

## The influence of cultural identity and perceived barriers on college preparation and aspirations of Latino youth in emerging immigrant communities.

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### **Abstract:**

Emerging immigrant communities differ from established communities in terms of needs and available resources. Students in these emerging communities may still be acculturating to new contexts and establishing their ethnic identities, which may impact their ability to engage in planning for the future. The current study examines what impact these cultural identity variables, in addition to perceptions of barriers to college entrance, would have on educational aspirations and college-going self-efficacy beliefs of Latino adolescents. Findings from 171 middle- and high school Latino students from immigrant families indicated that public ethnic regard and resilience to barriers were positively associated with college-going self-efficacy, and Anglo orientation had a trend-level effect, while perceived barriers were negatively related to that outcome. Private ethnic regard and person-based barriers were negatively associated with educational aspirations. Generation status, gender, mother's education, and age were control variables. Implications for research and practice are provided, focusing on perceived barriers and self-efficacy beliefs.

**Keywords:** latino immigrants | cultural identity | barriers to education | college | self-efficacy | educational aspirations | immigrant communities

### **Article:**

Between 1990 and 2000, some regions of the United States experienced a surge of immigrants, mostly comprised of economic refugees from Mexico and Central America (Wainer, 2004). These recent immigrants experienced some of the typical transitions that have marked previous waves of newcomers, but in the context of communities that were less prepared for international citizens and had fewer existing support services (Bohon, Macpherson, & Atilas, 2005). Immigrants in these emerging communities were typically in low-paying jobs without security or

health care, living in isolated sections of rural communities, and more comfortable with their native languages rather than English (Behnke, Gonzalez, & Cox, 2010; Bohon et al., 2005).

As the children of recently immigrated families enter U.S. schools, they may be facing a different set of barriers to educational progress than U.S.-born Latinos in established areas such as California or Texas (Flores & Chapa, 2009). Culturally similar college-educated role models may not be present to encourage and inspire, translated materials may not be provided to inform families and enable them to plan for college, and mentors or guides may not be available to explain the unfamiliar U.S. educational system (Bohon et al., 2005). At times, families may even receive biased or discouraging messages regarding higher education for Latino students (Perreira, Fuligni, & Potochnick, 2010). Yet, educational advancement can aid immigrant students and their families to achieve their goals and thus is key to their social and economic mobility. Thus, the current research investigates college hopes and plans for Latino adolescents in an emerging immigrant community. Predictors will include cultural identity variables (acculturation and ethnic identity) and perceptions of barriers.

#### College-Going Self-Efficacy and Perception of Barriers

Social cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) conceptually links perceived barriers and self-efficacy beliefs for educational or career tasks. Perceived contextual barriers may limit an individual's ability to formulate an aspiration or carry out a plan. Alternatively, a highly positive sense of self-efficacy might allow one to cope with perceived barriers and continue to move forward amidst challenges. Existing research on contextual barriers to future expectations and plans has included Latino students, although primarily in established communities with longer histories of Spanish-speaking presence (Flores, Navarro, & DeWitz, 2008; Gushue, Clarke, Pantzer, & Scanlan, 2006; McWhirter, Hackett, & Bandalos, 1998; McWhirter, Torres, Salgado, & Valdez, 2007; Ojeda & Flores, 2008; Rivera, Chen, Flores, Blumberg, & Ponterotto, 2007). Given the distinct features of emerging immigrant communities, the contextual barriers perceived by families in these settings may function differently. The current study would extend the literature by investigating several types of barriers and their impact on two education-related outcomes while simultaneously accounting for ethnic identity and acculturation of youth in immigrant families.

#### *Educational Aspirations*

The postsecondary educational aspirations of Latino youth in immigrant families are typically high (Perreira et al., 2010), but few studies have examined the potentially protective effect of cultural identity on high aspirations. St. Hilaire (2002) investigated these relationships, but with demographic descriptors (length of time in country, language fluency, chosen ethnic label) representing cultural identity variables rather than more complete measures of acculturation and ethnic identity. Still, the finding that length of residency in the United States was a negative

predictor of educational aspirations and expectations is a relevant baseline, and in line with the “immigrant paradox” literature (Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009).

### *Acculturation and Ethnic Identity*

Researchers have documented that the context of reception can influence how children of immigrants define themselves or incorporate new cultural influences (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2008; Kiang, Ferreira, & Fuligni, 2011). In selective acculturation, for example, students might maintain their traditional values in the context of home, and also adjust to the new values reflected in the schools (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Overall, conclusions are mixed, with increased endorsement of U.S. cultural norms often having academic benefits and Latino orientation contributing positively to psychological adaptation (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Flores et al. examined the educational goals of Mexican American high school students, and established that Anglo-oriented acculturation but not Mexican-oriented acculturation was positively related to aspirations and expectations for future education (Flores, Navarro, & DeWitz, 2008). However, these studies were conducted in South Texas with established Latino families, thus it is unknown whether the positive benefits of Anglo-orientation extend to youth in an emerging immigrant community.

Ethnic centrality and ethnic regard also have been examined in youth from immigrant families for their association with academic attitudes and achievement (Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005; Zarate, Bhimji, & Reese, 2005) and daily well-being (Kiang, Yip, Gonzales-Backen, Witkow, & Fuligni, 2006). In general, adolescents with greater ethnic centrality or importance also reported greater levels of motivation around academics, greater feelings of connection to their schools, and a more positive sense of self-esteem and well-being. In the absence of a large Latino receiving community in new gateway states, a different path to ethnic identity formation and its beneficial influences is possible (Rumbaut, 1994).

Thus, the research questions in the current study are (a) how do acculturation, ethnic identity, and perceptions of barriers predict college-going self-efficacy beliefs for adolescents in an emerging Latino immigrant community; and (b) how do they predict educational aspirations. The researchers anticipate that ethnic regard and Anglo orientation will be positively associated with both outcomes, while perception of barriers will have a negative influence even while controlling for cultural identity. Better understanding of the predictors of educational hopes and plans could provide tangible benefit to immigrant youth who are striving to advance in the United States.

## **Method**

### *Participants*

The sample consisted of seventh, eighth, ninth, and 10th graders ( $N = 190$ ) who had identified as Latino in the records of the participating middle- and high schools. The entire school district (K-12) was 34% Latino, with 19% of students displaying limited English proficiency and 68% of

students qualifying for free/reduced lunch (Department of Public Instruction, 2009). The high school, where more than half of the sample was located, was 28.3% Latino and 8.6% limited English proficient in the 2010 to 2011 school year (P. Crooks, personal communication, May 16, 2012). Study participants selfreported grades of mostly A's and B's ( $n = 139$ ), mostly B's and C's ( $n = 45$ ), or mostly C's and D's ( $n = 5$ ). The school could not provide official grade reports disaggregated by ethnicity, however other data told a similar story of academic progress. For example, only 69 of 1,280 students dropped out of the high school in 2009 to 2010, 19 of whom were Latino. The school wide attendance rate was 95%, and 92% to 95% of students were promoted from one grade to the next in 2009 to 2010 (Department of Public Instruction, 2009). All students at this school participate in a college readiness curriculum; there is no career or technical track.

The mean age of the participants was 14.01 years; 52.9 % were females and 47.1 % were males. The majority of participants was of Mexican origin (78%), with the remainder reporting Nicaraguan, Dominican, Salvadorian, Guatemalan, Columbian, Costa Rican, Cuban, or mixed Latino heritage. Regarding generational status, the following categories were utilized (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001): child or adolescent immigrants, who were born elsewhere and arrived here at age 6 or older ( $n = 24$ ), U.S.-reared immigrants, who were born elsewhere but arrived here at age 5 or younger ( $n = 44$ ), and U.S.-born students with at least one foreign-born parent ( $n = 110$ ). In this way, the majority of foreign-born students resembled generation 1.5 more than first generation immigrants, in that most of their memories and experiences were in the United States. Participants were asked to report on their parents' highest level of formal education, which they were able to do only partially (approximately one third utilized the "I don't know" response). Twenty-nine percent of the students reported that their mother had completed elementary or junior high (25% for fathers), and 17% indicated "some" high school as their mother's highest level of formal education (16% for fathers). Eleven percent had mothers who had achieved high school graduation (13% for fathers) and 5% had mothers who had completed some credits in college, but not a degree (2% for fathers). Only 5% had mothers who were college graduates (4% for fathers). Almost half of the sample (48%) indicated "some" economic difficulty in the family and 20% reported "considerable" financial stress.

### *Procedures*

Latino students were recruited from three schools in the southeastern United States (two middle schools and one high school). There were 442 Latino students total among the three schools. Recruitment occurred via phone calls and letters (in English and Spanish) to the home. The researchers were unable to contact 164 families (37% of total) due to disconnected numbers and inability to reach the parent. One student withdrew from the study. In total, 190 students (68% of those reached; 43% of total) assented and participated in the current study. All survey administration was completed in the participating school's cafeteria in the fall of 2010, during periods determined by the administration. The students assented to participation, which was voluntary and confidential. Participants had the option to have an English or Spanish version of

the survey; all but one chose English. Measures not available in Spanish were translated and back translated, and then the research team resolved discrepancies jointly. The research team was present to respond to questions during the survey administration and ensure completion.

### *Measures*

*College-going self-efficacy scale (CGSES).* The CGSES (Gibbons & Borders, 2010) measures an individual's confidence that he or she would be able to complete tasks leading to college-going at a high level of competence. If a student does not feel confident that he or she can carry out key tasks, it is less likely that the student would state an aspiration for postsecondary education or engage in preparatory behaviors (e.g., taking the SAT, seeking out college information, or having discussions with parents; Gibbons & Borders, 2010). CGSES items relate to college access (e.g., "I can make an educational plan that will prepare me for college") and college persistence (e.g., "I could do the class work and homework assignments in college classes"). The scale was developed for and validated on a diverse middle school sample, including White, Black, and Latino students, some of whom would be first generation college students ( $N = 272$ ). Prior work demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity, with a single-factor solution fitting the data best. Thus, the current study utilized a total score for the CGSES, with 30 items on a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all sure*, 4 = *very sure*). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the current study was 0.97.

*Perceptions of barriers (POB).* The original POB measure included barriers to both career and educational goals (McWhirter et al., 1998). Since the current study was only interested in perceptions of barriers to entering education, items indicating barriers to career and persistence in college were dropped, leaving nine specific items (e.g., "If I didn't go to college, it would be because of money problems") and one overall item (e.g., "I will be able to overcome any barriers that stand in the way of achieving my career goals"). Respondents utilized a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*), which was then reverse coded during data analysis to be consistent with the directionality of other measures. Cronbach's  $\alpha$ 's for the original study (including Mexican American students) ranged from 0.86 to 0.87, and in the current study was 0.86.

Total POB scores have traditionally been used because of the interest in evaluating likelihood of barriers. In the current study, a differential pattern of response was noted, with 58% of the participants agreeing that financial barriers would be the reason why they would not go to college, and a range of 6% to 22% of participants agreeing that various person-based barriers (e.g., family problems, not feeling smart enough, having a good job already) would be the reason. Thus, an exploratory factor analysis was undertaken on the nine barrier items, which indicated that a two-factor solution was the most appropriate (economic barriers constituting a separate construct from person based barriers). The overall "resilience to barriers" item described previously was also part of the model examined in the current study.

*Multidimensional inventory of Black identity (MIBI)*. Ethnic identity was measured with the MIBI (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Although the MIBI was initially created to evaluate racial identity with African Americans, it has been successfully adapted in prior studies to examine ethnic identity of Latino and Asian origin adolescents (Kiang et al., 2006; Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2008). The MIBI separates ethnic identity into centrality (importance), private, and public regard. Private regard reflects one's feelings about the ethnic group to which one belongs, while public regard reflects one's estimation of how others perceive one's ethnic group. In the current study, both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis indicated that two factors were present—public regard (e.g., “In general, others respect members of my ethnic group”), and a combination of ethnic centrality with private regard, which was labeled private regard (e.g., “I have a strong sense of belonging to my ethnic group”). Items are on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in the current sample was 0.95 for private regard and 0.88 for public regard.

*Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans--II (ARSMA-II)*. The ARSMA-II (Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995) can generate a multidimensional acculturation score rather than only a linear one. Separate mean scores were generated for Anglo orientation (e.g., “My thinking is done in the English language”) and Latino orientation (e.g., “My friends are now of Mexican/Latino origin”), so that they could vary independently in the models. As noted, the wording was changed from Mexican only to Mexican/Latino for the current study. Scale 1 of the ARSMA-II was given to the participants, including 30 items with a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *almost always*). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in the current sample was 0.88.

*Demographics*. Demographic data were collected, including country of birth of student and parents, participants' age, gender, grade in school, educational aspirations and expectations, and self-reported grades. Adolescents were not asked to report on their family's income. As was noted previously, there were some limitations with how parental educational attainment was reported, but it was deemed important to include as a control variable, along with age, generation status, and gender. Mother's education had fewer missing observations, and was highly correlated with father's education ( $r = 0.77$ ) and similar in range. Therefore, it was selected for analysis, with the “don't know” responses being placed at the zero end of the scale as a nonfactor in the students' perceptions about parental education.

## **Results**

### *Preliminary Analyses*

Correlations, means, and standard deviations among the variables are displayed in Table 1; multicollinearity was not present. Of the 190 participants, 171 had data for all the variables of interest in the current analysis. College going self-efficacy was significantly associated with educational aspirations, Anglo orientation, public regard, and resilience to barriers in the positive direction, and to economic and person-based barriers in the negative direction. The educational

aspirations outcome was significantly and negatively associated with person-based barriers and age, and positively associated with Anglo orientation. Latino orientation was positively correlated with Anglo orientation in this sample, implying a bicultural status. Of the ethnic identity variables, private and public regard were associated at 0.480, which is logical for related constructs and within acceptable limits. Ethnic identity and acculturation were confirmed to be separate constructs for these participants. ANOVA's evaluating Anglo orientation by generation status,  $F(2, 180) = 2.20, p = .114$ , and Latino orientation by generation status,  $F(2, 179) = 2.74, p = 0.068$ , demonstrated that scores did not differ significantly along those dimensions. Although the latter was only bordering significance, the trend was that higher generational status was linked to lower Latino orientation. Gender was negatively correlated with both Anglo and Latino orientation, as well as private ethnic regard, meaning that being female was associated with higher scores on those variables.

Multiple imputation was undertaken using SAS 9.1.3 in order to address a missing data problem with the ARSMA-II (Cuellar et al., 1995). The four items that contained the word "Anglo" were not answered by approximately one third of the participants; researchers also noted questions during the data collection related to the meaning of that word. Multiple imputation is a regression-based method that uses the distribution of data that is present to create a likely distribution for the data that is absent (Allison, 2002). Multiple imputation creates several versions of the dataset, using fully answered items to predict values for the missing items. In this case, donor variables included items from the Affiliative Obedience scale, the Familism scale, and the Ethnic Identity scale (all part of a larger dataset). The multiply imputed versions were used to perform separate regression analyses then combined along with the appropriate standard error terms. In this way, the normal variance that should be present in responses was maintained.

**Tables 1 & 2 are omitted from this formatted document.**

### *Regression Analysis*

A simultaneous multiple linear regression for each outcome (college-going self-efficacy beliefs and educational aspirations) was modeled with the 11 predictors listed in Table 2. Resultant regression coefficients and standard errors for both outcomes are listed in Table 2. The adjusted  $R^2$  statistic was available in the five copies of imputed data, and the averaged value explained 34% of the variance for college-going self-efficacy and 13% of the variance for educational aspirations.

There were four significant predictors for college-going self-efficacy beliefs, including public ethnic regard and all three perceptions of barriers variables (person-based, economic, and resilience to barriers). Anglo orientation was trending toward significance for college-going self-efficacy. For the second outcome, educational aspirations, private ethnic regard was the only cultural identity variable that was significant, and person-based barriers was the only POB variable (McWhirter et al., 1998). The impact on the outcome was negative in both cases.

Resilience to barriers was bordering significance for the aspirations model. The demographic control variables (age, gender, generational status, and mother's educational level) were not significant in either model.

## **Discussion**

Even though college-going self-efficacy beliefs and educational aspirations are related concepts, it is valuable to understand them separately. In the current study, the variables associated with students' hopes and aspirations for their futures are different from those associated with confidence in being able to successfully complete tasks in order to make those dreams come to fruition. College-going self-efficacy beliefs require a more specific assessment of the possibility of entering college, and thus may represent a stiffer test than the presence of hopeful attitudes. For students in emerging immigrant communities in particular, access to the resources that can help build efficacy for college-going tasks may be challenging. If the student's parents are unfamiliar with the U.S. educational system and the student's school is unfamiliar with strategies for working successfully with immigrant families, these adolescents may be left with very little guidance. Previous qualitative research also underscores high educational aspirations but less goal-directed behavior among students in an emerging immigrant community (Gonzalez, Stein, Shannonhouse, & Prinstein, 2012). Of note, neither gender nor generation status proved to be significant predictors of beliefs or aspirations in the current study, which parallels earlier findings by Flores et al. (2008). Those variables have been shown by other researchers (Zarate & Gallimore, 2005; Zsembik & Llanes, 1996) to impact actual educational attainment, but the current participants did not associate being male/female or a first-generation immigrant with a limited view of the future.

### *Role of Cultural Identity*

In terms of acculturation, Anglo orientation had a trend-level association with college-going self-efficacy beliefs but not with educational aspirations. Flores et al. (2008) also identified Anglo orientation as influential on Latino students' educational goals and aspirations, so it moves in the expected direction. College-going tasks as reflected in the CGSES (Gibbons & Borders, 2010) are targeted to the U.S. postsecondary educational system and require specific knowledge and resources (e.g., "I can get a scholarship or grant for college"). Anglo orientation in the ARSMA-II (Cuellar et al., 1995) includes use of English language and association with Anglo peers, both of which could be important for an immigrant adolescent trying to learn about college majors, financial aid, or admissions requirements. While this is not a fully significant finding, it could suggest some necessary tasks for a child who aspires to attend college in the United States (e.g., become familiar with the tasks and timelines that college planning entails, increase English fluency and comfort in school settings, gain access to college information). Putting acculturation to Anglo norms and college-going self-efficacy together provides some direction for working with this population. For example, counselors and educators could pair Latino immigrant youth with classmates whose families have a longer history of residence or college-going in the United

States, and these pairs could be asked to research scholarship requirements or visit nearby campuses and report their findings. Stepwise mastery of a task and vicarious learning from a role model are two ways of improving self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1999).

Yet, how students perceived that others viewed their ethnic group also influenced their college-going self-efficacy beliefs and highlights the importance of a school environment that supports ethnic minority students. Feeling culturally validated by others at school (public ethnic regard) was associated with more confidence in college-planning tasks for these students. This finding leads to two hypotheses: (a) discrimination, or negative public ethnic regard, in emerging immigrant schools could be very damaging to self-concept and future plans for students; and (b) school personnel may be in a position to influence college-going self-efficacy more so than immigrant parents. Parents are more likely to exert their influence in building ethnic centrality or private regard. Although prior studies have identified ethnic centrality/ private regard as promoting academic motivation that was not the case here. This underscores the importance of context, and the possibility that emerging immigrant communities are distinct in some ways.

The participants' high educational aspirations were unrelated to their acculturative status; this parallels the literature demonstrating high hopes for college among immigrant families, regardless of their levels of literacy, prior educational attainment, or financial stability (Ojeda & Flores, 2008; Perreira et al., 2010). The positive and significant correlation between Anglo orientation and Latino orientation means that students did not have to reject their heritage culture in order to identify with the Anglo culture and benefit in college planning. Since some prior research had noted a psychologically protective effect of maintaining ties to the culture of their immigrant families, it is encouraging to see bicultural youth in an emerging immigrant setting where there may not be as much community support for the home culture.

The negative relationship between private ethnic regard and educational aspirations is more troubling. Students with a positive evaluation of their own ethnic group also had reduced hopes for completing future education. This could be due in part to the meaning of "being Latino" in an emerging community, where there might be fewer examples of well-established Latino families who had completed formal education in the United States or stereotypes regarding manual labor as typical work for Latino adults. In addition, the regulatory environment for undocumented immigrants does not encourage college-going, which could impact educational aspirations. The Urban Institute estimates that 40% to 49% of Latinos in the state where this study occurred are undocumented (Passel, Capps, & Fix, 2004). The implication for counselors and educators is that they may need to address stereotypes about ethnic groups and educational or career attainment or identify positive role models that provide evidence for being Latino and achieving one's aspirations.

### *Role of Perceptions of Barriers*

In terms of educational aspirations, only person-based barriers made a significant contribution. However, both financial barriers and person-based barriers made separate and significant contributions to college-going self-efficacy beliefs of the students. The person-based barriers included concerns about being able to get admitted to a college, choosing to continue working rather than going to school, not feeling smart enough, or obligations to assist with family problems. Some of these barriers could be related to an adolescents' sense of self, such as the worry "what if I'm not smart enough?" Some could have cultural links to familism, a value common in Latino traditions that indicates that helping the family is more important than individual opportunities for education. Some might relate to the legal environment for undocumented students (e.g., "I couldn't get into college"). Financial concerns are common for recent immigrants to the United States, but were less influential for the current participants than person-based barriers. This list of financial and person-based barriers helps to set the agenda for immigrant advocacy groups, as it clearly shows where students' concerns lie. One encouraging development at the time of publication was the implementation of the deferred action policy signed by the Obama administration, which allows for temporary work permits for undocumented youth who were brought to this country at an early age. While this does not promise access to education, it could address some financial concerns.

Social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994) indicates that barriers can function in a variety of ways, depending on whether they are proximal or distal to the choice process, whether they are internal to the student or external, and whether they are perceived as difficult to overcome or coped with easily. In practical terms, this means that counselors and educators could help students explore the roots of their perceived barriers to future education, then sort them into categories related to coping strategies. An external barrier such as not being eligible for admission would require brainstorming to expand the potential solutions (such as applying to colleges in the parents' country of origin, starting in a community college with open admissions standards, or retaking the SAT) whereas an internal barrier ("I'm not smart enough, I wouldn't fit in") might benefit from careful exploration of any cognitive distortions or misperceptions informing the belief. There is a concern that person-based barriers interfering with educational aspirations could mean that students would not verbalize their hopes for college to anyone, and thus not receive the help or support that is needed to turn aspirations into action. For this reason, school-wide conversations about future planning should engage all students, especially in emerging immigrant communities where limiting stereotypes about Latinos could have an impact.

Another way to approach coping with barriers would be to increase individual resilience. Resilience to perceived barriers to college was related to the outcomes for these participants (although it was significant for college going self-efficacy and only borderline for educational aspirations). The barriers scale utilized asked about the likelihood of encountering barriers, but not the difficulty the barrier would cause. By endorsing the "resilience" item, students were suggesting that they still had confidence that they could cope with perceived barriers. This

positive attitude could be related to an optimistic immigrant mindset, or to the age of the sample, with the oldest students being in 10th grade at the time. Other studies have documented both; hopeful attitudes in recent immigrants and a drop in confidence when the college preparatory timeline is more salient or tasks become more challenging (Kao & Tienda, 1998). Either way, resilience represents a way for practitioners to frame a constructive conversation with immigrant youth about barriers and resources to help manage or overcome them. Some states in the southeast have convened summits of counselors, teachers, advocates, and educational leaders to share information, strategies, and encouragement for work with immigrants (Wainer, 2004). A systemic strategy like this would be particularly important in emerging immigrant communities, where structural resources are typically underdeveloped.

### *Limitations and Future Research*

Some limitations in the current study include (a) the need for multiple imputation due to the missing variables in the ARSMA-II, (b) the cross-sectional nature of the data which therefore cannot indicate directionality of effects, (c) the inability to ascertain participants' documentation status, and (d) the measurement of beliefs and attitudes, not actual college attendance. Future research could elaborate on the role of Latino acculturation in new immigrant communities, illuminate the role of gender or generational status differences, or examine barriers related to discrimination and undocumented status. In summary, the current study has brought attention to an emerging immigrant community and has attempted to document how cultural identity variables and perceptions of barriers might impact how students organize their college going beliefs and aspirations. Self-beliefs and aspirations can guide choices and behavior, provide motivation, and encourage resilient responses, and thus are important constructs to follow in addition to educational outcomes.

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