Eroding Community Cultural Wealth: How Schooling Devalues Latina/o/x Students' Identity, Pride, and Language

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Abstract

Educational narratives written by several cohorts of Latina/o/x students in a college-level ethnic studies course, first-year retention program showed how the current hegemonic educational paradigm—with its attendant neo-liberal, colonial, white supremacist and Eurocentric logics— abates the accumulation and employment of community cultural wealth. Specifically, these systemic obstacles impact linguistic, navigational, and resistant capital as Latina/o/x students recount how learning English, feeling othered by classmates and teachers, and internalizing assimilationist and deficit-based ideologies to avoid harassment or mistreatment factored into their educational experiences. Situating community cultural wealth amid the Americanization, deculturalization, or assimilationist projects that have shaped the schooling conditions for students of color better accounts how educational practices, curriculum and spaces can destabilize the range of community cultural wealth competences Yosso has classified. This project adds complexity and highlights the fluidity in the community cultural wealth model by recognizing competing forces at work: the cultivation of these assets via family/community home spaces, discourses and networks, as well as the attrition of these competencies in formal educational spaces. As such, this study contributes to the existing research about CCW by underscoring a dimensionality not yet fully addressed, and, by recognizing the epistemological significance of these skill sets.

"I felt like I didn't stay true to my mom or myself. I felt like I went behind my family's back and betrayed them. It was like I had to lose who I really was and who I really was around … just to thrive in school."

The above quote comes from a written assignment submitted in a college-level ethnic studies course designed for as a first-generation students of color that I taught for eight semesters. As a component of a first-year retention program, this final assignment asked students to pen an educational narrative essay documenting the challenges and opportunities they faced along their educational journeys. Additionally, students were asked to analyze those experiences using race-based concepts learned over the semester. In the excerpt featured above, the student recounts how prior to this course, he rebuffed aspects of his Latino ethnic identity in order to ensure his academic success, implicating schooling systems that reward students who conform to hegemonic whitestream norms of behavior, particularly the Americanization, deculturalization, or assimilationist projects that shape the schooling conditions for students of color (Valenzuela, 1999). As the remainder of the essay reveals, had he not enrolled in the ethnic studies course, he may not have had the opportunity to acquire the tools needed to reclaim his sense of self and restore cultural pride.

The epigraph above exemplifies the sentiment expressed in many of the educational narrative essays produced by the 400-plus Latina/o/x students enrolled in this course. Together, they point to the ways ethnic studies curricula renews a sense of pride and esteem in one's ethno-racial identity and knowledge base (Dee & Penner, 2017; de Novais & Spencer, 2019; Sleeter, 2011) and bolsters stores of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), or ways of knowing that result from experiences of marginalization, that are diminished in whitestream (Urrieta, 2009) spaces. Indeed, analyzing these educational narratives with a community cultural

wealth framework reveals not only that ethnic studies courses positively reinforce community cultural wealth, but, importantly, also how educational practices, curriculum and spaces adversely impact the various competencies Yosso has classified.

This article focuses on the later, as it analyzes the educational narratives written by Latina/o/x students about their schooling experiences, guided by the following inquiry: How does the current hegemonic educational paradigm—the curricula, educational practices and policies shaped by dominant and normalized neo-liberal, colonial, white supremacist and Eurocentric logics—diminish reserves of community cultural wealth, or CCW, for Latina/o/x students? To begin, I briefly describe the purpose, structure, and organization of the university ethnic studies course that produced the student reflections. I then review CCW literature about Latina/o/x students, noting how this model is largely used to highlight how Latina/o/x students engage at least six different categories of capital, or knowledge, rather than how these capabilities are curbed. Next, I discuss the critical race theoretical and methodological frameworks used to guide the CASDAQ-aided coding and analysis of the student work that makes up the data for this project. I then offer examples from a sample of 100 essays written by Latina/o/x students, allowing their voices to narrate the challenges they have endured in their K-12 schooling, honing in on the normative educational processes that impair three forms of their CCW—namely, their linguistic, navigational, and resistant capital—particularly, the methods used to learn English, the school climates that other them, and the prevalence of assimilationist and deficit-based ideologies. The student accounts point to how the CCW of Latina/o/x students can be destabilized as a result of the systemic obstacles they endure. I conclude by detailing how this study contributes to the existing research about CCW in two

ways: one, by underscoring a dimensionality not yet fully mapped, and, two, by recognizing the epistemological significance of these ways of knowing.

Ethnic Studies 2500: Educational Equity for Students of Color

The university ethnic studies course anchoring this study was one component of a first-year retention program for first-year, first-generation college students of color. Between 2009 and 2014, 800 students of color enrolled in the course, with half of them identifying as Latina/os/xs. The program aimed to increase the number of students of color graduating from a predominantly white, flagship, R1 public university, which had typically low retention and graduation rates for these communities (Alemán & Gáytan, 2017; Castrellón & Pérez-Torres, 2018; Delgado Bernal et al., 2009). Because of the multiple challenges Latina/o/x students face pursuing higher education in historically white institutions (Gándara & Contreras 2009; Solórzano & Yosso 2000; Yosso 2006; Zamudio et al., 2010), the majority of students enrolled in the course fell short of meeting traditional admission standards. Another subset of these enrolled were recipients of a local academic scholarship that covered all expenses for high-achieving underrepresented students. A criterion for admission or for their scholarship required these two groups to enroll in the year-long ethnic studies course, complete critical service learning (Donahue & Mitchell, 2010), and meet regularly with both academic advisors and peer mentors. The faculty (Alger, 1998; Eimers, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), advisors, and peer mentors were all people of color, and the service-learning site was a school with a predominantly student of color population.

For eight semesters, I taught one section of this course, which appraised the educational conditions and experiences of students of color in K-12 and in higher education. The course enabled students to develop an understanding of the educational experiences of historically

underrepresented students by reflecting on their own educational trajectories. Over the semester, students learned about the schooling conditions of students of color, steadily acquiring a vocabulary to help them contemplate how they have been socialized with dominant ideologies (Bejarano, 2005), racialized because of their racial, ethnic or cultural identities (Tatum, 2000), or aggrieved because of negative assumptions about their educability (Valencia, 1997). They also read about the strategies for perseverance and success in an educational system that was not intended for non-white students (hooks, 1990; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Villalpando, 2003; Ward, 1996). It was predicated on critical race pedagogies (Jennings & Lynn, 2005; Leonardo, 2009; Lynn, 1999, 2004, 2005; Lynn & Jennings, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000) that not only center students' lived experiences of systemic racialization via the educational spaces they engage, but also expose the white supremacist, Eurocentric, and colonial ideologies that inform and limit their formalized schooling.

The course culminated with a final paper—the educational narratives examined here—that is both a *testimonio* and analysis of their personal schooling experiences. Students wrote the final paper in two parts. For the first half, they reflect on: 1) their educational accomplishments and challenges; 2) the positive or negative educational experiences that have taken place in school or outside of school that have shaped their understandings of themselves as a student; and 3) how aspects of their identity—gender, race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, language, or immigration status—have impacted their educational journey. For the second half, students selected a handful of concepts—like the social construction of race, institutional racism, whiteness, systems of privilege, the myth of meritocracy, nativism, marginality, resistance, decolonization, and deficit thinking—to analyze the experiences in their narrative.

The resultant educational narratives written by Latina/o/x students were analyzed using a CCW framework for this study. In the next section, I describe the CCW model and review literature employing this lens, paying particular attention to CCW research related to Latina/o/x students.

Defining and Applying Community Cultural Wealth to Latina/o/x Students

Definition. According to Yosso (2005), community cultural wealth is "an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (p. 77). An asset-based perspective, CCW counters Bourdieuean cultural capital theory which situates white, middle- and upper-class populations as "culturally wealthy" and other lower-class and non-white groups as "culturally poor" (Yosso, 2005, p. 76). For groups positioned on the lower rungs of society's race and class hierarchies (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), acquiring this cultural capital, or favored behaviors and values, enables social mobility. Many deficit ideas about Latina/o/x students (Valencia, 2010) extend from this Bourdieuean premise, because Latina/o/x students are perceived to lack this cultural capital (Yosso, 2005).

In contrast, a CCW lens advances that the range of knowledge, skills and abilities of less economically affluent communities of color are often dismissed by dominant mainstream institutions. Yosso (2005) subdivides this expertise into six categories: familial, navigational, resistance, social, linguistic, and aspirational capital. Aspirational capital is the ability to maintain hope and resiliency despite real or perceived barriers. Linguistic capital is the communication skills attained through engaging multiple languages or styles. Familial capital is the historical knowledge about and connection to one's family and/or community that is passed down via *familia* or kin. Social capital is the support network made up of friends, peers, neighbors, family

friends, church parishioners, etc. Navigational capital is the resourcefulness needed to traverse white institutional structures. Finally, resistant capital is a critical awareness about social inequality. These half dozen CCW attributes fall outside bourgeoisie conventions but have proven to be beneficial for members of racial and ethnic communities to survive in a racially stratified society. Thus, CCW reorients flawed perceptions held about Latina/o/x students and other students of color to highlight the skills they draw from in educational sites.

Application. Employed extensively in educational literature, scholars have charted the various forms of capital that make up community cultural wealth as a function of parental, familial or communal *consejos*, networks (Burciaga & Erbstein, 2012), and/or learned *movidas* (Urrieta, 2009). Consequently, a significant amount of the scholarship using CCW often brings to light how the six assets are cultivated or enacted, which can be parsed into three strands: how Latina/o/x students use CCW to navigate educational spaces (Araujo, 2012; Araujo & de la Piedra, 2013; DeNicolo et al., 2015; Espino, 2016; Liou et al., 2009; Martinez, 2011; Matos, 2015; Pérez, 2014; Pérez Huber, 2009; Yosso et al., 2009); how programming or curricula engage students' CCW (Alvarez, 2020; Bejarano & Valverde 2012; Cuevas, 2016; Kelly et al., 2019; Murillo et al., 2017; Olcon et al., 2018; Rodriguez, 2016), or how pre-service teachers, educators and educational leaders might nurture modes of CCW among Latina/o/x students (Espino, 2016; Jimenez, 2020; Liou et al., 2016; Martin-Beltrán et al., 2018; Martinez, 2011; Saathoff, 2015; Zoch & He, 2020).

Because the CCW model intentionally highlights the assets students of color bring into spaces imbued by deficit ideas about their educability, the resulting research emphasizing how Latina/o/x students use CCW or how programming or educational stakeholders can amplify CCW, positions this "array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts" as preset and stable—

albeit often untapped—funds of knowledge (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). Notably, Yosso conceptualized the six forms of community cultural wealth as "not mutually exclusive or static, but rather dynamic processes" (2005, p. 77) with ebbs and flows, but as of yet, few studies have applied this model to flesh out which subtractive schooling practices (Valenzuela, 1999) generate those lapses. The educational narratives examined in this study provide a glimpse into how the dominant prevailing neo-liberal, colonial, and Eurocentric educational models curtail the epistemic knowledge conceptualized by CCW. The next section outlines the research design for this pursuit.

Implementing a Critical Race Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The final writing assignment of the university ethnic studies course—a narrative of focal moments along each student's personal school trajectory that signified manifestations of whiteness, racialization, racism, nativism, and/or colonialism—made up the data for this study. A theoretical sample (Corbin & Strauss, 2007) of 94 educational narratives written by Latina/o/x students between 2009 and 2014 were analyzed with the aid of a qualitative analysis software. All but six names of the students who authored the narratives are anonymized in the findings section.[1]

To complement the CCW model, I relied on a critical race-grounded theory approach (Malagón et al., 2009; Pérez Huber, 2009) to guide the analysis of this sample of narratives, paying particular attention to references that signaled forms of Yosso's capital. A critical race-grounded methodology process that aligns grounded theory with the goals of CRT, critical race-grounded theory is an abductive and comparative analysis of data that allows "researchers to consider how larger structural phenomena shape the data itself" (Malagón et al., 2009, p. 262). As a critical race scholar, Yosso's conceptualization of community cultural wealth is

situated within the framework of critical race theory—namely the centering of experiential knowledge of those who are systemically racialized and othered by structural relations of power--substantiating this methodological approach. NVivo, an automated CAQDAS tool, expedited this synergistic coding process, which consisted of three levels of coding. The first level sought to identify manifestations of CCW, similar to how educational scholars traditionally employ this analytical model. However, during this phase of the coding, I began to see patterns of educational experiences that functioned to wear away at these stores of knowledge. Informed by the tenets of CRT, I sensed an opportunity to consider the infrastructure of school environments as activating these instances, rather than pathologize Latina/o/x student culture or educability as the underlying cause. Again, because critical race theory recognizes the endemic, systemic, and institutional nature of racism and other oppressions, these loci buoyed my analysis of the recurring anecdotes, memories and vignettes contained in the student essays that described diminution of these skill sets. The educational experiences students wrote about thus fell into two categories: manifestations of CCW (which align with the typical scholarship in this area) and depreciation of CCW (which has not been as fully explored). For this project, I narrowed in on experiences that diminish CCW. I grouped these experiences via another two rounds of coding, collapsing them into the following three areas: 1) recollections about learning the English language; 2) memories of alienation at predominantly white schools and/or in advanced/honors/college preparatory courses; and 3) decisions to disassociate from racial identities and adopt deficit perspectives to deter racial prejudice or xenophobia. I then situated these patterns of racialized marginalization that surfaced—experiencing language acquisition and loss, compromised identity formation, and feeling othered in predominantly white environments—within the CCW model, connecting these occurrences as impacting three

specific forms of community cultural wealth: linguistic, navigational, and resistant capital. As the systemic processes for compromising three instrumental stores of generational, familial, and communal knowledge came into focus, I realized an opportunity to enrich our understanding of CCW by demonstrating the permeability and vulnerability of these resources. Multiple examples illustrating how Latina/o/x students mine these depositories to successfully navigate academe already exist; however, this project underscores the ways educational systems disarticulate those assets. Excerpts from the student narratives shared in the section below, then document how the current hegemonic educational paradigm, comprised of neoliberal, colonial, white supremacist and Eurocentric logics, diminishes linguistic, navigational, and resistant capital.

Devaluing Latina/o/x students' identity, pride, and language

This section centers the educational experiences chronicled by the Latina/o/x students in their written narratives, organizing their responses to demonstrate how the current hegemonic educational paradigm—that is, the curricula, educational practices and policies shaped by dominant and normalized neo-liberal, colonial, white supremacist and Eurocentric logics—diminishes their reserves of community cultural wealth of Latina/o/x students. Moreover, by weaving quotations and excerpts from the students' final essays here, I insert Latina/o/x student voice into the research record, establishing Latina/o/x student experiential knowledge (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) as a pivotal source for knowledge production. The commonalities in their   experiences make evident the constancy of schooling structures and discourses Latina/o/x students are subjected to in predominantly white environments, such as second-language acquisition, compromised identity formation, marginalization, and the inculcation of racist, deficit-based, and assimilationist ideologies. I pair the students' excerpts

with analyses that explicate how three distinct caches of CCW—linguistic, navigational, and resistant capital—are compromised as a result of these prevalent institutionalized whitestream (Urrieta, 2009) school practices and settings Latina/o/x students encounter. I have organized the students accounts into three parts, corresponding to the three types of capital impacted by the experiences of language acquisition and loss, compromised identity formation, and being othered documented by Latina/o/x students in their educational narratives: linguistic, navigational, and resistant capital.

Linguistic Capital

Nearly 40 percent of the Latina/o/x students in this sample reflected on their experiences learning English via U.S. public school systems. Existing scholarship on CCW uses the concept of linguistic capital to honor the bilingualism many Latina/o/x students claim and employ to translate for parents and family members, as well as to reposition Spanish fluency as an asset rather than a detriment. However, for many of the English-language learners in this sample who learned English as a second language in formal educational settings, acquiring this capital was wrought with feelings of inferiority, loss, exclusion, and shame.

For instance, students who excelled in school in Mexico were devastated to feel so incompetent in their new U.S. schools. Judy wrote, "I cried at night sometimes and I felt like a failure" because she had such difficulty learning English. Violeta recalled that she "wanted to cry," after taking an examination assessing her English skills because she understood so little of the test. Hortencia wrote that she began to doubt her intellect since she was the only student in her elementary class who was pulled out to work with a bilingual tutor, stating, "this made me feel stupid because I needed a 'special' person to teach me when the rest of my classmates only needed the teacher to learn." Meribha also felt the stigma of being an English language

learner, writing that she "hated being in ESL because everyone knew if you were in ESL" then you were not considered smart.

Lisa recalled the moment in elementary school when she realized her classmates "didn't speak English at school and go home and speak Spanish to their parents." She stated:

> This moment in my life brought a lot of uncertainty about who I thought I was and even brought feelings of shame. I didn't want to be different; I wanted to be like everyone else in my class. These feelings even led to me ignoring a friend who was also Latina. I would roll my eyes or give her one-word responses anytime she would want to talk about Mexico.

For others, maintaining or expressing a fluency in Spanish led to embarrassment or shame about their Latina/o roots. Roxanna wrote that by the time she reached high school, she had pushed aside all aspects of her Latinidad, and even dropped her AP Spanish class because she "refused to speak Spanish." Lisa adopted a similar tactic, writing, "I would often answer 'I don't know' if anyone asked me if I knew how to say something in Spanish, and if I did decide to tell them, I would do it with a 'white' accent, even though I knew the perfect pronunciation." Looking back at her younger self, Citlali wrote that she began denying that she could speak Spanish because she "didn't want to be called a wetback."

Students also articulated a profound sense of loss that came with acquiring English. Ximena explained:

> The more familiar I got with this new language, the more I couldn't get rid of that sensation of loss, the longing for my language, the feeling of power and fluency it brought to my life and how I could link who I was with it. And every

day I got forced to learn this strange language, the more I felt I needed to hide

my true identity and change what had always known to be me.

Elisa described the trade-off of being fluent in English not as "assimilation, or

adaptation," but as "an amputation. None of my friends understood Spanish so I spoke it less

frequently." Diana and Felix similarly "lost touch" or no longer "tried to speak or understand"

Spanish as a result of having mostly white friends. Both explained their choice was motivated by

wanting to fit in and not wanting to be racially marked or made fun of. Adriana disobeyed her

parents rule about only speaking Spanish at home and lost the ability to hold a conversation

with her *abuela* "because I declined to respond back in Spanish ... I knew I was taking it too far

but I wanted to fit in, I didn't want to be different anymore." Flor was so intent on minimizing

her accent that she reasoned that if she "stopped speaking my native language my accent would

go away." She stopped speaking Spanish and her native Mixteco[2] in the hopes of improving her

English.

These tales problematize an idealized version of linguistic capital essentialized in the

existing literature. For a good portion of the Latina/o/x college students in this sample, they did

not cultivate a set of bilingual skills outside of educational settings that fortified them against the

hegemony of the English language and empowered them now as college students in

predominantly white institutions. Instead, the lessons gleaned from monolingual school settings

were that this additional language skill set was insignificant and impaired their academic success.

Even those with predominantly Spanish-speaking parents fell victim to colonial and Eurocentric

ideologies that erode these stores of knowledge. Together, these stories illuminate schooling

practices regarding English-language learning that compromise linguistic capital.

Navigational Capital

Often described as resiliency, navigational capital refers to the component of CCW that informs the maneuvers Latina/o/x students use to negotiate within institutions designed to weed them out or quell their academic aspirations with their critical cultural consciousness intact. However, more than a third of the narratives examined here detailed an investment in whiteness as a tactic used to traverse racially unwelcoming spaces, often at the expense of a positive sense of racial or ethnic identity or pride in their racial/ethnic community.

Montzi typifies this coping strategy when she writes:

At such a young age, I did not know how to work this type of system, so I adjusted. I looked in the mirror and realized that I was not that far from whiteness. I'm faired skinned, brown eyed, have black hair. I knew I wasn't the typical white girl but … I could get in and become accepted. I knew it. So it began. I changed how I spoke, who I associated myself with, how I dressed and everything that I needed to adjust in order to be whiter.

Noelia and Estela similarly describe changing themselves to mirror their predominantly white friend sets. "I changed not only my identity, but my physical identity as well. I started to dress like them, talk like them, and I would act as if I was just as rich as they were," wrote Noelia. Estela stated that her "identity began to change" as her new white friends "became the mirror in which I saw myself." Paola wrote that she spent hours straightening her naturally curly hair to better fit white standards of beauty, while Isabel started dressing in the "trendiest clothes of the time," changing her manner of speaking to "sound more educated" and refrain "from using Spanish in conversations except for in Spanish class." Joanna explained that she opted to play "the role of a white person for the sake of my education." Adriana writes, "I just

knew that if I wanted to survive in this wave of whiteness I had to sacrifice who I really was and act like them." Flor said that she in order to be seen as good student she "assimilated and completely isolated myself from my Latino background."

Latina/o/x students often rationalized this coping mechanism because they wanted to be accepted, and to avoid having to deal with overt acts of racism. Emilia said that as a result of hiding and then forgetting her culture, she was finally "treated like every other white student" at her school. Staving off isolation and loneliness also prompted this strategy. Isabel said she began her transformation in eighth grade with another Latina friend in order to better fit in with the white girls in their class. Ariana notes that she "was desperate to make friends" and felt like she "had no other choice than to start acting like the rest of them. I began to act white." María resorted to telling people that she was "half Spaniard or Romanian. I felt like this way people in class or in public would accept me more." Jose, Montzi, and Analisa all wrote that in order to be accepted by their peers and/or teachers, they changed who they were and adopted dominant white characteristics. Susana wrote that she conformed to norms of whiteness as a way to prevent facing prejudice or racism or any oppression from anyone. Felix indicated that he pursued this tactic because he "longed to fit in and would do anything to not be questioned, doubted, or made fun of." Miranda did not like the way the population of Hispanic students were treated so she "acted, dressed, and talked like the white kids" so she would not be subjected to their taunting. Meribha had a similar rationale and associated mostly with her white classmates to avoid this stigma.

Many students realized that in adopting white norms and aesthetics, they rejected and avoided behaviors and practices that marked them as Mexican or Latina/o/x. Noelia said she spent less time with her family and participating in cultural traditions, choosing instead to spend

time with her white friends. Alberto gave up playing soccer, avoided going to *quinceañeras*, and,

like Adriana, only listened to American pop music rather than *bachata*, *bandas* and *cumbias*.

Diana also said she stopped listening to Latino music or watching *telenovelas* because she "didn't

want to be 'raced'" or made to feel different and not fit in.

Rather than deflect discourses that reinforced hegemonic white supremacist ideologies

with resiliency and critical agency, the recollections of these Latina/o/x students indicate that

they instead navigated academic spaces by internalizing or investing in whiteness. For them, this

option led to academic success, reduced overt expressions of racial discrimination, and resulted

in relationships that kept them from feeling lonely or isolated. This choice seems in contrast

with literature that showcases a navigational capital that withstands and circumvents the

negative and deficit messages about Latina/o/x students with an irrepressible spirit and

adeptness to rise above such discourse. It reveals the susceptibility of this form of capital,

especially in predominantly white academic settings, indicating a second way the current

educational paradigm diminishes reserves of CCW.

Resistant Capital

Finally, many of the Latina/o/x student recollections analyzed diverge from articulations

of resistant capital in the extant literature. Yosso defines resistant capital as the oppositional

behaviors and attitudes skills passed generationally to contest and disrupt the systemic

inequality racially disenfranchised groups bear. For the Latina/o/x students in this sample, two

common patterns of their educational trajectories accentuate the ways they complied with,

rather than defied, the status quo. One manifestation of this was the common practice of

changing their ethnic names as a result of pressure within their educational environments.

Another was in their account of how they internalized and reinscribed deficit thinking about their own racial/ethnic communities.

A number of students wrote about how they Americanized their name in order to avoid embarrassing pronunciations of it by teachers and classmates. Two different students named Paola each opted to change their name to "make it easier" for everyone attempting to say it. One offered "Lola" as an easier choice, while the other opted for "Paula." Amaris and Valeria made the decision as kindergarteners to change their names so they were easier to pronounce. Mariela hated hearing her first name butchered so she changed it to a more palpable, "Mary Ella." Flor Lucina preferred to be called Flor but resented when teachers pronounced her name as "floor," without the rolled 'r', she decided to go by her middle name, Lucina. Teachers struggled with this name as well and instead called her by her last name—Martinez. By the time she reached her senior year, she told people to call her "Lucy", as "literally, no one can get it wrong." Meribha got tired of explaining her name and teaching everyone how to pronounce it, so she changed her name to "Elizabeth" so she could avoid having to sound it out and explain its origin and meaning. Yasmina's unforgettable experience with an especially insensitive teacher prompted her to change her name, as well. She writes:

> When Mrs. Jarvis approached me to mark me off for roll call, she looked down
> at my name and said, "Wow, that name isn't from here. I'm not even going to try
> to pronounce it," and walked away. For the next couple of class periods, this
> routine continued. She … evolved this routine into a game as she would name
> me, "Yasmino from Latin America" for one day, and "Yama-who-ha from the
> middle east," for another. Due to this event, I now … [this] university identify
> me as Mina. Mina sounds white. Going by Mina means that I will not have to

explain myself or my background. Mina gives me the choice to be not immediately discriminated against and ridiculed for being named Yamina just because it sounds 'foreign.'

Another way Latina/o/x students described diminished forms of resistant capital was when they documented an inability to feel pride in their Latina/o/x identity or community, and described the ways they embraced deficit thinking about their families and community. Four out of every ten Latina/o/x student in the sample recounted how feelings of indignity about their Latina/o/x identity and Latina/o/x communities impacted their educational experiences.

For instance, Maya and Citlali each wrote about being embarrassed to be identified as a Latina because of the negative stereotypes associated with this label, particularly in regards to the high rates of teen pregnancy among Latinas. When one of Roxanna's Latina friends became pregnant in high school, she longer associated with her because she did not want people to think that she was going to be another statistic. Miranda also avoiding getting "generalized" with the Mexican and Mexican American students at her high schools who fit the typical stereotype: "They only spoke Spanish around each other, they listened to Mexican music loud, they dressed a certain way also." She said she realized that she kept her distance to avoid being stereotyped and found herself ashamed of her Hispanic culture. Diana "strived to separate" herself from other people of color during high school. She wrote, "I made it a point to not hang out with the 'ghetto' kids. I had grown to resent other students who came from similar backgrounds as mine, because I had internalized some of the comments from other, white students." Meribha also shunned the handful of Hispanics at her school because they were "'Mexican-Mexican.' I didn't want to be compared to the poor and ghetto type." In fact, Meribha said she "was so embarrassed and ashamed to be Mexican" that she began telling people she was Italian.

Montzi wrote that she believed she was genuinely better than the other Hispanic students in her school who dressed badly, spoke broken English, and were darker skinned than herself:

> I felt that the further I pushed myself away from the people who weren't like me and who I didn't want to become, the better chance I had at becoming successful. The last thing I've ever wanted was to become the stereotypical Latina; married at 18, already with a child, another on the way, no education, and no desire to succeed. I feel upset when I'm around people like that. I feel ashamed.

Emilia noticed that Hispanic students in her school were in regular classes—not the advanced classes she was enrolled in. She reasoned that if school administrators and teachers realized she was Hispanic, she would be segregated into those lower track classes. She wrote that this flawed realization made her "want to hide my ethnicity in fear that I would be segregated from the other students. I was ashamed to a certain extent because if these Hispanic students were being treated like outsiders, then maybe they really were, which meant I was, as well."

Carolina noted growing feelings of resentment and anger towards her own community because she perceived that a majority of the Hispanics at her school were not as invested in their schooling and "were all slackers who only cared about having fun and being involved in unnecessary drama. I was angry because it was their fault that the rest of us got the bad reputation." Susana also dismissed the few Latinos that attended her school as having no "values or morals" were "just slackers and didn't care about their education. I thought that if I associated with them that I would go down the wrong path."

In her narrative, Estela recalled being told by white girlfriends that she was different than the other Hispanic girls at their school. Wracked with guilt, Estela stated, "I never disagreed with them. … I figured that the lack of desire to learn and the lack of desire to obtain a higher education kept most students of color from taking advantage of the academic opportunities the school provided for them."

In addition to holding deficit notions about the educational capabilities and aspirations of their Latina/o/x peers, many Latina/o/x students also wrote about how ashamed they were of their families and homes. Roxana noted that even though she recognized the sacrifices her parents made for her, she was still "ashamed of their lack of education" and her "identity as a Hispanic." Jose expressed a sense of embarrassment when he wrote, "For the longest time that I can remember, I have always been ashamed of who I was and where I came from, especially since I was a Mexican-American student living in poverty with undocumented parents." Lilliana wrote that she "grew up hating my identity and blaming my culture and my family with their broken English." Montzi remembered her friend telling her "that her dad hated Mexicans, but she liked me. Those words hurt so much … they still pierce right through my skin." She identifies this moment as spurring her resentment at being Mexican American.

What these recollections indicate is that rather that turn to affirmations about their identity, culture, and ethnic origin to resist negative discourses about their worth or value, many Latina/o/x students internalize adverse dominant ideologies and develop sentiments of self-hate or shame for themselves, their families, and their racial/ethnic community. It reveals the ways the socialization process in predominantly white educational settings, at times, stifles the implementation of resistant capital. These narratives demonstrate how the combined rubrics of colonization, xenophobia, colorism, racism, and nativism that constitute the culture,

curricula, policies and practices of their learning environments, often overwhelm and compromise the potential of this particular reserve of knowledge.

Conclusion

How does the current hegemonic educational paradigm—with its attendant neo-liberal, colonial, white supremacist and Eurocentric logics—diminish reserves of CCW? The analysis revealed four different ways normative educational processes damage the linguistic, navigational, and/or resistant forms of capital of Latina/o/x students: they condition Latina/o/x students to: 1) reject Spanish in the process of learning English; 2) suppress their Latina/o/x identity; 3) pursue assimilationist strategies; and 4) adopt deficit-ideas about Latina/o/x communities. Importantly, it sharpens understandings of the dynamic qualities of the CCW model so it more aptly accounts for the layers of entrenched and systemic inequality that impair the integrity of these repertoires of knowledge.

Culled from a larger group of first-generation students of color, this sample of educational narratives offer a clear record of the repeated assaults Latina/o/x students face in whitestream schools. Heard through their voices, the continual school-sanctioned violence can be understood as destabilizing their multiple forms of CCW. Most research inadvertently treats the skill sets of CCW as fixed and enduring, almost essentializing Latina/o/x students with impervious amounts of grit and perseverance. These findings reposition the CCW model so it better accounts for the way educational practices, curriculum and sites work to impair the various forms of capital Latina/o students—and other students of color—have acquired to navigate white supremacy, whiteness, racism, and racialization throughout their educational trajectories.

As these findings illustrate, Latina/o/x students educated in the predominantly white spaces of higher education who have navigated through the pipeline and are successfully pursuing higher education are prone to having their cultural capital compromised as a way to preserve the current Eurocentric episteme. Rather than untapped wells of promise and potential, these various competencies suffer steady challenges that seek to Americanize or assimilate students, as researchers have noted (DeNicolo et al., 2015; Denton et al., 2020; Enriquez, 2011; Jimenez, 2020). With persistent efforts to discredit culturally competent approaches, race-based pedagogies and content, and ethnic studies curricula throughout the K-16 academic pipeline, the physical and discursive spaces that restore and rebuild these vital ways of knowing are becoming increasingly constrained or limited. Recognizing the processes that erode community cultural wealth allows for the possibility of recasting or transforming these practices before they jeopardize these faculties.

For instance, one of the recurring educational experiences that was particularly detrimental to the CCW of Latina/o/x college students are English-language learning programs. As noted in these student reflections, the process of singling out English-language learners—either by placing them in self-contained classrooms or by periodically pulling them from traditional classrooms—triggered feelings of shame, inferiority and loss. Memories of this process included being made to feel unintelligent and ignorant. It also illuminated discourses surrounding the English-language acquisition process that devalued both the Spanish language and a Mexican identity. Importantly, students did not critique or dismiss the benefits of learning English but did lament the high cost of forsaking their native tongue and, at times, their ethnic identity. Moreover, they now decry their lack a bilingual proficiency that would have benefitted them in their future careers. Because of the persistent use and maintenance of Spanish among

Latina/o/x communities, English-language learning programs will continue to be a necessary aspect of schooling for Latina/o/x children. However, what these student retrospectives make clear is the need to make space within these programs that allow Latina/o/x students to receive research-based support for the sense of loss they will undoubtedly experience as they begin to learn English. Furthermore, this analysis revealed how damaging the enduring commitment to monolingualism is for Latina/o/x students, as it exudes toxic messages about educability and worthiness that are understood even by elementary-aged children. Reorienting this perspective so that K-12 schooling in the U.S. celebrates, promotes and encourages—if not requires— fluency in a second language could mitigate these adverse experiences and help students retain their linguistic capital throughout their educational journeys.

Another commonplace experience that Latina/o/x students in this study referred to was the experience of being othered. Most prominent was the derision experienced as a result of having a Spanish or Indigenous first name. Few students detailed specific moments of being teased, bullied or discriminated against, outside of this specific racial microaggression (Solórzano & Pérez Huber, 2020), but they clearly alluded to discourses maligning their non-white identities. What they vividly recalled was their decision to distance themselves from their Mexican or Latina/o identity in order to navigate these hostile environments. To avoid feeling spurned, unaccepted or excluded, students increased their proximity to whiteness, adopted assimilationist ideologies, and internalized deficit-based attitudes about their own community and fellow Latina/o/x students. Consequently, these types of coping strategies compromised development of a positive Latina/o/x identity. What this points to is that despite the proliferation of multicultural, diversity, tolerance, and inclusion training in the field of education over the past fifty years, school settings remain fiercely Eurocentric and averse to non-white

students. Evident in their final reflective essays is that Latina/o/x students readily become attuned to the ideologies of white supremacy, nativism, colorblindness, and meritocracy that disparage their name, their ethnicity, their language, and their educability and while many exit the pipeline rather than conform to these pressures, many do acquiesce as a way to thrive in it. Thus, many arrive onto college campuses unmoored from their ethno-racial identity. To prevent this othering, teachers and other school stakeholders need to commit to learning the correct pronunciation for non-Anglo names (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012) and implement disciplinary strategies for students that bully, harass, or taunt based on racial differences. Zero tolerance policies for behaviors fueled by white supremacist or xenophobic beliefs rather than colorblind ideologies may help make Latina/o/x students—and other students of color—feel more welcome in spaces where they are the minority, and more confident to express their linguistic and familial capital.

As has been well-documented, incorporating ethnic studies-based curriculum that tackles systems of privilege and power also mitigates the obdurate fixation on white, European-American exceptionalism. Doing so allows all students to gain a macro understanding of these structures and the ways they benefit and sustain them before they are in college, when unlearning these norms only becomes available for those who take an ethnic-studies or gender studies courses. The racial inequities exposed by the disproportional impact of the 2020 pandemic made it apparent that our schooling system has failed to provide both an understanding of institutional racism, our own complicity in it, and the skills to discuss or properly address it. By integrating these conversations much sooner and throughout K-12 schooling, Latina/o/x students would be less susceptible to internalizing deficit-discourses that pathologize their culture and intellectual abilities and could continue to amass their resistant

and aspirational forms of capital, maintaining pride in their ethno-racial identity. Adjustments such as this would expand the acceptable forms of knowledge edified in U.S. schools, preserving and honoring the oppositional consciousness comprising the resistant capital of Latina/o/x students.

By conceiving of CCW as a set of epistemologies not merely invisible to the current overlapping systems of power, but indeed vulnerable to them, researchers employing this concept can understand the educational policies and practices—as well as the racial or imperial logics—that chip away at this valuable resource as epistemic assaults. This adds complexity and fluidity to the CCW model by recognizing competing forces at work: the cultivation of these assets via family/community home spaces, discourses and networks, as well as the attrition of these ways of knowing in formal educational spaces. Given the ideologies that uphold U.S. whitestream education, researchers have argued that CCW skill sets are invisible or undervalued by conventional schooling norms and standards, but what this analysis of Latina/o/x college student educational narratives exposes is that these spaces do not simply ignore or negate them, they function to erode them. Informed by critical race theory and methodologies, this study encourages researchers to conceptualize CCW not only by its function—capital that provides alternative access and navigation through the educational pipeline—but also by what it is—a set of epistemologies that jeopardize the knowledge structures maintaining the status quo, a key contribution of CRT. With the bulk of research on CCW emphasizing how students wield this knowledge, few scholars use this framework to explain how they forego or lose it, and too many Latina/o/ students arrive on a college campus with this know-how compromised. This project stresses the need to recognize and undo the current practices and policies that damage these reserves.

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[1] To protect the identities of the students whose stories are shared here, their names have been changed. However, six students shared poignant stories about how mispronunciations or ridiculing of their first names impacted their sense of identity and their educational journeys. Their actual names are used to maintain the integrity of their experiences.

[2] Mixtec refers to a related set of indigenous languages spoken in Oaxaca, Puebla, and Guerrero regions of Mexico.