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Community Cultural Wealth and Adaptive Capital: First-generation Latine Students' Use of Cultural and Social Capital within Community Colleges

By:

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Abstract (working abstract)

Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) and others since him have shown the importance of the use of social and cultural capital within schools. Although Bourdieu used his theory to criticize the reproduction of the middle and upper class hierarchy, it presents capital as something students either have or do not have. Issues arise from this because research finds that students who do not do well in school are lacking that capital, seeing them as deficient. In other words, in order to advance in society, you need to acquire the skills and knowledge valued by society. This ignores the fact that other forms of social and cultural capital exist. Using Yosso's (2005) theory of Community Cultural Wealth (CCW), which highlights six forms of capital students of color bring to school with them, I will highlight the ways in which first-generation Latine community college students navigate through community college. The study also names a new form of capital named adaptive capital which students bring to their two and four-year colleges with them. Through semi-structured interviews of current community college students and those who have transferred, I argue that if we are going to stop the reproduction of social inequalities within schools, other forms of capital need to be recognized and implemented within school culture and policy.

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Introduction

We are going through a time of increased college enrollment and attainment, yet the attainment from Latine students continues to lag behind their white and Asian counterparts. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). This is important to focus on because the Latine population has grown and is still growing at an increasing rate in the United States. The rise in the Latine population in the United States means that their impact on American society is expanding (Pino & Martinez-Ramos, 2012). Although there has been an increase of Latine students in school—27% graduated from high school, 20% went to college—the percentage of students successfully completing this degrees are rather low with 40% of them having dropped out of high school and only about 12% of them attained a four-year degree (Pino & Martinez-Ramos, 2012). Even with an increase in enrollment and attendance of college, Latine and African-American students are likely to end up leaving school without actually earning a degree (NCES, 2003). With the Latine student population growing, we should see more of these students graduate from high school and pursue a higher education; instead, we are seeing the opposite. Although it is important to encourage students to enroll and attend college, it is not enough to help these students close the attainment gap. Research has shown how the institutional environment of a school can have an effect on students' perseverance depending on how closely related the schools' environment is with students' aspirations and goals.

Latine students also have a higher chance at being a first-generation student. First-generation students have a harder time navigating through school because schools do not always focus their resources on how they could help these students succeed. Valenzuela (1999) even argues that schools take part in "subtracting schooling," which subtracts resources from Latine youth by encompassing a eurocentric curriculum that divests them of their culture. As

Valenzuela points out, subtracting schooling is an example of how schools are not built to help this demographic of students succeed within educational spaces. This leaves first-generation Latine students having a harder time getting into or graduating from higher education. In this research paper, I refer to first-generation students as students who are the first in their families to attend college. By focusing on first-generation community college students, a population widely ignored, scholars and policy makers will be able to understand what these students need, what assets they bring to school, and how to help them transfer from community college in order to attain a college degree.

First-generation students are also more likely to attend community college. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2005), first-generation college students made up 45% of the community college demographic in 2003. When you look at the amount of Latine students who are first-generation community college students, they make up 53% of the population (Faces of the Future, 2005). This means that most students who attend community college are overwhelmingly made up of first-generation and Latine students. This in itself does not cause a problem; the problem lies in that community college students' transfer expectations are usually not met. According to the Community College Research Center (2015), 80% of students intend to earn a bachelor's degree, but only 25% of those students transfer to a four university and only 17% of those 80% earn a bachelor's degree within 6 years of transferring. If only 17% of transfer students are attaining a degree when 80% of them have aspirations to receive a bachelor's degree, it is important to understand the population of students who make up community colleges and why they are having a hard time transferring out and attaining a degree.

For these reasons, this study examines the use of Tara Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth on first-generation Latine community college students and will ask the following

questions: How do first-generation Latine students use their cultural wealth in community college spaces? How is their cultural wealth used to transfer out of community college? What other forms of cultural wealth are being used by Latine students in two-year universities and once they transfer out? Yosso names six forms of capital: aspirational, familial, social, linguistic, resistant, and navigational capital. This study aims to expand on the framework Yosso provides and to name new forms of capital that were not included. The study found that the Latine community college students possessed a new form of capital that I call "adaptive" capital. Since all forms of capital are not mutually exclusive, the students in the study use their adaptive capital while using the other forms of cultural wealth they possess from Yosso's framework. By looking at the way this demographic of students uses their cultural wealth to navigate through two and four-year universities, we can help student persistence by aligning their attributes and goals to the institutional environment of the colleges they attend (as mentioned above). Building on a non-deficit perspective of these students can help build schools that are fair by recognizing and valuing the strengths that these students have. It will also help empower them by using their strengths to challenge oppressive structures and to use their own strengths with those that are already valued in society.

Literature Review

Social and Cultural Capital:

Economists have a long line of history in trying to distinguish humans as production processes (e.g. health, skills, education) from that of material wealth (such as land, equipment, etc) (Kiker, 1966). This especially became a major theme of research for economists during the 1960's, which they eventually named the concept of "human capital." During this time economists aimed to be able to name and quantify the concept of human capital—an example

being how humans invested in their own capital through the workforce and education (Becker, 1962). In the present day, people use the term human capital to refer to how individuals "generate economic output" by using their skills and knowledge (Martin, 2005). This form of human capital can be seen when someone makes a decision to go to college because they will be investing in their future to become more employable and earn a higher wage.

As Darity (2008) mentioned, a new wave of research hit in the 1970's and 80's because social scientists began to take on the concept of human capital and informed it in a new way. This new way conceptualized capital in sociological terms by taking into consideration the role that social structures and relationships had on the development of human capital (Darity, 2008). An example of this could be a student going to the financial aid office in order to understand the application process and how it works. Some of the social scientists behind this new concept of human capital were: Glen Loury, Pierre Bourdieu, and James Coleman (Darity, 2008). These social scientists were able to name human capital and transform it into what we now know as social and cultural capital. Since Bourdieu is the theorist who is connected to Yosso's CCW, we will talk more about his concept of cultural capital and the role it played in the education system.

Bourdieu argued that the knowledge of the middle and upper class could be used to gain mobility in the hierarchical society we live in because that knowledge is valuable (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). For those who were not socialized with the middle and upper class knowledge at an early age, they were able to gain that knowledge through schooling, giving them a chance to move up in society. Bourdieu (1977) argued that students who know how to behave, dress, talk, etc. were rewarded by schools who then inherently reproduced inequalities. Khan (2012) showed this through an example of a girl named Carla at St. Paul's school; she explained how she did not start doing well in school until she learned how to write her essays the way that St.

Paul wanted her to write. Carla complained to Khan letting him know that her essays did not become any better, she just learned, "how to talk like [they] wanted [her] to talk [and] how to write how [they] wanted [her] to write…" (Khan, 2012). In other words, Carla was trying to show that she believed her old essays were just as good as the new ones and that her intelligence did not change during the course of this time. The only thing that had changed was that she learned how to explain something in a different way that was then valued by her school and teachers. Examples like these show how schools reward the knowledge that they find valuable, which creates a disadvantage for marginalized students. Here Bourdieu (1977) argued that the responsibility to fix the social inequalities underrepresented students face should fall on the institutions themselves and not on the people who occupy them.

Although Bourdieu used his theory to criticize the reproduction of the middle and upper class hierarchy, it presents capital as something students either have or do not have. Some education scholars began to interpret his work as underrepresented students having a lack of capital and that the lack of capital had to be fixed (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Yosso & Burciaga, 2016). Issues arise from this because research finds that students who do not do well in school are lacking that capital, seeing them as deficient. Ovink & Veazey (2011) found that a program meant to help students of color in school was built around addressing the students "lack of middle and professional-class social and cultural capital." Valenzuela (1999) also explained how schools will use this type of deficit thinking to create ways in which to help these students "lacking" in knowledge, social skills, and cultural capital. In other words, in order to advance in society, you need to acquire the skills and knowledge valued by society. This ignores the fact that other forms of social and cultural capital exist. By ignoring these other forms of capital, we contribute to the deficit thinking towards communities of color.

Ochoa (2013) explained how there is always talk about "low achieving" and "high achieving" students and that the gap between those students must close. She went on to say that part of this "gap" had to do with the "tracking" of students—separating students on the basis of perceived ability for differential instruction. The tracking of students limits the social capital that the Latine students are able to attain in school (Ochoa, 2013). Not only are Latine students seen as lacking capital, but are also deprived of White middle class capital that is valued in society. This is shown because Ochoa (2013) argued that the Latine students in her study are placed into the low track at a higher rate than their White and Asian counterparts. An example of how Latine students are deprived of the capital they need was shown when Ochoa (2013) explained how the Latine students in the low track did not get to see the counselor as often as students who were placed into the high tracks. By being placed into the low track, the Latine students lost out on the resource of seeing a counselor at the same rate as those placed into the high track. I argue that it is important to take into account other forms of capital, in order to expand the way we see communities of color and to incorporate them into institutions in a more equitable way.

Other Forms of Capital:

Carter (2005) argued that cultural capital is a lot more complex because what is knowledgeable and valuable in one setting can completely be irrelevant in another setting. Hence, teachers and schools need to acknowledge the forms of capital that communities of color already possess. While Latine and black students may understand that Standard English will help them in school, they may not believe that keeping their own language or speech style will hinder their success (Carter, 2005). Yosso (2005) also named Cultural Community Wealth as a form of capital. She named the CCW framework as different forms of capital because she wanted to draw a connection to Bourdieu and the deficit lens that others have taken on his research (Yosso,

2005). Yosso also drew her six forms of capital by drawing from other scholars that help make up the CCW framework. She took from the Funds of Knowledge that were defined as the, "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll & González, 1994, p. 443). Another author Yosso drew from in order to create her CCW framework was that of Delgado Bernal. Delgado Bernal's (2001) idea of pedagogies of the home refers to learning strategies of resistance by the "practices and learning that occur in the home and community" (Delgado Bernal, 2001). Delgado showed that the learning that occurs in these students' homes and communities are then used to navigate their way through educational obstacles they face. Basically, pedagogies of the home served as cultural knowledge that helped the Chicana students in Delgado Bernal's study to survive in college. These forms of capital aim to show the strengths that communities of color possess. In this case, the authors are highlighting that students of color are not lacking in capital— instead they emphasize that social structures do not recognize their forms of capital. But when these students' own capital is ignored within schools, it causes them to feel as if they are not valued.

Colina Neri and others (2021) argued that Yosso and other forms of capital that are named are focused on the way that capital has a use value, versus an exchange value. The use value is different from an exchange value because "use value" refers to *how* the capital was being used. On the other hand they say that Bourdieu talked about capital in the sense that it is a type of "exchange value" that could help students acquire additional worth (Colina Neri et al., 2021). It derives additional worth because there are only a few people who possess it, but many people who value it. Colina Neri and colleagues (2021) concluded saying the strengths and assets communities of color possessed, did not become capital fully until they, "confer powerfully

accumulated status that can be further invested to accumulate yet more capitalizing power." The fact that CCW and other forms of capital are not yet recognized in schools causes them to not have the power to reinforce the inequalities that Bourdieu mentioned. Instead, CCW and other forms of capital that are not valued are named in order to empower students to use their forms of capital within educational spaces. It also aimed to call attention to the inequalities that the social structures reproduce and by calling attention to them, institutions can change to become more fair and inclusive.

In order to help black (and Latine) students gain identities of being intellectuals and achievers, schools needed to recognize the biculturality of these students and to see their culture as complimentary, not oppositional to the dominant culture (Steele, 2004). By not only acknowledging, but incorporating the social and cultural capital of students of color, it will produce a more supportive community where all students will have a safe space to be themselves and learn. By specifically looking at the theory of CCW within community college spaces, we can gain a better understanding of the social and cultural capital first-generation Latine students bring with them to school. This will allow us to implement better resources within community colleges, to help close the gap of Latine students transferring and attaining degrees from a four-year university.

Theoretical Framework

What is community cultural wealth?

Yosso (2005) names six forms of capital that make up the framework of CCW called: Resistant, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and aspirational capital. Below I will name each capital and the ways it is used by students of color:

Resistant: Resistant capital was named as students having the knowledge or skill to oppose and challenge social inequalities they faced. These students began to form cultural knowledge of the racism, dsicrimination, and challenges they and others face in order to resist and question the status quo.

Navigational: Navigational capital relied on students' agency within institutions when facing constraints. These experiences helped them gain skills to navigate through social institutions that were not created with communities of color in mind. This can also refer to places that can help students navigate these spaces. Some examples can be found within educational spaces that provide resources such as: a transfer student center, the financial aid office, and/or a cultural resource center.

Social: Social capital referred to the social networks of people and community resources these students had available to them. These social networks were made up of friends, resources on campus, organizations, and provide both instrumental and emotional support.

Linguistic: Linguistic capital was attained through different forms of communication. These forms of communication alluded to speaking, asking questions, storytelling (*cuentos*), art, poetry, teaching, translation, and much more.

Familial: Familial capital was gained through one's community or family ties. Familial capital refers to not only family but relationships students built within religious, school, sports, and other social organizations. These ties taught students cultural knowledge that helped them gain a commitment to their community and helped them realize that they were not alone.

Aspirational: Lastly, Aspirational capital is the ability to hold on to one's hopes and dreams, despite facing barriers. It also touches on the point that Latine parents hold high aspirations for

their kids in order to break the link between their occupational status and the educational attainment of their children.

Yosso (2005) also explained that all forms of capital are not mutually exclusive because they inform one another and can be used at the same time. In other words, each of the six forms of capital is fluid in the sense that it can influence one or more of the CCW forms of capital named.

How the framework was used:

This study asked the following questions: How do first-generation Latine students use their cultural wealth in community college spaces, how is their cultural wealth used to transfer out of community college, and what other forms of cultural wealth are being used by Latine students in two-year universities and once they transfer out? Both the first and second questions within this study asked how the demographic of the participants in the study are using CCW in their community colleges and to transfer to a four-year university. These questions were answered by laying out Yosso's six forms of capital (resistant, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and aspirational capital) as six of the main themes while coding the semi-structured interviews conducted. While coding each interview, the six main themes were coded at each point that one of the students mentioned one of the forms of capital being used throughout their experiences. These codes were later on used to show how the Latine transfer students used the six forms of capital named by Yosso with the new form of capital found within the experiences of participants in the study. Naming all six forms of capital within the transcripts gave us a better idea of how Yosso's framework was used within educational spaces in order to create supportive and safe spaces within community colleges in the future.

The third question asked what other forms of capital, if any, were being used by the Latine participants in the study that Yosso did not mention. While coding the transcripts, a new form of capital that could help inform CCW emerged. This new form of capital is named adaptive capital. Yosso's theoretical framework was used to show how adaptive capital fits with the capital she names as resistant, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and aspirational capital. Just as Yosso mentioned, all of the forms of capital within the CCW framework help inform one another. Since this is the case for all six forms of capital, adaptive capital would have to do the same in order to fit into the framework Yosso identifies. Due to this, adaptive capital could not act alone in its examples. Once adaptive capital was named, Yosso's six forms of capital were shown throughout the adaptive capital examples being used by the first-generation Latine community college students. Incorporating Yosso's framework into the adaptive capital examples, reinforced adaptive capital as an addition to CCW and that the capitals in community cultural wealth were not mutually exclusive.

Methods

My sample included 16 participants all of which are first-generation Latine students who are currently or have attended community college in the past. Of these 16 participants between the ages of 20-28, eight are males and eight are females. Four of the students are currently in community college, seven have transferred and are currently at a four-year university, and five are alumni who have graduated with a bachelor degree after attending and transferring out of community college. Participants did not need to be immigrants or undocumented but four of the 16 shared this background. All participants are located in California and have attended community college and transferred to four-year universities or are currently in community college in both Northern and Southern California. The names of the participants have been

replaced with pseudonyms and the names of community colleges and universities have been named randomly to keep anonymity.

The participants were selected through the method of snowball sampling. By using this method to get most of my interviewees, I reached out to old professors, organizations, and programs on campuses. Some of these programs include the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), transfer student center, Latine centered clubs and/or organizations, and PUENTE (which means "bridge" in Spanish)—a program designed to help students attend a four-year university. Some of the interviewees themselves also referred some people in their own networks that fit the criteria.

Using semi-structured interviews, I asked the participants about their high school experiences, their college aspirations, how they ended up in community college, their experiences in community college, and what their transfer experience was like.

Although using these semi-structured interviews provide valuable information on students' experiences, the study is small so it is not entirely generalizable. There is also the risk that interpretation of a participant's words can be misunderstood since the data is coded subjectively. In order to mitigate this I made sure to follow up with participants to reduce the room for misinterpretation when it came to coding.

Findings

Adaptive Capital

Through the use of CCW to analyze the gathered data, I found that many of the interviewed Latine community college students had one or more of the six forms of cultural wealth. The first-generation Latine students used all forms of capital—although some were used more than others throughout their education journey. Coding the interviews, I found that these

were the forms of cultural wealth that were used from most to least: resistance capital, navigational capital, social capital, familial capital, aspirational capital, and linguistic capital. Although these forms of capital were all very important to these students' lives and educational journeys—the interviews conducted demonstrated that there was an additional different form of capital being used by all of the students. This new form of capital is one that can be added to Yosso's framework of cultural wealth to give us a better understanding of how Latine students navigate higher education, and will be the main focus of my findings.

I define this new form of capital as adaptive capital. Adaptive capital is the ability to adapt to different environments, institutions, and spaces that marginalized folx encounter in their everyday lives. Adaptive capital has a few components that make it different from just being able to adapt to a new environment as well as the other forms of capital that Yosso already lays out. The first component of adaptive capital is that forms of oppression must first be recognized by students of color. Students must be able to recognize forms of oppression such as systemic barriers, forms of discrimination, or white ethnocentric norms of society. The second component is that students adapt to the environment they are in by following the unwritten rules and norms of this institution. As a result they are able to navigate these spaces much more effortlessly. The first component to adaptive capital is important because as students adapt to their environments, they recognize that their forms of capital and culture are not being valued in those spaces. While some recognize it, others even call it out. They help shine light on the fact that their way of living life is not always valued in schools. Navigational capital and adaptive capital may seem similar because navigational capital refers to students' skills in navigating through different social institutions. Although some would argue that adaptive capital should fall under navigational capital, instead of being its own form of capital, I argue otherwise. Adaptive capital

is not like navigational capital because students must first recognize their experiences and other forms of cultural wealth that are not recognized in schools. This is why the first component of adaptive capital is so important and what makes it stand apart from just navigating a new space. These students call out what Khan calls "bullshit" and then adapt to the space they are in. By adapting to those spaces and understanding the "bullshit," only then do students learn how to navigate the environment they are in. As shown earlier, Carla portrayed this perfectly in Khan's example when she complained about not being able to receive good grades on her essays until she learned how to write how the school wanted her to write (Khan, 2012). Carla made sure to point out that her essays beforehand were still very well written, she said that she never became smarter, she just learned how to write in a different way (Khan, 2012). In this case, adapting does not mean to adapt to an environment and see it as the legitimate way of being. Instead students understand that it is a system with unwritten rules, which they learn to adapt to in order to succeed and stay resilient.

As all other forms of cultural wealth, adaptive capital is not mutually exclusive—instead it is interconnected and informs all other forms of capital. For example, linguistic capital is tied in with adaptive capital when students recognize that their native tongue is not recognized in school, so they adapt to the school norms in order to look smarter or more capable. They can also use forms of social and navigational capital in order to adjust seamlessly.

In the following analysis I will explain six different ways in which adaptive capital was used by first-generation Latine community college students during their time in community college and throughout some of their transfer experiences. The six sections are made up of students': 1. Transfer Experience, 2. Linguistic Experience, 3. Immigration Status, 4. Identity Formation, as well as 5. How Class plays a Role, and 6. COVID-19 Effects. Throughout all of

these sections, I will lay out how adaptive capital is used and also how it intersects with Yosso's framework of community cultural wealth.

I. Transfer Experience

All of the students interviewed were either in their last year and transferring out of community college, already attending a four-year university, or had graduated with a bachelor's degree. The students who had already transferred were asked about their experience and a lot of them noticed that they struggled in one way or another after leaving their community colleges. One of the ways they got past these struggles and obstacles was by using their adaptive capital at their new universities. Ingrid says:

> I noticed that for other people it wasn't bad, so that frustrated me. I hated it, being lost, not knowing and not feeling part of it, when for other people it was so easy, so natural, and effortless. (Ingrid, Pos. 54)

Ingrid first recognizes that she is lost in navigating the system of higher education. She becomes frustrated by this because she realizes that other students are not struggling in the ways she is. As an immigrant, transfer student, and an English language learner (ELL), Ingrid did not have an easy transfer experience. Her life experiences made her realize that she was not like other students who the educational system was built for. When asked how she dealt with this, Ingrid explains:

> Honestly, the first couple weeks I was just going with the flow. I'm super lost here, I don't know what's going on, but I'm just like, "I cannot be so behind 'cause then I will not be able to catch up." I felt so behind, so I was trying to navigate and "fake it till you make it" the first couple of weeks, maybe the first month. Then from there, you naturally start to get the hang of it. (Ingrid, Pos. 58)

In order to ease the feeling of being lost, she mentions having to fake it till she made it, which shows that she was having to adapt to the environment she was in when needed. By "faking it," Ingrid is highlighting how her way of being is not the norm of how the system works at her university. She is irritated with the fact that who she is, is not considered the right way of being. After adapting, in those specific spaces, she was able to gain an understanding of how the system actually worked. Ingrid then goes on to explain how:

> I always need to try to do the best that I can, knowing that I'm always going to be a step behind because of a lot of reasons… and not letting that affect what I can achieve. I can always do better, although I might have to work twice as hard or just a tiny bit more. Not letting that pull me back. Also making peace with English being my second language, messing up once in a while, or often, but just knowing that I'm always improving although other people cannot see that. (Ingrid, Pos. 66)

Although Ingrid is frustrated that her lived experiences, such as being an ELL student, are not being recognized at her school, she both adapts and uses other forms of capital in order to succeed. Ingrid adapts to her environment by criticizing her school's curriculum which focuses on learning English but fails to incorporate her Spanish speaking. She is highly aware that her challenges are a result of her being different from this predetermined mold, and because of this decides to fake it till she makes it. Ingrid also uses her aspirational capital to maintain her hopes and dreams, despite the barriers she is facing through her transfer experience. Adaptive and aspirational capital are both interconnected here as she realizes that the barriers she faces are because she is different, yet continues to hold her aspirations close to her heart, not letting this be a limitation in what she can achieve. She makes sure that she will be able to accomplish her goals and dreams of the future by adapting and calling out the hidden curriculum of the school.

Another current transfer student, Isabella, talks to me about her transfer experience. She tells me how the process has been difficult because universities tend to not keep transfer students in mind. She goes on to say:

> I do know a lot of my colleagues did find it impactful. The fact that sometimes you're behind in the prerequisites that specific college says. I know a lot of people who suffered/who struggled. There were a lot of people who didn't really have the support programs, or maybe they just didn't have time or whatever to really look into specific prerequisites for each school. Even then here [at my four-year] I still have a whole semester where the undergraduate prerequisites I couldn't have done even if I was over [at the community college], so I think there is that. (Isabella, Interview, p. 4)

Isabella makes sure to point out that as transfer students, they have to put in extra work in order to get all of their prerequisites done both at the community college they attend and after they transfer. Isabella recognizes that four-year universities, as institutions, are built for students who are incoming freshmen and not necessarily built for transfer students coming in as "juniors." She helps raise the question of whether school is actually easily accessible for everyone. Is the school system built for first-generation Latine students in the first place? As Isabella points out, it may not be built to cater to that demographic of students. Early on in the interview Isabella described her community as, "segregated, 'cause it's a very predominantly Hispanic community and migrant community. It has an agricultural economy that is really dominant there." What she was hinting at is that her community is made up of a lot of agricultural workers and not many of them go into higher education. Later in the interview she said that she had to "ground" herself once she got to college. Having to ground herself was her way of adapting to the university, the people

in it, and their views on what “normal” life looks like. Looking back at her community, she soon realized that:

> It gets difficult once you get here and you realize for other people that's not the situation, for other people they were raised to do that, they have college funds. I thought, “Mom, how much do you have saved up for my college?” she’s like, “what are you talking about,” you know? So it’s stuff like that that kinda makes you just ground yourself. That helped me kind of learn it's not gonna be easy but it's gonna be worth it. (Isabella, Interview, p. 9).

When Isabella found out her mother did not have that money saved up for her education, she saw once again through the facade of what “normal” life looks like for a lot of people. Since her and her community's experiences are very different from what is considered the norm, Isabella was able to call attention to the fact that not everyone gets to college with the same means. By grounding herself, Isabella finds a way to adapt to this new environment of thinking that is not her way of thinking. By adapting she is not accepting this new way of thinking, instead she adapts and uses her familial capital and navigational capital to go through this new environment. Her family and community left her with experiences that she draws on throughout her transfer experience.

Overall, both Isabella and Ingrid have to deal with the contradiction that they have made it into a four-year university, yet their experiences are not being valued within those spaces. This contradiction allows them to call out social inequalities in their schools and then draw on their adaptive capital to work the system.

II. Linguistic Experience

Another major theme that came out of adaptive capital was being able to adapt in spaces when it came to balancing their native language (Spanish), with learning and speaking English in school settings. This balancing also came with an inner battle within themselves. The Latine students came to realize that the use of Spanish in one setting could be considered a skill, when in other settings it was looked down upon. Jose is a perfect example of this when he tells me:

> Well I could definitely say in high school and a bit of a community college the importance of being bilingual was not that significant. I guess just super recently is when it became a thing to be bilingual, listen to Spanish music, listen to Mexican/Latinx culture, things like that. It wasn't until recently that it became a trend, that it became a thing, maybe because of social media. I guess that's one of the emphases that I tell people who are mentoring people from the same background going into college, that you gotta stick with that. Yeah it's ok to change, to develop your thinking, your major, your ideas… but always be proud of your roots, be proud of where you come from (Jose Interview, p. 6)

Jose moved to the US at an early age and was an English Language Learner (ELL) growing up. After going through many years of schooling, he started to realize that being bilingual in school is not necessarily a skill, but more of a hindrance. He mentions that being bilingual is not very significant in classroom settings, but when it comes to being trendy or in social settings, listening to music in Spanish is considered cool. When Jose recognizes this, he is pointing towards the injustice that being able to speak Spanish in one setting can make him be an outsider, while in another setting it would make him valuable. This makes him an outsider within educational spaces because the English language skills he does have are not considered satisfactory in the classroom. Knowing this, Jose adapts to the school setting by working very hard in his English

classes in order to excel. Although he knew that speaking Spanish is still a valuable skill, Jose would adapt to his school's values by adapting and learning to speak/write English in the manner that the school considered proper. In fact, Jose says:

> I definitely improved my English, my writing. I'll tell you Denisse I'll be honest with you… besides hating writing before, I think I developed… not a love of writing but I understood the mental idea that it's important. (Jose Interview, p. 5)

Jose knew that if he was going to excel in school and in society at large, he would have to become a better writer in English. What is interesting here is that Jose does not want to become a better writer because he found a love for it, instead he decides to adapt in those spaces because of the "mental idea" that it is important. By referring to the "mental idea" that writing is important, Jose is alluding to the fact that schools value writing and the way that someone writes. He is suggesting that the mental idea can be changed and that writing may only be considered important because of the way that educational spaces are set up in this time and place. Here Jose is showing that the values of society are not the way that life actually is, but that they are just constructed rules to be followed.

Isabella provides another example showing how English being valued in schools is not the law of the land, but something contingent. Isabella tells me how growing up speaking Spanish she learned a few different skills that she feels are not recognized in school:

> I would say maybe it's those skills you learn growing up. Just being I would say a more diplomatic person because I had to be a mediator for my family as the person who spoke English and Spanish. Just being bilingual that's a skill that I already have that isn't necessarily something that's super impressive once you translate… so it's not necessarily something that's appreciated, but it is something that gives me an advantage. I feel it is a

> skill and yeah, recently I had a work experience where they didn't have interpreters, so I was there to interpret. I said, "I need dinner or something 'cause this isn't free, this is a skill." That's definitely something I brought with me, not only the bilingualism, but that ability to interpret or mediate. (Isabella Interview, p. 6)

Isabella grew up knowing that being able to speak Spanish and English is a skill, but that the skills she learned from being able to do both are not being valued in schools. Isabella becomes annoyed at the fact that she helps the school out by translating, but that they do not value it as much as her parents and community have in the past. She wants to show that translating is not a "free skill" and that she should be compensated for it. Since English by many in the United States is seen as the language that should be spoken, her bilingualism did not seem to be a valuable enough skill to be compensated for. Knowing this, Isabella adapts to her school's values by learning to change the way she writes:

> …during my Community College time, I worked as a journalist in my community. I was already a very strong writer, so I feel going through that experience and the whole experience of writing your personal insight questions, scholarships, essays… my writing just became… I'm not sure. I would say that writing is one of the big skills that I really took out of the whole process—just learning to be a better persuasive writer or even just in the way that I write, what language I should use, being precise. (Isabella Interview, p. 6)

At first Isabella is not able to pinpoint what exactly about her writing has changed. She was certain that she was a strong writer before adapting to the way that schools want her to write. Once she began adapting to this form of writing and explaining it further, she was able to

pinpoint that she had to learn exactly what type of language to use that then allowed her to seem as if she were a much stronger writer than when she started off.

Both Jose and Isabella know that to adapt to the form of writing and language that is valued in schools, means that they are only going through the motions. But adapting to the norm the school creates does not mean that they are accepting those norms as the rules of life. Both examples show a huge pull from their resistant capital to show that their way is also the right way. Jose says that they need to be proud of their roots and to never forget where they come from because their lived experiences are just as important. Isabella also shows a form of resistant capital as she argues that being bilingual is a skill that should be more important in school contexts. Overall, even as both Isabella and Jose adapt to what is expected of them at their schools, they both show that they are not willing to give up their identities and the skills that come with that from beforehand.

III. Immigration Status

Many of the interviews also mention their own or their parents immigration status within the United States and what impact their status has on their educational journey. Many of these students learn as they go as they must navigate their way through community college, transferring, four-year universities, and any hurdle their legal status may bring. Since some particular students' legal status, due to being immigrants, prohibits them from being able to take advantage of resources provided for first-generation Latine students, they realize that they have to find other forms of support. Luz is one of these students and very early on realizes that her legal status would force her to work twice as hard as other students and would face many struggles that other students will not have to encounter. Luz tells me:

> I think about my DACA experience, I often don't share that but also people don't really ask for that and I think that's something that is important to the identity of myself because there are limitations to being a DACA student. In terms of financial aid, I don't qualify for FAFSA. I can't study abroad, unless I apply for advanced parole—but then there's legal limitations which is like finding an attorney to fill out that application and making sure all your documents are in place. Meaning you have to have a renewed passport and if you don't, you have to pay for that. So there's a lot even though it's just a status, there's a story behind that and statistically I'm not supposed to be where I'm at due to my DACA status or unlawful status.

As the first component of adaptive capital lays out, Luz first recognizes that her experiences are not being valued in schools. She calls out how students who are a part of DACA do not qualify for financial aid, how they cannot study abroad, and many other struggles students like her go through in educational spaces. With education becoming increasingly more expensive, it makes it that much harder for DACA students to attend school in the first place. After Luz recognizes that her experiences are not acknowledged in school, she starts to adapt to the school system and what it values in order to play the game. Playing the game does not mean that she lets go of who she is. Instead, she embraces who she is even more, all while adapting to what society deems as important. Luz recognizes that people in the workforce appreciate people who have studied abroad or have gotten internships in school spaces. Since this is a hard reality for her, she adapted in the way she could in order to get those same experiences as her peers. Luz says:

> On top of my counselors and the resources that Carrington College provided me, I learned about the [University of California Washington Center] UCDC which is a program in the UC system where students throughout the academic school year can go to

> Washington DC, have an internship, and have classes. Merryl did that, and I was amazed by that opportunity because I couldn't study abroad due to my legal status. So I thought, if I go to a UC and apply to the UCDC program it would be the closest thing that I can get to studying abroad (Luz Interview.docx, p. 2)

Luz adapts to the system by knowing that these opportunities are important both in and outside of school. By adapting to this form of thinking and knowing she needed to gain these opportunities, she starts to use her social and navigational capital to help her adapt further. Her friend Merryl is a social tie outside of school that gives her the information about the UCDC program and that also provides emotional support to help her keep going in school. She also uses her own agency to navigate and find new resources to adapt to the new spaces she will find herself to be in. Luz decides to find ways to gain the same opportunities as her friends by getting internships and other opportunities within the United States. The most important thing she takes away from this is that she never fully accepts the university's view of what life is as her own. Even after adapting, she still holds on to who she is, her experiences, and taking it with her into the future. She did all of this by also using her resistance capital. An explicit example of this is when she tells me:

> I think I'm making the best of it and actually this time around I plan to go to grad school and share that experience and find places that value that experience that I have, so yeah that's something that I'll look for when applying to grad school. (Luz Interview.docx, p.5)

Luz is not the only one who has to deal with her immigration status within schools. Although there are other students who deal with this personally on account of their own immigration status, many other students also struggle with this because of their parents'

immigration status. Adela goes through this when filling out her FAFSA application when first attending her community college. Adela recounts an anecdote explaining:

> Oh my gosh so now that we're talking about FAFSA, when I actually applied to Hillsborough they were like, "Oh you have to do this application" and I had no idea how to do it. My parents don't have a Social Security number and part of creating an account your parents have to create like a parent key code and I was not able to because of my parents. I remember I had to drive all the way up to Hillsborough, while I was still a senior in high school and I went to the financial aid window at Hillsborough and the assistant there helped me.

The FAFSA application is not user friendly when it comes to families who are undocumented. Adela encounters this and is quickly able to realize that FAFSA does not take into account the immigration status of her family and how that impacts her when filling out the application. As a first-generation student, she does not know how to fill out this application by herself so she decides to drive down to her community college where she is able to receive help. By using her navigational capital she took upon her own agency in order to find a way to navigate the system she would soon be a part of. Adela also uses her adaptive capital by first recognizing that her family's experiences are not really recognized within schools or their system. She even calls out the system as a whole for students who are undocumented themselves and mentions:

> Also financially I know some people... I'm not really sure on this but for undocumented students I don't think they're eligible for FAFSA, so their experiences are different than, you know, someone that is a citizen or someone that's a permanent resident. That will change a lot and so I'm very grateful that I have FAFSA (Adela Interview, Pos. 52)

After having her own experience with FAFSA, Adela is able to take into consideration other realities in the world aside from the realities that are set into place. In this case, the world view is that students are those who are citizens and that schools are not built for students who are undocumented. She adapts to the realities that universities set into place, but she still calls them out as not being the way the world actually is and that there are other realities out there. Even after using her navigational and adaptive capital, Adela also shows her aspirational capital when she says:

> It was a really stressful process and I think if I would have not been motivated at all to start college, I think I would have just said, "Oh I'm not doing college," because of that application. (Adela Interview, Pos. 54)

She draws on her aspirational capital in order to maintain her motivation and dreams of going to college even when facing these barriers with FAFSA. By using her three forms of capital, she is able to get through the process of filling out her FAFSA application and maintaining her (and others) experiences alive.

IV. Identity: Way of Dressing

Identity formation, specifically when it comes to the way someone presents themselves in the way they dress, is another major theme throughout the interviews. The way someone dresses is an important symbol for the type of person they are and how people want to express themselves. Some forms of dressing are deemed as more appropriate than others, especially depending on the space someone is in. The first-generation Latine community college students are able to recognize that their forms of dressing do not always coincide with what schools see as professional, acceptable, or cool. As they start to notice these patterns, they begin to adapt to

their schooling spaces. Armando is one of these students and stated this perfectly when he explains:

> I always knew I wanted to go to college, I always knew, ever since I was a little kid. I got student of the month in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, maybe 4-5 times in a row. I want to go to college it's just the teachers growing up would always tell me, "Nah you're gonna be fucking dead or you're gonna be locked up." Just because of the way I dress or the way I acted and they were always against my personality and who I was. They probably had other students that had been through there that looked like me; bald head, khaki shorts, the same story. I feel like because of that, I was stereotyped and put in this category where I was destined to fail. (Armando Interview, p. 9)

Armando's form of dressing as he got older makes teachers and school staff perceive him as a "bad kid." He counters this by showing his aspirational capital and showing that he has always aspired to go to college, even while his teachers do not believe in him and what he is capable of. Once Armando reached community college he begins due to being the president of the Accounting Club. Armando emphasizes how:

> I did change my way of dressing when I became president of the Accounting Club. My dressing style change up had to do a lot with the president before me. He was always suited and booted. I remember going to Ross and buying my first tie after seeing the way he dressed and presented himself.

After attending community college he begins to adapt to the "suited and booted" form of dressing depending on the space he is in. He begins to use his adaptive capital in order to adapt to what schools and society deem as respectable. By recognizing the way in which the former president dresses and "presents himself," Armando then dresses differently when he got assumed

the same position. This helps him present himself, just as the former president did before him, as someone who is professional and in a position of power. Once in community college he starts to find professors who believe in him, which allow him to trust teachers/professors who see him differently. Even while adapting to a “more appropriate” form of dressing, Armando knows that having a bald head and khaki shorts did not actually make him a “bad kid.” He criticizes the actions and thoughts of his childhood teachers for stereotyping him into a specific category of someone who will fail, even when he himself knows the aspirations he has. Armando adapting to the “suited and booted” form of dressing is not him recognizing this as a better form of dressing because he still stays true to his reality and who he is. Armando goes on to say:

> Honestly, I just dress how I feel. Like yesterday I had some slacks and a button up but today I’m wearing a muscle shirt, shorts, and long white socks. Yesterday I had important meetings to attend and today I’m just chilling, so I think it has to do with what I’m doing and how I feel. But I do still dress like I’m up to no good. I just recently shaved my head also, so it makes me look even more like a gangster.

This is a perfect example of how Armando learns to adapt to society's visions of what is an acceptable form of dressing, all while not forsaking who he is and where he comes from. This opens up the reality that dressing in khakis, long white socks, a muscle tee, and having a bald head does not mean that you are a “gangster.” It only means that you are perceived as one.

This next example is from Karel who experienced people dressing differently once he transferred out of his hometown's community college into a four-year university. Although Karel experiences something different in regards to the way he dresses, he still had to adapt to a new form of dressing after transferring. Karel explains:

> Yeah, so I mean I guess I kind of felt lost at the beginning. It was completely different from Ava Springs. In Ava Springs I'd walk around in normal clothes—like shorts and a shirt, and over here everyone dressed so nice. I was out here with basic clothes and I feel like that was kind of intimidating or nerve wracking for me. I was like, "Damn, I have to find out how to dress better." That was something that made me feel like I didn't fit in in the beginning.

As a transfer Karel notices that people dress very differently from what he considers his "normal." He told himself that he would have to start dressing better because that is what would allow him to fit in. Karel experiences a different form of learning because although he has not been excluded from school as someone who would fail, socially he was not having an easy time making friends at school. This deprives him of a lot of social capital he could have had within the first few quarters he attended school. After noticing that there is a specific way to dress in order to fit into the context of that university, he begins to adapt to this new form of dressing. Once he begins to dress differently, he has an easier time making friends and navigating through his new school. Karel says:

> My first year here, I was still a little awkward, that made it kind of difficult to meet people. I feel I definitely now fit in, and it's a lot easier to talk with people; but it was definitely difficult the first quarter. There's a lot of things you have to get used to. (Karel Interview, p. 5)

By drawing on his adaptive capital, Karel is able to find a way to talk to people in an easier way, even if it is difficult having to change himself. The reason this was not so easy for him was because he noticed that dressing in a "better" way is not the only way to dress. Going back to what Karel said earlier, the way that he dresses is what he considers normal, while the way that

everyone else dresses at the university is different. Here he calls out the school's norms for not being the rules of society, but as only one way that society can work making it another perfect example of how adaptive capital can work.

V. How Class Plays a Role

The fifth major theme that came out of adaptive capital was the way students had to adapt to new environments when it came to their socioeconomic status or class. Many of the Latine students who were interviewed had a lot of responsibilities to attend to whether it was in their home or at the workplace. The students talk about their experiences having to deal with the stressors of school and the stressors from having to work in order to pay for school. There are also many circumstances where these students feel as if they have to grow up quickly because they are the oldest in their family and must help raise their siblings. For example, Alberto talks about how he has a job to make money, has to go to school for his education, and then also has obligations at home:

> I guess being a versatile student and to explain that like I was mentioning it right now: working throughout school, being part of clubs, and also having chores. I think that's a big part that I should have probably emphasized more. Just taking on different responsibilities that I don't really see as something major just because of the circumstances that I'm in right now is something that I have acquired I would say. I have been in moments where I kind of see it but it's just so brief that I kind of disregarded it.

Alberto mentions how all of these responsibilities in and outside of school are not "emphasized more." When he says this, he is calling attention to the fact that having a job outside of school and taking on chores at home is not something that schools or society really take notice of. He goes on by explaining:

> For example, when I tell my friends that I have things to do. I do this every day before I go to school and every day when I'm at home: I do chores (sweeping the house and mopping, feeding my dogs, or pets, the birds, taking my sisters to school) and also working, being in clubs, and then school. I currently see that as the norm and when I talk about it with different people, they might do similar stuff but not to the full extent. (Alberto Interview, p. 6)

When it comes to school, many people view going to school and doing homework as the only responsibility students have. This view of students in school is inaccurate. This is especially true for students who need to work to pay their way through school or to help their parents out at home. As Alberto indicates, many of his friends do not understand his lived experiences and all of the responsibilities that fall on him outside of school. With this he opens up the conversation to show that many students are not only students, but also employees, and someone who helps run the household. Many schools tend to ignore these experiences and expect students to focus on school and get good grades in their classes because that is what makes a good student. Alberto knows that this is one of the unspoken narratives of what it means to be a good student—so he adapts to it. Even with all of the other responsibilities he has, he continues to push through in order to maintain his GPA to transfer. Here he also draws on his aspirational capital by maintaining his hopes and dreams by working hard, even in the face of the barriers he encounters. Alberto knows that GPA is important because of the way school is organized and plays by its rules, yet he does not make that organization legitimate in his life:

> These ideas ingrained from high school that you need to have a high GPA in order to succeed draw away from reality. You have to also consider your personal life and also take time for yourself, but also do meaningful stuff with your time. At the end of the day

> we're all still human and no one is perfect and it's extremely hard to be perfect (Alberto Interview, p. 9)

Although Alberto understands that his community college and the universities he wants to transfer to value high GPAs, he also questions the legitimacy of this viewpoint. He helps raise the question of whether judging students on their merit (based on a students GPA) is actually a fair way to decide whether someone gets into a college or not. Due to this, Alberto encompasses his adaptive capital all while using his resistant capital to put into question the meritocratic system that educational systems value so highly. Even while going through hardships, Alberto also mentions all of the good and the help that he receives from his family. This is shown when he mentions his familial capital and the support he receives from his family both emotionally and instrumentally as well. Alberto says that he is thankful for his family because they provide him with, "a place to live and eat…. [and by] providing [him] with different tools, such as the ones [he] mentioned above, [gives him] the opportunity and allows [him] not to stress about uncertainty" (Ivan Interview, p. 5).

Another example of adaptive capital being used, in terms of class, is with another student named Armando. Armando talks about the way he needs to choose between going to work in order to pay his bills or whether to skip work in order to be able to study for his classes.

> Definitely time management. You need to be really good at what you're spending your time in, what you prioritize. It's either like I need to pay bills or I need to go to class and I paid this last month so I could afford missing a day or two from work so I could study for my final. Different scenarios like start taking sandwiches to go. So definitely time management and preparing 'cause like since I didn't have transportation and I was always on my bike. If I left something at home… that's a whole hour (30 minutes going, 30

> minutes coming) and a whole workout. I couldn't forget anything, I had to make sure I had everything. (Armando Interview, p. 6)

Armando's life in his educational journey is based on these daily decisions and choices. Even when wanting to study for his classes or finals, he has other worries such as being able to pay the rent and bills at home. Just as Alberto understands the importance of having good grades in school, Armando also understands the importance of his other responsibilities. Which is why he is willing to call in sick to work to make time for studying for his finals. Even when it comes to transportation, he has to adjust (or adapt) by preparing well in advance. He can not afford to forget anything because it will cause his whole schedule to become messed up. In these different ways Armando adapts to his bike transportation by preparing everything ahead of time and by trying to make time for both sets of responsibilities he has. Armando also draws on his navigational capital in order to navigate both his work spaces and his educational spaces. He leads with his agency and is able to highlight the ways in which educational systems are still unsupportive to students in many ways.

Both Alberto and Armando began to understand the way that the educational system works with grades and by being highly competitive. This causes both students to adapt to the reality of their situation because of their socioeconomic status and by working extra hard to get good grades. The experiences that Alberto and Armando have had has made them not buy into the belief that grades and GPA are a reflection of who you are as a student.

VI. COVID-19 Effects

One of the most recent ways to use adaptive capital came from COVID-19 and the start of the pandemic. The interviewees all had to face the unknown of the pandemic while applying to transfer, while trying to navigate through the institution of higher education, and while going

through the actual process of attending a new school as a transfer student. Although all students had to find ways to adapt to these new circumstances, it was apparent that their experiences are very different from others who are not first-generation, low-income, Latine community college students. Adrian had to face huge changes when the pandemic began due to everything going online:

> Just being in that learning environment in [University of California San Diego] UCSD and then transitioning back to home where I didn't have internet, I didn't even have a laptop like, "Oh crap, how I'm gonna do my studies?" So it was kind of weird, right? But then thankfully UCSD… I forgot what the department was called but it handled the [Electronic Benefits Transfer] EBT applications and the basic resources; I think it's called the Basic Resource Center at UCSD. They had said that, "we have 300 laptops to rent for free for students to use for the spring quarter." So I got one and then eventually they emailed us back saying that a private donor had donated money, so now we could keep the laptop; we didn't have to return them. I was super happy because I finally have a working laptop, right? It wasn't the best laptop, it was just a Chromebook, but that Chromebook served me so well. That Chromebook is a steamboat and it just did everything that I needed. Coming from nothing, to having that Chromebook was a freaking luxury.

While in school, Adrian was able to use his navigational capital to take advantage of the resources that he had on campus. These resources were having access to the internet, having school computers, and even having a quiet space to focus and study when he needed it. When the pandemic hit he lost all of the resources that were provided to him in that way. The pandemic hit and affected low-income communities of color the most. Adrian recognizes that this was the case

when he mentioned how he had to go back home where he did not have access to many of the things he had access to on his campus. In many cases, schools are not able to provide Chromebooks or other forms of resources for their students because those students who fall under the previously mentioned categories are not taken into consideration. Although Adrian was able to use his social and navigational capital to: 1. Find out about these resources and 2. To gain access to these resources, he still had to adapt to his home environment and learning within those spaces. Adrian mentions how he had to go from studying in a different environment every day to having to stare at the same wall once the pandemic hit:

> In terms of classes, it was alright. It wasn't too bad, but eventually it caught up to me where I just stayed home the whole day. You know, coming from the beautiful place of UCSD, being by the ocean, studying by the grass outside of the library or whatever… to going to a small apartment and just staring at the wall all day doing your work. It's like *big sigh,* but yeah. (Adrian Interview, Pos. 60)

Even after Adrian was able to gain access to WIFI and a Chromebook to get his schoolwork done, he still mentioned having to adapt to his new school environment while being at home. While Adrian had a small space at home to study, many other students had offices or other environments that they could study in at home. Despite the fact that Adrian appreciates everything that has been given to him, he still feels as though the pandemic really wore him down and eventually "caught up to [him]."

Another student, named Luna, also had to adapt to COVID-19 and the effects it has on her educational journey while transferring:

> I'm a fifth year student. This is my third year now at [University of California Davis] UCD. I transferred right before everything went remote, so I really only did six months at

> UCD before I had to move back in with my parents. It was just kind of weird because I spent the first fall quarter kind of just getting a feel for what the quarter system was like and then also I was trying to meet new people and build relationships with my professors. I think when winter quarter came around, I was finally starting to feel a little bit more comfortable and I knew where I needed to go if I needed resources. I was really close with my housemates ‘cause I got housing in the Chicanx living learning community. We were all transfer and Hispanic students, so it was really nice getting to do that. And then I would spend a lot of time at the transfer center and just meeting other transfer students and so it was a lot easier for sure than first going to [Chabot Community College] CCC, but it was still kind of weird.

The pandemic hit as soon as Luna transferred into her first year at her new university. Not only did Luna use her adaptive capital as she transferred into a new school, she also adapted to the new form of schooling that took place online once the pandemic began. Luna goes on to say that:

> Something that me and all my friends agreed on was that we don’t really feel welcomed because everyone that’s our age, they’ve been here for 2 years now and they’ve been able to establish those connections and then they're already so familiar with the area and UC system, whereas we’re just like, “what’s going on? We don’t know what to do.” So then spring quarter came and that was when everything went remote and I moved back in with my parents. If I had graduated on time last year I wouldn’t really have had a transfer experience or a school experience at all. So that’s why I decided to take some time off last year. I took off winter and spring quarter in 2021 and I just did a fifth year this year. (Luna Interview, Pos. 36)

Luna and her friends not only see the pattern that universities are not built for transfer students academically and socially, but it becomes even more apparent once she has to do school from home. It becomes apparent because she knows that she is being deprived of the experiences and resources that her transfer experience would give her. Some of these include being deprived of the social capital she built in her first six months of her transfer experience. This causes Luna to adapt once more by withdrawing from school for two quarters before she is able to go back in person. This allows her not only to have a transfer experience, but to take this past year of in-person classes to learn what schools see as the legitimate order of the way things should be.

Both Adrian and Luna both had to experience the lockdown of COVID-19 during their transfer experience. Although everyone was affected by the lockdown and having to go through school remotely, Adrian and Luna had specific experiences they had to adapt to as being first-generation Latine transfer students. Using their adaptive capital, they were able to adapt to the pandemic, all while shedding light on how the lockdown affected everyone differently.

Throughout the sixteen interviews conducted, many of the interviewees show examples of using their adaptive capital in their daily lives and while going through their transfer experience. They use their adaptive capital as a way to adapt to their new environments while in community college and while transferring, all while recognizing forms of oppression. Overall, they are able to use their adaptive capital in six different ways that include: their transfer experience, linguistic experience, immigration status, identity formation, how class plays a role, and COVID-19 effects.

Discussion

This study adds to the literature on trying to change the narrative of deficit thinking towards communities of color. By drawing on Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth framework, it

takes a strengths based approach to how these students can encounter obstacles in their educational journey and how they overcome them. Instead of pointing out what students of color lack, Yosso's framework identifies and puts a name to the assets these students bring with them to school. The study shows how Latine transfer students possess their own form of capital which allows them to overcome the institutional barriers they face both in and outside of school. In this case, there is not a focus on what students are lacking to gain access to higher education—instead there is a focus on the use of their own forms of capital, which are not yet recognized in schools.

While Yosso (2014) explains that the cultural wealth framework started off with 16 forms of capital and was then narrowed down to 6, scholars have been expanding on the framework Yosso names. An example of this is Rendón et al. (2015) who identifies four additional forms of capital that they added to Yosso's already standing framework. They name these four assets as: *ganas* (determination), pluriversal, spirituality/faith, and ethnic consciousness. This study adds to the small amount of literature there is, in order to expand the CCW framework. In this study, the first-generation Latine community college students possess a new form of capital called adaptive capital. Adaptive capital helps expand on Yosso's theory because it easily interchanges between the six forms of capital she names. In other words, it is mutually reinforcing of the other 6 forms of CCW that Yosso identifies. It also focuses on a strengths-based approach explaining how these Latine transfer students already have this form of capital and bring it with them to schools.

Khan (2012) challenges Bourdieu's argument that elite students are found in elite schools because they already have a predisposition to the "correct" cultural norms of those schools. He challenges this notion because he finds that all students at St. Paul's, no matter their race and class, actually have to start from the beginning and learn how to be an elite and that society is a

hierarchical ladder that they can climb. This study contributes to Khan's argument because it shows how the Latine transfer students use their adaptive capital to learn and adapt to their higher education institutions in order to climb the hierarchical ladder society says we can climb. It also adds to his "bullshit" argument because it names it as a form of capital that students of color possess. Although Khan only provides one example of how a student uses adaptive capital (or "bullshitting" their way through) within an elite school, this study helps show that adaptive capital can be used in many different ways and in different contexts.

Overall, this study helps in opening up and adding to the conversation of new forms of capital. An issue is that CCW is not yet recognized in schools. By having more conversations about the strengths that students bring with them to schools, we will be able to recognize them. Once these assets are recognized, they can be valued within those spaces and we can start finding ways to incorporate more strength based approaches to helping marginalized students.

The importance of recognizing adaptive capital is that it is showing that these first-generation Latine students are not necessarily trying to fit into White culture, they are also using it as a means of survival. In order to get through their transfer experience and survive it, many of the students extrinsically adapted to their educational spaces culture, but were still able to hold on to who they were intrinsically. Ultimately, these students are not simply accepting the school's way of doing things as the right way, but as only one way of doing it. Therefore, people may see some of these students learning how to write in English better and dressing more "professionally" on the outside, but in reality- these students are still holding on to their lived experiences and culture on the inside. This helps the first-generation Latine community college students stay true to who they are and where they come from. It also brings attention to the ways

in which schools are still unsupportive and can even be hostile to underrepresented students in higher education. Although this is a step in the right direction, is it enough?

It has been 17 years since Yosso came out with her CCW framework. The CCW framework is presently being used to empower students of color and to help them utilize assets already within their communities, but schools are still not incorporating the framework within their schooling systems. If this were the case, then we would have seen a difference in the interviewees' lived experiences being recognized in schools. The form of capital that is still being recognized and valued in schools, is still primarily white ethnocentric, middle and upper class culture. Although adaptive capital is a strength that these students possess, they only have to adapt because their assets are still not being recognized within schools. Having to adapt to these spaces in order to survive and get ahead, ultimately still reproduces the social inequalities that I lay out throughout this paper. This sheds light on the fact that not much has changed in the 17 years since Yosso has called on schools to recognize the CCW that students of color possess. Due to this, I call again on schools to not only start recognizing the assets that students of color bring with them to schools, but to actually start making changes and improvements to incorporate those assets.

Conclusion

The paper sought to understand and define different forms of community cultural wealth that first-generation Latine students use throughout their transfer experience. My research shows that while all the students who were interviewed use the six forms of community cultural wealth that Yosso has previously described, there is another form of community cultural wealth that I have referred to as adaptive capital. There was an apparent pattern of the students using this new form of capital in six different scenarios throughout their interviews. These six different

scenarios or ways in which adaptive capital is being used by the Latine students include: their transfer experience, linguistic experience, immigration status, identity formation, i.e., way of dressing, how class plays a role, and COVID-19 effects. I also saw a pattern of the participants not only using Yosso's six community cultural wealth as well as this new form of cultural wealth—adaptive capital—individually, but also in conjunction with each other.

As mentioned earlier, it is apparent that there is room for improvement, to make these educational spaces much more accessible for all. Not everyone fits into a predetermined mold of what a successful student is going to be. In order to make this happen there should be policy changes. One example that would be beneficial for many students is to create policy changes regarding federal aid where DACA students can qualify for FAFSA. Even for students who are citizens or residents but have parents who are undocumented have a difficult time applying for financial aid. Roderick et al. (2011) have shown that assistance in filling out FAFSA and its full completion is a strong predictor of students both applying to and attending four-year universities. The FAFSA application should be made easier to navigate for first-generation students whose parents cannot provide the support of filling out this application due to language barriers. Another example of a change that can be made is to change the way that ESL programs work. Most bilingual education is exit-oriented once you become proficient in English. Instead of making ESL programs exit-oriented, we can change this. Bilingual students can take classes in both their native language and English. It can be transformative in bilingual students' lives. A smaller change that can happen in classrooms is asking students on the first day of class how they interact (linguistic capital), getting to know where they come from (familial and aspirational capital), and creating a diverse curriculum (resistant capital). This will allow professors and teachers to know what assets students bring with them and how they can then incorporate them

into the classroom. This will also make students feel more welcomed within those spaces. There are many other ways in creating school spaces where first-generation and students of color will be more incorporated within the school culture. I call on schools, practitioners, researchers, and students to work together and think of innovative ways of drawing on the assets marginalized students have in order to help them succeed further.

After finalizing the study and gathering all the data necessary, there are a few limitations that if addressed can improve the quality of this study. One limitation is the sample size. As mentioned before it is a small study with only 16 participants and hence not generalizable. If the study were to be broadened and have a much larger sample size the data would be more generalizable. It would also be beneficial to include participants from different states rather than just California. Another limitation to the study is the fact that adaptive capital is a new form of capital and there needs to be more research done. Additional research should include different methods and looking for adaptive capital in different scenarios, as well within a different demographic of participants.

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