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Pa'lante, siempre pa'lante: pedagogies of the home among Puerto Rican college educated families

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ABSTRACT

Research focused on Latinas/os in higher education often examines patterns of failure, while neglecting factors that contribute to Latina/o generational familial success. This article focuses on intergenerational strategies taught within college-educated Puerto Rican households that assist in academic achievement and success in higher education. Delgado Bernal theorized pedagogies of the home to explain co-constructed cultural knowledge within Chicana/o households to challenge deficit perspectives. Through analysis of educational oral histories of four college-educated Puerto Rican families, pedagogies of the home are extended. The Puerto Rican college-educated children demonstrate *sin pelos en la lengua* (without mincing words), *contradictions among college completers*, and *pa'lante siempre pa'lante* (always moving forward) as strategies employed in navigating higher education. In rearticulating, pedagogies of the home for the Puerto Rican community, institutions of higher education can better respond to the various experiences of Latinas/os.

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Introduction

At 6:00 a.m. in Los Angeles, California, I waited patiently with a cup of coffee in hand, my laptop booting, and a copy of my protocol at my side. Ramon Gonzalez, a Puerto Rican doctoral candidate, was assisting his mother, Rosario, with an online video platform in Brooklyn, New York. A few weeks prior, I interviewed Ramon about his educational trajectory and how his college-educated mother informed his pathway through college. I learned from Rosario that she was a participant in ASPIRA¹ as a high school student, which prepared her to pursue higher education as a first-generation college student. While attending a public college in New York, Rosario minored in Puerto Rican Studies and engaged in protests to address college inequities in the mid-1970s. My interviews with the Gonzalez family reveal how knowledge is co-constructed within Puerto Rican households over the course of two generations attending and graduating from four-year institutions in the United States.

The Gonzalez's narratives are ones of achievement among Latina/o families, which are atypical in higher education (Gándara, 1995; Harper, 2012; Pérez, 2014). Research focused on Latinas/os in higher education often examines why these students are not achieving, identifying patterns of failure, less studied is the focus on factors that contribute to Latina/o academic success in these

settings (Gándara, 1995; Harper, 2012; Pérez, 2014; Antrop-González, Vélez, & Garrett, 2005). In fact, while Latinas/os are the fastest growing ethnic group, they attain the lowest levels of college completion in comparison to all other racial/ethnic populations (Pew Hispanic Center, 2017). Based on these startling facts, many studies focus on the experiences of Mexican Americans and Chicanas/os in higher education as they represent the highest proportion of Latinas/os in the United States (Nuñez & Crisp, 2012; Soto, 2006; Torres, 2004). Puerto Ricans constitute the second largest proportion of Latinas/os in the United States, yet there remains a dearth of information regarding their experiences in higher education (Nuñez & Crisp, 2012; Pérez Huber et al., 2015).

In 2001, Delgado Bernal introduced pedagogies of the home in the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* to elucidate how knowledge is co-constructed among first generation Chicana college students and their parents to challenge predominant views maintained by educational institutions about Chicana/o students. This study extends her work by focusing on intergenerational strategies taught within Puerto Rican households that assist in academic achievement and success in higher education. My analysis of educational oral histories of four Puerto Rican college-educated families provides an understanding of intergenerational achievement, which moves us beyond first generation college experiences and discourse. This analysis challenges the notion that all Latina/o students occupy first-generation college statuses while simultaneously confronting the realities college-educated Puerto Rican families encounter with individual and institutional racism. I demonstrate how pedagogies of the home vary based on college degree attainment yet remain vital strategies to resist and thrive in institutions of higher education.

To begin, I examine K-12 studies that analyze contributing factors to Puerto Rican student success as research in this area of education has focused on (re)centering Puerto Rican families as active contributors to their children's academic achievement. I then turn to the sparse literature presented on their conditions in higher education to acknowledge Latina/o heterogeneity (Antrop-González, 2011; Irizarry & Antrop-González, 2014; Nieto, 2000). Next, I describe how Chicana feminisms, specifically pedagogies of the home, reframe how Chicana/os, and in extension the Puerto Rican community, are active agents in promoting educational achievement and success. Finally, through educational oral histories, I illuminate how college-educated Puerto Rican children have made sense of the strategies taught by their parents' advancing the understanding of intergenerational pedagogies of the home.

Literature review

The literature is limited regarding Puerto Rican students' various educational pathways in K-12 and higher education (Antrop-González, 2011; Irizarry & Antrop-González, 2014; Nuñez & Crisp, 2012; Nieto, 2000; Soto, 2006; Torres, 2004). I focus on scholarship within K-12 contexts since education scholars in this sector have recognized the need to disaggregate Latina/o by race and ethnicity and have also been critical in reframing deficit-focused discourses into ones that are asset based (Antrop-González, Vélez, & Garrett, 2005; Hine, 1991; Hidalgo, 2000; Irizarry & Antrop-González, 2014; Nieto, 2000; Rolón, 2000). K-12 research allows us to examine the skills, practices, and knowledge Puerto Rican families share within the home to promote academic achievement. I then turn to the sparse literature in higher education focused on first-generation college experiences and the disaggregation of Latina/o students, which offer comparative studies of Puerto Rican and other Latina/o students.' These bodies of literature underline the importance and need to study Puerto Rican students and their families as active contributors to the academic success in K-12 and higher education.

Puerto Rican families and academic achievement

Historically, Puerto Rican educational 'failure' was attributed to culture and familial units (Nieto, 2000). Contrarily, Puerto Rican families have consistently cultivated and emphasized the importance of education to their children (Bonilla & Campos, 1981; Nieto, 2001). In response, K-12 education scholars center their research to examine the experiences of Puerto Rican students to articulate assets that are cultivated in their families, households, and communities (Antrop-González, Vélez, & Garrett, 2005; Hine, 1991; Hidalgo, 2000; Irizarry & Antrop-González, 2014; Nieto, 2000; Rolón, 2000).

Hine (1991) examined 10 gifted Puerto Rican high school students' perceptions of their family environment. Through a qualitative analysis, findings reveal that the ability to learn in English and Spanish within the household, fostering high academic expectations, and utilizing negative stereotypes of Puerto Rican culture and identity as motivation, contributed to their academic achievement among high school aged children. Flores-González (1999) sought to understand how Puerto Rican high school students, as involuntary migrants, negotiate their Puerto Rican identity as it relates to their academic success. In other words, did Puerto Rican students find it necessary to relinquish their ethnic identity to be academically successful? In conducting an ethnographic study at a predominately Latino high school in Chicago, Flores-González (1999) identifies Puerto Rican high school students were academically successful while maintaining a strong sense of their identity and culture.

Further, Rolón (2000) interviewed 10 Puerto Rican girls who attended an urban high school in Massachusetts to examine how they described themselves as knowledge holders who were active in their academic trajectories. These students revealed three key elements that contributed to their academic success: parental support (especially mothers), teachers who were active in caring about their students' culture and language, and high aspirations of attaining a college education. Hidalgo (2000) interviewed four Puerto Rican mothers from low socio-economic households of kindergarten students in Boston. Mothers were interviewed to understand the socialization process related to their children's academic achievement. Hidalgo (2000) identifies four strategies implemented by the Puerto Rican mothers: 'monitoring, communicating, motivating, and protecting' in promoting educational achievement among their children (p. 181). Finally, Antrop-González et al. (2005) examined ten Puerto Rican 11th and 12th grade students enrolled in a public urban high school. Their findings support previous research. Antrop-González et al. (2005) confirm that students who have a strong Puerto Rican identity, mothers who are active in their academic trajectories, and teachers and staff who care and are engaged in extracurricular activities all contribute to the academic success of these students.

Overall, Puerto Rican students who have parental support and engagement (especially from mothers), exposure to a strong culture and ethnic identity, and teachers or staff who are supportive, cultivate their academic success and achievement in K-12 schooling (Antrop-González, Vélez, & Garrett, 2005; Hine, 1991; Hidalgo, 2000; Irizarry & Antrop-González, 2014; Nieto, 2000; Rolón, 2000). These K-12 studies locate Puerto Rican families as vital in promoting educational achievement and reframe households as asset-based sites of cultural knowledge production.

Puerto Ricans and higher education

Research on Latinas/os in higher education is limited, as data and findings are not disaggregated to understand ethnic variations and focus on the experiences of first generation college students (Nuñez & Crisp, 2012; Torres, 2004). Puerto Ricans comprise the second largest proportion of Latinas/os in the United States yet experience low levels of college completion in comparison to other ethnic groups (Pérez Huber et al., 2015). Torres (2004) identifies that Cuban American students were more likely to persist and achieve in college than their Puerto Rican and Mexican American counterparts. However, it is unclear if the college achievement was due to institutional

characteristics or ethnic group membership. Ceballo (2004) examines ten Mexican American and Puerto Rican undergraduate students from low-income families that attended Yale University to understand how families promote educational attainment. Ceballo (2004) found that these families experience limitations due to their socio-economic status, but this did not prevent them from being highly supportive of their children's pathways into and through college.

Núñez and Crisp (2012) recognize the importance of disaggregating data in understanding ethnic variation among the experiences of Latina/o students in higher education. In disaggregating data, they examine the differences and similarities among Puerto Rican and Mexican American college students' college choices and enrollment. Findings indicate that Mexican Americans experience higher attrition rates and are more likely to attend community colleges than Puerto Ricans. More importantly, Núñez and Crisp (2012) state, 'this study indicates that future research should address more fully how the contextual layers of the family... the local higher education context; and the broader political, economic, and social context affect the college access of different Latina/o ethnic subgroups' (p. 92). This study addresses the contextual layers of college-educated Puerto Rican families and their experiences navigating higher education through guidance by the following research questions:

1. How do Puerto Rican college-educated parents *impact* their college-educated children's college-related experiences?
2. How do Puerto Rican college-educated children *perceive the impact* of their college-educated parents on their college-related experiences?

Theoretical perspective

Chicana feminism and pedagogies of the home

Chicana feminisms emerges out of resistance against patriarchal and racist projects that have historically silenced and dismissed the experiences of women of color in the United States (Anzaldúa, 1987; Anzaldúa, 1990; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981). As a framework, Chicana feminisms interrogates the intersections between power and colonialism, race, class, gender, and sexuality to capture the nuances of Chicana experiences (Anzaldúa, 1987; Anzaldúa, 1990; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981). Education has served as a site in which Chicana feminists have made critical interventions in challenging deficit notions (Delgado Bernal, Elenes, Villenas, & Godinez, 2006). Chicana feminist pedagogies refer to epistemologies that are taught and learned in informal sites, such as the home, that embrace knowledge outside of institutions of higher education (Anzaldúa, 1987; Delgado Bernal, Elenes, Villenas, & Godinez, 2006).

Delgado Bernal (2001) using Anzaldúa's (1987) concept of *mestiza consciousness*, explains how Chicana first generation college students make sense of their experiences in higher education. Delgado Bernal (2001) has theorized this phenomenon as 'pedagogies of the home,' arguing that ways of knowing are equally produced knowledge within the home for Chicana first-generation college students. Pedagogies of the home are transformative responses that work to improve the lives of Chicana students to counteract the emotional pain, oppression, and trauma caused by frequent encounters with race and racism. Delgado Bernal's (2001) study contends that Chicana first generation college students negotiate and embrace their bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to communities, and spiritualities to resist and thrive in higher education settings.

Delgado Bernal (2001) found that Chicana first-generation college students utilize their bilingualism to offer a realistic understanding of how the use of Spanish and English language is vital to their daily experiences and existence. They employ their biculturalism of Mexican and American culture to leverage multiple perspectives as a source of support in their social and academic development. By embracing their bilingualism and biculturalism, the Chicana first

generation college students maintain a commitment to their communities that enables them to find support within the communities they have created throughout their educational trajectory (i.e. cultural clubs). Finally, Delgado Bernal (2001) found that her participants held a deep awareness of their spiritualities, which center on the connection to one's personal and familial spirit as a form of learning self-care, throughout their educational journey. These four aspects contribute to their pedagogies of home, which they employed to resist and thrive in navigating their higher education experiences.

Extending Delgado Bernal's study (2001), Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzmán (2012), as *académicas puertorriqueñas* (female Puerto Rican academics) and first-generation college students, conceptualize pedagogies of the home as bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to communities, human spiritualities, and, specific to the Puerto Rican experience, *lucha*. Their bilingualism is the utilization of the Spanish language as a tool to create nuances within and expand on existing theoretical terms in the dominant literature. For them, understanding more than one language facilitates an ability to uniquely conceptualize and differently frame ideas. This form of bilingualism intersected with their understanding of biculturalism. In their contexts, biculturalism was the embracing of multiple cultures, how those cultures differ, and how they gained a sociopolitical consciousness based on these experiences. Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzmán (2012) view a commitment to communities as a (re)centering self-commitment that acknowledges the worry and sense of responsibility students hold to the larger ethnic community, while acknowledging how this influences the way identities often shift. In redefining spiritualities, they put forth human spiritualities as the invoking of internal development of individualized spiritual growth through physical interactions with objects, places, scents and sounds. Specifically, Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzmán (2012) share, 'we could not avoid noting the sound of the *coquí* (a frog native to Puerto Rico) being a good-night melody that feeds our souls' (p. 553). Contributing to the theorization of pedagogies of the home, Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzmán (2012) define *lucha* as naming the colonial relationship of Puerto Rico and the United States from which Puerto Ricans draw so much of their identities. *Lucha* is the source of resistance against the ongoing colonialism of Puerto Rico.

Informed by Delgado Bernal (2001) and Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzmán's (2012) pedagogies of the home, in this study are understood as exchanges within college-educated Puerto Rican households that empower families to disrupt the hegemonic notions that Puerto Rican culture, traditions, and customs are inferior (Delgado Bernal, 2001). The strategies taught within the home are considered transformative responses that work to improve the lives of Puerto Rican students in counteracting the psychological pain, suppression, and hopelessness caused by frequent racialized encounters and experiences of racism. This study answers questions regarding varying aspects of pedagogies of the home that are co-constructed in college-educated Puerto Rican households. I reveal how pedagogies of the home vary based on college degree attainment but remain vital strategies to resist and persist in institutions of higher education.

Oral history as methodology in Chicana feminist research

I engage Chicana feminisms to account for the gender and racial experiences among Puerto Ricans in the United States. Chicana feminists have been central to theorizing, recovering, writing, and sharing history through oral narratives (Blackwell, 2016; Perez, 1998). Chicana feminist historian, Emma Perez (1998) unearths previously disregarded history in conceptualizing the decolonial imaginary where *sitios y lenguas* [spaces and discourses] emerge out of U.S. Third World feminisms and Chicana feminisms (Hurtado, 2003). Decolonial imaginary is the space where counterhegemonic histories are unmasked and decolonized. Perez (1998) argues that sites within the borderlands act as spaces (*sitios*) in which decolonial discourses (*lenguas*) emerge (Anzaldúa, 1987; Delgado Bernal, Alemán, Garavito, 2009). As a combined experience, *sitios y lenguas* 'rejects colonial ideology and the by-products of colonialism and capitalist

patriarchy-sexism, racism, homophobia' (Perez, 1998, p. 161). *Sitios y lenguas* has been applied to the experiences of Latina/o students in higher education to challenge the misrepresentation and barriers experienced by these students (Delgado Bernal, Alemán, & Garavito, 2009). Delgado Bernal et al. (2009) state, '[the]decolonial imaginary can push educational scholars to rethink how we honor hybrid practices, identities, and histories in and out of educational institutions' (p. 566). Oral histories informed by the Chicana feminist tool of *sitios y lenguas* provides historical narratives that often go dismissed to be revealed. *Sitios y lenguas* informs educational oral histories as a method to assist researchers in examining forms of inequity or access that inhibit or promote Puerto Rican students' achievement in educational settings. Puerto Rican familial knowledge production exemplifies an asset based cultural framework.

Olmedo (1997) articulates the power of conducting oral histories within a Puerto Rican community to teach students how to create applicable histories to their familial experiences. Through the application of the funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), Olmedo (1997) recommends that Puerto Ricans who utilize the 'narratives of their families and community ... may be one that bridge[s] the gap between home and school' among students (p. 567). For this article, educational oral histories are extended to individuals within the same family. Individual educational oral histories of Puerto Rican parent(s) and their children offer a holistic overview of how participants live, negotiate, and interact in their everyday lives (Delgado Bernal et al., 2009).

Data collection and analysis

Data were collected as a part of a larger project that examined the differences and similarities of Chicana/o and Puerto Rican college-educated families (Garcia, 2016). I began recruitment with a flyer listing the participant inclusion criteria that included the following: Self-identify as Puerto Rican having attained a bachelors in the United States and have at least one parent with a bachelor's degree attained in the United States, between the ages of 21–40, and from California, Illinois, or New York. I used social media such as email and Facebook to tap into the networks that existed for me as a Puerto Rican/Chicana and active participant in Latina/o communities. The participants were identified by snowball sampling (Patton, 2002) as well as through email list serves from the following organizations: Puerto Rican Studies Association (PRSA), Latina/o Studies Association, and the American Education Research Association Hispanic Sig. In addition, network sampling (Delgado Bernal, 1997) was also used as peers asked if they could forward the flyer to their networks; many claimed they knew families who matched the criteria.

The children participants (defined in this study as the second-generation college graduates) contacted me at their own accord, and I screened each participant to make sure that they, as well as their parent, were willing to participate. This article is based on eight, 60- to 120-minute educational oral histories of four parent and child dyads. Due to the subjects' geographic variation, the interviews took place via an online video platform or in person. Table 1 provides demographics of the four families.

The oral history interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. I printed out the transcribed interviews, then read and listened to the interviews two to three times while following the transcript to begin the process of coding. I used elaborate coding as defined by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) as the 'process of analyzing textual data in order to develop theory further' (p. 104). This style of coding applies a preexisting theory to a different context or social circumstance, which can support, strengthen, adapt, or negate previous findings.

In this case, pedagogies of the home, or 'teaching in home', served as central/core code and were used in the first cycle of coding. The second cycle of coding consisted of related codes informed by previous theoretical findings of 'bilingualism,' 'biculturalism,' 'commitment to communities,' 'spiritualities,' and 'lucha' (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Castillo-Montoya & Torres-Guzmán, 2012).

Table 1. Puerto Rican family dyad characteristics.

Family name	Age	Self-identity	Generation in the U.S.	Residence	K-12 education	Degree attained	Field	Current occupation
Daughter, Fernandez	34	Puerto Rican	2nd Generation	Illinois	Private	MA	Education	Doctoral Student
Father, Fernandez	58	Puerto Rican	1st Generation	Illinois	Public	BA	Business	Personal Accountant
Son, Gonzales	35	Nuyorican	2nd Generation	New York	Private	MA	Sociology	Doctoral Candidate
Mother, Gonzales	60	Puerto Rican	1st Generation	New York	Public	MS	Education	Retired, Bilingual School Psychologist
Daughter, Santiago	28	Puerto Rican/Salvadoran	2nd Generation	California	Public	MA	Education	Doctoral Student
Father, Santiago	56	Puerto Rican	1st Generation	California	Public	MBA	Business	Director of Sales
Son, Baez	35	Nuyorican	3rd Generation	New York	Public	MS	Education	High School Teacher
Mother, Baez	59	Nuyorican	1st Generation	New York	Public	MS	Education	Retired, Elementary Teacher

An example of how I coded for a related code for 'bilingualism' occurred whenever the participants spoke of 'language,' 'English,' or 'Spanish.' The third cycle of coding consisted of further analyzing the related codes such as 'bilingualism' to 'language' to 'non-verbal' or 'verbal.' After each initial round of coding, the transcripts were sent back to the participants to provide input and feedback on how I was making sense of their educational oral histories. Several of the participants replied with corrections, additions, or deletions.

Viewing the data through the theoretical tool of pedagogies of the home, emergent themes of strategies taught and learned within the households of college-educated Puerto Rican families informed by previous findings emerged. As Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) recommend, for elaborative coding, at times, 'the relevant text will not fit with one of your old theoretical constructs, but instead will suggest new ones. This is also helpful, because it will increase your understanding of your research concerns (p. 107).' As the interviewer or witness, my interpretations/writings of the participants' educational oral histories differed based on how I narrated and witnessed dialogs across generations. Thus, the findings of these families vary in length and detail, as well as coverage of and references to historical time periods.

Pedagogies of the home among college-educated Puerto Rican families

*Sin pelos en la lengua*²

The Baez family, a mother/son dyad from the Bronx, New York, provide us with our first insight into *sin pelos en la lengua*. Lucia, a self-identified Nuyorican, pursued college in her early 30s as a first generation and nontraditional college student. Lucia became a dedicated high school teacher in the New York public school system. Her son, Rocio, followed in his mother's footsteps and is currently a social justice high school educator in the New York public school system. Lucia, as with the other parents within this study, felt her son's ability to speak with confidence and pride as a Puerto Rican was an important skill. Due to Rocio's racial and ethnic identity, he experienced racism from his teachers, administrators, and peers. His parents were often called in and fought on his behalf for equal treatment. The Baez dyad states:

Lucia: I always taught my son to express himself even if it was a teacher, but do it tactfully and respectfully. All right. But this one teacher, Mr. Robins, right? [Looking at her son]

Rocio: [Mr. Robins] was all the things you should not be as a teacher with certain kids. He would find things to pick on me [about]. He knew I would say something back and he would kick me out of the classroom. My parents were often brought in to talk to him.

Lucia: [Mr. Robins] was in attack mode even with us. He started to tell me about how my son is. I said, 'Well, we have taught our boy to express himself. Even if it is a teacher. Even with me. Express yourself as long as it is done respectfully.' [Mr. Robins] did not think we were going to come out like that. He said, 'What?' I said, 'We will definitely keep track of what Rocio needs to do, but there has to be mutual respect. He is a student and a human being. You should respect him. He has to respect you.' You know, that was my firm thought. My mother was just like that, a chip off the old block. She did not let anybody disrespect us if we also respected them.

Lucia expresses that she had learned from her mother how to be direct while having respect for others. In enacting pedagogies of the home, Lucia passed the ability to assert oneself as co-constructed knowledge to her son or as *sin pelos en la lengua*: a form of speaking to verbally express exactly what an individual is experiencing without hesitation or filter. Rocio exercised his voice within a classroom setting and spoke with confidence when engaging with teachers. While the teacher may have viewed this as combative, Lucia supported her son's right and ability to think critically.

The Gonzalez family, a mother/son dyad from Brooklyn, New York, shared similar sentiments. The mother, Rosario, was a first-generation college student and became a bilingual school psychologist in the New York public school system. Her son, Ramon, a doctoral student in sociology,

was in the process of writing his dissertation on the Puerto Rican student movement in New York City in the 1960s–70s when I interviewed them. Rosario recalls advocating for her son when unjust situations would arise and providing him a space to develop his consciousness. Rosario states:

I always had to advocate for Ramon. Ramon would not shy away from expressing his opinions. He was always very polite about it and did it with good language. He would not back away from his position and I think that was a very good thing. My children always knew who they were, 'Yeah, I'm Puerto Rican' if anybody asked them. Teachers would say to me he was argumentative, and I would say, 'Yeah because he is a thinker and he has been taught to express his ideas.'

Ramon had the support of his mother and was able to navigate difficult situations that arose for him as a Puerto Rican student. His mother equipped him with the skills needed to have confidence in who he was and cultivated his opinions. On a similar note, the Fernandez family, a father-daughter dyad from Chicago, Illinois, reveal what *sin pelos en la lengua* meant for the daughter Alanna. She states:

My whole personality and upbringing was to be resourceful. I am very good at it. If I have a question, I'm going to find an answer by asking people. And, no, I'm not shy about it either. I will meet you in the street.

Alanna, a doctoral student in education at a public institution in New Jersey, makes evident that her father Renaldo developed her ability to be resourceful. Renaldo, a first-generation college student who became an accountant stated:

I knew that from the very beginning that I had to do whatever it took to have Alanna be resourceful. I had to make sure she had more opportunities than what I had. She had to speak up. You know?

This was true for all the parents and their children's development. In comparison to Delgado Bernal (2001) and Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzmán's (2012) findings regarding bilingualism and biculturalism, for the children in this study, Spanish was not their first language. However, what we learn from *sin pelos en la lengua* is that language is not restricted to having fluency in multiple languages. Rather language, in this case English, for the parent and child dyads offers a variation of dialects, registers, and idiolects. Flores and Rosa (2015) provide an understanding of these linguistic patterns as raciolinguistic perspectives. They state, 'a raciolinguistic perspective seeks to understand how the white gaze is attached both to a speaking subject who engages in the idealized linguistic practices of whiteness and to a listening subject who hears and interprets the linguistic practices of language-minoritized populations as deviant based on their racial positioning in society as opposed to any objective characteristics of their language use' (p. 151). In the context of raciolinguistic perspectives, *sin pelos en la lengua*, can be viewed as an English dialectic linguistic practice of resistance among the Puerto Rican parent-child dyads. For the children, their biculturalism was interconnected to *sin pelos en la lengua* as Spanish language learners, navigating educational institutions in the diaspora, while simultaneously having pride in their ethnic identities as Puerto Rican.

Much like, Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzmán's (2012) understanding of biculturalism as being linked to socio-political consciousness this was very evident for the children in the study. For the children, *sin pelos en la lengua* was reinforced daily within the home as a practiced action to challenge injustices and gain knowledge outside of the home. The Puerto Rican children exercised their voices when navigating institutions of higher education through becoming active agents in their trajectories and experts in their needs and wants. The Puerto Rican children exercised their voices to survive and succeed in their educational trajectories. As students of color, *sin pelos en la lengua* is critical because institutions of higher education designated them as underrepresented students *but not* as first-generation college students. In the next finding, this is explored further among the family dyads as college access and equity were not linear pathways due to having a college-educated parent.

Contradictions among college completers

The Santiago family, a father/daughter dyad from Rancho Cucamonga, California, complicate our understanding of Puerto Ricans in higher education who over the course of two generations attain college completion. The daughter, Mariana, a doctoral student in education, describes her entry and first year experience as an undergraduate:

I went under the radar as a student. I was involved, but no one paid attention to my academics. When I got to college, I did not know what I had got myself into. I was so overwhelmed. My first semester was bad. I never got into academic probation, but I was close to it. I came in as a psychology major and it was the typical getting weeded out. I got my first C and D. I felt very defeated, so I no longer pursued that. My dad intervened on my behalf.

Mariana offers important insight on what navigating higher education meant for her. She describes herself as a student that went 'under the radar.' For Mariana, it seems that teachers, counselors, administrators, and professors were absent in assisting her. Her father, Nestor, a first-generation college student who became an accountant, recalls the barriers faced when his daughter entered college:

We went through a lot of learning once she got to college. I was able to help her when no one would because I had went through it, but it was still different for me. I tried to emphasize to Mariana that college was like a marathon. It is difficult to get out in four years. Classes are going to be harder because the university is trying to get the low performing students out.

Nestor demonstrates what he would tell Mariana when she encountered challenges within her undergraduate experience. He was able to transmit knowledge about the college-going process inside the home that the institution did not help her facilitate in navigating. The Santiago dyad offer an understanding of *contradictions among college completers* as exchanges between parents and their children that complicate assumed advantages or resources due to having a college-educated parent as they were not exempt from experiencing racism at the individual or institutional level. Like the other families in the study, the Santiago dyad demonstrates that regardless of having a college educated parent, barriers persisted for their children in navigating institutions of higher education.

The Fernandez dyad provides a more nuanced perspective of *contradictions among college completers*. In a joint interview, Renaldo and Alanna discuss the college application and college-going process:

Renaldo: I do not remember helping Alanna with the application. She filled it out and did whatever she had to do. I just signed wherever I needed to sign. I do not remember being too deeply involved in that part.

Alanna: I did it all by myself. No one helped me.

In discussing barriers Alanna may have encountered as an undergraduate, Renaldo states, 'Undergraduate? I do not think she had barriers. I know she lived on campus. She decided she wanted to live at home because one of the girls was a real slob.' Alanna at this point in the interview interrupted her father stating, 'There was probably a reason for me to come home.' In ending the interview, Alanna circled back to discuss barriers she experienced as an undergraduate. Looking directly at Renaldo she confides:

I did not fully understand at the time what I was experiencing in college. I was with mostly white students. We did not have the language in the house to talk about discrimination or culture clash. You [looking at her dad] never knew my barriers. One reason I moved home [was] because I never felt integrated at that school. I did the same thing you did. Get in and get out. Get my degree and move on.

Renaldo: If I would have gone to college right after high school - then that might have been different.

Alanna and Renaldo share a powerful moment of transparency and honesty. Like Alanna, the children within this study had parents who were first-generation college students, nontraditional students, or a combination of both. In further understanding the intricacies of *contradictions of*

college completers we learn that based on these statuses, the parents navigated institutional racism through life experiences. However, they themselves did not have a language to name their oppression. While the children had at least one college-educated parent, this status did not deter or protect them from encountering acts of discrimination or how to respond to such acts. This led all four of the children to feel unwanted by or isolated from the larger campus culture.

The Baez dyad provide another perspective of *contradictions of college completers* in discussing what it meant to apply and enter college:

Rocio: The earliest message I remember from my parents was you are going to go to college. I saw them both go, and they were first in their families to graduate from college. Both did it part time while I was alive. I was at both of their college graduations as a teenager.

Lucia: I wanted him to go to college. We took him to see colleges and all that. All of us went, and you basically did it yourself, right, Rocio?

Rocio: Even though my parents went [to college], I was the first to go after high school. Even though my parents blazed that trail, there was a lot of newness to it. Yeah, they were involved but they were happy that [my now wife] was there as a guide.

Lucia credits Rocio for applying to colleges on his own. He provides an example of how he was the first in the family to directly enter a four-year institution of higher education from high school. His parents were nontraditional students, which ultimately resulted in a collegiate experience for him devoid of a standard route or guidance. Like Lucia, the parents in the study engrained high expectations within their children to pursue and attain a bachelor's degree. While the Puerto Rican parents financially and emotionally supported their children throughout the college application process, a disconnect emerged.

All the Puerto Rican parents tended to discount their personal experiences as not enough expertise to assist their children through transitioning into academic and social life. Due to the four children completing bachelor's and master's degrees at the time of their interviews they all held strong understandings of the *contradictions among college completers* due to having a college-educated parent. Unlike Delgado Bernal (2001) and Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzmán's (2012) studies, *contradictions among college completers* centers on the experiences of Puerto Rican students that did not institutionally have a first-generation college student designation, yet contradicting, often felt like first-generation college students as they had difficulty navigating these institutions as students of color. For them, it was important to analyze the educational system to understand how race and racism affect institutions, discourse, and educational practices and the impact both have on students of color.

Pa'lante siempre pa'lante

Renaldo, the father in the Fernandez dyad, expressed that by attending college and graduating with a bachelor's degree, he expected his daughter to exceed his accomplishments and assist the Puerto Rican community more broadly. Renaldo's expectations were a strong message within his household, as Alanna describes:

The biggest messages that come to my mind [from my dad] are, 'Every generation has to be better than the next,' 'Don't ever leave for tomorrow, what you can do today,' and then that famous saying in Spanish, '*Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres*' or 'Tell me who you walk with and I will tell you who you are.'

Alanna illuminates powerful shared messages within her household, '*Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres*' or 'Tell me who you walk with and I will tell you who you are.' Like the Fernandez dyad, for the families within this study as Puerto Ricans in the diaspora, they understood the community they were a part of and that was something not to take for granted, but rather to embrace.

Comparable to Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzmán's (2012) concept of *lucha* as giving name to the resistance Puerto Ricans possess to combat the ongoing colonial relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States, *pa'lante siempre pa'lante*, also acknowledges this ongoing colonial relationship. Within this study, *pa'lante siempre pa'lante*, was the intergenerational commitment to communities that Puerto Rican college educated dyads shared to engage in social justice praxis within the diaspora. This differs from *lucha*, as it is specific to the historical socio-political experience of Puerto Ricans in the diaspora. *Pa'lante siempre pa'lante* has historical significance as a mantra for being widely used in the 1960s as a part of the Puerto Rican Student Movement and by the Young Lords. In the diaspora it signifies a collective commitment to communities to always move forward regardless of hardship.

Pa'lante siempre pa'lante was further demonstrated by the Baez dyad, Rene (the son), states:

Like my mom has said, we spoke about everything because we were always open including racism and discrimination. She was a teacher and so am I in our community. I really think that there's a parallel between where I teach now and the public school where I went for high school. I'm very much aware of race and culture and how that plays into everyone's experience. I'm involved at my school in something that we call courageous conversations and it's all about racism and how racism plays out institutionally and in the world. I have taken a leadership role and try to make minority groups feel welcome and safe in my school.

In the Baez household, conversations regarding racism and discrimination occurred and informed both of their experiences in the Puerto Rican community and as teachers. *Pa'lante siempre pa'lante* were strategic actions rooted in the generational migration of grandparents-parents-children with the desire to improve the quality of life through education institutions. With each successive generation in the diaspora, challenges and barriers were present, and social justice praxis was implemented.

Lastly, unlike any of the other dyads, the Gonzales dyad contacted me after their interviews. In a post-interview email exchange, Ramon (the son) sent the following:

Mom spoke with me a little while ago... she mentioned that she was a member of ASPIRA. We had a little fight about if she had ever mentioned that to me before. In fact, she had told me before, but it was only within the last year or so! She also told me that she minored in Puerto Rican Studies and participated in protests that Puerto Rican students had organized in response to discrimination on campus. I never knew this! Mind you, I was Mr. Puerto Rican Studies in college and very involved in student activism. I am surprised that she did not share all that with me when I was in college... She said she and the other Puerto Rican students 'were just trying to get by.' It is not like she was a seasoned activist or ever felt truly comfortable in college. She just did not have time to acquire that much knowledge about higher education. We both concluded that *one generation is not enough*.

An explicit point the Gonzalez dyad share is that 'one generation is not enough,' referring to one successive generation of college completion to the next generation is not adequate to transmit all forms of social and academic capital needed to sufficiently navigate institutions of higher education. While this was a consistent message among the families within the study, to counter this challenge and despite the omission of educational details between the Gonzalez dyad, the home was a site in which activism was redefined and implicitly engaged in. For the dyads, higher education was difficult, but worth the sacrifice to ensure that their community be recognized within these institutions-*Pa'lante Siempre Pa'lante!*

Discussion

Informed by Delgado Bernal (2001) and Castillo-Montoya and Torres-Guzmán's (2012) pedagogies of the home, my analysis reveals how intergenerational Puerto Rican college-educated family dyads co-construct cultural knowledge in the household. When confronted with individual or systemic racism in higher education, Puerto Rican college-educated children exemplify *sin pelos en la lengua*, *contradictions among college completers*, and *pa'lante siempre pa'lante* as strategies of

resistance taught and learned from their parents. These teachings and strategies are not stagnant, but rather holistic as they often overlap with one another. *Sin pelos en la lengua* act as a form of speaking to verbally express exactly what an individual is experiencing without hesitation or filter. *Contradictions among college completers* are exchanges between parents and their children that complicate assumed advantages or resources due to having a college-educated parent as they were not exempt from experiencing racism at the individual or institutional level. Finally, *Pa'lante siempre pa'lante* are the intergenerational commitment to communities that Puerto Rican college educated parents and children shared to engage in social justice praxis within the diaspora. These findings confirm that for Puerto Rican families, regardless of having two successive generations attain a bachelor's degree in the United States, pedagogies of the home remain vital in their educational processes, which demonstrate a continuation of resistance advocacy and cultural affirmation in the face of individual or institutional racism.

Educational policy makers and institutions of higher education can enhance the college going experience for students of color by further examining how they operationalize 'first generation college students' versus students that do not occupy this status in higher education (Kouyoumdjian, Talavera-Bustillos, Garcia, & Guzmán, 2017; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018). Further research should examine these populations within and across different ethnic/racial groups to understand the ways in which institutional privilege plays out. Zinn, Cannon, Higginbotham and Dill (1986) explain the institutionalization of privilege as 'organized to facilitate white middle-class men's smooth entry into and mobility in positions of power. These men establish criteria for the entry of others into similar positions, defining success, the reward system, the distribution of resources, and institutional goals, and priorities in a way the perpetuates their power' (p. 291). Historically white institutions of higher education were not designed by or with communities of color in mind (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Nevertheless, people of color are expected to perform and are held to the same standards as white males. It is not to say that people of color are not successful. However, we must ask at what cost do students of color assimilate into institutions? Are the costs loss of identity, internalized notions of inferiority, and/or imposter syndrome? We must ask who benefits most from institutionalized privilege in which racism is alive and thriving.

The heterogeneity that exists among Latinas/os necessitates that we expand our scope of the experiences of Puerto Ricans in higher education (Nuñez & Crisp, 2012). The literature pertaining to the educational experiences of Puerto Ricans in higher education is limited in its focus on why these students are not achieving while identifying patterns of failure, rather than focusing on what contributes to Puerto Rican academic success (Antrop-González, Vélez, & Garrett, 2005; Pérez, 2014). This study examines intergenerational bachelor's degree attainment among Puerto Rican families to move us beyond first-generation college experiences and discourse.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Nichole M. Garcia, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education in the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. Her research focuses on comparative studies of Chicanx/a/o and Puerto Rican college-educated families to advance narratives of intergenerational achievement and college choice processes. She employs mixed methods to examine inaccurate portrayals of educational outcomes for communities of color. In doing so, institutions of higher education can plan appropriate programs and evidence-based interventions to meet the growing needs of students.

Notes

1. Translating from Spanish to English as “aspire” was established by Antonia Pantoja in the 1960s to empower Puerto Rican high school students to pursue a higher education. ASPIRA is a high school college access program still active today.
2. Translating from Spanish to English as “without mincing words” is often used in the Latina/o community to describe an individual’s verbal behavior.

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