

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Lesley Hernandez Silva for the degree of Master of Science in College Student Services Administration presented on May 24, 2019.

Title: Latinx Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Students & the College Assistance Migrant Program: Stories of Strength, Persistence, and Success

Abstract approved:

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Spirit Brooks

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), Latinx people are the fastest growing ethnic group in the nation but are least likely to enroll in institutions of higher education and fewer eventually earn a degree even if enrolled. Enrollment rates for Latinx students with migrant and seasonal farmworker (MSFW) background have even lower enrollment. In 2004, the Oregon State University College Assistance Migrant Program (OSU CAMP) was established to support the success of migrant and seasonal farm worker students. CAMP helps them enroll in and complete their first year of college and increase the persistence of CAMP students during their second year in college. However, scholars have emphasized the gap between Latinx MSFW and non-Latinx MSFW students who graduate and in doing so research has reflected a consistent trend that Latinx MSFW students remain less likely to graduate with a bachelor's degree. While the intention is to focus the attention and support on students, it may also naturalize their failure to succeed and frame them as students whose experiences and interests would not enrich the university and succeed in

college (Gray, 2013). Absent from research is an asset-based approach focusing on students' inner strengths, or cultural wealth, that motivate them to enroll and become successful college students. This study utilizes a Community Cultural Wealth framework (Yosso, 2005) to explore the role of cultural capital on Latinx MSFW student success from a perspective of presence.

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Latinx Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Students & the College Assistance Migrant  
Program: Stories of Strength, Persistence, and Success

by

Lesley Hernandez Silva

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Director of the School of Language, Culture, and Society

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Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Lesley Hernandez Silva, Author

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

U.S. demographics are changing rapidly and students from various backgrounds are entering college at a higher rate, including Latinx<sup>1</sup> children with migrant and seasonal farmworker (MSFW) backgrounds. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), there are more than fifty-seven point five million Latinx people living in the U.S. as of 2016, constituting about eighteen percent of the total U.S. population. Of this population, an estimated 3 million farmworkers and their families labor in fields and factories across the U.S. to plant, cultivate, harvest and process the crops that become our food. The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), a federally-funded educational support and scholarship program that helps students from migrant and seasonal backgrounds succeed during their first year in college, identifies a farm worker as a person who participates in “any activity directly related to the production of crops, dairy products, poultry, or livestock; the cultivation or harvesting of trees, including nursery and forestry work, or fish farm work” (CAMP, 2017).

Although the MSFW population varies regionally, approximately 78 percent of farmworkers and their children are Latinx and about 95 percent are of Mexican descent (mhsalud.org, 2018). In just ten years, between 2000 and 2010, the Latinx population grew by forty-four percent (Arbona & Jimenez, 2014), and of that, many of whom are of school age. The number of Latinx people in the U.S. is expected to increase to one hundred nineteen million by 2060, accounting for almost twenty-nine percent of the nation’s population by that date (U.S. Census, 2017). Consequently, the new census population projections confirm the importance of the Latinx population as the primary demographic for the nation’s future growth through the means of post-secondary education.

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<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Census uses the term “Hispanic” or “Latino” in collecting and reporting data, instead of the “Latinx” term used in this study.

In spite of the fact that Latinx people are the fastest growing population in the nation, college completion rates have not kept up with the growth of its population, and they continue to fall behind their non-Latinx peers. According to the BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center (2009), farmworkers have one of the highest dropout rates and encounter tremendous obstacles in completing high school and pursuing a postsecondary education. Only fifty percent of migrant students graduate from high school. In 2009, the national high school graduation rate for White students (eighty-two percent) was sixteen percent more than that of Latinx students (sixty-six percent) (Stellwell et al., 2011). Of these students who did graduate, seventy-one percent of white students directly enrolled in college, compared to fifty-nine percent of Latinx students (Snyder and Dilow, 2011). However, matriculation to college does not guarantee graduation. In the same year, thirty-six percent of first-time, full-time Latinx students earned a degree within six years, compared to forty-nine percent of Whites. As a result, educational support and scholarship programs such as the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) have been created to increase the graduation rates of migrant and seasonal farmworker children, many of whom identify as Latinx.

Since its establishment in 1972 under Title IV, Section 418A of the Higher Education Act through the U.S. Department of Education, CAMP's mission has been to "to provide educational and support services including outreach efforts to eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers and their children during their first year of college (CAMP, 2017). Serving as a cohort style to more than twenty thousand students since its establishment, CAMP services include but are not limited to providing assistance with admissions, financial aid, and other university services such as registering for courses, tutoring, mentorship, and developing a long-term support system. The two main goals that CAMP strives to achieve is to 1) support the success of migrant and seasonal

farmworker students by helping them to enroll in and complete their first year in college and 2) increase the persistence of CAMP students during their second year in college and achievement of post-secondary education (CAMP, 2017).

While farmworker families realize the importance of education in improving their children's chances of leaving farm work for other occupations with higher earnings and a better socioeconomic status, poor retention in post-secondary education remains a significant problem for farm worker children. As a result, Latinx children from migrant farmworker families are among the most disadvantaged groups in the country (Green, 2003). Given the the social context in which Latinx MSFW students develop and learn, they are characterized as more vulnerable by focusing on the "risk factors" and the lack of cultural capital to achieve success. However, there are multiple examples of Latinx MSFW students who, despite life challenges, are making good progress toward earning college degrees (Rendon, 2014).

For many successful Latinx MSFW students, who remain in college or have graduated, their commitments to their families and community, serving as role models for others, bilingualism, resistance to microaggressions, support through their peers, and their capacity to navigate through the unknown collegiate world and their personal world motivated these students to enroll and stay in college. Programs similar to CAMP have been created to alleviate some of the challenges that MSFW students, many of whom are Latinx, face in the system of higher education by providing the tools necessary for these students to succeed in college while understanding their cultural heritage and lived experiences. In order to challenge the idea that Latinx MSFW students are "at-risk", it is important to recognize that students can develop strengths through lived experiences, cultural traditions and life challenges to continue persevering through higher education (Yosso, 2005). Hence, this study examines the cultural

influences that empower Latinx MSFW students by identifying the cultural capital they possess and enable them to become successful college students. In addition, the study also examines how the Oregon State University College Assistance Migrant Program has promoted success amongst Latinx MSFW students.

## **Definition of Terms**

### **Latinx**

Defining the term Latinx is difficult because there is ongoing debate about what it means and who is and who is not included. Latinx students do not belong to one nationality, or one culture or race. According to the current U.S. Census Bureau's definitions, Latinx are individuals of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (Humes et al., 2011). The current set of categorical definitions for race and ethnicity are inadequate to defining Latinx because they do not include a classification for Latinx as a separate race (Humes et al., 2011). The only six racial categories used for the U.S. Census are 1) White, 2) Black or African American, 3) American Indian or Alaskan Native, 4) Asian, 5) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 6) Some Other Race (Humes et al., 2011).

Gonzalez (2013) argues that many Latinx people feel that the current system of categorization does not accurately reflect who they are. Latinx people are quite heterogeneous (García & García, 2012) and have common linguistic and cultural traits that distinguish them from other U.S. ethnic groups. It is important to note that the term is used interchangeably in education research literature as Hispanics, Chicanos, Central Americans, and South Americans (De Anda, 2004; Humes et al., 2011; Rendon et al., 2014). This study utilizes the spelling "Latinx" rather than the traditional spellings of "Latino" or "Latina" as a way to resist the

transphobic systems embedded in our culture and language and be more inclusive to non-gender binary participants.

### **Migrant and seasonal farmworker**

The College Assistance Migrant Program identifies the term *farmworker* as a person who participates in “any activity directly related to the production of crops, dairy products, poultry, or livestock; the cultivation or harvesting of trees, including nurse and forestry work, or fish farm work” (CAMP, 2017, p. 1). According to the Code of Federal Regulations 34 CFR 206.3 the term *seasonal farmworker* means a person whose primary employment was in farm work on a temporary or seasonal basis (not a constant year-round activity) for a period of at least seventy-five days within the past twenty-four months. A *migrant farmworker* is a seasonal farmworker, as defined, whose employment requires travel that precludes the farmworker from returning to his or her permanent place of residence within the same day (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Although many Latinx MSFW students in CAMP have had direct experience working as a farmworker, some may only have migrant or seasonal farm working *background* where at least one immediate family member/s have spent a minimum of seventy-five days during the past twenty-four months as a migrant or seasonal farmworker. In this study, the terms migrant and seasonal farmworkers are used interchangeably.

### **Student success**

There are many ways to define student success (i.e. persistence, retention, grade point average (GPA)). Many researchers have used student retention and persistence to explain and understand student success, both of which become inseparable and often highlight a deficit perspective amongst Latinx MSFW students (Flink, 2018; White, 2012; Barone, et al., 2004). These completion metrics and approaches, such as GPA and general standardized tests, tend to

privilege certain types of learners and fails to directly address barriers, in particular, students of color or other underrepresented students, tend to face or other priorities (Fain, 2018). Cuseo (2007) argues that Webster's dictionary defines "success" as a "favorable or desired outcome," therefore student success is defined as a favorable or desirable student outcome. For the purpose of this study, student success is the degree to which students achieve their primary academic goals whether that includes persistence, retention, GPA, student involvement, well-being, etc. The aim in doing so creates a student-centered approach by focusing on the student experience. Participants define the term based on their experience and academic goals and whether they identified as a successful college student or not.

### **Cultural wealth**

The concept of culture for students of color, specifically Latinx students, have taken different meanings. Some researchers have equated race and ethnicity with culture and others have taken a much broader approach, including but not limited to characteristics and forms of social histories and identities (Yosso, 2005b). As part of the challenge to deficit thinking in education, Yosso argues that "culture refers to behaviors and values that are learned, shared, and exhibited by a group of people" (p. 75). Culture can then form and draw from cultural wealth, ones accumulated assets and internal strengths.

Cultural wealth is defined by Yosso (2005b) as "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. 76). Specifically, Yosso speaks upon aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance capital. These forms of capital are accumulated not from formal education but through lived experiences and life challenges that have helped students of color move forward (Howard, Flenbaugh, & Terry, 2012). It is noteworthy to clarify



that these forms of capital are not mutually exclusive or static, but is a dynamic process that build on one another as part of community cultural wealth.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), Latinx people are the fastest growing ethnic group in the nation but are least likely to enroll in institutions of higher education and fewer eventually earn a degree even if enrolled. In 2006, Latinx people ages twenty-five and older had lower college graduation rates (fourteen point five percent) than their counterparts; Asian students at fifty-one percent, Whites at thirty point five percent, and Blacks at twenty-one point two percent (Lopez & Fry, 2013). The gap in the number of Latinx and non-Latinx college students who graduate from a four-year university represents disproportionate educational achievement of Latinx and non-Latinx students.

Although scholars have studied the challenges and barriers of Latinx students, there is a significant lack of educational literature on Latinx student success in post-secondary education. The choice of focusing on CAMP for this study also derives from the lack of literature surrounding migrant and seasonal farmworker students, specifically in student support programs. Few scholars have studied farmworkers educational experiences in university settings as most research has centered on students in high school and their educational gaps and struggles, or networks of support (Bejarano & Valverde, 2012). Scholars have emphasized the gap between Latinx MSFW and non-Latinx MSFW students who graduate and research has reflected a consistent trend that Latinx students remain less likely to graduate with a bachelor's degree (Flink, 2017; White, 2018).

Absent from research is an asset-based approach focusing on students' inner strengths, or cultural wealth, that motivate them to enroll and become successful college students. Research is

needed that focuses on the persistence of Latinx MSFW students in higher education. Each student has a unique life experience that they bring to the college setting and despite the experience, Latinx MSFW students remain linked to the community in which they came from by drawing on their cultural wealth to succeed. Rather than examining Latinx MSFW students from a perspective of absence in higher education, there is a need to focus on these students experiences in higher education through a perspective of presence; an asset-based framework. This study addresses the existing literature gap by examining the role of community cultural wealth in CAMP Latinx MSFW student success by capturing the talents, strengths, and experiences that these students use to navigate and persist in their first year at a four-year institution in Oregon.

A deficit model, or damage centered framework (Tuck, 2009), of Latinx MSFW students focuses on the social context in which Latinx MSFW students develop and learn in comparison to the White dominant culture, specifically related to retention and graduation rates in higher education. Because many researchers have used Latinx MSFW student's poor retention and persistence rates to explain and understand student success, both of which become inseparable, these students have been described as "disadvantaged", "unintelligent", "underprepared," or lacking in motivations (Gray, 2013). This deficit thinking in Latinx MSFW students often portray these students as not being expected to graduate and not framed as students whose experiences and interests would enrich universities and succeed in college. Instead of using a deficit model to highlight what Latinx MSFW students "lack" in higher education, an asset - based approach is needed that will center these students' inner strengths learned through their lived experience and viewing them as students capable of succeeding in higher education.

## **Conceptual Framework of the Study**

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argued that the knowledge of the upper and middle classes is capital and is valuable to a hierarchical society when addressing the debate over knowledge within the context of social inequality. He argues that if you were not born into a family whose knowledge is valued and cannot access the knowledge of the middle and upper class, the opportunity for social mobility through formal education is limited. Bourdieu's theoretical insight is interpreted in a way that explains why the academic and social outcomes of people of color are significantly lower than the outcomes of Whites – one that can be described as a deficit model. However, the assumptions regarding people of color is that they “lack” the social capital and cultural capital required for social mobility. As a result, schools often work with this assumption in mind and restructure ways to help “disadvantaged” students, rather than building on the cultural capital they may bring to school (Yosso, 2005a).

Bourdieu's traditional view of cultural capital is narrowly defined by White, middle class values, and is more limited to wealth – one's accumulated assets and resources. The theory normalizes knowledge, skills, and experiences associated with whiteness as the dominant race and undervalues the cultural capital of students of color. This deficit model proposes that a lack of dominant cultural capital is responsible for lower educational attainment of these students. While the intention of Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) theory was to critique the institutional biases that serve the economic, political, and cultural elite in society, the theory has been absorbed by deficit theories as a way to explain “why some groups in society are more equipped with cultural capital to succeed academically and why other groups should attempt to mimic, adopt, or gain such capital” (Gonzalez, 2012, p. 126).

Yosso (2005b) argues that there are forms of cultural capital that marginalized groups bring to the table that traditional social reproduction theory does not recognize or value. In response to the academic conclusion that frames minoritized students and families at fault for poor academic performance, Yosso crafted and adopted the Community Cultural Wealth model and described it as “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” (Yosso, 2005b, p. 77). Community cultural wealth has its origin in Critical Race Theory and the intersection of race, law, and power. CRT shifts the center of focus from White, middle class culture to the cultures of communities of color and reveals the accumulated assets and resources in the history and lives of communities of color. Yosso’s theoretical framework, an asset-based approach, attempts to demonstrate the positive values and assets that people of color bring into the institution (Lareau, 2003; Romero, 2004; Valdes, 1996; Yosso, 2005b). As mentioned earlier, farmworker families realize the importance of education in improving their children’s chances of leaving farm work for a better life even though many do not understand the homework assignments because of their limited formal education. Yosso described these forms of support as part of Community Cultural Wealth through six forms of capital; aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital.

While the intention of deficit models of education is to focus the attention and support on Latinx MSFW students, by locating the problem within the individual students and their “lack” of capital”, it may also naturalize the failure of students to succeed and frame them as students whose experiences and interests would not enrich the university and succeed in college. In using community cultural wealth as a framework, this study challenges the traditional interpretations of Bourdieu’s Social Reproduction theory (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) and shifts the research lens

away from a deficit view of Latinx MSFW students as places full of cultural poverty and disadvantages, and instead focuses on the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by these students. Overall, moving away from a deficit model to a community cultural wealth perspective validates the unique Latinx MSFW cultural capital that is conducive to educational attainment (Ayala & Contreras, 2018) and student success in college.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The low admission and retention of Latinx MSFW in higher education indeed represents a national challenge for educators and administrators of institutions of higher education. This study explores the role of community cultural wealth and its impact upon success of Latinx MSFW students who completed their first year with the Oregon State University (OSU) College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). Drawing upon student cultural wealth is an asset-based approach, one that is central to achieving equity and to giving Latinx MSFW student the education they deserve. Acknowledgement of Latinx MSFW cultural wealth in higher education (i.e. student support programs and course curriculum) can lessen obstacles students face and build a foundation from which to address the challenging experiences that arise for these students in college.

In an attempt to address the gap on Latinx MSFW post-secondary educational experiences and student success, this study focuses on cultural influences that empower Latinx MSFW students to become successful in college. It addresses, in particular, the cultural influences that challenge existing deficit models by drawing on aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital.

I also examine how the OSU CAMP program has promoted success amongst its Latinx MSFW students by leveraging the different forms of capital that students bring with them into

college. Specifically, this study examines the role of cultural wealth and institutional factors that motivates Latinx MSFW students to pursue higher education and how CAMP has contributed to their success. Rather than focusing on a perceived lack of Latinx MSFW cultural capital and the impact on student success, I provide a framework that allows for programs and practitioners to reframe their assumptions about students from MSFW backgrounds and work with an asset-based framework to foster success. By identifying and using the research findings to examine the role in student success, using Yosso's model of cultural wealth, this study addresses the following questions:

*Research Questions:*

1. What diverse range of cultural capital and/or assets do Latinx students, who have completed their first year with the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon State University, utilize to become successful college students?

This question asked participants to identify cultural influences that assisted in their ability to persist at Oregon State University and/or become successful college students. Through the lens of community cultural wealth, these cultural influences were translated into assets or different forms of cultural capital as defined by Yosso (2005b). These assets are not accumulated through formal education, instead students develop strengths through their lived experiences, cultural traditions, and life challenges which help them become resilient and continue to become successful college students (Rendón et al., 2014). In identifying forms of cultural capital, this study recognizes the assets that Latinx MSFW students bring to the education setting and challenges the common "at-risk" narrative placed on this student population.

The second research question is:

2. How has the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon State University promoted success amongst its Latinx students?

Community cultural wealth plays important roles in Latinx MSFW student retention. I was interested in identifying the way CAMP, in particular, is influential in promoting student success by influencing the different forms of capital that students utilize during their first year at Oregon State University. This question specifically targets different opportunities and strategies that align with Latinx MSFW students' assets and cultural capital. The aim was to provide a foundation for college faculty and staff beyond CAMP to learn more about Latinx MSFW student's college experience, reframe their assumptions about this student population, and work with an asset-based framework to foster their success in college.

### **Significance**

The literature that directly examines the cultural experiences of Latinx MSFW students in higher education, specifically Latinx MSFW students who were once enrolled in and/or completed CAMP, is limited (Ramirez, 2012; Zalaquett et al., 2007; Escamilla and Trevino, 2014). While there are some studies that have examined the barriers that Latinx MSFW students face in higher education, the studies have used a deficit approach and assume that Latinx students "lack" the social and cultural capital to succeed in higher education; a deficit model (White, 2012; Flink, 2018; Barone et al., 2004). Absent from existing research studies is a focus on Latinx cultural wealth that students utilize to transcend their lived experiences and to excel in education. By using Community cultural wealth to analyze and interpret individual and focus group interviews, this study identifies the role of cultural influences that empower these students by identifying the cultural capital they possess and enable them to come successful college students.

In the community cultural wealth model, the focus is on the cultural wealth that Latinx MSFW students bring to higher education as part of their cultural heritage. However, the use of a deficit model in education inaccurately reinforces the marginalization of all underrepresented students by focusing on the issues that *prevent* these students from succeeding academically, rather than examining capital that *promotes* academic success. In comprehending the power and marginalization of Latinx MSFW students within a majority population, an understanding of why it is important to further study the cultural influences and capital that marginalized students hold, which promotes their success at the university, is highlighted.

Research that provides insight on student cultural wealth is also used to reframe the assumptions surrounding this student population and ultimately encourage college administrators, faculty, and student services personnel to work with an asset-based framework to foster student success. Gray (2013) argued “like the focus on selective admissions, many of the programs established within universities to increase graduation rates tend to locate the problem within the individual students” (p. 1246). Programs like CAMP are often described as “compensatory programs” that are often filled with underrepresented students with the intention “to make up for the experiences (such as the cultural experiences) lacked by disadvantaged children”, assuming that these students lack cultural capital to succeed (Gray, 2013, p. 1247). If used wisely, the findings of this study can empower educators and universities to improve the quality of instruction that they provide these students. They will then be able to set an asset-based approach as the foundation to their work and offer different opportunities for their students that align with Latinx MSFW students’ assets and cultural capital to promote student success.

This study challenges the negative assumption that Latinx MSFW students are at-risk and that they lack the cultural capital to succeed in higher education, along with providing



meaningful insight to faculty and staff when working with these students. It is important to note that research cited in this study outlines the large body of literature surrounding the failure of Latinx MSFW students in obtaining a post-high school education. During the time that this study was conducted, very little published research was available regarding the cultural capital of Latinx MSFW students and/or in CAMP. The findings of this study give meaning to the experiences of Latinx MSFW students and the cultural capital that they possessed to continue succeeding in academia.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the cultural capital that Latinx MSFW students bring with them to college and that influences their success in higher education. As well, the recognition that CAMP has been influential in promoting student success, along with identifying the strategies and practices used to leverage the different forms of capital that students bring with them during their first year in college. The research questions analyzed in this study were: 1) What diverse range of cultural capital and/or assets do Latinx students, who have completed their first year with the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon State University utilize to become successful college students? and 2) How has the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon State University promoted student success amongst its Latinx students? Using the framework of community cultural wealth, this study challenges the existing deficit model surrounding Latinx MSFW students and other underrepresented students and encourage other programs to work with an asset-based framework to foster success amongst their students. This study also adds to the limited literature regarding student success and cultural capital wealth for Latinx MSFW students and CAMP.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a foundational knowledge of Latinx migrant and seasonal farmworker students, specifically in the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon State University (OSU), to foster success amongst these students. This literature reviews (a) the meaning of Latinx migrant and seasonal farmworker students, (b) Latinx migrant seasonal farmworker students and the effect of the deficit model of student need and success, (c) the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), and (d) the role of CCW in Latinx MSFW success and CAMP.

### **Who are Latinx Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Students?**

Although most Latinx MSFW students in the U.S. belong to Mexican ethnicity (ninety-five percent), Latinx students do not belong to one nationality, or one culture or race but rather, it is a very diverse group of people who identify as descendants of countries of origin including Mexico, Central American, and South American countries. The U.S. Department of Education (2010) has endorsed the use of “Latino” and “Latina” as terms that “acknowledge the linguistic and cultural assets of U.S. children and students who are identified in conjunction with provision related to the examination of civil rights in various educational and noneducational settings” (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). It is important to note that the term is used interchangeably in education research literature as Hispanics, Chicanos, Central Americans, and South Americans (De Anda, 2004; Humes et al., 2011; Rendon et al., 2014). Although Latinx students are quite heterogeneous (García & García, 2012), they have common linguistic and cultural traits that distinguish them from other U.S. ethnic groups. In this study, the term “Latinx” is utilized instead of the traditional spellings of “Latino” or “Latina”. In doing so, this

study resists the transphobic systems embedded in our culture and language and becomes more inclusive to non-gender binary participants.

Approximately 78 percent of farmworkers and their children are Latinx. According to the Code of Federal Regulations 34 CFR 206.3 used for CAMP eligibility, the term “seasonal” farmworker means a person whose primary employment was in farm work on a temporary or seasonal basis (not a constant year-round activity) for a period of at least 75 days within the past 24 months. A “migrant” farmworker is a seasonal farmworker, as defined, whose employment requires travel that precludes the farmworker from returning to his or her permanent place of residence within the same day (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). As previously mentioned, CAMP identifies the term “farmworker” as a person who participates in “any activity directly related to the production of crops, dairy products, poultry, or livestock; the cultivation or harvesting of trees, including nursey and forestry work, or fish farm work” (CAMP, 2017). It is important to note that although many Latinx MSFW students in CAMP have had direct experience working as a farmworker, some may only have migrant or seasonal farm working *background* where at least one immediate family member/s have spent a minimum of 75 days during the past 24 months as a migrant or seasonal farmworker. In this study, the terms migrant and seasonal farmworkers are used interchangeably.

### **Latinx Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Students and the Effect of the Deficiency Model**

Agriculture has historically been one of the leading industries employed by migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the United States, specifically in the Oregon area where this study took place. The history of farmworkers in Oregon dates back to the early 1940’s when thousands of Latinx farmworkers came to the U.S. as part of the Bracero Program, an agreement between the U.S. and Mexico in 1942 and ending in 1964. The agreement imported a large number of

Mexican workers – mainly farmworkers – into the Willamette Valley on a temporary basis, replacing American workers dislocated by war during World War II (Immigrationtotheunitedstates.org, 2015). The Bracero Program was intended to be temporary, yet the growing dependence of American farms on Mexican labor kept increasing for nearly two decades after the war ended.

According to Lopez, Scribner, and Mahitivanichcha (2001), “migrants are the most academically vulnerable groups in the United States, constantly faced with economic, health, and work-related problems that translate into lower academic achievement and higher dropout rates” (p. 253). Given the characteristics of the social context in which Latinx MSFW students develop and learn, the majority of research has focused on the deficits of these students (Trevino, 2004). Most of what has been written about migrant students has been based on disadvantaged, deficit, or at-risk theories of academic failure. Through the use of this deficit model, a strong emphasis has been placed on the negative effects of minoritized cultures, the lack of adoption to “American” values, and the supposed lack of high aspirations (Trevino, 2004). Because this study is working to change the deficit narrative surrounding Latinx MSFW students, it is important to understand the model when analyzing the extensive amount of literature surrounding admission and retention rates of students and their ability to be successful college students.

**Socioeconomic status and culture.** According to Martinez and Cranston-Gingras (1996, p. 1), “because of their lifestyle, children and young adults from migrant farmworker families are among the students with the highest risk factors for school failure.” This deficit model perceives students as not being able to succeed academically because of factors associate with socioeconomic status, family and cultural variable, and academic deficiencies (Gray, 2013, p.

1245). Huang (1993) claimed that many migrant students suffer educational disadvantages stemming from poverty and that due to financial hardships, migrant children often work to contribute to the family's income. Approximately 61 percent live at or below the poverty level set by the federal government (Lopez et al., 2001) where three out of five farmworker families live in poverty today with a median income of less than \$10,000 (Zalaquett et al., 2007).

However, researchers have used the deficit model to explain why Latinx MSFW students drop out of college and are unable to achieve success. In using this approach, it becomes expected that a large percentage of Latinx MSFW students will not graduate.

Research also shows that Latinx students continue to have much lower levels of academic achievement and graduation rates than non-Latinx Whites. By framing students as falling behind their White counterparts, it centers White experience as superior and contributes to the marginalization Latinx MSFW students (Yosso, 2005a). Because many Latinx MSFW students generally belong to specific identities (i.e. first-generation, low-income, student of color), research has framed these students using words with negative connotations such as “disadvantaged”, “unintelligent”, “underprepared,” or lacking in motivations (Gray, 2013). While the intention of the designation is to focus attention and support on students with academic needs, the deficit model naturalizes the failure of students with the skills to succeed (Gray, 2013, p. 1145).

**Language.** Latinx MSFW students' language differentials have also been studied from a deficit standpoint that emphasizes the lack of linguistic capital (Flink, 2018). According to the Pew Research Center (2017), more than 37 million Latinx in the U.S. speak Spanish at home, an estimate of 73 percent of Latinx as of 2015 (Pew Research Center, 2017). Flink (2017) found that English-language learners (ELLs) in higher education, individuals whose native language is

not English and have immigrated to the U.S, have increased in enrollment and that many Latinx begin their educational journey as such. However, existing research has characterized Latinx ELLs as having little to no English-language skills, placing them at a disadvantage prior to enrollment in college (Flink, 2018). Studies have characterized Latinx MSFW students as “lacking the resources that are sometimes admitted on a provisional basis and framed as ‘at-risk’ students” (Gray, 2013, p. 1145). Flink (2017) also claimed:

Lacking English-language skills forces Latino ELLs to first improve and refine their English-language skills so that they are academically and linguistically prepared for the demands of college-level coursework... The added time necessary to gain enough English-language skills so as to begin college-level coursework adds a burden upon Latino ELLs...The longer it takes for Latinx ELLs to begin and complete a degree program, the greater the chance that they will not succeed. (p. 9)

The deficit approach has framed these students experience and interests as ones that would not enrich the university and that they would not succeed in college (Gray, 2013). When the campus environment does not value all of its students and the experiences that they bring to college, students are stigmatized because of their ability (Yosso, 2005a).

**Institutional barriers.** This use of a deficit framework in research and practice fails to examine existing institutional barriers marginalized students face, such as segregation based on race or ethnicity. The framework reinforces already established systems of oppression, in education and beyond, that affect minoritized students. In the words of Irizarry (2009), society “...blames the victims of institutional oppression for their own victimization by referring to negative stereotypes and assumptions regarding certain groups or communities” (p.1). As a result of the negative stereotypes and assumptions placed on certain groups or communities, there are

anticipated negative outcomes because students are believed to experience emotional, behavioral, educational, and psychological challenges (Gray, 2013).

Studies show that for students of color, navigating spaces in higher education include experiences with racial and gender microaggressions or isolation (Humes, 2011). In a study conducted by Hurtado (1994), it was found that even 25 percent of high-achieving Latinx students attending a predominantly white university viewed their institution as troublesome and students felt as though they did not fit in. Sotello Viernes Turner (1994) found similar findings in her research focusing on the experiences of Latinx students where she described the experience of students of color in a predominantly White university as “guests in someone else’s house” (p. 356).

The deficit model fails to explain the low rates of admission and retention of Latinx MSFW students in higher education and their ability to succeed. The deficit model of education reinforces the marginalization of minorities and frames students in a negative way.. To challenge the idea that Latinx students are “at-risk” and do not have the desire to succeed it is important to recognize that students can develop strengths through lived experiences, cultural traditions and life challenges to continue persevering through higher education (Yosso, 2005a). Hence, this study employs an asset-based in researching Latinx students and challenges the dominant narrative surrounding this population that is limited in literature. Only by highlighting and understanding the cultural wealth of Latinx MSFW students within a majority population, can we truly understand and draw on students’ internal strengths used to succeed in higher education – and enable student support programs, such as CAMP, to work with an asset-based approach when working with Latinx MSFW students.

### **College Assistance Migrant Program Background**

The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) is a federally funded program under the U.S. Department of Education designed to support students from migrant and seasonal farm worker backgrounds during their first year in college. The goal of CAMP is to support the success of migrant and seasonal farm worker students by helping them to enroll in and complete their first year of college and increase the persistence of CAMP students during their second year in college and achievement of postsecondary degree. CAMP projects across the nation provide educational services that include but are not limited to academic and career advising, tutoring, skills workshops financial aid stipends, health services, housing assistance, registration and coursework planning, and social activities that aim in providing the student with support and campus engagement (Ramirez, 2012). Because CAMP is a federally funded program, each university operates their CAMP program in unique ways that work in relation to their program funding. Overall, the program services approximately 2,400 students annually at 40 campuses today (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

In order to qualify for CAMP and its services, one of the following is required:

- (a.) The individual applying, or his or her parent, must have spent a minimum of 75 days during the last 24 months as a migrant or seasonal farm worker
- (b.) The individual applying must have participated, or be eligible to participant, in programs like Employment and Training Administration (E&TA), Migrant Education Program (MEP) or Department of Labor (DOL) or Migrant and Season Farm worker programs.

In addition, qualifying individuals must meet the following requirements:

- (a.) Enroll or be admitted for enrollment as a full-time student at the Institution of Higher Education participating with CAMP;



- (b.) Be in their first academic year of program of study at the Institution of Higher Education, as determined under the standards of the institution; and
- (c.) Be determined by the grantee to need the academic and supporting services and financial assistance provided by the project in order to complete an academic program of study at the Institution of Higher Education (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education, 2009, pp. 45-46).

### **The Oregon State University CAMP program.**

The Oregon State University College Assistance Migrant Program (OSU CAMP) is a residential program established on the OSU campus in 2004. The program continues to support its participants through academic, personal, and financial counseling, advising and orientation, tutoring and mentoring, monitoring and referrals, technology (laptops, iPads, calculators), and assistance in obtaining aid and scholarships. Despite the large number of migrant and seasonal farm work in Oregon, currently there are only two CAMP programs in the state – one at a community college and another at a four-year university, OSU CAMP. On an average, OSU CAMP serves 35 eligible students in the state of Oregon which are primarily Latinx, low-income, rural, first-generation with high financial and academic need. Serving close to 385 participants since its establishment, OSU CAMP is among the nation's most successful CAMP programs. Program participants have successfully graduated (six-year graduation rate) between 83 percent and 87 percent of students per cohort each year.

### **The Role of Community Cultural Wealth in Student Success and CAMP**

Programs like CAMP have an asset-based approach and provide leveraging strategies that are aligned with Latinx MSFW students' experiences to promote success. Cesar Chavez once

said, “we draw our strength from the very despair in which we have been forced to live. We shall endure” (Cesar Chavez Quotes, n.d). Latinx MSFW students face significant challenges as they transition to college but hold extraordinary strengths and drive to succeed, as well as the ability to become transformed from the college experience. This review will examine the current research that looks at Yosso’s (2005b) community cultural wealth model and how it has contributed to Latinx MSFW student success in higher education. Yosso captured the talents, strengths, and experiences that students of color bring with them to their college environment, arguing that aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital can be used to empower students.

Aspirational capital is defined by Yosso (2005b) as the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), in 2 and 4-year colleges and universities, the total college enrollment rate of Latinx students increased from 32 percent in 1990 to 40 percent in 2015. From 2005 to 2015, the total college enrollment rate for Latinx 18 to 24-year-olds increased from 25 to 37 percent (Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). Ayala and Contreras (2018) found that familial capital possessed by students played a critical role in the aspirational capital of a majority of Latinx. Aspirations were often shaped by validating agents (i.e. parents, siblings, grandparents) who shared life stories on overcoming adversity and who provided support and wise advice (Rendon, Nora & Kanagala, 2014). Community role models, such as counselors and advisors in CAMP, also served to foster student aspirations and hope for the future. Many of Latinx MSFW aspirations have also shaped by the need to put their education into practice to be able to help family and/or community members access information about how to reach college. In summary, Zalaquett, McHatton, and Cranston-Gingras (2007) attributed that 42 percent of Latinx MSFW

students in CAMP reported that they attended college to be successful, 40 percent to achieve a better life, 25 percent to be educated, and 25 percent to make their parents proud.

In the United States, the perceived most valuable cultural capital centralizes Whiteness, making it difficult for Latinx MSFW students to recognize their own community cultural wealth (Ayala and Contreras, 2018). The role of linguistic capital is defined by Yosso (2005b) as the various language and communication skills students bring with them to their college environment. An estimate of 84 percent of Latinx migrant and seasonal farmworkers hold Spanish as their native language and may also communicate using an indigenous language such as Mixteco (Flink, 2017). While some students were cognizant that they had a Spanish accent and were sometimes teased about their accent, students also recognized that being bilingual in Spanish and English helped them to communicate and to form relationships with others (Rendon et al., 2014). Linguistic capital highlights bilingualism as a source of affirmation, especially in Spanish language classes.

Some argue that familial capital is the foundation for Latinx MSFW success in higher education, hence serving as a critical source of support (Yosso 2005b, Rendon et al., 2014). As mentioned earlier, 25 percent of Latinx MSFW students in CAMP reported that they attended college to make their parents proud (Zalaquett, McHatton, & Cranston-Gingras, 2007). They argue that the majority of Latinx MSFW students in CAMP identified their families as the most important resource in their decision to attend college. For many, familial capital was gained through validation, *consejos* (advice), and role modeling (Rendon et al., 2014). Although Latinx MSFW families are unable to provide academic or financial support, education is highly valued, and goals are respected. According to Ayala and Contreras (2018), positive family messages surrounding education have framed education as the means for a better life. This experience

established student's personal determination to complete life goals not only for themselves but for their family (Rendon et. al, 2014). Narratives with messages of persistence document how familial and community socialization become a source of capital, especially in a space where Latinx MSFW students are marginalized. "These messages of persistence challenge deficit perspective assumptions that Latinx MFSW families do not value education and that lower levels of educational attainment are "normal" for their communities" (Ayala and Contreras, 2018, p. 7).

Navigational capital refers to the skills of moving successfully through social institutions, especially those that were not designed by or for communities of color, while social capital refers to "networks of people and community resources" (Yosso, 2005b, p. 79). Rendon et al. (2014) found that peer networks proved to be essential to Latinx students. "Students capitalized on their friendships with peers, the social networks that were formed with their friends, and lessons learned from their interactions with peers in developing social capital" (Rendon et al., 2014, p. 16). Students enter the program either knowing each other from high school or by quickly creating bonds through their shared immigrant, fieldwork, or educational experience (Bejarano & Valverde, 2012). Ayala and Contreras (2018) argued that Latinx MSFW students brought knowledge of different cultural, economic, and racial communities into college from traveling through various geographical and sociodemographic spaces, which contributed to their social and intercultural competence. Sometimes this navigational capital was a product of already established social connections at the institutions. For example, Bejarano and Valverde (2012) found that many students relied on Latinx farmworker community members for information on CAMP. Older siblings served as a support mechanism, as do other CAMP alumni, who were mentors, tutors, and dorm leaders for freshmen. In their study, 84 siblings from 39 families have

participated in the CAMP program, which speaks to both social and navigational forms of capital (Bejarano & Valverde, 2012).

Yosso (2005b) defines the last type of capital as resistance capital. Resistance capital refers to the knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality. In Rendon et al.'s (2014) study, Latinx experienced racial and gender microaggressions, as well as culture shock in college. Having gone through those experiences, Latinx students acquired resistant capital in the face of different academic and social barriers and obstacles in college. In Ayala and Contreras's (2018) study, Latinx students confronted the social construction of Latinx as other and were pressured to legitimize their presence in higher education. The negative perceptions of Latinx people motivated them to change other's perception of Latinx people in higher education. According to Yosso (2005b), the sources of this form of capital come from parents, community members and historical legacy of engaging in social justice. Sofia Villenas and Melissa Moreno (2010) found that Latinx mothers taught their daughters to *valerse por si misma* (value themselves and be self-reliant) within structure of inequality such as racism, capitalism, and patriarchy. Studies have also highlighted how "proving people wrong" serves as resistance capital and also feeds aspirational capital (Rendon et al, 2014; Zalaquett et al, 2007; Hurtado, 1994).

### **Implications of the Literature**

Prior literature and research have centralized on the perceived lack of Latinx cultural capital and the impact on academic success of students. At the time in which this study was conducted, limited research on the role of community cultural wealth in Latinx MSFW and higher education, in particular relating to success, existed. We know that Latinx MSFW students utilize assets and strengths to succeed in college (Ako-Asare, 2015; Ayala & Contreras, 2018;

Garcia, 2018). However, there is a need for scholars to highlight this in order for student services personnel and administrators to develop and provide the infrastructure necessary for admission and retention of students. Reviewing the different types of capital that contribute to community cultural wealth adds to research on Latinx MSFW students. Only by challenging the racist and classist thinking that the so-called “at-risk” students do not have the same desire to succeed as majority students (Gray, 2013), can we truly understand why it is important to study this population and the cultural wealth that they hold.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods**

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology for this study. This chapter includes a review of my research questions, my positionality as the researcher, methodology and methods, and the data collection process used to answer this study's research questions. In addition to that, Chapter 3 presents a description of data analysis and how I present the findings using case studies.

#### **Research Questions**

As discussed in Chapter 2, the retention rate of Latinx MSFW students in post-secondary education remains an area of concern. Although most of the literature surrounding Latinx MSFW students addresses the challenges and barriers of these students in a way that suggests a lack of cultural capital, Latinx MSFW students develop strengths through lived experiences, cultural traditions and life challenges to continue persevering through higher education.

By using Yosso's (2005b) framework of Community Cultural Wealth, and expanded definitions of "capital" to examine the role in student success, this study asks the following questions:

- 1) What diverse range of cultural capital and/or assets do Latinx students, who have completed their first year with the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon state university, utilize to become successful college students?
- 2) How has the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon State University promoted success amongst its Latinx students?

#### **Positionality**

As a person who identifies as a Latinx MSFW successful college student, I bring a distinct view to this research. Not only do I, as the researcher, identify with these identities but I

also identify as a woman, low-income, first-generation, and as a daughter of immigrants; many identities of which became apparent in my participants identities. Holding these identities gave me the opportunity to understand and relate to my participants lived experiences. As the researcher, I acknowledge that my background has the potential of introducing bias into this study because my experience may be similar to that of my participants. However, because I hold many of the same identities as the participants in this study, we shared similar lived experiences and cultural wealth. I was able to strongly connect and understand with the voices of my participants, alongside establish a safe space for them to share their experiences without the fear of being misunderstood. My own community cultural wealth was a strength in this study, especially when participants were unable to fully express and describe their experiences. I connected with them verbally by further prompting questions that would lead to their description based on our similar experiences. It is important to note that I was never a part of CAMP at Oregon State University nor at my undergraduate institution.

### **Case Study Methodology**

Case study methodology is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed and in-depth data collection that involves multiple sources of information (i.e. interviews, observations, questionnaires, reports). The report is then outlined through case descriptions and case-based themes. Although Stake (2005) states that case study is not a methodology but instead a choice of what is to be studied, others present this as a methodology or a strategy of inquiry (Creswell, 2017). For this research study, I chose to view it as a methodology and a type of design in qualitative research that would ask the research questions. Through a collective case study, or a multiple case study, methodology, various perspectives are provided to explore the phenomena



of cultural wealth amongst Latinx MSFW students. Case study methodology is also employed to challenge the theoretical assumptions of specific populations, in this case CAMP Latinx MSFW students. In this study, the use of multiple case study methodology aligns with my intention of exploring the role of cultural wealth in Latinx MSFW CAMP student success by describing and reconstructing the case history of a group of Latinx MSFW students in the College Assistance Migrant Program through an asset-based approach.

### **Data Collection**

This study employs a qualitative research approach, using a combination of one survey and semi-structured in-depth interviews; six individual interviews and one focus group for a total of seven participants. All participants were asked to complete a brief online demographic survey identifying specific identities (i.e. CAMP cohort year, Latinx, first-generation) of theirs, serving as the screening tool for this study. Participants had the opportunity to identify whether they would prefer to participate in an individual or focus group interview, or both. Both interviews focused on participants' college and lived experiences, but it was up to them to decide what they were most comfortable with.

Based on participants response, I identified six participants interested in individual in-depth interview each, along with a follow-up interview. In the follow-up interview, participants had the opportunity to give their perspective on their responses in the first interview and assist in the analysis of their responses. In the case that the participant was unable to meet in person, I sent the participant the findings of their analysis via email. Participants were informed that they had two weeks to provide their feedback to me and if they did not respond by the deadline, I would proceed with the initial analysis as is. In addition to the six individual interviews, I identified three participants (two previous and one new) interested in an in-depth focus group

interview that did not require a follow-up interview. A focus group should be small enough to allow everyone to express a viewpoint and large enough to capture a diverse range of perspectives.

I met individually with each participant/s in a private room in the Valley Library at OSU or classroom on campus. Interviews were conducted at various times in the day, but surrounding noise was minimal due to the choice of location. For the focus group interview which was located in a classroom setting, I created a more personal interview setting by providing food, sponsored by the OSU CAMP program, and moved furniture so that it resembled a dinner table more than a classroom.

Participant interviews were audio-recorded with their consent. It was advised that the interview would be audio-recorded for transcription purposes and information regarding their identity would be confidential. Consent to participate in this study was obtained by participants prior to completing the demographic survey and consent to be audio recorded took place at the beginning of the initial interview. In completing the demographic survey, the participant was first presented with a consent form and had to agree before continuing onto the complete demographic survey. In both initial interviews, individual and focus group, verbal consent was obtained using the consent form which allowed me to audio-record the interview.

Each interview began the same way once consent was obtained and upon participant indication, audio-recording began. All participants were asked the same set of questions and in some cases, questions were restated to assist the participant further understand if a comprehension issue arose. During the interview, field notes were written to record any comments or insights the participants made. At the end of each interview, each participant had the opportunity to share

anything that was not mentioned in the interview regarding their identity as a Latinx MSFW student, CAMP, and/or their educational experience.

### **Interview questions**

This study employs an extension of Critical Race Theory. “CRT shifts the research lens away from the deficit view of Communities of Colors as places full of cultural poverty disadvantages, and instead focuses on and learns from the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged” (Yosso, 2005b, pg. 1). Yosso argues that communities of color possess an exceptional knowledge base which should be acknowledged and leveraged when developing student success frameworks. To successfully highlight the experiences of Latinx MSFW students and the cultural factors and assets that these students utilize to succeed in higher education, I framed my questions in alignment with the Yosso’s community cultural wealth model and its six types of capital, aspirational, social, navigational, familial, and resistance capital. Specifically, I asked questions that touched on Yosso’s six forms of capital and how they impacted participants ability to achieve success in college with the support of the College Assistance Migrant Program. A few of the research questions in this study were based on Garcia’s (2018) study, “Supporting the Glo Up: Womxn of Color and Student Success”. Garcia’s study utilized a critical race and intersectionality theoretical frameworks to examine the experience s of six successful womxn of color college students. Both studies explored community cultural wealth with respect to communities of color in higher education and student success.

In addition, I used a semi-structured interview framework that included fifteen open-ended questions. All participants were asked the same set of questions and in some cases, questions were restated to assist the participant further understand if a comprehension issue

arose. This design allowed for the opportunity to elicit as much detail and meaning from the interviewees as possible. As a way to give flexibility for participants to highlight new topics during the interview, I ended each individual and focus group interview by asking participants to share something that was not mentioned during our time together regarding their identities and educational experience. The complete list of questions that were asked in this research study can be found in appendix G and H.

### **Recruitment and sampling.**

Potential participants were identified based on students who had completed their first year at OSU with CAMP. As the researcher, I established contacts at OSU to distribute the screening tool, demographic survey, via email to students involved with CAMP. Those who are interested in participating in this study completed a brief online demographic survey. The demographic survey was accessible to potential participants by either 1) contacting the researcher, and/or 2) through a link provided in the recruitment materials. Participants were recruited through several mechanisms:

*CAMP listserv* - A blind carbon copy (bcc) email was sent out to all students on the CAMP listserv. Students on the this listserv were all previous or current CAMP students. In the email appendix B, a direct link to the demographic survey was included and potential participants were able to examine whether they met the requirements to participate in this study.

*Other social media.* Understanding that many previous CAMP students transition to other student support programs at the OSU campus after their first year with CAMP, I reached out to the Director of the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) for assistance. Similar to the email sent out to the CAMP listserv, a blind carbon copy (bcc) email (appendix A) was sent out

to all students in the EOP listerv and potential participants were able to access the demographic survey and examine whether they met the requirements to participate in this study.

***Snowball sampling.*** I asked participants to refer my study to other Latinx students who also completed their first year with the College Assistant Migrant Program and might be interested in participating. Business cards (appendix C) were provided for participants to share with potential participants who fit the criteria. Students who were then interested in participating in my study would contact me through the information provided on the business card.

All students interested in participating in this study completed a brief online demographic survey which served as the screening process. If students met the requirements to participate in the study, I would personally contact them via email to schedule a time to interview.

### **Participant eligibility**

To be able to participate in this study, participants must have met the following:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Self-identify as a Latinx student
- Be currently enrolled at Oregon State University (undergraduate or graduate)
- Completed their first year of their undergraduate career with OSU CAMP

To be able to qualify for CAMP, participants had to meet the following criteria:

- Must be US permanent resident or US citizen
- Be a first-year incoming student with less than 36 credits
- Enroll as full-time student at OSU (12 credits/quarter)
- Participated in Migrant Education Program during K-12
  - OR from a Migrant/Seasonal farm working family
  - OR participated in National Farmworker Jobs Program

**Confidentiality: Protecting human participants**

To ensure confidentiality of my participants, I completed CITI training and certification. I gathered the study data myself by first using the demographic survey required for the screening process of this study, along with the description of the research project and its purpose. In accessing the survey, participants were not required to log in with their ONID credentials or personal information, hence the information they disclosed in the survey was not linked to their university information or other personal information they decide not to share. Participants were not able to view other participant responses through this survey and only the principle investigator and myself had access to this information. Participants name and email were only collected for the means of contacting the participant for an initial interview.

From this point forward, participants were assigned a number and that number corresponded with research materials collected from the participants. I retained a link between the participant number and direct identifiers after the data collection because participants would be participating in the analysis and write up of the final research findings. The linked list of codes and direct identifiers were stored in a separate location from the data. Participants were given a pseudonym from that point forward on all recruitment materials. Once audio recordings were completed, any individual identifiable information was removed from the audio recordings and transcriptions were stored with a pseudonym.

With the understanding that many Latinx MSFW students come from mixed-status families, I did my best to encourage participants to use the word “immigrant” rather than disclosing or referencing documentation status of themselves or others. The word “immigrate” means to “come into another country to live permanently” and does not disclose the status of the individual in the given country (Vocabulary.com, 2019). I chose this word as a way to give

meaning to student's lived experiences while also protecting their privacy and confidentiality. In the case that participants referenced or disclosed documentation status during the interview, interviews were only transcribed by me. Only the Principle Investigator and I had access to this information.

### **Field notes**

Before and during the process of my study, I kept detailed field notes to remember and record the behaviors, activities, and other observations of my participants. "Field notes are intended to be read by the researcher as evidence to produce meaning and an understanding of the culture, social situation, or phenomenon being studied" (Schwandt, 2015). Based on participants responses to the demographic survey, I wrote field notes before each interview (i.e. identities and lingering thoughts and/or questions). During the interview, I would make field notes on students' responses, date and time of interview, along with location, and other physical observations. After each interview, I would take the time to reflect and record my thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns for at least ten minutes.

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Transcription and coding**

Once all interviews were conducted, I transcribed all individual and focus group interviews myself. I removed any identifying information from the audio files and transcriptions. After transcriptions had been completed, I chose to review each transcript individually and began the process of coding. Codes were organized into four categories; challenges, success, community cultural wealth, and CAMP or other campus support. Challenges included the worries and problems that students faced in attending Oregon State University. Success was used to describe and explain student's own definition of the word.

Community cultural wealth encompassed Yosso's (2005b) linguistic, social, navigational, familial, resistance, and aspirational cultural capital, hence were viewed as sub-codes. CAMP or other campus support encompassed all forms of support students received within the OSU college campus. Once codes were categorized, I began to review codes for any overlap in preparation of further analyzing the data.

### **Case study analysis**

For this study, I used a multiple case design which would allow me to use both a within case analysis and a cross case analysis. To ensure validity in my study (Stake, 2006), I first performed a within case analysis of my participants interviews. Through this data collection, a detailed description of the individual students' case emerged in which I was able to present important aspects of their stories. In each individual case study, I identified issues within each case and then looked for common themes that highlighted their case, specifically using the four general codes mentioned earlier. The use of a within case analysis allowed me to further understand the context of the case and students lived experiences. I then chose two out of the six cases to showcase in this study.

Once a within case study analysis was performed, I moved forward with cross-case analysis. According to Yin (2003), cross case analysis involves examining themes across cases to discern themes that are common to all cases. In this case, I compared the within case themes across multiple cases to examine reoccurring themes, similarities, and differences across cases. I then aggregated information into larger clusters of ideas and made my own assertions to make sense of the data and provide an interpretation of it to best formulate findings in terms of Yosso's community cultural wealth model.



### **Designing individual case studies**

In conducting a case analysis of each case study (within-case analysis), I began to notice whose stories I would like to showcase. In an attempt to best represent various viewpoints, I decided to showcase an undergraduate and a graduate student's story. Once a within-case analysis was performed, I began to recognize an informal format these students' stories would be presented in. I began with a brief introduction and continued on with the student's life before college, transition to OSU, life at OSU, and their definition of success. While conducting this analysis, I began to look for connections and relationships between the codes in each case study. Codes related to challenge and codes related to community cultural wealth were connected as I would see would be best appropriate. I chose this approach because according to Maxwell and Miller (2008), connecting strategy preserves data on their original form and instead analyzes and reduces data by identifying key relationships that tie the data together. After looking for connections and relationships, I began to compose the case studies.

### **Collaborative data analysis**

After I completed the analysis of the two individual case studies, I followed up with participants to set up a second meeting. This follow up meeting took place in person on the Oregon State University campus or virtually. During these follow-up meetings, I presented my initial findings and interpretations of their initial interview and requested their engagement in the construction of their case study. The purpose of this interview was to receive participant feedback and participation in the interpretation of their case study, particularly if they disagreed with the initial findings. In the case that participants requested any changes, I would make those changes and then present the case study back to them until they agreed on the final findings.

### **Structuring final findings**

Once I analyzed the data and constructed both case studies, I had an idea of how I would structure my final findings. I first began by reintroducing Yosso's community cultural wealth framework. From there, I chose to present my final findings using the framework's aspirational, familial, social, navigational, linguistic, and resistance capital. I did this by grouping similar themes across each type of capital, beginning with both case studies and how they highlighted the different types of capital. Following, I began to add other participants data to showcase how the overall data spoke to each cultural capital. In the process, I found that by laying out my final findings this way, the data spoke upon both research questions. I then began to analyze participant responses to success by looking for similarities and differences. From this, I created themes to form three different aspects of the definition of success.

### **Limitations**

As previously mentioned earlier in chapter 1, Latinx students are quite heterogeneous and do not belong to one nationality, culture, or race. Although this study focused on Latinx MSFW students, all seven participants identified in having Mexican descent. The absence of students from other cultures limited the diversity of experiences in this study. However, given the demographics of Latinx MSFW people in the U.S., it is estimated that 95 percent are of Mexican ethnicity (Arbona & Jimenez, 2014). As the researcher of this study who identifies as Latinx with MSFW background, I also acknowledge that my background had the potential to introduce bias to this study. However, researcher bias was controlled whenever possible, but it is also important to note that any qualitative research has the risk of research bias (Creswell, 2017).

Given that this study is a qualitative study and uses case study as a methodology, limitations involve issues of generalizability and a lack of representativeness (Creswell, 2017). However, it is important to note that the goal was not to generalize the data collected but rather,

to highlight the experiences of Latinx MSFW students in higher education. Additionally, the intent of the study was to use a collaborative data analysis for each participant. However, given the use of case study methodology, I found that collaborative data analysis did not suit this study.

### **Summary**

The study looked at the following research questions: (a) What diverse range of cultural capital and/or assets do Latinx students, who have completed their first year with the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon state university, utilize to become successful college students? and (b) How has the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon State University promoted success amongst its Latinx students? The study was guided by a case study methodological approach, using semi-structured interviews, that sought to interpret students lived experiences as internal strengths, or cultural wealth, that prompted Latinx migrant and seasonal farmworker students to become successful college students. In addition, this study examined how the College Assistance Migrant Program has promoted success, in relation to students' inner strengths, amongst its Latinx students. Yosso's (2005b) community cultural wealth model was used to view students lived experiences as internal strengths that contributed to their success at Oregon State University. In conclusion, this research addresses the existing literature gap by examining the role of community cultural wealth in CAMP Latinx student success by capturing the talents, strengths, and experiences that these students use in higher education.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of community cultural wealth in the success of Latinx MSFW students in higher education. Latinx students with migrant and seasonal farmworker background hold a wealth of cultural capital (aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant and linguistic) which help them pursue higher education.. This study also examines how the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) has promoted success amongst Latinx students through an exploration of community cultural wealth. The following research questions asked in this study are the following:

- 1) What diverse range of cultural capital and/or assets do Latinx students, who have completed their first year with the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon state university, utilize to become successful college students?
- 2) How has the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon State University promoted success amongst its Latinx students?

This chapter provides a description of participants, a brief overview on community cultural wealth, participant case studies, discussion of how study participants highlight the different types of capital in community cultural wealth, and an overview of how the College Assistance Migrant Program has helped Latinx MSFW students achieve success at Oregon State University.

### **Description of Participants**

In order to be involved in this study, participants must have self-identified as current Oregon State University Latinx students. However, interview participants had the opportunity to identify their ethnicity and many indicated having Mexican descent. Participants must have also

been in the OSU College Assistance Migrant Program during their first year at the university. Because of these requirements, all participants identified as Latinx with MSFW background.

Interview participants consisted of seven Latinx students, five of whom identified as female and two whom identified as male. There was a wide range of CAMP participants per cohort in this study, extending from the 2012 – 2013 CAMP cohort to the most recent and completed cohort of 2017 – 2018. All participants identified as being first-generation college students, meaning that none of their parents completed a four-year degree. It is important to note that four out of seven participants are currently majoring in a science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) related field. For the purpose of protecting my participants privacy, participants have been identified using pseudonyms when reporting responses.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>College</b>	<b>CAMP Cohort</b>	<b>Add'l Identities</b>
Monica	Undergraduate Senior	Science	2015 - 2016	First-generation, woman in STEM
Cesar	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Graduate Student	Public Health and Human Sciences	2012 - 2013	First-generation, male
Bianca	Undergraduate Junior	Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences	2016 - 2017	First-generation
Luna	Undergraduate Senior	Public Health and Human Sciences	2015 - 2017	First-generation, single parent household, woman
Max	Undergraduate Sophomore	Public Health and Human Sciences	2017 - 2018	First-generation, single parent household
Camila	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Graduate Student	Liberal Arts	2013 - 2014	First-generation, single parent household
Daniela	Undergraduate Junior	Veterinary Medicine	2016 - 2017	First-generation, single parent household, woman in STEM

### **Community Cultural Wealth**

As mentioned before, community cultural wealth is defined by Yosso (2005b) as “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. 76). Specifically, Yosso (2005b) defines aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance capital.

Aspirational capital refers as the “ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future” in the face of real and perceived barriers. Linguistic capital refers to the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style. Familial capital is defined as “...the cultural knowledge nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community, history, memory, and cultural intuition. Social capital for Latinx MSFW students refers to the “networks of people and community resources” (Yosso, 2005b, p. 79). Navigational capital includes skills that Latinx students use to navigate through institutions not designed for students of color. Lastly, resistance capital refers to the knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality. It is noteworthy to clarify that these forms of capital are not mutually exclusive or static, instead can be described as a dynamic process that build on one another as part of community cultural wealth.

### **Case Studies**

The next section of this chapter focuses on two case studies that highlight the ways that Cesar and Daniela, two participants, navigated Oregon State University, a predominantly white institution. Both cases showcase how students possess and utilize aspirational, familial, navigational, social, resistance, and linguistic capital to achieve success in higher education.

#### **Cesar’s story**

Born and raised in the Willamette Valley, Cesar is a son of immigrant parents and brother to four sisters. Cesar entered Oregon State University during the 2012 – 2013 academic school year as an undeclared undergraduate student and later on graduated in Public Health in spring of 2017. Despite the challenges that he has faced, Cesar continues to defy statistics by pursuing a master’s degree in Public Health and being the only Latinx student in his program, along with being the first in his family to obtain a four-year degree from an institution of higher education.

Cesar grew up in a predominantly Latinx community where his identity as a Latinx migrant and seasonal farmworker played a critical role in the start of his educational career. Although Cesar's parents did not want this occupation for him in the future, they thought it would be a great experience for him to learn.. During his summers working in agriculture, he vividly remembers picking raspberries with his parents at a very young age, from dusk to dawn.

As I would pick them from the branch, they would squirt juice. You get that juice all over you and you get really sticky. I hate things on my face so I would constantly be like this [rubs arm on face] and get berry juice all over my face. With the heat it would dry it up really fast. I remember that. You would have to wear long sleeves, so you don't get thorns on you but then those long sleeves get wet with the juice. That normally happens in the morning and by the afternoon, they get all crusty – kind of hard because the juice has dried up. It was always really uncomfortable...I can describe it because I reflect on it now and in the moment, you don't think about it. In the moment I have to fill up the crate, stack them up, carry them...

When I asked Cesar if his experience as a migrant and seasonal farmworker impacted his educational experience, Cesar responded:

[Sigh] I never want to do that again. It pushed me every single day. I don't want that future. The sun – I remember looking up at the sun and it was high up. You know my mom was ready at the fields to sell food because she would honk her horn. When I would hear that honk, it was a relief. That meant lunch but that also meant I would not have to pick for 15 minutes.

For Cesar, this experience granted him the opportunity to recognize that working in the production of crops was not something that he wanted to do as an occupation in the future and

instead, wanted to pursue a higher education. Cesar developed hopes and dreams for the future, or *aspirational capital*, driving him to Oregon State University as an undergraduate student and now as a graduate student.

However, when Cesar first entered Oregon State University, he immediately realized that being the only student of color in classroom spaces limited him from achieving success at Oregon State University.

...in one of my STEM courses... I was...paying attention but not really participating. I was wondering, “why am I not participating? I know some of these things, but I don’t want to raise my hand, or I don’t want to answer.” I think this was the third or fourth time when I realized it. I stepped back and I was like, “I’m the only dark-skinned person in this room. I don’t feel like I fit in this room.” Even the professor, he was White. When that became more apparent, that became more of my limiter. I would go in and examine the classroom and then I would question myself. I would question why I was here. That distracted me from learning which was already a difficult thing.

Nonetheless, Cesar found comfort in having a group of friends, with similar background as his, go through the experience with him.

Another tool that really helped me was having friends from back home go on this journey with me who share the same experiences. The fact that we went to high school together really helped. We would lean on each other and we would talk to each other about classes and what we’re struggling. I lived off campus my first year and second year and they lived on campus. They would help me, and they would be the ones I would default to. “If you need to take a break in our dorm, just let us know. You can sleep there.” Having their



support – they were in the CAMP program too. That helped seeing them every day and being with them.

Cesar was able to find emotional support through his everyday interactions with people who shared identities similar to his, reassuring him that he was not alone and that he had other people to share his experience in higher education.. Through his peers and other social contacts, also recognized as *social capital*, Cesar successfully maneuvered through his collegiate career, developing a strong use of *navigational capital* to succeed in his first year in college and beyond.

Additionally, as an undeclared first year student, Cesar had a difficult time seeing people who looked like him in various career paths. Now, as a graduate student studying public health, Cesar reflected on his experience and expressed:

For a very long time within the Latinx community, if you're going to go to school – given what I said about hard work – it has to be something of high caliber which is engineering or medicine...even a teacher you could say, but a lawyer or something of that caliber.

Typically, that is what is placed within the Latinx community where you have to be and those are the only careers that you see yourself achieving. I think for the longest time, it was hard figuring out if I should go back. I did my undergrad here too and now my graduate program...it was hard trying to see where I would go because I had never seen someone in that position. I had never seen an epidemiologist whose Latinx. I've never seen a chemical engineer that's Latinx. It's just hard to envision myself there and this whole time, even now, it's hard to see myself as an environmental occupational health person because I've never seen one who is Latinx.

Although he did not see Latinx students in the classroom space or in different career options, Cesar found internal motivation and resilience to keep persisting in spaces of the

university setting. Through this experience, he developed *resistance capital*, persisting despite the educational inequality that contributed to the lack of people with similar identities as his own in academic spaces and professional careers.

Because I made the connection that I don't see enough Latinos in these positions where I can envision myself there, it was one of my goals when I declared this career path to teach more Latinx people about public health. It takes me back to what courses can I take... it was in the classroom space where I didn't know individuals who had taken those where it was a struggle. But through CAMP, I was able to meet students who had already taken those courses and who were Latinx. They paved the road to see that we can fit into those spaces whether it was organic spaces, or it was calculus. I could see myself in those roles.

Cesar turned to the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) for validation in times where he felt left out and/or when he did not feel he belonged in academia, using his *social capital* to further develop *resistance capital*.

They were always there to validate. I think that's why we go to \_\_\_\_\_, to validate our problems and how we're feeling. She does a really good job...students feel that she's taking it all in. You belong here. At the end of the day when I feel that I don't belong here, that's where I go, and I look at the students and I look at staff there. I belong here.

He continued to express how CAMP impacted his first year in college, supporting him as he navigated through a difficult time in his educational experience.

They made it easier to go about my day here on campus. Having someone be like, "hey there's Cesar. How are you?" That's exactly why I got into their office. If I go into a class, I feel people would notice I was there. If something happens where I start missing

class, people would start wondering what I was doing. They acknowledged me, they know my name. That's all I could ever ask for.

In having a classroom space shared with other CAMP students, Cesar felt his existence at Oregon State University was validated. He found strength through CAMP staff, faculty, and peers, *social capital*, to finish his education knowing that he had a solid group of people who supported him in and outside of the classroom space. Experiences as such, further facilitated his success at the university by maneuvering through academic spaces (*navigational capital*).

Although being the only student of color in the classroom space made Cesar feel out of place, he also developed internal strength and comfort in using his native tongue in Spanish speaking courses.

This class [Spanish course], I did not hesitate to engage and the fact that I knew that they understood not only the language, but the culture helped a lot. I believe I'm more extroverted in Spanish with my family and cousins. That's kind of how I learned to show excitement, but the environment doesn't allow you to utilize your language...I felt very comfortable in that classroom. I'd just show up and eat my orange – I wouldn't second guess it and that made a huge difference.

Because of Cesar's lived experiences, he used Spanish as a way to interact with others, also granting him different opportunities, such as an internship off campus that allowed him to use his native tongue with others. Hence, Cesar capitalized on his *linguistic capital* to find opportunities that contributed to his *navigational capital*.

The fact that I was able to speak Spanish and understand the culture allowed me to be in that internship for a good 6 months – interacting with people. I found myself using my Spanish there and it helped me create a community on site where I knew parents of

students who I worked with. I would see them at the store, and it allowed me to talk to them and make their day and it would make my day because of the familiarity.

As can be seen through Cesar's narrative, he was able to empathize with other Spanish speaking parents and relate to them because of their connection with language. Through this practice, Cesar was able to find a home away from home with others who spoke the same language as he did, making his educational experience feel less lonely and more supported.

Cesar also found strength and resistance through his family's support, *familial capital*. When Cesar began his undergraduate career and begin looking into graduate school, he expressed relying on his own research to "make things work out".

I really relied on my skills of researching; going online and navigating and getting my way through the resources that I know of...to try to find the answer and make things work out. I didn't know how my parents were going to react for me wanting to come back to grad school because it's not a very well-known thing. You're going to go to school again. When I applied and I got accepted, it was like...how am I going to explain this to my parents?

Although Cesar's parents were unable to provide him with him with the educational knowledge to help him navigate the system of higher education his first year and beyond, their supportive actions, up to this date, have shown him that they value his education as much as he does.

My family has been very supportive. I feel bad when I have to call them and tell them, "I can't visit you this weekend because I have a lot of homework." They understand. "Do what you have to do." Sometimes they'll make the road trip down here and bring me food

because they know I love to eat. Even when I was back home, they would tell me “if you need to do homework, just let us know and we’ll kick the kids out.”

Simple gestures as providing him with food, driving to visit him at the OSU college campus, or enforcing “quiet time” at home for Cesar to do his homework, encouraged him to keep persisting through the support of his family (*familial capital*).

To add, Cesar also found internal motivation and determination to reach his goals and aspirations based on his mother’s *consejos* and *platicas* (advice and conversations).

My mom would always say, “you never know who is watching you.” I never understood that. As an adult, you do never know who is watching you. You get judged – specifically the way that I would describe myself is dark skinned – brown skinned, bushy hair when I don’t get my haircut, so that’s what people see. They don’t see the fact that I am in a graduate program studying Public Health or Environmental – they see what the stereotypes are and that’s what they start building up. It’s about always constantly proving that I’m worthy enough to be on campus.

Cesar described using these stereotypes as motivation for him to continue learning and achieving success at Oregon State University.

It’s one of the reasons why I came back to grad school because I felt that I needed to keep going. To keep proving myself...I took a challenging course because I feel that I need to be prepared for when I leave school and go into the working field or the professional field. If someone questions my intelligence; “who do you think you are?” I can say I took a course on it in college and I know what I’m talking about. I wouldn’t get questioned and if I were to be questioned, I would be prepared.

Cesar endured hardship and saw his parents struggle to give him and his siblings a better life by working in low paying jobs. As a result of these experiences, he aspires to use the knowledge he has gained in his undergraduate and graduate program to work with the migrant farm working community through occupational health and advocate for their poor working conditions. It is clear that Cesar's hopes and dreams, *aspirational capital*, kept him motivated to achieve success at Oregon State University. Although he described his time harvesting raspberries as physically and emotionally exhausting, Cesar used a valuable skill, learned from migrant and farmworker community from a young age, to continue even when he faced challenges.

I think I stayed here [OSU] for so long because of those core values that I have from the migrant community... you need to work hard. You need to have a strong work ethic. That is something that was deeply engrained with me as a child.

Cesar carried a strong work ethic with him when he first moved to Oregon State University to pursue a higher education, helping his navigate through his first year in college and beyond.

Whenever I feel that I can't finish a project, its either this or the alternative...spending six to seven hours doing something you really don't want to do. It's sad because that's our *default alternative*.

Cesar used the term "default alternative" to describe Latinx students with migrant and seasonal farmworker background resorting to farm-work as their second option if obtaining a four-year degree did not take place. Knowing that this could be his default alternative, if he returned home without a degree, Cesar found motivation to persist in higher education and finish his education (*aspirational capital*).

When I'm doing homework, when I'm doing anything, this does not compare to the work that I did in that moment. In that moment, I would have wished to do anything else, from watching tv, playing with my friends, or even homework but just not being there. When you talk to students and they don't want to do something, it's better than picking blueberries and they get it. They get what we mean. You can say, "It's better than waking up at five a.m. or six a.m. Again, they get it. I think that's been one of the things that has helped me thrive here [OSU]. Knowing that that could be my alternative.

Despite Cesar graduating with an undergraduate degree and being a second-year graduate student, soon to graduate, he does not consider himself to be a successful college student. Coming from a public health background, Cesar expressed the importance in finding a balance in his wellness wheel <sup>2</sup>in order to be successful.

I come from a public health background, so for me, anyone who has their wellness wheel in check...ranging from your occupational health to your physical, biological, mental, intellectual, social, spiritual...if one of those is out of balance, it impedes a lot of your success or where you can be successful.

He went on to explain how the wellness wheel related to his experience in higher education

I have had other people tell me "you're so successful" just because of what I've been able to accomplish. For me, I find it troubling that when I'm in class and I need to focus on the material, my mind shifts to another stress whether its money or social – I'm not making enough friends, I need to go to work after that, I need to do homework. While

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<sup>2</sup> "The Wellness Wheel illustrates a wellness model with seven dimensions: emotional, intellectual, physical, social, environmental, financial, and spiritual. All dimensions are interconnected and important to a well-rounded and balanced lifestyle" (Wellness Wheel, n.d).

I'm trying to learn my material, I'm thinking of something else because my wellness wheel is out of check. There was a point where I had three jobs and I feel like that distracted me a lot from my studies. It distracted me a lot from getting engaged and being with friends. I'm still trying to work at balancing myself on that wellness wheel because I feel like once you have all of that, you learn how to balance your time with friends and yourself, your job. Because of that, I do not consider myself successful.

Although Cesar does not see himself as a successful college student, he has continued to defy statistics by persevering and resisting in spaces of academia that were not meant for him. As Cesar prepares to graduate this upcoming year, he embodies the strength and determination that many Latinx MSFW student hold to excel and obtain a degree in higher education for a better life. Experiencing the physical and demanding labor of farm-work first hand, empowered Cesar to persist and continue pursuing success at Oregon State University. Despite the hardships, Cesar's experiences, both academic and lived experiences, required him to develop different strengths to navigate and continue countering the narrative that Latinx MSFW students are less likely to graduate from higher education.

### **Daniela's story**

Daniela is in her third year of her undergraduate career studying Pre-Veterinary Medicine and was admitted into the OSU College Assistance Migrant Program for the 2016 – 2017 academic school year. Born and raised in the Willamette Valley, she is the oldest out of ten siblings but grew up living with her mom and four other siblings after her parents separated. Aside from identifying as a Latinx migrant and seasonal farmworker student, Daniela also



identifies as a successful first-generation college student and daughter of immigrants with indigenous roots.

Daniela attended a public institution for her primary and secondary education where the majority of her friends also had immigrant parents and worked in migrant and seasonal farm work year-round. Seeing her mother work in the fields set the foundation for Daniela to pursue a higher education and has since then, motivated her to persist and stay in college. As a result, Daniela developed *aspirational capital* and *resistance capital* that kept her motivated and with the will to persevere despite the challenges.

I learned through growing up with my mother and working with my mother, and seeing how she struggles, to keep our heads above water. As a skill, I feel like it's just being resistant and never giving up. With any immigrant child, you understand that your parents have sacrificed so much, you should at least help them a little bit. You feel obligated, there's this little guilt. The guilt that immigrant children feel.

Although Daniela expressed guilt, she used this guilt as her driving force to apply to Oregon State University (OSU). However, once accepted and in her transition from a predominantly Latinx migrant and seasonal farmworker hometown to OSU, she experienced culture shock.

When I came to OSU, it was in culture shock because there were so many white students. Like I said, I use to live in \_\_\_\_\_ where we saw a lot of Latin(x). What if they don't understand the cultural references that I make or what if we don't relate in the same way?

In addition, Daniela expressed feeling a lack of community in the classroom space as a Latinx STEM student. It became difficult for her to navigate through spaces of academia when

she did not see people who looked or identified as her, but she remained connected to her dreams and goals as she continued her collegiate career.

I am in the STEM fields. It's hard to relate with other STEM students because a lot of them are predominately white. It's hard to feel comfortable in that environment. You see people who are similar to you and create that community but when you don't see people that are similar to you, you don't.

These experiences required her to develop different strengths and obtain support during her first year in college. Daniela found this support outside of the classroom space through the College Assistance Migrant Program where she found a community and others who she could relate to. Daniela found strength through OSU CAMP's faculty and staff and resources, developing *social capital and navigational capital*.

CAMP has made me feel prouder of my culture and of my ethnicity because I really felt kind of shy when I came here, and I saw other white students. I thought well I'm not like them. They won't understand me and how can I relate to them or talk to them if I don't know myself anymore. CAMP helped validate my existence here at OSU. It has helped me be prouder of my culture background and it has reminded me why I'm here. It has reminded me of why I am studying here, it has reminded me of why I have to work hard.

For Daniela, mentors, tutors, faculty and staff were crucial to her understanding of how to navigate her first year in college and beyond because they understood her cultural background (*social capital*). Through CAMP, she was able to connect with people who shared the same identity of a migrant and seasonal farmworker student as her.

It makes us feel more at ease because for a lot of us, we don't know other people like us at the university. A lot of us are first generation. By going to those places, I get to meet

other people and meeting those people has helped me study harder and actually understand me.

Although Daniela identifies as a first-generation college student and her mother was not able to provide her with the educational knowledge to navigate her first year in college, she depended and found emotional support through her mother's *consejos y platicas* (advice and conversations) to navigate her undergraduate career. Through her mother's *consejos y platicas* (advice and conversations), she received words of encouragement and perseverance. Daniela's *familial capital* contributed to her *navigational capital*, especially during challenging circumstances.

She keeps me sane. There are times where I'm just alone by myself. When I'm by myself, I tend to overthink things. I call my mom. She doesn't understand what I'm going through, but she tries to relate. When I tell her I'm stressed, she'll say, "don't worry *mijita*. Go take a hot bath or a shower. Don't worry about it. I understand that you're stressed sometimes but you just have to keep working. You're already three years in. You can't just drop now – it's too late!"

Daniela also found support and comfort in speaking her native tongue, Spanish, with people in her CAMP cohort and friends from back home which allowed her to stay connected with her peers (*linguistic capital and social capital*). "Me and my Latin(x) friends – we may not see each other in two months but we always click because of language. When we hear our native tongue, we feel at home."

Being involved with CAMP and in spaces with Latinx migrant and seasonal farmworker students and students with other identities, also made her reflect on her own identities. As a

daughter of an indigenous woman, she has not been immersed in the culture nor has she been exposed to her mother's native tongue.

I've been having trouble identifying myself. My mother speaks her indigenous language and never really taught me about her language or culture. When they talk about native communities or indigenous communities, yeah, I have the blood, but I don't have the culture. I don't know anything about it because my mom doesn't want to teach me about it. As a kid, she had felt ashamed of it. I could seek it and try to learn about my own identity but it's hard when you're living in the US where it's not really explored.

This experience motivated her to explore her identity as a daughter of an indigenous woman further. When asked about her aspirations, she answered, "I hope to have my own veterinary clinic either here in the U.S. or in Mexico. My mom didn't teach me about her indigenous community, but I want to help other indigenous communities." Daniela relied on *aspirational capital* to achieve success in higher education.

Although Daniela was not immersed in her mother's indigenous culture, she developed a need to learn more about it and give back to a community that is unknown to her. Having these aspirations influenced her ability to achieve success in college by motivating her to persist and *echarle ganas* (put in effort) in order to attain her long-term goals. The phrase *echarle ganas* held more meaning than putting effort or working hard. Daniela understood that her mother's words encouraged her to do her best in school, to have a career in the future, otherwise, it would be very difficult for her to be successful. As a result, *aspirational capital* and *resistance capital* became a form of capital developed from *familial capital*.

It's motivated me. That's the only way I'll be able to achieve my dreams. I don't have any of those connections that can give me a high-end job without going to college. The

only way to leave the place that I'm at right now, is through education. Without education, I'll be working in the fields and probably working a low-end job.

Daniela used her inner drive to persist in college while also using it as an opportunity to change future generations for the better, starting with her younger siblings.

I'm the oldest out of ten kids. My brothers and sisters, they'll say, "I want to be a lawyer!", "I want to be an engineer!", or "I want to be a researcher!" These are the things that I didn't know growing up.

Knowledge of people, programs, career paths, and support groups on campus has been key in her collegiate journey and has inspired her to be a role model for her younger siblings (*aspirational capital*). She explained that now that she holds the knowledge needed to navigate higher education, she can pass that knowledge down to her brothers and sisters and serve as a support system for her them. Daniela had hopes of securing equal rights for her siblings, developing a form of *resistance capital*. Although she holds the knowledge necessary to successfully navigate through higher education, she also wants to teach her siblings the skill of being resourceful. To Daniela, this meant teaching her younger siblings to find information on their own by asking questions, doing their own research, and seeking out opportunities.

They'll ask me, "I like this thing. I like playing with monkeys or I like learning about monkeys. I like sharks but I don't know how to make that into a career." I'll tell them the different career paths that they can take. I go to the library with them and get them books about the different things that they're interested in to get them to explore their interests so that they can make a career of it too.

Daniela goes onto say that students succeed because they are able to find where they “felt accepted” and when they found that, “they were able to connect and really give it their full potential.” She identifies as a successful college student and to her this means:

a person who gets good grades – passing grades. Some classes are very difficult, and some students have three jobs, and they are doing different clubs. Some students just need to pass the class. Some students have no job at all and they’re not participating in anything – they can get a 4.0 very easily because all they do is study. You can be the smartest person at a university but if you don’t have the skills to communicate with people, to be resourceful, to outreach, to do those things...you won’t be as successful. You won’t have the same opportunities as another person.

With the support of her family, friends, and mentors, Daniela was able to rely on her internal strengths to become the successful and resilient leader she is today. She plans on using her experiences as a Latinx migrant and seasonal farmworker student to develop a voice for other people like herself.

### **Aspirational Capital: Sacrifices, Paying it Back, and Moving Forward**

Yosso (2005b) defined aspirational capital as the “hopes and dreams” students have. Latinx MSFW students referenced examples of aspirational capital in the context of family and hopes of paying them back, and educational and career aspirations.

Some participants expressed that their parents and grandparents had immigrated to the U.S. at a very young age, without any formal education, emerging themselves in the field of migrant and seasonal farm work as a form of survival and hopes of a better life for their children. During their summers, Monica, Luna, Cesar, Max, Bianca, and Daniela shared the same experience in working in agriculture settings as a way to financially assist their families.

I had to work in the fields – I think it was in middle school, right after the economy went down and my dad lost his job and my mom just gave birth. I think I was about 12 years old – you know, wake up at 4 or 5 am as a 12-year-old...on your knees, just picking blueberries for so many hours and the sun is on you. I hated every single moment of it. I knew I had to do it if we wanted to stay in our house, if we wanted to eat, if we wanted to do all of these things. I think that having that weight as a 12-year-old child is what made me realize, “whoa, I don’t want to be in this situation when I’m older, ever, so I have to work extremely hard to go to college.” – Bianca

Bianca’s first-hand experience working in agriculture, similar to her peers, allowed her to understand the long and physically demanding labor that her parents had to endure to provide her family with the basic living necessities, such as a home. As a result of this experience, Latinx MSFW students expressed a debt towards their parents sacrifices and efforts in immigrating to the U.S. and paying it forward. For example, when asked what or who motivated her to achieve success in college, Luna said, “my mom”, adding:

She is one of my best friends and she's the reason why I even wanted to go to school in the first place. I saw that she didn't get to have an education and she wasn't given the chance. She gave me a chance and I want to be able to say to her that I took a chance and I'm able to do something with that.

Monica also added:

I worked in the *limpia* (weeding). Working there...sucked. A lot...working 10-12-hour days and waking up at 3 a.m. I did it because it was easy money and I knew it was going to end and I would go back to school. Then I realized that for many people, that’s not the

reality. This is all they do. I knew I didn't want that for myself. I had to go to school to get a better job.

As can be seen here, Latinx MSFW students grew an appreciation for their parents and the farmworker community which motivated them to improve their family lifestyle and attend college. These aspirations were shaped by farm worker stories of strength and overcoming adversity. Hence, for Latinx MSFW students, the aspiration of education was a space for financial mobility despite the barrier's inequality in higher education. Students drew on their families to develop and maintain hopes and dreams.

Although many Latinx MSFW students expressed hopes and dreams related to their family, in many cases students had a general idea of how they would apply the knowledge obtained in education into practice, in order to address the needs of their communities. For example, Monica and Cesar both expressed the desire to obtain a master's degree in hopes of addressing the needs of the migrant and seasonal farmworker community. Monica, an undergraduate senior, says:

I really want to go back to \_\_\_\_\_ because there's a really high migrant population and I want to work in a clinic with the *campesinos*. I am bilingual and did grow up [in community], so I understand it. Language...there's no barrier there but there's also no cultural barrier between us either. I really want to work with a population that are monolingual Spanish speakers or with a really high migrant population. I think there's a lot of disparities that need to be addressed, not just within the Latinx community but within rural health too...there's a lot of health problems and things that need to be addressed and that's what I want to do.

Cesar, a second-year master's student, also indicated similar aspirations:



I've always wanted to work with the migrant farm working community in terms of occupational health and really try to advocate for them – for the working conditions that they're in, just improving those working conditions, so exploiting regulations that work against protecting them. Exploiting the behaviors of people including managers – the choices they make and trying to dissect why are they coming from that area and why can't they understand the workers.

Latinx MSFW students' responses revealed a strong desire to go into a field in which they related to because of their lived experiences. In particular, Latinx MSFW students wanted to give back to their Latinx and/or migrant and seasonal farmworker communities. As many of the responses show, Latinx MSFW students relied on their hopes and dreams for the future to persist in spaces of higher education, especially when they faced challenges. It is clear that Latinx MSFW students held a great wealth of aspirational capital, motivating them to continue achieving success and making their dreams a reality.

### **Linguistic Capital: Language as Comfort and Opportunity**

For many Latinx MSFW students, language served as a way to communicate with one another and relate. Although all seven Latinx MSFW students in this study grew up being bilingual, speaking both Spanish and English from a very young age, linguistic capital was the least spoken about from participants. However, while many students expressed that it was unusual for them to use Spanish in the classroom space, those who did have the opportunity indicated that speaking Spanish provided them with comfort. For instance, Daniela described this in her case study as, “when we hear our native tongue we feel at home, whereas you're speaking to someone else who doesn't speak your native tongue.” Daniela described her ability to speak

Spanish with others as a form of comfort that gave her a sense of belonging to the college campus.

Because some Latinx MSFW students recognized the importance of Spanish in their educational and career goals, speaking both English and Spanish became an asset in achieving success. Monica expressed using her Spanish minor as a way to achieve her goal in becoming a physician assistant and working with migrant and seasonal farmworkers specifically, many of whom the majority only speak Spanish. Similarly, as mentioned in Cesar's case study, he hopes to use his Spanish language when working with the migrant and seasonal farmworker community through occupational health. To further develop their Spanish speaking skills to achieve success in their future aspirations, Luna, along with Monica and Camila, used their bilingualism to help navigate through higher education by minoring in OSU's unique Spanish for Heritage Speakers. The use of student's linguistic capital in navigating higher education will be revisited in the navigational capital section of this study.

Students who had previously acted as an interpreter for members of their family expressed the ability to navigate back and forth between both languages in the classroom setting. For many of these Latinx MSFW students, translating for their parents became the norm whether it was for school conferences, scheduling appointments, grocery shopping, and more. As Yosso (2005b) had argued, experiencing more than one language and/or style, enhanced people of color's "memorization, attention to detail, dramatic pauses, comedic timing, facial affect, vocal tone, volume, rhythm, and rhyme" (p. 29). For instance, Luna expressed that in being bilingual, she was able to create new ways of learning which contributed to her success academically.

I think when we take our experiences as bilingual students or even trilingual students, we're able to take one concept and double it just so we can have one answer. We're doing

a lot more work, but we don't even recognize that we're truly working our brains twice the amount to someone else.

### **Social Capital: “Not What You Know, but Who You Know”**

In talking about their experiences at Oregon State University, many students spoke about the role of social capital in achieving success at the university. Peer networks proved to be important to student's ability to navigate spaces of higher education. Latinx MSFW students capitalized on their friendships with peers in and outside of the CAMP program and network with others in their friends' social circle to develop social capital.

Cesar, for example, already had a social network established at the university prior to attending OSU because he was accompanied by two friends from high school.

We would lean on each other and we would talk to each other about classes and what we're struggling... They would help me, and they would be the ones I would default to.... having their support, they were in the CAMP program too, that helped seeing them every day and being with them.

Similar to him, this group of students were Latinx, MSFW, and first-generation college students. Cesar utilized these contacts to navigate his first year in college and beyond, knowing that he was not alone and that he had other people to share his experience in higher education with.

In addition, Cesar also relied on making new friends through CAMP, forming a new social network, to meet other people who enjoyed playing soccer on their free time.

Through...CAMP, you meet people and then you create a group. “Oh, you play soccer? Let's go play!” through them, you meet their inner circle – they invite friends over and you get to meet them. My freshman year...we created a soccer group on Facebook. When

anyone who was going to play would post and say, “we’re going to play at 6 if anyone wants to join.” I created that group because I always wanted to play soccer and I didn’t know who else to ask but then, “I know this person” “oh I know this person too” and then I started meeting new people.

Similar to Rendon’s (2014) study, Cesar capitalized on his friendships with peers and the networks that were formed with their friends. In doing so, Cesar was able to form connections with others who shared a common pastime as he did, making college feel less isolating.

In most cases, Latinx MSFW students communicated their experiences in predominantly white institutions and how those friendships provided them with the cultural capital to navigate through societies institutions.

We talk about our experiences of being people of color at the most predominantly white state in America. It’s that support that they [friends] have. I try to connect with other people who have the same experiences I do or other people of color. Having that connection and feeling like you have that little family here at the university, also helps you stay here and feel more welcomed. I still connect with other CAMP people from my cohort. It makes you feel more welcomed and less alone.

Daniela’s narrative expressed relying on her social network as a way to meet new friends who shared similar experiences as she has because of her identities. By relying on her social capital, she obtained companionship support through her peers and a sense of belonging at OSU.

Latinx MSFW students also expressed dedicated faculty who cared about their educational experience as a form of social support that assisted to their navigation at OSU. In Daniela’s case study, mentors, tutors, faculty and staff were crucial to her understanding of how

to navigate her first year in college and beyond because they understood her cultural background.

When speaking about CAMP's orientation, she expressed:

The first faces that we see are other Latinx students. The mentors make us feel welcomed. We meet other migrant students. We connect. It makes us feel more at ease because for a lot of us, we don't know other people like us at the university. A lot of us are first generation. Being with other people that have similar background as you, makes you feel more at ease and prepares you to actually face what you're going to experience at the university.

She continued on to say:

My advisor went to Cornell and she is amazing. I always walk into her office and I just walk myself to her couch. She always asks, "Do you want chocolate? Do you want candy? Do you want to eat some lunch?"

Daniela spoke about relying on networks formed with other Latinx students because they understood her background and lived experiences. Small acts such as checking in on Daniela also showed and made Daniela feel that she was supported at the institution. She knew that she had a support system of professional faculty and staff within and outside of the CAMP program that would motivate her to achieve success.

For Luna, CAMP mentors, faculty, and staff provided her with the information, validation, and emotional support to persist and achieve success at the institution.

Once you start letting go of your fear, you start letting in opportunity. That's definitely something that has been hard to figure out, but I think that with the support that I've had with my professors, or my supervisors, they remind me of those things that I'm doing right and that the cost will be worth it. Always having people around you and saying

you're doing great...if you finish this thing, you'll be done, and you can rest. Those kinds of things have truly stuck with me and have made sure that I continue to be successful.

Luna expressed that the people that she works with have motivated her keep pursuing success by reminding her of her accomplishments and what she is doing right.

For Max, his high school counselor provided him with advice on how to navigate institutions of higher education before attending Oregon State University.

One of the things that my counselor told me in high school was that nothing is going to be done for me and so I need to advocate for myself and any help that I need. That definitely something that I have learned; self-advocacy.

Max relied on people that he knew prior to college for advice and information as a way to prepare him for his journey at OSU and has enabled him to put this skill to use while being here.

Lastly, Latinx MSFW students also expressed the role of racial and/or interest-based organizations in navigating spaces in higher education, academic or nonacademic. Particularly, students gravitated towards Latinx based, or predominantly Latinx, organizations. For Luna, CAMP, focusing on students with migrant and seasonal farmworker background, provided her with the social network to network with others in others social circle to develop social capital. Through the National HEP/CAMP Association Summer Internship in Washington, D.C., she connected with other Latinx MSFW students for support. Now, three years later, Luna expressed:

We all still actually have a group chat together, so we still try to look contact each other. I actually got to see him a couple of months ago in Orlando because I was there for a conference and just a catching up with him and kind of talking about life was cool. Because here's this person that I didn't know three years ago and now he's a super close friend of mine and kind of just helping each other out.

Similar to Luna, Bianca was able to capitalize on her friendships with peers and in the process, obtained various leadership skills and opportunities in college.

I feel that throughout all of the clubs and stuff that I do, I gained a good social circle, so I've been able to network with people but also, I've learned a lot of leadership skills.

There's a lot of skills that I think are super transferable to whatever jobs that I do. Also, if I have any questions about homework, I can always go to them. Fortunately, I've been able to get my research gig through them by simply networking and knowing people.

Bianca's experience emphasizes Ayala and Contreras's (2018) findings on social capital, "not what you know, but who you know", hence the title of this theme. While showcasing social capital, Bianca's statement highlights how social capital influences navigational capital, much of what will be covered in the following section.

### **Navigational Capital: Establishing a Sense of Belonging and Moving Through Academic Spaces**

Feeling like an outsider at a predominantly white institution made it difficult for some Latinx MSFW students to persist in academic spaces. However, students remained in college and achieved success through their navigational skills. As Yosso (2005b) defined, navigational capital referred to students' skills and abilities in navigating through institutions not designed for students of color. In this analysis, that Latinx MSFW students leveraged skills, developed before attending college, to locate resources, information, and people to help them succeed in college.

In Cesar's case, he identifies learning a strong work ethic from his family and migrant community. For many students, the value of hardwork and a work ethic grew from the physically demanding labor in migrant and seasonal farm work.

I think I stayed here [OSU] for so long because of those core values that I have from the migrant community... you need to work hard. You need to have a strong work ethic. That is something that was deeply ingrained with me as a child.

Latinx MSFW students also expressed the use of other skills such as being self-sufficient in doing their own research and finding opportunities to achieve their hopes and dreams. Luna described developing this skill due to her migrant farm work background.

Having a migrant parent...who works in the migrant community...it was definitely learning to be self-sufficient and kind of taking that into my education. I always found my own way to learn and to get my homework done.

Similarly, Cesar and Daniela also described this in their cases as the following:

I really relied on my skills of researching; going online and navigating and getting my way through the resources that I know of...to try to find the answer and make things work out.

We don't have parents who went to college. We didn't have any of that. We had to go find that ourselves. I think that's also made us super-efficient at finding opportunities.

In addition, participants in this study spoke about the reliance on faculty and staff, peers and family for formal or informal networks of information to navigate their college experience. Similar to Ayala's and Contreras' (2018) findings on Latinx cultural wealth, for many Latinx MSFW students, navigational capital was the product of already established programs or other arrangements on the college campus, such as the College Assistance Migrant Program. Students recognized that the institution, both its structure and culture, were unsupportive and/or hostile to them and their communities. Luna described this as the following:



We have to be more Mexican than Mexicans, yet we have to be more American than the Americans...It's how we have to view the world and we have to be able to be interchangeable and adapt to our communities because we fit in in so many spaces yet get excluded from a lot of spaces.

Consequently, Latinx MSFW students gravitated towards validating agents, people on campus, in CAMP who would help students operate in distinct social contexts and enable them to move in unsupportive academic spaces. Validating agent included but were not limited to siblings, parents, faculty and staff, and peers who validated students' experiences and feelings as they navigated a predominantly white institution. For example, Camila described this as:

I feel like they made all of my feelings where I felt that I needed help, they made those feelings feel validated because I don't know who else I would have reached out to on campus for things as simple as redoing my FAFSA again without any help or registering for classes. There were a lot of things that I wouldn't have known or no clue to go to.

Like others in this study, Luna relied on CAMP faculty and staff for validation of her existence at OSU. Validation became a product of networking with faculty and staff on campus allowing her to maneuver through college. Through this validation came the belief that she was capable of achieving success in higher education, creating a foundation for which Latinx MSFW came to depend on as they navigated through their college experience.

I wanted to feel like I actually was deserving of being a student at this school. Having my mentor and having \_\_\_ (CAMP staff member), who is my boss now, say, "you deserve to be here. You earned your spot at this institution. You deserve the grade that you got.

Don't ever question why you got a good grade or that you don't deserve a good grade."

That was great because I didn't have people like that ever telling me those kinds of things.

Lastly, Latinx MSFW students navigated their college experience using skills that gave them comfort and a sense of belonging at the university, enabling students to maneuver through academic spaces. While declaring a minor in Spanish for native Speakers, students found an "escape" from the traditional Westernized curriculum and were able to establish a "safe space" on campus. Spaces as such, facilitated Latinx MSFW students success within unsupportive environments at a Oregon State University, a predominantly white institution.

As mentioned earlier in the findings of linguistic capital, Latinx MSFW students expressed using their native tongue(s) as comfort, specifically the Spanish language. Similar to Monica's response, other Latinx MSFW students expressed connecting with other Spanish speakers for opportunities and comfort that would allow them to traverse multiple and distinct social settings. For example, Max had the opportunity to become a Spanish tutor for the Department of Spanish and the World of Language and Cultures and help other students who had the goal of learning Spanish. Luna and Bianca were also able empathize more with Spanish speaking students, parents, and faculty members on the college campus as a form of comfort and belonging.

### **Familial Capital: Foundation to Educational Success**

Familial capital was the most discussed form of community cultural wealth among all seven respondents. Yosso (2005a) argued that pre-college experiences within a communal environment come with knowledge that campuses can help students leverage in to positive

experiences in college. Students expressed self-determination to achieve their goals and aspirations for themselves but also for their family.

When asked what motivated Max to keep pursuing success at Oregon State University, he responded:

I think it's the opportunity to be in this country and have the opportunity to pursue a higher education. If my parents hadn't immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico, I don't think I would be in this position right now.

Because all students identified as first-generation college students, attending a post-secondary institution with the intention of graduating with a four-year degree became much more meaningful. Obtaining a degree represented their parents sacrifices, hopes, and dreams in immigrating to the U.S. and achieving the "American Dream." Latinx MSFW students expressed being appreciated of their parents efforts in moving to a new country for the purpose of them achieving a higher education.

In achieving the "American Dream", Latinx MSFW students would be able to support their family, an experience that Daniela described as:

You know that your parents want to – they have dreams, they have aspirations but sometimes they can't do that because they have to work. They have to keep going. You feel that guilt because they gave up their life so you could have a better one. You should be successful so once you have a career and make enough money, you can give them that life that they put on pause.

Daniela's case study portrayed other Latinx MSFW student's strength to continue achieving success through familial relationships and support. Because of students' familial sacrifices and emotional support during their undergraduate career, later explained in this

section, a strong need to give back to family members evolved. Education was seen not only as a form of socioeconomic mobility for themselves but as a way to support their family through various forms, specifically financially.

For Monica, supporting her family looked like:

Probably more financial as they get older when they can't work as much and depending on where they're at with their health and age. That may look like paying for them to have a home care giver if they get to that age, medical treatments...paying for that, or me taking them to their appointments and driving them.

For many Latinx MSFW students' families, medical insurance was not an option in their household. Parents would convey the importance of an education in order to improve their socioeconomic status and obtain benefits such as medical insurance. For example, Monica found strength in persevering through higher education and achieving success to pay back her parents support and sacrifices by providing for them medically and financially, many benefits that they did not have access to.

Students shared difficult family life experiences, instilling Latinx MSFW students with the determination to persevere in higher education and framed education as a means for financial mobility. Hence, Latinx MSFW students relied on familial strengths as a way to persist and persevere through the challenges faced in higher education and remain in college. For example, Daniela expressed that although her mother was unable to provide the educational knowledge to help her navigate her first year in college, her mother tried to relate and understand her struggles by empathizing with her. As a result, parental emotional support became critical for her to successfully navigate Oregon State University her first year and beyond. Emotional support became a product of familial capital. As can be seen below, in times of vulnerability or

challenge, Daniela found strength by calling her mom, serving as a reminder of why she entered college in the first place.

We [mother and Daniela] always talk to each other every single day, even though she's 45 minutes away, every single day she calls me. I sometimes tell her, "I'm really bummed out" or "I'm really stressed". She keeps me sane. There are times where I'm just alone by myself. When I'm by myself, I tend to overthink things. I call my mom. She doesn't understand what I'm going through but she tries to relate.

For many students, family, specifically mothers, motivated them to persist and achieve success at Oregon State University. It was apparent that Latinx MSFW students relied on their parents' words of affirmation and motivation to continue achieving success at the university.

Similar to Daniela, Max also received emotional support from his mother:

My mom has always told me that I need to be confident in myself and in my abilities and not let anyone else tell me otherwise. That kind of just gave me a boost to even get into college. That's always a value that I always keep in mind for my mom.

Max's mother supported him by validating and believing in his ability to enter a four-year institution and achieve success. His mother's lessons of care and wisdom informed his educational experience, reminding him of his abilities as he navigated his first year in college and beyond. Max was able to find his strength through his mothers' words and lessons, encouraging him to take different opportunities on the college campus.

In spite of the fact that many Latinx MSFW students did not address practical skills taught by their family members, students' stories were filled with messages that highlighted perseverance and determination and most importantly, messages that valued education. Luna said:

My family has always pushed me to go to school...they've always told me, "don't be like us. Go to school. You don't want this lifestyle...I think that they made sure that I understood from a young age that this was not the life for me."

As seen in Luna's narrative, along with others in this study, parents used their own life experiences as a way to motivate their Latinx MSFW children to enroll, persist, and achieve success at Oregon State University. When participants felt stressed or were going through a hardship, they would turn to family, specifically mothers, for encouragement through *consejos* and *platicas* (advice and conversations). These *consejos* and *platicas* were often filled with words of strength, persistence, and encouragement. Delgado-Gaitan (1994) highlighted how *consejos* offer valuable learning opportunities for Latinx children, arguing that *consejos* "are more than storytelling, it is problem solving" (p. 59). Through this experience, Daniela acquired resistance capital through her mother's *consejos*:

When I tell her I'm stressed, she'll say, "*don't worry mijita*. Go take a hot bath or a shower. Don't worry about it. I understand that you're stressed sometimes but you just have to keep working. You're already three years in. You can't just drop now – it's too late!"

Daniela describes her mother's *consejos* and *platicas* as strength and validation which allowed her to keep achieving success at Oregon State University even when she experienced challenges.

Bianca also expressed:

Even though she [mother] is not an educated woman, she is still a wise woman and I get those lessons from her...and even though my parents didn't know how to help me with my math, how to help me with other things, they still always supported me. If I wanted to

play Lacrosse which is a sport they didn't even know existed, they still let me play. If I wanted to do band, they didn't know what the music means but they would let me do it. Their support not only through academics but through extracurricular activities really helped me notice that they would help me with whatever else.

Bianca's narrative highlighted an important strength amongst all seven participants.

Parents encouraged students to take advantage of the various opportunities that came with being a student in a four-year university, in spite of that fact that they did not know what it was.

Similar to Gonzales' (2012) findings, although many of the parents may have not understood the coursework that students had because of their limited formal education, they expressed to their children, in a distinct and powerful way, the importance of education through their support. This can clearly be seen in Daniela's narrative:

Like I said before, my parents and other friends' parents would always tell us when we were working in the fields – “work hard and study hard because if you don't, you're going to end up like us. You're not going to be able to succeed. You're not going to be able to dream big, so you have to work hard. You can't give up. Things may be hard – your family may lose their house or their job, but your job is to study and to work hard.

Daniela's community and family networks affirmed that despite the challenges she may face, education will and should forever be her priority. This support is important because Latinx MSFW families are often flooded with negative messages about family expectations for their children to drop out of school and help them financially. Contradictory to what the deficit model suggests, Latinx MSFW families were interested in obtaining more information on how to best support their son or daughter during their first year in college and beyond. Luna described this as:

My mom came to our orientation for CAMP and kind of just try to learn about what college was because we both didn't really know. Even when I go home till this day, she'll ask, "how's school going?", what kind of classes am I taking, what am I learning, although she may not know what exactly I'm talking about. She just likes the concept of being able to tell her these things and feeling comfortable to say...you know, I'm learning something, and I want you to learn with me. Now that she's gotten older, she appreciated that education is a form of bonding.

Other supportive actions that emerged amongst Latinx MSFW students in this study included enforcing "quiet time" in the house when students visited home so that they would be able to complete their homework and mothers preparing homemade meals for their children to eat. Even though families did not know how to assist students in their school work, they tried their best to relate and understand the time commitment involved by providing them with an effective studying environment and eliminating any tasks that may require additional time. Latinx MSFW students expressed that through these simple acts of support, they felt supported and developed resistance capital, encouraging them keep persisting despite the struggles they faced in academia.

In addition, Latinx MSFW students aspired to become role models for their younger siblings. From a very young age, Latinx MSFW students were raised with the expectation of attending college after graduating from high school. Bianca described this as, "from a very young age, I remember in elementary school, my parents would say, 'you're going to college.' That was just the mindset that they came from." For Bianca, Max, and Daniela, being the oldest in their family meant setting the example for the rest of their siblings to follow. Max described this experience as, "I think that they need to see that if I can get through it (college), then they



can also...the two little ones are just starting to engrave that thought in their mind...going to college.” As a result, future Latinx MSFW students would be able to leverage on their personal human resources for information on how to succeed in college.

In Cesar’s case study, he expressed, “I have a thirteen-year-old sister -- because I came to this university, my younger sister wants to come to this university. She’s made up her mind that she wants to attend college.” Bianca’s, Max’s, and Cesar’s experience, similar to others in this study, challenge the deficit model surrounding Latinx MSFW families not valuing education. Latinx MSFW students knew that education was important for their parents because they always reminded them that education was “key” to a better and more secure life. Latinx MSFW further instilled the value of education amongst their younger sibling by sharing their knowledge in navigating the system of higher education with them through storytelling and personal advice based on their own experiences.

Migrant students have all the potential to succeed but I also think that it goes back to the different types of learning and the way one acquires knowledge. From my experience, growing up a lot of the knowledge from our culture was passed down by family, and by stories. – Camila

Camila strongly believes that Latinx MSFW students have the ability to succeed. For her, similar to many others, knowledge was carried through their community’s history, memory, and cultural traditions. Although this form of knowledge was not fully recognized in academic spaces, which would create additional barriers to students of this background, Latinx MSFW students had a strong need to provide the necessary information to their younger siblings in order for them to successfully navigate the system of higher education. For example, Daniela expressed:

I have the opportunity to change future generations...these are the things that I didn't know growing up...now that I have that knowledge...I can pass it down to my brothers and sisters and tell them about it.

For Daniela, being the eldest sibling in her family not only signified having the potential to be a positive role model to her younger siblings but to also change their future. As the first in her family to attend college and having gone through the experience alone, she now has the knowledge to share that information with her younger siblings. This knowledge would be essential for her younger sibling's experience in higher education and have the ability to be transformed from the college experience.

Through the sharing of educational information across and between generations, Latinx MSFW students set a strong foundation for future generations to pursue a higher education by relying on their familial capital. Latinx MSFW students described not knowing anyone in their family with a college degree or college experience, hence sought to be a role model for others, specifically their siblings. Younger siblings are able to leverage on the knowledge provided to them by their older siblings, such as Daniela. The power of educational knowledge and support amongst family members gave Latinx MSFW students, similar to Daniela, the strength and potential to create a positive impact for other Latinx MSFW students.

### **Resistance Capital: Strength and Perseverance**

As previously mentioned in Cesar's and Daniela's case study, Latinx MSFW students experienced racial and gender microaggressions, along with culture shock in college. Yosso (2005b) argues that resistance capital refers to the knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenge inequality. Having experienced racial and gender microaggressions, students obtained resistance capital which they would rely on in the face of

academic or social barriers in college. For example, Monica, a Latinx in a STEM related major, expressed being a woman in a major dominated by White men.

I think my experience just being a woman in the science has been a little different because predominantly [White] men go into it. So, going into upper division science classes, you don't see many women there...I had someone tell me that my English is very good. I was like...yeah, thanks. I've spoken it for 18 years.

Like many others, Monica became aware of the structural nature of oppression in the classroom space, consequently motivating her to work to transform such oppressive structures. For example, despite Monica experiencing microaggressions during her undergraduate career and now, a senior preparing to graduate, she overcame the intimidation that came in being one of the few Latinx women in STEM by securing equal educational rights and challenging structural inequalities. Monica, like other STEM students in this study, counters the deficit view that Latinx women are not intelligent to be enrolled in STEM related majors.

Monica's experience with microaggressions in the classroom setting highlights a cultural mismatch between her own culture and that in which is dominated by the U.S. In the U.S., the most valuable cultural capital centralizes Whiteness (Barajas and Ronnkvist, 2007; Gonzalez, 2012; Neely and Samura, 2011) and can cause difficulty for Latinx MSFW students to recognize their own cultural wealth which was seen here. When asked about his experience growing up bilingual, Cesar said:

I argue sometimes that English was my first language because I learned it at such a young age...I found myself multiple times in ESL trying to show my worth in the English language. I remember when I got my letter in the seventh grade saying, "You're proficient in English". I was really happy. Someone finally told me I was proficient.

[Now in college], the environment doesn't allow you to utilize your language. I've only had like 3 Latinx professors where I've been able to use my Spanish in.

Despite Cesar having to continuously show his proficiency in the English language and the educational curriculum not embracing his bilingualism, he formed resistance capital. Cesar used his experience to validate the experiences of marginalized people and to inspire people to become agents of social change, including himself, by attaining a college degree and participating in research opportunities as this one.

Similar to Cesar's experience, Bianca shared that while growing up it became a long process to convince herself that English and Spanish were both her first language. Both Latinx MSFW students acknowledged that the dominant White English language did not allow for them to recognize their own cultural capital in the classroom space. Because of both of their experiences, they built resistance capital, persisting and resisting in the opposition to become empowered by their bilingualism in coming into their first year in college.

In other cases, Latinx MSFW students felt pressured to prove their existence in higher education. As a result of others negative perceptions on Latinx MSFW students, students were motivated to keep achieving success. In Cesar's case study, he expressed using stereotypes as a motivation to achieve success and prove his existence at the institution.

It's one of the reasons why I came back to grad school because I felt that I needed to keep going. To keep proving myself so that when they see my name on a paper...my name is kind of hard to coin as a Latinx name so they see it as a White name...but when they seem me [in person], stereotypes are going to come in...at the end of the day...it was always about being prepared and taking the hard courses needed to answer those questions.

For Cesar, pursuing a graduate degree would allow others to see his identity as a Latinx student as one who could contribute through educational knowledge. Similar to his experience, Luna felt the need to prove her worth as a Latinx MSFW student in a predominant white institution.

Coming from a background where media portrays you a certain way or portrays your community a certain way and you have a lot of other outside factors contributing to your behavior or the way that you carry yourself in school...so, definitely...wanting to prove my worth, per say...where it's like I always have to try twice as hard to get the same recognition as some other people in my classrooms.

Similar to Wiggan's (2008) findings, rather than rejecting academic success, many Latinx MSFW students, including Cesar and Luna, saw high achievement as "cultural agency" and resistance against White supremacy. Despite of it all, Latinx MSFW students resisted to subordination by the modern educational system and its values on White cultural capital, by pursuing a higher education.

### **Defining Latinx MSFW Student Success**

Latinx MSFW students had varying definitions of what it meant to be a successful college student. While students acknowledged that academic achievement was important to their success at the university, they understood that there was more to it. There was a distinctive difference between undergraduate and graduate students and their definitions of success. However, there was a common agreement amongst all seven definitions, including 1) holistic health, 2) involvement, opportunities, and prioritization and 3) finding purpose and willingness to learn.

**Holistic wellness.** While students expressed the importance of academic achievement and progress towards graduation, Camila, Cesar, and Monica also framed success as taking care of oneself and positive personal development. Cesar and Camila, both graduate students, defined having a balanced wellness wheel (physical, finance, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual components) as contributing to becoming a successful college student. However, because they have yet to find an even balance to all components to their individual wellness, they did not identify as a successful student. Although Camila and Cesar did not self-identify as successful Latinx MSFW students, they did express progression towards achieving success at Oregon State University. Monica also framed success as one that encompassed a growth mindset<sup>3</sup>, particular to personal growth and professional development.

**Involvement, opportunities, and prioritization.** Bianca, Monica, Luna, and Daniela defined taking on various opportunities across the university campus as a form of involvement but also recognizing prioritization was essential to their success. Bianca and Monica's definition of success included taking the initiative to take on opportunities beyond the classroom space, providing her with the skills necessary to be a competitive candidate in the work force. Luna's definition also included involvement as important to her success, specifically contributing to her campus community by helping others obtain the common goal of persisting and graduating from Oregon State University. For Daniela, she identified a successful college student as someone who earns passing grades with the understanding that many Latinx MSFW students are in

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<sup>3</sup> A growth mindset is the belief that intelligence can be developed. Students with a growth mindset understand they can get smarter through hard work, the use of effective strategies, and help from others when needed (Mindset Scholars Network, 2015)

involved across campus through work and clubs. She also notes the importance of outreach and being resourceful to obtain new opportunities and achieve success.

### **Finding purpose and willingness to learn**

Luna, Monica, and Max identified finding a purpose and a strong want to learn as foundation to their success and/or used it to define success. Luna conveyed success as identifying her passion, setting a plan to achieve her goals, and celebrating the small successes. Luna and Monica both discussed having a desire to learn, ask questions, and strive for internal and external change through the use of their educational knowledge. Max also recognized success in identifying a purpose but also identified using personal values to foster success and achieve his ultimate goal and/or purpose in higher education.

### **OSU College Assistance Migrant Program and Student Success**

It is clear from the analysis that Latinx MSFW students developed strength and perseverance from their lived experiences working in the fields and observing their parents labor in the fields as a full-time job. Inevitably, the OSU College Assistance Migrant Program recognized the importance of creating a supportive environment that would contribute to student's success and persistence. Building on Yosso's (2005b) community cultural wealth framework and participants responses, the OSU CAMP program promoted success amongst its Latinx MSFW students through two interrelated forms of cultural capital, familial and navigational. Other types of capital, aspirational, linguistic, and resistant capital, became apparent but often emerged in relationship to familial, navigational, and social capital.

**Familial capital.** Yosso (2005b) describes familial capital as community, history, memory, and cultural intuition, or in short, the cultural knowledge nurtured through family. OSU CAMP recreated a sense of familial capital for many Latinx MSFW students through

programming events that reflected the Latinx culture, care, guidance, and support. For example, many students expressed staying connected with their cultural traditions and Latinx cuisine by attending OSU CAMP's Welcome Back *Pozole* (spicy stew made with pork and hominy) dinner party or barbeques. Programming events that embraced their culture gave students a sense of belonging, knowing a space with OSU CAMP existed for them within the larger Oregon State University campus.

Faculty, staff, and students were described as family, "CAMP brother", "CAMP sister", or "Mama \_\_\_\_". It was clear that Latinx MSFW students saw professional staff with respect but also formed an informal familial relationship through the academic and emotional support they received. They saw CAMP faculty and staff as people that they could trust because they understood their cultural values. Specifically, in Luna's words, "what I think that made the experience so much more worth it was that they [CAMP faculty and staff] understood the background that we come from...of having overprotective parents and having parents who were questionable about a lot of things." In situations similar to Luna's case, professional staff were comfortable talking to parents over the phone or in person and reassuring them that their son or daughter were safe under their care. As a result of this cultural understanding between CAMP Latinx professional staff and parents, academic success was further facilitated.

### **Navigational and social capital**

Navigational capital refers to the skills that Latinx MSFW students use to move successfully through social institutions not designed for them, while social capital refers to the peers and other social contacts utilized by students to navigate social institutions. In most cases, navigational capital was a product of Latinx MSFW students' involvement with programs on campus or knowledge of specific people. OSU CAMP was instrumental in providing students



with social and navigational capital, specifically through professional development opportunities. OSU CAMP provided Latinx MSFW students with various opportunities in and outside of the OSU campus, such as the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute National Conference, the High School Equivalency Program/College Assistance Migrant Program Association Internship through the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, and the CAMP Scholar Intern Program with University Housing and Dining Services. All of the professional development opportunities that OSU CAMP provided were free of cost for students and/or students received some form of monetary compensation for their time. For Daniela, this looked like:

They give us \$300 per term to help us buy our textbooks and stuff. It's a really big help because since we were first year students, we were forced to live at the university which is extremely expensive. We were forced to have a meal plan which is also extremely expensive.

Through these internship opportunities and the monetary stipend OSU CAMP provided to students, students gained valuable skills and abilities that they would then carry over into the classroom space or other leadership positions, aiding their success in college.

Due to the nature of OSU CAMP's cohort style model, the program provided Latinx MSFW students with the opportunity to meet other students who reflected their own identities (i.e. Latinx, MSFW, first-generation college student, bilingual). Luna also described this as, "When you put me in a group of 30/35 students that are often from these backgrounds and have had similar experiences, I want to be here. That kept me here my entire freshman year." For many Latinx MSFW students in the OSU CAMP program, connecting students with similar identities with each other, gave students a sense of belonging at the university. Students bonded through their shared fieldwork, bilingualism, and other lived experiences while also networking within their established connections.

In addition, CAMP faculty and staff served as validating agents. Students received academic advising, monetary stipends, attended and registered for classes, and navigated financial aid information with the guidance and support of CAMP professional staff. Latinx MSFW students felt comfortable asking CAMP faculty and staff questions that may have been perceived as “dumb” if they asked their college advisor because they understood their cultural background. CAMP faculty and staff guidance, support, and validation facilitated students experience in maneuvering Oregon State University and its complex systems. Overall, students expressed OSU CAMP being critical in their success as they navigated their first year and beyond.

### **Summary of the Results**

To summarize, research questions asked in this study were: 1) What diverse range of cultural capital and/or assets do Latinx students, who have completed their first year with the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon State University, utilize to become successful college students? and 2) How has the College Assistance Migrant Program at Oregon State University promoted success amongst its Latinx students?

Findings in this study clearly revealed that deficit-based assumptions of Latinx MSFW students are incorrect and inaccurate. Despite the hardships and struggles that students experienced, it was found that Latinx MSFW students hold an immense amount of strengths, persistence, and ability to achieve success, much of which the College Assistance Migrant Program built on. Familial capital became the most discussed form of capital, followed by social capital and navigational capital. For many, aspirational capital, students hopes and dreams, was developed within familial capital. Navigational capital was the product of already established programs or other connections on campus, also recognized as social capital. Latinx MSFW

students depended on their resistance capital to face microaggressions, stereotypes, and other forms of oppression. Lastly, linguistic capital, the least addressed form of capital in this study, was embedded in building professional empowerment skills.

As can be seen, the analysis showed an overlap across each type of capital, specifically between aspirational capital and familial capital and between social capital and navigational capital. As Yosso (2005b) argued, “these various forms of capital are not mutually exclusive or static, but rather are dynamic processes that build on one another as part of community cultural wealth” (p. 77). As result of the accumulation of cultural wealth and the support of a student support program like the College Assistance Migrant Program. The conclusion is that Latinx MSFW students have the ability to achieve success and persist in higher education if provided with the appropriate support to navigate their educational experience.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

In previous chapters of this study, the purpose and importance of community cultural wealth in the experiences of Latinx MSFW and their ability to achieve success was outlined. The analysis of the data showed that Latinx MSFW students do employ strengths that drive them to achieve success. Student support programs, similar to the College Assistance Migrant Program, have the ability to draw on students' strengths and abilities to achieve success. This chapter provides a brief overview of the discussion of the findings, limitations, recommendations for future practice, and suggestions for future research.

As the U.S. demographics are changing rapidly, students from various backgrounds are entering college at a higher rate, including Latinx students and students of color. The low admission and retention of Latinx students in higher education indeed represents a national challenge for educators and administrators of institutions of higher education. However, institutions have located the problem on individual students, maintaining that the cultural heritage of Latinx students and students of color, in comparison to the White dominant majority, does not allow minoritized students to be successful in higher education. This is a deficit model and portrays students whose experiences and interests would not enrich the university and as students who are less likely to achieve success.

Despite the disparity in the lack of literature using an asset-based framework, one that acknowledges the strengths, skills, and abilities of students of color, Latinx MSFW students continue to persevere and become successful college students. As seen in this study, Latinx MSFW students hold an immense amount of cultural wealth that they use to navigate their collegiate experience. As a result, this study aims to address the existing literature gap, specifically as it relates to Latinx MSFW students and success in higher education.

## **Discussion of Findings**

Using Yosso's community cultural wealth framework, an analysis of Latinx MSFW CAMP students at Oregon State University revealed how students utilize cultural wealth throughout their schooling. Through the support and validation of the College Assistance Migrant Program and the cultural wealth that students possessed, Latinx MSFW students demonstrated that they were able to achieve success in college. Specifically, the analysis of this study demonstrates how all six types of capital outlined by Yosso (2005b) are developed by students lived experiences or through the CAMP curriculum. It became clear that CAMP built on the cultural assets that Latinx MSFW students bring into the college and program. Specifically, CAMP's partnerships in and outside of OSU demonstrated to provide Latinx MSFW students with the greatest form of personal and professional development.

### **Aspirational capital**

Unlike the deficit narrative surrounding Latinx MSFW students, participants in this study held a great wealth of hopes and dreams stemming from their familial values and educational and career aspirations. As a result of student's experience working in migrant and seasonal farm work, they relied on their hopes and dreams to hold an education as a way for social and financial mobility. Students also expressed having dreams of attending graduate school to further practice their educational knowledge in the area that they were passionate for.

### **Linguistic capital**

Linguistic capital was the least discussed form of capital. A large disconnect between Latinx MSFW students and how they utilized their bilingualism in academic spaces stemmed from the lack of linguistic capital valued by the U.S. educational curriculum. However, students would use their bilingualism amongst other bilingual students in and outside of the CAMP

program as a form of comfort. Students also expressed that the only way that they could use their bilingualism in academic spaces was if they were enrolled in a Spanish course. Specifically, three students in this study minored in OSU's unique Spanish for Native Speakers minor, capitalizing on their bilingualism to achieve success in college and achieve their hopes and dreams.

### **Familial capital**

Familial capital became the most discussed form of capital. For many Latinx MSFW students, family and their MSFW communities introduced the value of higher education into their lives. Although many did not have the formal education to support their son or daughter in college, they had a had a willingness to learn. CAMP's willingness to communicate with parents and family members through programming events, such as Mi Familia Weekend and START Bilingue, further connected students and families to their educational journey at OSU.

### **Social and navigational capital**

For many Latinx MSFW students, navigational capital developed as a result of already formed existing or established agents on the college campus. Students largely highlighted the use of peer networks, CAMP faculty and staff, and racial and/or interest-based organizations to navigate their college experience. CAMP provided many students with the opportunity to partake in organizations, internships, or conferences in which they related culturally, such as the High School Equivalency Program/College Assistance Migrant Program Association Internship through the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, United States Hispanic Leadership Institute national conference, and CAMP Scholar Intern Program with University Housing and Dining Services. In addition, it was also found that students gravitated towards opportunities that gave

them comfort, such as minoring in OSU's Spanish for Native Speakers minor as a means for professional development and comfort in the classroom space.

### **Resistance capital**

Despite Latinx MSFW students experience with negative assumptions about them and their identities, students were able to use those negative experiences to motivate them to achieve success at the university. CAMP staff and faculty provided a space for students to talk about their struggles and concerns as they navigated an institution that did not reflect their own identities.

Although students' responses mentioned the use of CAMP as a resource that would allow them to successfully navigate spaces in higher education, we might assume that student support programs as such are fulfilling their purpose. However, the numbers of Latinx MSFW students enrolling and graduating with a degree in higher education says otherwise and the need for special programs, once again, proves the inequality that still exists today.

It cannot be denied that Latinx MSFW students faced a significant amount of challenges as they made the transition to college. However, it became clear through the data analysis that the problem did not lie on Latinx MSFW students. Latinx MSFW students held extraordinary amounts of strengths and willingness to achieve success in higher education. The problem lies on the institutional system and its inability to recognize the knowledge, skills, and abilities that Latinx MSFW students bring into the college space by placing the default on White culture as the sole focus for intellectual inquiry. This narrative not only normalizes the knowledge, skills, and experiences associated with Whiteness as the dominant race, but undervalues the cultural wealth of students of color and frames students and families at fault for poor academic performance.

Ayala and Contreras (2018) argued that “special programs are often isolated from the central administrative and curricular work of university” (p. 12). As mentioned earlier in this study, programs like CAMP are often described as “compensatory programs” that are often filled with underrepresented students with the intention “to make up for the experiences (such as the cultural experiences) lacked by disadvantaged children”, assuming that these students lack cultural capital to succeed (Gray, 2013). Similar to the focus on selective admissions, the institution tends to locate the problem within the individual students (Gray, 2013). However, in this study, CAMP demonstrated a strong utilization of students’ knowledge, skills, and abilities into their curriculum while still remaining Latinx MSFW students tied to their culture and ways of knowing. In comprehending the power and marginalization of Latinx MSFW students within a majority population, this study understands the importance of cultural influences and capital that marginalized students hold, which promotes their success at the university. Similar to any other program, there is always room for improved practices to best support the students in which the program is serving. As a result of the findings in this study, related to CAMP practices and the challenges that students faced, I offer recommendations, after addressing the limitations in this study, that align with Latinx MSFW student’s cultural wealth.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The findings in this study are significant for institutions of higher education that wish to learn what accounts for student success of Latinx MSFW students and/or who wish to increase the retention of these students. The acknowledgement of Latinx MSFW cultural wealth in higher education can lessen obstacles students face and, in the process, build a foundation from which university personnel can address the challenging experiences that arise for these students in college. It is our duty as faculty, staff, and administrators to design programs where our students



feel validated and supported on their journey towards success in higher education, both in and outside of the classroom space. We must appreciate and understand the various cultural capital that Latinx MSFW students bring to college by leveraging strategies that are aligned with student assets to foster student success. As a result of student responses in this study, I have presented a few recommendations for university personnel to practice that integrates Yosso's community cultural wealth framework and/or practices already being done by the OSU College Assistance Migrant Program.

### **Aspirational capital**

As discussed in the research findings, Latinx MSFW students referenced examples of aspirational capital in the context of family and hopes of paying them back, along with educational and career aspirations. To leverage on Latinx MSFW student aspirational capital relating to their educational and career aspirations, a common resource that students in this study used to affirm that they had the capacities and strengths to attain their hopes and dreams was the use of CAMP peer mentors. As evidenced by the positive impact that Latinx MSFW students expressed in having peer mentors, CAMP assisted Latinx MSFW students in connecting them with undergraduate mentors who validated their existence at the university and motivated them to continue pursuing success. As a result, I suggest that faculty and staff incorporate a peer to peer mentor program. Students yearn for mentors, particularly someone who shares their experiences, to share their personal and professional stories. Through the use of peer mentoring, mentees are able to obtain important information about courses, financial aid, and on campus and off campus resources but they are also able to see people who reflect their identities or in the words of Cesar, "they paved the road to see that we can fit into those spaces...I could see myself in those roles."

Similar to peer mentors, academic advisors and counselors have the ability to be supporting and validating agents. Engaging practitioners, particularly advisors, in a “whole person” (Dunn, 2017) approach, otherwise known as holistic advising, is imperative to the academic success of Latinx MSFW students. Holistic advising can be defined as a developmental process that focuses on the whole student, taking into consideration all the complexities of a person (Dunn, 2017). In imperative approach to holistic advising is considering student intersectionality. What happens when you have a student who has four different social identities that impact their academic experience? In particular, I recommend that practitioners get to know students’ characteristics before meeting with them and learn their goals and needs as much as possible to offer targeted resources and support. Practitioners also have the opportunity to challenge and reframe Latinx MSFW students’ assumptions by reflecting on how they can encourage and identify the strengths that these students bring to college. Subsequently, practitioners can then connect Latinx MSFW students’ strengths and resources to address academic and social challenges that students may experience.

### **Linguistic capital**

For many Latinx MSFW students, language served as a way to communicate and relate with one another. However, because students hardly used their bilingualism in the classroom setting, it became the least talked about type of capital in this study. There is a strong need for higher education to engage students in activities that allow them to practice their bilingualism, beginning with a change in curriculum and offering of other opportunities across campus.

*Change of curriculum.* As can be seen in this study, culture is an important part of many Latinx students. Araujo (2011) argued that students, faculty, staff, and curriculum do not reflect the cultural experiences that students of color bring, and this

study supported her argument as many Latinx MSFW students did not see a strong use of their bilingualism in the classroom setting. At the state level, Oregon has begun to implement policies that support and incorporate the culture of the Native American experience in education. For example, Senate Bill 13 Implementation: Tribal History/Shared History calls upon the Oregon Department of Education to develop a “statewide curriculum relating to the Native American experience in Oregon, including tribal history, tribal sovereignty, culture, treaty rights, government, socioeconomic experiences, and current events” (Senate Bill 13, n.d., para. 1). Although this bill pertains to students in kindergarten through grade 12, this bill addresses the existing lack of cultural diversity in the U.S curriculum across the education spectrum. If implemented in higher education, a bill as such can deeply value the preservation of Latinx student language, majority of which speak Spanish but also acknowledging Brazilian Portuguese. Latinx MSFW students also highlighted OSU’s unique Spanish for Native Speakers minor as a means for professional development and comfort in the classroom space. By implementing policies and/or academic programs to the college curriculum, a foundation for Latinx students is established, creating a setting where Latinx students are able to relate and see themselves in the classroom space and countering White majoritarian culture and institutions as superior which contributes to the marginalization Latinx MSFW students.

*Other opportunities.* Engaging students in activities that allow them to practice their bilingualism outside of the classroom space is equally as important as in the classroom setting. Because students expressed using both Spanish and English with their peers in and outside of the College Assistance Migrant Program, potential activities may

center around student interaction. Community based programs have the opportunity to offer peer language tutors, intergroup dialogues, and study abroad experiences that centralize around their language. In addition, because Yosso's (2005b) definition of linguistic capital goes beyond language, other practices leveraging this capital may include, but not limited to, music, poetry, journaling, and arts-based projects (Rendon and Kanagala, 2014). We must ask ourselves, as educational professionals, to what degree are we supporting our Latinx MSFW student's language and communication strengths and how they are being used in the classroom setting to be able to capitalize on students' linguistic assets.

### **Social Capital**

Peer networks, faculty, and racial and/or interest-based organization proved to be important to student's ability to navigate spaces of higher education. Particularly, participants in this study expressed forming new relationships with faculty, staff, and mentors on campus who cared about them as people beyond their academics. However, many Latinx MSFW students in this study expressed viewing or networking with either none or very few Latinx professionals in different careers and occupations, especially in STEM related fields. Cesar elaborated this by stating the following:

I had never seen an epidemiologist who is Latinx. I've never seen a chemical engineer that's Latinx. It's just hard to envision myself there and this whole time, even now, it's hard to see myself as an environmental occupational health person because I've never seen one who is Latinx.

While it is important for programs to offer peer mentoring services that allow them to network with other students with similar background and experiences, I also encourage staff and

faculty to implement a professional mentorship program with faculty, staff, and community members from inside and outside of the university setting. By connecting Latinx MSFW students with supportive professional community members one on one, whom share similar background, experiences, and interests, practitioners provide career networking opportunities early on in these student's career. Mentors have the ability to connect students with career development opportunities, graduate school information, and/or guide them in their journey to achieving success in higher education. For example, Terenzini et al. (1996) found that undergraduates who received out-of-class mentoring from faculty demonstrated an increase in academic achievement, while mentored first year students were more likely to return to college for a second year. Programs as such have the ability to increase the likelihood of career success and gain career guidance in spaces where they do not see themselves.

In addition, Yosso's (2005b) community cultural wealth framework challenges faculty, staff, and administrators to reflect on how they are helping students stay connected and/or form new relationships with communities and individuals who will positively impact their educational success. Practitioners must think critically and thoughtfully as to how they can leverage student's social capital. I also recommend practitioners to establish study groups where students are able to cultivate the skills of other Latinx MSFW students by learning from and supporting each other. Last but not least, practitioners can assist in the formation or advising of racial and/or interest-based organizations on campus which can translate into student retention.

### **Navigational Capital and Resistance Capital**

Although Latinx MSFW students faced challenges as they transitioned into college, students strongly relied on their navigational skills to maneuver through their first year in college. Since findings in this study showed a deep overlap between examples of navigational

capital, resistance capital, and social capital (already addressed above), recommendations for navigational and resistance capital are placed together. Many Latinx MSFW students experienced culture shock as they transitioned to the college campus, relying and building on their navigational and resistance skills to navigate and overcome challenges faced in higher education. Programs not only have the opportunity to employ on a community cultural wealth framework to structure an initiative that draws on student's ability to operate in limited spaces and navigate in distinct social contexts, but to also offer student support groups to heal from any negative situations that they may have experienced (i.e. culture shock, microaggressions, stereotypes). Faculty, staff, and administrators can help Latinx MSFW students create a safe place on campus where they can share their experiences inside and outside of the classroom space and learn other students experiences with similar educational and lived experiences. I suggest that programs incorporate a model into their program design that allows for students from various backgrounds to come together in a small group setting and share their experiences in and out of the college experience.

For instance, the University of Arizona's "Voices of Discovery Intergroup Dialogue" is an exceptional program that has draws on students' navigational skills for academic achievement and success. The program structures interaction between undergraduate student diverse groups with the goal of creating a greater understanding about intergroup and diversity issues. It brings a group of 8 to 10 students together, belonging to different identities, for intergroup dialogues for 2 hours per week in a 5-week period. Students who participate also receive course credit for participating in the program. Dialogue is facilitated by two trained facilitators with the intention of creating a safe place to foster greater interaction amongst diverse groups and their experiences while being in higher education (Voices of Discovery Intergroup Dialogue Program, 2018). If

implemented carefully, programs have the potential to be a safe space for students through intergroup dialogues and can even integrate other forms of capital such as resistance capital through support groups and counseling, linguistic capital through bilingual group dialogue, and more.

### **Familial Capital**

It became apparent that the most discussed form of capital in this study was related to familial and community support. Although all Latinx MSFW parents did not hold formal educational knowledge to guide their son or daughter as they entered college, parents had a strong desire to learn how to best support them. Yosso (2005b) asks faculty, staff, and administrators to reflect on how we can create an environment that honors and invites families to participate in their child's educational journey. Five out of the seven participants highlighted the use of OSU's START Bilingue first-year program as a way to connect their family in their journey to achieving a higher education. During these sessions, CAMP faculty and staff interacted with students and parents by answering their questions and concerns. As a result, I would strongly encourage programs to carry out an accessible, yet low cost, program that allows for students and families to attend and inform themselves of the college experience. For example, Luna expressed her experience in having her mother attend the START Bilingue program in the following statement:

She came to our orientation for CAMP and kind of just try to learn about what college was because we both didn't really know...She just likes to concept of me being able to tell her these things and feeling comfortable enough to say...you know like I'm learning something, and I want you to learn with me. Now that she's getting older, she appreciates that education is a form of bonding.

Programs serving Latinx MSFW students have the opportunity to provide parents with the adequate information, such as financial literacy, on-campus safety, academic and non-academic resources, and general knowledge through workshops and classes to best support their child during their first year in college.

Leveraging on Latinx MSFW student's strength connected with familial ties can also include hosting family events on campus and celebrating the successes of students (as well as their challenges) with the presence of family and surrounding community. In the end, it is critical that higher education offers bilingual extracurricular opportunities for parents to engage and connect with Spanish speaking staff on campus. Similar to students expressing the use of their native tongue as comfort, studies show the use of Spanish generated trust amongst Latinx parents whose son or daughter attended an institution of higher education (Witowsky, et al., 2018).

### **Institutional Reinforcement**

It is important that institutions also consider how historical and current policies and practices may serve as barriers to underrepresented students (i.e. students of color, low-income, first-generation college students) and not only Latinx MSFW students. Campus leadership, including a diverse faculty, have the potential to reinforce positive and impactful policies and practices to facilitate the success of the students they are service. The following recommendations are centered on institutional-level actions based on the analysis of this study.

#### **Increase Latinx representation**

Many Latinx MSFW students expressed a significant lack Latinx representation as a stressor, especially at a predominantly white institution. It was important for Latinx students to see others with similar identities as their own in academic spaces and leadership/administrative



positions. Institutions committed to increasing student diversity can take the steps necessary to improve outreach and recruitment of prospective students. Institutions can effectively expand access when strategies and policies are addressed together, rather than in isolation. Promoting Latinx representation across the institution can begin through financial aid and admissions with more targeted financial aid and holistic application reviews and less focus on standardized test scores. Campus leadership, including a diverse administrative leadership group, plays an important role in achieving a more representative and inclusive institution. Latinx students expressed having more representation of Latinx mentors and role models in higher end positions allowed for them to see themselves in positions as such.

### **Support services for students**

As a result of this study, it was evident that programs such as the College Assistance Migrant Program were crucial in recognizing the cultural wealth that Latinx MSFW students hold. Institutions should work to ensure students have the academic and social supports they need to achieve success in college. Institutional policies centered on student support services have the potential to improve Latinx academic outcomes, especially during their first year in college. However, this should not be the only form of support that Latinx students receive and should take place across all levels of an institution.

### **Robust training**

Many institutions include some form of cultural competency training for new students and require them to take coursework in diversity as freshmen. Although diversity and inclusion trainings are often a requirement for all students, faculty, staff, and administrative roles, not much has changed for students, faculty, and staff of color in institutions.

It is not enough to increase Latinx representation across the institutional setting without deconstructing the systematic barriers that continue to oppress marginalized people. Therefore, I recommend a robust training required for all members of the institution, centering on the systems of oppression that contributes to the marginalization of Latinx students and other marginalized students. In doing so, an institutional policy requiring all students, faculty, staff, and administrators will obtain a greater understanding in the systematic barriers that challenge marginalized populations and will be better equipped to serve students. A robust training that addresses the source of the problem, also has the potential to reduce forms of discrimination, stereotypes, and microaggressions.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

While this study focuses specifically on the College Assistance Migrant Program, I strongly encourage scholars to investigate how a community cultural wealth framework can be used across various functional areas when working with Latinx MSFW students. Research is needed that focuses on the persistence of Latinx MSFW students in higher education, focusing on their inner strength that drive them to achieve success. Given the lack of research on Latinx students and their ability to achieve success, I would suggest researchers to focus on students experiences in higher educations through a perspective of presence and success. To further address this gap, it would be beneficial to conduct a longitudinal study to determine whether student's cultural capital remain the same before and after attending college. This form of research would add value to academic and support programs with the intention of retaining and promoting success amongst its students.

In addition, it would also be beneficial to examine the role of a community cultural wealth framework across other underrepresented identities such as students of color, low-

income, and first-generation college students. Research as such would expand the knowledge of university personnel and future legislators and assist in the development of programs and/or policies focusing on these specific populations. Through this learning, faculty and staff, administrators, and policymakers have the opportunity to make the appropriate change and move toward achieving greater academic achievement amongst students.

### **Conclusion**

At the rate in which the nation is becoming racially and ethnically more diverse, it is important for higher education personnel to work with a community cultural wealth framework that fosters success amongst all students of color and/or other underrepresented students. “Rather than letting the deficit approach that racism breeds guide our work as educators and community organizers, it is imperative that we implement a positive and culturally relevant approach to our work with communities of color.” (Ako-Asare, 2015, p. 40). By addressing the deficit framework surrounding Latinx MSFW students and drawing on their cultural wealth, we are able to work in achieving equity and give Latinx MSFW student the education they truly deserve.

Found in this study, Latinx MSFW students illustrated a strong use of Yosso’s (2005b) community cultural wealth framework, highlighting aspirational, linguistic, social, navigational, familial, and resistance capital. As Rendon (2014) argued capital, or assets, are not always accumulated through formal education but rather, students develop these strengths through lived experiences, cultural traditions, and life challenges, much of which has been dismissed and unacknowledged by U.S. system of higher education today. Furthermore, it should be noted that this study and recommendations are based on the work the College Assistance Migrant Program has done with Oregon State University Latinx students of migrant and seasonal farmworker background. However, I strongly believe that this study is only the beginning to a slow, yet

progressing, field of research which has the potential to provide the knowledge necessary for university personnel to acknowledge the abilities and skills that Latinx MSFW students possess.

Although it cannot be denied that a significant amount of work has been done in the last few years, there is still much left to be done. Only by gaining an in-depth understanding of how Latinx MSFW students, and other students of color, are shaped by their community cultural wealth can we better serve students and assist them as they navigate the system of higher education. The acknowledgement of these student's cultural wealth in higher education can lessen obstacles students face and build a foundation from which to address the challenging experiences that arise for Latinx MSFW students in college. However, we can only achieve this if educational professionals honor their roots and provide them the wings to develop into successful college students, without assimilating to the academic culture, by providing them the support and cultural empowerment that they deserve.

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## Appendix A

### Social Media Advertisement

ATTENTION OSU STUDENTS:

Do you self-identify as Latinx and are currently enrolled at Oregon State University? Did you complete your first year with the OSU College Assistance Migrant Program? If so, I invite you to participate in my Master's thesis research study, "Riqueza Cultural: Latinx Students and the College Assistance Migrant Program".

The study will highlight the experiences of former CAMP students prior to their college experience, reflecting on where they are today, and looking ahead. It provides a space for reflection, sharing, and connection among previous CAMP scholars and their lived experiences, and to identify assets and knowledge they have used to succeed in college.

Interviews will be expected to be conducted in person. The expected total time commitment required is approximately two and a half hours to five hours for focus group and/or individual interviews. If you meet the criteria described above and are interested in participating in this research study, please fill out the demographic survey below:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeR1ZePcYptNMgrAcFoD4lOK3ri9RjvB0WpBI7bMF3ancYtNA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeR1ZePcYptNMgrAcFoD4lOK3ri9RjvB0WpBI7bMF3ancYtNA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

Although this research study is being conducted to fulfill the thesis capstone requirement of my master's program, the Principle Investigator is my major advisor, Spirit Brooks.

For more information, please contact Lesley Hernandez at [hernales@oregonstate.edu](mailto:hernales@oregonstate.edu)

Thank you!

## Appendix B

### Email Recruitment

*Subject:* Calling Previous Latinx College Assistance Migrant Program Scholars!

*Body:*

Hello [Student Name],

My name is Lesley Hernandez, and I am a current graduate student at Oregon State University. I will be conducting a research study titled “Riqueza Cultural: A Case Study on Latinx Students and the College Assistance Migrant Program” to provide a space for reflection, sharing, and connection among previous CAMP scholars and their lived experiences, and to identify assets and knowledge they have used to succeed in college.

In this study, we use the spelling of “Latinx” rather than the traditional spellings of “Latino” or “Latina” as a way to resist the transphobic systems embedded in our culture and language, and to be more inclusive to non-gender binary participants.

The study will highlight the experiences of previous CAMP students prior to their college experience, reflecting on where they are today, and looking ahead. Participation includes a brief online demographic survey, an initial in-person interview (either individually or in a focus group), and a follow-up interview. The online demographic survey will cover the participants self-identified identities (e.g. major, first-generation college student, gender, sexual orientation). The initial in person interview will focus on talking about the participants college and lived experiences. In the follow up interview, participants will have the opportunity to provide feedback on their responses in the first interview and assist in the writing of their narrative. Participants in the focus group will not be required to attend nor assist in the follow up interview.

Interviews will be expected to be conducted in person. The expected total time commitment required is approximately five hours for individual interviews (online demographic survey, initial interview, and follow up interview), and two and a half hours for participants in the focus group (online demographic survey and one group interview). If you meet the criteria below and are interested in participating in this research study, please fill out the demographic survey below.

To participate in this research project, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Self-identify as a Latinx student\*
- Currently enrolled at Oregon State University
- Have completed the first year of your undergraduate career with the OSU College Assistant Migrant Program

Online Demographic Survey:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeR1ZePcYptNMgrAcFoD4iOK3ri9RjvB0WpBI7bMF3ancYtNA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeR1ZePcYptNMgrAcFoD4iOK3ri9RjvB0WpBI7bMF3ancYtNA/viewform?usp=sf_link)




Although this research study is being conducted to fulfill the thesis capstone requirement of my master's program, the Principle Investigator is my major advisor, Spirit Brooks.

If you know of someone who fits this criterion, please forward this opportunity to them. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Best,  
Lesley

Appendix C

Business Cards



**Riqueza Cultural: A Case Study on Latinx Students and the College Assistance Migrant Program**

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**Oregon State University**


To participate in this research project, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Self-identify as a Latinx student\*
- Be currently enrolled at Oregon State University
- Have completed the first year of your undergraduate career with the OSU College Assistant Migrant Program

For more information, please contact Lesley Hernandez at [hernales@oregonstate.edu](mailto:hernales@oregonstate.edu)

\*The spelling “Latinx” is utilized in this study rather than the traditional spellings of “Latino” or “Latina” as a way to resist the transphobic systems embedded in our culture and language, and to be more inclusive to non-gender binary participants.

The Principle Investigator for this research study will be Spirit Brooks.



**Riqueza Cultural: A Case Study on Latinx Students and the College Assistance Migrant Program**

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**Oregon State University**


To participate in this research project, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Self-identify as a Latinx student\*
- Be currently enrolled at Oregon State University
- Have completed the first year of your undergraduate career with the OSU College Assistant Migrant Program

For more information, please contact Lesley Hernandez at [hernales@oregonstate.edu](mailto:hernales@oregonstate.edu)

\*The spelling “Latinx” is utilized in this study rather than the traditional spellings of “Latino” or “Latina” as a way to resist the transphobic systems embedded in our culture and language, and to be more inclusive to non-gender binary participants.

The Principle Investigator for this research study will be Spirit Brooks.



**Riqueza Cultural: A Case Study on Latinx Students and the College Assistance Migrant Program**

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**Oregon State University**


To participate in this research project, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Self-identify as a Latinx student\*
- Be currently enrolled at Oregon State University
- Have completed the first year of your undergraduate career with the OSU College Assistant Migrant Program

For more information, please contact Lesley Hernandez at [hernales@oregonstate.edu](mailto:hernales@oregonstate.edu)

\*The spelling “Latinx” is utilized in this study rather than the traditional spellings of “Latino” or “Latina” as a way to resist the transphobic systems embedded in our culture and language, and to be more inclusive to non-gender binary participants.

The Principle Investigator for this research study will be Spirit Brooks.



**Riqueza Cultural: A Case Study on Latinx Students and the College Assistance Migrant Program**

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**Oregon State University**

To participate in this research project, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Self-identify as a Latinx student\*
- Be currently enrolled at Oregon State University
- Have completed the first year of your undergraduate career with the OSU College Assistant Migrant Program

For more information, please contact Lesley Hernandez at [hernales@oregonstate.edu](mailto:hernales@oregonstate.edu)

\*The spelling “Latinx” is utilized in this study rather than the traditional spellings of “Latino” or “Latina” as a way to resist the transphobic systems embedded in our culture and language, and to be more inclusive to non-gender binary participants.

The Principle Investigator for this research study will be Spirit Brooks.

## Appendix D

### Demographic Survey Consent Form

**Purpose:** You are being asked to take part in a research study. The purpose of this research study is to provide a space for Latinx students in the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) to discuss their college and lived experiences, and the skills, knowledge and support they utilize to achieve success. By the end of this study, the researchers hope to identify the assets and knowledge that students utilize to succeed in college and challenge the deficit-based perspective on Latinx students, specifically in the College Assistance Migrant Program. In addition, this study examines whether CAMP can influence Latinx knowledge to promote student success. This study shall be conducted by a graduate student for the completion of a thesis.

**Activities:** The study activities include a brief online demographic survey and one or two in-person interviews. This brief online demographic survey will cover your self-identified identities (i.e. Latinx and/or first-generation college student identity).

If you decide to proceed and participate in the study after submitting the survey, the student researcher will contact you for one in person interview that will focus on talking about your college and lived experiences. This first interview may be conducted as an individual interview and/or as a focus group. In the second interview, if invited, you will give your perspective on your responses in the first interview and assist in the analysis of your responses. If you only decide to participate in the focus group, you will not be invited for a second interview.

In the case that you are unable to meet for the second interview, the research team will send you their analysis via email and ask you to respond with feedback and suggestions within two weeks. If you do not respond within this two-week timeframe, researchers will proceed with the analysis as is.

**Time:** Your overall participation in this study will last about 4.5 hours. This brief online demographic survey will take 10-15 minutes. The first in person interview will take 1.5 to 2 hours, and the second interview will take 1.5 to 2 hours. If you participate in the focus group, your participation is expected to last 2.5 hours.

**Risks:** The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with the being in the study include potential emotional and social risks associated with participation. You will be asked to speak on your college experiences and cultural knowledge as a Latinx student enrolled in the College Assistance Migrant Program which may evoke an emotional response. However, the questions asked in the interview are not intended to elicit emotional responses.

The study will also ask you to share the services and support you use in and outside of the College Assistance Migrant Program to achieve success. You may decide to share the use of support services which may be private and/or confidential information to you. If a breach of confidentiality were to occur, it may result in negative social impacts. The security and confidentiality of information collected from you online cannot be guaranteed. Confidentiality will be kept to the extent permitted by the technology being given. Information collected online can be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses Please share as much information as you are comfortable disclosing given these potential risks.

**Confidentiality:** Other people may learn that you participated in this study but the information you provide will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. If you decide to participate in the focus group, we will ask members of the focus group to maintain the confidentiality of comments made during the discussion. However, there is still a risk that comments you make during the discussion may be shared outside of the group. Due to the potential risk related to a breach of confidentiality, we ask that you do not disclose your documentation status, or that of others. Participant information collected as part of this research, even if individual identifiable information is removed, will not be used or distributed for future research studies. If the results of this study are published, and shared directly in presentations, a description of your identities, direct quotes from the participants from the individual interviews, and your experiences will only be shared.

**Voluntary:** Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer and/or withdraw at any time without penalty. Your decision to take part or not take part in this study will not affect your grades, your relationship with your professors, or standing in the University.

**Study contacts:** If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Spirit Brooks at (541) 737-2391 or [spirit.brooks@oregonstate.edu](mailto:spirit.brooks@oregonstate.edu). If you have questions about your rights or welfare as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) office, at (541) 737-8008 or by email at [IRB@oregonstate.edu](mailto:IRB@oregonstate.edu). You must be 18 or over to participate in this study.

By clicking I agree, you agree to take part of this study.

I agree

I do not agree

## Appendix E

### Demographic Survey

Thank you for your interest in this study. Please provide some more information about you and we will get in contact with you soon. For more information, please contact Lesley Hernandez at [hernales@oregonstate.edu](mailto:hernales@oregonstate.edu)

1. Name:
2. Email:
3. What academic school year did you complete the College Assistance Migrant Program?
  - a. 2017 – 2018
  - b. 2016 – 2017
  - c. 2015 – 2016
  - d. 2014 – 2016
  - e. 2013 – 2014
  - f. Other
4. In order to participate in this study, you must self-identify as a Latinx student at Oregon State University. Do you self-identify as so?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
5. Are you the first in your family to attend college?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Prefer not to answer
6. This research study requires an in-person interview either individually and/or through a focus group with the researcher. Which are you most comfortable with?
  - a. Individual
  - b. Focus Group
  - c. Both (willing to participate in both)
  - d. No preference (willing to participate in either the individual OR focus group - only one)

## Appendix F

### Interview Consent Form

**Project Title:** Latinx Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Students in the College Assistance Migrant Program: Stories of Strength, Success, and Persistence

**Principal Investigator:** Spirit Brooks

**Student Researcher:** Lesley Hernandez

**Version Date:** November 11, 2018

**Purpose:** You are being asked to take part in a research study. The purpose of this research study is to provide a space for Latinx students in the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) to discuss their college and lived experiences, and the skills, knowledge and support they utilize to achieve success. By the end of this study, the researchers hope to identify the assets and knowledge that students utilize to succeed in college and challenge the deficit-based perspective on Latinx students, specifically in the College Assistance Migrant Program. In addition, this study examines whether CAMP can influence Latinx knowledge to promote student success. This study shall be conducted by a graduate student for the completion of a thesis.

**Activities:** The study activities include a brief online demographic survey and one or two in-person interviews. The brief online demographic survey will cover your self-identified identities (i.e. Latinx and/or first-generation college student identity). Following, a one in person interview will focus on talking about your college and lived experiences. This first interview may be conducted as an individual interview and/or as a focus group. In the second interview, if invited, you will give your perspective on your responses in the first interview and assist in the analysis of your responses. If you only decide to participate in the focus group, you will not be invited for a second interview. In the case that you are unable to meet for the second interview, the research team will send you their analysis via email and ask you to respond with feedback and suggestions within two weeks. If you do not respond within this two-week timeframe, researchers will proceed with the analysis as is.

**Recordings:** Audio recording is not required, but strongly encouraged. Interviews will be digitally recorded, with your consent.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to be audio recorded.

Initials

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not agree to be audio recorded.

Initials

**Time:** Your participation in this study will last about 4.5 hours. The brief online demographic form will take 10-15 minutes. The first in person interview will take 1.5 to 2 hours, and the second interview will take 1.5 to 2 hours. If you participate in the focus group, your participation is expected to last 2.5 hours.

**Risks:** The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with the being in the study include potential emotional and social risks associated with participation. You will be asked to speak on

your college experiences and cultural knowledge as a Latinx student enrolled in the College Assistance Migrant Program which may evoke an emotional response. However, the questions asked in the interview are not intended to elicit emotional responses.

The study will also ask you to share the services and support you use in and outside of the College Assistance Migrant Program to achieve success. You may decide to share the use of support services which may be private and/or confidential information to you. If a breach of confidentiality were to occur, it may result in negative social impacts. The security and confidentiality of information collected from you online cannot be guaranteed. Confidentiality will be kept to the extent permitted by the technology being given. Information collected online can be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses Please share as much information as you are comfortable disclosing given these potential risks.

**Benefit:** We do not know if you will benefit from being in this study. However, you may experience a benefit from telling your story and be heard.

**Payment:** You will not be paid for being in this research study.

**Confidentiality:** Other people may learn that you participated in this study but the information you provide will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. If you decide to participate in the focus group, we will ask members of the focus group to maintain the confidentiality of comments made during the discussion. However, there is still a risk that comments you make during the discussion may be shared outside of the group. Due to the potential risk related to a breach of confidentiality, we ask that you do not disclose your documentation status, or that of others. Participant information collected as part of this research, even if individual identifiable information is removed, will not be used or distributed for future research studies. If the results of this study are published, and shared directly in presentations, a description of your identities, direct quotes from the participants from the individual interviews, and your experiences will only be shared.

**Voluntary:** Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer and/or withdraw at any time without penalty. Your decision to take part or not take part in this study will not affect your grades, your relationship with your professors, or standing in the University.

**Study contacts:** If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Spirit Brooks at (541) 737-2391 or spirit.brooks@oregonstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights or welfare as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) office, at (541) 737-8008 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu

**Verbal Agreement:** By verbally agreeing, you agree that this study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, you are 18 or over, and that you agree to take part in this study.

## Appendix G

### Individual Interview Questions

#### Background

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and family background?
2. **Main Q.** What are some important cultural traditions or what aspects of your culture are you most proud of?
  - a. **Probing Q.** What is one skill/lesson from your community that helps you understand the world?

#### Latinx and Other Identities

3. When you think about the terms “race” and “racism”, what do those terms mean to you?
4. **Main Q.** Has race and racism ever influenced your educational experience, both in and out of the classroom setting? If so, please explain.
  - a. **Probing Q.** More specifically, how has your identity as a Latinx student influenced your educational experience? Has it presented any challenges? Has it helped?
5. One of the requirements to qualify for CAMP is to have participated in the Migrant Education Program (K-12) or belong to a migrant/seasonal farm working family. How has this identity influenced your educational experience and your ability to achieve success?
6. Have any of your other identities impacted your educational experience? If so, please explain.

#### Cultural Capital & Student Success

7. How would you define a successful college student, and would you consider yourself to be one?
8. The ruling idea surrounding students of color is that we enter university “at risk” of failing or dropping out of college. As a Latinx student how would you counter this?
9. **Main Q.** Thinking prior to your college experience, what strategies, values, skills, and/or support did you enter into Oregon State University that have helped you become a successful college student?
  - a. **Probing Q.** If you are bilingual, has knowledge of multiple languages helped in your ability to achieve success in college? If so, how?
  - b. **Probing Q.** Has your family and/or home community influenced your ability to succeed in college? If so, how so?
10. **Main Q.** Now, reflecting on where you are today, what strategies, values, skills, and/or support have you developed while in college that have helped you become a successful college student?
  - a. **Probing Q.** How do you navigate your college environment– academics, extracurricular activities, social life?
  - b. **Probing Q.** What motivates you to keep pursuing success, achievement, and/or to finish college? Why?
  - c. **Probing Q.** Are there certain people that support you off and/or on campus? If so, how have they impacted your ability to achieve success in college?



11. **Main Q.** Looking 10 years from now, what are your aspirations (collegiate, career, and/or personal)?
  - a. **Probing Q.** Have they influenced your ability to achieve success in college? If so, how?

### CAMP

12. **Main Q.** How, if at all, did CAMP impact your ability to achieve success during your first year at Oregon State University? How about after your first year?
  - a. **Probing Q.** Did CAMP help alleviate some of the challenges you mentioned earlier? If so, please explain.
13. Did CAMP help validate your existence as a valuable member of the OSU learning community (personal development and social adjustment)? If so, please explain.
14. Overall, how would you define your experience with CAMP?
15. Is there anything you would like to share with me that was not mentioned in this interview regarding your identity as a Latinx student, CAMP, and/or your educational experience?

## Appendix H

### Focus Group Questions

#### Introduction

1. First, I would like you to go around the room and introduce yourselves. Please tell me:
  - a. Name (first name only)
  - b. Major
  - c. CAMP Cohort Year

#### Background

2. **Main Q.** What are some important cultural traditions or what aspects of your culture are you most proud of?
  - a. **Probe Q.** Give me three important skills/lessons from your community/culture that help you understand the world.
3. **Main Q.** When you first started thinking about college, what were your reasons for wanting to attend?
  - a. **Probe Q.** What expectations did you have prior to coming to OSU?
  - b. **Probe Q.** How, if at all, have your expectations changed now that you are a current student at OSU?

#### Latinx and Other Identities

4. **Main Q.** Now I would like to spend some time talking about your identities.. Based on the demographic questionnaire that you filled out prior to this interview, which identities have impacted your ability to achieve success at Oregon State University? Please explain.
  - a. **Probe Q.** How has your identity as a Latinx student influenced your educational experience? Has it presented any challenges? Has it helped?
5. **Main Q.** When you think about the terms “race” and “racism”, what do those terms mean to you?
  - a. **Probe Q.** Has race and racism influenced your educational experience, both in and out of the classroom setting? If so, please explain.
6. One of the requirements to qualify for CAMP is to have participated in the Migrant Education Program (K-12) or belong to a migrant/seasonal farm working family. How has this identity influenced your educational experience and your ability to achieve success?

#### Cultural Capital and Student Success

7. We talked a bit about how your identities and lived experiences relate to achieving success, but everyone has a different interpretation of what “success” means to them. Can we go around the room and define what a successful college student means to you, and would you consider yourself to be one?
8. The dominant idea surrounding students of color is that we enter university “at risk” of failing or dropping out of college. Most of the literature around us focus on what we lack when coming to college, rather than focusing on the strengths we hold through our lived experiences, cultural traditions, and life challenges to continue persevering through higher education. As Latinx students how would you counter this idea?

9. **Main Q.** Thinking prior to your college experience, what strategies, values, skills, and/or support did you enter into Oregon State University that have helped you become a successful college student?
  - a. **Probe Q.** (IF NOT MENTIONED): What about...?
    - i. Bilingual
    - ii. Family and/or Home Community
10. **Main Q.** Now, reflecting on where you are today, what strategies, values, skills, and/or support have you developed while in college that have helped you become a successful college student?
  - a. **Probe Q.** (IF NOT MENTIONED):
  - b. Navigating – academics, extracurricular activities, social life...
  - c. Motivation – finish college, achievement, success
  - d. On/Off Campus Support
11. **Main Q.** Looking 10 years from now, what are your aspirations (collegiate, career, and/or personal)?
  - a. **Probe Q.** Have they influenced your ability to achieve success in college? If so, how?

### CAMP

12. **Main Q.** When and how did you first hear about the College Assistance Migrant Program?
  - a. **Probe Q.** What was that experience like for you?
13. **Main Q.** How, if at all, did CAMP impact your ability to achieve success during your first year at Oregon State University?
  - a. **Probe Q.** (IF NOT MENTIONED) How about after your first year?
14. **Main Q.** Did CAMP help validate your existence as a valuable member of the OSU learning community? If so, please explain.
  - a. **Probe Q:** (IF NOT MENTIONED) How about...
    - i. Personal Development
    - ii. Social Adjustment
15. In conclusion, I'd like to go around and have each person tell me one or two things that they took away from this conversation today. It can be about anything that we spoke about in the last few hours – potentially your reflection, awareness to something, etc.