brown v. Board of Education and the interest-convergence dilemma. *Harvard Law Review*, 93(3), 518-533.
- Bensimon, E. M. (2005). Closing the achievement gap in higher education: An organizational learning perspective. *New Directions in Higher Education*, 131, 99-111.
- Bergmann, J., & Sams, A. (2014). *Flipped learning: Gateway to student engagement*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.
- Berryman, M., SooHoo, S., & Nevin, A. (2013a). Culturally responsive methodologies from the margins. In M. Berryman, S. SooHoo, & A. Nevin (Eds.). *Culturally responsive methodologies* (pp. 1-31). Bingley, UK: Emerald.

- Berryman, M., SooHoo, S., Nevin, A., Barrett, T. A., Ford, T., Nodelman, D. J., Valenzuela, N. & Wilson, A. (2013b). Culturally responsive methodologies at work in education settings. *International Journal for Researcher Development*, 4(2), 102-116. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRD-08-2013-0014>
- Bloom, L. R. (2002). From self to society: Reflections on the power of narrative inquiry. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bok, D. (2009). *Universities in the marketplace: The commercialization of higher education*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bowen, W. G., Chingos, M. M., & McPherson, M. S. (2009). *Crossing the finish line: Completing college at America's public universities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Braxton, J. M. (Ed.) (2000). *Reworking the student departure puzzle*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Braxton, J. M., Hirschy, A. S. & McClendon, S. A. (2004). *Understanding and reducing college student departure*. (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 30.3). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Braxton, J. M., Sullivan, A. S., & Johnson, R. (1997). Appraising Tinto's theory of college student departure. In J. Smart (Ed.) *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research*. The viability of academic integration as a central construct in Tinto's Interactional Theory of College Student Departure. In J. M. Braxton (Ed.), *Reworking the student departure puzzle*, Vol. 12, pp. 107-164. New York: Agathon.

- Breland, H., Maxey, J., Gernand, R., Cumming, T., & Trapani, C. (2002). *Trends in college admission 2000: A report of a national survey of undergraduate admission policies, practices, and procedures*. National Association for College Admission Counseling, Alexandria, VA.
- Britz, J. D. (2006 March 23). To all the girls I've rejected. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/23/opinion/to-all-the-girls-ive-rejected.html>
- Brizee, A., Case Tompkins, J., Chernouski, L., & Boyle, E. (2015, August 17). Critical race theory (1970s – present) [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/14/>
- Brown, E. (2015 November 24). College enrollment rates are dropping, especially among low-income students. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/education/wp/2015/11/24/college-enrollment-rates-are-dropping-especially-among-low-income-students/?utm_term=.d04a42f566ca
- Brown, M. C., II, & Dancy, T. E., II. (2010). Predominantly white institutions. In K. Lomotey (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of African American education* (Vol. 1, pp. 523-526). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Bruni, F. (2017, April 26). Lifting kids to college. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/26/opinion/usc-neighborhood-academic-initiative-lifting-kids-to-college.html?_r=0
- Burrus, J., Elliott, D., Brenneman, M., Markle, R. Carney, L., Moore, G., ... Roberts, R. D. (2013). *Putting and keeping students on track: Toward a comprehensive model*

of college persistence and goal attainment (Report No. ETS RR-13-14).

Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Services. Retrieved from

https://www.ets.org/research/policy_research_reports/publications/report/2013/jqvy

Cabrera, N. L., Miner, D. D., & Milem, J. F. (2013). Can a summer bridge program impact first-year persistence and performance? A case study of the New Start summer program. *Research in Higher Education*, 54(5), 481-498.

Cahill, C. (2006). 'At Risk'? The Fed Up Honeys re-present the gentrification of the Lower East Side. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 34(1/2). 334-363

Capper, C. A. (2015). The 20th-year anniversary of critical race theory in education: Implications for leading to eliminate racism. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 5(5), 791-833.

Carnevale, A. P., Rose, S. J. & Cheah, B. (2011). *The college payoff: Education, occupations, lifetime earnings*. Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce, Washington, DC. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED524299.pdf>

Carnevale, A. P., & Strohl, J. (2013). *Separate and unequal: How higher education reinforces the intergenerational reproduction of white racial privilege*. Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce, Washington, D.C. Retrieved from https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/SeparateUnequal.FR_.pdf

Chambers, T. V. (2009). The 'Reivement Gap': School tracking policies and the fallacy of the 'Achievement Gap.' *The Journal of Negro Education*, 78(4), 417-431.

- Chambers, T. V. (2009). The 'Receivment Gap': School tracking policies and the fallacy of the 'Achievement Gap.' *The Journal of Negro Education*, 78(4), 417-431.
- Chase, S. E. (2011). Narrative inquiry: Still a field in the making. In N. K. Denzil & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 421-434). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Chun, E. (2103). Meet our nation's first-generation college students: This growing population of students faces an uphill climb. *INSIGHT into Diversity*, 82(2), 22.
Retrieved from
http://www.epcc.edu/diversityprograms/Documents/1st_Gen_Students.pdf
- Clandinin, D. J. (2013). *Engaging in narrative inquiry*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Caine, V. (2008). Narrative inquiry. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 542-544). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Colarusso, L. (2015, January 12). Colleges ratchet up recruiting of applicants — just to turn them down [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://hechingerreport.org/colleges-ratchet-recruiting-applicants-just-turn/>
- Collegedata.com. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.collegedata.com>
- Colleges. (2017). I'm First. Retrieved from <http://www.imfirst.org/colleges/>
- Communities. (2017). University of Southern California. Retrieved from <https://communities.usc.edu/college-access/nai/>

- Conger, D., & Dickson, L. (2016). Gender imbalance in higher education: Insights for college administrators and researchers. *Research in Higher Education*, 1-17.
doi:10.1007/s11162-016-9421-3
- Conley, D. T. (2005). *College knowledge: What it really takes for students to succeed and what we can do to get them ready*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14.
- Cooper, K. M., Ashley, M., & Brownell, S. E. (2017). A bridge to active learning: A summer bridge program helps students maximize their active-learning experiences and the active-learning experiences of others. *CBE Life Sciences Education*, 16(1), 1-14.
- Cost of Recruiting. (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.ruffalonl.com/papers-research-higher-education-fundraising/2016/cost-of-recruiting-an-undergraduate-report>
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*. Retrieved from <https://philpapers.org/archive/CREDTI.pdf>
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1993). Beyond racism and misogyny: Black feminism and 2 Live Crew. In M. J. Matsuda, C. R., III Lawrence, R. Delgado & K. W. Crenshaw (Eds.), *Words that wound: Critical race theory, assaultive speech, and the First Amendment* (pp. 111-15). Boulder, CO: Westfield Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

- Crotty, M. (1998/2015). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Daiute, C. (2014). *Narrative inquiry: A dynamic approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Darling, R. A., & Smith, M. S. (2007). First-generation college students: First-year challenges. *Academic Advising: New Insights for Teaching and Learning in the First Year*, 203-211.
- Davis, J. (2010). *The first-generation student experience: Implications for campus practice, and strategies for improving persistence and success*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- DeAngelo, L., Franke, R., Hurtado, S., Pryor, J. H., & Tran, S. (2011). *Completing college: Assessing graduation rates at four-year institutions*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA. Retrieved from <https://heri.ucla.edu/DARCU/CompletingCollege2011.pdf>
- Delgado, R. (1989). Storytelling for oppositionists and others: A plea for narrative. *Michigan Law Review*, 87(8), 2411-2441. doi:10.2307/1289308
- Delgado, R. (1993). On telling stories in school: A reply to Faber and Sherry. *Vanderbilt Law Review*, 46, 665.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Delgado Bernal, D. (1998). Using a Chicana feminist epistemology in educational research. *Harvard Educational Review*, 68(4), 555-582.

- Delgado Bernal, D. (2002). Critical race theory, Latino critical theory, and critical raced-gendered epistemologies: Recognizing Students of Color as holders and creators of knowledge. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 105-126.
- Demetriou, C., & Schmitz-Sciborski, A. (2011). Integration, motivation, strengths and optimism: Retention theories past, present and future. In R. Hayes (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 7th National Symposium on Student Retention*, Charleston, SC (pp. 300-312). Norman, OK: The University of Oklahoma.
- DiAngelo, R. (2011). White fragility. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 3(3), 54-70.
- Dweck, C. S. (2007). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.
- Eagan, K., Stolzenberg, E. B., Lozano, J. B., Aragon, M. C., Suchard, M. R., & Hurtado, S. (2014). *Undergraduate teaching faculty: The 2013-2014 HERI faculty survey*. Higher Education Research Institute, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles. Retrieved from <http://heri.ucla.edu/monographs/HERI-FAC2014-monograph.pdf>
- Eddy, S. L., & Hogan, K. A. (2014). Getting under the hood: How and for whom does increasing course structure work? *CBE – Life Sciences Education*, 13(3), 478-492. Retrieved from <http://www.lifescied.org/content/13/3/453.short>
- Edhlund, B. M., & McDougall, A. G. (2016). *NVivo for Mac essentials: Welcoming Mac-users to the NVivo world*. Stallarholmen, Sweden: Form & Kunskap AB

- Eletreby, D. M. (2010). *Conversion experiences of three white American Muslim males: The impact of centering and decentering forces* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (Order No. 3440227).
- Engle, J., & Tinto, V. (2008). *Moving beyond access: College success for low-income, first-generation students*. Washington, DC: Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504448.pdf>
- Equity and student success (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://cue.usc.edu/equity/>
- Espinosa, L. L., Gaertner, M. N., & Ordfield, G. (2015). *Moving forward on race, class & college access: Achieving diversity in a shifting legal landscape*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- Esquibel, D. H. (2013). *A qualitative case study on the retention and persistence of second generation first time degree-seeking Latino students in higher education* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (Order No. 3574490).
- Federal TRIO Program. (2017). Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices//list/ope/trio/index.html>
- Ferguson, D. L., & Ferguson, P. M. (2000). Qualitative research in special education: Notes toward an open inquiry instead of a new orthodoxy? *JASH*, 25(3), 180-185.
- Fernández, L. (2002). Telling stories about school: Using critical race and Latino critical theories to document Latina/Latino education and resistance. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 45-65.

- Field, K. (2017, February 5). College 101 for parents: Helping moms and dads help their first-generation students succeed. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- Fine, M. (2013). Echoes of Bedford: A 20-year social psychology memoir on participatory action research hatched behind bars. *American Psychologist*, 68(8), 687-698.
- First Generation Students. (2017). California State University Monterey Bay. Retrieved from <https://csumb.edu/pgcc/first-generation-college-students>
- Ford, H. (2014). Qualitative codes and coding [PowerPoint presentation]. Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/hfordsa/qualitative-codes-and-coding>
- Freire, P. (1968/2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed: 30th anniversary edition* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Fulton, K. P. (2014). *Time for learning: Top 10 reasons why flipping the classroom can change education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- G.I. Bill. (2017). City University of New York. Retrieved from <https://cuny.edu/site/cc/higher-education/gi-bill.html>
- Gibbs, N. (2008, April 3). Affirmative action for boys. *Time*. Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0%2c9171%2c1727693%2c00.html>
- Gibbs, P. (2007). Does advertising pervert higher education? Is there a case for resistance? *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 17(1), 3-11.
- Gibbs, P. (2011). An Aristotelian model for ethical higher education marketing: The role of practical wisdom. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 21(2), 203-214.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Given, L. M., & Saumure, K. (2008). Trustworthiness. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 896). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Glynn, T. (2013). Me nohotahi, mahitahi, haeretahi totou: Collaborative partnerships between indigenous and non-indigenous researchers (Maori and Pakeha). In M. Berryman, S. SooHoo, & A. Nevin (Eds.) *Culturally responsive methodologies* (pp. 35-52). Bingley, UK: Emerald.
- Greenfield, G. M., Keup, J. R., & Gardner, J. N. (2013). *Developing and sustaining successful first-year programs: A guide for practitioners*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Gutierrez, M. (2016, July 23). For many colleges, application fees mean revenue. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Retrieved from <http://www.post-gazette.com/business/money/2016/07/24/For-many-colleges-application-fees-mean-revenue/stories/201607240100>
- Haak, D., HilleRisLambers, J., Pitre, E., & Freeman, S. (2011). Increased structure and active learning reduce the achievement gap in Introductory Biology. *Science*, 332(6034), 1213-1216.
- Harper, S. R. (2009). N____s no more: A critical race counternarrative on Black male student achievement at predominantly White colleges and universities. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(6), 697-712.
- Harper, S. R. (2010). An anti-deficit achievement framework for research on students of color in STEM. *New Directions for Research*, 63-74.

- Harper, S. R. (2012a). *Black male student success in higher education: A report from the National Black Male College Achievement Study*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in Education. Retrieved from <http://www.gse.upenn.edu/equity/sites/gse.upenn.edu/equity/files/publications/bmss.pdf>
- Harper, S. R. (2012b). Race without racism: How higher education researchers minimize racist institutional norms. *The Review of Higher Education*, 36(1), 9-29.
- Harper, S. R. (2016). Foreword. In V. Pendakur (Ed.), *Closing the opportunity gap: Identity-conscious strategies for retention and student success* (pp. ix – xii). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Harper, S. R., Davis, R. J., Jones, D. E., McGowan, B. L., Ingram, T. N., Platt, C. S. (2011). Race and racism in the experiences of Black male resident assistants at predominantly White universities. *Journal of College Student Development*, 52(2), 180-200. Retrieved from <http://works.bepress.com/sharper/38/>
- Harper, S. R., Patton, L. D., & Wooden, O. S. (2009). Access and equity for African American students in higher education: A critical race historical analysis of policy efforts. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 80(4), 389-414.
- Harrison, J., MacGibbon, L., & Morton, M. (2001). Regimes of trustworthiness in qualitative research: The rigors of reciprocity. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(3), 323-345.
- Hernandez, A. (2011). New Bloom's pyramid [Image]. Licensed by Creative Commons. Retrieved from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/21847073@N05/5857112597>

- Herr, K. (1999). Private power and privileged education: de/constructing institutionalized racism. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 3(2), 111-129.
- Herreid, C. F., Schiller, N. A., Herreid, K. F., & Wright, C. B. (2014). A chat with the survey monkey: Case studies and the flipped classroom. *Journal of College Science Teaching*, 44(1), 75–80.
- Hiraldo, P. (2010). The role of critical race theory in higher education. *The Vermont Connection*, 31, 53-59.
- Hogg, L. (2011). Funds of knowledge: An investigation of coherence within the literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 666-677.
doi:10.1016/j.tate.2010.11.005
- Hogg, L. (2014). Multiple identities: Consideration of respectful research practices. In C. McMaster & C. Murphy (Eds.), *Postgraduate study in Aotearoa New Zealand: Surviving and succeeding*, (pp. 153-167). Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press.
- Howard, T. (2013). How does it feel to be a problem? Black male students, schools, and learning in enhancing the knowledge base to disrupt deficit frameworks. *Review of Research in Education*, 37(1), 54–86. doi:10.3102/0091732x12462985
- Hubain, B. S., Allen, E. L., Harris, J. C., & Linder, C. (2016). Counter-stories as representations of the racialized experiences of students of color in higher education and student affairs graduate preparation programs. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 29(7), 946-963.

- Hurtado, S., & Carter, D. F. (1997). Effects of college transition and perceptions of the campus racial climate on Latino college students' sense of belonging. *Sociology of Education, 70*(4), 324-345.
- Inkelas, K. K., Daver, Z. E., Vogt, K. E., & Leonard, J. B. (2007). Living-learning programs and first-generation college students' academic and social transition to college. *Research in Higher Education, 48*(4), 403-434.
- Jaschik, S. (2006, March 27). Affirmative action for men. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2006/03/27/admit>
- Johnson, E. J., & Castrellon, T. (2014). Recoding Discourses in Higher Education: Critical Views on Recruiting Materials for Latin@ College Students. *Journal of Latinos & Education, 13*(3), 166-180. doi:10.1080/15348431.2013.849597
- Josselman, R. (2012). Narrative research. In N. J. Salkind (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of research design* (pp. 869-874). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Kaminer, A. (2014, November 16). Applications by the dozen, as anxious seniors hedge their bets. *The New York Times*, pp. 1-27.
- Kezar, A. (2000). Summer bridge programs: Supporting all students. ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED442421.pdf>
- Kincheloe, J. L., McLaren, P., Steinberg, S. R., & Monzó, L. (2017). Critical pedagogy and qualitative research: Advancing the bricolage. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (5th ed.) (pp. 235-260). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

- Knight-Diop, M. G. (2010). First-generation college students. *Encyclopedia of African American education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J. A., Bridges, B. K., & Hayek, J. C. (2006). *What matters to student success: A review of the literature*. National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, Washington, DC. Retrieved from [https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/sites/default/files/WhatMattersStudentSuccess\(Kuh,July2006\).pdf](https://www.ue.ucsc.edu/sites/default/files/WhatMattersStudentSuccess(Kuh,July2006).pdf)
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H., Whitt, E. J., & Associates (2005). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7-24.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools. *Educational Researcher*, 35(7), p. 3-12. doi: 10.3102/0013189x035007003
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). 'Who you callin' nappy-headed?' A critical race theory look at the construction of Black women. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 12(1), 87-99.
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. IV (1995). Toward a Critical Race Theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68. Mehta, S. S., Newbold, J. J., & O'Rourke, M. A. (2011). Why do first-generation students fail? *College Student Journal*, 45(1), 20-35.
- Leonardo, Z. (2009). *Race, whiteness, and education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

- London, H. B. (1989). Breaking away: A study of first-generation college students and their families. *American Journal of Education*, 97(2), p. 144-170.
- Madrid, P. (2016, May 6). USC Neighborhood Initiative celebrates 25 years of college access and success for local children [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://news.usc.edu/100147/usc-neighborhood-academic-initiative-celebrates-25-years-of-college-access-and-success-for-local-children/>
- Mangan, K. (2015, May 18). The challenge of the first-generation student: Colleges amp up efforts to retain them, but hurdles remain. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from https://static.ark.org/euploads/adhe/The_Challenge_of_the_First-Generation_Student_-_The_Chronicle_of_Higher_Education_by_S_Adkison.pdf
- Martin, S. A. (1999). *Early intervention programs and college partnerships*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://www.ericdigests.org/2000-3/early.htm>
- Matsuda, M. J., Lawrence, C. R., III, Delgado, R. & Crenshaw, K. W. (1993). Introduction. In M. J. Matsuda, C. R., III Lawrence, R. Delgado & K. W. Crenshaw (Eds.), *Words that wound: Critical race theory, assaultive speech, and the First Amendment* (pp. 1-15). Boulder, CO: Westfield Press, Inc.
- Mauro, A., & Mazaris, A. (2016). Student recruitment and retention at the intersections: A case for capacity building. In B. Barnett & P. Felten (Eds.), *Intersectionality in action: A guide for faculty and campus leaders for creating inclusive classrooms and institutions* (pp. 3-14). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

- McElroy, E. T., & Armesto, M. (1998). TRIO and Upward Bound: History, programs, and issues – past, present, and future. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 67(4), 373-380.
- McIntosh, P. (1990). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Independent School*, 49(2), 31.
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). Introduction to qualitative research. In S. B. Merriam and Associates (Eds.), *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis* (pp. 3-17). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Milem, J. F., & Berger, J. B. (1997). A modified model of college student persistence: Exploring the relationship between Astin's Theory of Involvement and Tinto's Theory of Student Departure. *Journal of Student Development*, 38(4), 387-400.
- Miller, B. C. (2014 August 20). Increasing college diversity. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://diverseeducation.com/article/66470/>
- Minikel-Lacocque, J. (2013). Racism, college, and the power of words: Racial microaggressions reconsidered. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(3), 432-465.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.
- Morales, E. (2018, January 8). Why I embrace the term Latinx. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jan/08/why-i-embrace-the-term-latinx>

- Moss, G. (2004). Provisions of trustworthiness in critical narrative research: Bridging intersubjectivity and fidelity. *The Qualitative Report*, 9(2), 359-374.
- Murphy, M. S. (2013) Considering *Happiness* and *Caring*: A conversation with Nel Noddings. *Teacher and Teacher Education*, 34, 184-188
- Murphy, M., & Destin, M. (2016). *Promoting inclusion and identity safety to support college success*. The Century Foundation, Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://tcf.org/content/report/promoting-inclusion-identity-safety-support-college-success/>
- Murphy, T. E., Gaughan, M., Hume, R., & Moore, S. G. (2010). College graduation rates for minority students in a selective technical university: Will participation in a summer bridge program contribute to success? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 32(1), 70-83.
- Mutua, K. (2012). Counternarrative. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*, pp. 132. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Noble, K., Flynn, N. T., Lee, J. D., & Hilton, D. (2007). Predicting successful college experiences: Evidence from a first-year retention program. *Journal of College Student Retention*, 9(1), 39-60.
- Nunez, A. M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S. (1998). *First-generation students: Undergraduates whose parents never enrolled in postsecondary education* (Report No. NCES 98-082). Washington, DC.: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/98082.pdf>

- Nunez, A. M., & Sansone, V. A. (2016) Earning and learning: Exploring the meaning of work in the experiences of first-generation Latino college students. *The Review of Higher Education*, 40(1), 91-115.
- Orientation Programs (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.smith.edu/student-life/orientation>
- Parent Orientation. (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.smith.edu/sites/default/files/media/Documents/Student-Affairs/ParentOrientation2016.pdf>
- Patel, E. (2016). Foreword. In B. Barnett & P. Felten (Eds.), *Intersectionality in action: A guide for faculty and campus leaders for creating inclusive classrooms and institutions* (pp. ix-xi). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education. (2011). *6-year degree attainment rates for students enrolled in a post-secondary institution*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from http://www.pellinstitute.org/downloads/fact_sheets-6-Year_DAR_for_Students_Post-Secondary_Institution_121411.pdf
- Peña, E. V., Bensimon, E. M., & Colyar, J. (2006). Contextual problem defining: Learning to think and act from the standpoint of equity. *Liberal Education*, 48-55.
- Pendakur, V. (2016). Introduction. In V. Pendakur (Ed.), *Closing the opportunity gap: Identity-conscious strategies for retention and student success* (pp. 1-9). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Pennebaker, J. W., Gosling, S. D., & Ferrell, J. D. (2013). Daily online testing in large classes: Boosting college performance while reducing achievement gaps. *Plos*

- ONE*, 8(11), 1-6. Retrieved from
<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0079774>
- Pérez Huber, L., & Solórzano, D. G. (2015). Racial microaggressions: What they are, what they are not, and why they matter. *Latino Policy and Issues Brief*, 30, 1-4. UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, Los Angeles, CA.
- Perilla, A. (2010). Measuring success in outreach and engagement: Arizona State University and the American Dream Academy. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 14(3), 97-111. Retrieved from
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ905466>
- Petty, T. (2014). Motivating first-generation students to academic success and college completion. *College Student Journal*, 48(2), 257-264.
- Piaget, J. (1973). *To understand is to invent: The future of education* (G. A. Roberts, Trans.). New York, NY: Grossman Publishers. Retrieved from
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0000/000061/006133eo.pdf>
- Pierce, C. (1970). Offensive mechanisms. In F. B. Barbour (Ed.) *The Black Seventies*, (pp. 265-282). Boston, MA: Porter Sargent Publisher.
- Pinnegar, S., & Daynes, J. G. (2012). Locating narrative inquiry historically: Thematics in the turn to narrative. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 3-34). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Pippert, T. D., Essenburg, L. J., & Matchett, E. J. (2013). We've got minorities, yes we do: Visual representations of racial and ethnic diversity in college recruitment materials. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 23(2), 258-282.

- Ponjuan, L. (2011). Recruiting and retaining Latino faculty members: The missing piece to Latino student success. *Thought & Action*. National Education Association, Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/home/49914.htm>
- Potter, H. (2014, June 26). What can we learn from states that ban affirmative action? [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://tcf.org/content/commentary/what-can-we-learn-from-states-that-ban-affirmative-action/>
- Raisman, N. A. (2009, April 1) Retain students retain budgets: A how to. *University Business*. Retrieved from <https://www.universitybusiness.com/article/retain-students-retain-budgets-how>
- Raisman, N. A. (2013). *The cost of college attrition at four-year colleges & universities: An analysis of 1669 US institutions*. Educational Policy Institute, Virginia Beach, VA. Retrieved from http://www.educationalpolicy.org/pdf/1302_PolicyPerspectives.pdf
- Redford, J., & Hoyer, K. M. (2017). *First-generation and continuing-generation college students: A comparison of high school and postsecondary experiences* (Statistics in Brief, pp. 1-27, Rep. No. ED-IES-12-D-0002). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018009.pdf>
- Reid, P. T. (2006). Critical race theory. In Y. Jackson (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of multicultural psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Reissman, C. R. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Relles, S. R., & Tierney, W. G. (2014). *Improving college writing before the freshman year: Findings from 10 years of a summer bridge program. The Summer Before*.

Pullias Center for Higher Education, University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education, Los Angeles, CA. Retrieved from

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED562034.pdf>

Rendón, L. I. (1996). Life on the border. *About Campus*, 1(5), 14-20.

Reyes, N. A. S., & Nora, A. (2012). *Lost among the data: A review of Latino first-generation college students* (White Paper). Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, San Antonio, TX. Retrieved from

https://www.hacu.net/images/hacu/OPAI/H3ERC/2012_papers/Reyes%20nora%20-%20rev%20of%201st%20gen%20latino%20college%20students%20-%202012.pdf

Robertson, R. V., Bravo, A., & Chaney, C. (2016). Racism and the experiences of Latina/o college students at a PWI (predominantly White institution). *Critical Sociology*, 42(4-5), 715-735.

Robertson, R. V., & Chaney, C. (2017). "I know it [racism] still exists here": African American males at a predominantly White institution. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, 39, 260-282. Retrieved from

<http://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1015&context=hjsr>

Ross, K. A. (2016). *Breakthrough strategies: Classroom-based practices to support New Majority college students*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Russell, D. (2011). Master narrative. In M. Ryan (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of literary and cultural theory*. Retrieved from

http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/tocnode?id=g9781405183123_chunk_g978140518312336_ss1-3#citation

Ryan, C. L., & Bauman, K. (2016). Educational Attainment in the United States: 2015.

U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Washington, D.C. Retrieved from

<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p20-578.pdf>

Saenz, V. B., Hurtado, S., Barrera, D., Wolf, D., & Yeung, F. (2007) *First in my family:*

A profile of first-generation college students at four-year institutions since 1971.

Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles. Retrieved from

<https://www.heri.ucla.edu/PDFs/pubs/TFS/Special/Monographs/FirstInMyFamily.pdf>

SAGE Publications Ltd. (Producer). (2017). *Jeong-Hee Kim discusses narrative methods* [Streaming video].

Saldana, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). London, UK: SAGE Publications, Ltd.

Sander-Staudt, M. (n.d.) Care ethics. Retrieved from <https://www.iep.utm.edu/care-eth/>

Schwandt, T. A. (2015). *The SAGE dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Selingo, J. J. (2013, April 14). A matter of ballast. *The New York Times*, pp. 8.

Sherry, M. (2012). Insider/outsider status. In L. M. Givens (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 433). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

- Sherwin, J. (2012). *Make me a match: Helping low-income and first-generation students make good college choices* [Policy brief]. MDRC, New York, NY. Retrieved from http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/policybrief_24.pdf
- Simson, D. (2014). Exclusion, punishment, racism and our schools: A critical race theory perspective on school discipline. *UCLA Law Review*, 61(2), 506-563.
- Sleeter, C. (2012). *Critical race theory and education*. In J. A. Banks (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of diversity in education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Sleeter, C. (April, 2017). *Ethnic studies and White teachers*. Keynote address presented at the OC Ethnic Studies Summit, Chapman University, Orange, CA.
- Smith at a Glance. (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.smith.edu/about-smith/smith-glance>
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (2nd edition). London, UK: Zed Books, Ltd.
- Snyder, T. D., de Brey, C., & Dillow, S. A. (2018). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2016* (NCES 2017094). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2017094>
- Solórzano, D. G. (1997). Images and words that wound: Critical Race Theory, racial stereotyping, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 24(3), 5-19.
- Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). Critical race and LatCrit theory and method: Counter-storytelling. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14(4), 471-495.

- Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23-44. Retrieved from <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/marcos.pizarro/courses/8085/s1/SY.pdf>
- SooHoo, S. (2006). *Talking leaves: Narratives of otherness*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- SooHoo, S. (2013). Humility within culturally responsive methodologies. In M. Berryman, S. SooHoo, & A. Nevin (Eds.), *Culturally responsive methodologies* (pp. 199-219). Bingley, UK: Emerald.
- Stolle-McAllister, K. (2011). The case for summer bridge: Building social and cultural capital for talented black STEM students. *Science Educator*, 20(2), 12-22.
- Strayhorn, T. L. (2010). Bridging the pipeline: Increasing underrepresented students' preparation for college through a summer bridge program. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 55(2), 142-159.
- Strayhorn, T. L., Travers, C. S., & Lo, M. T. (2017, April). *Self-esteem as a moderator of the link between peer support and transition efficacy among first-year college students*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Antonio, TX.
- Stephens, N. M., Fryberg, S. A., Markus, H. R., Johnson, C. S., & Covarrubias, R. (2012). Unseen disadvantage: How American universities' focus on independence undermines the academic performance of first-generation college students. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(6), 1178-1197.
doi:10.1037/a0027143

- Storlie, C. A., Mostade, S. J., & Duenyas, D. (2016). Cultural trailblazers: Exploring the career development of Latina first-generation college students. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 64, 304-317.
- Stuber, J. M. (2011). *Inside the college gates: How class and culture matter in higher education*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Terenzini, P. T. (1987, November). *A review of selected theoretical modules of student development and collegiate impact*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Baltimore, MD.
- Tierney, W. G., & Jun, A. (2016). A university helps prepare low-income youths for college: Tracking school success. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 72(2), 205-225.
- Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research*, 45(1), 89-125. doi:10.2307/1170024
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Tinto, V. (2012). *Completing college: Rethinking institutional action*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Today's Student Statistics. (2017). Lumina Foundation, Indianapolis, IN. Retrieved from <https://www.luminafoundation.org/todays-student-statistics>
- Tomasko, D. L., Ridgway, J. S., Waller, R. J., & Olesik, S. V. (2016). Research and teaching: Association of summer bridge program outcomes with STEM retention of targeted demographic groups. *Journal of College Science Teaching*, 45(4), 90-99.

- Toutkoushian, R., Stollberg, R., & Slaton, K. (2018). Talking 'bout my generation: Defining 'first-generation college students' in higher education research. *Teachers College Record*, 120(4), 1-38..
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *Quick Facts*, California. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/CA/PST045217>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2001). Post-secondary retention and persistence: A primer. <http://www.ribghe.org/7attach1061207.pdf>
- Valdés, F. (n.d.) Lat Crit conceptual overview. Retrieved from <http://latcrit.org/content/about/conceptual-overview/>
- Vargas, J. H. (2004). *College knowledge: Addressing information barriers to college*. The Education Resources Institute, Boston, MA. Retrieved from https://storage.googleapis.com/cbma/downloads/CollegeKnowledge_3.pdf
- Van Blerkom, D. L. (2013). *Orientation to college learning*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning.
- Ward, L., Siegel, M. J., & Davenport, Z. (2012). *First-generation college students: Understanding and improving the experience from recruitment to commencement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ware, L. (2016 August 8). How to survive, be safe and thrive at a predominantly white institution [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://www.theroot.com/how-to-survive-be-safe-and-thrive-at-a-predominantly-w-1790856312>
- Westermann, E. B. (2014). A half-flipped classroom or an alternative approach? Primary sources and blended learning. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 38(2), 43-57.

- Wilbur, T. G., Roscigno, V. J. (2016). First-generation disadvantage and college enrollment/completion. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*, 2, 1-11. doi:10.1177/2378023116664351
- Williams, J. P. (2014 September 22). College of tomorrow: The changing demographics of the student body. *U.S. News*. Retrieved from <http://www.usnews.com/news/college-of-tomorrow/articles/2014/09/22/college-of-tomorrow-the-changing-demographics-of-the-student-body>
- Wise, T. (2005). *Affirmative action: Racial preference in black and white*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Wood, J. (2016). *The glass ceiling is not broken: Gender equity issues among faculty in higher education* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Chapman University, Orange, CA.
- Xu, S., & Connelly, F. M. (2010). Narrative research. In C. Kridel (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of curriculum studies* (pp. 595-599). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Yamauchi, E. M. (2010). *Counterstories: Uncovering history within the stories of faculty of color* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (Order No. 3421775).
- Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69-91. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>
- Yosso, T. J. (2017, April). The meaning and relevance of community cultural wealth. In C. R. Aguilar, A. H. Huerta, & R. C. Neri, (Chairs), *Funds of knowledge, community cultural wealth, and forms of capital*. Symposium conducted at the

annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Antonio, TX.

Yosso, T. J., Parker, L., Solórzano, D. G., & Lynn, M. (2004). From Jim Crow to affirmative action and back again: A critical race discussion of racialized rationales and access to higher education. *Review of Research in Education*, 28(1), 1-25.

Yosso, T. J., Smith, W. A., Ceja M., & Solórzano, D. G. (2009). Critical race theory, racial micro aggressions, and campus racial climate for Latina/o undergraduates. *Harvard Educational Review*, 4, 659-690.

Zamudio, M. M., Russell, C., Rios, F. A., & Bridgeman, J. L. (2011). *Critical race theory matters: Education and ideology*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Appendix A

Seeking Research Study Participants

Latinx Women:

Were you in the first generation of your family to earn a bachelor's degree?

Did you attend a predominantly-White, private university in Southern California?

Your participation in a doctoral research study is kindly requested

Hello, my name is Pamela Ezell and I am in the final year of a Ph.D. program at Chapman University in Orange, California. Chapman has authorized a research study concerning the experiences of Latinx women who were in the first-generation of their family to earn a bachelor's degree. At this time, the study is limited to Latinx women who attended

_____ University,
_____ University, or
_____ University.

Participation would involve one or two interviews (via Skype/FaceTime or in person), would be completely confidential and would not be paid but deeply appreciated.

It is the intention of this research study to better understand the experiences of Latinx women on these campuses.



If you would like to participate or learn more about the study:

Email: ezell@chapman.edu

Call or text: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Thank you for considering and best of luck in your current and future endeavors!



Appendix B

What factors caused you to select to attend a predominantly White private university?

1. What were the best parts of your university experience - the highlights of your memories?
2. Were there any experiences that troubled you or caused your rethink or regret your choice?
3. While an undergraduate at your university, can you describe experiences of racism in any form (microaggression, overt racism, etc.)?
4. What were the institutional responses to these incidents?
5. How would you have liked the university administration or your faculty members to respond?
6. Can you describe any other experiences of oppression, such as sexism or classism?
7. How did the senior leadership of your institution express a commitment to diversity?
8. How did you experience diversity as an undergraduate?
9. What were the most surprising experiences of attending your university?
10. How could you have been better prepared for the learning and lifestyle of college?
11. What experiences best equipped you to persist with your education until the bachelor's degree?
12. Can you describe your most important mentors on campus - faculty, staff, alumni?
13. Who were you most important influences off campus?
14. What recommendation or suggestions would provide to your university to better support first-generation Latinas?