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A different world : first generation Latinas and family role change : a project based on an independent investigation

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A Different
World: First -
Generation
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored the subjective experiences of the transition to college among first generation Latinas as well as their caregiver's subjective understanding of the student's family role and the changes that occurred in the family once the student entered college. This study explored how Latino cultural values influence the Latina students' understanding of their family role and the influence of cultural phenomena on the transition to college.

Data for this research were gathered from 12 individual interviews; 6 interviews conducted with alumnae from Mount Holyoke College and 6 selected caregivers. Alumnae participants in this study were self-identified first-generation Latinas (South American, Mexican American, Central American, or Caribbean heritage), which is defined as a student who is the first in her family to go to an institution of higher learning and to earn a 4-year college degree. Data from semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions asked alumnae about their family roles in the home and how those roles changed upon entering college. Interview questions for caregivers focused on student family roles and how the students' departure to college influenced the family and family obligations.

The findings for first-generation Latinas included beneficial and challenging experiences. Being the first in the family to go to college, making caregivers proud, and gaining educational and social privilege were cited as beneficial experiences. Alumnae participants were found to experience cultural incongruity in the college environment, experiences of survivor guilt, family obligations, and caregiver demands as stressors as well as isolation from their communities. The pattern of communication between caregivers and alumnae as they transitioned to college, non-verbal expectations, and cultural values that prioritize family were found to be the most stressful factors to deal with while entering college. Making their families proud, setting boundaries in their relationship to caregivers, as well as integrating an identity as an educated, adult, Latina woman were experiences contributing to persistence.

A DIFFERENT WORLD: FIRST-GENERATION LATINAS

AND FAMILY ROLE CHANGE

A project based on an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Latinos are the largest ethnic minority group in the United States with a

number of approximately 32.8 million (Alberta, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005). The

Latino population in the United States presently makes up 13% of the population

(Castellanos & Gloria, 2007). Despite the size of this growing population, first-

generation Latina students to attend college are least likely among college students

to enroll in a 4-year university directly after high school (Sy, 2006). Though first-

generation Latinas are applying to 4-year universities they are doing so in low

numbers as most of them choose to remain at home or to attend a 2-year college

(Bordes & Arredondo, 2005).

The American Council on Education (2002) found that college enrollment for

Latino college students increased more than 68% from 1990 to 1999 (Sy, 2006).

Though overall Latino enrollment has increased, data suggests that the first-

generation Latina is dealing with factors she must negotiate everyday in order to be

successful in college. Sy (2006) found that Latina students experience greater stress

during college than men in the family due to the cultural value of *marianismo*, which

expects women in the family to act as caretakers. Sy and Romero (2008) found that

first-generation Latinas are also the least likely among college students to complete

their degree. According to research, the Latino family plays a central role during the

college transition experience for students. Sy and Romero (2008) found that the

pressure to fulfill multiple roles for the family makes the college transition stressful

and that this conflict has negative psychological outcomes for the first-generation Latina struggling to persist in college.

Several challenges impacted first-generation Latina students' transition to college. Parents who view their daughter as a family caretaker are more likely to place additional pressure on her to maintain that role while she makes the transition to college (Sy, 2006). Caregiver expectations are based on the cultural values of the Latino family and the extent of the expectations had depends on the extent to which caregivers and family subscribe to these values (Sy, 2006). The closeness of family relationships has also been found to have great influence on Latina students' fulfillment of family obligations; particularly that of the Latina daughter and her mother (Sy, 2006).

The research into the particular experiences of first-generation Latinas attending 4-year colleges and their caregivers remains sparse. Current persistence and Latino family research tends to focus on the experiences of Latinas as daughters, their family roles, and college choices, which might ellipse the experiences of first-generation Latinas and the multiple roles they occupy while transitioning to college. Further research is needed to improve upon persistence and degree attainment rates of Latinas.

This current research study will benefit and contribute to the field of social work in several ways. First, it expands on examining how family roles change for the first-generation Latina in college. Second, it broadens the literature on understanding how cultural values influence the college experience for Latina

students. Third, schools can better understand how to support students and parents during this transition. This study would be useful to academic and student affairs administrators, faculty, and mental health professionals interested in understanding the psychosocial needs impacting first-generation Latinas academic achievement and persistence. Fourth, most of the studies conducted with and regarding first-generation Latinas have only looked at the perspective of the student. This research study looks at the experiences of first-generation Latinas and considers the perspective of the caregiver and the family at large via the lens of the caregiver who is the head of the family in this very collectivist culture.

The overall purpose of this research study is to explore the subjective experiences of the transition to college among first generation Latinas as well as their caregiver's subjective understanding of the student's family role and the changes that occurred in the family once the student entered college. Using qualitative data gathered from 12 individual interviews; 6 with alumnae and 6 with selected caregivers, the research question to be examined is: How do first-generation Latinas perceive their cultural role in the family has changed upon entering college and eventually graduating and returning to the home?

This study is divided into several sections. Chapter Two considers the relevant literature related to the overall experiences of first-generation Latinas and their family experiences while transitioning to college, in general and what experiences impinge upon the experience of transition, specifically. Chapter Three will give an overview of the methodology guiding the study. A report on the findings

is included in Chapter Four. Chapter Five integrates the study findings with the

related literature from Chapter Two.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Latinos in the United States

In order to understand the experience of Latinas in higher education, it is important to contextualize the issue. The Latino population in the United States is constantly growing and presently makes up 13% of the population (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007). Presently, Latinos are the largest ethnic minority group in the United States with a number of approximately 32.8 million (Alberta, et al., 2005). Despite this considerably large population, first-generation Latina students are least likely among college students to enroll in a 4-year University directly after high school. First-generation Latinas are also the least likely among college students to complete their degree (Sy & Romero, 2008). The term "first generation college student" is understood as a student whose parents have not attended an institution of higher learning of any kind (Hartig & Steigerwald, 2007). Currently, only 10% of entering Latino college students finish with a 4-year degree (Saunders & Serna, 2004) and less than 43% of Latino high school students actually have the criteria for acceptance into a 4-year college (Saunders & Serna, 2004). Research has shown that a major factor contributing to the success of Latina first-generation students is cultural congruence between their home life and the environment of the University as well as family connections and responsibilities (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005; Sy &

Romero, 2008; Saunders & Serna, 2004). However, family responsibilities have not only been identified as a protective factor but as a stress factor as well.

Family Obligations and Social Roles

According to Sy and Romero (2008) the Latino family plays a central role during the transition to college for Latina students. They point out that the transition to college involves a change in both context and social roles for the student. Entering college is part of a developmental process for students where they begin to figure out what it means to be a young adult and begin to negotiate their place in society. Sy and Romero make an important distinction between the home (proximal setting of the student) and society (cultural context in college). Sy and Romero note that the changes experienced during the transition to college can be more harmful than helpful if they are not consistent with the expectations and values of both one's family and the college environment.

Family obligations are defined as the things that adolescents and young adults believe they should do as part of the family as well as the things they actually do for the family (Sy & Romero, 2008). The conflict Latinas face while negotiating college and home responsibilities and the difficulties this causes while adjusting to college has had little empirical study. That which is discussed in the literature is mostly theoretical. In order to understand the experience of the first-generation Latina and the conflict experienced while negotiating multiple demands from family and the college setting, it is important to consider family influences on education,

family expectations and roles, as well as family responsibilities Latinas have during their college years.

Traditional Family Values

Latino parents expect their children to prioritize family needs over individual needs. Understanding the values within the Latino family is crucial to analyzing family influences on education. Furthermore, understanding Latino cultural values and analyzing how these values either are or aren't replicated in the University environment is crucial to understanding the success of the first-generation Latina. Cultural values which define the family dynamics of Latinos are: *familismo (the value of family), comunidad (the value of community)*, and *personalismo (the value of relationship),* which are understood as presenting a sense of validation, mentorship, and cultural mirroring when transferred to the university setting (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007). *Comunidad* or community is defined as a sense of responsibility for one's community and is closely related to *familismo*, which is a sense of caring for and being responsible to one's family and prioritizing family needs over personal ones (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Sy & Romero, 2008).

In her book, *Latino Families in Therapy*, Cecilia Falicov mentions the work of psychoanalyst Alan Roland (1988; 1998) who coined the term the "*familial self*":

> [Alan Roland]….coined the term familial self to describe a sense of self that includes one's close relationships as part of who one is. This self-family construction is useful in understanding Latinos' dedication to children, parents, family unity, and family honor. Money, objects,

home, and other possessions are shared easily, perhaps because a

familial self is tied to a different conception about individual rights

and property." (Falicov, 1998, p. 163)

In this way, the Latino family becomes an extension of oneself and becomes central

to one's identity and sense of being in the world. Roland also writes about a reserve

of feelings that are unshared with the family and he calls this reserve the "*private

self,*" which holds secret feelings and thoughts. According to Roland, the Latina

daughter is able to individuate from her parents control by the existence of this

inner reserve while maintaining an emotional intimacy and closeness of relationship

with them throughout life (Falicov, 1998). It is important to note that *familismo* does

not lessen among 2nd generation Latino families – this is a value that families

continue to endorse from generation to generation (Sy & Romero, 2008).

Personalismo is closely related to *familismo* and stresses a high level of emotional

resonance with others (Falicov, 1998). The term "*familial self*" is used to describe

how Latinos navigate relationships to people in a personal and familiar way

(Falicov, 1998).

Traditional Latino Values and Gender

In a culture strongly influenced by gender construction, *marianismo* is a

value that emphasizes the self-sacrifice females must make while also stressing the

importance of the family caretaker role Latinas are expected to fulfill in the family

(Sy, 2006). The female experience in the Latino family is of particular importance as

Latina women have historically been raised to be submissive under authority,

particularly the authority of men. According to David T. Abalos: "Latina women were traditionally raised to feel ashamed and worthless if they broke with authority," (Abalos, 2007, p. 85).

The Role of the Latino Parents

Sy and Romero (2008) report that Latina adolescents and young adults are more likely to fulfill family obligations than European American or Asian American adolescents. Perhaps this is because the authority of parents in the Latino family goes unquestioned. *Respeto* (respect) is of utmost importance in this family structure and the term is understood differently than in Anglo-American culture (Falicov, 1998). In the Latino family, it can be considered disrespectful to resist a parent's need for contact or financial assistance even as an adult child (Falicov, 1998). The authority of parents persists through adult life and conflicts with the Anglo value of "personal authority" (Falicov, 1998). Oftentimes, Latino immigrants who come to the United States are surprised by the level of autonomy children have. In the Latino family, parents tend to give sons more freedom than daughters as the daughter represents the honor of the family and would dishonor the family by making bad decisions such as choosing to be sexually active outside of marriage (Abalos, 2007).

The Latina mother. The role of the mother is important to consider when examining the family expectations of the Latina daughter in the family. The Latina mother serves as a central figure of sacrifice (*marianismo*) and is not expected to have time away from caring for her family while the Latino father is the "master of

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the household," the bread winner, and the disciplinary figure for the children while maintaining certain distance from day to day activities (Falicov, 1998). It is common for the eldest child to act as an intermediary for the parents in the Latino family while maintaining respect – most times, the eldest child will act as a cultural and linguistic translator for recently immigrated parents (Falicov, 1998).

The Latina mother-daughter relationship. Trust in hierarchy is a value identified as important within Latino culture as well and one that keeps the value of *respecto* and other values in place. This value is understood as the Latina daughter's respect for her mother's high status in the family. Latina daughters who adhere to this hierarchical familial system are more likely to do what their mothers ask them to (Sy, 2006) even if these demands interfere with other aspects of their lives such as college. Daughters adhering to this hierarchy are more likely to sacrifice their personal needs for the well being of the family when necessary (Sy, 2006).

The mother-daughter relationship has a large influence on the transition to young adulthood for Latinas (Sy, 2006). The closer a daughter's relationship is to her mother the more she will subscribe to cultural values, which place an emphasis on *familismo, respecto*, and *marianismo*. A Latina daughter with a close relationship to her mother will feel more obligations to fulfill cultural roles in the home due to a sense of interdependence between both people. Daughters who are connected to their mothers feel more comfortable making sacrifices for their mothers (Sy, 2006). Interdependence is understood as an exchange between the mother and daughter-

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one where the daughter feels free to share her feelings and opinions and the mother is willing and able to provide her daughter with wisdom and advice (Sy, 2006).

Latinas and Identity

Torres (2004) found that students self-identified using the language their parents used. For example, if a parent self-identifies as Latino than the student usually identifies using the same term. The students who experienced the most cultural conflict between the values taught by parents and values within the college environment were students of less acculturated parents (Torres, 2004). However, students in this study who came from mono-cultural environments with parents born in the United States experienced the same level of cultural conflict in spite of parent's apparent acculturation. The latter fact demonstrates how entrenched Latino family values are and sometimes regardless of immigration history of the family.

Affiliation with one's ethnic group is the result of an identity development process and differs depending on the individual's experiences. Ethnic identity development is understood as the process of developing an ethnic identity based on one's own sense of self as part of their ethnic group affiliation. Research studies have shown that identity formation and the way that an individual culturally identifies is the result of their environment, cultural heritage in that environment, as well as influenced by the way one's parents identify (Castillo, Conoley, Choi-Pearson, Archuleta, Phoummarath, & Landingham, 2006; Torres, 2004; Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Torres, 2003).

In a separate study, Torres (2003) examined the major influences on ethnic identity development of Latino college students during their first 2 years of college. Torres found that for the Latino college student, the process of self-identification was influenced by decisions made between both American culture as it is reflected in the University setting and one's own Latino culture. Twelve self-identified freshman Latino students were individually interviewed during their first year of college and then 10 remaining participants were interviewed during their 2nd year at the same institution to consider the ways ethnic identity development was influenced during the college integration process. Torres (2003) found that those who came from diverse neighborhoods had a strong affiliation with their ethnic identity and did not see themselves as a minority until arriving on a predominately White campus. On the other hand, Latino students who come from predominately White neighborhoods tended to define themselves based on their geographic location and not ethnicity. Therefore, students from diverse neighborhoods strongly identified as Latino as opposed to their peers from predominately White neighborhoods.

College students are at the place in their lives where they are experiencing an identity crisis as outlined by stage 5 of Erikson's developmental theory (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). An identity crisis is understood as "ego identity versus role confusion" during which time individuals are figuring out a role for themselves and who they are as separate from their families (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005). Ethier and Deaux (1994) found that Hispanic students who strongly identify as such while transitioning to college do better with this transition than students who do not

identify as strongly. Hispanic students who come to college with a strong ethnic identity usually continue ethnic involvement while at school and therefore strengthen their identification with that group while in college (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). On the other hand, students who enter college without a strong ethnic identity typically end up with lower self-esteem and higher signs of stress (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Social identity theory stresses the importance of the "need for positive self-esteem" to human motivation – this implies that achieving cultural congruence in college results in persistence whereas cultural dissonance contributes to a lack of persistence. The meaning ascribed to an identity is dependent on the context that one is in. Many colleges are pre-dominantly White institutions and therefore provide a predominately White context for the Latino student. In this way, a persistence factor for Latino students becomes the ability to locate sources of support on campus and find ways to replicate and participate in cultural reconfiguration by any helpful means. Either and Deaux (1994) found that for students who enter college with a strong ethnic affiliation, the college experience becomes a way to reinforce group identification via campus involvement.

Difference in Cultural Norms: Anglo/Latino

In Anglo-American culture it is customary for children to leave home once they reach adulthood. Staying home, in Anglo-American culture, is viewed as a form of financial dependence that is frowned upon whereas in Latino culture (and most collectivist cultures) staying home is both acceptable and expected (Falicov, 1998). Latinos typically leave home when they are ready to begin a family of their own

(Falicov, 1998) and this separation process is shaped by gender expectations as women are viewed to be more vulnerable to external influences and more in need of parental/familial protection (Falicov, 1998). Though there exists this pressure for Latinas to remain living at home, family connectedness and the responsibilities had in the family have not only been identified as stressors but also as success factors for first-generation Latinas in college (Sy & Romero, 2008). The reason for this is the importance of *familismo* and *comunidad* to the identity of the Latina. For the Latina, identity does not exist as apart from one's family.

Cultural dissonance is typically what first-generation Latinas experience when leaving the home to go to college. Cultural dissonance is defined as the experience of conflict between the expectations of others and one's own sense of self and culture (Torres, 2003). Cultural congruence is understood as the ways in which cultural values and ways of relating are mirrored between one's family environment and the university environment. Due to the history of the University and the foundation of Anglo-American values it was first established on, it is understandable why many Latinas on predominately White campuses experience cultural dissonance.

The University

Institutions of higher education became vehicles of social status after World War I (Levine, 1986). The curriculum of the University became increasingly linked to the values of America and in this way catered to the nation's middle class, white-collar population (Levine, 1986). As higher education became a possibility

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accessible to more Americans, the University offered students social and economic mobility. Admission to the University was very selective and based primarily on one's family background and social status (Levine 1986). The American University became an institutional mirror for the values of society- values that were consumption-oriented and representative of a rising middle-class (Levine, 1986). At this time, collegiate culture did not accommodate students of different socio-economic classes together via classes and extra-curricular activities that often led to a different experience for students of color (Levine, 1986).

Levine writes that a college degree back in 1928 was a sign of "social superiority" and its absence a "social stigma" (Levine, 1986). In the 1920s, though Universities offered many social advantages to their students, these benefits were mostly afforded to White (Anglo-Saxon), Protestant, upper-middle class young men. Those who were less likely to have the means to attend college and enjoy its benefits as both students and alumnae were men from lower classes, women, and Blacks (Levine, 1986). WASP values of materialism, self-promotion, and a peer-oriented personality were replicated in the American University in the 1920s and the value of such an education was mostly recognized by upper-middle class parents who were eager for their children to secure opportunities of high influence (Levine, 1986). In this way, it becomes apparent how American Universities reflect American Anglo-Saxon values and therefore challenge more collectivist values that place emphasis on the family and on community as opposed to the needs of the individual. It becomes important for the first-generation Latina to find ways to create cultural

congruence via the replication of an alternative support structure within the college environment as well as maintain family relationships.

Negotiating Demands Between Worlds

Torres found that students who are first-generation in the United States who leave for college struggle with the expectations of the college environment as well as balancing those with the expectations of their parents (Torres, 2004). Parents of first-generation students in the United States tend to be more tied to the traditions of their country and therefore have stricter expectations of their children (Torres, 2004). The students of parents newly immigrated to the United States experience cultural dissonance and high stress levels based on expectations of parents and alienation from peers within the college environment who may not understand the pressures they are under (Torres, 2004). Parents who lack college experience have less ability to support their children throughout the college process such as advising about courses and career planning (Sy & Romero, 2008). These parents can provide emotional support to students but their lack of exposure to the college environment and therefore lack of understanding about the experience presents further challenges for the Latina negotiating family obligations once she leaves to college (Sy & Romero, 2008). On the contrary, Latino college students who are second generation and higher in the United States tend to enjoy the cultural values instilled in them by their parents, integrate those values within their identity development process and experience less pressure and cultural dissonance (Torres, 2004). The way Latino students of newly immigrated parents begin to define culture for

themselves during the identity development process and in college may not always be the same as the understanding of their parents, which may lead to further feelings of alienation (Torres, 2004).

Immigrant Families

Studies have shown that while family roles change when a student leaves to college, these changes are exacerbated by factors such as educational level of parents, ability of parents to understand the college experiences and educational demands, immigration status, as well as socioeconomic status (Torres, 2003; Tornatzky, Cutler, & Lee, 2002; Torres, 2004). During one study, 41 case studies of Latino parents were done in order to examine to what extent parents were understanding of and informed about the college process and experience (Tornatzky, et al., 2002). The findings of this study revealed that language barriers were a major obstacle for parents who hoped to learn more about the college application process and be of assistance to their children. Many parents reported a lack of resources that were in Spanish as well as a need for the student to serve as a translator. Predictive factors that indicated how much college knowledge parents have were educational background of the parent and socioeconomic status.

Many Latino immigrant parents struggle as they send their children out into the American school system as they don't know what to expect and many times due to language and cultural barriers these parents have no knowledge about how to navigate the educational system (Falicov, 1998). Integrating into a new culture, even academic culture, is often experienced by Latino parents as an interference in the

way they have chosen to raise their children (Falicov, 1998). For Latino children who were raised elsewhere and brought to the United States to reunite with the nuclear family later on in the course of development, adjusting to a new educational experience and culture overall can be even more stressful. Oftentimes, in the case of children who are later sent to the United States for school, parents are more overprotective and over involved with their children (Falicov, 1998). The experience of Latino teenagers has been described as living between two worlds- two languages, two cultural orientations, and two value systems (Falicov, 1998). Latino immigrant parents and their children have a clash of values often related to: attitudes about gender expectations, sexuality, understanding of hierarchies, dating, personal freedom, etc. (Falicov, 1998). The Latino child is not to question the parent on any basis and doing so is experienced by the parent as disrespect - whereas in Anglo-American culture it is customary for children to blame their parents for being too strict, in Latino culture children are viewed as ungrateful if they challenge their parent's authority (Falicov, 1998).

Parent support and presence during the college experience is crucial to the success of a first generation college student. Gofen (2009) found that elements in the family, which supported the academic achievements of students, were family values, parent's attitudes towards education and interpersonal relationships in the family. Gofen (2009) interviewed 50 first generation college students about their experiences leaving to college as the first in the family. All of the participants in his study agreed that family (parents, siblings) support were crucial to their sustenance while at school. Parental attitudes in their children's education varied from pride

that the child was making the parents dream come true, hoping for a path out of poverty for the family, and education strictly for the purpose of education. From the student's perspective, parents felt their children were taking advantage of a missed opportunity of theirs and that felt good. Some students communicated that though their parents did not have a college degree they were self-educated and therefore served as role models. Students expressed a desire to make their parents proud as a motivational factor as well.

First Generation College Students

Latino family dynamics have very clear boundaries set between parents and children and for this reason it can be particularly stressful when a student leaves the family to go to college. Many first-generation students experience guilt as they watch their families struggle to sustain the educational opportunity they've been presented with that their parents didn't have (Hartig & Steigerwald, 2009). Families of first-generation students struggle with change on numerous levels. These levels include financial, emotional, cultural, and familial (Hartig & Steigerwald, 2009). Financially, families struggle because most first-generation college students from Latino families come from immigrant families who experience poverty (Falicov, 1998). Emotionally, it is difficult for a child to leave the home because of the multiple expectations had in the home as well as difficult for the parental authority figures to know that their child is being exposed to knowledge and experiences that may challenge their own or which they, themselves haven't been exposed to. The latter, in turn, defies Latino family dynamics by challenging the authority structure

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in place. For example, the Latina experiences pressure from the family to self-sacrifice and fulfill multiple roles because she is affected by the *marianismo* that defines the role of her mother.

Hartig and Steigwerwald (2009) offer a helpful theoretical framework with which to understand some of the separation modes that families experience when a first-generation student leaves the home. Depending on the expectations had of a student in the family, leaving the home for college could be experienced with either of the following: binding, delegating, and expelling by the family (Hartig & Steigerwald, 2009). Binding is understood as happening when families are enmeshed and the student has a hard time with separation; usually the latter occurs because dependence on the family is valued. Delegating is when students are relied upon for meeting needs in the family. Many times delegating is the result of parents projecting their own unattained dreams onto their children. Expelling is when a family forces a child to be independent whether or not they are ready for the change (Hartig & Steigerwald, 2009).

Gender Differences and Family Obligations

Sy and Romero (2008) report that there are no gender differences in the degree to which Latino/a students value their families. However, the obligations that children are expected to perform within the family fall mostly on Latinas and more often on them than on sons in the family. Latinas are more likely to have to help with chores in the household, language brokering for parents, as well as caring for younger siblings. Literature looking at family obligations mostly focuses on

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Latina adolescents and for this reason not enough is known about how family obligations are translated to the college environment once a Latina leaves the home and transitions to young adulthood.

The value of *marianismo* is at the core of gender expectations for Latinas. *Marianismo* expects that women (not men) prioritize family needs above individual needs. *Marianismo*, however, is not the same as familismo because of the aspect of submissiveness. Women are expected to fulfill a submissive role in the family and for this reason are expected to sacrifice more than men in the family (Sy & Romero, 2008).

First generation Latinas, in comparison to their male counterparts (Sy, 2006), have to deal with a variety of stressors when leaving to college- these variables include a lack of mentorship, dealing with stereotypes, a lack of cultural congruence in the culture of the University, as well as lowered familial support (Alberta, et al., 2005). Due to the cultural hierarchy in the family as well as role expectations, Latina adolescents are more likely to deal with multiple expectations in the home, within their families, and during college (Sy, 2006). Demands from multiple contexts influence the experience of the Latina college student and put this population at greater risk for negative mental health outcomes as they navigate the college environment (Sy, 2006).

Studies that looked at family obligations found that gender played a major role in how family responsibility was assigned (Torres, 2004; Sy, 2006). Sy (2006) writes that parent perceptions play a role in family obligations. According to Sy

(2006) parents who perceive their daughter to be family-oriented and fulfilling a caretaker role most likely place pressure on her to continue to fulfill those obligations when making the transition to college. According to a qualitative study done on 83 first-year Latino students, parents' felt that cultural traditions and expectations were being challenged the most in cases where females were experimenting with more freedom in their personal lives (Torres, 2004). Many students in this study reported the need to lie to their parents or not tell the entire truth due to parents' not understanding school demands such as needing to attend meetings or study groups- 74% of the students in this study lived at home and reported having to negotiate with parents on a daily basis. In addition, it was found that the Latina students' relationship to her mother is a predictive factor, which indicates family obligations and perceived responsibility to the family.

Family as a Protective Factor

Sy and Romero (2008) mention a study by Fuligni and Pedersen (2002) where findings suggest that family obligations for minority youth are not just a stress factor but also a protective factor. Fuligini and his colleagues found that Latino youth were more likely to persist in college if they had a stronger sense of family obligations as well as better psychological outcomes if they prioritized their role in the family and responsibilities attached to that role.

Social Capital as a Protective Factor

Building social capital has been identified as a way to reconfigure family values and as a protective factor that strengthens a Latina's ability to thrive in the

college environment. Saunders and Serna (2004) looked at how academic achievement and degree attainment relate to one's ability to maintain or acquire social capital in the college environment. Within the study, social capital was understood as once defined by Bourdieu (1986): "social capital is measured in the amount of resources that are ranked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, in other words, to membership in a group," (Saunders & Serna, 2004). Saunders and Serna (2004) did a sub study of a group of 30 students who were a part of the Futures Project program. This program helped marginalized youth to cultivate the skills needed for college access as well as help students to think critically about cultural processes that advantage some and disadvantage others. This learning and development program strengthened students' preparation for college by helping them to see themselves as intellectuals and providing them with the tools to be successful academically during the transition from high school to college. Saunders and Serna (2004) found that students who reach out to faculty members and seek out opportunities for mentorship benefit greatly in the college environment (Saunders & Serna, 2004). It is important for Latinas who strongly identify with their cultural heritage to find ways to replicate their familial support system and neighborhood environment while at school (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Students who have utilized resources such as cultural houses, special orientations, as well as supportive services while at college have been successful in identifying a new support structure while in college and creating cultural congruence in their University experience (Ethier & Deaux, 1994).

Mentorship as a Protective Factor and a Form of Social Capital

Phinney (1993) explained that in order for one's ethnic identity to develop, one must resolve two conflicts: facing stereotypes and prejudices by the majority group to one's own ethnic group and developing a bicultural value system in order to deal with the clash between White cultural groups and one's own cultural group (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005). Mentorship is one of the mediums that have been found helpful during the ethnic identity development process.

Bordes and Arrendondo (2005) examined how mentoring experiences as a cultural congruity tool, influenced perceptions of the college environment for Latino students. In this study, 112 first semester Latino students ranging from the ages of 16 to 26 filled out self-report questionnaires with questions regarding mentorship experiences, university environment, and cultural congruity between cultural values and university setting. The findings showed that perceptions of having a mentor greatly influenced perceptions of the university environment as more positive. However, having a mentor did not influence the perception of cultural congruence between one's own cultural heritage and the culture of the college environment. In this way, perception of the university setting and supportive factors within that setting contribute to persistence more than actual cultural congruence in the culture of university does for the Latina. This means the university setting could be completely contrary to what the Latina student's values are but if the student finds ways to reinforce those values of family and connectedness on her own, she is more likely to persist.

Integration and Community as a Protective Factor

Academic integration is defined as a student's individual experience within the academic community of which they are a part (Braxton & Sullivan, 2000) and their level of comfort within that setting. Academic integration is predicted based on one's own identity formation and the change of context and culture within the university (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). The environment of the institution and the culture wherein plays a major role in the success of the first-generation Latina student. A culture that emphasizes community and trust amongst the student and faculty body is a protective factor for the Latina student (Saunders & Serna, 2004). *Personalismo* has a great influence on the way a Latina views environment as well- a warm and friendly environment in which one can build close personal relationships is perceived as a more comfortable environment (Rivera, Cooper, & Arredondo, 2002). Furthermore, pedagogy and teaching methods play a role in the transition to college.

Latina students experience much isolation and role confusion in the college setting, specifically at predominately White colleges (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005). The Latinas who experienced cultural congruity between the college environment and their own background as well as those who had a positive perception of the college environment made more decisions to persist (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005). Latinas who felt they had social support on-campus persisted more- social support is defined as support from friends, mentors, faculty, and family (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005). Specifically, Latinas reported it was very important to have a

mentor of the same ethnic or racial group with whom they could identify (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005).

Latina Role Negotiations

Sy and Romero (2008) interviewed 20 Latina adolescents and young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 years old in order to find out how they managed to negotiate family obligations while in college. The participants in this study were first and second generation students in the United States and enrolled in a 4-year university or alumnae of one. The themes that emerged from their findings were the role as a surrogate parents for younger siblings, importance of becoming self-sufficient as well as the voluntary (vs. obligatory) nature of their financial assistance to families. Women in the study identified becoming self-sufficient as a means in which they could help family i.e. not asking parents for money or clothing, versus self-sufficiency to attain independence. Women from 2 parent families did not mention role as surrogate parent but women from single-parent families did. Many of the latter women mentioned taking on responsibilities such as following up with school programs for siblings and buying clothing. Most of the women from single-parent families came from homes where the mother was the primary parent. Due to this finding, it is known that family structure has an important influence on caretaking roles Latinas are expected to perform within the family. About 35% of Hispanic households consist of single-parent families and being an older sibling in one of these homes means more responsibility (Sy & Romero, 2008). Women also noted that the financial contributions they've made to the family were not

demanded by the family and were therefore voluntary in nature – women verbalized an issue with the word obligation and felt that it did not capture the true nature of their contributions. Sy and Romero (2008) noted that they had to change the wording of their questions from obligation to "financial contribution" in order to get more elaborate responses from participants. Sy and Romero (2008) concluded that Latina students fulfilled obligations in the home due to what they call a "culture of concern" which is the result of Latino family values of familismo and respeto. Therefore, this feeling of obligation Latinas have is a result of cultural background and not necessarily expressed demands from parents.

SUMMARY

In summary, this review of Latino cultural values in the context of University values has revealed several key findings. While transitioning to college and young adulthood, Latinas are figuring out the delicate balance between defining their independence, identity and role in the world, as well as negotiating meeting the needs and demands of their families. The transition of the first-generation Latina to college is difficult for both the student and the parents of the student. For the Latina raised in a collectivist culture and a foundation of values based on familismo, multiple demands from school and the family can cause stress and make the transition to college difficult. For the parent, there is often an experience of the child being a family pioneer and reaching the goals the parent could not fulfill. Due to traditional values such as *respeto* and *familismo*, during the Latina's transition to college, parents often experience academic culture as an interference in the way

they've chosen to raise their children. For students of more acculturated parents, parents are often more understanding of the demands of the University and more flexible with expectations of their children. However, for students of less acculturated parents, parents can often feel removed from their child's experience and factors such as language, and education level can be hindrances on a parent's ability to be supportive. There is research on how Latinas negotiate obligations but no literature was found on how expectations are negotiated once Latinas leave college and return home. Sy and Romero (2008) explain that negative psychological outcomes may exist for the Latina who has trouble renegotiating family roles once the transition to college is in effect. Therefore, this research is important and relevant to the field of clinical social work and higher education.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Purpose and Question

The research question for this study is as follows: How do first generation

Latinas perceive their cultural role in the family has changed upon entering college

and eventually graduating and returning to the home?

The purpose of this study is to explore the subjective experiences of the

transition to college among first generation Latinas as well as their caregiver's

subjective understanding of the student's family role and the changes that occurred

in the family once the student left for college. In the body of literature, there are few

studies that address how the family role of the Latina college student changes once

she makes the transition to college. Most of the studies that have been done have

focused on Latina children and adolescents and cultural family roles instead of how

those roles change upon entering college. Sy and Romero (2008) report that missing

from the literature is research specifically addressing Latina adolescents' and family

responsibilities during college. For this reason, this study proves to be very useful

and has much value to add to the literature at hand.

Research Design

A qualitative design method, using semi-structured interviews with open-

ended questions, was selected to allow for an in-depth exploration of the subjective

experience of the first-generation Latina and her selected caregiver. The individual

interviews were chosen in order to allow for individual exploration and elaboration on questions and to allow for participants to recall aspects of their academic and family transitions in a relational interaction with this researcher. Individual interviews were viewed as being congruent with participants' cultural values, particularly those that emphasize personalismo (the value of relationship and relating) and intimacy in relationships (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007).

Type of Data

Data for this research were gathered from 12 individual interviews. There were 6 interviews conducted with alumnae from Mount Holyoke College and there were 6 selected caregivers of those alumnae participants who were interviewed, which comprised pairs of one student and one caregiver selected for the interview process. The demographic questionnaire gathered personal information related to participants' age, generational status in the United States, year of graduation from Mount Holyoke College, as well as ethnic diversity in the neighborhood in which the student was raised and primary language spoken in the home. Data from the individual interviews were obtained using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions that asked alumnae about their family roles in the home and how these roles changed upon entering college. Interview questions asked caregivers about student family roles and how the students' departure to college influenced the family and family obligations.

Demographic Characteristics and Sample

Alumnae participants in this study were self-identified first-generation Latinas, which is defined as a student who is the first in their family to go to an

institution of higher learning and to earn a 4-year college degree. The participants in this study were alumnae from Mount Holyoke College and one parent chosen by the participant. The reason participants were chosen from Mount Holyoke College is due to this researcher's professional connection as an alumna from this institution. Furthermore, participants were self-identified Latinas meaning that they identify as having South American, Mexican American, Central American, or Caribbean heritage. All alumnae participants are between the ages of 22-30 years. The parent selected was the primary caregiver during the time the participant was in college.

Exclusion criteria included any participant who identified her primary parent as a sibling. Any participant who was a first-generation, self-identified Latina and identified their primary caretaker as anything other than a biological sibling was able to participate in the study. If a participant was multi-racial or multi-cultural but identified as a Latina, this participant was interviewed for the purposes of this study.

All interviews were conducted over the phone by this researcher, recorded using digital recorder and later transcribed by this researcher.

Data Collection

After approval from the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Board was obtained, procedures began to recruit participants (see Appendix A, B, & C).

This researcher sent an email to the Chair of LaUnidad and the Young Alumnae Association of New York City of Mount Holyoke College and then followed-

up with phone calls. This researcher asked them to distribute the flyer. All participants expressed interest in the study by email. This researcher confirmed through email that they did meet the research criteria and answered any questions they had about the study. In some cases participants responded to the email confirming they met research criteria and had a caregiver willing to be interviewed, in others they did not. If a student did not respond, this researcher assumed they did not meet research criteria and removed them from the participant list. Once participants indicated they wanted to be part of the study, they received a confirmation email with the informed consent form for both them and their selected caregiver in both English and Spanish for review (See Appendix D). This researcher also made two copies of the informed consent, referral sources, and mailed them to each participant's home and caregiver's home with a return addressed, stamped envelope to be sent back to this researcher.

Total participation in each interview was no longer than one hour and thirty minutes and each interview was audio recorded using a digital recorder. All of the individual interviews were conducted over the phone. The first ten minutes was an informal introduction by this researcher. This researcher also confirmed that each participant met the research criteria. This researcher reviewed the informed consent and gave each participant an opportunity to ask questions prior to being interviewed.

Data Analysis

This researcher transcribed the data collected from the individual interviews and then used thematic content analysis. The narrative data was analyzed and coded for themes. These categories were: challenges and stressors, family roles before and after the transition to college, coping strategies, and protective factors. There were implicit findings that were categorized under ethnic identity development. The demographic data were summarized using descriptive statistics.

Methodological Limitations

This researcher was aware of possible limitations in the use of individual interviews to collect narrative data. One limitation was that interviews were all conducted over the phone and this may have decreased the sense of intimacy or personalismo experienced by the participant. In the end, the benefits of the individual interviews were thought to outweigh this limitation.

In conducting this investigation, this researcher was aware of potential biases. The findings may be biased due to one parent being interviewed and not the other. During this study, participants were able to choose which caregiver was a primary support during their transition to college; these decisions may be an example of sampling bias. One possible bias was this researcher's ethnic and national background. As a U.S. born Puerto Rican and African-American woman, this researcher was aware of the multiple meanings individuals subscribe to their own ethnic identities and personal values based on that identity which may or may not be reflected in the literature. This researcher's specific ethnic and national background might have made some Latinas and parents more comfortable to speak,

while creating discomfort for others. To mitigate this potential bias, this researcher

decided not to reveal her specific ethnic background to the participants. Another

potential bias was over identification. In addition to identifying as Latina, this

researcher shared other similar characteristics and experiences as the participants

including being a first-generation alumna from Mount Holyoke College. Due to

having shared characteristics and experiences with the participants, this researcher

might have neglected to probe or explore questions. Having served as the social

chair of LaUnidad at Mount Holyoke College, this researcher had a prior relationship

with two alumnae who were participants. One had been in the same graduating

class at this researcher and the other was also a member of LaUnidad during the

time this researcher served a term as social chair. These prior relationships could

have created more comfort for the participants or limited what they shared during

the course of the interview. The small sample size is another possible limitation,

which may impact the generalizability of the findings.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This qualitative research study investigated the experiences of first-generation Latina students and their caregivers during the transition to college. The research question was: How do first generation Latinas perceive their cultural role in the family has changed upon entering college and eventually graduating and returning to the home? This chapter reports the findings gathered from 12 interviews. Six interviews were conducted with alumnae from Mount Holyoke College and 6 interviews were conducted with selected caregivers of those participants.

Participant Characteristics

The study recruited 6 self-identified first-generation Latina alumnae from Mount Holyoke College and 6 selected caregivers of those participants. The age of alumnae participants ranged from 23-30 years old and the age of selected caregivers ranged from 49 to 65 years old. Three alumnae participants were from single-parent households; one of which was headed by a single-father. Two households were traditional with two married parents and one was a non-traditional household with a matriarchal grandmother as the caregiver. All but two alumnae participants were born in the United States; one was born in Mexico and the other was born in Brazil. All but two selected caregivers were born outside of

the United States; one was born in Brazil, two were born in Columbia and the other was born in Mexico. The ethnicities of selected caregivers and alumnae participants were Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Brazilian. New York was the home state of 6 participants while two pairs of participants each came from Southern California, Arizona, and Rhode Island. Each of the twelve participants came from neighborhoods that were made up predominately of people of color, which is defined as folks who are non-White. One pair of participants came from a neighborhood that is predominately African-American and the remainder of participants were from mixed neighborhoods made up predominately of Latinos.

Themes

The findings were analyzed using thematic analysis. Participants were asked open-ended questions during the individual interviews that would lead to a richer understanding of the experiences of first-generation Latinas to attend a 4-year college and their families via the perspective of a selected caregiver. Themes were broken down into the following phases: pre-college issues, college-related experiences, and post-college changes. Nine themes were identified in the responses: importance of family and community; acculturation; guilt; renegotiating relationships; assimilation to the college environment; mentorship; letting go; ethnic identity development; and isolation from community. Additional implicit findings that emerged from the data are also presented at the end of this chapter.

Pre-college Issues

Theme: Importance of family and community

Time spent with the family seemed to be an important factor that every Latina participant understood growing up. Though this wasn't a value that was directly spoken about in the family it was understood based on the prioritizing of family time. Alumnae participants spoke about consistently spending a lot of time around extended family as well as events and major Holidays being a time where family gathered together in celebration. One participant connected her experience of prioritizing family to being Latina:

> I mean a lot of events are centered around family and values are centered around family so something that I definitely attribute to being Hispanic is just the family oriented life that I lead because it's so ingrained in me since I was a child my mom always made sure we worked together as a family. I notice that a lot of my other friends don't really have that I definitely think that it's a part of Hispanic culture the whole family orientation and going to family parties on the weekends and celebrating holidays with your family…

Latinas spoke to the experience of family as a priority and understanding how important this value was growing up as well as its present importance in their adult lives. One alumna in particular speaks about a conversation she had with a boss whose mother in law passed away:

> My boss is Irish and her mother in law just passed away but I was explaining to her you don't understand in my culture, in my family really…. someone being in the hospital is like a party in the hospital. Like everybody shows up and everybody is in the room and everybody is there from like 6am to like 12 at night like the person is never left unattended and she had to hire a nurse to be there with her mother in law and I'm like no in my family someone would make sure that someone was there at all times.

Alumnae participants spoke about the difficulty they experienced during the transition to college and each shared an experience of value conflict once entering college and a sense that they acquired values different than the ones instilled in them by caregivers. Caregivers generally understood that college had changed their

children in this way but still had similar expectations especially as it related to spending certain events such as Christmas and other major holidays with the family.

Many alumnae, though still prioritizing family, had a change of values while in college and returned home wanting to prioritize other things in their lives as well. One alumna spoke about needing to explain to her mother that she does not want to spend every holiday with family.

> ....It's hard to explain to them 'no Mom, I don't want to spend New Year's with family. I want to do my own thing' even things like that its my mom that believes family comes first and its definitely true but at the same time its like I want to have my own personal life and its very hard because growing up in such a traditional Hispanic Catholic family….moving seven hours away on a flight def shocked my family completely because they didn't think I would be leaving the household.

Latina alumnae spoke about the experience of re-creating family-like connections in college with other Latinas on-campus as a supportive measure. Latina alumnae were able to reach out to other Latinas and create relationships were they felt understood and supported. Alumnae participants spoke about a feeling of connection to other Latinas on-campus. One alumna in particular shared finding a sense of comfort in knowing that there were other Latinas on-campus with a similar background to her own:

> A lot of the other Latinas on-campus came from similar backgrounds. So, just understanding little things about being Latina. Or being from a poor neighborhood. That type of connection was important to me. And I feel like Latinas in general have a strong sense of family and community. And are really open to other people and protective of other people when they gain your trust.

In this way, the importance of family and a sense of belonging connected to family was important for Latinas as they transitioned to college and finding a way to adjust

to a new environment via the use of an instilled value and sense of self based on culture.

Theme: Acculturation

Alumnae participants all had a role in helping their caregivers with acculturation in the United States. Many alumnae had experiences of being translators for caregivers while growing up. Some alumnae participants served as linguistic translators and others as cultural translators. Alumnae recalled memories of caregivers who lived in a very insular way within the Latino community and rarely spent time among people of other cultures. One participant spoke about "Americanizing" her caregivers and what that was like for her:

> I'm the one that Americanized my parents because they still have a lot of values and culture from Mexico. My parents only surround themselves with other Hispanics ….We'd shop in once place because that's what we do. You shop together or whatever.

Another participant had experiences in childhood where she served as a cultural and linguistic translator for her caregivers who did not speak English and were not as knowledgeable about the American school system. Alumnae had similar experiences growing up navigating a world outside the home within the American school system and a world within the home where they were expected to fulfill multiple roles. Caregiver participants did not speak about experiences of their daughters serving as linguistic or cultural translators though some caregivers did talk about relying on their daughters for help with errands and household duties.

Theme: Expectations related to gender

Alumnae participants all reported having multiple roles within the family. Most of these expectations were gender expectations that were communicated nonverbally to alumnae Caregivers expressed that they had only one expectation of their daughters and that was for them to go to college. Caregivers expressed making this desire known to their children through verbal communication and reinforcement of how important education is throughout their lives. However, alumnae reported something very different. According to alumnae participants, they had multiple roles in the family and expectations to fulfill in the family. Many of the expectations the alumnae felt they had were communicated nonverbally by caregivers. One participant who was identified as a caregiver is the grandmother of an alumna with two generations of wisdom. This participant was the only caregiver to articulate that expectations in the Latino family should be understood and accepted though not always communicated verbally:

> It was understood...you don't have to say it directly. You just know what is expected of you. My mom was like that and didn't say things to me directly but I knew what I had to do and how I had to act, you understand?

One single father reported feeling fine with his daughter (and other children) not sharing everything with him and being selective about what they share with him. However, it felt important to this father that his children at least confide in his daughter who was interviewed for this study:

> That's one thing I love about my kids they are always helping each other no matter what I mean I don't care if they don't tell me everything but as long as they talk to my daughter that's important to me...I know my youngest he goes and tells [daughter's name] everything.

The daughter, however, felt very differently about her role in the family and did not

view herself as being a confidant for her siblings. Instead, she viewed her role as a

secondary caregiver and mother to her siblings:

> I have 2 younger brothers. My role in the family was basically to be the
> mother figure. My parents were divorced when I was about 10 years old. So
> after that my father would work really long hours so I'd have to come home
> after school and cook or if I wanted to go out with my friends I'd have to
> bring my brothers along... He never said it but I just felt like that was what I
> needed to do. Like if my brothers were hungry I'd be like I have to feed them
> I'm not going to let them starve. And my father probably, I wouldn't want him
> to know this but he wasn't the most responsible parent at first. I think he had
> a hard time transitioning from being a father with a wife that took care of
> everything – like he gave her his paycheck and she paid the bills, to being the
> single father with 3 kids. That was a hard transition for him. So, I kind of felt
> like I needed to help out.

> The feeling of obligation to the family was common among alumnae

participants. Though caregivers never verbally communicated particular

expectations and obligations to their daughters, all participants felt the need to help

their caregivers out. Many caregivers reported feeling that the only expectation of

their daughter was to attend college and receive higher education. However, all of

the alumnae participants reported feeling unspoken pressures to fulfill roles in the

family that were not necessarily communicated to them verbally by their caregivers.

> I knew how much my mom needed me and depended on me to do other
> things in the house that she did not have time to do as a single mom who
> worked full-time....and she depended on me a lot so it was really hard for me
> to feel like I'm leaving [to college]. It wasn't necessarily vocalized I mean
> growing up my mom said your family is all you have and family was always
> very important and I always remember doing and helping out it wasn't said
> that oh you have to take care of your family this is your obligation I think
> when I went to college that's when it began to feel more like an obligation
> that's when I began to question me playing this role because I didn't realize
> that that wasn't the norm....It wasn't verbally expressed it was just like it's
> just us and you've got to do what you got to for your family and if you love

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family this is how you show love and this is how you show commitment. Seeing my mom struggle I felt like I just had to do what she told me to do.

Alumnae participants were able to connect their sense of family obligation to the value of familismo and an idea that "if you love family this is how you show love." In a sense, it never occurred to alumnae participants that there was any other option but to sacrifice one's time and efforts for the family. Many daughters reported feeling undue stress and pressure related to familial roles and wanting to please their caregivers. One participant in particular speaks to the experience of internal turmoil regarding these pressures and confusion regarding the origin of these difficulties:

> We went to a therapist because I couldn't sleep. I had nightmares and the therapist said what is it that your parents are doing to you that makes you so stressed? I'm going to be really honest with you…my parents were doing nothing. It was me. I was creating this stress on myself. I was making myself really stressed out and then blaming it on my parents. My parents did nothing to stress me out it was just that sense of responsibility of me always having to do my best because I don't want my parents to think that I'm not.

Many participants reported spending much time trying to understand their families and family role in an attempt to make sense of the stress they experienced. Some participants reported being able to have these discussions with caregivers and some did not. However, all participants reported being able to set limits and boundaries in relationship to their caregivers once entering college. One participant in particular speaks to her understanding of her mother's overwhelming situation as a single mother and feeling that perhaps her mom did not realize how much pressure she was placing on her:

> I was also a huge support for my mom as a single mom….I was another mom. I took care of my brothers and my sisters. I worked 2 part time jobs in high

school and I helped my sister with her homework and my brothers with homework and a lot of food shopping and cleaned and outside chores you know I think it was hard for my mom. I think she did not realize how much she depended on me for how much work I did for her or the house or the family.

Alumnae participants were very sensitive to their caregiver's needs and very helpful in meeting those needs. There was a sense of codependency between caregivers and their daughters that alumnae felt their caregivers were not aware of until they entered college. According to the literature on the subject, it is a cultural value to self-sacrifice for the family. One possibility that caregivers touched upon is how the Latino cultural value of familismo and marianismo expects a great deal from the women in the family. Perhaps due to this cultural value and an unspoken expectation, caregivers were not as sensitive to the significant role their daughter's played in the home. One father speaks of the power of cultural transmission of values and how these roles and expectations get passed on from one generation to the next:

> I trust her values and I know she has good values and that's something that she can tell you herself that the values I did teach her all of them actually are something that comes from within me something that I got from the past from generation to generation its passed on actually you know.

Many of the messages regarding gender and gender roles within the family were communicated nonverbally. One participant spoke to her experience being the only female in the house and a very clear nonverbal message she receives after her mother and father divorced:

> I think even right after my mother left. My father sent me to Florida so I can learn how to cook and to take care of my grandmother. My aunts were practically training me to be a housewife. They had me cleaning all the time and they would criticize my cleaning. So, all of those things that you would

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associate with a housewife. I felt like that summer when I was sent there was like a crash course for me.

Another participant confirms the latter's experience with the following statement:

Well I think especially for women- you stay at home and families are a large part of your life.

Another aspect is that caregivers did not report treating their children differently based on gender. Caregivers who admitted to having a different experience based on gender reported that they worried more about their daughters than their sons when they transitioned to college for safety reasons. Generally, these caregivers felt that daughters were more vulnerable in the environment due to their gender. One mother reported the following:

Thinking of a woman going out into the world alone maybe if it was a male I would have thought oh yes he's gone not as worried. I would have been less worried but she is a woman so I was worried about her safety. I was worried about the parties, the dating, watch your drink and tell her to be careful. Not knowing what could happen to her and concerns about her being vulnerable and I wouldn't feel that as much if she was a male.

Alumnae participants in this study reported struggling with their experiences of gender and their identity as Latina women, which often conflicts with a more feminist and independent sense of self.

I call it home training but…cooking and cleaning and taking care of elders and men in the house those are all values I know are not necessarily feminist going to all women's college and identifying myself as a feminist it's hard for me to like deal with that but I feel like its comfortable for me to fall for that dynamic. Or be that person.

For many alumnae participants the choice to go to an all-women's college challenged the cultural norm of marianismo and being the sacrificial woman in the family. Alumnae participants all spoke about the experience of becoming educated

and coming into an identity as a young woman who is capable of accomplishing

anything without limitations due to her gender as a Latina woman.

COLLEGE-RELATED EXPERIENCES

Theme: Guilt

Alumnae participants in this study spoke about understanding the sacrifices

their caregivers have made, many of them immigrants, to come to this country and

create opportunities for their children. Alumnae spoke about a strong desire to

please caregivers and meet expectations while feeling that every accomplishment of

theirs was also an accomplishment for their caregivers. However, these alumnae

experienced a looming sense of guilt that plagued their conscience and a sense that

they have left their families behind while moving on with their own lives

independent from family:

> There is a lot of guilt. I feel guilty taking my time thinking I should be doing
> something for my family right now. I spend money on hair and a massage and
> I could send that to my little brother to get xy or z or my mom to buy food to
> feed other people. I always feel guilty when I buy something for myself. I
> have to justify that I need this.

Alumnae participants attributed individual meaning to their absence at home

and the ways this may have affected their caregivers and families. Instead of

thinking of one's college transition as a rite of passage and creating new

opportunities for one's family, alumnae participants felt they were abandoning the

family. Many alumnae had doubts that their families would function okay without

them and experienced a lot of guilt and anxiety as a result.

> I think I still feel guilt for not being present I think I will always have that that
> feeling of guilt feeling responsibility for my brothers and my father as if I

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were their caregiver you know. I feel guilty that I chose to go to college that was farther away that I chose to move to New York that I'm now choosing to move to DC because I feel I'm making decisions for myself and that's hard for me because a lot of my life has been about taking care of them and I feel like I call them so much because of that guilt too.

Making decisions for oneself is experienced as a betrayal of the family and a source of abandonment. Alumnae participants were so used to making decisions with and for the family that once they entered college and created a life for themselves outside of the home, making individual decisions felt very counter-culture. One participant connected her perception of what was expected of her to experiences of guilt from her caregivers:

> Well it's the guilt (laughs) it's the freakin guilt that they do that's another traditional Hispanic thing you are raised with so much guilt like it's just ridiculous from the moment that your born.

One caregiver connected her understanding of what to share and not share with her daughter to a desire to prevent her from continued experiences of guilt about leaving home to enter college:

> Yea (her daughter's name) had a lot of guilt too and I had to let go also for me it was like I was calling her like where are you let me know and I realized I had to grow and let her go and so she wont have the guilt about leaving home.

Theme: Renegotiating relationships

Alumnae spoke to their experiences having to set limits and boundaries in their relationship to caregivers in order to cope with the transition to adulthood and entering college. It felt important for alumnae to be vocal and direct with their caregivers about what their needs were and what boundaries would have to exist in their relationship as they transitioned to college and young adulthood.

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Well it gets to the point where you're like okay I need to live my life and not feel pressured to constantly please my parents. That's another thing- they don't ask it, but you just always want to please them. Always. Always. Always. Always. Always want to please them. And I'm like you know what I need to live my own life too. I'm sorry for the way that I have to say I want to live it….I want to be way more honest with them like in the past there was so much more guilt and I'd do a lot of things….I'm an adult.

Alumnae spoke to developing their own personal lives both professionally and romantically and what that was like for caregivers. Many caregivers felt it was important to know what is going on with their children and to be involved in their decision making processes while alumnae compartmentalized their personal lives as separate from relationships to the family. One alumna in particular spoke about her mother's concern for her sexual experiences and desire to know about her romantic life. This alumna had to be very clear with her mother that this was a conversation she was not willing to have:

I know how to handle myself. I know what to use and I know who to use it with…. I'd like to open up myself and tell you [her mother] about all these things….that's something that I'd rather not discuss with you and I'd rather leave it alone because I made the decision and don't regret that I made the decision [about beginning to have sex] and its not something that involves you.

Other alumnae have had to make the decision simply not to care anymore so as to avoid internalized guilt about not doing what their caregivers want them to do:

My parents have gotten really good…It's another thing I've forced on them that they need to know. I've kind of forced that mentality, like "Mom I don't care whatever". So, what's the point like they eventually stop trying to guilt me….they realize I don't care.

Other alumnae weren't as able to set these boundaries and limits from within the home. For some it was difficult to set clear limitations while being so close to home and back and forth on college vacations. Many alumnae talked about their

experiences going away from the home and how liberating an experience that was.

One alumna spoke about her experience studying abroad:

> Then when I went to study abroad it was the best experience ever because I used to have these really bad back pains and a lot of it was stress….I couldn't talk to my mom often the conversations were short because it was expensive to call… no family worries. I didn't think about family, nothing and it was the most stress free experience.

In order to take some of the pressures away from their sense of family obligation, alumnae also found alternative ways to support caregivers while preserving their own time and energy. One alumna talked about learning to refer her mom to other resources and services as a replacement of her family role and a way to offer help to her mom without having to do so much herself:

> The thing that I could do is bring her to other people or services to help her and it was a clear rule and I laid our lives there. I'd do the research and look up companies, programs where my mom could reach out to a counselor, financial counselor….So I was connecting mom to other services so she could do it instead of her being dependent on me.

Alumnae also talked about needing to provide structure to their communication with caregivers and set limits and boundaries on that communication as well:

> When I first started out in college my mom would call me nonstop all the time and then I said no and I'm not going to pick up the phone all the time and it took two good weeks of her cursing me out but then she started to respect that I would pick up when I did and when I wanted to.

Many alumnae had a shared experience of boundary and limit setting. The caregivers of these participants were able to adhere to these newly formed boundaries in the caregiver/child relationship. Alumnae participants were able to notice when caregiver behavior began to change in terms of expecting so much.

Caregivers did not share as much as they would usually share during phone conversations or would wait for the appropriate timing to share something with their daughters. Caregivers also became increasingly sensitive to the academic obligations their daughter had while at college. There was a noticeable difference in caregiver behavior as a result of boundary and limit setting on the part of alumnae participants. One alumna spoke about being better able to help her mother without any negative affects to herself or her schoolwork by the use of limit setting:

> I hear about it when something goes wrong but no longer the first person. She'll say I need this letter and need you to mail this out and Ill tell her that I will do my best and give her a time frame whereas before I would stop everything and do what she needed…

Another alumna participant spoke about her mother becoming more sensitive to the pressures she was experiencing at school as a result of setting boundaries.

> She may not tell me things right away anymore if she knows I have an exam coming whereas before she didn't understand that. Now she won't call me when I have a paper due. I think with me being in school she realized how it was hard for me to try to stay on top of schoolwork with all the pressures at home. I think she got to the point where she didn't want to hinder me from completing college. Sometimes I do give her two hours on the phone when I can because I feel like I want to give my mother that space and I feel like I want to know what's going on. Now we've reached an understanding so I can just hear it in her voice when she just needs somebody to talk to and she can just hear it in my voice when I really have to get off the phone. That's how college changed us.

Theme: Assimilation to college environment

All alumnae reported difficulty during their transition to college and getting used to the University environment and culture. Alumnae felt they had to adjust and assimilate to their environment in order get the most out of their academic

experience and to persist. One alumna in particular had a lot to share about her experience growing up poor and in a community of color with very few Whites and then arriving at Mount Holyoke and wanting to be accepted as elite and deserving of being there and belonging.

> I felt like the culture at Mount Holyoke definitely fostered or it felt like you know oh I'm very lucky and privileged to be accepted into this circle of elitism and wealth and opportunity and me being accepted into this circle you know you need to conform you need to assimilate and this is what success looks like.

She later learned that:

> ....Success means appreciating your story and where you came from and integrating all of that in into a person that you are today or to use your past as a means to have or shape your future. I felt like there was no space for appreciation of my specific story or my past and it was more the assimilation to this and conform to that and you'll be successful and you'll be a Mount Holyoke woman and I completely sold into that and that's what I wanted.

This alumna in particular spoke to her experience of grappling with her past and the community where she comes from and how that fit in with her experience in college. Over time, she was able to come into her own identity and accept that she can be both a product of her environment, family, community, as well as intelligent, educated and deserving of her experience:

> It [college] like taught me this is my life and this is my story and I am successful and I have done all this stuff study abroad, fellowship at Penn State, Cum Laude from Mount Holyoke, I went to a top 20 law school but doesn't mean shit to me like what the hell am I going to do with all of that how does that make me a better person at the end of the day am I still a good person and when people see me do they see a character or a person that's loving and welcoming or do they see someone who is just prestigious or elitist....its great to aspire and to push yourself but I think now in terms of....okay I have all of these experiences so where is my voice among this or that instead of me just assimilating.

Theme: Mentorship

One success factor that added to the persistence of alumnae participants in college was the seeking out of mentorship. Many alumnae participants spoke to their experiences of mentorship through the creation of friendships as well as fostering relationships with faculty and staff while at college. One alumna talked about her experience being mentored by other woman of color:

> I went to counseling and a women of color group facilitated by a black woman and Indian woman... so it was good to have that support network at Mount Holyoke also the professors of color were extremely supportive – even though I never really bonded with her [a female professor of color] I think she helped me to model excellence. I always thought she was harder on the women of color and it really motivated me to try harder and to try my best and I always thought she's so hard on us but excelling in her class even made me feel more empowered.... It was a huge boost of support to know that hey that could be me one day and my advisor [name] for the charter school program that's why I do educational law and I did a lot of urban planning work with him he was super supportive and helped me for that part of me that felt like no one else really understood....There were a lot of supports LaUnidad, APAU [African-American and Latina cultural organizations].

Alumnae participants also spoke about their experiences being mentored by white faculty and not limiting themselves to only mentors who were people of color:

> There were also white professors that were super supportive like [name] psychology professor I really loved her a lot and would often go to her office and just talk just something about her like the way she would look at me like very nurturing without saying anything she would just sit there and let me cry....there were tons of support at Mount Holyoke it felt very safe in that it was a small environment and I didn't hesitate to go to a professor and say I'm confused can you help me?

Post-college changes

Theme: Letting go

Caregivers expressed a moment during their daughter's transition to college where they experienced a "letting go." Caregivers spoke about coming to a

realization that their daughters had grown up and an acceptance that their children

must move on to create their own lives separately from family. One caregiver spoke

about struggling with extreme over-protection of her daughter and eventually

learning that he cannot live her life for her and make decisions for her:

> As a caregiver we make the mistake of always wanting our kids to be…. what
> we want them to be. I had to realize one day [daughter's name] has to live her
> own life I can't live it for her. I have to let go and just let her be…I have to
> start….letting her go…. knowing that her life is her life now. I've done what
> I'm supposed to and now she has to be on her own.

Another caregiver spoke about experiencing a loss when his daughter went

away to college. Though he expressed understanding that he was not losing a

daughter he talked about the loss of companionship and having her around:

> I personally went there with her and dropped her stuff. I helped her move
> and everything. It was sad. I felt very sad. Not that I was losing a daughter of
> course not….sad because she had been living with me all those years and I
> was more like a father and a mother to them throughout all those years and
> its not easy it's hard because when you see your kids grow up with you it's a
> totally different thing.

The same caregiver, when asked about his daughter beginning a new life of

her own independent from family and in a new state, responded by talking

accepting that she is her own person with her own goals and dreams. This caregiver

also spoke extensively about cultural values within the Latino family and how those

values can be more hurtful than helpful at a certain point within a child's

development:

> I was not going to stop my daughter from moving to New York to explore so
> she can explore her avenues in her career and you know in getting herself in
> the right path and in the right direction….I let her go right. I was just a little
> worried because she was gonna be there all alone but when I saw her when I
> went down there and saw what I saw it was uplifting and I thought she's

gotta do what she's gotta do and that's how it is some families don't believe that they are more like scared but like my mother used to always say look we are not going to be here forever you want your kids to start getting older and start to form their family- you're going to have to fly… Yea many parents do go the old fashion way those values are good values but sometimes they can hurt the children.

Theme: Ethnic identity development

Alumnae participants who identified strongly as Latina continued to do so once they got to Mount Holyoke. Many of the alumnae who identified strongly once they entered college identified just as strongly before transitioning to college. All of the latter participants were from communities of color, which were predominately Latino. However, a participant who did not strongly identify as Latina prior to entering college began to do so once she transitioned. This particular participant identifies as having mixed heritage and grew up in a predominately African-American community:

> I didn't necessarily identify as being Latina until Mount Holyoke even though a lot of people saw me as Latina but growing up in Bedstuy [Brooklyn] in an African American household and not with my father who is Latino…Mount Holyoke is when I really began to own it….come to the LaUnidad meeting and I was like I don't feel comfortable and don't speak Spanish but people always assumed that I spoke it….that felt really new and felt weird because I didn't necessarily grow up with that.

One alumna spoke about her identification as Latina as strongly connected to a need to celebrate her differences and her culture amongst a college environment that did not reflect her cultural identity:

> …like I think when you're back home you are who you are. But in college it's like you are the person amongst you know I don't want to say white people (laughs) I don't want to say a sea of white people but you're the minority. You're not the majority anymore. So I think what we did was celebrate our difference and embrace who we were like cook a lot together just embrace our identity even more while being in a place where our identity can get lost.

Other alumnae participants spoke to how welcoming the Latina community was while in college and how accepted they felt once becoming a part of that community and cultural organization of LaUnidad:

> My mom said you don't have a choice you're going to go to college and then exploring my identity was the last thing I thought I would own or claim while there. It just kind of happened. My core circle of friends they are mostly Latina but it's not like I don't know what that means or how that came about. It is an identity that I own even though I don't know how it came about it was a very safe and warm environment.

> I always felt like I was Latina or that there was something different like people expected me to be Latina because of my last name so when I was transferred to a middle school uptown it was a predominately Dominican neighborhood and so many of the girls and all of the Latinas welcomed me kisses on the cheek and all that I was confused like why are they all kissing me on the cheek and like holding my arm or whatever. I found that weird but it was saying you're a part of me and it brought me into this circle that was new to me because I'm like I don't even know these people but they are being so warm …

Many alumnae began their process of ethnic identity development by beginning to notice the differences between them and their White friends and colleagues while in college. One alumna spoke about needing to visit her caregivers on the weekends and having to explain this to White friends:

> Like coming home on the weekends….when I tell it to my friends who are White- oh I have to go home for the weekend they are like why? I'm like ummmmmm uhhhhhh my caregivers are home and I want to see them….I mean I do want to see my caregivers because they've been working all week but it's an obligation of coming home to spend time with my caregivers.

Theme: Isolation from community

One consistent theme was a sense of isolation alumnae participants felt during their transition to college. Caregivers were able to identifying noticing the

changes their daughters experienced in their relationships to friends from home and

from the community once they returned from college:

> And then you come back and they look at you differently within the community. That's isolating, too, a community where old friends and family members they look at her differently….it's like oh [daughter's name] acts different. She really thinks she's above people. And it's kind of hurtful when you hear that and it's something that everybody [should] have the opportunity to do without feeling guilty or bad because they went out and got an education…
>
> It was really hard and I felt bad for her because when she came home I would have balloons and flowers. I would be so glad she's coming home….and nobody showed up because it's not such a big deal for them but it was for us and her brothers and sisters cried, they missed her, it was like they were so proud of her. They had a big sister in college.
>
> All selected caregivers spoke about a lack of understanding on part of

extended family and a sense that members outside of the nuclear family did not

understand the importance of the feat alumnae were accomplishing. One caregiver

spoke about instilling a value in her children not to be discouraged by their

environment and by the perceptions of others:

> ….I tried to encourage my kids not to let your environment limit you. Sometimes a lot of African Americans or Hispanics we tend to let our environments limit us like our family members not allow us to succeed because we will be looked at differently so I always told them that this is your right… because at the end of the day you're the one that you have to live with [yourself] and it's your life.
>
> The same caregiver talks about the importance of having other people in her

daughter's life that could relate and be supportive of her accomplishments:

> …I think it could be jealousy not even jealousy maybe the fact that they never done it because my sister's children have never done it so….they can't see it. So it is good to have friends, supportive friends, from outside that can see it.

Alumnae participants also spoke to a larger sense of isolation experienced on part of their extended families:

> Outside of my immediate family there was a lot of resentment or I was always told that I was different….and that's why she's going to college- like she's not like the rest of us. So I think they had to justify the fact that they didn't go to college because there is something weird about me or odd about me….not that they [I] put in the work or tried hard enough or managed to have their [my] right priorities….In some ways they were proud…but I don't think they identified with me growing up. I was the white girl or I was corny or whatever.

Alumnae also felt isolated from their families and communities based on a change of ideals and values. Alumnae participants spoke about how difficult this was to cope with as part of communities which are very much extensions of biological family. All alumnae participants spoke to the experience of beginning to identify as a "Mount Holyoke Woman" and what that meant for them as well as how that impacted the perception others from their communities at home had of their changed persona. One alumna in particular talks about becoming "more worldly" via her college education and how this in turn influenced a change in her values and understanding of who she was and what she wants out of life:

> It's really interesting how things completely change. It just opened up my mind from being stuck in Southern California. It made me understand there is a world out there I wasn't living in and things that I have no part of so now I'm much more worldly and I know that I could never live in southern California I want to live somewhere else. You can be a Mount Holyoke woman because your independent, knowledgeable and you know what you want and you're gonna get it. Because a lot of my cousins in Mexico when I go there are like you are so White washed and I'm like its not that I'm White washed….it's really difficult at times because the traditions that my family have are not necessarily the values that I share.

Another alumna talks about coming into her privilege of being educated and this being perceived by old friends in the community as her being too White and thinking she is better than them:

> My neighborhood was really small. We went to school together, we chilled together and so not taking them with you is hard especially since I became few of the kids that actually left and those are people that when I came back I was too quote, unquote White for them….the way I talked and acted and presented myself wasn't the [participant's name] they knew when I was in high school. When I got back I wasn't hanging out with them so when I was at Mount Holyoke I got arrested my 3rd day….I couldn't get in trouble anymore because if I did than I wouldn't have anything so I couldn't be around those people anymore and they thought I thought I was better than them and to some extent I did feel that way because I was doing something with my life when they were not even trying… and so it was a real struggle and I still talk to some of them but others I can't do anything because now I'm so far into my privilege with education that…all I sound like is some motivational speaker to them now and I'm not the kid that they saw in the street I'm a motivational speaker that is trying to get some hood rats out of the street and is a convert and I don't really want to be that person.

Another alumna compares her transition experience to living in two very different worlds and feeling a sense of loss of connection with her community who assumed she had changed because of her education:

> I think it was hard for me because for me they were such different worlds especially hanging out with friends who were in college or were but already dropped out or went to a community college. I feel like they thought who is this new person who is speaking a little more eloquently or who is more informed about certain things or excited about certain things. It was really hard for me to say that there are new things that I've learned. It was hard for me to say that these are things that I've learned and they may change me a little bit but I'm still going to be me even if these things change. So that was really hard for me…

Implicit Findings

Theme: Spoken and unspoken

Implicit findings in this study related to the selective choices caregivers and alumnae made regarding what they chose to express verbally to one another. All participants reported making decisions about what information to share and not share with their caregivers and daughters. Many caregivers reported feeling emotional, sad, and as if they were experiencing a loss when their daughters first moved to Mount Holyoke for their first semester of college but choosing not to verbally express that and deal with it separately and on their own time.

> When I got back I cried it was overwhelming for me…. I was walking on the campus with a friend. We went together and I just looked at her [her daughter] and just cried. I said, I can't believe she's here. She didn't see it. She never saw it. And then when I got home I just really I realized this was it. Like she's really there. It was one of the greatest moments in my life. Unbelievable. It was one of the best times in my life. She never saw it.

All participants who were selected caregivers reported a consistent effort to maintain communication with their daughters. Caregivers reported needing to hear from their daughter's everyday as a way to manage their own worries and anxieties about having them so far away. It was important for caregivers to feel they still had a connection to their daughters. Many of the caregivers reported missing the companionship of their daughters. Though caregivers remained in daily communication many were cognizant of not sharing too much regarding the families stresses or problems the family was experiencing so as to avoid worrying their daughters and distracting them from their academics:

> ….I don't tell her everything I just want to leave it alone and not tell her and she'll come back home like why didn't you tell me.

The idea that certain things that were going on at home should not be shared due to preventing daughters from guilty feelings was prevalent among caregiver

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participants. One caregiver in particular did not tell her daughter about a major depressive episode she experienced because she wanted to wait for her daughter to graduate from college first and felt the news would make her feel guilty enough to drop out and want to return home.

> I didn't want to accept her absence. I fell into a very deep depression because all I would do is work and come home and I didn't want to do anything. I missed her presence so much all I did was get up to work and that was it. I was very very depressed and didn't want to accept things. My daughter would say 'mom, do you miss me' and I would say 'I'm not going to say I don't but everything is fine' even though things were not fine I didn't want her to know or to worry so I lied.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This qualitative study explored the subjective experiences of the transition to college among first generation Latinas as well as their caregiver's subjective understanding of the student's family role and the changes that occurred in the family once the student entered college. Data for this research were gathered from 12 individual interviews. There were 6 interviews conducted with alumnae from Mount Holyoke College and 6 selected caregivers of those alumnae. The research question for this study was as follows: How do first-generation Latinas perceive their cultural role in the family changing upon entering college and eventually graduating and returning to the home? This chapter will integrate the literature review with the study findings in five areas: family and community experiences, family role experiences, caregiver experiences, persistence experiences, and recreating family and community. A discussion of the strengths and limitations of this study and recommendations on promoting first-generation Latina students persistence are also included.

Key Findings

Study findings revealed a combination of beneficial and challenging experiences as first-generation Latinas transition to college. Being the first in the family to go to college, making their parents proud, being an example for siblings,

and creating educational opportunities for their families were cited as beneficial experiences. A number of academic and family experiences created challenges for alumnae while transitioning to college. Family experiences that created stress were fulfilling multiple roles in the family, experiencing guilt that they moved away to go to college and abandoned the family, and receiving pressure from family and community members that they not change or loose their cultural identity. Evidence that caregivers expected Latina alumnae to fulfill multiple roles in the family was based on gender expectations in Latino culture. These expectations were communicated non-verbally and sometimes unbeknownst to caregivers. To overcome these challenges, the study found that participants renegotiated relationships with their families and recreated family-like connections via mentorship and student relationships within the college environment. Alumnae also spoke with faculty and advisors and sought support from campus offices, including cultural organizations such as LaUnidad, APAU, and the campus-counseling center. This study found that positive as well as negative experiences contributed to persistence for first-generation Latina students. They continue to be role models within their families and communities after graduation from Mount Holyoke College, to create opportunities for themselves, to improve the social and economic conditions of their communities and families as pioneers of higher education, and to make themselves and their families proud by constantly aspiring to a high degree of excellence in their personal and professional lives. Integrating these findings with the research literature now follows.

Family and Community Experiences

Alumnae participants felt that their venture towards education was about more than just themselves. They experienced entering college as a family venture and something that was being done for the family. Many spoke about being an example for their siblings and being able to pave the road for generations to come within the family. On the other hand, the Latino cultural value of marianismo emphasizes the expectation that women will prioritize family needs over individual ones that conflict with the individualistic culture of the college environment (Sy & Romero, 2008). Family connectedness and the maintenance of family relationships has been shown to present a "double-edged sword" for the first-generation Latina struggling to persist (Sy, 2006). While family connections have been shown to provide emotional support during the first-generation Latina students' transition to college they have also been shown to place additional pressure on Latinas to continue to fulfill family roles from within the college environment.

Family and community were understood as both protective factors as well as stressful factors. Caregivers mentioned that weekly communication with their daughters helped them to deal with their absence from the home while alumnae mentioned it helped them to cope with being away. However, it felt important for alumnae to know what was going on in the household while often knowing what was going on led to experiences of guilt about moving away to college. The reason alumnae wanted to know about family matters was due to the sense of responsibility for the family.

Family Role Experiences

While family connectedness has been proven to support the emotional stability of the student, it has also been shown to promote a sense of obligation to meet family needs (Sy, 2006). Alumnae participants all spoke about feeling pressured to continue to fulfill family roles from within the college environment. Though Latina alumnae had a difficult time defining this pressure as a family "obligation," all participants expressed feeling there was no alternative other than to prioritize their family in this way. Latinas who were closer to their mothers were more likely to do what their mothers ask of them as a result of their close relationship.

Caregivers in this study did not speak about placing these expectations on their daughters while they transitioned to college. Many of the family roles Latina alumnae felt they were pressured to continue to perform were expectations that were communicated nonverbally by parents. This was done by communicating family news in the hopes that alumnae would intervene- especially when siblings got into trouble, the expectation that alumnae would come home to visit often, and the hope that alumnae would continue to help with errands while at college such as making phone calls related to family matters, etc. These family role obligations fall more on girls in the family than they do on boys and the extent to which these obligations are fulfilled is higher among Latina daughters than Latino sons (Sy, 2006).

Alumnae participants had a hard time negotiating family roles from within the college environment. It felt counter to the Latino culture to put one's family aside and to prioritize school over family. However, many alumnae spoke of experiences of first negotiating relationships with family in order to persist and make the college transition less stressful. Boundary setting with parents was helpful in terms of alumnae not picking up the phone when studying, stating that the conversation would have to happen at a later time, or cutting conversations short while emphasizing the importance of a test or paper to a grade for class. Caregivers were responsive to these needs when they were communicated verbally.

Caregivers had the same expectations of daughters that they had before the transition to college. Many caregivers expected daily phone calls or contact of some kind. It felt natural for alumnae participants to contact their caregivers and families regularly though they found they needed to renegotiate the timing of phone calls and the duration of contact with the family in order to prioritize school, work and make accommodations for their college roles. The fact that alumnae participants were able to renegotiate relationships with their family and caregivers in this way was what fostered their academic success and achievement.

Gender Role Experiences

Gender is also a basis for the pressure first-generation Latina students feel to fulfill family obligations within the college environment. Gender has been cited in previous research as the root cause for expectations of Latina women in the family (Sy, 2006; Sy & Romero, 2008; Torres, 2004). Marianismo is understood as the

essence of being a caretaker for the family and putting one's own desires aside for the well being of the family. Research indicates that Latina students experience greater difficulty transitioning to college than their male counterparts as a result of marianismo (Sy, 2006). Though it has been shown that parents emphasize the importance of education to their children, many parents view daughters as "family-oriented caretakers" and tend to place multiple expectations regarding the role of caretaking on their daughters even while they transition to college (Sy, 2006). One caregiver in this study spoke about an understanding Latinas in the family have about their family roles and obligations. According to this caregiver, expectations do not have to be communicated verbally to Latinas in the family for them to be understood. The perspective of this participant speaks to an overall sense Latino parents have that family expectations are understood by all in the family. According to David T. Abalos: "Latina women were traditionally raised to feel ashamed and worthless if they broke with authority," (Abalos, 2007) and this viewpoint is reinforced by the value of respecto, which stresses respecting one's elders and in particular one's parents. Falicov (1998) writes about Latino styles of communication, which are shaped by familismo and respeto. *Choteos* (jokes) and *indirectas* (sarcastic comments) are used to communicate while maintaining harmony in interpersonal relationships. Latinos are socialized with the idea that interpersonal relationships will flourish if people talk nicely and avoid confrontation and direct forms of communicating issues (Falicov, 1998).

In setting examples of *indirectas* and emotional closeness, Latino parents teach their children to have a "proper demeanor" and a considerate, helpful,

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and warm approach toward others. Later they will be praised and liked for

displaying *simpatia*- the ability to create smooth, friendly, and pleasant

relationships that avoid conflict. (Falicov, 1998, p. 180)

Caregivers in this study did not admit to treating children in the family

differently based on gender but when asked they were very clear that they would

have worried less if their daughter had been a son who moved away to college.

Caregivers also felt they would have needed less contact with their sons than they

did with daughters. They shared concerns about the safety of their daughters while

moving away to college as well as a concern for the family once their daughters left.

Caregivers were sensitive to the changes that occurred once their daughters left the

home and though many did not attribute this directly to the multiple roles

daughters had in the home, they were able to talk about the family changes that

occurred as a result of the transition to college. Many of the changes mentioned

were a sense of loss, a sense that something was missing, and an overall change in

family dynamic and roles in the home.

Caregiver Experiences

Generational status of the parents had a great influence on the expectations

parents had of their daughters while in college. Torres (2004) uses the language of

"acculturated parents" and "less acculturated parents" to write about the level of

acculturation of American culture parents have achieved. In this study, caregivers

ranged from adhering strictly to cultural values to selectively choosing which values

were the most important. According to Torres (2004), students of acculturated

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parents tend to make decisions between Latino and Anglo culture in less stressful ways and experience less stress from parents. The studies' findings were consistent with this research and found that alumnae participants of acculturated parents were better able to assimilate to the college environment while maintaining a strong sense of their ethnic identity as Latina. Caregivers in this study who were less acculturated had a tendency to expect more from their children in terms of traditional family roles. These caregivers placed more pressure on their daughters during the college transition and had higher expectations of their daughters to maintain daily contact and to remain connected to family events and news. Torres (2004) notes that a focus on gender issues seemed to be clearer among the Latinas of less acculturated parents, which is consistent with the findings of this study. Caregivers who were born in the United States and still value Latino cultural values as central to their way of life struggled with the college transition of their daughter and role change. This study found that Latino cultural values were challenged the most when female college students experimented with more freedom while in college (Torres, 2004).

Ethier and Deaux (1994) point out that the families of first-generation Latina students' are different from other Latino families in important ways. According to them, Latina women entering college goes against central cultural values and therefore the families of these students must have already made important negotiations with their children prior to the transition to college. Having already negotiated up to this point, the families in this study had strengths that allowed them to renegotiate relationships during the transition to college. Though these

families had certain tools, the transition to college remains full of ambiguity for both the caregiver and the Latina student as they stumble to figure out a way to renegotiate family relationships and roles within the family.

Persistence Experiences

Caregivers all spoke about impressing upon their children the importance of education throughout their lives. The one expectation caregivers reported having and making clear both verbally and nonverbally was that their daughters go to college and pursue the opportunities they were unable to pursue. All alumnae understood how valuable education is and how important it felt for the family that they be the first to reach the milestone of graduating from college. This served as a motivational factor for first-generation Latinas to remain in college and complete the experience.

First-generation Latinas in this study initially perceived the environment of Mount Holyoke College as a negative environment because of the difference between Latino culture and the culture of the college, which stresses independence and autonomy (Phoummarath, Landingham, Conoley, Choi-Pearson, Castillo, & Archuleta, 2006). University culture is more often than not consistent with the behaviors, beliefs, and values of White American culture (Phoummarath, et al., 2006). For Latinos, as well as other individuals of color, ethnic background is an important piece of personal identity and often a source of pride to be worked through during early adulthood and oftentimes in college (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Alumnae participants in this study spoke about strongly identifying as Latina within

the college environment as a means to persist and make connections with other Latinas on campus. Identifying strongly as Latina and finding ways to celebrate and support that identity felt important for alumnae participants in this study. Alumnae spoke about experiences of identity development within the college setting and questioning gender roles as a result. Many participants struggled to understand traditional Latina gender roles rooted in passivity for women and began to become more assertive within the college environment (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Examples of the ways participants began to assert themselves included seeking out mentorship, speaking up in classes, and competing for various opportunities on-campus such as study abroad scholarships and internship opportunities.

Alumnae spoke about being exposed to new knowledge and new people that made the transition to college feel more like a personal adventure for them. It felt like doing something for themselves and their own personal and professional development. This is understood as contributing to the development of a "private self" the Latina daughter creates in order to individuate from her parents (Falicov, 1998). For many first-generation Latinas, the experience of having a life separate from family was a persistence factor. Many participants spoke about taking advantage of internships, study abroad experiences, as well as building a social life with friends apart from family.

Recreating family and community. Alumnae spoke about feeling estranged once arriving at Mount Holyoke, a predominately White college, due to the change of environment. This felt very different to the culture of the home communities of

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alumnae participants, which were predominately of color. Moving to a new college environment that was predominately White was experienced as a transition that required assimilation.

In order to persist and assimilate to the college environment, alumnae spoke about recreating family-like connections while on-campus through mentoring from faculty and staff as well as participating in cultural organizations such as LaUnidad and APAU to connect with other students of color who they perceived as having a similar experience. Alumnae participants found that when they connected with other students of color with whom they could relate, the college environment felt less stressful and the transition to college was made easier.

Community was re-created on campus as well via the building of connections with other students and faculty alike. Faculty of color mirrored for students what they could be in years to come and students gravitated toward professors, of color and White, who took the time out to speak to them and find out how their transition was going. It felt important to be heard and understood by a community of people on-campus.

Recommendations

This study confirmed that first-generation Latina students are experiencing both stressful and beneficial experiences during their college transitions, which are rooted in their cultural values. First-generation Latinas struggle to balance the expectations of their parents and families along with the expectations of the college environment (Torres, 2003). Challenges in the college environment create a sense of alienation, both inside and outside the classroom. To support Latina students'

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persistence, predominately White colleges should adopt strategies that promote family involvement and increase a sense of belonging.

Several strategies to promote Latina students' academic persistence and achievement could be adopted. A bridge program from high school to college could focus on building academic skills, while also addressing the cultural and social challenges Latina students might encounter in a college setting. In addition, college materials that are sent home such as invitations to campus-events, etc. could be published in Spanish as well as English depending on the language spoken in the home in order to involve parents and family in the college experience. Academic offices, which provide student support, should assess whether their services are meeting the needs of Latina students. By understanding Latino cultural values and the influence these values have on the transition to college, practitioners will better understand the "cultural socialization" of first-generation Latinas. In addition, institutions of higher education can better assist Latina students and their families with the transition (Torres, 2004). Furthermore, examining the cultural roles and family obligations that Latina daughters are expected to fulfill will contribute to better understanding how academic outcomes are influenced by this cultural phenomena.

College counseling centers should become familiar with the unique academic, social, and cultural needs that Latinas encounter when transitioning to college. In addition, counselors should be aware that it is important for Latina students to feel heard and understood when it comes to family tensions that arise in order to feel

supported. These clinical encounters should not stigmatize the enmeshment of family but should instead seek to reinforce the Latina students' individuation from her family in a gradual, supportive way to support the renegotiation of relationships. Latinas might consider organizing a group that would discuss strategies to enhance their academic success. Another student could lead the group or Latina students could identify a professor or administrator who could facilitate it. This study confirmed that most Latina students were seeking support from their Latino peers and other students and faculty. To augment individual counseling services, peer support groups could be implemented that would give Latinas the opportunities to develop strategies for success and to provide mutual support.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Limitations to this study include sampling bias and researcher bias. Sampling bias may have occurred as the research design asked participants to select one caregiver as opposed to another and the selected caregiver might have had a particular bias in his/her responses. Researcher bias may have occurred due to this researcher's identification as a first-generation Latina herself who is also an alumna from Mount Holyoke College. This may have resulted in over-identification with participants and a lack of probing while asking questions during the interview. There may have been an informational bias due to this researcher's specific ethnic and national background, which may have made some Latinas and caregivers more comfortable to speak, while creating discomfort for others. Finally, due to the small sample size of the population used for this study, results may not be generalizable beyond first-generation Latinas attending a private, 4-year college.

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The study also had several strengths. Contrary to other studies that tend to focus on the students' perspective, this study included a sample of caregivers who were selected by the student to be interviewed. Furthermore, this study had a diverse sample of first-generation Latinas from various ethnic backgrounds and used qualitative data to obtain narrative experiences of participants.

Conclusion

In conclusion, first-generation Latinas are transitioning to college and going to 4-year colleges with further aspirations to obtain professional and graduate degrees. As this study confirmed, they have a number of positive and beneficial experiences that can facilitate this transition. At the same time, challenges and stressors present barriers to a successful transition to college. In order for the first-generation Latina to persist in college she needs to create a community of people within the college environment who understand and support her during her transition and throughout her college experience. Four-year colleges should consider implementing recruitment and retention strategies and programs that increase Latina students' sense of belonging and lessen the guilt and sense of family abandonment that comes from moving away from home to go to college. Considering the academic, social, cultural, and family experiences that can be enablers or barriers to Latina students' academic achievement and college transition success is recommended.

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Appendix A

Smith College School for Social Work Approval Letter

SMITH COLLEGE
School for
Social Work

Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950
F (413) 585-7994

January 15, 2010

Emely Velez

Dear Emely,

Thanks for sending in the translated materials. I think it is very important to have it available just in case. All is now complete and we are happy to give final approval to your study.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Good luck with your interesting project.

Sincerely,

Ann Hartman, D.S.W.
Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Joanne Corbin, Research Advisor

Appendix B

Email to Cultural Organizations at Mount Holyoke College

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is Emely Velez and I am an alumna from the class of 2008. I'm currently working on my Masters of Social Work from Smith College School For Social Work. As part of my curriculum, I am currently working on my masters' thesis project, which will be looking at first-generation Latina college students and how the transition to college changes cultural roles in the family. I'm hoping to interview 12-14 participants and for this reason I am reaching out to your organization.

As an alumnus, I am aware of the depth of talented individuals we recruit to our esteemed institution and am hoping to locate participants from within this network. I have attached to this email a flyer, which promotes the purposes of my research and contains my contact information for interested parties who either want more information about my study or hope to participate. If you would be willing to forward my email and flyer to your organization and your mailing list, I would deeply appreciate this. Thanks in advance for your help and please do contact me should you require more information.

Warmest Regards,

Emely Velez c/o 2008

Appendix C

Permission Letter from New York City Young Alumnae Association

COPY OF EMAIL CONFIRMATION SENT BY SECRETARY OF MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE NEW YORK CITY YOUNG ALUMNAE GROUP

Tamara.Dews@sonymusic.com to me

Hi Emely,

I am writing you to confirm that I will distribute your thesis flyer to the New York City Young Alumnae group list once our club's president (Kate Axt) reviews your materials. Please send me the materials at your earliest convenience, so I can forward them to the Kate.

~Tamara

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant,

My name is Emely Velez and I am a Masters Candidate at Smith School For Social Work. I am conducting a qualitative study about first-generation Latinas. The purpose of this study is to explore the personal experiences of the transition to college among first generation Latinas as well as their parent's personal understanding of the student's family role and the changes that occurred in the family once the student left for college. This research study for my thesis is being conducted as part of the requirements for the Masters of Social Work degree at Smith College School for Social Work and future presentations and publications.

Your participation is requested because you have been self-identified as a first-generation Latina alumna. If you choose to participate, I will conduct an individual interview with you and your selected parent. The interview will last for approximately 60-90 minutes. I will ask you both to provide information about yourself, such as your age, where you are from, what is your ethnicity, etc. Each participant will be individually interviewed as well as selecting a primary parent who they would like to participate in the study. The parent chosen cannot be a sibling who has fulfilled the role of parent. Once a parent has been chosen, they will be contacted and scheduled for a separate individual interview. These interviews will explore how leaving to college has influenced the family of the student as well as the student's role in the family. Two separate interviews will be conducted to focus on the student's perspective and the parent's perspective. Interviews will be recorded using an audio recorder and I will transcribe the data myself. If a transcriber is used, he or she will sign a confidentiality agreement. The interview will be conducted either in person or over the phone. I will not conduct any interviews over the phone until I have your signed consent letter in hand. You and I will determine what works best given our respective geographic locations and with consideration to what will be most convenient for you.

The potential risk of participating in this study may be that during the process of answering personal questions, you may encounter some difficult emotions and some interview questions could trigger uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. An example of this would be potentially recalling memories of family conflict or feelings of isolation while you were in college, etc. As part of the mental health community, I feel it is important to provide you with a list of resources for mental health services in your area for you to access should you find it necessary. You will receive no financial compensation for your participation in this study. However, you may find it personally meaningful to participate as well as benefit from the knowledge that the results of this project will be particularly relevant to other first-generation Latina students as they seeks ways to be successful and supported throughout their own college experiences. This is an area of research that is missing from the literature on first-generation Latinas and their families.

As members committed to education you may feel rewarded by this study considering the ways it will add to the body of literature in academia.

In order to ensure participant confidentiality, I will give you a code number under which I will store your data. I will privately maintain contact information connecting you to your code number until I am able to check back with you about the validity of my transcriptions and analysis. This is to ensure that you feel as though you have been represented accurately in my work. This connecting information will be destroyed as soon as these checks have been completed. The data will be shared with my research advisor only and under the code number you choose. Once my thesis is complete, all recordings and transcripts will be destroyed after 3 years according to Federal regulations. Strict confidentiality will be maintained, as consistent with federal regulations and the mandates of the social work profession. Your identity will be protected, as your assigned code number will be used in the reporting of the data. Your name will never be associated with the information you provide in the interview. The data may be used in other education activities as well as in the preparation for my Master's thesis. Your confidentiality will be protected by coding the information and storing the data in a secure file for a minimum of three years and after three years it will be destroyed unless I continue to need it in which case it will be kept secured.

Participation in this project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to answer any questions I ask at any point during participation in the project. You may also withdraw from the study for any reason at any point up to April 1, 2010, at which point I am required to submit the bulk of Thesis work to Smith College School for Social Work and will be unable to remove your contribution from the final product of the Thesis work. In order to withdraw from the study, you are asked to inform this researcher of your decision to do so, but not the reasons for doing so. If your chosen parent and/or guardian chooses to withdraw, the same guidelines apply. Once Informed Consent has been collected, you must inform me of your decision to withdraw verbally and in writing. If you have any concerns about your rights or about any aspect of the study, I encourage you to call me or the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee at (413) 585-7974.

YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Investigator's Signature: _____   **Date:** _____

Participant's Signature: _____   **Date:** _____

Please keep a copy of this form for your records and thank you in advance for your participation.

Appendix E

Carta de Consentimiento Informado

Estimado afiliado,

Mi nombre es Emely Vélez y soy un candidato de la Universidad de Smith para el maestría en trabajo social. Estoy llevando a cabo un estudio cualitativo acerca de las latinas de primera generación. El propósito de este estudio es explorar las experiencias personales de la transición a la universidad entre las latinas de primera generación, así como la comprensión personal de los padres y los cambios que se produjeron en la familia una vez que el estudiante fue al universidad. Este estudio de investigación para mi tesis se lleva a cabo como parte de los requisitos para los maestros de grado de trabajo social, en el Universidad de Smith y las futuras presentaciones y publicaciones.

Su participación se solicita debido a que han sido auto-identificada como la primera alumnana de la generación de latinas. Si decide participar, voy a efectuar una entrevista individual con usted y su madre o padre. La entrevista tendrá una duración de aproximadamente 60-90 minutos. Le voy a preguntar tanto para proporcionar información acerca de usted, su edad, de dónde eres, ¿cuál es su origen étnico, etc. Todos los participantes serán entrevistados individualmente, así como la selección de uno de los padres que les gustaría participar en el estudio . El padre elegido no puede ser un hermano que ha cumplido el parte de padre. Una vez que un padre se ha elegido, ellos serán contactados y programado para una entrevista individualmente. Estas entrevistas se explorará como la manera de salir de la universidad ha influido la familia del estudiante. Dos entrevistas por separado se llevará a cabo para centrarse en la perspectiva del estudiante y la perspectiva de los padres. Las entrevistas serán grabadas usando una grabadora de audio y voy a transcribir los datos a mí mismo. Si se utiliza un transcriptor, él o ella firmará un acuerdo de confidencialidad. La entrevista va a ser en persona o por teléfono. No voy a llevar a cabo todas las entrevistas por teléfono hasta que tenga su carta de consentimiento firmada en la mano. Tú y yo determinar qué funciona mejor dado a nuestros respectivos lugares geográficos y con la consideración de que será más conveniente para usted.

El riesgo potencial de participar en este estudio podría ser que durante el proceso de responder preguntas personales, puede encontrarse con algunas emociones difíciles y algunas preguntas de la entrevista podría provocar pensamientos y sentimientos incómodos. Un ejemplo de esto sería potencialmente recordando los recuerdos de los conflictos familiares o los sentimientos de aislamiento mientras que usted estaba en la universidad, etc. Como parte de la comunidad de salud mental, creo que es importante proporcionarle una lista de recursos para los servicios de salud mental en su área para que usted tenga acceso en caso de que lo consideren necesario. Usted recibirá ninguna compensación económica por su participación en este estudio. Sin embargo, usted puede encontrar un significado personal a participar, así como beneficiarse de los conocimientos que los resultados de este proyecto será especialmente relevante para los otros estudiantes de primera generación-Latina, ya que pretende maneras de tener éxito y el apoyo de toda su experiencia universitaria. Esta es un área de investigación que no se encuentra en la

literatura sobre la primera generación de mujeres latinas y sus familias. Como miembros comprometidos con la educación se puede sentir recompensado por este estudio teniendo en cuenta las formas en que se agregan al cuerpo de la literatura en el mundo académico.

Con el fin de garantizar la confidencialidad de los participantes, le dará un número de código con el que voy a guardar los datos. Privada que mantendrá la información de contacto de conexión a su número de código hasta que pueda volver a platicar con usted acerca de la validez de mis transcripciones y análisis. Esto es para asegurar que se siente como si han sido representados con exactitud en mi trabajo. Esta información la conexión será destruida tan pronto como estos controles han sido completadas. Los datos serán compartidos con mi asesor de investigación y sólo en el número de código que usted elija . Una vez que mi tesis es completa, todas las grabaciones y transcripciones serán destruidos después de 3 años de acuerdo con las regulaciones federales. Estricta confidencialidad se mantendrá, ya que de conformidad con las regulaciones federales y los mandatos de la profesión de trabajo social. Su identidad será protegida, como su número de código asignado será utilizado en la presentación de los datos. Su nombre nunca será asociada con la información que dio en la entrevista. Los datos pueden ser utilizados en actividades de educación de otros, así como en la preparación de mi tesis de maestría. Su confidencialidad será protegida por codificación de la información y el almacenamiento de los datos en un archivo seguro por un mínimo de tres años y después de tres años serán destruidos a menos que me siga lo necesitan, en cuyo caso se mantendrá segura.

La participación en este proyecto es completamente voluntaria y usted puede negarse a contestar cualquier pregunta que pregunte en cualquier momento durante la participación en el proyecto. Usted también puede retirarse del estudio por cualquier motivo en cualquier momento hasta el 1 de abril 2010, momento en que estoy obligado a presentar la mayor parte del trabajo de tesis de la Universidad de Smith, la Escuela de Trabajo Social y no podrán retirar su participación de los producto final del trabajo de tesis. Con el fin de retirarse del estudio, se le solicita informar a este investigador de la decisión de hacerlo, pero no las razones para hacerlo. Si tu padre elegido decide retirarse, las mismas pautas de aplicación. Una vez consentimiento informado que se ha recogido, debe informar a mí de su decisión de retirar verbalmente y por escrito. Si usted tiene alguna preocupación acerca de sus derechos o sobre cualquier aspecto del estudio, le animo a que me llame o el Presidente de la Escuela de la Universidad de Smith de Trabajo Social Comité de Revisión de Sujetos Humanos al (413) 585-7974.

SU FIRMA INDICA QUE USTED HA LEÍDO Y ENTENDIDO LA INFORMACIÓN ANTERIOR Y QUE HA TENIDO LA OPORTUNIDAD DE HACER PREGUNTAS SOBRE EL ESTUDIO, SU PARTICIPACIÓN, Y SUS DERECHOS Y QUE ESTÁ DE ACUERDO PARA PARTICIPAR EN EL ESTUDIO.

Firma del investigador: _____ **Fecha:** _____

Firma del participante: _____ **Fecha:** _____

Por favor, mantenga una copia de este formulario para sus archivos y gracias de antemano por su participación.

Appendix F

Interview Questions

These are the questions I would like to ask. However, based on my literature review, I would like to discuss voluntary vs. forced obligations, gender roles, and cultural values as follow-up questions. These are all issues identified as important in the literature. I will ask the follow-up questions if these issues are not touched upon in the responses.

Demographic Questions (for both participants and parents)

1. Age
2. Primary language spoken in the home
3. Year of graduation from MHC (only for alumnae)
4. What neighborhood did you grow up in? Predominately White or a large population of People of Color?
5. Are you of the first-generation in your family born in the United States? If not, which generation are you?

Student Questions:

1. Where were you born? If needed, when did you come to the United States?

2. How do you identify ethnically and what are some values that you have connected to that identity?

3. What was the transition to college like?

    a. How did your role in the family change?

        i. How much of what you just described do you think is a result of being a woman in a Latino family?

    b. How did your role in the family stay the same?

    c. What helped you deal with the transition?

    d. What made it difficult? Academically? Environmentally?

    e. Ask about responsibilities to family while at school and ask if participants felt these were expected from parents? Did participants feel an obligation to fulfill certain responsibilities to family?

4. Have your parent's expectations of you changed since leaving to/graduating from college? If so, how?

Parent Questions:

1. Where were you born? If needed, when did you come to the United States?

2. How do you identify ethnically and what are some values that you have connected to that identity?

3. What did you expect from your children as a part of the family as they were growing up?

    a. Did this change once they left to college? If so, how?

4. What was the student's transition to college like?

    a. What changed in the family?

    b. What remained the same?

    c. What helped the family deal with the transition?

    d. What made it difficult?

    e. Discuss gender roles and obligations.

    f. What expectations did you have for your daughter? Do you think she accepted these?

5. Have your expectations of your daughter changed since leaving to/graduating from college? If so, how?