"We are the minority": Latinx student-athletes experiences within their Predominantly White Institutions

Melody Alanis[1], George B. Cunningham[2], and Natasha T. Brison[1]

[1] Texas A&M University
[2] University of Florida

Despite the burgeoning Latinx student population in the United States, a conspicuous gap exists in the academic literature, particularly within the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) context. Consequently, the central objective of this study was to redress this void by analyzing the racial experiences encountered by NCAA Division I Latinx student-athletes enrolled in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). To fulfill this objective, the researchers applied a qualitative phenomenological approach, seeking an in-depth comprehension of the significance of diversity practices within the distinct educational milieus inhabited by the study's participants. Employing Latin Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) as the theoretical framework, the authors gathered data through six semi-structured interviews and supplemented this information with pertinent diversity and inclusion-related information derived from each participating university and the respective athletic programs. The study's findings underscored the persistent issue of racial discrimination confronted by NCAA Division I Latinx student-athletes within the university setting. Remarkably, despite the extensive diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) trainings and councils within these institutions, Latinx student-athletes continued to grapple with racial disparities. Indeed, recurring themes from the data highlighted their significant reliance on familial support and campus resources as strategies for navigating and mitigating these challenges. In light of a substantial body of scholarly work that recognizes the critical importance of DEI in sport, this study serves as a poignant reminder of the pressing need for further academic and practical endeavors aimed at effectively addressing racial disparities.

Key words: Latinx, student-athletes, PWIs, inclusion, diversity

Introduction

In an era where diversity and inclusion are prominent in the United States sport sector (Cunningham, 2023; McDowell, 2022), the literature on the Latinx population (a non-binary alternative term for Latino or Latina) remains limited (Ortega & Grafnetterova, 2021). Notwithstanding the contributions of some prominent scholars, such as Darvin et al. (2017), McGovern (2020), and Ortega (2021), who have noted common experiences amongst Latinx student-athletes, more research is needed to understand this growing population. The imperative for further research becomes evident when considering the underrepresentation of Latinos within the sport sector, a concern underscored by Cameron (2012). McGovern (2020) echoed this sentiment and suggested a closer examination of the intersectionality of race, class, gender, and generational status is essential to understanding the outcomes of Latinas' participation in U.S. sports. This consternation is further accentuated by Alanis et al. (2022), who call attention to the scarcity of research on Latinas, with a mere 14 studies distinctly focused on this demographic group from 1980 to 2020.

Although Latinx individuals comprise 18% of the total United States population, nearly 60 million people (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020), this percentage does not commensurate with their representation in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) setting, as Latinx individuals constitute only 6% of the student-athletes (McGuire, 2021). Moreover, research focusing on Latinx student-athletes at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) is uncharted territory, as most studies have examined the experiences of Latinx student-athletes at Hispanic serving institutions (HISs; Grafnetterova et al., 2020) and Latinx students within the Historically Black College and University (HBCU) setting (Allen & Stone, 2016). This notable disparity, coupled with Grafnetterova and Banda's (2021) call for enhanced support to empower Latinx student-athletes in achieving higher education, forms a guiding premise for this research study.

Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to conduct a critical analysis of the racial experiences of Latinx student-athletes within the context of PWIs. Specifically, we examine the encounters of these student-athletes with instances of racial discrimination within the PWI environment (RQ1) and elucidate the strategies they employ to navigate the multifaceted challenges they face within this setting (RQ2). To accomplish this objective, we employ a phenomenological qualitative research design that is grounded in the Latin Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) framework. Within the LatCrit framework, there exists a focus on understanding the daily micro and macro-affirmations and challenges encountered by the Latinx population within the dominant culture of the United States (Espinoza & Harris, 1997). As such, this theoretical framework aligns coherently with the analytical scope of the study. In summary, the research seeks to illuminate the intricate tapestry of racial experiences encountered by Latinx student-athletes. In doing so, we provide valuable insights that can inform strategies for addressing these challenges and offer practical solutions.

Latin Critical Race Theory

Espinoza and Harris (1997) underscore that due to the pervasive racism experienced by the Latinx population in the United States, particularly within the educational and legal systems, more affirmations are needed. As such, to investigate the experiences of Latinx NCAA Division I student-athletes at PWIs, this study employs LatCrit as a theoretical framework. LatCrit is an extension of Critical Race Theory (CRT) that focuses specifically on the Latinx population and their intersectional social identities forming discriminations present in the United States (Espinoza & Harris, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 2016).

The four key elements that constitute CRT are mirrored in LatCrit. That is, CRT accentuates that (a) racism is ingrained in the educational and legal systems (Birk, 2022; Crenshaw, 1991; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001); (b) the United States legal mandates that promote neutrality are color-blind, as they are perpetuated by the interests of dominant White individuals (Crenshaw, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 1998); (c) eradicating racism requires extensive analysis, as the laws intended to alleviate this problem are embedded with racism (Crenshaw, 1988; Singer, 2005); and lastly, (d) CRT maintains that we must give emphasis to the unique experiences of the individuals who have suffered racial discrimination. According to Delgado (1995), "we must employ storytelling" not only to illuminate their experiences but also to change the dominant White narrative (p. 14). Although LatCrit shares these principles, the fifth element that distinguishes it from CRT is that it comprehends the Latinx population and their intersectional identities (Bernal, 2013).

According to Villalpando (2004), LatCrit provides a critical examination of the interplay between various social identities, including "language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, and sexuality," within the Latinx population (p. 43). This makes LatCrit an important theoretical framework for scholars to analyze the intersecting identities of Latinx individuals, which give rise to various forms of oppression, including racism and sexism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023; Stefancic, 1998). Therefore, LatCrit is highly appropriate for this study, as it enables the researchers to draw attention to the experiences of Latinx student-athletes and address the challenges they face within PWI by incorporating their "sociocultural and cultural knowledge" (Villalpando, 2004, p. 48). Although CRT and LatCrit have been present for several decades, they remain highly relevant today. As Yosso et al. (2009) note, this is evident by the continued prevalence of "White communities… universities" (p. 664).

Literature Review

This section serves to elucidate the acronym PWI, delineating its significance in shaping student experiences. Furthermore, we affirm the perspectives of NCAA athletes, prioritizing the paramount importance of cultivating a diverse campus environment, particularly concerning Latinx student-athletes.

PWI Impact: Unpacking the Term and Student Experiences

The preceding section underlined that PWI[1] refer to higher education institutions where 50% or more of the student population is comprised of White-American individuals (Gaston & Ojewuyi, 2022). However, the implications of PWIs on student experiences extend beyond just the high enrollment rates of White students (Bourke, 2016). Drawing upon CRT, Bourke (2016) illuminates the structural power dynamic that exists within the label "Predominantly White Institutions," which reinforces "Whiteness as a norm" and shapes student interactions accordingly (p. 16). This results in persistent underrepresentation, alienation, and self-segregation among people of color in these institutional settings (Elam & Brown, 2004; Santos et al., 2007).

Given the significant Latinx population in the United States, understanding their experiences at PWIs has become a prevalent phenomenon in the American higher education system (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2020; Rankin & Reason, 2005). For instance, Anthony and Eliott (2019) found states with significant Latinx populations and educational institutions, such as California, Texas, Florida, and New York, do not provide Latinx students with equal access to public four-year higher education institutions compared to their White counterparts. This disparity is surprising, given that Latinx people constitute the largest and fastest-growing minority group in the United States (Funk & Lopez, 2022; Mora, 2022). Therefore, more research is needed to comprehensively understand the experiences of Latinx individuals in the United States educational setting.

The NCAA Student-Athlete Experience

Over the years, a plethora of research has drawn attention to the challenges encountered by student-athletes, particularly within the NCAA, as they navigate the complex terrain of managing their academic pursuits (Gayles, 2015; Rubin & Moses, 2017), athletic engagements (Gould & Whitley, 2009), and social commitments (Marx et al., 2008). The multifaceted nature of this challenge is illuminated in the study conducted by Hardin and Pate (2013), wherein the authors exposed the difficulties encountered by student-athletes. Within their research, NCAA Division 1 football student-athletes struggled to effectively manage their time, a consequence of the persistent academic pressures they faced to maintain eligibility, coupled with the demanding on-field performance expectations set by their coaches (Hardin & Pate, 2013).

Further contributing to this discourse, Huml et al. (2019) explains a range of complex factors that significantly impede the academic advancement of NCAA student-athletes. These encompass a diverse array of challenges, including but not limited to, the shaping influence of "athletic identity," the dynamics of "student-athlete interactions within the athletic department," prevailing "stereotypes" associated with

---

1. It is also important to note that PWI is not a federal designation, unlike Hispanic serving institution (HSI), which is defined by federal law (Malcom-Piqueux & Lee, 2011). PWI is a commonly used term in higher education research and is typically defined by the demographics of the student population.

student-athletes, and the specter of "student-athlete burnout" (Huml et al. 2019, p. 98). Therefore, the extant literature underlines the various ways in which NCAA student-athletes' academic pursuits, athletic identity, and student role collectively shape their experiences within their university setting (Gayles, 2015; Marx et al., 2008).

The Importance of a Diverse Campus for Latinx Student-Athletes

The significance of campus culture in shaping a college student's educational experience has been thoroughly explored by scholars (Howard, 2019; Yosso, 2005). Research indicates a campus environment characterized by diverse, equitable, and inclusive (DEI) practices holds the potential to significantly enhance student engagement (Cunningham, 2023; Laird et al., 2007; Pascarella, 2001). This implies students from underrepresented populations (e.g., Latinx, African Americans) who have access to more culturally diverse opportunities and events (e.g., athletic activities, mentoring programs) can indirectly develop stronger cognitive and personal skills (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). For instance, Ortega and Grafnetterova (2022) affirmed how a supportive athletic department contributed to Latinx student-athletes' decision to enroll in graduate programs. Moreover, Martinez (2018) noted how Latinx student-athletes receiving support from their campus advisors, staff, and faculty played an important role in their success at their community college.

Despite the various elements that constitute the campus ecology, including daily routines, specific organizational meetings, and work appointments (Díaz III, 2020; Kuh, 2001), students, faculty, and staff of color (e.g., Hispanics, African Americans, Native-Americans) attending and working at PWIs still continue to grapple with an unwelcoming campus climate and insufficient assistance that appreciates their cultural backgrounds (Turner, 1994). Consequently, Laird et al., (2007) found students of color attending PWIs encounter greater hurdles in terms of classroom engagement and demonstrate reduced levels of overall college satisfaction. In essence, the absence of DEI institutional practices may discourage underrepresented students from fully engaging in a university's extracurricular activities (e.g., athletic events), which can potentially affect their academic success (Cunningham, 2023).

Therefore, in this study, we explore the racial experiences of Latinx student-athletes within their PWIs context. In parallel, we endeavor to provide practical guidance for practitioners to effectively address these multifaceted adversities. Two research questions guided this study forward:

>**RQ1:** What are the racial experiences encountered by NCAA Division I Latinx student-athletes during their enrollment at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs)?
>
>**RQ2:** In what ways do NCAA Division I Latinx student-athletes respond to and address the multitude of challenges arising from these experiences?

Method

Employing a qualitative phenomenological research design method, our study delved into the lived experiences of six NCAA Division I Latinx student-athletes within their PWIs. A particular focus was placed on the racial dynamics and encoun-

ters that transpired within the academic milieu of their respective universities. Given the inherent objective of a phenomenological research design, which is to uncover and articulate a phenomenon as experienced by participants (Patton, 2002), our study also aimed to gain insights into how Latinx student-athletes navigate the diverse challenges encountered in their university settings. Thus, aligned with the fundamental principles of phenomenological research design, we engaged in active listening to participants' experiences, incorporating extensive quotes from the interviews to offer comprehensive clarity and depth to our findings (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Research Design

Patton (2002) contends that a qualitative phenomenological research design is characterized by the researcher's ability to elucidate and comprehend a phenomenon through the lived experiences of those who have encountered it. The primary goal of this research design is to accurately uncover, describe, and present the phenomenon as perceived by the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2016). A phenomenological research study is commonly employed and well utilized to investigate "affective, emotional and intense human experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p.26). Therefore, in this study, the racial experiences of Latinx student-athletes within their respective PWIs educational and athletic settings were assessed.

Participants

This study consisted of six participants, comprising of one Latino man and five Latina women NCAA Division I student-athletes (*see* to Table 1). The participants were engaged in a variety of sports, including Track, Soccer, Long-Distance Track, High Jump Track, and Cross-Country (*see* Table 1). Moreover, participants rated their time management. The concept of time management is highly relevant to the focus of this study, as we are examining the experiences of Latinx student-athletes. Rothschild-Checroune et al. (2012) stresses effective time management skills are crucial for balancing academic and athletic commitments, which are both demanding in nature. Therefore, understanding the time management habits and strategies of Latinx student-athletes can provide valuable insights into their experiences and the challenges they face.

In the context of time management, the study's findings revealed that participants consistently opted for options categorized as "above average" or "average" (*see Table 1*). The evaluation of "above average" time management was based on factors such as low stress levels, higher levels of physical activity, good academic performance (e.g., achieving high exam scores), and a healthy balance of leisure activities (Misra & Mckean, 2000). Conversely, "average" time management was characterized by high stress levels, low levels of physical activity, poor academic performance, and a lack of personal downtime (Misra & Mckean, 2000; Wintre et al., 2011).

Participant ages ranged from 21 to 23, with a mean of 22 ($SD = 0.63$). Additionally, participants attended five different PWIs in the United States. The university enrollment ranged from 11,938 to 72,982, and the percent of Latinx students enrolled at the university ranged from 8.4% to 25.6%, with a mean of 17.96%.

Table 1. Participants' Gender, Sport, NCAA Division, and Time Management Results.

Name	Gender	Sport	NCAA Division	Time Management Results
Mia	Woman	Track- Long Distance	I	Average
Agustin	Man	Track	I	Above Average
Julieta	Woman	Soccer	I	Average
Michelle	Woman	Cross-Country	I	Above average
Lucia	Woman	Cross-Country	I	Above average
Daniella	Woman	Track- High Jump	I	Above average

Data Collection

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, participants were recruited via snowball sampling. This method involved each participant assisting in identifying subsequent participants (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2017). The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format and lasted a maximum of 30 minutes (*see Appendix A*). This format provided the interviewer with the flexibility to explore participants' responses and ask follow-up questions (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Moreover, to enhance comfort and trustworthiness in the interview process, the first author inquired about participants' preferred language for the interview (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Being proficient in both languages (Spanish and English), she was easily accessible to interview in either language. Nonetheless, all participants opted to conduct the interviews in English.

Furthermore, to accommodate for the geographic dispersion of the study participants, all interviews were conducted through Zoom and were recorded for later transcription and analysis. Participants were offered the option to select a comfortable location, such as their homes or universities, in an effort to reduce potential apprehension or pressure during the interview process (Farhadi, 2017). In addition to the interviews, the primary author collected secondary data from the universities attended by participants, with a focus on resources available to support diversity and inclusion. Diversity policies amongst the universities and athletic departments were noted, along with any other support (e.g., specific training for diversity practices, advisory councils, or organizations that discuss the support of diversity and inclusion; *see Table 2*).

Table 2. Diversity Policies and Support Amongst the PWI and Athletic Settings. Y=Yes, N= No

Name	Faculty and Staff training on DEI (Y or N)	Easy access to reporting racial harassment (Y or N)	Councils, organizations, and groups that specifically focus on DEI (Y or N)	Anti-Discriminatory Policy (Y or N)	Athletic Diversity Policy (Y or N)	Definition of racism and guidance of pronouns and diverse practices (Y or N)
Mia & Agustin	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
Julieta	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Michelle	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lucia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Daniella	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Data Analysis

Upon completion of the first interview, the lead author transcribed the session, analyzed the findings, and recorded her interpretations of the discussion in a reflexive journal. As noted by Vadeboncoeur et al. (2021), a reflexive journal enables authors to note the interview's implications from an investigator's perspective and, importantly, to delve deeper into the participant's responses. Therefore, using a reflexive journal throughout the study enhanced its credibility (Birt et al., 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2016).

After the second interview finished, the primary author quickly noticed common themes emerging. These themes were not surprising given the literature on the educational (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2020), social (Holguín Mendoza et al., 2021), and physical (Von Robertson et al., 2014) challenges student from marginalized populations experience at PWIs (Grafnetterova & Banda, 2021). Moreover, the LatCrit theory highlights the systemic oppression towards individuals of Latin descent that is seen embedded in legal doctrines that govern society, specifically the educational domain (Valdes, 2005). Consequently, drawing on the PWI culture literature and the LatCrit theory, the primary author began to code similar themes that emerged after the second interview.

To further enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of our study, we conducted member checking by presenting the emergent themes and conclusions to the participants for validation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe this method (member checking) as being one of the most "critical techniques [in] establishing credibility" within a qualitative research study (p. 314). In addition, as noted by Creswell and Poth (2016), member checking allows the authors to ensure that their interpretations and conclusions are firmly rooted in the data obtained from the participants.

Therefore, once all the interviews were concluded, and themes were created, the primary author shared these themes with the participants for their feedback. The participants provided positive feedback that was consistent with the existing literature, which describes the PWI culture as being characterized by strong micro aggressions against non-White individuals (Comeaux, 2011; Turner, 1994). Therefore, member checking adds to the rigor and validity of our study and strengthens the overall conclusions drawn from our findings.

Positionality Statements

The primary investigator of this study is a Latina from Texas. Although she is a U.S. citizen, she identifies personally as Mexican. Moreover, her ethnic, educational, and linguistic background situates her within the participant's "in-group" (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Specifically, her parents are of Mexican origin, she is a native Spanish speaker, and she attended a PWI for six years. Additionally, all of her participants knew she was a Latina woman whose first language was Spanish and who attended a PWI. Her initial recruitment emails mentioned this, along with the start of all the interviews. Furthermore, the researcher's epistemological and paradigm orientation played a crucial role in shaping the study's trajectory. That is, she is bound by a constructivism paradigm, as her aim is to investigate and explain how people relate to

the reality that society has constructed (Nørreklit et al., 2016).

The second author is a White, cisgender man who is an English speaker. He has conducted diversity and inclusion research for two decades, employing varied methodologies and theoretical lenses. Many of these investigations have focused on the nexus of gender, race, and sport, including examinations of the opportunities for and experiences of Latinas in sport and physical activity.

The third author is a Black woman who attended PWIs for her undergraduate and graduate studies. She is an English speaker but also has an intermediate proficiency in Spanish, after living in Spain for two years during her secondary education. Her research is in sport marketing and personal branding. However, a segment of this research encompasses gender-based marketing. She approaches her research from a pragmatic paradigm, where her research methods are determined based on the research questions.

Limitations

While our study has several strengths, we must also acknowledge some limitations. First, our sample size was relatively small, consisting of only six participants. However, it is important to note that research on marginalized communities (e.g., African Americans, LGBTQ individuals, Latinx) can be challenging due to their societal positions in the United States, as captioned by Moore (2018). Moreover, our study focuses on a specific group of college students during their formative years, adding to the complexity of participant recruitment.

Secondly, our sample exclusively comprised participants enrolled in NCAA Division I institutions. While this selection enables us to illuminate their experiences, further research is warranted to comprehensively understand the encounters of Latinx student-athletes across the various other NCAA divisions. Third, the majority of our participants were involved in Track and Field sport settings. Lastly, while all of our participants attended a PWI, one participant (Daniella) also attended a Hispanic serving institution (HSI)[2]. We acknowledge that the intersection of PWI and HSI status can be nuanced and may impact the findings. Nonetheless, the experiences of Latinx student-athletes are an essential issue to comprehend. Additionally, while our findings are robust and consistent with existing literature, caution should be exercised when generalizing these results to all Latinx student-athletes in PWIs. Rather, the experiences of these six participants provide valuable insights for improving the educational and athletic sectors within PWIs.

Findings

The aim of this study was to explore the racial experiences of Latinx student-athletes within their PWIs. Our specific research objectives focused on gaining insights

---

2. An HSI is an institution where at least 25% of the student population is Hispanic (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). It is possible for an institution to be both a PWI and an HSI if the institution has a predominantly White student body but also has a significant Hispanic student population.

into their encounters with racial discrimination within the PWI environment (RQ1) and investigating the strategies they employ to navigate these experiences (RQ2). Results show that Latinx student-athletes at PWIs face racial discrimination from multiple sources, including their environment, coaches, and university staff. Nevertheless, the encouragement they receive from their families and the educational support extended by their athletic departments empower them to persevere even in the face of daily biases. The thematic landscape that emerged from our discussions comprises "Outsider," "Campus Resources," and "Family Matters." A more comprehensive exploration of these themes follows in the subsequent sections.

Campus Experiences

Building upon the LatCrit framework and to address RQ1, our findings enunciate the need for enhanced support for Latinx student-athletes within the educational landscape of the United States (Villalpando, 2004). Notably, a prevalent theme that emerged from our data centered on the experience of "*Outsider*" status encountered by these athletes within the broader campus community.

Outsider

Michelle, one of our participants in our study, noted that due to her Latina background, "it was hard to relate to [other] students in class." Agustin mirrored the same response and simply specified that his campus did not feel like home since it was "mostly White."

It is evident that Latinx student-athletes at PWIs do not feel embraced by their campus environment. This sentiment extends beyond the classroom, permeating into various campus organizations and programs. For example, Lucia explained how she wishes there were "more culturally diverse programs offered that I can be involved in…I do not feel at home here." Furthermore, Agustin shared that, "at the beginning, it was hard to adjust…there are so many White people and not enough Latin organizations for us."

Triana et al. (2020) accentuate the academic success of Latinx students necessitates a pervasive "sense of belonging" that transcends the classroom and permeates the entire university space (p. 8). Furthermore, LatCrit explicitly highlights the need to recognize Latinx "cultures, languages and experiences" within a formal educational setting, as they historically have been "omitted" (Bernal, 2013, p. 390). Our participant, Michelle, echoes these concerns, stating, "it is hard to talk [to faculty or staff] about our issues, especially since no one relates to you." Mia also mirrored the discussion by emphasizing "that due to my skin color...I feel uncomfortable and unsupported." Thus, our findings suggest universities, particularly PWIs, lack an inclusive environment, which ultimately can have a damaging decline in Latinx students' success attainments (Ortega et al., 2022).

We also questioned whether our participants experienced any adverse racial experiences on campus; "have you seen others experience bias based on their race or ethnicity, or have you experienced it yourself?" Themes we identified shed light on how our Latinx student-athletes had either faced racial oppression themselves or had

observed others enduring discrimination based on their skin color. Mia, a participant in our study, stated, "it is hard to relate to people due to my Latin background." Along the same lines, Lucia expressed that "there is not a lot of representation of us; [the staff and faculty] make it really hard to feel welcomed." Michelle further described the implicit racial incidents she had observed "on the university bus and on campus…you could tell that [White] individuals at my university do not like use [outsiders]."

Michelle, Alejandra, and Lucia's experiences give prominence to the pervasive impact of underrepresentation and the absence of diversity practices within a university setting. Their narratives resonate with a study conducted by Loveland (2018), wherein the authors stress the vital role of cultivating a strong sense of "cultural and communal identity" within colleges to better enhance Latinx students' personal development (p. 46). These experiences align seamlessly with the existing body of literature, which illuminates the academic and personal challenges faced by students of color due to the prevalence of underrepresentation and the lack of comprehensive DEI practices within academic institutions (Mendoza et al., 2021; Singer, 2005; Ortega et al., 2022).

Interestingly, participants expressed witnessing a disproportionate burden of outward oppression targeting African American students within their PWIs. While this observation may not be directly correlated to our research questions, it tangentially stresses the broader context of racial oppressions that extend to other student-athletes of color. Mia articulated her observation, noting that "during the Black Lives Matter movement, I saw many negative social posts going around at our university about African Americans, particularly this one post about a student stating that [he or she] will hang a Black person." While this racial hostility was directed at another underrepresented group (i.e., African Americans), the Latinx student-athletes were also impacted. As Mia points out, "the university called a whole meeting on this situation during regular class hours to discuss this…but we [student-athletes] were mad, they didn't do anything to suspend the [person who posted this post]."

Emerging scholarship has pointed to the negative campus culture PWIs have against underrepresented communities (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Laird et al., 2007). This was also the case for some of the participants in our current study. Agustin remarked, "I see [and experience] a language barrier in my classes… most of my teammates are international Muslim and African Americans and need help but do not receive it…so we really struggle." Elements such as building relationships with faculty and engaging in extracurricular activities are crucial in providing "counter-spaces" for Latinx and other marginalized populations to succeed academically (Von Robertson et al., 2014). Despite their importance, such spaces were lacking in our participants' experiences.

Countering the Challenges

In addressing our research question (RQ2), we sought to understand the strategies employed by participants to navigate potential racial challenges within their

PWIs. The insights shared by most participants converged around two central themes: *Campus Resources* and *Family Support.*

Campus Resources

Within our study, numerous athletic departments and universities extended valuable resources to bolster students' engagement with matters of race and ethnicity while navigating the intricacies of campus life (*see Table 2*). A significant facet of this support was the establishment of dedicated programs aimed at amplifying DEI within the broader campus community. Our participants were keen to emphasize the pivotal role played by these campus resources in nurturing their academic advancement and social integration. Julieta, for instance, articulated the essence of these resources, affirming, "my university makes it a point to have a diverse curriculum and programs...which makes me feel very inclusive." Likewise, Daniella voiced how "because my university and athletic department provides cultural groups that help me find my voice on campus...I feel that every year I am personally improving." Although these programs varied in availability across campuses, they encompassed a wide range of offerings. For example, DEI training for faculty and staff, mechanisms for reporting incidents of racial harassment, councils, organizations, and groups focused on DEI, anti-discrimination policies, DEI policies specific to athletic departments, and guidance on pronouns and diverse practices (*see Table 2*).

Notably, the participants in this study personally experienced the benefits of these programs. For instance, Julieta affirmed, "every semester is different, but because of the resources and athletic staff present, I am able to learn how to interact [socially] and manage my time within my PWI." Research conducted by Casad et al. (2013) underscores the critical importance of providing students and faculty with the necessary tools to comprehend and confront social justice inequities. That is, when both faculty and students are educated about the mechanics and manifestations of biases, they become more adept at recognizing and addressing these issues openly (Monteith, et al., 2019). This heightened awareness can lead to a more inclusive and equitable academic environment (Adams, et al., 2014; Morris & Ashburn-Nardo, 2009).

Family Support

In various ways, all participants personally encountered instances of racial oppression or observed such occurrences within their PWI university setting. Many of them stressed their family's motivation played a pivotal role in propelling them forward to overcome these challenges. Michelle shared, "My dad was a first-generation college student…and he and my grandparents always make a huge deal to complete [my] university degree." Agustin echoed this sentiment, stating, "we [his family] come from the lower class…education, family, and a job is really important to us." Extensive research has underlined how family members can significantly mold the academic and athletic aspirations of Latinx college students (Osanloo et al., 2018). Moreover, studies have emphasized the crucial role of strong family support in positively influencing the college adjustments and academic achievements of Latinx

students (Núñez, 2013; Ortega et al., 2022; Pérez & Taylor, 2016). Our study further corroborates this, affirming that family serves as a significant motivator for Latinx student-athletes, propelling them to pursue their educational and athletic endeavors within their PWIs.

Furthermore, our findings also unveiled that there were instances of persistence stemming from family expectations. For example, Daniella articulated this persistence, explaining, "I worked very hard and was lucky enough to receive a full ride…I have to do well for my culture." Michelle succinctly put it, "I have my family's success on my shoulders…I can't give up." This familial persistence to not squander educational and athletic opportunities acted as a driving force, compelling them to persevere adverse experiences. Grafnetterova and Banda (2021) stress similar dynamics in their study, noting that first-generation Latinx student-athletes heavily rely on family support for their educational and athletic accomplishments. The perception of this support being "unconditional" provides encouragement, persistence and empowers them to pursue their educational goals (Grafnetterova & Banda, 2021, p. 18). Consequently, our study contributes to the LatCrit theory by elucidating that while racism is indeed experienced, Latinx student-athletes driven by strong motives will persistently strive toward their ultimate objectives.

Discussion

While previous research has shed light on the racial experiences of Black student-athletes within a PWI setting (Singer, 2005, 2008), there remains a dearth of comprehensive exploration into the experiences of Latinx student-athletes within this setting. Therefore, this study makes a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge by closely examining the racial encounters of NCAA Division 1 Latinx student-athletes across PWIs in the United States. Furthermore, the insights gleaned from this study hold potential to offer beneficial guidance to both athletic and academic stakeholders seeking to enhance a sense of belonging within their PWI campus culture.

Building upon Espinoza and Harris' (1997) Latin Critical Race theory, our investigation has brought to light how the racial identity of Latinx participants significantly contributes to the distressing discrimination prevalent in their PWI campus and athletic contexts. These unsettling experiences have caused immense distress, leading them to feel like "outsiders" within their own athletic department and university. In this context, our study outcomes resoundingly echo a fundamental tenet of the LatCrit theory – the deep-seated roots of racism within the United States educational framework necessitate a comprehensive analysis for meaningful transformation (Bernal, 2013; Espinoza & Harris, 1997; Grafnetterova & Banda, 2021; Villalpando, 2004).

Moreover, while our participants recounted instances of racial aggression, they firmly refrained from adopting a stance of passive victimhood. Quite the opposite, motivated by familial support and campus resources, they exhibited tenacious determination to pursue and achieve their athletic and academic ambitions. This resilience

resonates harmoniously with the LatCrit framework, which challenges us to recognize and unmask the origins of racism (Espinoza & Harris, 1997; Yosso et al., 2009).

Furthermore, the findings accentuate an intriguing paradox. Despite most of the universities where our participants attended, many of which boasted multiple DEI initiatives within both their academic and athletic domains (*see Table 2*), instances of racial disparity and discrimination persisted among Latinx student-athletes. This observation finds resonance within the extensive LatCrit literature, maintaining the amplification of Latinx voices are needed in order for their experiences to be understood, and for the transformations within educational settings to be achieved (Espinoza & Harris, 1997; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

In summary, our research underscores the profound impact of racial identity on the experiences of Latinx student-athletes within PWIs, aligning our findings with the principles of LatCrit theory. It draws attention to the urgency of recognizing and dismantling the roots of racism within the educational system to pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable future (Espinoza & Harris, 1997).

Implications

Our findings carry substantial implications. Primarily, they illuminate the presence of racial biases affecting Latinx athletes and other underrepresented student groups, such as African Americans and Muslims, within the confines of their campus environments. This underscores the pressing imperative for universities and athletic departments to adopt more comprehensive and diverse approaches. For instance, academic institutions can proactively organize an array of events, seminars, and programs designed to celebrate and advocate for diversity and inclusion. These initiatives may encompass cultural festivals, unity walks, food tastings, and art exhibitions, among others. The objective for universities should extend beyond mere cultural awareness education; it should encompass the creation of an inclusive and accepting environment where everyone is welcomed. As posited by Wells et al. (2016), diverse learning environments serve to better equip students for a globalized society, ultimately diminishing stereotypes and nurturing "cross-racial understanding" (p.21). Furthermore, Cunningham (2023) underscores the multifaceted benefits that diversity and inclusion practices can confer upon both the campus and the surrounding community. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination persist, particularly within social contexts where individuals perceive distinctions among themselves.

Lastly, we strongly recommend the implementation of robust mentoring programs within universities and athletic departments. These programs would enable athletes to connect with individuals from diverse racial backgrounds, including faculty members. Ortega et al. (2022) have demonstrated how increased faculty representation is positively correlated with the graduation rates of Latinx students. Furthermore, the research by Ortega and Grafnetterova (2022) spotlights the critical role of faculty representation and mentoring programs in enhancing the academic success of Latinx student-athletes. Phommasa et al. (2022) punctuate the potential long-term benefits of practices like "faculty dinners" and "table talks" for marginalized college

students (p. 113). Therefore, we advocate for the widespread adoption of mentoring initiatives that facilitate interactions between athletes and individuals from diverse racial backgrounds, including faculty members.

Future Directions

There are several compelling avenues for future research that warrant exploration. First, it would be valuable for forthcoming studies to delve into the experiences of Latinx student-athletes within other NCAA Divisions. Given that the NCAA Division I typically garners more resources and support for their athletic programs compared to NCAA Divisions II and III (Sweitzer, 2009), examining how these differences influence the racial experiences of Latinx student-athletes could provide insightful perspectives.

Secondly, there is a compelling need for future research to investigate whether additional social identities, such as citizenship, age, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic class, can contribute to the racial discriminatory encounters faced by Latinx student-athletes at PWIs. Existing literature extensively chronicles the heightened discriminatory experiences that result from the intersection of social identities (Cho et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1991; 2022). However, much of this research primarily focuses on the Black population (Ireland et al., 2018; Lewis et al., 2017), leaving a gap in understanding the intersectionality of Latinx individuals. Moreover, a recent study by Huber (2023) reiterates the necessity for researchers to undertake a comprehensive examination of the impacts these intersecting identities have within the Latinx population.

Lastly, further research is warranted to assess the potential effectiveness of DEI interventions and training programs aimed at mitigating racial biases on campus. This is particularly significant given that all the universities examined in our study had incorporated faculty and staff training as part of their DEI initiatives, provided easy avenues for reporting racial harassment, and established clear definitions of racism (*see Table 2*). Yet, despite these efforts, it was notable that the majority of the Latinx student-athletes continued to encounter instances of racial aggression.

Conclusion

Amidst the growing presence of Latinx individuals within the education and athletic settings in the United States (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020), it is noteworthy that research on the experiences of Latinx student-athletes, particularly within their university settings, remains relatively sparse (Grafnetterova & Banda, 2021; Ortega & Grafnetterova, 2022). As such, the purpose of this study was to address this gap by critically analyzing the racial experiences of NCAA Latinx student-athletes who attend PWIs. Our findings illustrate the challenges these student-athletes encounter and spotlights their determination, often drawing on both familial and campus-based resources for sustenance. Consequently, this study accentuates the significance of universities and athletic settings to proactively address issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusivity in order to promote a more inclusive environment for Latinx students.

References

Adams, V. H., Devos, T., Rivera, L. M., Smith, H., & Vega, L. A. (2014). Teaching about implicit prejudices and stereotypes: A pedagogical demonstration. *Teaching of Psychology*, *41*, 204–212.

Alanis, M., Cunningham, G. B., & Desimone, A. (2022). Underrepresented on the field and in the literature: A scoping review of Latinas in sport. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, *30*(1), 53–65. https://doi.org/10.1123/wspaj.2021-0060

Allen, T. O., & Stone, A. (2016). Degrees of separation: Latino students' transitions to a Texas HBCU. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*. https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2016.1194285

Anthony, M., Jr, & Elliott, K. C. (2019). *Broken Mirrors II: How Many Latino Students Are at Public Colleges & Universities? Not As Many As There Should Be.* The Education Trust. https://edtrust.org

Bernal, D. (2013). Critical race theory, Latino critical theory, and critical raced-gendered epistemologies. In B. J. Thayer-Bacon, L. Stone, & K. M. Sprecher (Eds.), *Education feminism: Classic and contemporary readings* (pp. 389–408). SUNY Press.

Birk, M. (2022). Do you hear me? A critical review of the voice of racism anti-racism education campaign from Aotearoa New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, *57*(2), 543-558. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40841-022-00239-2

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health Research*, *26*(13), 1802–1811. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870

Bourke, B. (2016). Meaning and implications of being labelled a Predominantly White Institution. *College and University*, *91*(3), 12. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1113601

Cameron, C. (2012). You can't win if you don't play: The surprising absence of Latino athletes from college sports. *Wake Forest Journal of Law & Policy*, *2*(1), 227–246.

Casad, B. J., Flores, A. J., & Didway, J. D. (2013). Using the implicit association test as an unconsciousness raising tool in psychology. *Teaching of Psychology*, *40*(2), 118–123. https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628312475031

Cho, S., Crenshaw, K. W., & McCall, L. (2013). Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis. *Signs*, *38*(4), 785–810. https://doi.org/10.1086/669608

Comeaux, E. (2011). Study of attitudes toward college student-athletes: Implications for faculty athletics engagement. *Journal of Negro Education*, *80*(4), 521–532.

Crenshaw, K. (1988). Race, reform, and retrenchment: Transformation and discrimination law. *Harvard Law Review*, *101*(7), 1331–1387.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

Crenshaw, K. W. (2022). *On Intersectionality: Essential writings*. https://openlibrary.org/books/OL28107346M/On_Intersectionality

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.

Cunningham, G. B. (2023). *Diversity and inclusion in sport organizations: A multilevel perspective* (5th ed.). Routledge.

Darvin, L., Cintron, A., & Hancock, M. (2017). ¿Por qué jugar? Sport socialization among Hispanic/Latina female NCAA division I student-athletes. *Journal of Amateur Sport*, *3*(2), 27–54. https://doi.org/10.17161/jas.v3i2.6460

Delgado, R. (1995). *The Rodrigo chronicles: Conversations about America and race*. NYU Press.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2023). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (4th ed., Vol. 87). NYU Press.

Díaz III, H. (2020). A hierarchy of environmental design for Latin* men at PWIs. *The New York Journal of Student Affairs*, *20*(1), 91-117.

Elam, C. L., & Brown, G. M. (2004). The inclusive university: Helping minority students choose a college and identify institutions that value diversity. *Journal of College Admission*, *187*, 14–17. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ922064.pdf

Espinoza, L., & Harris, A. P. (1997). Afterword: Embracing the tar-baby. LatCrit theory and the sticky mess of race. *California Law Review*, *85*(5), 1585. https://doi.org/10.2307/3481066

Farhadi, B. (2017). Skype: Bodies, screens, space. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *26*(2), 293–295. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369x.2017.1391498

Funk, C., & Lopez, M. H. (2022, June 16). *1. A brief statistical portrait of U.S. Hispanics*. Pew Research Center Science & Society. https://www.pewresearch.org

Gaston, J., & Ojewuyi, O. (2022). *The Black college student experience: PWIs vs HBCUs*. The Daily Egyptian. https://dailyegyptian.com

Gayles, J. L. (2015). Today's college athlete. In E. Comeaux (Ed.), *Introduction to intercollegiate athletics* (pp. 83–91). Johns Hopkins University Press.

Gould, D., & Whitley, M. A. (2009). Sources and consequences of athletic burnout among college athletes. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, *2*(1), 16–30. https://doi.org/10.1123/jis.2.1.16

Grafnetterova, N., & Banda, R. M. (2021). "Need help? We got you!": Sources of support for first-generation Latinx student-athletes. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/19357397.2021.1916311

Grafnetterova, N., Gutierrez, J. A., & Banda, R. M. (2020). Entrando en el juego: The role of Hispanic-serving institutions in fostering educational and athletic

outcomes for Latinx athletes. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, *14*(3), 61–83. https://doi.org/10.24974/amae.14.3.400

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Handbook of qualitative research. In E. G. Guba & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Competing paradigms in qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 105–117). SAGE Publications.

Hardin, R., & Pate, J. R. (2013). Playbook vs. textbook: Examining academic transitioning of NCAA division I-FBS football student-athletes. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, *7*(3), 229–244. https://doi.org/10.1179/1935739713z.00000000014

Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2017). *The practice of qualitative research*. SAGE.

Holguín Mendoza, C., Taylor, A., Romero Montaño, L., & Dorantes, A. (2021). Too Latinx or not Latinx enough? Racial subtexts and subjectivities in a predominantly white university. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *22*(3), 1138-1153.

Howard, T. C. (2019). *Why race and culture Matter in Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap in America's Classrooms*. Teachers College Press.

Huber, L. P. (2023). Using Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and racist nativism to explore intersectionality in the educational experiences of undocumented Chicana college students. In E. Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds.), *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education* (pp. 215–230). https://doi.org/10.4324/b23210-23

Huml, M. R., Bergman, M., Newell, E. M., & Hancock, M. G. (2019). From the playing field to the classroom: The academic challenges for NCAA Division I athletes. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, *13*(2), 97–115. https://doi.org/10.1080/19357397.2019.1578609

Hurtado, S., & Carter, D. F. (1997). Effects of college transition and perceptions of the campus racial climate on Latino college students' sense of belonging. *Sociology of Education*, *70*(4), 324-345. https://doi.org/10.2307/2673270

Ireland, D. T., Freeman, K. E., Winston-Proctor, C. E., DeLaine, K., Lowe, S. M., & Woodson, K. M. (2018). (Un)hidden figures: A synthesis of research examining the intersectional experiences of Black women and girls in STEM education. *Review of Research in Education*, *42*(1), 226–254. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732x18759072

Kuh, G. D. (2001). Assessing what really matters to student learning inside the national survey of student engagement. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, *33*(3), 10–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091380109601795

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *11*(1), 7–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236863

Ladson-Billings, G. (2016). Toward a critical race theory of education. In W. F. Tate (Ed.), *In Critical race theory in education* (pp. 10–31). Routledge.

Laird, T. F., Bridges, B. K., Morelon-Quainoo, C. L., Williams, J. M., & Holmes, M. S. (2007). African American and Hispanic student engagement at minority

serving and predominantly white institutions. *Journal of College Student Development*, *48*(1), 39–56. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2007.0005

Lewis, J. A., Williams, M. G., Peppers, E. J., & Gadson, C. A. (2017). Applying intersectionality to explore the relations between gendered racism and health among Black women. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *64*(5), 475–486. https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000231

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1st ed.). SAGE Publications.

Loveland, E. (2018). Creating a sense of community and belonging for Latinx students. *Journal of College Admission*, *241*(1), 44-49. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1260282.pdf

Malcom-Piqueux, L. E., & Lee, J. M. (2011). Hispanic-Serving institutions: Contributions and challenges. *College Board Advocacy & Policy Center*. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED562686.pdf

Martinez, E. (2018). College choice processes and experiences of Latino/a/x student-athletes in the community college context. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, *12*(1), 14–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/19357397.2018.1444700

Marx, J. M., Huffmon, S. H., & Doyle, A. (2008). The student-athlete model and the socialization of intercollegiate athletes. *Athletic Insight: Online Journal of Sport Psychology*, *10*(1), 1-23. https://www.cabdirect.org/abstracts/20093120751.html

McDowell, J., Pickett, A. C., & Pitts, B. G. (2022). Introduction to the special issue on diversity and inclusion in sport management education. *Sport Management Education Journal*, *16*(1), 1–3.

McGovern, J. (2020). The intersection of class, race, gender and generation in shaping Latinas' sport experiences. *Sociological Spectrum*, *41*(1), 96–114. https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2020.1850378

McGuire, C. (2021, October 6). *LA CAASA aims to increase Hispanic/Latinx representation in college athletics*. NCAA.Org. https://www.ncaa.org/news/2021/10/6/features-la-caasa-aims-to-increase-hispanic-latinx-representation-in-college-athletics.aspx

Mendoza, C. H., Taylor, A., Montaño, L. R., Lucero, A., & Dorantes, A. (2021). Too Latinx or not Latinx enough? Racial subtexts and subjectivities in a predominantly white university. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *22*(3), 1138–1153. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2021.1920945

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Misra, R., & Mckean, M. (2000). College students' academic stress and its relation to their anxiety, time management, and leisure satisfaction. *American Journal of Health Studies*, *16*(1), 41-51.

Monteith, J. J., Burns, M. D., & Hildebrand, L. K. (2019). Navigating successful confrontations: What should I say and how should I say it? In R. Mallet & M. J. Monteith (Eds.), *Confronting prejudice and discrimination: The science of changing minds and behaviors* (pp. 225–247). Academic Press.

Moore, M. R. (2018). Challenges, triumphs, and praxis: Collecting qualitative data on less visible and marginalized populations. In L. Compton, T. Meadow, & K. Schilt (Eds.), *Other, Please Specify* (pp. 169–184). University of California Press.

Mora, L. (2022, October 7). *Hispanic enrollment reaches new high at four-year colleges in the U.S., but affordability remains an obstacle*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/10/07/hispanic-enrollment-reaches-new-high-at-four-year-colleges-in-the-u-s-but-affordability-remains-an-obstacle/

Morris, K. A., & Ashburn-Nardo, L. (2009). The implicit association test as a class assignment: Student affective and attitudinal reactions. *Teaching of Psychology*, *37*(1), 63–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/00986280903426019

Noe-Bustamante, L., Lopez, M. H., & Krogstad, J. M. (2020, July 10). *U.S. Hispanic population surpassed 60 million in 2019, but growth has slowed*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/07/u-s-hispanic-population-surpassed-60-million-in-2019-but-growth-has-slowed/

Nørreklit, H., Raffnsøe-Møller, M., & Mitchell, F. (2016). A pragmatic constructivist approach to accounting practice and research. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, *13*(3), 266–277. https://doi.org/10.1108/qram-05-2016-0039

Núñez, A. (2013). Achieving equity for Latino students: Expanding the pathway to higher education through public policy. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *51*(1), 95–97. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231311291468

Ortega, G. (2021). Examining the intersection of race and athletics for Latino male student-athletes. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *20*(2), 179–192. https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192719876091

Ortega, G., & Grafnetterova, N. (2022). Examining the development of graduate school aspirations among Latinx college athletes. *Innovative Higher Education*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-021-09578-2

Ortega, G., Alanis, M., & Smith, A. (2022). Examining how athletic staff influence Latinx college athletes intent to graduate. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, *15*, 125-148.

Osanloo, A. F., Parra, J., & Pedraza, C. a. A. (2018). "Los olvidados" – An integrative review of the extant literature review on the forgotten ones in intercollegiate athletics. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, *12*(1), 53-74. https://doi.org/10.1080/19357397.2018.1444697

Pascarella, E. T. (2001). Identifying excellence in undergraduate education. Are we even close? *Change. The Magazine of Higher Learning*, *33*(3), 18–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091380109601796

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research*. Jossey-Bass.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Pérez, D., & Taylor, K. B. (2016). Cultivando logradores: Nurturing and sustaining Latino male success in higher education. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, *9*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039145

Phommasa, M., Dominguez-Whitehead, Y., & Caudillo, A. (2022). Faculty mentoring dinners: Facilitating high-impact practices. In K. Weber (Ed.), *Developing and Implementing Promising Practices and Programs for First-Generation College Students* (pp. 113–126). Routledge.

Ponjuán, L., & Hernández, S. (2020). Different yet similar: The educational experiences of Latinx male students at Texas PWI, HSI, and HBCU institutions. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *20*(4), 453–465. https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192719896330

Rankin, S. R., & Reason, R. D. (2005). Differing perceptions: How students of color and white students perceive campus climate for underrepresented groups. *Journal of College Student Development*, *46*(1), 43–61. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2005.0008

Rothschild-Checroune, E., Gravelle, F., Dawson, D., & Karlis, G. (2012). Balancing academic and athletic time management: A qualitative exploration of first year student athletes' university football experiences. *Society and Leisure*, *35*(2), 243–261. https://doi.org/10.1080/07053436.2012.10707843

Rubin, L. M., & Moses, R. A. (2017). Athletic subculture within student-athlete academic centers. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *34*(4), 317–328.

Santos, S. J., Ortiz, A. M., Morales, A., & Rosales, M. (2007). The relationship between campus diversity, students' ethnic identity and college adjustment: A qualitative study. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *13*(2), 104–114. https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.13.2.104

Singer, J. N. (2005). Understanding racism through the eyes of African American male student-athletes. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *8*(4), 365–386. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320500323963

Singer, J. N. (2008). Benefits and detriments of African American male athletes' participation in a big-time college football program. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *43*(4), 399–408. https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690208099874

Solorzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). Critical race and LatCrit theory and method: Counter-storytelling. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *14*(4), 471–495. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390110063365

Stefancic, J. (1998). Latino and Latina critical theory: An annotated bibliography. *La Raza Law Journal*, *10*(1), 423-498. https://doi.org/10.2307/3481065

Sweitzer, K. (2009). Institutional ambitions and athletic conference affiliation. *New Directions for Higher Education*, *2009*(148), 55–63. https://doi.org/10.1002/he.368

Triana, C., Gloria, A. M., & Castellanos, J. (2020). Cultivating success for Latinx undergraduates: Integrating cultural spirituality within higher education. *About Campus*, *24*(6), 4–9.

Turner, C. S. V. (1994). Guests in someone else's house: Students of color. *The Review of Higher Education*, *17*(4), 355–370. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.1994.0008

U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)*. White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics. https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/hispanic-serving-institutions-hsis/

Vadeboncoeur, J. D., Bopp, T., & Singer, J. N. (2021). Is reflexivity enough? Addressing reflexive embodiment, power, and whiteness in sport management research. *Journal of Sport Management*, *35*(1), 30–43. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2019-0375

Valdes, F. (2005). Legal reform and social justice: An introduction to LatCrit theory, praxis and community. *Griffith Law Review, 14*(2), 148-173.

Villalpando, O. (2004). Practical considerations of critical race theory and Latino critical theory for Latino college students. *New Directions for Student Services*, *2004*(105), 41–50. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.115

Von Robertson, R., Bravo, A., & Chaney, C. (2014). Racism and the experiences of Latina/o college students at a PWI (Predominantly White Institution). *Critical Sociology*, *42*(4–5), 715–735. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920514532664

Wells, A. S., Fox, L., & Cordova-Cobo, D. (2016). How racially diverse schools and classrooms can benefit all students. *The Education Digest*, *82*(1), 17-24.

Wintre, M. G., Dilouya, B., Pancer, S. M., Pratt, M. W., Birnie-Lefcovitch, S., Polivy, J., & Adams, G. (2011). Academic achievement in first-year university: Who maintains their high school average? *Higher Education*, *62*(4), 467–481. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-010-9399-2

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *8*(1), 69–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006

Yosso, T. J., Smith, W. A., Ceja, M., & Solorzano, D. G. (2009). Critical Race Theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate for Latina/o undergraduates. *Harvard Educational Review*, *79*(4), 659–691. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.4.m6867014157m707l

Appendix A
Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your family's social class?

2. How would you describe race and race relations at your university?

3. How would you describe your experiences as a Latinx student-athlete?

4. Have you seen others experience bias based on their race and ethnicity? Have you experienced bias yourself? If so, what was the nature of the bias?

5. Have you ever felt uncomfortable or unsupported by your peers, teachers, or your team?

6. Between these three choices; above average, average, and below-average: how do you feel you manage your sport and schoolwork? What are reasons you answered as you did?

7. Does your social class affect any social, academic, or sport-related settings?

8. Would you like to add any final remarks on your college experiences?