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Latino superintendents' identities:

A critical study of cultural, personal, and professional worlds

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

Narciso Iglesias

Committee in charge:

California State University, San Marcos

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University of California, San Diego

      Professor Claire Ramsey

2009

The Dissertation of Narciso Iglesias is approved, and it is acceptable

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                                                           Chair

University Of California, San Diego

San Diego State University

California State University, San Marcos

2009

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the five Latino men that shared their life experiences

with me, without you, this dissertation would not be.

EPIGRAPH

There are many reasons for why a man does what he does. To be himself he must be able to give it all. If a leader cannot give it all he cannot expect his people to give anything.

~ Cesar Chavez

People who have lost their hunger for justice are not ultimately powerful. They are like sick people who have lost their appetite for what is truly nourishing. Such sick people should not frighten or discourage us. They should be prayed for along with the sick people who are in the hospital. The love for justice that is in us is not only the best part of our being but it is also the most true to our nature.

~ Cesar Chavez

When any person suffers for someone in greater need, that person is a human.

~ Cesar Chavez

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Latino superintendents' identities:
A critical study of cultural, personal, and professional worlds

by

Narciso Iglesias

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, San Diego, 2009
San Diego State University, 2009
California State University, San Marcos, 2009

Professor Patricia Prado-Olmos, Chair

This study explored the cultural, personal, and professional experiences of Latino superintendents in California school districts. By looking at these superintendents' experiences, supports and challenges before and after attaining the superintendency, it was hoped that the challenges Latino superintendents' faced in negotiating culture, personal, and professional experiences would lead to an accurate picture of the role of race, culture and language in educational leadership. Specifically, this study used Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a theoretical foundation to examine both data collection and data analysis. Theoretical models of identity and socialization as related to CRT guided this study. The research design primarily used elicitation of narratives through interviews to examine the lived experiences of Latinos who are superintendents. Finally, the research has implications for both Latino and non-Latinos aspiring to attain the position of superintendent.

Chapter I

Introduction

The omission of Latino leadership narratives from educational circles, research

journals, and the mainstream media limits educators' ability to understand and develop

ways to improve schools and communities for children of color, especially Latino

children. In fact, Latinos are quickly becoming the majority in US schools, thus the

need to look at the historical context of marginalization, racism, and classism within

our schools. The critical examination of the lives of Latino leaders can be instructive,

as educators try to deconstruct the success and failure of Latinos in schools, the role of

language, and the need to close the achievement gap (Murtadha & Watts, 2005).

Indeed, the instructive power the Latino superintendent narrative can have for those

aspiring to become superintendents and hoping to have an impact on students' lives,

cannot be overstated.

Using a Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework, this study attempts to broaden

the understanding in the field of Latino educational leadership. The research question

that guides this study is: How do Latino superintendents negotiate their cultural,

personal, and professional identities in order to become successful in a White-male

dominated field (Urrieta, 2007)? In addition to the CRT framework, the literature on

identity, socialization, mentoring, social justice and resiliency is examined for both

relevancy to the topic and insightfulness into cultural, personal and professional

concerns that Latinos in the superintendency face. For example, socialization

processes, seen as psychological and sociological adaptations, are required for

individuals to acculturate to an organization. These processes appear to be extremely

difficult for Latinos to understand and go through, since a very small percentage of

Latinos ascend, attain and maintain the superintendency, thus there are few to no role

models (Magdaleno, 2004). Viewed through a CRT lens, one explanation for why

Latinos have a problematical time attaining the superintendency could be a lack of

opportunity due to a certain demographic preference in the superintendent's office by

school boards (Meier & Stewart, 1991). Another explanation could be the resistance

of Latinos to be "socialized" into a field dominated by the mainstream culture

(Urrieta, 2007).

In both the literature review and method sections, CRT is further expanded on

for its application to this topic. CRT, as a research methodology, relies on established

qualitative methods such as narrative inquiry, storytelling and interviews for data

collection. Data analysis is conducted through a lens grounded in the critical

examination of race, culture and language as mediating factors in the lived experiences

described within the data.

Issues and Concerns within Educational Leadership

In 2000, Latinos have become the largest ethnic minority in the United States,

at 35.3 million (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000); of these 35.3 million Latinos, 20.9

million are of Mexican ancestry. Census projections predict no decrease in the Latino

population. In fact, the census projects a 188 percent increase to the Latino population

of 102.6 million over the next 50 years. However, even as the Latino population has

increased overall, the population of Latino high school graduates has failed to keep

pace. In fact, Latino students graduate at lower rates than other populations (Munoz, 2004). For example, Mexican-ancestry students have the lowest graduation rate (46 percent) when compared to White (84 percent) and African American students (72 percent) (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2004).

The dropout rate among Latino students has been sufficiently alarming to provoke educational leaders to respond to the crisis (Hirschman, 2001). Beyond the immediate crisis, the dropout rate foretells a bleak future, as it affects the number of Latinos matriculating to and graduating from college, which in turn affects the potential for future Latino teachers and school administrators. In other words, the current crisis can to be addressed as a pipeline issue, if few Latinos graduate from high school, fewer are available to go to college, become teachers, administrators, and then superintendents. There needs to be a sharp increase in Latino high school graduates to have a positive effect on school personnel, from teachers, principals, district office administrators, and the superintendency. Due to these educational pipeline issues, there are very few Latinos in line to become superintendents. According to recent research studies, approximately ten percent of all superintendents nationwide are persons of color. Furthermore, only eight percent of women superintendents identify as persons of color, with only one percent identifying as Latina (Grogan & Brunner, 2005; Hess, 2002).

Another possible reason why Latino superintendent candidates are invisible in the hiring pool can be due to the lack of Latino school board members. Current research (LIF, 2006) shows that on average, only 15% of school board members in

California are Latinos. Having a low percentage of Latino board members, in effect, diminishes the potential for Latinos to become superintendents, since the research shows that school boards overwhelmingly select White male superintendents. This trend, in turn, diminishes the potential for Latino/as to become principals, district office administrators and even teachers (Meier & Stewart, 1991). School board members have a tremendous influence on the selection and success of a superintendent. Therefore, if school boards recognize the impact of their hiring practices and act to hire people with the best qualifications, characteristics, and talents such as Latinos; school district leaders might actually start representing the school district's demographic realities. In return, a Latino superintendent might have an inspiring influence on all the school district's children.

As previously mentioned, White males have dominated leadership positions in the field of education, particularly the position of superintendent (Sharp, Malone, Walter, & Supley, 2004). However, in California, this trend appears to be changing with the superintendency becoming increasingly available to Latinos, who sometimes do not identify with the White-dominant culture. This small, but significant, trend of Latinos attaining the superintendency, suggests that these positions are slowly becoming occupied by Latinos rather than those of the predominate culture (Mendez-Morse, 1999, 2000; Skrla, 1999, 2000a, 2000b; Tallerico, 1999, 2000a, 2000b). These opportunities have helped Latinos become visible and valued leaders in education (Mendez-Morse, 1999, 2000; Skrla, 1999, 2000b; Tallerico, 1999, 2000).

Unfortunately, when minority superintendents are given the opportunity to lead, they are often recruited to non-solvent and/or disadvantaged school districts (Aleman, 2000; Hunter & Donahoo, 2005; Manuel, 2001; Manuel & Slate, 2003; Ortiz, 2001; Scott, 1980). One might conclude that mostly White-public school boards view minority candidates as only appropriate to lead highly challenged districts with large numbers of poor and minority students (LIF, 2006). On the other hand, it could be perceived that board members are seeking a person representative of the student population and the community, i.e. a role model for these students and a point of connection for the parents.

Consequently, the Latino superintendent narrative is crucial and important to explore and understand because these life experiences can shed insight into when, why, where, and how Latinos make it to the top of an educational school system. The narrative of a Latino superintendent could possibly hold the solutions that can address the complexities that plague America's Latino youth, since they have lived the Latino youth experiences and, not only survived, but thrived, at times, against all odds.

Negotiating Identities

As Latinos seek and accept opportunities to lead, Latino administrators must come to the realization that their role identity as an administrator has many aspects. Each educational leader brings experience, background, and culture to the administrative role (Trujillo-Ball, 2003). This new and emerging administrative identity is often shaped by one's family, organization, and society (Curry, 2000; Powell, 1993; Restine, 1993). These familial, organizational, and societal influences

are dependent on external influences, beliefs, and values that are constantly in flux (Curry; Powell; Yon, 2000).

It can be assumed that the role, identity and development of the administrator changes and adapts as one ascends from one administrative role to another. This professional identity also changes and adapts according to the outside influences and needs of the students, teachers, supervisors and community that shape the administrative experience. These forces challenge a person's identity as an individual and as an educational leader before they attain a balance between their cultural, personal, and professional lives.

The combination of these external forces with an individual's distinct background and culture creates a unique identity for that person. As the external forces change, an individual's identity might change or be renegotiated. For example, Latinos may have identities as nurturers, providers, and diplomats when working with one group of individuals. However, Latinos may possess the additional identities of disciplinarians and/or authoritarians when working with others. Identity is shaped according to the need at a particular time and place; it is situational and often dependent on the circumstances (Curry, 2000; Yon, 2000).

This changeability or simultaneous multiple identities means that the attributes and characteristics that are assigned to a person may not be observed or even be true for that person at any given time (Trueba, 2002). Trueba further states that Latinos "…manage to acquire and maintain different identities that co-exist and function without conflict in different contexts simultaneously" (p. 10). For instance, although

Latino administrators have been assigned certain traditional attributes and characteristics such as loyalty, kindness, and caring; some Latinos may never display these ascribed attributes and characteristics. They may display other attributes and characteristics to fit their identity and need at that point in time. In other words, changing opportunities for Latinos and the experiences these opportunities bring, leads to the incorporation of distinct and different attributes, characteristics, cognitive processes, thoughts and eventual identities.

In exploring the lives of Latino superintendents, the question of changing or negotiating identities might be captured in detail, which can help others who are seeking to acquire a superintendent's position. Additional insight from this study might be how Latino superintendents, perceived as role models because of their identity, can have a potential impact on student success (Zirkel, 2002). However, few Latino superintendents have been studied, leaving a very limited understanding of their educational and life experiences. In fact, the few dissertation studies that have been published have focused on Latina superintendents, not Latinos. Latina superintendent narratives include the complication of being both a minority and a female. While there are elements that help elucidate the experiences of educational leaders, there are other elements that can only be captured by interviewing Latino superintendents, to truly understand the *Latino* experience.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine and explore Latino superintendents' lives, identities, internal dialogue and choices. By doing so, it is expected that a

glimpse into their minds and worlds is obtained. Can these life choices be replicated? Can these experiences, characteristics and traits be encouraged and developed in other Latinos and non-Latinos? The literature review about Latino leadership has discussed strong themes such as family support, spirituality, social networking, atypical career pathways, and the overwhelming need for mentoring. Researchers, in looking at Latino's lives, have detailed circumstances and life experiences that explain their rare successes.

The Latino superintendent experience of ascending, attaining and maintaining the superintendency, is by sheer numbers both atypical and successful. Successful, as in beating the odds, since about ninety percent of the superintendent positions are held by White men. An intentional focus on the life of Latino superintendents provides enormous insight. This focus could generate rich and insightful narratives of educational and life experiences, which in turn might encourage other Latino administrators, teachers and youth to seek similar paths or adopt new ways of thinking. For example, most evident in the research are the relationships built by Latino superintendents. Often called social networks, supports and mentoring, these relationships have created the opportunities, such as the superintendency, that were once inaccessible to Latinos (Magdaleno, 2004). This body of research suggests that seeking a mentor may be a successful adaptive strategy for other Latinos seeking higher administrative positions. Therefore, inquiring about the lived experiences of Latino superintendents might produce narratives that result in concrete strategies for others to adapt.

In trying to understand the Latino superintendent experience, one must consider the intersection of language, race, and cultural factors, which are all played out in the everyday discourses of the superintendent's life. Therefore, the researcher's purpose is to listen and understand the voices of Latino superintendents as they have negotiated their identities in their professional environments. Latino men have had to endure various forces that create their identities without truly understanding the role of identity creation (Vasquez, 2006). The creation of multiple identities is directly tied to many factors, such as the many stakeholders, (i.e. the Board) that the superintendent answers to.

Research Question

The overall research question is: How do Latino superintendents negotiate their cultural, personal, and professional identities? There are three additional questions that help guide this research (adapted from Trujillo-Ball, 2003):

(a) What does identity mean to Latino educational leaders?

(b) How does the Latino identity change due to experiences, influences, and expectations from family, culture, society, and self?

(c) What does a successful Latino educational leader "look like" according to the narratives gathered for this study?

These questions will help to guide and frame the research as data is collected and analyzed.

Significance of the Study

Ultimately, as Latinos attain and maintain the highest-ranking school district position and their superintendents' narratives are shared; other Latinos will become knowledgeable of specific socialization processes and challenges. At the end of this study there could be a deeper and clearer understanding of the career paths, choices, and processes that Latinos use as they negotiate multiple identities to include that of superintendents. Five areas are examined for their possible impact on Latinos who seek to become superintendent: identity, socialization processes, mentoring, resiliency, and social justice. Finally, CRT is introduced as the lens that guides this study.

Personal Interest

On a personal note, given the demographic shifts in the United States, it is imperative for me to understand the Latino superintendent socialization process; because becoming a superintendent is my personal and professional goal. As a current Latino principal, how do I keep, negotiate, and/or balance my cultural, personal, and linguistic identities with my new professional identity as I also strive for the superintendency? Adding to my dissertation's intrigue is the complexity of being an "insider" as a student researcher. Therefore, as a Latino male, school principal, and researcher I need to be explicit about my multiple roles, since the narratives of the researcher and participants might intertwine (Glesne, 1999). For example, my position as a Latino administrator will provide me access and entry with potential participants. On the other hand, my own story as a Latino administrator could potentially bias the ways in which participants narratives are analyzed and interpreted.

The superintendent socialization process entails the awareness and acquisition of specific domains of knowledge; such as political, symbolic, structural, and/or human resources (Bolman & Deal, 2003) and the eventual application of such knowledge by Latino administrators. Given the fact that mostly White middle-class men have dominated the superintendency, the socialization process is typically a new process for Latino administrators (Magdaleno, 2004). The Latino superintendency holds numerous possibilities and potential, especially in a well-written narrative using qualitative methods. Since I am intrigued by the process of becoming a Latino superintendent, my own personal journey and understanding underlie much of this study, which has become very significant in helping me to negotiate the various situations I have encountered. What makes Latino leadership different? It has been my personal experience that as a teacher and now a school administrator, I have been able to influence the lives of children. I have taken the time to understand the plight of the poor, disenfranchised, homeless, at-risk and socio-economically disadvantaged students from non-traditional family. I have heard their stories and I have shared mine. I have laughed, cried, and even yelled at them, like a father yelling after his own children. I believe that it is the commonalities of our histories that have created true relationships. The processes that I have used to overcome obstacles and the circumstances I have gone through has created a deep understanding and commitment to all children, especially those that have been underserved. For these reasons - to illuminate the socialization processes and experiences of Latinos who are moving into positions of leadership, to investigate unique characteristics of Latino leadership, and

to contribute to the common histories of Latinos in the face of obstacles and difficult circumstances – I have examined Latino superintendents' leadership narratives in the hopes of bringing a deeper understanding and appreciation of their lived experiences.

Chapter II

When looking at the journey from classroom teacher to superintendent for typical mainstream candidates, there were many factors that accounted for the success of those who made it. When looking deeper, at the road to the superintendency for the not so likely candidates, women, African-Americans, Latinos, and Asian-Americans; the landscape looked surprisingly similar and different at the same time. All individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, or background needed to undergo a process of socialization and acceptance into the mainstream. Be they white males, minority, female or minority females, candidates all partook of socialization experiences that began at the teacher level, with the first nod to move forward, to the principalship, then onto central office experience, and eventually the superintendency. At each step of the way, the candidate had to prove themselves worthy, acceptable, and likely to succeed, in order to make it to the next level. Ironically enough, the steps to the next level have more to do with how well one was a "team player" and did not "rock the boat," than the skills, knowledge and dispositions that one possessed to get the job done and be "successful" by any other measure of success.

In the case of white males, the road was supposedly easier, since they shared the same values, ideals, and standards that they were being judged against. Their way of viewing the world was more in line with the mainstream than that of females and minorities. Therefore, the path was smoother for them, and thus, the overrepresentation of white males in the highest office of K-12 education. For many other groups, in order to make it past the socialization process, there was a lot more

negotiation of identity, culture, world view, and values, and thus the road was often

longer and required more conformity or change on the part of the candidate.

This study focused especially on the road for Latino males into the

superintendency and used critical race theory (CRT) as a lens for examining the

literature and the journey Latino candidates underwent as they achieved the ranks of

superintendency. The literature reviewed to help understand this phenomenon

included critical race theory, identity studies, socialization, and mentoring.

Specifically, in the first section, the literature review turned to Critical Race Theory

(CRT). As a theoretical framework, CRT was used to examine Latino superintendents'

experiences and to frame their stories. Next, Latino ethnic identity was discussed

relating how family, language and culture impacted the future educational leader. In

the third section, forces of formal and informal socialization were examined. Finally,

the importance of mentoring, support systems, networking, social justice and

resiliency were also reviewed.

Overview of Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) had its start in the mid-1970s with the work of

Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman. Its outgrowth from the field of Critical Legal Studies

(CLS) was a move from Bell and Freeman to appropriately include race as part of

CLS's critique of mainstream legal ideology (Ladson-Billings, 1999). The importance

of CRT was twofold, questioning of the status quo and its use as an intellectual and

social tool to deconstruct oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruct human

agency, and construct equitable and socially just relations of power (Ladson-Billings,

1999). In essence, CRT worked toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating other forms of subordination based on immigration status, sexuality, culture, language, phenotype, accent and surname (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2006).

CRT as a qualitative methodology was relatively new in its use outside fields of law, including those fields that had traditionally utilized positivist types of paradigms, such as education. This was an example of what Lather (1986) termed as a shift in researchers' understanding of what constitutes research and scientific inquiry. Lather (1993) suggested that post-positivist discourses used in qualitative methods lead to increased use and acceptance of research methods that are interactive, contextualized and humanly compelling, inviting participation in the exploration of research issues.

Basic Tenets of CRT

The basic tenets of CRT began with the idea that racism was a normal, everyday part of American society and appeared in many of our daily interactions. Additionally, the dominant culture constructed realities in ways that promoted its own self-interest and more specifically the interest of elite groups (Delgado, 1995). Furthermore, the concept of interest convergence is seen as a way that White elites tolerate or encourage advancement of Blacks (people of color) only when they promoted White self-interests (Delgado, 1995).

In terms of education, CRT described the socio-political climate as one dominated by White males. Specifically, for the Latino superintendency, this meant

that educational institutions were not created with Latinos in mind. Yosso (2006) described the ability to maneuver through social institutions as "navigational capital" (p. 44). Many Latinos appear to lack this navigational capital unless they were working with a mentor who was filling them in.

CRT provided a powerful tool in understanding how the subordination and marginalization of people of color were created and maintained within American mainstream society (Villenas & Deyle, 1999). Through its primary goals of social activism, racial justice, and ultimately social transformation, CRT presented an opportunity for questions to surface concerning societal and educational treatment of communities of color and, how that treatment impacted the status quo, opportunities for advancement, and sense of identity. For the purposes of this study, Latino superintendents, as a scarce commodity, were examined because it was posited that the influences of race and racism in the United States played a critical role in the lack of Latinos at the superintendency level within the K-12 system, even though the numbers of Latino students continued to grow at a rapid rate.

Critical Race Theory as Qualitative Methodology

CRT as a qualitative research method was applied in this study because it encouraged the use of stories, narratives, and counterstories to rewrite current hegemonic ideology concerning the Latino experience (Villenas, Deyhle, & Parker, 1999). As a qualitative method, CRT was a vehicle that established and honored the "voice" of Latino superintendents. According to the literature, CRT did not propose a specific methodology, but embraced the use of qualitative methodologies such as

interviewing, storytelling, and narrative inquiry (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Qualitative researchers made sense of and found interactions between personal stories gathered through this type of methodology (Glesne, 1999, p. 1). According to Glesne, in this process of sense-making, the researcher became the main research instrument as he observed, asked questions, and interacted with research participants (Glesne, 1999, p. 5).

One of the merits of conducting a qualitative study to examine the lives of Latino superintendents was the exploratory nature of this study. Informants were sought to build a picture of who they were based on their own ideas, thus increasing the amount of relevant literature available (Creswell, 1994, p. 21).

Critical Race Theory in Education

Included in post-positivist discourses such as CRT were new paradigms reflecting how research should be conducted in communities of color. Previously, the theories and belief systems dominant in education relating to people of color had been premised upon political, scientific, and religious theories which relied on racial characteristics and stereotypes about people of color that support legitimating the dominant ideology and related political action. Tate (1997) had called for a change in the way educational research was conducted in communities of color. Tate questioned how cultural pedagogy was viewed and interpreted in the construction of knowledge, and how this knowledge was used to construct the realities of communities peripheral to dominant mainstream cultures. Solórzano (2001) borrowed from initial CRT tenets, and questioned traditional claims made by the educational system and its institutions

toward objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race, neutrality, and equal opportunity. Solórzano (2001) also built on Delgado's foundational tenets of CRT and proposed five themes specific to education:

1. The centrality of race and racism and its intersectionality with other forms of subordination;

2. The challenge of dominant ideology;

3. The commitment to social justice;

4. The centrality of experiential knowledge; and

5. The transdisciplinary perspective.

These themes supported Tate's (1997) proposition that the historic treatment of education and equity for students of color, as well as its role in providing experiential knowledge of race, class, and gender should be challenged in educational discourse (p. 199). In CRT, this experiential knowledge was transferred and validated through processes such as the creation of narratives and storytelling. Although these techniques were valued within a qualitative CRT framework, opponents challenged the use of narratives and storytelling as a reliable and verifiable process, questioning the factual objectivity of personal accounts of racism and stories about racial dilemmas (Parker, 1998). Solórzano (2001) stated that because CRT was committed to social justice as a libratory or transformative response to race, class, and gender oppression, in education, the experiential knowledge of students of color was legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial interactions.

Application of Critical Race Theory to Study Latino Superintendents

CRT was employed in the current research to examine the lived experiences of Latino superintendents. Delgado's (1995) tenets and Solórzano's (2001) perspectives of CRT provided an infrastructure with which to study Latinos as a racialized and marginalized group of people who had experienced a history of oppression and discrimination that was reflected in society and educational institutions (Omi & Winant, 1986). In this study, CRT was applied to look at the dearth of Latino superintendents in the field and how CRT might shed a light as to why so few aspiring Latinos make it to that level.

School districts reflected a system founded on the principles of exclusion (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998). CRT questioned this exclusionary system by deconstructing institutional practices that supported the marginalization and racialization of people of color. CRT explained the underrepresentation of Latino superintendents in school districts across the nation, because it illuminated traditional claims made by the educational system and its institutions toward objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity (Solórzano, 2001). In reality, many Latinos who aspired to the superintendency found there were roadblocks in the way based on who they were, what they believed, the experiences that have shaped them, and their way of relating to the various stakeholders of a school district.

Based on the premise that racism was deeply ingrained in American society, as suggested by Delgado (1995), there remained the question of the existence of racism

within school systems. Based on this premise, the question of when Latino superintendents experienced racism and discrimination in school systems was apropos. Additionally, did that ingrained, institutional racism affect who gets chosen and who does not, and even among the few who are chosen, why them and not others? Narratives, which were embraced by CRT, were used to capture the essence of what Latinos experience as they wove their way through the myriad of obstacles to achieve the superintendency.

Narratives that focused on the experience of outsiders empowered both the story-teller and the story-listener by virtue of their opposition to the traditional forms of discourse (Montoya, 1995, p. 537). Narratives in qualitative research served as representations of a story or encounter (Glesne, 1999). They reflected lived experiences, cultural values, traditions, and the history of a subordinate group and how that compared with the lived experiences of the mainstream group. In this same sense, narratives helped to define the group and their experiences with systems of oppression, specifically, Latinos seeking the superintendency.

Another important aspect of studying the Latino superintendency with a lens of CRT was the aspect of establishing voice. For Latinos, "voice" had been a powerful tool of oral traditions, passing family knowledge from one generation to the next (Bernal, 2001). Gonzalez (1993) explained her realization that the tradition of relaying her own experiences and rich history through the practice of storytelling within her family influenced the development of her personal character. For the purpose of this study, the concept of "voice" was used to empower the participants, otherwise known

as storytellers, to tell their own story in their own voice. Interview data was interpreted

into narratives to maintain a semblance of "voice" presented through the "written

word." According to Quintana (1990), the "written word" used by the researcher had

the power to revive and liberate, as well as the potential to blind, imprison, and

destroy.

The epistemological boundaries of researchers were nebulous at best when

they attempted to interpret rather than report about cultures unlike their own. Many

times cultures were represented within a western academic context and were not

contextualized in cultural relevancy, as seen in the "voices" of the participants, but

rather represented through the eyes of the researcher (Scheurich & Young, 1997).

Quintana (1990) suggested that one way to eliminate this form of misrepresentation

was through the liberating force of writing as the medium by which to voice concerns.

She supported the concept of the written word as a tool powerful enough to enforce

value systems, and to represent, dictate, control and categorize.

Harris (1995) proposed that "voice" can be used to: 1. Speak for a political

faction, unifying and empowering many voices, as long as contradictory voices remain

silent; 2. Rewrite the story and eliminate the silence; and 3. Address "gender

essentialism" as "one" speaking for "all." In this sense, "voice" dictated the complex

realities of those being studied.

Critical race theorists argued that it was essential for researchers to

acknowledge the multiplicity of realities that existed in order to better understand

specific manifestations of interactions in these realities (Ladson-Billings & Tate,

1995). The use of "voice" within this study was meant to convey viewpoints differing from those of dominant mainstream culture (Delgado, 1995; Urrieta, 2007). Writing then served as the vehicle for demystification and self-representation through "voice." The realities of the research participants in this study also were relayed through narratives as a means by which to establish "voice."

Latino Ethnic Identity Developmental Experiences

Identity development can be paramount in Latino's career choices, expectations, and aspirations. Identity formation was influenced by physical, cognitive, and psychological changes throughout one's adolescence. In studying Latinos and their relational contexts, the importance of their interactions with their own ethnic group shed light on their identity formation. These interactions were crucial as they provided a positive image of one's own ethnicity as well as reinforced the internalization of positive cultural traditions, language and customs (Umaña-Taylor, Diversi & Fine 2002). These developments can be seen as positive attributes in Latinos' work settings.

Phinney's (1992) research suggested there was a significant relationship between self-esteem and ethnic identity, especially for ethnic minority adolescents. Self-esteem was considered important in ones psychological well-being. Umaña-Taylor, et al. (2002) speculated that a strong ethnic identity could serve as a buffer against negative stereotypes, minimizing the negative influence of the stereotypes on a person's self-esteem.

Ethnicity played a direct role in the development of identity. What was important to consider was that Latinos, in developing their ethnic identity, found this process more challenging than members of majority groups (Markstrom-Adams, 1992). Even though this might be the case, research indicated it was an essential process for minority psychological development. Again, it was not that Latinos have negative self-esteem, self-hatred or were *at risk,* but instead it was a difficult process to discover one's identity when surrounded by the mainstream hegemony because the dominant culture did not include Latino experiences as part of the American ideal. If accepted, these processes would allow for Latinos to participate and contribute in their own development, making crucial choices about who they were as individuals. This self-discovery allowed Latinos to negotiate their multiple identities and helped them arrive at a point of self-acceptance and appreciation for one's ethnic identity. Again, these processes helped solidify ethnic identity and build resiliency as Latinos often negotiated a racist, somewhat hostile environment.

Gonzalez, Umaña-Taylor, and Bamaca (2006) also discovered, while studying bi-cultural adolescents of Latino and European descent, that a strong connection existed between a Latina mother and either her Latino child and/or her bi-racial child (depending on family configuration). This connectedness produced in Latino and/or bi-racial youth the necessary tools to identify as Latino. As speculated by the authors, Latina women "are often viewed as responsible for passing on traditions, customs, and cultural practices from one generation to the next" (P.199). These *traditions* helped in fostering a strong ethnic identity, a resilient disposition, and a connectedness to

someone deemed extremely important, the Latina mother. It can be hypothesized that the more positive interactions that Latino youth have with their family members and especially their mothers, the better equipped the Latino child will be in interacting with society (Gonzalez, Umaña-Taylor, & Bamaca, 2006).

In a study conducted by Plunkett and Bamaca-Gomez (2003) Latino parents' support, monitoring, involvement and high educational levels impacted their Latino students' academic success. This study reinforced the need to increase parent participation and training; in doing so, parents provided developmental strategies for their children. The following quote summarized the importance of empowering parents with an education that positively influences Latino youth: "Resilience research provides strong evidence that successful life outcomes emerge as positive, reliable and predictable when the focus is on development rather than punishment" (Brown et al., 2001, p. 18).

Latino parents appeared to be influential in the lives of Latino youth and adults. When Latino parents were given an education regarding their roles, as empowering human beings versus passive participants, the quality of their children lives was increased. When Latino parents were seen as monitoring, encouraging, and supporting by their children, these Latino youth had higher self-esteem and self-efficacy. These internal reflections have been found to help Latino youth succeed academically (Arellano & Padilla, 1996).

Coincidentally, Umaña-Taylor and Fine (2004) found that the fewer the family members that Latino youth reported as born in the United States, the more they

reported that their families were instilling in them a sense of culture and ethnic

identity. This family ethnic socialization allowed for the youth to interact and connect

with the family in a way that created ethnic behaviors, affirmation and belonging, and

ethnic identity achievement. These elements were extremely positive and built a

resilient character in Latino youth. More importantly, in engaging family members

Latino youth participated and contributed to their identity development and

achievement in future school and career endeavors. For those Latino youth who had

family members born in the United States, it appeared that a relationship with other

Latino role models would be ideal. The lack of role models could be addressed by

having Latino educational leaders in school environments that reflected students'

cultural identities (Zirkel, 2002).

In addition, as Latinos gained access to higher education, their identities

continued to evolve. For example, Garcia (2004) wrote regarding the narratives of

Mexican-America women and their emergent identities in a university setting. What

was presented was their (re)negotiated boundaries of their ethnic identities. Their

narratives revealed two developments that occurred while attending a university. First,

their marginalization and alienation sparked a growing understanding that their

ethnicity mattered. Second, an increased awareness regarding the impact of race,

ethnicity, social class, and gender was evident in their narratives as first generation

university attendees.

Joane Nagel (cited in Garcia, 2004) wrote "the construction of the ethnic

identity and culture is the result of both structure and agency - a dialectic played out

by ethnic groups and the larger society." According to Garcia, "ethnicity is the product of actions undertaken by ethnic groups as they shape and reshape their self-definition and culture" (p. 156). Therefore, the experiences of these Mexican-American women at the university setting lead them to (re)negotiate their ethnic identities involving a new imagining of the socially constructed meanings that individuals attached to their ethnicity. Furthermore, they (re)constructed their ethnic boundaries by increasing interaction with third and fourth generation Mexican Americans.

Figured Worlds, Simultaneous, Multiple & Mestiza Identities

Figured worlds, simultaneous and multiple theories of identities, offered a direct critique to the traditional notions of developmental psychology, dispelling the sequential and linear identity development offered by such scholars like Erickson. Instead, Urrieta (2007) Trueba (2002) and Anzaldúa (1987) offered a different perspective on identity development that explained the internal dialogue Latinos often have within themselves and their abilities to co-exist in multiple worlds.

Urrieta (2007) added a different perspective on identity, his look at Mexican American university students and the processes they used in becoming Chicano educators dispels the traditional notion of a fixed identity. He used the identity production in figured worlds theory proposed by Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) as a way of looking at identity. This identity was not linear or sequential, but instead fluid and flexible and lead to individuals constantly negotiating their identities through relationships that were dynamic. It was these relationships that co-constructed the cultural phenomena labeled "flexible" identities (Urrieta, 2007).

Likewise, Trueba (2002) described Latinos ability to negotiate different worlds as "simultaneous multiple identities." He considered the ability to gain in social mobility and psychological adaptation as both resilient and successful. More powerfully described as "becoming an "other" and participating in different worlds," Trueba further described this process as "code switching." For example, in talking about Latinos in Texas, he cited Ainslie (1998) who described Latinos "as acting and communicating as Anglos" at the local flea market.

Trueba (2002) saw a world where all nationalities and races became blended and were able to negotiate multiple worlds, "they manage to mimic codes and patterns and fit well in different groups without any penalties. There is no psychological dysfunctionality or cultural conflict in their daily interaction with opposite groups. Code switching and the assumption of different identities comes natural to them and permits them to function in multiethnic and multicultural environments" (p. 11). Trueba's thoughts on identity appeared ideal; however others such as Villenas (1996) found the idea of multiple identities without internal strife difficult because of the ability to be self-aware in multiple settings. As a self-proclaimed Chicana researcher, she often contemplated the role she played as an "outsider" conducting research in a Latino community for a White university. She also realized that as a Chicana "insider," she both understood and studied the Latino community she belonged to, which often left her feeling conflicted, having to be silent on a number of discriminatory practices she encountered when conducting research.

In response to Ogbu's *oppositional identity*, a theory that assumed some minorities resist becoming like the dominant culture and therefore act in an oppositional manner, Trueba hypothesizes "that oppression and abuse can also generate precisely the opposite—resilience and cultural capital to succeed—which often creates the psychological flexibility necessary to pass for or assume different identities for the sake of survival." (p. 20) Trueba's statements about Latinos, validated research that indicated Latinos could be resilient and successful. However, others (Villenas, 1996) made the argument that although these experiences make one resilient, it did not silence the internal dialogue Latinos had as they progressed towards a simultaneous existence.

As demonstrated in the work done by Anzaldúa, identity was not fixed and was often conflictual in one's own mind. Anzaldúa (1987) spoke about the need to recognize a new Mestiza, one that "…continually walks out of one culture and into another, because I am in all cultures at the same time" (p. 77). Anzaldúa was able to describe the personal turmoil when she spoke about how "the clash of voices results in mental and emotional states of perplexity…the mestiza's dual or multiple personality is plagued by psychic restlessness." Anzaldúa offered this new Mestiza as a person who can manage her multiple identities:

> The new Mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality; she operates in a pluralistic mode- nothing is thrust out, the

good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does

she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else. (p.

79)

Anzaldúa's (1987) argument on the formation of Mestiza can also be used to

read the formation of Latino superintendents' identities in the current political/cultural

atmosphere. Anzaldúa argued that people have to negotiate their identities daily

among the different cultures, languages, and philosophies, especially around physical

border areas. They often faced challenges, but they also gained from the constant

crossing of linguistic, cultural, and political boundaries. She called these people

border-crossers. She wrote, border-crossing "provides a hybrid progeny, a mutable,

more malleable species with a rich gene pool." (p. 99)

She continued to write, "The future will belong to the Mestiza. Because the

future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two

or more cultures. By creating a new mythos--that is, a change in the way we perceive

reality, the way we see ourselves and the ways we behave--la Mestiza creates a new

consciousness" (102). Anzaldúa's Mestiza was perhaps the hidden consciousness of

Latino superintendents, because they were daily crossing barriers in language,

customs, or values. To use Anzaldúa's lens to read Latino superintendents, it was no

exaggeration to say that it was exactly what they needed, embracing of the Mestiza

that gave them the understanding to fight discrimination and exclusion to succeed in

the American society.

Furthermore, other Latino psychologists, scholars and researchers have developed theories about the development of Latino identities. Ramirez (1999) offered seven tenets of Mestizo Psychology: 1. The person is an open system; 2. The spiritual world holds the key to destiny, personal identity, and life mission; 3. Community identity and responsibility to the group are of central importance in development; 4. Emphasis is on liberation, justice, freedom, and empowerment; 5. Total development of abilities and skills is achieved through self-challenge; 6. The search for self-knowledge, individual identity, and life meaning is a primary goal; 7. Duality of origin and life in the universe and education within the family plays a central role in personality development. These seven tenets, taken together with the theories and ideas advanced by Trueba and Villenas, leads one to understand that Latinos' identity experiences were not fixed, linear or sequential. Instead, the Latino experience called for an interactive, co-created identity found in pursuit of justice and life meaning through community and others.

As Urrieta (2007), Trueba (2002) and Anzaldúa (1987) explained identity was multi-faceted, multi-dimensional, contextual and extremely relational. The implications for the Latino superintendent were many and varied. For example, as a new, developing administrator, it's the knowing when to be a certain way or act in a certain manner that made a difference. It can also be the rules of engagement and/or knowing how to read the political landscape. This overview of identity opened up a series of questions that were not easily answered, like: Is it possible that Latino superintendents have this internal strife? Do they feel like they belong to multiple

worlds? How do they manage their multiple identities? How do they go from one culture to another successfully?

These questions and others were explored in this study as the identity of Latinos seeking the superintendency was analyzed and described for a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

Overview of Socialization

Socialization processes have been extensively studied in the educational field. Socialization researchers considered Feldman (1976) and Van Maanen (1975) as pioneers in the field of organization socialization processes. For example, Feldman's socialization work was grounded in research having to do with medical settings. He proposed three stages in professional socialization that has been applied to the field of education. These stages helped to describe the stages of socialization individuals must go through to successfully acculturate themselves to an organization and eventual success within the organization or the profession.

Each stage involved different processes. The first stage is called anticipatory socialization. This stage corresponded to all the learning done before entering a specific work field. In the educational realm, this referred to educational and credential programs at universities. It was in this stage that realism or congruence set in, since some individuals developed idealistic working conditions about what it meant to be a teacher and worked in the area of education.

The second stage is referred to as accommodation. This was the period when the individual saw what the organization was actually like and attempted to become a

participating member. For educators, this stage was absolutely critical since researchers indicate that if teachers were not successful within 5 years, they were in danger of dropping out of the field completely. In this stage, individuals began initiation to their tasks, defined their roles, had congruence of evaluation, and began the introduction to group processes. In education, the support provided by administration and how one, as a teacher, socialized and adjusted to the school environment was based on the principal to teacher relationship.

The third and final stage, as described by Van Maanen (1975) was role management. In this stage, individuals had already come to some tentative resolution of problems in their own work groups, and now needed to mediate the conflicts between their work in their own group and other groups, which may place demands on them. In this stage, resolution of outside life conflicts occurred as well as resolution of conflicting demands at work.

Likewise, Van Maanen's (1975) study looked at how individuals *learned* the culture and the values of their new job settings. This became very important in the context of Latinos seeking the superintendency because the position has been defined and structured based on mainstream values and ideals. For Latinos, having a distinctly different culture and set of values, oftentimes meant they had to seek to understand their identities in their new work settings. This negotiation can present an incongruence of one's own realities, which might lead Latinos to have cognitive dissonance. This created the need to adjust one's cultural, personal, and professional identity in order to be aligned to the mainstream culture. However, this was easier

said than done, as Trueba (2002), Anzaldúa (1987), and Delgado (1995) have attested. Identities were the essence of our being and mainstream norms were often rife with racism, thus creating a need to renegotiate a cultural self with a professional self.

In applying these processes to education, it was crucial to understand the socialization processes a superintendent goes through, since many began as teachers and progressed to school administration, district office administration, and finally the superintendent position. This socialization process was imperative to understand because it provided a sense of the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that needed to be "mastered" in order to be accepted by the mainstream.

Educational Socialization

Educational socialization has taken two paths, the formal, standardized degree programs and on the job training. As cited in Mullen (2004), Schmieder, McGrevin, and Townley's (1994) study of 450 principals and superintendents found socialization to be critical to the preparation of school leaders. Of particular interest was the contrast between organizational socialization (the learning a superintendent experiences in a new job) and formal socialization (university degree programs and training situations) (Heck, 1995). These distinctions were important due to the various paths that individuals had taken when aspiring to the superintendency. Many women and minorities started with the formal aspect of education and eventually found a mentor to "show them the ropes" and "sponsor" them for a position. However, many white males were tapped first by the organization, given opportunities and then obtained the formal education needed for the positions they had already risen to.

This distinction has taken on a special meaning of who succeeds and why when socialization was viewed from a paradoxical nature as proposed by Mullen (2004). Socialization presented a paradox, according to Mullen (2004), due to "a paradox: formal, standardized degree programs were the primary means of socialization for administrators, yet these do not seem to meet current needs for a changing repertoire of school leadership. And, if an experienced administrator was unwilling to help the "novice," socialization is stunted" (p. 33). If socialization is defined as "the process by which an individual selectively acquired the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to perform a social role adequately (in this case the school district superintendent)" (Parkay & Hall, 1992, p. 286), and women and minorities were not tapped by an experienced person, then all of their knowledge and skills would come from book learning, which was clearly inadequate for all one needs to know to be successful on the job.

According to Cantwell (1993), Hart (1991) and Parkay and Hall (1992) the formal socialization processes often led to isolation and powerlessness, especially for women and minority leaders, who typically lacked mentors and role models who can help guide and explain organizational issues and concerns. Additionally, socialization tended to breed conformity to the status quo and rewarded those who did not rock the boat or make waves. Formal socialization programs tended to reproduce leadership styles, suppress innovation, and promulgate a custodial orientation in the new inductee (Cantwell, 1993; Crow & Glascock, 1995; Hart, 1991; Schein, 1985). For minorities and women, who had different values, goals, agendas or ways of viewing the world,

this tendency toward conformity can be discomforting, a dissonance between the lived experiences of the individuals and the reality of the organization.

Superintendent Socialization

The socialization stories of minority superintendents entailed survival of harsh professional experiences because of early family/childhood experiences and having strong mentors. Examples of African-American women are used as comparable experiences for Latinos who also seek the superintendency. In analyzing Brunner and Peyton-Caire's (2000) writing about African-American women hoping to become superintendents, they addressed three obstacles, overcoming narrow perspectives dominated by White males at the university level, the labeling of minority experiences as risky curriculum, and the lack of literature regarding African-American superintendents. These three obstacles hindered African- Americans and other minorities from understanding and attaining the superintendency.

For instance, Brunner and Peyon-Caire considered the work of Romero and Storrs (1995, cited in Brunner & Peyton-Caire) in explaining how as early as graduate school, students were socialized to "view the areas of gender, race, and ethnicity as illegitimate" (p. 533) for defining space, arguments, and ways of knowing and being in the world.

In countering the notion of illegitimacy, Brunner and Peyton-Caire's (2000) review of literature on African-American superintendents, such as Jackson's (1999, cited in Brunner & Peyton-Caire) work, revealed that:

The women interviewed had the support and experiences as they grew up that, unknown to them, prepared them for leadership. When opportunity knocked, they accepted the challenge, which was their due, only to find, similar to many White and male superintendents, that their time in power was limited and that turnover was high (p. 535).

Maienza's (1996) study on needed organizational and individual elements to attain the superintendency included the concept of *opportunity*, which supported Jackson's (1999) notions. Jackson's notion of individuals having developed leadership skills early on in life because of family support was reinforced when these individuals took the opportunities, such as the superintendency, later on in life and demonstrated an ability to be leaders within an organization that was not designed for their type or style of leadership.

In addition, Alston's (1999) work demonstrated that role models and support systems were critical for African-American women as they sought the superintendency and as they worked to be successful in it. The reality that African-American women were infrequently represented in the superintendency made them rarely available to serve as role models or as a part of support systems. Brunner and Peyton-Caire (2000) explained that:

…given that invisibility is merely a social construct, Black female superintendents are not invisible to themselves, to their families, within their districts, or within their communities. Their scarcity in school districts makes

their practices in the role of superintendent invisible to most Black women and

others in the academy who may aspire to the position. (p. 537)

Hoyle (2007) wrote about two superintendents and their paths to renew their

first superintendent contracts. First, Hoyle examined these two superintendents'

educational backgrounds. Although both had attended top ranked educational doctoral

programs, their first jobs as superintendents had different end results. For example,

although both had very successful tenures, only one superintendent's contract was

renewed. Hoyle was able to speak about, not only their educational backgrounds and

preparation, but the political ramifications of not knowing how to read and engage

board members. These stories shed light on the socialization processes that many

Latino superintendents were unaware of and therefore lacked. In fact, many minority

superintendents were unaware of these political nuances. Although, Hoyle focused on

national administrative standards and evaluative processes, it was the unspoken rules

that affected one of these superintendents. Hoyle concluded by making

recommendations for political socialization to be included in university preparation.

However, given the nature of school districts and boards, including political

socialization in a university preparation program was probably not as effective as

having a mentor from the district who was providing inside information, insight, and

guidance.

In like manner, Garza (2008) writing about his first year as a superintendent,

discovered how political his position really was. In this auto-ethnography, Garza

details his interactions with board members. He quickly discovered that board

members, in this district, kept their power by striking deals with community members. Garza encountered situation after situation where either employees or community members attempted to use board members pressure to influence the superintendent. Garza mentioned that he survived his first year as superintendent by refusing to compromise his philosophy of social justice. He also learned that it was impossible to depoliticize his decisions. Lastly, Garza believed that leaders for social justice consistently challenged the hegemonic culture, which resulted in adversarial relationships between those in power and the superintendent.

Furthermore, when Maienza (1986) explained how individuals accessed the superintendency, he used Kanter's (1977) model of organizational structures and how three distinct elements must exist to access the superintendency. These structural elements were opportunity, power, and relative representation. In fact, all three of these elements must be *high* in volume in order for an individual to have mobility into the highest office of K-12 education.

The concept of opportunity spoke to being in a place where the candidate can be noticed by others, had access to the necessary information and had the ear of those in power. Power spoke to having the ability to gather resources, using the resources effectively, and getting things done. Power increased when one's tasks were visible and highly relevant to the goals of the organization and decreased as organization priorities shifted. Power also increased when one had strong alliances, a well placed mentor, and a strong track record.

Lastly, relative representation referred to the degree which one was represented in the organization by others like themselves. These individuals were considered to be part of the *in* group. Whereas individuals who were not part of the *in* group, yet gained access the superintendency, did so when they had extraordinary visible competence, strong alliances, or there were changing priorities in the organization. Maienza's quantitative/qualitative data and results confirmed that an individual must take advantage of the elements of opportunity, power, and relative representation in order to attain the superintendency. Unfortunately, for many minorities, lacking one or another of these elements was often the norm, thus the path to the superintendency can be artificially blocked through factors beyond the candidates control.

Kalbus (2000) in sharing her story about applying, interviewing and being denied the position of county superintendent relayed some injustices and insights about not having *relative representation*. First, due to a protest from the Hispanic community, the county board was forced to launch a nationwide search. Kalbus believed this was her opportunity, again a key element in attaining the superintendent. Second, Kalbus had what Maienza called "power," she had already attained the position of regional superintendent. She had the knowledge and ability to gather resources and conduct her work. So what was the reason why Kalbus was rejected from becoming county superintendent? It was the lack of relative representation. The "in group" had already pre-selected their person. Kalbus wrote,

> In my county, the county superintendent announced his plans to resign 2 years
>
> before his 4-year term ended; the man who was the obvious heir apparent was

the deputy superintendent. Because the outgoing superintendent still had 2 years left in his term, the county board of education had the authority to appoint the county superintendent (pp.550-551).

In this case the "in group" consisted of the county board of education and the current county administration, i.e. - superintendent and deputy superintendent. Kalbus further explained that the county board of education was made up of an all White board, 4 men and 1 woman all between the ages of 50 and 70. As though her observations were not enough, when she consulted with the resigning superintendent about applying he said, "It would be political suicide for you to apply" (pp.551-552).

In all of these cases, it can be seen that attaining the superintendency was a matter of chance, luck, know how, and opportunity. An individual must be in the right place at the right time to take advantage of certain elements converging. For mainstream candidates, it was much easier because relative representation was usually a given and once power was attained, all one had to do was wait for the opportunity to come. For women and minorities, the story was a little bit different, since relative representation was often missing, they must show that they can be "more white male than white males" in order to be accepted and to be given the opportunity for the position, then for success.

Mentoring

Learning of socialization processes, especially for Latino teachers and superintendents, appeared to occur with more frequency when a mentor had been there to lend a helping hand (Magdaleno, 2004). Mentoring, defined as "to serve as a trusted

counselor or teacher, especially in occupational settings" (dictionary.com), was one of the most important supports Latinos and minorities were able to use to break into traditionally white male professions. When an individual was mentored, they were essentially given the "nod" that they could make it to the next level and be supported. It was ironic to note that for the superintendency, it was often white males themselves that mentored minorities and females to be successful within the educational system (Rueda, 2002; Ortiz, 2000). This was especially telling, in light of CRT, because it showed that the system was essentially a majority mainstream system and "others" were only let in at the invitation of a mainstream individual.

Many studies revealed that Latino and minority superintendents sought and needed mentors (Magdaleno, 2004; Clodfelter, 2002; Enomoto, Gardiner, & Grogan, 2000 & Ortiz, 2000 & Mendez-Morse, 1997). This belief was further validated by Glass' observation (cited in Ortiz, 2000) that the:

> public school superintendent is easily the most male dominated of any of the executive professions . . . because school board members [tend] to select superintendents who have . . . the same type of background and professional experiences as their predecessors (p. 39).

For Latino candidates to have had an opportunity at the superintendency, they needed to be well prepared for school board relations, know about the isolation suffered, understand racial and gender discrimination, and learn to insulate themselves from the constant attacks and backlash from the myriad of groups they would encounter (Magdaleno, 2004; Ortiz, 2000 & Harrison-Williams, 2000). The

application of these skills had to be learned on the job with training and mentoring from a more seasoned professional who could provide guidance and direction.

Duran's (1982) dissertation study on Chicana administrators in Colorado and New Mexico further reinforced the notion that without mentors, Chicano administrators had a slim chance of attaining the superintendency. She explained that in the 1970's and early 1980's, Chicana administrators were not classified as superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal or assistant principal but instead they were administrators and/or specialists of non-decision making programs. Those that had attained administrative positions were in jobs deemed "safe and acceptable." That is they did not rock the boat, ask too many questions, or "break the rules." They conformed to the status quo and helped to enhance and solidify the way things were done around here. Based on a qualitative method called grounded theory, Duran was able to extrapolate themes such safe and acceptable, actions deemed as loyalty to the organization, and being of a non-critical nature as being important predictors of minority success in administration.

Duran's (1982) other themes were (a) female role models, which were usually the participants' mothers and sisters, (b) community itself as a support system or a detrimental system, (c) early family structure (i.e. father reading to daughter) and working environment (i.e. other Chicanas being supportive) as a support system, and (d) discriminatory practices by school districts like hiring Anglo women with Spanish surnames or hiring Chicanas with Anglo surnames. According to Duran, these discriminatory practices also included the use of skin color. Participants in this study

often referred to themselves as "light or medium" as a way to justify their selection.

Lastly, the male dominance (whether White or Brown) of administrative positions

hindered the opportunities for these Chicana educators to succeed and advance within

the organization.

Elizondo (2004) further reinforced the need for mentoring by first recruiting

and retaining qualified bilingual/bicultural teachers and administrators by stating,

"The research is clear that Latino educators at all levels today – from the classroom

through the superintendency- are vastly underrepresented given the growing

population of Latino youngsters in many communities" (p. 2).

Similarly, Romo (2004) spoke to the need for mentoring Latinos. In his study

of 14 Latino educational administrators, one theme was evident "the need for mentors

and mentoring of Chicano students to develop future educational activists in both

teaching and administration." (p. 103) Additionally, Romo (2004) spoke to how bi-

culturally competent Latino administrators helped the educational community (a) by

directly and consciously serving as role models for students, (b) acting as ambassadors

to hostile and fearful community members, (c) modeling what others have proposed as

a primary way of promoting educational equity, and (d) acting directly to recruit and

retain Latino and other minority leaders to implement culturally democratic

educational practices.

Campbell & Avelar (2000) validated the need for mentoring by reporting that

successful minority superintendents had an ability to be aware of contexts, knew that

what they knew was right, and understood when it was appropriate to use this

knowledge to mobilize ethnic communities. Secondly, they had engagement of will, in other words, they had the will to work hard, listen, and learn. In conjunction with the second point, it was important to note that they also had a willingness to have a command of the English language. Lastly, these superintendents had developed networks that supported others like themselves; as well as coaching relationships. The data suggested these three characteristics made for strong minority superintendents.

Likewise, Mendez-Morse (1997) suggested that strong independent minority women can strengthen themselves further by redefining themselves through three critical processes: rejecting, asserting, and claiming. Rejecting referred to casting off the beliefs that only White males can be superintendents, that you can only "make it" by having mentors and refusing negative gender expectations. Asserting referred to the act of declaring oneself competent to be a superintendent, that their experiences as teachers and administrators were appropriate and that the superintendency was part of their identity. Lastly, claiming referred to their ability to redefine themselves and take on the duties of the superintendency and therefore knew that they have taken on the position/title and were no longer just a person in the position.

Rueda (2002) found that Latinos who had obtained the superintendency in Texas did so with the intent to make a difference. They were able to do so with the help of others, and with the help of loyal mentors who believed in them. They had barriers to overcome, normal and abnormal career paths, and had to learn communicative and networking skills. As validated by Magdaleno (2004), Harrison-Williams (2000) and Ortiz (2000), mentoring was critically important, specifically as

it applied to the need for mentoring of Latino superintendent candidates. It should be noted that Rueda's category for mentoring included both *Mentors and Anglo Mentors*. The majority of the Latino superintendents thanked their Anglo mentors for the help they gave them. Ironically, this acknowledgement supports Ortiz's (2000) frustration that minorities and females needed to be sponsored by White superintendents instead of being acknowledged for the skills and knowledge they brought to the table.

Davila (1997) described mentoring as having a positive impact in how one became a superintendent, as well as how one maintained the superintendency. Within Davila's concept, mentoring included support from family, informal and formal types of support, and sharing success with past mentors. Furthermore, 70% of the overall participants said they had been mentored, including 50% of the female participants. Davila's study validated the importance of mentoring, just as numerous other studies have articulated the need for networking, support systems, and mentors (Hibbits, 2005; Johnson, 2005; Magdaleno, 2004; Mendez-Morse, 2004; Manuel & Slate, 2003; Rueda, 2002; Campbell & Avelar, 2000; Clodfelter, 2000; Harrison-Williams, 2000; Ortiz, 2000 & Mendez-Morse, 1997).

Essentially, due to the nature of the job and the complexities involved, an individual, regardless of race, that received the benefits of a mentor was much more likely to be successful, in not only obtaining the position, but in also being successful once they were in the position.

Social Justice

Social justice was a recurring theme in the literature on minority superintendents. For although the society had come a long way in dealing with race and ethnic issues, there were still many barriers and issues that needed to be overcome. Minorities and females were still required to prove themselves over and beyond that which was asked of white males and were still held to a different standard of achievement than their white male counterparts (Brown, 2004).

Some studies suggested that educating school leaders in social justice and transformative pedagogy could have a positive impact on closing the achievement gap due to the need to address and face these issues in a very straight forward manner (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005 & Brown, 2004). These authors believed that leaders needed to empower their students as future citizens who were able to criticize and understand social, political, and economic contradictions. Furthermore, leaders must be advocates for students and confront "the insurmountable barriers for many students' academic success" (p. 204; Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2004). This student advocacy, by educational leaders, occurred when *practiced reflexivity* was used on a daily basis, as noted in Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy's study (p. 214).

If there was a push for social justice in the educational arena, it was fitting to note that what Latino and female superintendents had experienced (particularly in terms of gender and racial discrimination; Ortiz, 2000) had prepared them to do the work of social justice to a greater degree. It should also be noted that the social justice discourse encouraged the seeking out and promoting of Latino and female candidates,

not just for the superintendency, but society in general (Brown, 2004). Unfortunately, the research showed that many Latino and female superintendents continued to struggle in isolation and in a pervasive climate of discrimination (Johnson, 2005; Magdaleno, 2004; Manuel & Slate, 2003; Rueda, 2002; Ortiz, 2000 & Scott, 1980).

An example of social justice leadership and comparable experiences for Latinos were the stories of Black female superintendents. These individuals had the will to work under the worst conditions in a series of studies conducted by Alston (2005, 2000). In her studies of Black female superintendents, she found that many Black female superintendents were "found in poorly maintained and badly managed urban school districts with high minority populations" (p. 681). These Black female superintendents were described as not only possessing efficacy, but also possessing qualities such as patience, self-knowledge, humility, flexibility, idealism, vigilance, and commitment. In this article, they were properly named *tempered radicals and servant leaders* (Alston, 2005). However, even this exception to the rule, proved the rule. These Black female superintendents did not conform and were not expected to conform, probably due to the marginalized nature of the schools and districts they were in.

Studies by Quilantan (2004) and Mendez-Morse (1997) validated Alston's notion that strong women lead successfully. Quilantan found that strong Latina superintendents possessed characteristics such as professional competence (i.e. outperformed others), personal strengths (i.e. nurturer, resiliency and awareness), and knew how to do away with organizational stressors by reconfiguring the

organizational charts. Similarly, in a study of female superintendents, Brunner (2000) found similar themes/characteristics such as power, silence, style, responsibility, and people skills.

Ironically, it was in the relational areas of power, silence, style, responsibility, and people that these women superintendents found themselves questioned. What should have been acknowledged as strengths—were seen as weaknesses by people who valued traditional norms. Brunner (2002) discovered that traits such as asking open questions, being a proactive listener, being respectful and caring to others, honoring multiple perspectives, understanding social justice, and understanding one's role were powerful strengths and worthy of investigation. These qualities, possessed by the superintendents in her study, may have led to further changes in what was considered the traditional superintendency.

Anderson (2000) reinforced Brunner by reporting on the three most important strategies in overcoming occupational barriers: support of family, developing a strong sense of self, and learning the characteristics of the school district. These themes were consistent in studies conducted by Alston (2005) and Quilantan (2004). Hibbets (2005) complemented Anderson by offering the same characteristics for male minority superintendents in South Central Texas. Themes such as early experiences, family, spirituality, and meaningful relationships kept these men from succumbing to racial biases and discriminatory practices. Although Latinos had the essential ingredients to be successful, research showed that they were not being chosen in equal numbers for the superintendency (Dana & Bourisaw, 2006). This state of affairs was unfortunate,

due to the need for a "different" leadership style and systemic change in the many communities being served by traditional superintendents.

Resiliency

The Latino superintendent, as a person with upward social mobility, had most likely negotiated his cultural identity while developing a professional identity working alongside others of the dominant school district culture. These experiences were usually painful, yet demonstrated Latinos' resiliency (Ortiz, 2000). In relationship with resilience education, many Latino educators and administrators, who had advanced professionally, learned to adapt and advance in a culture other than their own (Brown, D'Emidio-Caston, & Benard, 2001). Their ability to adapt and adjust, not only in their current work environment, but throughout their childhood and adolescence, was a topic worth pursuing since many Latinos did not obtain professional teaching and administrative positions (Glass, 2000; Hess, 2002).

So, how do Latinos overcome adverse circumstances? In regards to this discussion about Latino psychological developments, adaptations and strategies, resiliency research shed some basic understanding. This resilient position, as advocated in the book *Resilience Education* (Brown, D'Emidio-Caston, & Benard, 2001), was an acknowledgement that protective factors such as connectedness, opportunities to participate and contribute, and high self-expectations were produced in Latino communities. The typical discussion on Latinos was usually based on a deficit model and therefore viewed the Latino as *at risk* versus resilient. It was

imperative to understand Latinos' development and psychological adjustment as a positive protective factor.

The processes by which Latinos developed their self-concept and influences of racism, discrimination and stereotypes were essential to understanding Latinos, especially as they experienced socialization to the superintendency (Umaña-Taylor, Diversi & Fine, 2002). In conclusion, Latino superintendents possessed the characteristics and attributes that warranted their continuance as superintendents and Latino candidates possessed what it takes to be superintendents; however, they were not given the opportunity as readily as their White male counterparts (Alston, 2005; Anderson, 2000; Brunner, 2002; Campbell & Avelar, 2000; Clodfelter, 2002; Davila, 1997; Enomoto, Gardiner, & Grogan, 2000; Harrison-Williams, 2000; Hibbetts, 2005; Magdaleno, 2004; Manuel & Slate, 2003; Mendez-Morse, 1997; Mendez-Morse, 2000; Mendez-Morse, 2004; Ortiz, 2000; Quilantan, 2004; Rueda, 2002).

Summary

In summary, based on the current review of the literature, Latino superintendents' narratives should include elements of their identities, socialization processes, mentoring experiences, social justice motives and their personal resiliency. The lens used to analyze their stories was based on Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT presupposes that minorities, and in this study Latino superintendents, continued to be challenged due to their culture, ethnicity, race and linguistic characteristics. This study shed light on this possibility as well as gave voice to Latinos in the superintendent position.

Chapter III

Embarking on a journey to understand the Latino Superintendency was like embarking on a journey through uncharted territory. One sort of knew where to begin, but the end point was unpredictable and difficult to define because there were few Latinos in the role, the issues were complex, and the path was as varied as the individuals who were in the positions. Therefore, to explore the complexities of who gets in, why they get in, what path they took, how they were selected, and why were there so few of them, a qualitative method was employed using a narrative inquiry approach with a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens. This methodology allowed the researcher to delve deeply into the narratives of five Latino Superintendents with the idea of describing the phenomenon and shedding some light into relative dearth of Latino Superintendents in a state as diverse as California.

Critical Race Theory and Qualitative Methods

According to the literature, CRT refrained from proposing a specific methodology, yet embraced the use of qualitative methodologies such as interviewing, storytelling and narrative inquiry (Ladson-Billings, 1999). CRT encouraged the use of parables, stories, narratives, and counterstories to rewrite current hegemonic ideology concerning the Latino experience (Villenas, Deyhle, & Parker, 1999). Leading to a qualitative method of data collection, CRT was valued as a vehicle to establish "voice" for Latino superintendents. Qualitative researchers made sense of and found interactions between personal stories gathered through this type of methodology (Glesne, 1999, p. 1). According to Glesne, in this process of sense-making, the

researcher became the main research instrument as he or she observed, asked

questions, and interacted with research participants (Glesne, 1999, p. 5).

One of the merits of conducting a qualitative study to examine the lives of

Latino administrators was the exploratory nature of the study, not leaning solely on the

limited amount of literature written about Latino superintendents. With this

information, the researcher listened to informants and sought to build a picture of who

they were based on their own ideas, thus "increasing the amount of relevant literature

available" (Creswell, 1994, p. 21). Another benefit of using a qualitative methodology

was that it allowed the researcher to function as an advocate or an interventionist,

taking a position on an issue revealed through their research (Glesne, 1999, p. 120).

Overview of the Methodology

This study sought to answer questions regarding the Latino superintendency

and the influences of their cultural, personal, and professional identities. In order to

generate data to answer the research questions, five Latino superintendents were

interviewed for this study. Questions regarding their cultural background, personal

lives, professional identities, barriers and support systems were asked and the

responses analyzed. Each interview led to the composition of a narrative that told the

story of the individuals' path towards the superintendency.

A narrative design best fit this inquiry for several reasons. First, this inquiry

involved several unique people within the U.S. educational school system. Second, the

cases were likely to be representative, capturing the circumstances and conditions of

the everyday life of a particular Latino superintendent. Last, this study was revelatory, observing and analyzing a phenomenon previously inaccessible (Yin, 2003).

By using qualitative methodology (e.g., observations, interviews, member checking and collaboration) the exploration of the Latino leadership narrative was meaningful, and provided a holistic picture of the possible multiple identities of Latino superintendents. The data sources allowed for triangulation of data gathered and analyzed. Glaser and Strauss (1967) in discussing the use of qualitative methods made the following observation:

> …in discovering theory, one generates conceptual categories or their properties of evidence; then the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept. The evidence may not necessarily be accurate beyond a doubt, but the concept is undoubtedly a relevant theoretical abstraction about what is going on in the area studied. Furthermore, the concept itself will not change, while even the most accurate facts change. Concepts only have their meanings respecified at times because other theoretical and research purposes have evolved. (p. 23)

In searching to develop a Latino leadership narrative, this research was approached from a Critical Race Theoretical Framework (Solórzano, Villalpando & Oseguera, 2005). This theory presupposed that race played a role in how individuals were perceived in American society. By interviewing Latino superintendents, themes of race, language and culture emerged and were extrapolated from the data, therefore reinforcing the need for a theoretical construct that did not permit race or relations

among so-called "races" to fade into the background. An assumption was made that race and the adaptations people must make to the powerful presence of race in American society structured at least part of the leadership narratives collected.

Collecting/Analyzing Data

Face-to-face interviews were conducted for data collection. These interviews lasted approximately sixty minutes. Field notes were taken on observations of the non-verbal features of the interviews. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for later coding/theme building. As with many qualitative approaches to research, such as grounded theory, themes "emerged" from multiple sources such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, which included school board communications and school board meeting agenda/minutes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As data analysis proceeded with a careful review of the transcripts, categorization of patterns and themes occurred.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) believed qualitative work produces "empirical generalizations." This would help an emerging theory to be applicable and broad, instead of limited and bounded. Glaser and Strauss proposed that researchers use a comparative analysis in order for a study to have "greater explanatory and predictive power" (p. 24). Glaser and Strauss' work stated that qualitative studies should be viewed as "theory in process, that is, theory as an ever-developing entity, not as a perfected product." Even more applicable to this study was the human interaction of interviewing others and capturing their stories; thus this research can be seen as ever-

developing, allowing it to be rich, complex, and dense. As stated by (Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006, p. 778),

> We now can embrace sophisticated theoretical stances on critical and qualitative race and ethnic perspectives, border voices, queer, feminist, indigenous and other non-Western lenses and epistemologies. Previous generations of inquirers could distinguish themselves simply as qualitative researchers; we know now that the field and its practitioners are neither unitary nor united, except in their critical and/or interpretive stances. We have a rich variety of resources, theories and perspectives through which we may draw the results of our studies, illuminating aspects of social, educational and cultural life previously unknown save to those who lived the experience.

Furthermore, understanding the experiences and positions Latino superintendents have had, helps the field of education understand the paths this group of individuals have had to trek throughout their careers. Latino superintendents were of interest for several reasons, one of which was the low frequency with which Latinos become superintendents. According to Hess (2002), approximately 10 percent of all superintendents nationwide were persons of color. Grogan and Brunner (2005) reported that only 8 percent of women superintendents identified as persons of color, with only 1 percent identifying as Latina. The State of California has roughly 1000 school districts; approximately 40-50 Latinos hold the position of superintendent. Second, given the demographic shifts in the United States, it was important to

understand how Latinos successfully attained the superintendency and how they were able to maintain their positions over time.

As aforementioned, Critical Race Theory (CRT) provided the theoretical framework for this study's design, data collection, and data analysis. The value of using CRT to study Latino administrators was in the power of the theory to help explain and decontextualize the socio-political, racial, and educational contexts where these "stories" were played out. The qualitative methods, including interviews, narratives, storytelling, and counter-storytelling, helped to illuminate and delimit the ways that race influences much of the process of rising to the highest position in any line of work.

Research Questions

The research questions used in this study were selected to help guide the research and allowed for the participants to inject their own voice, identities, and experiences during the interview process. The interviews were open-ended and participants were allowed to go in any direction that made sense to them as they talked and discussed their personal, cultural, and professional experiences. In order to understand the lived experiences of Latino superintendents, the following questions were used:

The main research question was: How do Latino superintendents negotiate their cultural, personal, and professional identities? Three addition questions that helped guide this research (adapted from Trujillo-Ball, 2003) were:

a. What does identity mean to Latino educational leaders?

b. How does the Latino identity change due to experiences, influences, and expectations from family, culture, society, and self?

c. What does a successful Latino educational leader "look like" according to the narratives gathered for this study?

These questions were used in an open ended interview design with follow-up questions asked by the researcher to further clarify, delimit, provide understandings and define the contexts and contents being discussed (Merriam, 1998). Each of the follow-up questions was necessarily different and unique to the stories being shared, the styles of the individuals, and the tone of the interview.

Research Design

A narrative design was chosen for this study because it conformed to the requisites of research design when studying a unique phenomenon or context. First, this inquiry involved a unique person within the U.S. educational school system. Second, the case could be representative, capturing the circumstance and conditions of the everyday life of a unique individual. Lastly, this study could be revelatory, observing and analyzing a phenomenon previously inaccessible (Yin, 2003, p. 40-43).

Additionally, Creswell (2002) (adapted from Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) spoke to seven major characteristics of narrative research: 1. Experiences of an individual's–social and personal interactions. 2. Chronology of experiences–past, present, and future experiences. 3. Life stories–first-person, oral accounts of actions obtained through field texts (data). 4. Restorying (or retelling of developing a

metastory) from the field texts. 5. Coding the field texts for themes or categories. 6. Incorporating the context or place into the story or themes. 7. Collaboration between the researcher and the participants in the study, such as negotiating field texts. This study employed most of these seven characteristics in the study design, collection, and analysis.

Furthermore, this study employed what Clandinin and Connelly's work (cited in Creswell, 2002) called *the three-dimensional space narrative structure.* In this structure*,* the story elements were organized around three elements of the participant's story: *interaction* (personal and social), *continuity* (past, present, and future) and *situation* (place). These three elements helped restory an individual's experiences and enabled the researcher to triangulate the data from various perspectives.

The following figure (adapted from Creswell, 2002) helped to better understand the steps in conducting narrative research as it was used in this study.

Steps in Conducting Narrative Research (figure 1)

Build in past, present, future

Build in place or setting

Describe their story

Analyze their story for themes

Restory or Retell the individual's story

Step 4

Have them tell their story

Collect other field texts

Collect stories from that individual that reflect personal and social experiences.

Step 3

Collaborate with the participant storyteller in all phases of research.

Step 5

Purposefully select an individual to learn about the phenomenon.

Step 2

Write a story about the participant's personal and social experiences.

Step 6

Identify a phenomenon to explore that address educational problem.

Step 1

Validate the accuracy of the report.

Step 7

Research Chronology

Paralleling the seven steps in Figure 3.1, this study was conducted in the four following phases. In phase one (which parallels step one), a pilot study was conducted in Spring of 2007 as a project for a Qualitative Research Methods course taught by Dr. Janet Chrispeels at the University of California at San Diego. The pilot study was a preliminary examination of the literature related to Latina/o superintendents and helped identify Latino superintendents as research participants.

In phase two (which parallels step two), Latino superintendents in school districts in California were contacted using California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators website's membership roster and in person at CALSA's annual conference. The locations of the school districts in California, with large Latino student populations, were considered for identification of a participant pool consisting of Latino superintendents. Names of prospective participants were also collected through recommendations from colleagues, coworkers, and mentors. Pseudonyms were assigned to participants to ensure confidentiality.

In phase three (which parallels step three), interviews were scheduled and conducted during the spring and summer of 2008. Interviews took place in participants' offices or in an adjoining conference room and/or at CALSA's annual conference in San Diego, California. All interviews were collected at either the superintendents' offices in their California school districts and/or their preference of at the CALSA conference in a private/public location of their choice.

Phase four of the study (which parallels steps four, five, six, and seven) consisted of transcription and analysis of the recorded interviews. This analysis consisted of restorying the individual's story, collaborating with the participant, writing the story about the participant's personal and social experiences, and validating the accuracy of the report. Grounded theory was applied in extrapolating themes and patterns (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Critical race theory framed the analyses to relay value and "truths" of the narratives, providing a unique voice for the superintendents (Delgado, 1995).

These four phases of the study helped define the cycle of designing the study, collecting the data, analyzing the data, and fact checking the final stories. These processes provided the foundation for delineating the study and triangulating the data.

Participant Selection

A purposeful sampling strategy was used in the study. A purposeful sampling was selected because it offered the most salient option for this study, which needed to select participants who fit a certain set of criteria and could not be left to chance. As Patton, (1990, p. 169) stated, "…purposeful sampling is [used] to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study." The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the experiences of Latino superintendents, the participants were men of Mexican descent employed as superintendents in a public school system in California. These participants had varied years of experience, noting changes and differences in cultural, personal, and professional identities. Additionally, the differences and similarities in their generational statuses, whether

they were Mexican immigrants or first, second, or third generation Mexican-Americans, were very relevant and pertinent to their "stories".

Participants were identified through the California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators (CALSA) (www.calsa.org) website. The membership rosters, provided by the CALSA website, were used to select the superintendents for the purposeful sample. In addition to membership rosters, the CALSA conferences typically introduce and recognize first-year superintendents and held panel discussions with seasoned Latino superintendents. These conferences have allowed the researcher the opportunity to access, select first-year and seasoned Latino superintendents and ultimately capture their stories through interviews.

The California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators (CALSA) was a community of educational leaders whose mission was working to increase the number of successful Latino/Latina administrators, committed to closing the Latino/Latina student achievement gap. CALSA (http://www.calsa.org/mission.cfm) achieved its mission by:

- Advocating on behalf of Latino children
- Providing opportunities for professional development and career enhancement
- Promoting the success of current and future leaders

Therefore, the researcher decided that the use of the CALSA's website and membership rosters offered credibility to the selection of participants.

All participants were treated in accordance with the Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants (American Psychological Association, 2002). Names were changed to ensure confidentiality; however, regional locations remained similar to the original to provide context and further understanding of the phenomenon studied.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation used for this study was first developed by Hernandez's research (2005) and a pilot study conducted by the researcher. Additionally, qualitative research techniques such as interviews and extant data were used to gain added context and gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon studied (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

As previously mentioned, the selected questions were tested in a pilot study prior to the interviews. As a result of the pilot study, a broad selection of questions that focused on Latino experiences was identified. Using the list of questions produced from the pilot study, specific questions for the interviews were noted. Each interview was conducted with the intent of using the interview guide strictly as a way to steer the questioning, thus allowing for the majority of the interview to be guided by the participant.

Questions were asked chronologically, beginning with childhood experiences through professional life challenges as administrators. This process allowed the interviews to evolve into discussions about a specific topic included in the questioning or other related subjects.

At the conclusion of each conversation/interview, participants were invited to collaborate with the researcher to restory their life experiences as they participated in all phases of the research. The Latino superintendents had an opportunity to self-identify as well as to list experiences or professional challenges that each one saw as having a significant impact in their personal and professional lives.

Data Collection

In this study, face to face interviews with Latino superintendents were conducted for data collection. These interviews lasted sixty minutes per interview/conversation and were audio recorded. The transcripts of the interviews were evaluated using a qualitative approach known as grounded theory; these entries were evaluated for topics, patterns, and themes. Multiple factors were uncovered that might contribute to why Latino superintendents were successful in attaining and maintaining the superintendent position within a California school district. Additionally, the researcher collected data on the location, demographics, and situation of each of the districts involved. This extant data allowed the researcher to further triangulate the interview data collected, school demographics, and restorying with each participant to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon studied.

Furthermore, during the interview, field notes were taken of non-verbal features, tone, comfort level and other clues to help provide a context. As a qualitative approach to research, themes "emerged" from multiple sources such as extant data, interviews and observations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data was guided by the notion of grounded theory in which key recurring themes and patterns were identified and analyzed to understand the phenomenon in question (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In narrative research, part of the data analysis was restorying or retelling the individual's story by interpreting the events. As the researcher transcribed, read, and studied the recorded voices, it was the task of the researcher to establish a context for the study. As part of the context, the researcher needed to construct a past, present, and future, build in place and setting, and accurately describe the story while analyzing for the themes and patterns that emerged (Creswell, 2002). Creswell believed that the data analysis "… process also includes examining the raw data, identifying elements of a story in it, sequencing or organizing the story elements, and then processing a retold story that conveys the individual's experiences" (p. 534).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) recommended using the structure of the *three dimensional space narrative* to retell the participants' stories in a way which included interaction, continuity and situation. Within each one of these structures, there existed other elements important to the participants overall story and the eventual understanding of the social phenomenon being studied.

In addition to capturing the elements of the story, the researcher collaborated with the participants during each step of the research process to assure validity and fidelity to the data and the ensuing analysis. According to Creswell (2002) "this collaboration can assume several forms such as negotiating entry to the site and the

participant, working closely with the participant to obtain field texts to capture the participants' experiences, and writing and telling the individual's story in the researcher's word" (p. 535).

With grounded theory, data analysis develops after a careful review of the transcripts and categorization of themes occurred. Major topics, patterns, themes and life experiences were identified and categorized from in-depth interviews/conversations, field notes, and extant data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Glaser and Strauss (1967) believed qualitative work produces "empirical generalizations." This would help an emerging theory to be applicable and broad, instead of limited and bounded. Glaser and Strauss proposed that researchers use a comparative analysis in order for a study to have "greater explanatory and predictive power" (p. 24). They stated that qualitative studies should be viewed as "theory in process, that is, theory as an ever-developing entity, not as a perfected product." Even more applicable to this study was the human interaction element of interviewing others and capturing their stories; thus this research can be seen as ever-developing, allowing it to be rich, intricate, and dense.

To add validity to the study, a theoretical framework using a CRT lens was developed for data analysis. The data was analyzed for possible influences of discrimination, racism, and/or personal/professional challenges related to the superintendent's position. These topics, themes, patterns, and experiences were restoried and presented to the participants as an analysis of the raw data. Their comments, concerns, and issues were recorded and taken into account.

Discourse in the social sciences offered validity as the problem not the solution; however, qualitative practices such as member-checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation were practices that had been implemented in an effort to resolve the problem of validity without exhausting it. Triangulation was defined as the use of multiple data collection methods, multiple sources, multiple investigators and/or multiple theoretical perspectives. Peer review and debriefing were external reflections and input on the researcher's work and member checking was the sharing of interview transcripts, analytical thoughts, and/or drafts of the final report with research participants to make sure their ideas were being represented accurately (Glesne, 1999). Study participants participated in peer review, member-checking, and collaboration (Creswell, 2002). This triangulation allowed for participants and the researcher to establish trustworthiness throughout the discourse process.

Researcher Context

Positionality

As a Latino male, principal, and student researcher, the researcher was keenly aware of his multiple identities. These identities lent insights into interactions with participants in the study as well as possible dilemmas. Therefore, to a great extent, validity in qualitative methods hinges on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person conducting the fieldwork. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that the researcher was the instrument in establishing validity by the objectivity they bring to the process. Lather (1993) positioned validity as "an incitement to discourse" especially when the researcher was open to new ideas and incorporated them in their research.

The researcher kept in mind his multiple roles and learned to incorporate the best of all worlds without diminishing validity or introducing bias. The links of commonalities among the participants' and the researcher's professional challenges and life experiences as Latino administrators working at California school districts were cordially established.

Entry

The researcher was a Latino middle school principal in Southern California at the time this study was conducted. As a Latino high school student, he became aware of organizations that addressed the educational and social conditions of Latino students. Since then, he has personally given numerous talks at conferences to address, inspire, and motivate Latino students' college aspirations and perseverance. As a first generation Mexican-American, college graduate, school principal, and current doctoral student, he continued to be aware of the struggle to "make it" in our society.

As a current member of CALSA (California Association Latino Superintendents and Administrators), he was aware of the unique opportunities Latinos have in providing leadership to California schools and school districts. As a member of CALSA, he was cognizant of the role mentoring played in helping Latinos climb the professional ladder. Mentoring, especially for Latinos, helped in gaining access to the superintendency, evident by the mentoring program CALSA provides. This program started in 2004 with the guidance of Ken Magdaleno. In 2005, Dr. Magdaleno reported that in 2003 only 7% of California's school districts were led by Latinos (http://www.acsa.org/publications/pub_detail.cfm?&edcalID=1734)

Methodological Limitations

The limitations of this study included the small number of Latino administrators holding superintendent positions in school districts in California and the even smaller number of Latino administrators available for this study. As full-time administrators, both participants and researcher were constrained by limited availability within demanding personal and professional schedules. Also, this study was regionally bounded to California and might not be reflective of other parts of the U.S. The smallness of the study, though limiting generazability, was also advantageous because it allowed the researcher to go much deeper into the topic, creating a detailed story.

As a qualitative study, this research allowed the educational field to fully understand the phenomenon of the Latino superintendency, who makes it, what it takes to be successful, and the role of culture and race in educational leadership success. Due to the small sample size, the results would not be easily generalizable to other contexts and situations; however, the study can shed light on areas that are needed for further study.

Summary

Critical Race Theory was used to create a framework to examine the life experiences and professional challenges of Latino administrators holding superintendent positions at one of five school districts in California. Their narratives of professional challenges and life experiences were explored. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews and conversations. The sample group was drawn from

recommendations from professional associations. Data was analyzed using CRT perspective, and themes and commonalities were extrapolated and categorized. Member-checking, triangulation, and collaboration were used to establish trustworthiness. The researcher collected data that clearly reported on the life experiences, negotiated identities and professional challenges of the participants. Chapter Four provides these findings and presentation of the data.

Chapter IV

How is the way you experience race or ethnicity now similar or different from when you were growing up?

Oh, very different. I mean I'm aware now. I wasn't aware before. We thought we were the majority in the community where I grew up because everybody was Latino around us. We didn't know that there was a different culture, way of life and expectations and way of doing things and, you know, norms and what have you. I'm much more aware now.

I have to function in a world that is not Latino, where I am a Latino. The Latinos in the community want you to favor them. Anything I don't do for them makes them question whether I am committed to helping Latinos.

The African-American community expects me to understand what it feels like to be a minority; therefore, I should reach out to them. Anything I do to reach out to the Latinos is something that I'm taking away from them.

The white community sees me as an exceptional Latino. I'm not the norm. They're proud that I'm not the norm; that I represent the Latino community, but they want me to be as cultured in the white community as possible. They don't want me to be radical in any sense. I have to be very political. I'm very aware. I always have to be very aware of what's going on around me. (Agusto)

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to capture the narratives of Latino superintendents, as pertaining to their cultural, personal and professional experiences as they progressed towards the superintendency. The identity of the Latino Superintendent was the overarching construct that guided the research questions, the themes that emerged within each category, and the examples of what success looked like.

This study sought to answer the questions related to a) what does identity mean to Latino educational leaders, b) how does the Latino identity change due to experiences, influences, and expectations from family, culture, society and self, and c) what does a successful Latino educational leader "look like" according to the narratives gathered for this study? In relation to answering these questions, interview data was gathered during this study from five Latino superintendents. The superintendents all have had different career paths with some shared patterns and experiences. This study presents the three major categories that emerged and the themes within each category.

The names have been changed to ensure anonymity; however, regional area has remained consistent for contextualization of the different areas of study. Additionally, a brief profile of each of the interviewees is presented first to offer further contextualization of understanding the Latino Superintendency. In the body of the chapter, a decision was made to include somewhat lengthy excerpts from the interviews, with interpretations and conclusions used to introduce and sum up each set

of thematically organized excerpts. This decision was made in the interest of maintaining the richness and integrity of the superintendents' narratives as much as possible while also inserting a theoretical analysis based on CRT.

Participant Profiles

Justo: Adapter

So, I went down and interviewed for that position and got it. And, I was like, wow, what a move. You know, I went from 860 to 20,000. And again, I think this is where my adaptability comes into play, not being intimidated, not being overly nervous about it. Just thinking, you know, I've got a background. I can apply the knowledge that I do know and learn some new skills. And I did. I tell you that (Southern Californian city) really developed my skills to a whole different level. Because of the issues, because there were things that were on a much bigger scale, bigger magnitude I really developed, further developed my skills. I thought I was always a good communicator and a good listener, but working for a big school district really accelerated the level of my game.

Justo, a current superintendent of a Southern California school district, has had a career spanning more than 20 years of administrative work. However his rise to superintendent would be considered "quick" going from associate superintendent to deputy superintendent to superintendent in a matter of three years. Justo's success can be directly attributed to what he calls "adaptability." In his narrative, Justo referred to adaptability more than five times. It was first noted in schooling circumstances, then his friendships, and eventually showed up in this ascension to the superintendency.

Educador: The Peacemaker

So, I was on the school board and our superintendent took a job; a position in the [Name of District] Unified. So, this is a one house school, right. I mean real small. And I had gone to school there. My kids had gone to school there. I lived in (district), right there. And so, I was born and raised there, right. So then the board offered me the position, because they didn't feel like going out and recruiting. And they needed a peace maker at the time. So I'm a peace maker…

Educador, currently a superintendent in a Southern California school district, has had an abnormal ascension to the superintendent's position, spending a considerable time outside the school system working as a consultant and as a farm advisor for the University of California educational system. From his narrative, it can clearly be seen that his life began in the migrant camps his parents worked on. As his professional career began, he again found himself working in some of the very same communities in which he once worked and lived in as a child.

Adan: Innovator

My pursuit is to eventually write . . . write about educational leadership; write about school settings; culture; write about innovations and how innovations occur and how to integrate innovations into a system. So those are the things I'd like to write about.

Adan, a county superintendent in California, was the only one out of the five research participants to be born outside the United States, in Mexico to be precise. His progress in education from teacher to principal and eventually superintendent has not been easy. He has had to reinvent himself in ways that fit his innovativeness, but not necessarily the traditional notions of leadership. For example, for years he was a continuation principal and when he attempted to move forward, he was reminded that he had not been a "true" principal because of the continuation high school principal label.

Agusto: The Mentored

Once I became the leader of a school; once I was successful at achieving that goal, several people crossed my path that began to mentor me unofficially. I didn't ask for it, but for whatever the reason is, they found an interest in trying to encourage me to move higher. So that put the seed in my mind. …there was a superintendent who decided, "I'm going to get some Latino educators together," and I was very impressed by that. That had an impression on me because it was the first time I saw others that looked like me who had achieved their doctorates and were in the top positions in their districts. I hadn't seen examples of that, not a lot of them. That really had a major influence on me.

Agusto, a very successful superintendent in a large urban school district in Southern California, truly experienced the "large urban" lifestyle. Unlike the majority of the participants, who had a migrant experience, this participant enjoyed a

community that was largely Latino, and did not necessarily experience some of the isolated or discriminatory practices that occurred in rural communities, where people were not necessarily familiar with language issues and/or Latino needs. Committed, successful, and mentored were words that described this participant.

Freire: Big Heart

I'll never forget the time that we were having a classroom party, and the teacher had asked that we all needed to bring something. I asked my mom if she could bring something. What she ended up bringing in this beat up little pot of hers – that was one of her favorite little pots – wrapped up in aluminum foil were these taquitos. I was . . . my heart just sank, because I thought, "Oh my God, how am I going to bring these in?" . . . and the irony was that my mom brought them, and I met her outside, I got them from her, and I took them into the class…That taught me all about . . . that little thing taught me a lot about who I am and not to be ashamed of what I brought. Whatever I brought to the table had to be good enough for me and my mom. Who cares what everybody else thought, because that was the best we could bring to the table. I thought to myself, "Hey, what we bring to the table is a good thing."

Freire, a current superintendent of a small school district in Southern California, has also risen to the top of one of the most influential administrative organizations in California. This man was able to express his heart at every venue where he has spoken. He speaks fondly of his family, and especially of his mother.

There was no question that those who came in contact with this person, felt the love and compassion this man has for his fellow human beings.

Results

In analyzing the data, the three categories that emerged were Personal Understanding, Cultural Influences, and Professional Experiences. Using the lens of Critical Race theory (CRT) to explore these issues it became apparent that although the superintendents' experiences did not, at times, explicitly speak to issues of race, language, and culture; their collective experiences, in a very subtle way, did speak to those very issues.

The five superintendents interviewed were very knowledgeable and aware of the role that their ethnicity played in the advancements they made, how they were viewed by the larger community, and the expectations for them from the various constituencies with which they dealt. To that end, the superintendents' voices spoke volumes and added context to their experiences.

Within each of these categories, a number of themes emerged. A word of caution is in order, these categories and themes were not mutually exclusive, but were highly interactive and interrelated to each other. Some of the themes could have appeared in other categories, but for ease of analysis a decision was made to place them within their respective areas, with an understanding that the influences within and between the categories were many. Because this study was the first of its kind, and because it was revelatory and exploratory, it was important to understand that analytic categories were fluid in the lives of the superintendents.

Personal Understanding

Each of the superintendents interviewed went through a period of personal understanding and reflection as they became aware of the context of race, school, and opportunities that surrounded them. They literally went from unaware elementary school children to high school students who were beginning to understand the world and how it worked. In CRT minorities stories were atypical, often called "counterstories" because they did not fit the typical majoritorian/dominant story often told (Yosso, 2006).

Within this category, the following themes emerged, a) educational placement, b) strong educational drive/achievement drive/motivation c) family, and d) sports/sense of belonging. Each of these themes was fully explored in terms of the connection with CRT and how these personal understandings helped to shape each of the individuals into becoming a Latino superintendent.

Educational Placement

Educational placement was a very interesting theme that emerged in the lives and stories of the Latino superintendents studied. Latinos often had varied and different placement experiences based on race, language, and prior schooling. They did not necessarily follow the typical scenario for school attendance. It was of interest that among the superintendents studied, two of the five reported that they were placed in grades that were not compatible with their ages. Adan was two years older than most first graders and placed according to his language abilities. In his own words,

…my brother was two years younger than I. We were placed in first grade. I had already been in first grade. But because none of us spoke English and none of them spoke Spanish, there was no other place to put me, but there. They figured they'd keep us together and we could talk to one another, if we needed at least some support. (Adan)

…yeah, I would have been eight. So at that point for me, I had learned so much more in the Mexican school system plus being in preschool that was ahead . . . it wasn't until about third or fourth grade that kids caught up with me in math and the other things. It was kind of a joy trip for me. It was a piece of cake. (Adan)

Because they didn't know what to do with us, I was placed in special ed classes for improvement in reading and speech. So those are the two . . . I was pulled out and actually I learned quite a bit through that process because the teacher was very nice and very good. (Adan)

Not only was Adan placed in a grade where he was two years older than the rest, but he was also placed in Special Education due to a lack of school resources. Fortunately, school officials realized he needed help. In the final analysis, it worked out well for Adan, but for many Latinos put in grades where they were older or put into Special Education for language reasons, the results were not so favorable.

The situation for Justo was a little bit different. He was excelling as an older student, but knew he was different and wanted to be accelerated and to "catch-up" with his peers and was disappointed when he was not allowed to move forward.

However, hindsight, as an adult, he now sees that the system did him a favor. As he tells his story,

> I always thought I was a little different…I mean it wasn't like, normally somebody like the bookworm or the studious person won't interact well with others. But, in this case, I didn't, I didn't miss a beat, and I was still, you know, one of the class leaders. Even at being a grade level behind, I still had a lot of influence on the ones that were older than me because I hung out with them, and I played sports and stuff. Being a late birthday I think helped me. I was older, more mature than my classmates. No, I don't think a lot of them did. I know one of them tried to compete with me academically. But, I always beat him on the report card. I kind of wiped him out. (Justo)

> At one time, when I was in fourth grade, they were thinking about skipping me a grade. Or maybe it was third grade. They were thinking about skipping me a grade. I got pretty excited about that, because I was actually doing a lot of the work that the older kids were doing, the grade above me. So I thought, oh good, that's great, accelerate me and I'll be caught up with those guys. And then for some reason they changed their mind. And that was a real hard thing for me. I was crushed. I didn't realize or understand why. But in hindsight, you know, and after a while, I realized that they did me a favor, you know. To keep me there, I was doing well. I was excelling well and that at my age, although I was performing above everybody else, they had their reasons. But I think they

did it for the right reasons, for the right reasons. Even if they didn't really explain it well to me.

They took me out of a basal reader, probably in to third grade, because it's just, they figured I wasn't getting anything from then. So starting fourth grade they put me, my English teacher put me to, classroom teacher, put me to reading paperbacks. And since I was already ordering and buying paperbacks, she just told me which ones she wanted me to read, and I ordered those. And that's what, that was my reading from that point on. I just read books, and she gave me…and I didn't realize at the time, she had to go the extra mile. She had to read the books too. You know, develop the course, you know, the outline for it, and questions and, so. She did that for me. Took me out of the basal reader and I just kind, was given my own thing. And I felt special. And maybe they did that as a way to cushion my ego from not getting promoted to another grade level. (Justo)

In the case of both Adan and Justo, the system treated them in ways that were different from the norm; as a result these men experienced different attention from teachers because of their situations. Those close relationships likely helped them eventually excel. Perhaps, if they had been in the correct grade for their age, they may not have experienced the same success in later life that they enjoyed.

Strong Educational Drive

Four of the five superintendents reported that they had a strong drive to succeed and do well in school. They were motivated to graduate, learn English, and

make something of their lives. Learning English well was obviously a goal of these young men once they realized it was the key to their eventual success. As Adan tells it,

> …though I did take Speech. My goal was to learn English well and learn it rapidly; better than any of my students. That was my competitive edge …decided to go to [name of college] which is a community college up there. I took a speed reading class that I felt was very helpful because I needed to read a lot and I hadn't. (Adan)

Justo's passion for learning, doing well in school and excelling served him well, despite the typical experiences of Latino youth who find it hard to get motivated to do well in school. In his story, he not only did well, but teachers liked him because he did well, starting a cycle of success. In his own words,

> So, I did very well there. My teachers took a real liking to me. I was always a very good student. I really enjoyed school because I excelled, I competed. I wanted to be the best. And then that kind of translated to sports. I did real well in sports too because I wanted to be the best in sports, and competed. I was very competitive. Yeah, so… So I always wanted… I was always a person to really want to be the best. I don't know why, but… So, the other thing is I really developed, early on, a passion for reading. So that was kind of my childhood experience. I really excelled in school. And I loved learning. And I loved reading. And all of it just fell in place. I think that being a voracious

reader, an avid reader, really helped my skill level. Not as just as a reader, but I realized even back then, it made me a better writer. (Justo)

In other cases, such as Freire's, it was the dislike for a teacher that motivated him to aim high for himself,

Then my freshman year . . . I should backtrack just for a quick second. When I was at [Name] High School and I was a junior, I had this teacher who was ready to retire. She was the worst teacher in the world. Actually, it was when I was a freshman. Worst teacher in the world, and I used to say to my friends, "I could teach this class better than she can, and the only difference between her and me is a piece of paper, and I'm going to go on and get that paper." It was at that time my freshman year that I aspired to become a teacher. So, one of the classes that we were able to take for extra credit at [Name] High is that we would go to the local elementary around the corner, Magnolia School, my school, and we were able to go and be placed in classrooms and help tutor elementary kids at that time. I took that class. (Freire)

Educador's story is a little bit different, but showed that success begets success and that was a formula for doing well. When he discovered that he did well in Agriculture classes, he stayed with them and found the success of doing well in one area boded well for all areas.

And then I went to [Name] Valley Community College. And one of the things, growing up that I was successful in – wasn't successful in a lot of things – but I was successful in my Ag [agriculture] classes I was taking. I was taking

vocational agriculture in high school… So, you know, so when I started taking

Ag, and I found success there, I started getting fairly good grades. And, you

know, A's and B's, whereas my other classes were C's and D's, or something

like that. But, so that grew. And so I majored in agriculture, obviously at

community college. And so when I graduated there in 1967, my goal was to go

to Cal Poly. And I majored in Ag, right…just general Ag sciences. My

freshman year [in high school] was a bomb, you know in other words. But my

sophomore year I found, you know, success in agriculture as well as my

vocational Ag classes. (Educador)

Looking at these "restories" of motivation and success it became obvious that

any success in education was enough to spark motivation and keep one going. It was

clear that once an individual felt success, he was much more likely to keep going and

stay motivated, even if the road was difficult or challenging. These early experiences

of success helped to shape these superintendents into individuals who would succeed,

regardless of the obstacles or challenges along the way.

Family

In the area of personal understanding, having a supportive and dedicated

family appeared to have made a difference in the career paths and journeys these

individuals were following. A spouse provided Agusto with the support and

commitment he needed to complete school and seek and pursue the superintendency.

…the second one, of course, I would say *my wife* has had a great influence

because she's been so supportive. I mean we had two kids at a very young

age. We were married at 19/20. We had our first kids when she was 23 and I was 24. By 26, we had both of our kids already. Yet, I hadn't finished college. I was just taking off in my career. I wanted to . . . I was still involved with my church, you know, still involved with singing things that I probably had no business doing any more; but, I was still doing it. She was that foundation, that anchor that said, "I believe in you and I'm going to support you and I'm going to take care of the kids and I'm going to free you to do the things you need to do to get us there, because I'm investing in you." (Agusto)

For Freire and Justo, it was a brother who made a difference and helped to mentor them and keep them on the right path to success where so many others have failed to succeed.

One of the things that I realized also is that *my brother* – because it was mostly my brother and I – and my brother was always one grade ahead of me. *My brother* is brilliant. He is just . . . he ended up in high school at [Name] High graduating third in his class. He ended up, out of four years, getting one B+ and the Salutatorian had an A- and the Valedictorian had straight A's through four years. He's just brilliant. From [Name] High, he went to Stanford University and graduated Stanford University with honors. From Stanford University, went to [UC] Medical School and has been a practicing doctor his whole adult life. I mean he's just . . . he's one of the most brilliant people I've ever met. (Freire)

And although for Freire, his brother was a brilliant role model, for Justo, his brother set a standard of pride in what you do and pride in your work that helped shape him into knowing and believing that he had the power within to reflect and be the kind of person he wanted to be.

> I remember one experience with *my brother*; my older brother was out there working. I had started working out there with him. And of course he was a little irritated because I was small. And I couldn't pick up the pipes that well. The sprinklers would always drag, because I wasn't strong enough to hold a sprinkler pipe up in the air. So one of the times he was irritated, I was out there, and had moved a whole line by myself. And the whole idea was to move it uniformly; the same distance. And I kind of slopped it together. I remember the sprinkler line was really crooked and not well put together. I remember he blew a fuse. He said, "You know, just get the heck out of here! If you're not going to do a good job, then just don't even do it at all." He kind of lectured me on that whole. And my thought was, hey they're not my pipes. What do I care? And, of course, you're young. But that one really left a big impression. I had realized after a while, he's right. You have to have pride, take pride in what you. If you're going to do it, do it well. Don't do it half way. Because that, that work, whether it's a sprinkler line, or whatever, sprinkler pipe stuff, that's reflective of you. It's a reflection of you. (Justo)

These experiences with loved ones who mentor, model, and motivate were invaluable and helped to shape the identity of the individual and how they saw themselves within the realm of what they were doing and trying to accomplish.

Sports and Coaching

This pattern was difficult to identify since was it was intertwined at so many different levels. The notion that sports provided a sense of belonging and a feeling of accomplishment compliments the notion of academic success begets academic success. For these individuals, they blended and belonged to the greater school culture through their participation, and at times, leadership in sports.

For Adan, his leadership skills began developing early on the field. As he became a leader in the discus, he figured out how to coach a winning team.

It was a K-8 system, so we went through 8. Graduated from [High School]; participated in basketball, so I played basketball. I played football. I played baseball, all the sports all the way through high school. In high school actually, it was just basketball and track. I was a discus thrower. (Adan)

I concentrated a lot on sports too, particularly discus and since the coach didn't know how to, I would watch loops of videos of discus throwers like [Bob] Mathias and Al Oerter who were famous discus throwers at the time. I would watch their loops and I would learn how to do it and then I would coach our team on the discus because the coach didn't know how to do it. He had no clue. Actually, we took first, second, third most of the time. My size – I'm small and I had these big old football players, 6'6" guys weighed 250 pounds

try to throw a discus. Well, it's just brute force. You learn a system; you learn the technique; you can throw a lot further. It wasn't brawn. I would use brains. How do you? What do they do? Throwing the hips in; leveraging with the legs; it's all timing; very important stuff that I learned in high school because I was just very interested. What I'm interested in, I do well. I was very focused on that, but I was able to teach it as well, which at that time put me in kind of a leadership role as well. (Adan)

Educador also showed leadership skills that came with sports and excelling and being a champion in his arena. He appeared to have learned a lot about how to belong and be part of the "in" group, while also maintaining a sense of self and who he was.

…And I, oh meanwhile, I did other things. You know, I was in track, I ran track, distance, cross country and all that in high school, and in college. So I was fairly successful. In college, I also started wrestling and stuff like that. But also in track and field and cross country and that sort of thing. So, I was the lead champ in my division, in my event and that sort of thing two years in a row… Yeah, so I wrestled at college. I started wrestling in college at 115. So I didn't have to try to lose any weight, I was already there. So, under 115 right, so, that's how it went… While I was there [in military], I participated in sports, you know, in boxing and wrestling and stuff like that. But those are the main two that I did. So I kept active in sports and stuff. And I was a fourth army wrestling champion, and fourth army boxing champion. And, I had boxed

when I was a kid, starting when I was about 12 years old, you know, so I'd done that in my home town. (Educador)

…But also in track and field and cross country and that sort of thing. So, and I was, you know, I was the lead champ in my division, in my event and that sort of thing, two years in a row. So I, you know, I was fairly successful. So that gave me more courage to step up. And I started to feel more confident, you know. So, but I wasn't very successful in all the other things. You know, and my first language was Spanish to begin with. And so, you know, I struggled through elementary and middle school. Back then it was junior high, the junior high years. And that's why I struggled my first year in high school. But then I found a place, a home, you know, academically as well as physically. So, I had, you know, I had a pretty good run there. (Educador)

Again, Educador eventually found himself working in a community that honored his strengths and that also allowed him to express his love for the two things he knew best, wrestling and agriculture.

Yeah, okay. So I was there at [High School], I was there a year. And then, as a vocational Ag teacher and also I coached wrestling there as well. So I was recruited actually, to go work at [High School] in vocational Ag program, which was a better situation. (Educador)

As for Freire, it was during his early university years that he discovered a new passion for sports. As a way of staying healthy, he took a P.E. class at the university,

in which he was given the opportunity to officiate games. The following quote

described how he spent his extra time at the university.

> I was just trying to hang on academically, but I'll tell you one thing that did
>
> take my time as a passion that I ended up doing at [UC] is out of a lark, I took
>
> a PE class. At [UC], you didn't get any credit for PE. You just took it to stay
>
> healthy or whatever. There was this class called "The Psychology of Sports
>
> Officiating," so I took it. As a result of that, I started to officiate basketball
>
> and baseball games as another source of income. We'd . . . [teacher] who was
>
> the teacher of that class, assembled us and he would start getting contracts
>
> within the community of [Southern California] for us to go out and officiate
>
> those games. In some cases, I was in way over my head, because we'd go out
>
> and here I was a sophomore at [UC] doing State baseball scrimmages, [UC]
>
> baseball scrimmages and baseball. In basketball, here I was in college and do
>
> you remember when we had the old ABA team, the [name of professional
>
> basketball team]? They used to practice at [university name] in the pavilion
>
> there. For their inner squad scrimmages, guess who was doing their games?
>
> That class because of [teacher] and his connections, we were doing those
>
> games. It was incredible…so any extra time I had was spent doing this.
>
> (Freire)

> I was on track in education and we can talk about more of that from [UC]
>
> where I went, but I also kept officiating. As a result, I ended up officiating
>
> high school and junior college basketball for 16 years. I ended up . . . I stayed

with basketball and I ended up . . . I was able to do four CIF championship games at [Name] Arena. I was selected to do that. I had a PAC 10 tryout, you know, and my knees gave out. (Freire)

As a matter of routine, Agusto was involved in sports for most of his young life however it was not until his senior year in high school that he discovered that he could go to college.

In high school, I was involved in cheerleading and that type of thing, so that kind of exposed me to the college mentality. Up to that point, I hadn't even thought about college. Like so many other kids that I was affiliated with in high school. . . and I wasn't around enough people that talked about college to even think about it. So, it wasn't until high school, late high school, like my senior year, that I began to think, "Huh, maybe I should think about college." (Agusto)

I was a gymnast in high school, so I was involved in sports, you know. I think sports kept me off the streets, because a lot of my friends got involved in gang type activities, and you know, perhaps drugs. Sports and my cheerleading experience had a major impact; had a change of direction. (Agusto)

Sports has often been touted as the great equalizer in schools and it was one way to help students experience leadership skills, learn how to compete, and experience success. For two of these superintendents, sports played a large role in their journey and helped to shape who they were and who they became as they continued their quest for success within the system.

Overall, the area of personal understanding pointed to the way these superintendents' understanding of who they were and how they fit into the system made a difference to the career path they had chosen. Race and class obviously made a difference and they began to realize just how they were different and how they were the same and how this understanding can lead to the roles they play in school and in the success of others. Educador summed it up best when he tried to capture the difference between being a counselor in a ritzy upper middle class school and what his lived experiences have to offer.

> …yeah, I can't remember when it was. It's been a while. But anyway, whatever the year was, it might have been sooner too, probably. So he, so my master counselor asked me a question. He said, well, tell me one thing that you learned during the time here. Remember, this was an upper middle class school where I did my counseling internship and very ritzy and all that stuff, right. So he said, tell me one thing you learned. And I said, well what I learned is what these kids need I don't have. And what I have, they don't need. See. So, you got to think about that, you see. Because I didn't say I have something. But whatever I had, they didn't need. And what I found out that what I had, there were kids elsewhere that could use that. Because these kids over here were…their issues or problems would be like, okay, I don't know where to go for my summer vacation, should I go to Hawaii, or go to, you know, Puerto Rico or something, I don't know. You know and our kids, they said well, you know, they had to go up north and harvest crops and stuff like that. And their

issues were like night and day compared to our issues. Okay. So, how am I going to buy a pair shoes to start school with right? Where am I going to come up with money, so that sort of thing, totally different? (Educador)

In CRT it was expected that race plays a role in academic and professional success and, as can be seen, a certain level of personal understanding developed over time in just how race shaped who became successful and the path they followed. From the experience of being retained or put into Special Education, to the experience of an older brother's chastisement to have pride in your work, these experiences shaped these individuals into being leaders with a "different" lived experience.

Cultural Influences

It became obvious in analyzing the data that cultural influences had an impact in shaping the success and identity of each of the individuals involved. They were their culture and they knew and understood the role that culture played in the success they eventually achieved. These superintendents knew when to self-identify with their heritage culture, and when to adapt the values and mores of their adopted culture. In CRT, counterstories served a specific purpose of nurturing community cultural wealth, memory, and resistance (Yosso, 2006). These superintendents' stories spoke to that community cultural wealth they experienced as youth and had created as leaders.

The themes that emerged in this category were a) migrant lives, b) English speaking fathers, c) pride in culture, and d) overcoming obstacles. These themes spoke to the usefulness of CRT in analyzing how a mixed identity emerged for each superintendent, as someone who could go between two cultures and feel very

comfortable, regardless of whether they were dealing with their professional colleagues or poverty stricken parents.

Migrant Lives

Four of the five superintendents were raised in homes where one or both parents were migrant workers. These four superintendents speak of their parents as hard working, having a strong work ethic, and adapting and adjusting to work that was laborious and in turn, this type of work, gave the most back to the family—as in better work, housing, and mobility.

> Very well. I started out growing up in a small family of four. And, my parents were migrant. And so, we, they did follow the crops. And early on, the kids were younger, myself included, we would stay with our grandparents. And so they would go up north and we grew up in the Imperial Valley, an agriculture area, southeast corner of California, along the Mexican and Arizona border. And right about 1986, there was a book, Kodak came out with this book, okay. The Day in the Life of America, it's hard bound, well I have the hard bound. This is soft bound. But, The Day in the Life of America and it was photographed by 200 of the world's leading photojournalists on one day. And, so this picture came out and if you read the caption it says [mom's name], sixty, still works as a migrant farm worker, but thanks to her long years of toil, her son [Educador] does not have to anymore. A graduate of [Cal], runs personnel management programs for area farmers. (Educador)

My dad started out picking cotton in the fields. And my mom was a housewife primarily, although she did do a little bit of work, seasonal work out in the fields too. (Justo)

My father and my mother were both migrant workers here, but my mom's base was... My dad was from… but he had traveled since his teens to the United States and worked in various agricultural areas like Fresno. He's familiar with Imperial Valley, Reno and loading ice cars and then he had heard about logging up in the northern part of California, [Name of] County. He went up there because the pay was better and the work was not as difficult. (Adan)

Well, I think of second generation . . . my parents were born in Texas. So they are first generation, but their immigrant culture is still was very strong with them. My mother was a migrant worker at a young age. My father worked any job he could find. Then they moved to California where I was born, so I was born in California. (Agusto)

The interviews showed that the superintendents understood hard work and what it meant. Their parents provided concrete examples of people who took up difficult work to get ahead and support their families. Their work lives also provided early exposure to the range of systems that operated in the world, and how people moved within them. Last, they showed that as children the superintendents saw clear relationships between work and meeting the needs of one's family.

English Speaking Fathers

In two of these cases the fathers' ability to speak English was a major factor in propelling these Latino superintendents forward. Thus, the ability to speak English and to fit into the mainstream was seen as an important foundation for success.

When we arrived here in [California] in July of 1956 he was working in a lumber mill. Prior to that, he had worked for the person who sponsored him, but he lived in his house. He invited him to stay with him and took him in and really . . . my dad learned English quite rapidly. (Adan)

And then my dad–my step dad actually, but he's my dad, because he pretty much raised me since I was a small infant, toddler–knew English. He had gone to school up until about tenth grade in high school. So he was very good with English language and a very sharp man. (Justo)

The superintendents showed here that their observations since childhood of the positive consequences of speaking English, and thus being accepted by the mainstream. These two had subtle evidence at home of the actions people have undertaken to adapt to their newly adopted country and become successful.

Pride in Culture

Although the positive power of speaking English was evident for two of the superintendents, it did not diminish the pride they felt in their culture and heritage and how that pride in the culture influenced their personal and professional decisions. They all maintained strong family ties and connections and were keenly aware of

being Latinos first, and superintendents' second, never losing sight of the role models they had become, not only professionally, but personally, as well.

I left mom and dad, but I always . . . my dad would always write and I would . . . he would write; we would call. I would come back. It's not like I left them all in the lurch. They were kind of shocked. Here I am. You were going to get a teaching job in the States and you're down in Mexico and what? My dad loved it. My dad was very proud of his country. All through my years growing up he would emphasize Mexico. You're a Mexican. Don't ever forget that. Because I was so acculturated here in the United States that I was losing it, when I went down to the University of Guadalajara, it was like a revival. Here I am in (Spanish) before where I never was and all the things about Mexico I wanted to learn. The history professor . . . I took a history class down there in Mexico. Oh man, I was so thrilled learning about the Revolution and Independence and Cinco de Mayo and what all it means. Here the (Spanish) which has my name in it and (Spanish). So, all of these names and all these places of interest really became who I was; who I am now. That was what, 22? I think that pride has also be instilled in my children. Here growing up in [name of city], I've also seen that they are very proud of being Mexican. But they also know that they're American. They're both. (Adan)

Now leadership – I think being bilingual and bicultural adds a whole new dimension to the superintendency. You're approachable. People talk to you on the street; call you. I think it's an inviting gesture on our part. More

significantly, it's the comfort level that Latinos feel when another Latino is in office. There's pride that comes along with it. People have expressed that to me. They're very proud of the fact that I'm here. They feel represented. They know I represent all children here and all students, but they have a strong commitment to having more Latinos become successful in the schools. Caesar Chavez supported this idea, but it goes beyond that. It's how you feel about it. You have to be proud of who you are and your accomplishments that you've come from a very proud family. Pride can also be a deterrent. It gets in your way when you're too proud. That's a deterrent because that's arrogance and people won't particularly come to you if you feel that way. It's not inviting. (Adan)

So the thing is, that day when my Mom did that, I was no longer ashamed of where I came from and what I could share with my friends who lived in these homes. They loved coming over for dinner. It wasn't too long before my Mom had a reputation as the best cook in the world. They loved coming over. They loved being there at my Mom's house, and especially around dinner time. The thing is, my Mom opened our house, and what I always used to say and as I got older is that my Mom, as poor as we were, is my Mom would end up making our house a home. Whereas when I went to some of these friends' homes and I saw what was going on and the relationships between husband and wife and the relationships between kids, I realized that their house was still just a house. I thought, "You know, we're way ahead of these people." As my

life went on and some of the things that I'll probably be sharing, as the Mama [last name] that I share with staff; I've shared with people over the years, and one of the Mama [sayings] that she always used to say to me was, "You only had to have two things in life. You had to have your health and your happiness. Your happiness is defined through your family." If you had those two things in life, you're going to live a rich life. It doesn't take the monetary things. She was exactly right. (Freire)

The other thing I realized with my Mom, especially when I brought friends over, I'd go and there would be nothing in the cupboards. There would be nothing in the fridge, and I'd say, "Hey Mom, can you cook us something?" Before you knew it, there was this feast. I mean it's as though I thought she ran out to this restaurant, brought it all in, took it out of the covers, the cardboard boxes, and put it on a plate as though . . . and she was the most incredible cook. One of the things—and then I'll move on to the high school years—one of the things—and this was all during the junior high years—one of the things my friends always used to say is, "Gosh Freire, your Mom could open up a restaurant and it would be so successful because she's such a great cook." It was true. (Freire)

As with the two superintendents whose fathers spoke English, here they reported culture and identity as being very important to their development as professionals. Their own experiences of building their (and in Adan's case his children's) identities as both American and Mexican acknowledged that being of two

cultures without abandoning either of them was a normal part of life, just as speaking both Spanish and English was a normal part of life for two of their fathers. In addition, being bilingual and bicultural were positive attributes for a superintendent because they increased his ability to represent a part of his constituency that may have felt previously underrepresented. Last, Freire's experience comparing his own family life to his friend's indicated that he observed both cultures and understood his strong preference for his own home culture, even though he recognized his own "dual citizenship" in other areas. It was evident that moving between the two cultures easily had a positive impact on the success these individuals achieved as superintendents.

Overcoming Obstacles

The superintendents told of life experiences that drew on their personal determination, especially in the face of demeaning or potentially demoralizing insults in their daily lives at school. In each case, they responded to the insult by moving forward and fixing their focus on goals and people that held more value for them. Being closely tied to their families and their sense of their future potential helped them to overcome the obstacles that were put in their path.

> So that's one of the things that I think for me, growing up, even before then, and since then is, whenever put in that kind of situation, and instead of letting that bring me down, or be a real deterrent, it actually makes me more stubborn, more determined to prove people wrong. And that's one of the things I wanted to do is make sure that I proved this guy wrong. That I'm going to succeed, despite his doubts. (Justo)

Justo made this comment after having endured a tough experience in his young academic career. Although, Justo had managed to breeze by elementary and middle school, he faced an obstacle in high school that he did not anticipate—his high school counselor. The following quote captured a typical experience for many Latinos when trying to navigate their high school bureaucracy and define a measure of success.

> …so I went back to my high school to see my counselor. And said I wanted, I told him what my plan was. I said hey, I'm going to be going to college. I want to go to [Cal State]. [Name of big rural city] had only been open for a little bit at the time. And I said, "What do I need to do?" And, this man was just very discouraging. This man, here's a man who is a counselor, he would call me in once a year, for two minutes, five minutes max and say, okay I'm looking at your records. You haven't been in trouble. That's good, okay, well, we'll see you next year. And never had any discussions with me about options, or hey you know, you're taking… I was taking college prep classes the whole time. So when I went to him and told him I wanted to go to [Cal State], he looked at my record for a little bit. And then he said, you know [name], he says, you know I'm thinking you should go to the junior college. I think that's where you're going to be more successful. He said, you know, I see here you've taken a lot of shop classes, and you know they have a great auto shop classes over at [Name] College. Which is really insulting, because I thought, you know, I took auto shop, one auto shop class for two years, and it was my elective. And it's because most of my buddies were in there now. And we didn't really do a

lot, but not because I had an interest in being a mechanic. Not that there's anything wrong with that. But, so this man sees the auto shop and says oh you're a shop jock. So I think it was a very stereotypical those days…I was really angry. I say you know I come here to him for help. And he's trying to redirect me because he thinks, what, all Mexicanos are good with their hands, you know, they make good mechanics? I mean that's the stereotype. I see here you had shop, so go do that. You can be successful with that. I do remember I wasn't stellar with my grades. But still, just instead of trying to give me other options. (Justo)

Freire spoke about the power of his mother's love and understanding to overcome what appeared to be a psychological barrier to academic success. The following quotes progress from teacher doubts to self-discovery to success.

But I'll never forget Mrs. J in third grade . . . fifth grade when I followed my brother and the first thing she said to me was after she realized I wasn't as smart, her comment of me of saying to me one day in frustration, "Why you can't be more like your brother?" I remember Mrs. J. I remember what she looks like and I remember that day of which this occurred, I have to say this, and this is all I ever cared about, my mother never, never in all the years never said, "Why can't you be like your brother?" She never . . . he would bring home report cards of straight A's; I would bring home a report card of B's and C's. A, every once in a while, but B's and C's; and never once did she ever say, "Why can't you be like your brother?" She always did say to me when it

came to those report cards and they called me [nickname] as a family and the reason is because my father's name was [name]. When I was a kid growing up, instead of having two [name]'s in the family because my name is [whole name], they called me [nickname]. To this day, my family calls me [nickname] and then my professional life and my friends call me [first name]. (Freire)

There were many obstacles in the daily life and educational lives of these superintendents. The superintendents reported obstacles that were typical of many students and others that were unique to students who were stereotyped by their educational institutions. Still even the more typical obstacle showed cultural values embedded in the response. Freire's experience with a teacher who expected him to be as smart as his brother was painful, but his mothers support and perspective helped him to overcome. His mother's perspective on him was "all I ever cared about." In the other comment, Justo responded to the insult of being stereotyped as a low achieving non-college bound student with anger and determination. In these two cases, identities were strengthened because the superintendents did not permit outsiders to redefine them, in one case as a "shop jock" and in the other as "more like you brother." In these examples, a clear identity, many years before the move toward the superintendency, can be seen.

Professional Experiences

Although each of the superintendents boasted about very successful and unique careers in education, there were certainly some similarities in their rise to the top.

They were all very well aware of the opportunities they were afforded, at times

because they were Latinos and at times, for the talents they displayed. There was no

doubt that race played a role in the professional experiences of these superintendents,

as CRT would predict. In CRT it was assumed that race does play a role and holds

that people such as Latino superintendents offer legitimate, appropriate, and critical

understandings about racial experiences. Furthermore, CRT viewed this knowledge as

a strength that drew explicitly on the lived experiences of Latinos by analyzing "data"

including, but not limited to, oral traditions (Yosso, 2006).

The themes that emerged under the category professional experiences were a)

role models, b) organization influences/community outreach, c) multiple

opportunities/concurrent opportunities, d) atypical career paths and e) superintendent

realizations. These themes were fully explored as the career path for these successful

Latino superintendents was traced.

Role Models

Role models were very important to these five successful Latinos who were

able to achieve the superintendency at a time when very few Latinos were being

successful. These superintendents had both personal and professional role models that

made an incredible difference in their lives. They reported parents, teachers, and

principals who played a role in helping them to get ahead, believed in themselves, and

set an example of what could be.

For example, the superintendents reported the ways their parents modeled adult

life to their children. They modeled honoring obligations through family and parental

love, being responsible through providing for the family, being punctual to work in the fields, and showing independence and being "tough." What the parents modeled and what the superintendents recognized from the vantage point of adulthood played into their sense of integrity as they managed relations among their many identities.

Parents

Well, first and foremost, I would say my dad. My dad–you heard me say earlier in my speech–my dad had very little education, but my dad was a very loving father. He spent time with us; all of his kids. He was the first; he was the one that showed me this character, the depth of character that was needed. My dad was a very strong man of character, and that had an influence on me. He was not a loud man, not a very social man, but he spent time with his kids. That had an impact on me. (Agusto)

I was, and I say this modestly and humbly, I was well liked. I think part of it had to do with sports and the other part had to do because I was a good person because of my mom. I was just a good person, and people like that. (Freire)

He decided to come up here and work to make enough money to buy a tractor and then go home. We would see him off and on going back and forth, but he had established a base in [Mexico]. He actually had a house built. He was a handyman; all around construction guy. He bought and built a home. He actually built it with his coworkers so we had a house in [Mexico]. He came up and decided to bring the family up. My dad was the kind of a person that

nothing stopped him from trying and doing different things, so he learned how to drive the cats they used up in the logging; how to set chokers; how to fall trees; how to drive big rigs so he was a man of versatility. (Adan)

You know, my dad didn't let us get away with anything. You'd think that he being the boss and the foreman, he would… he would let us slack off. And if anything, my dad was a lot harder on us. He expected us to be up really early sometimes, ridiculously early, before we even had to be out in the fields. But his whole thing was he was going to teach us some responsibility. So we'd get up even though we didn't have to be at work for two hours or something. And so we would eat and hang around and just kind of kill time before he got around to coming and picking us up and taking us out into the fields in his work truck... I bought books all the time through those, back then it was Arrow and Tab Books. And I ordered books all the time. My parents could at least afford that. They were pretty cheap back then, like 35 cents, 25 cents, 45 cents. And so I developed my own library at home. I had, my parents bought me a little shelf and I collected books, and put my own little library together and I read all kinds of stuff. (Justo)

So you go in to this, as I look at it. So you're going through life very advanced there's individuals, there's you know, my mother for example. You know the reason she's in this book, is because when I was interviewed, the photojournalist, I just spoke about her. How she'd been a big… See my mother was, you know, a single parent, right. I mean, and we were never on welfare or

anything. She worked real hard all the time. And she, she was strict as a door nail. And *she's tough*. And she grew up without a mother as well, right. I mean so she's pretty independent, she was a go getter. And so she was always on the go and move. And so we learned to cook and wash and iron and do all those things. Sometimes she had to stay up North, Northern California, or Central California, or on the Coast. You know, Oxnard, Oceanside, she was a tomato packer later on. And she was, and we would be in school. We would be at home, going to school. (Educador)

Well, you know, I knew that we had a unique experience in the poverty levels when we were growing up only after I was an adult. But my family was different in a lot of ways. One was that being a Latino, I didn't grow up in the Catholic experience. My parents are Southern Baptists. So that was a little different; and therefore, I didn't get a lot of the same culture experiences that many, you know, of my friends were receiving. One being the Mass and the other being Catechism when I was growing up as a kid, and I didn't go to Catechism type things…You know, I think I already mentioned the experience with our parents and their direction on a religious basis. One of the things that had an impact because of that was our parents; it was a habit for them every Sunday to be at church. Seven kids, as poor as we were, we were always ready on Sunday mornings to go to church. So we learned that our faith was important. So that was ingrained in us; it was a big part of our lives. (Agusto)

These recollections about parents indicated that, as adults, the superintendents recognized the characteristics they learned at home, which helped them in their climb to the superintendency. Role models had to model something, and in these narratives, they modeled "depth of character," and spending time with their children. Their parents were good people. They showed determination, they spoke English, they were tough, expected their children to do housework, and go to school. Their expectations extended to their aspirations for their children. Notably these recollections were framed by contrasts, despite having little education, despite poverty, despite many children in the family, the parents modeled and passed on many positive attributes for their children.

Teachers and Principals

The superintendents' recollections about their teachers were powerful commentaries about their own experiences as well as revealing portraits of the kinds of teachers who made a difference in students' lives. In recollection, these teachers made learning "exciting," exposed their students to school content, for example algebra in sixth grade, offered tales of other cultures and other ways of living, advocated for better opportunities for students, and generally contributed to the superintendents' sense of themselves as learners with potential. Adan was emphatic in his reflections about the teachers who made school exciting for him, and who helped him learn to reflect on his own learning. Agusto reflected on a teacher who exposed him to music he had never heard before, and on a teacher who impacted his life when she told he parents he had potential. Freire told about a teacher who "turned my

academic life around," and another who advocated for his transfer to a more advanced

math class. These teachers played important roles in these superintendents'

development. They recognized their potential, found ways to usher them into more

elite parts of school life, and even countered stereotypes that other teachers believed.

In these recollections, the superintendents revealed their own engagement with school

and their growing comprehension of the way these large social structures, which were

outside their family circle, operated.

> Oh…way back when, I think it was more like fourth grade. By the time I got
>
> to sixth grade, the teacher, and I think, he meant it in a positive way, but today
>
> it may look like a negative way. He said "You know, here you have [name]
>
> who comes from a different country and he knows English better than any of
>
> you." He would scold the class. So that kind of made me feel embarrassed but
>
> at the same time proud… Algebra was taught in sixth grade. I started learning
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> Algebra in sixth grade because *the teacher* was a math teacher. In fact, he
>
> taught math and some English and the rest of it kind of went by the wayside. I
>
> was very strong in math and strong in English. By the time I got to seventh
>
> grade, I had *another teacher* who had been in the military in Taiwan. He
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> brought in a lot of the Chinese culture and we learned new games like cricket.
>
> Nobody knew what cricket was. We were the only class out there playing
>
> cricket and everybody looked at us kind of funny as if "What are you doing?"
>
> It's cricket, folks. We learned the arts; the Chinese arts. We learned some of

the alphabet . . . they're not alphabet; the characters; Chinese characters that he taught us. (Adan)

Yeah, well, that's why I say it was such an exciting time. Sciences–he gave us projects to work on. He brought in materials for us to do our science projects. Very exciting stuff . . . we had to develop a circulatory system and the model for it. We discovered that if you put a pump in and put pressure all around, it would just explode. So, we had to find a way for the blood to circulate. Those are all things that through trial and error we learned and we had to explain what happened in the process. Exciting! In eighth grade we had rotating teachers. We had four of them so each one brought a new perspective to the classroom. One was, of course, mine, was very strong in math. We had an English teacher who was very strong in English literature who brought that to us. We had one who was well rounded. He brought in materials . . . he was more of a very cultured man who had traveled a lot, so he brought in information about different parts of the world he traveled. Through his eyes, we were able to at least experience a little about these countries he lived in. He would tell us tales about his experiences there and what the people were like and they were all very vivid descriptors. (Adan)

…so, I did very well there. My teachers took a real liking to me. I was always a very good student. I really enjoy school because I excelled, I competed. I wanted to be the best. And then that kind of translated to sports. I did real well

in sports too because I wanted to be the best in sports, and competed. I was very competitive. (Justo)

But I had a number of teachers that had an influence on me. One was my choir teacher. . . because I was in choir from junior high on, and my choir teacher in junior high took a real special interest in who I was. Again, you know, you're young. You don't understand why, but they do. So he took it upon himself to expose me to various other kinds of music and other things that I had never heard before. So, that was kind of nice. (Agusto)

I had a Social Studies teacher in eighth grade that also had an impact because she made a real effort to contact my parents and get my parents involved. Up to that point, my parents, not knowing English, would never get involved, not really. This teacher reached out to my parents and that had an impact because I was real curious how my parents would interact with my teacher. This teacher was one that told my parents, "Your son has potential, and I don't know if anybody's told you that, but you ought to be thinking about a way for him to go to college," and that type of thing. She did that on her own, so that had a really big impact. (Agusto)

I have to say that the teachers as a whole at that elementary level were very empathetic knowing that we came from a single parent household and back in those days, that was basically unheard of. These days, it's no big deal, but back then it was. I had some teachers who took me under their wing and

treated me a little differently because of that. For them, I have great appreciation for the memories that they left me. (Freire)

It wasn't until that time and I'll never forget. It was a Spanish class. It was my first period, the end of the first trimester when I was a freshman. Mr. M and he said, "I'd like to announce the students in this class who made the honor roll." He called names off, and he called me name. I raised my hand and I said, "Mr. M, I think that's a mistake. I think it's supposed to be [my brother], not Freire." He looked and he goes, "No, they have [your brother] listed here for tenth grade. They have you listed here for ninth grade." I thought, You're kidding me. What happened is, I ended up for the first time in my life getting two A's, two B's and two C's that equated to a 3.0 and the honor roll started at 3.0. I have to tell you; that turned my academic life around. It finally turned my academic life around. (Freire)

Back then, they had just started honor roll classes. We had no AP classes; we had no IB classes. You either had at risk classes, mainstream classes or you had what they called the fast track classes. Those were ones, for example, when I left eighth grade; because of who I was in eighth grade, and because I think of skin color if you will, I was placed in a pre-algebra class. Basically when I went into it, it was a sea of brown faces. It was with Mr. B in ninth grade. I was whipping through that stuff, and I thought, "Why am I here?" It's not because of these guys. These people were my friends. I loved hanging out with them. In terms of the academics, I mean I was whipping through this. I

would come to him and I would say, "Mr. B, this is not what I need." By the grace of Mr. B, he pushed hard for me to move me from that pre-algebra dumbbell math class into Algebra I. The only thing that they were concerned about is that I'd already missed a first trimester of the foundation for Algebra I; but they put me in and I had [Mr. S], one of the most inspirational teachers I've had. Again, all of a sudden, I walk in and in this case, there were a lot of my Joe Jock friends that I played football with and starting to play basketball with, and they were, "Where have you been, Freire?" and all of this stuff and after a week of being in the class, we got our first test. I took the test and I got it back on Monday. I'll never forget Mr. S passing the test out one by one and he's putting the test down. I look at it, and it has this huge question mark on it. On the other side of it . . . it's incredible how we remember these things, isn't it. On the other side of the page was this 100% and the huge question mark. I looked because he stopped. He didn't keep passing them out. He stopped. I looked up at him and I was pointing to the question mark and he looks down at me and he says, "Where have you been?" (Freire)

Well, okay, I finished up at General [Middle School]. I graduated from eighth grade. It was one of the largest eighth grade classes ever. There were 17 kids that graduated that year. High school, you know, *my principal* used to warn me. And she was a hard-nosed lady. But she had a big heart. One of those real tough, not even the farmers out there challenged her. But you know, but she just had the biggest heart for the Latino kids. And really I think that's kind of

paved my path. But I got a little bit cocky in junior high, like all junior high kids do. And so I remember she used to get on me a lot, being like my mom. She would tell me, she was, you know, here you're just a big fish in a small pond. But when you get to high school, and that was 2,000 kids there, you're going to be just a little fish in a big pond. And I thought, oh yeah, whatever, you know. I didn't, they warned me and you know, I hit high school, and I was fine. I adapted. (Justo)

I finished high school, I had no problem graduating. And that *principal* that I talked about Leona [the principal], she called me. One of my kid brothers, when I got home one day, and I was close to graduating, I think it was like two or three months from graduating. And he said, Mrs. [the principal] said she wants to talk to you. She wants you to come by. So I did. I went by and saw her. She was very direct. She said, she called me [name], because my name is [name]. So she said, [name], I know you're going to be graduating soon, right? I said, yeah, yeah. She said okay. She goes, so what do you plan to do when you finish school? And to tell you the truth, at that time, I didn't really have a clue. I thought well, I was thinking I could go work in the fields. My only two options I saw were going to work in the fields or joining the military to get out of the home. Get out, experience the world. Give me a chance to grow up. College was not an option. And I don't know why. I mean you'd think with that I loved academics. I just didn't see that. There was nobody in my family that had done that. I was the second oldest, third oldest at the time. And I just knew

that was not an option. So she asked me what I was doing. I told her well, I was thinking I'd go work in the fields, or, then I told her, I think I may want to join the military. And she said, you know what, you're going to college. She didn't ask me. She said you want to go, she just said, you know what, you're going to college. And I said, oh, okay. She said I don't want to see you waste your opportunities. You're a smart kid and I don't want to see you waste that. And so yeah, she said you're going to college. She goes, I know somebody, Dr. [name] who runs the Migrant Mini Corps Program. And I've already talked to him about you. He's expecting you. Don't let me down. You have an appointment on… Dr. [name] expecting you and he's going to get you in school. I was like, okay. And I didn't say like, no I want to wait. I said, oh, okay. And I walked out of there and I thought wow. That's Mrs. [the principal], you know to the end, that was her. She's just not going to take no for an answer. (Justo)

From their positions of leadership, superintendents represented schooling in a massive way. They had not only been students, they had been teachers, perhaps counselors, assistant principals, principals and other types of administrators. In these recollections of influential teachers, the superintendents were telling the stories of how they got "into" school in their childhoods. Their influential teachers commented on their potential, engaged them with exciting content and activities, recognized their abilities, and required them to reflect on their own learning. It was possible that without these teachers as early "mentors" and the socialization to schooling that they

provided, the superintendents' identities would not have inclined toward positive relationships with schooling. In CRT terms, the superintendents' resiliency may have rested on the foundation of the school-positive identities that their influential teachers fostered.

Organizational Influences/Community Outreach

Resiliency in these children came from different experiences and interactions with multiple individuals. For many of these Latino superintendents, this resiliency first came from their interactions with family members, secondly it came from a love of sports, and thirdly, it came from organizations and how their outreach to communities and individuals made a difference. Overall, Mini-Corps seemed to have the greatest influence in terms of an educational career, but other organizations reaching out to the Latino community also made an incredible difference for these individuals, many of whom were not given a chance to succeed based on birth circumstances.

Mini-Corps

Mini-Corps was an organization that gave migrant students who wanted to become teachers a chance to tutor and decide if they wanted to be teachers. Justo's recalls his interaction with Mini-Corps at his K-8 school.

I also experienced Mini Corps as a student in school, my last few years at General [middle school]. We actually had Mini Corps students out there. And they were perfect role models. I remember both of them very well. Marcos,

and I think the other, the other guy's last name was [last name], I think his first name was Dave. And they just were awesome, awesome role models. I aspire to be like them man. They were just, they were awesome. They were very smart, and they worked with us in sports, coached us. And so I think that that's part of it too. I thought, you know, I could do that. I can be the role model. I can help out the kids and be,… so very successful. They made an impression on me. I think both those guys made a real impression on me. I remember Marcos took us in to a tournament one time, up in [Northern California]. And these were all large school, we didn't know any better. We went out, I mean he knew, but we didn't know any better, us players. And so we went up there to [school] to play. First game we played, who was it, we played [big mean school] Junior High School. And they beat us pretty good. But we were, we never played, we kept trying, we kept trying. We lost by 18 points. And I remember we were pretty dejected in the locker room. And Marcos comes out and Mr. [name] with him. And I remember Marcos said, you know you guys got to get out there and have some fun. You guys just aren't having fun. We're like, oh yeah, we just got stomped. And he goes--how many free throws you guys think you missed in that game? I don't know. He said you missed 18 free throws. He says, so you guys lost by 18 points. What would happen if you made those free throws, or missed or made most of them? You guys would be right in there with these guys. And I kind of thought, he's got a point there, okay. Which, you know, I think has a big impact on a person. You know you

think, it's this thing about not being a quitter. But also, you know, being, facing

insurmountable challenges and saying you can do this. You can pull it together

and you can do this stuff. I think that added to me as well, the fact that you

don't quit and nothing's impossible. And you know, and the adaptability….

adapting to the situations. (Justo)

As an adult, Educador recalled working for Mini-Corps and giving back to the

community. He felt at home with this organization and thought he had found his niche,

only to move in a year for a higher position; however the experience was still very

important to him and helped to shape and mold the leader he would eventually

become.

…so I got a job back with migrant education in the California Mini-Corps

Program. Okay. So I go to California Mini-Corps I was there for only a year. I

was a teacher, part of the migrant teacher trainee project. So I was there for a

year. (Educador)

Likewise with Justo, his early childhood experiences led him full circle, as he

entered college; he returned to his roots and worked for Mini-Corps.

And so John convinced me to join Mini Corps, even though I really didn't

think about becoming a teacher per se. I did have in my mind that I wanted to

become a social worker. So I was along those same lines. I don't know why

social work…it might have been my interactions as a kid, saying I want to

grow up and be able to do something helpful and help people like me or

whatever who are like me. So I got in to Mini Corps because I thought I need a

job, I need an entrance in to school. And Mini Corps was a way to do it. So they put me to work in classes as a tutor. And then of course I took up coaching kids in grade school. And I think within two to three months of that, I realized that's what I wanted. I did that just for a couple months and thought, you know, I want to go in to teaching. And this is my calling; I just felt a real passion for that and connection, even though I was young. I really enjoyed working with kids, working with teachers. I really enjoyed the coaching and it was good. (Justo)

Church and Other Youth Organizations

Agusto did not have any experiences with Mini-Corps, but instead interacted with multiple organizations. Agusto remembered several organizations; his family's church, Outward Bound, YMCA, and Boy's Scouts that made a difference and helped to shape him as the leader he would later become.

You know, I think I already mentioned the experience with our parents and their direction on a religious basis. One of the things that had an impact because of that was our parents; it was a habit for them every Sunday to be at church. Seven kids, as poor as we were, we were always ready on Sunday mornings to go to church. So we learned that our faith was important. So that was ingrained in us; it was a big part of our lives. And then through church, you had, you know, youth groups and they had an influence. You had youth leaders. Then you had referrals to community groups like Outward Bound had an impact. YMCA groups; having grown . . . growing up in a poor area, those

kinds of organizations reached out to my socioeconomic kids. I was a Boy Scout. That had an influence. Again, it was an outreach to the barrio kids, but my parents made sure we took advantage of those things. So I credit them a lot for that. (Agusto)

Boys and Girls Clubs

Well I did you know at that time they had the Boys & Girls Clubs and I was kind of a minor officer in the Boys Club. First time I had to do a speech to get elected was there…I did take Speech. My goal was to learn English well and learn it rapidly; better than any of my students. That was my competitive edge. (Adan)

Several of the superintendents recalled the boost they received from participating in various youth organizations. Notably, from interacting with role models, Justo recognized in himself his own potential for being a role model for younger people. The role models who pushed him, and who gave him the message "Don't quit. Nothing is impossible" and told him that he could grow up to make a difference. The interviews also showed an early awareness of outreach that was designed for Mexican American children, outreach "to the barrio." Last, speaking English again emerges as an early ambition, recognized as a "competitive edge" by one of the interviewees.

In summary, these experiences with outreach organizations that were specifically trying to make a difference in the lives of Latinos proved to be very effective for this group of superintendents and probably played an influential role in

the leaders they would become. They were helped by the traditional system within the constructs built to reach out to the community, and thus became believers that the system could and would make a difference in the lives that were touched.

Multiple and Concurrent Opportunities

The generation that produced these five superintendents was the generation that came of age in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Accordingly, although each of them showed undeniable ambition, determination and resilience through their public school educations, each of them also found themselves in the right place to apply for funding and opportunities, or to be recruited rapidly for positions that required their bilingual and bicultural abilities. Notable in the interviews was the sense of surprise at the possibilities that came their way.

The five superintendents interviewed, as they restory their lives and recount the paths they took to get to the superintendency; showed a pattern that came up in the transitions that they experienced at various levels of the organization. They spoke about the multiple and concurrent opportunities they had as they transitioned in and out of college, in and out of the classroom, into the principalship, into the district office and eventually onto the superintendency. The road was not easy nor the path well traveled. At times, these trailblazers had to reconnect with their roots, make a tough decision, and/or take advantage of an open door from a helpful mentor. These next entries show the different transitions and levels of transitions that these Latino men experienced throughout their careers.

College Transition

I tell you, it started to open doors in terms of the fact and I ended up graduating

High [School] on the honor roll and got into [UC]. Then went through [UC]

and I graduated [UC] with honors. It was just amazing. Here was this kid that

got B's and C's his whole life and ended up graduating, which I think next to a

Stanford and Berkeley and some of the other private schools, an incredible

school. And I graduated with honors. When I crossed the stage that day, the

first thing I did was I went over to hug my brother and said, "I was able to do

this because of you," which was true. So the thing is that getting into the fact

that we were Latino is that it opens so many doors in terms of opportunities. I

will never forget. . . my going into my freshman year when we had to fill out

the paperwork for finances and it may not sound like much now…but it was a

lot back then. In 1972, I'm filling out the application, and we're at a kitchen

table and my brother's filling out his application for his sophomore year at

Stanford.   I'm filling out the application for my freshman year at [UC].

Stanford is going to cost him that particular year $5,600 which was a huge

amount in 1972. It was going to cost me $2,400 at UCSD. My mother's total

income that year from cleaning houses and the social security checks that she

got from my Dad was $2,100. Because of that, we ended up; get this, at the

end of four years at [UC], my brother owed ten dollars. The state, because of .

. . we were able to stay on track academically and because we came from a

minority family and because my mother was not a college graduate, he ended up owing ten dollars after four years at Stanford. I ended up owing $600 at the end of four years at [UC], because the state came in and said, "We're going to invest in your future." It was incredible, just amazing. (Freire)

Military as Option and Possibility

Then I went into teaching. I decided to get my teaching credential in my third year. They were on the quarter system. The first quarter I decided not to go to school after I graduated because I was being drafted. At that time, it was the Vietnam War and I was drafted. I went down to Oakland and asked the exam which qualified at that time was called 1A which is "you're ready to go." Pack up your bags and . . . I went to Oakland for the physical. That's where everybody went from Northern California. I classified 1A and was just waiting and then the war ended so I didn't have to go. But I was on the call list to go. My number – they had the lottery at the time – my number was very low. It was a matter of time. Well then that didn't happen and I went back to school. (Adan)

…at [Cal] I was to major in Ag, that's all I knew. I was going to major in Agriculture. But, I didn't have the finances. So what I did is I joined the military. So I went to the army, the United States Army for three years to get the G.I. bill. So I had a pretty good run there. I went to Fort Ord and did my boot camp there. And I was a squad leader there. And then I flew into Atlanta, went to Aniston, Alabama. And that was the chemical core. So I was a flame

thrower, chemical equipment repairman was my MOS, whatever. You know, that was my specialty. So most of the time I just fixed flame throwers and got them ready so people could fire them and train with them and stuff. And this is 1967. So, anyway, so then I went to Albuquerque to the Sandia Base. The name of the place was Sandia Base. The Atomic Energy Commission was in charge of that base, and, by and large, and we served there. And I was a sergeant handling the radioactive training. I was in charge of keeping these testing sites, or training sites, hot with radiation. You had to have some low level radiation in place so that people could learn to use the equipment and learn to decontaminate themselves. So, I did that for about a year and a half. (Educador)

Becoming Teachers

I got recruited. You know I've always been kind of recruited for everything. It's been kind of lucky that way. I moved. I decided to go back to [Northern California] County. And I don't know how this guy found out. But it must have, I don't know where he got the name. But some, I got a call from the principal that one of the principals in [town], a little agriculture town, 4,000 people something. It's a forgettable little place. And the teacher, the principal called me, [name]. He said Justo, you know, I see that you finished up school. We need teachers. Why don't you come on out. And then he found out I was a bilingual teacher, had a bilingual cross-cultural emphasis. So man he hired me on the spot. You know. I became a teacher, started teaching fifth grade,

bilingual. And then did that, and then I switched over to second grade, and did second grade for a while. And so that's where I started with my education. (Justo)

So, after two years I graduated from [University] with a degree in Agriculture, Business Management with an emphasis in management. And, so I stayed another year to get my teaching credentials in vocational agriculture. So, the summer of 1973, I moved back to the [Name] Valley. And I got my first teaching position at [Name] High School. But, so…I was there a year. And then, as a vocational Ag teacher and also I coached wrestling there as well. So then I went to, I was recruited actually, to go work at [Another] High School in vocational Ag program, which was a better situation. They had a school farm and it was just a better situation for teaching, because they give you a pickup, you know, and all that. Where as in my previous position, I had to use my own car, because you go out and you visit projects. You know, kids would have animals they were raising. And so you had to do project visitations. Well at this place they give you a brand new truck every six months, from the agencies. So, and then, it was a totally better situation. (Educador)

I went through [UC], was able to get a credential to teach, and a BA. I walked into [Southern Californian] school district at the age of 21, a second grade classroom at [Elementary] Lane. I got interested in Special Ed, so then I moved from [City] into [Another Southern California City] because they had Special Ed programs. Went back and started working on a credential, a

Masters for Special Ed at [University]. Got priced out; I was halfway through my . . . got priced out, so then I finished it up at [University] State. Taught Special Ed; I taught elementary school. Taught Special Ed with [City]; got interested in Administration. (Freire)

In college we were . . . I went to State my last three years, went two additional years and got my BA degree in Spanish and History... Then I went into teaching. I decided to get my teaching credential in my third year. I think I was inspired by my middle school teachers. They liked what they did. They enjoyed it. I said "I want to be like that. I want to do something I like and enjoy and can share." It wasn't easy. My first teaching job was real rough because I had not been trained on how to deal with discipline. How is that you get your objective across to kids who are at all different levels? All these things that you experience as a teacher, I had no clue. I went through; I had a Master teacher who would guide me. I would take a class or two here and there and teach it, but she was always there to give me pointers. When you're off on your own and kind of doing it and these were (Adan)

After I finished my credential, a friend of mine invited me to go to Mexico. Now I had been to Mexico before and I'd been to the University of [Name] in the summer program. It was actually through the University of [Name] that I took the summer program there, loved it and visited Mexico City and then I decided to go back and he said "Well, let's take a two week trip." I said "Fine." So we went and he stayed in [town] and I went down to Mexico City

and there was a . . . I was walking down the street and I saw the sign that said English Teacher Wanted and I went in and asked and they gave me the job, so I stayed. I stayed three years… after I got my credential. So they saw I had a credential. They liked that I was from California. It was a British school. They had their own curriculum. I said "I don't speak British English, the Queen's English." That was fine. They're learning English. It's good to have models of different types of English here. Fine, so they hired me. It was after . . . it was during the same time. It was like six months in the British school and then I got to the American school. It paid a lot better – almost double what I was making at the British school. I got there . . . through them I actually had an experience. I would learn . . . because I knew some of Mexico City and all the time I was there that they appointed me as the teacher that would take the field trips with the new kids coming in to the American school system called [name] and take them once a quarter on a field trip to all the interesting sights in Mexico City. I would take them to the Museum of Anthropology, the pyramids, a day trip. They would get to see the sights. It was great. I took a course over at the Museum of Anthropology. I got interested in anthropology, archeology in particular. I wanted to go visit down into the Yucatan and go take a look at the pyramids; the ruins down in that area. So opportunities came and I did go. I visited every state in Mexico except for Baja California and that came in just four years ago. I finally went to Cabo [San Lucas]. (Adan)

…but we moved back here to California. With all our belongings – I have a little Kharmann Ghia. I still have it – a '69 Kharmann Ghia…I got a call that Friday from [town] but instead of waiting, I took the job here. And the rest is history. I'm glad I did. I never regretted taking it. So I went from private schools to public school – my first public school experience…After three years at [town], I said "This is my life. I love teaching." (Adan)

Becoming Bilingual Counselors

…in the meanwhile, I got recruited by friends to apply for a counseling program they were developing over at [Name] State to increase the number of minority, Latino, bilingual counselors. So we were at a conference. Actually we were at a conference in San Diego, we were in Coronado. And one of my friends from Mini Corps, said, Justo, they're interviewing here in one of the rooms, you know. Like one of the rooms where you presented. They're interviewing for this program. "Why don't you come down? A bunch of us are going to go down and apply and interview." I said, "No, I don't want to be a counselor. I just started teaching and I don't want to go to school either." And so, she talked me into it. So we went down. And I thought, oh what the heck. And so I went down there and I interviewed and filled out the app. They selected me and I thought, oh great. Because when I finished school, I was so burned out I just told myself I will never go back to school again…so I did that for a year, a little over a year. And that was an intense program. That was 40 something units in about a year and a half. And we finished and my whole

intention wasn't to go in to counseling. I thought it would make me a better teacher to have those counseling skills and counseling background. But as soon as I finished that, there was an opening for a counselor. They wanted a bilingual counselor. So I did that. So I went ahead and decided to do that. I left teaching, probably a little early, but it was fine. I went in and became a counselor. (Justo)

So this fellow was working, and his wife, were working on their masters in counseling, right. It was in education, with counseling emphasis. So he convinced me to take one class. And so I did, with the University of [Name]. And they had...yeah... one counseling class, counseling theory or something like that. And so I took it and they said, you got nothing to lose. And so if you like it you stay, if you don't you go. And one of my goals had been, and in the back of my head I'd like to become a counselor some day, so I pushed forward, you know. So I got a masters about two and a half years later, I got a masters from University of [Name] in counseling, and I got my two personnel services credential, which allows you to counsel right at K-14. And I also got my community college counseling credential at the same time. So anyway, 39 units later, the GI bill paid for all of that, right. So that was great…

so what was happening is that I was teaching. I taught there two years. And after two years, you know it's a slow process. I had more than 15 units, so I had a partial counseling credential, okay. Back then you could get a partial counseling credential. And, so there was a position open in [Name] Union

High School, where I had graduated from high school, it was in counseling for the migrant education program, special program that the county had there at [Name] Union High School. So I went to and applied and I got the position. So after only three years of teaching, I was already counseling. So I went down there and of course, I worked with migrant kids and that's what I used to do as a kid growing up. And, so we had a lot of things in common, so it was easy because I had a lot of things to relate. Yeah, I was there for three years, as a counselor for migrated education students. And that was a unique position because I was able to place students in different jobs around the campus, or off campus in agencies, non-profit agencies or governmental agencies and that sort of thing. So that was great. And I also took kids to field trips and stuff like that. (Educador)

The preceding sections of the interviews reveal the various ways that doors were opened to the superintendents in their college years and early careers. As one notes, the state of California was willing to invest in his future, a fact that he finds amazing to this day. A second did not have the finances to attend college so joined the military, and as he reported, "had a pretty good run there." Several comment that they were recruited for credential programs, MA programs, and jobs. One commented that he was "lucky that way." But it was not a matter of luck. Indeed, being bilingual in Spanish and English and bicultural Americans of Mexican heritage became a somewhat unexpectedly desirable set of attributes. Justo commented "And then he

found out I was a bilingual teacher, had a bilingual cross-cultural emphasis. So man he hired me on the spot. You know. I became a teacher."

Adan had a similar experience. He reported that he had two job offers, "I got a call that Friday from [town] but instead of waiting, I took the job here. And the rest is history. I'm glad I did." They accepted jobs that returned them to communities like those they had grown up in, and put them to work with "migrant kids," with whom they had a lot in common. They also began to reflect on their lives and their role models, especially their own teachers. One commented on the inspiration he found in recalling his middle school teachers, who enjoyed their jobs, and who made him want to do the same, to enjoy his job and share with others. At this stage in their careers, the superintendents were teachers or counselors who enjoyed their jobs, and who felt they were giving something back to their communities or communities like the ones where they grew up.

Becoming an Administrator

The next stage of their careers took the superintendents out of the classroom and school counselors' offices and into preparation for becoming administrators. The three interview excerpts here indicated, again, the role of peers and mentors in the process of deciding to earn an administrative credential. At this stage in their upward movement in educational leadership this mentorship ranged from passing on information about a program, to passing on names that led to rapid recruitment into administrative positions.

…there's no way I could have . . . I was so frustrated and so I ran into a friend who said "You know they . . ." I asked to go to the ACSA conference here in Sacramento at that time and I went to it and boy it was an eye opener. I ran into a friend there and he said "You know they have an internship program at the state college for [administrative] credentialing." I was just finishing up my Spanish Literature Masters at [University] and said "Well, I've got one semester left to finish." He said "Well, why don't you do that? You're doing the job. You get to go for a day and spend an entire day doing different things and then you have night classes. You should be able to do it. You just have to get your district to agree." (Adan)

During that time, some friends said hey, a bunch of us are going to go up and apply for this administrative program at [State]. And I said, who? They said well [Name], and this and that. I said okay fine. I said you know what? I'll go with you guys. So we went up there. I didn't really want to become an administrator. I just thought it would make me a better counselor to have administrative skills in the classroom. So I went up there and said, I have nothing to lose. Went up there and applied, and interviewed for the program and got selected. So they developed a cohort of about 27 of us, 25, 27 of us. And went to, through two years at [State]; picked up my admin credential. And then, not thinking I was going to actually use it right away, but okay I'll bank it and see what happens. I finished the program in the summer time. And I got a call within a couple of weeks of finishing my program from somebody back in

[name of town]. I had left this town [name of town] to go to work as a counselor elsewhere. (Justo)

So I paid $40, went and took the test. Now, in order to take the test…and it was a Sunday, it was in [Southern California] where I took the test…but, back then, you had to have a Masters and you also have to have at least, well, a teaching credential and at least three years teaching or something like that. So I had all those requirements. The requisites, so then I took the test. And I got my administrative services credential, which is the one I use these days, right. For, and they're clear and stuff. So, okay… I left counseling for the [Name] Union High School. I got a call. (Educador)

Becoming Deans and Assistant/Vice Principals

And somebody back in [town] had heard about me and said, hey, I understand you just finished your admin program. And I've heard good things. I'd be real interested in, you know, to see what you, would you be interested in a job here. And I said, "Well what's the job?" And first he said, "AP or a counselor." And I said, "Well I'm already a counselor." I said, "I don't want to be a counselor." Said, "It's going," I said, "I'd be interested in some AP." He said, "Okay AP." So I went down. He said, "It's not an interview. We're just going to talk, I just want to get a feel." I said okay. So I came down, talked to him. We hit it off. We were talking about stuff how to make things. He said, I want to offer you a contract. And I was like, I wasn't ready for that. And I thought wow, I thought we were just talking man. I want to take you to the superintendent right now.

We're going to offer you a contract, we want to hire you. So that was kind of a shock. But we went over and they offered the contract. And I signed it. I said well, what the heck, you know. I got my credential, might as well put it to good use. I did that. I got in to administration that day the 28th, first day of the job. (Justo)

The reason I'm saying that is that the following year, is with my third year of counseling with the migrant program, I got a call from a former principal from [Name] Union High School called me. He was a former vice principal and is now the principal of the high school. He called me up. Hey Educador, I hear you have an administrative credential. This was April, so it was about probably seven or eight months later I guess. I got a call. One in a million chance, they told me, right. There was a position there for dean of students. So, I went and applied for the, he asked me to apply. I applied for it. And they had already interviewed 17 people. So they weren't happy with the match, you know. So, because they, the people there knew me, and I had worked there just one year. Remember, I worked there one year in college, was an Ag teacher and all that. So I didn't burn any bridges, I suppose. So, but this position you needed to have an administrative credential…so everything was, the timing was real important. So I worked there. I went over after the spring break. I left my other job, counseling. And came and joined [Name] Union High School, back where I started from. So that was seven years later, right. And so I worked for them for another year. So I finished one year and then worked for another year. And

then I decided, you know, this is not where I want to be. I don't want to be doing discipline in my life, because I was doing a good job and they're going to leave me there. And so because I was bi-lingual, you know, it really served that double purpose. And I got along with the kids real well and all that stuff. So I decided to move on. (Educador)

I went back to [University] State and got a second Masters in Administration. At that time, I was teaching Special Ed at the high school level. I had taught it at the elementary and now I was teaching Special Ed at the high school. From there, I went into Dean of Students at the elementary school. Then I went into an Assistant Principal at [Urban] High School; moved over to [City]. (Freire)

At that point, my fourth year, actually . . . yeah it was my fourth. My principal – the vice principal left and they asked me to be the vice principal. I said "No, I don't want to be a vice principal." Why would I want to be a vice principal? I know why he left. Why would I want that? He asked me again–that was in March. He asked me again in June and I said "No." By late July when school was about ready to start, he asked me as a favor and I said "Okay as a favor only." And I said "I will do it, but I will do only if I don't like it I can make the decision that you will give me back my classes and semester and you will not ask me again." How to discipline this whole school; how to manage an entire discipline system of the school was a huge challenge. There's no way I could have . . . (Adan)

I was so frustrated… It was the last day to register at the university and I remember the Chair – it was lunch time and the Chair was in his office and I went to see him and I said "I'm interested in your program." He said "Well you know today's the last day to register." "I know, but what do I need to do?" He said "Well you need to go before an interview panel but everybody's out. I don't know if I can get a panel together. Well tell me a little bit . . ." So I gave him a little bit of my background and he said "Well, you know, can you come back later this afternoon." I said "No, I have to go back to a conference. No, I don't think so." So I started walking out the door. He said "Come back here. Let me see what I can do." So he went and got two professors there and they interviewed me and they got me in the program. It's all kind of serendipity at this point. But I'm so glad they did because I met a lot of people whom I learned from who were in the same boat I was in who were in administrative positions learning for the first time. (Adan)

So I did that, but there was an opening in [another town] for a vice principal. They'd had kind of . . . their whole high school here they were going to get a whole new administration basically. So they hired the principal and then two weeks later I was hired as the vice principal. It was different than [small town district]. [Town]'s small. [Small town district school] was basically discipline, very little of anything else; student activity stuff. [Bigger town/district] was curriculum. It was learning . . . I was in charge of a section of the high school. I had of course foreign language. I had the history, social

studies department. I had the career tech department, art, the library so all of those were areas of focus where I would attend meetings and I would actually learn and evaluate program plus staff. I was . . . because the high school became a model school for career tech; I had the opportunity to go to a variety of conferences learning from top writers in research on educational leadership. It was an eye opener for me. Not only were there textbooks I was reading, but I actually got to see them and hear their presentations live which was inspiring. So I really got . . . once I hit [City] area, I really got inspired. I really wanted to be a top notch leader and administrator. To what degree and to what level I wasn't certain at the time. I knew I wanted a principalship but in what and where. I would read the ACSA and look at all the different job opportunities. (Adan)

These accounts documented important moves into school administration. Again, the processes are related as "serendipity," a "kind of shock," and/or a "one in a million chance." Becoming administrators and leaders was not explained as the outcome of a long term plan or a set of specific goals. Again, the superintendents laid out their upward progress on the career ladder as a case of being in the right place at the right time, or about the fact that "someone" had heard they had completed an administrative credential. At the same time, their narratives clearly showed the beginnings of conscious and deliberate awareness about the paths they were on. Adan represented this trend perfectly when, after he commented that his career moves were "a kind of serendipity" he provided an important clue to his growing sense of where he

was headed. He related that he "met a lot of people whom I learned from who were in the same boat I was, who were in administrative positions learning for the first time."

This was a more intense and notable level of growth and mentoring, a move from serendipity to seeing oneself as learning "for the first time," that was as a beginner, what administrative positions involved, and realizing that learning on the job was going to be a key part of their careers from now on. Additionally, as Adan's narrative revealed, being an educational leader shifted from being a set of abstractions in textbooks, and took the more compelling form of textbook and article authors presenting in person, a highly inspiring change. Meeting these leaders inspired him, and made the idea of becoming a leader concrete, if not yet completely clear and specific. Adan's narrative clearly marks his path, however when he relates that he "really wanted to be a top notch leader and administrator. To what degree and to what level I wasn't certain at the time."

In summary, as these transitions suggested, these Latinos had a lot of help along the way and were hard workers. They were willing to put in the time, go back to school, take advantage of opportunities, and had mentors looking out for them and who they were. At each step of the way, they were given the nod to go ahead, they took on extra duties, and impressed their superiors with their willingness to get the job done and give back to the community.

Atypical career paths to the Superintendency

Minority superintendents were often relegated to high need, high poverty schools. It was not surprising that the rise to the superintendency for Latinos often

involved being placed or hired for the most difficult position, which was managing a continuation high school. This piece of information can either lead one to believe that the population being served needed a role model, such as a Latino principal, or it can be seen as a systemic response for the placement of Latino administrators. However, the third experience - Educador's, leads you to believe that at times there can be a match between one's background and interests with where one chooses to become a superintendent; in his example a migrant worker goes back to migrant communities to serve mostly migrant families and Latino students. It is like a homecoming to make an essential difference.

Almost relegated to the Continuation Principal label

So I did and I went to an interview and I got hired to be the continuation high school principal in [City]. So I did that for four years. There, I almost got pigeon holed- just like the kids get kind of stereotyped. You know, I tried to get out of there after like three years. And I was coming in always a close second, and I was just, almost, you know. You're good, but didn't get it. So I wondered how much that little stigma played into- oh he's a continuation principal…I applied for a middle school, junior high, for, I think they were all either middle schools or junior highs. I wanted to get into that secondary. And I wasn't having success. I was always the bridesmaid, never the bride. So then I thought- I need to get out. You know if I stay any longer it's going to be almost impossible to get out and not that there was anything wrong with that. I just didn't want to spend my career in a continuation high school setting. So I

thought I need to get into a comprehensive high school. And so what I did is that they had an opening as a, for a VP at the comprehensive high school. And I asked for a transfer…it was kind of a lateral move, although my title went down. I think I pretty much stayed with the same salary. (Justo)

About six years down as a VP, I got a job . . . at mid-year- the principal of the continuation school left. Now, why continuation . . . everybody was telling me "Don't go to a continuation school. That's a dead end road for anybody. You need to be a high school principal someplace." …I was there ten years at the continuation school. I applied for the assistant superintendent of curriculum here in the district and I was second. They took in another person who I thought was a very skilled person. He was a high school principal from another district. In my interview, after the interview and after the decision was made, the one thing they told me was "Oh you know, you haven't had experience as a high school principal." You know what? I understand what you're saying, but you're so wrong. I am a high school principal. You just don't see continuation school as a high school and that's a shame because it is one of your high schools… but I understand what you're saying. You're telling me that I've got to climb the traditional ladder in order to get to where I need to get to, right? And I understand that's the logical step. (Adan)

But then again opportunities came along and we had had a very close working relationship with the county Office of Education here through my principalship at the continuation school. We had a project at the [Name of School] which

brought in a lot of the science, mathematics, social studies. We also had a project at one of the elementary schools where our English teacher would work with . . . would send kids over as kind of assistants to teachers. In [my] close working relationships with this office I had been asked because the superintendent and I talked to the superintendent and she said "You might be interested in the superintendency." I said "Well." "Oh you'd be a good model because you deal with kids at risk. You've had ten years experience with that. You know the community. You're well known in the community; not only in [big town] but [small town] knows you and [city] knows you. I don't know about West [large city]." I wasn't familiar with West [large city]. That got a kind of a seed planted in my mind and that's a possibility. Well that's two years down the road. No problem; I have time to think about it. Well election comes a year before, so here I am and of course . . I became a county superintendent. It was all new to me. It was an uphill . . . it was a steep learning curve. Because I ran against someone who was from this office, it wasn't like open door welcome. There were people who did welcome me who were inside, but I never solicited anybody from here for any kind of endorsement or anything. I just didn't want to touch it. (Adan)

Then from there I went into a principalship; my first principalship of a Special Ed self-contained elementary school at [City]. From there, I went into a principalship of a regular elementary school and maintained that for 16 years. And then went into the Coordinator position in the district office. Then from

the Coordinator's position into this position as Superintendent/Principal at [City]. (Freire)

This rung of the ladder posed difficulties for Justo and Adan that recalled negative, sometimes implicit structures from school days for the Latino superintendents, that was stereotyping, and the negative side of being a role model, being "pigeon-holed." In the excerpts above it was clear that were doubts about the chosen career path, and the first serious difficulties, perhaps impediments, in the upward movement on the career ladder. Both Adan and Justo were showing their growing awareness of the system, and narrated their difficulties moving through it. Being placed at the head of continuation high schools, in Justo's view, could be the career version of the stereotyping that grows from skewed expectations of Latino students in high school. Being a role model for underachieving students can easily reflect badly on an educational leader if he is viewed through the lens that magnifies only negative stereotypes. Both men subtly reported challenges to their resiliency at this step.

Although both understood that they had to strategize to continue their career growth, in the end even the best strategies depended on a marketplace at a high level of administration where available positions were outnumbered by qualified applicants. Accordingly, Justo reported that he was "always a close second, and I was just, almost, you know. You're good, but didn't get it." This caused him to have doubts about his continuing upward movement and he "wondered how much that little stigma played into. Oh he's a continuation

principal." In the end, Justo strategically accepted a lateral move so he could move into a comprehensive high school, "although my title went down." Adan had a similar experience, and like Justo took a strategic view of the situation. When he was told that he did not have high school experience, so he was not offered a position he applied for, he reminded his superiors that he was indeed a high school principal, and he reported a respectful but somewhat blunt conversation where he said "You just don't see continuation school as a high school and that's a shame because it is one of your high schools."

Like Justo, he showed his awareness of the systemic structures he was facing, "You're telling me that I've got to climb the traditional ladder in order to get to where I need to get to, right? And I understand that's the logical step." These two narratives, Justo's expression of doubt about his potential to advance and his acceptance of a lower title, and Adan's acknowledgement of the "traditional ladder" revealed that the superintendents had moved away from their serendipitous view of their educations and their careers. At the high levels they had achieved, they now understood the challenges they confronted in a system that continued to operate on traditional terms.

Superintendent Realizations

It was interesting to note that none of these five men started off with the dream of wanting to become superintendents, it was something that happened as a part of their careers. Some of them wanted to get jobs, get out of the barrio, be mechanics, or be teachers. Throughout, their careers, they met people who had visions for them that

were beyond the visions they had for themselves and eventually, that path led to the superintendency. Along the way they were helped by many and have learned a lot in the process. For Agusto it was awareness and what it means to have accomplished what he accomplished. For Adan, it was an understanding and breaking potential barriers and for Freire it was the realization that he was right where he was supposed to be.

Obviously the five interviewees moved through the system and climbed to the top rung of the ladder, despite the challenges, difficulties, doubts, and ultimate delicacy of their positions. In this section they reflected on the realizations they have arrived at as Latinos who became superintendents. These realizations lay out a complex series of decisions, changes, understandings, and internal struggles that show concretely what negotiation of identity looks like for Latino superintendents.

Awareness

Awareness here means both being aware of what is around them, but also being aware of how they are being seen by those around them. Agusto's description here showed circumspection, a wish to demonstrate balance, acknowledgement of the importance of consistency, and a commitment to "steady progress" but little sense that he had cast off anything of himself in the interest of conformity.

> Oh, very different. I mean I'm aware now. I wasn't aware before. We thought we were the majority in the community where I grew up because everybody was Latino around us. We didn't know that there was a different culture, way of life and expectations and way of doing things and, you know,

norms and what have you. I'm much more aware now. I have to function in a world that is not Latino, where I am a Latino. The Latinos in the community want you to favor them. Anything I don't do for them makes them question whether I am committed to helping Latinos. The African-American community expects me to understand what it feels like to be a minority; therefore, I should reach out to them. Anything I do to reach out to the Latinos is something that I'm taking away from them. The white community sees me as an exceptional Latino. I'm not the norm. They're proud that I'm not the norm; that I represent the Latino community, but they want me to be as cultured in the white community as possible. They don't want me to be radical in any sense. I have to be very political. I'm very aware. I always have to be very aware of what's going on around me. (Agusto)

Oh I'm aware of it, and I don't mind. For example, being a member of CALSA is something that my board members know and approve. They are okay with it. Even my white board members; they know. I don't go back and start as a result of this meeting go back and say, "Shame on you, white board members. You're horrible in how you've oppressed us over the years," not something like that. Everything is balanced, but steady progress is, to me, the key. I don't neglect the needs of our EL students. I will preach that to the community and to my board and the message needs to be consistent. I have to do likewise about our African-Americans, because they struggle too and they're being left behind. There's a huge gap there. So all of those things; as

long as they see consistency in my behavior, it shows them who I am. It's when I start acting differently for different groups that you lose your credibility. (Agusto)

I have been, for example, called on the carpet among an African-American group that's very militant, very radical; and they brought me in as a guest speaker only for the purpose of hammering me. That's where it tests your mettle, because you say, "Okay, wait a minute. This is where I die. This is what I'm going to continue to do. It doesn't meet with your approval, but understand, I right now have the approval of," and that's what I have to do. Strange thing happened – even though they weren't happy, they saw the consistency. They respect that and so I survived. (Agusto)

Continuous Learning

Again, Agusto's interview described the continuous learning that superintendents have to undertake. It required a strategic outlook and quick decision-making. And, in contrast to earlier steps on the ladder, at the superintendent level the tone changes from seeking mentorship to seeking the best mentors. Knowing the characteristics and skills of the "best" mentors meant identifying one's needs and the gaps in one's knowledge. This was a second characteristic that appeared at this level, but not at earlier levels.

Well, one thing is continued learning; learning as much as you can about your subject matter. When I was a teacher, I tried to learn the best I could for each grade level, you know. Of course, back then they didn't have the standards

and the same kinds of accountability they have today; but learning as much as I could, learning from the best. I always picked out the best people I knew of in that field. When I was a brand new teacher in third grade, it's not . . . it doesn't take long for you to find out who the best third grade teachers in your school. And you look for that person say and you get to know them. I always did that for each step along the way. So when I was a VP, I looked for the best principal I could work for. If I was a principal, I pursued other principals who had more experience than I did, who were successful. I would try to pick their brains and find out what they did and what they . . . what was their emphasis? What made them successful? And as a superintendent, I continue to do the same thing. I look for people that have been successful and say, "Okay, why are you . . . how are you . . . how is it that you're successful? What's in your brain? Talk to me." And so those people have . . . I think that's really served me well doing what I'm doing today. (Agusto)

Understanding Potential Barriers

Again, at the superintendent level, much more was at stake than earlier in their careers. Rather than responding to barriers or obstacles, Agusto took action, and was explicit about his values and what the values of the district would be under his superintendency. The narratives about this topic made clear references to both social justice (Freire recalls being in the audience when Cesar Chavez spoke on campus at UC) and to barriers that people of color build inside themselves, "inner racism" that is your "worst enemy." Adan

raised the issue of racist and hurtful talk, and how to respond to it –

immediately, to let people know "it's not acceptable."

Well you heard me say earlier that I think that there's . . . one of the barriers is

expectations from the various groups in the community. If you don't fall

neatly into their expectations, you're going to receive some degree of criticism.

If you try to be all things to all people, you will not be focused and not

accomplish much. So what I have found . . . my strategy is always to chart a

written course of action that you share with everyone so there's no question of

what you stand for. If something becomes written . . . for example, I did in

[city], I established what I call our blueprint for success. I think every good

superintendent has some version of that, but they may call it something else –

our compact, our contract, mine is a blueprint. In that blueprint, I made known

what the value system for our education community was. Then it was clear.

(Agusto)

I said "One of the most significant pieces we have to look at and you can help

your students with is the idea of internalized racism where you are your worst

enemy. You feel you are lesser because people make . . . you may think that

people are making you feel lesser than who you are. You may think they're

racist, but is it them or is it you? In some of these things that can be described

the feeling about feeling lesser is self discriminatory. So those are the topics I

think you need to talk about with your colleagues. These are the things that as

you go through and gather cohorts of students throughout the school system

who you are encouraging to go to the university and get their degree in sciences and particularly in engineering is that they cannot feel any lesser. They must not feel any lesser. They must have the courage and they must have the idea that they can do it." (Adan)

Caesar Chavez supported this idea, but it goes beyond that. It's how you feel about it. You have to be proud of who you are and your accomplishments that you've come from a very proud family. Pride can also be a deterrent. It gets in your way when you're too proud. That's a deterrent because that's arrogance and people don't particularly will come to you if you feel that way. It's not inviting. I said "You might want to consider that for your students as you talk to them. You talked about building kind of a workshop for students who are Latino coming in, but you may want to get some experts in that field to talk about what it's like. Sometimes people make stupid comments not really knowing how stupid the comment is; not knowing that they're hurting. But you got to put a stop to it. Who's responsible for that? You are when it happens; not long after it happens. Act right immediately and deal with it. Let people know it's not acceptable." If you have a leadership position, more so. It's not acceptable. I've had incidences here where I said "We are not going to tolerate that behavior." Can't tolerate it. Well, it wasn't intended. If a person feels that way, doesn't matter whether you intend it or not. It's wrong. And I think if you think about it, you'll know it's wrong. You still think it's okay and that's not right and you know it's not right. I'll tell you, you don't have to

admit to me, but think about it. I'm not your conscience. You're your conscience. I'm just telling you "Don't do that. Not under my watch." (Adan)

Understanding the Superintendency

The superintendency was a moving objective, or as one superintendent commented "Just when you think you've got it figured out, there's always something new, always a new twist." This hinted at two dimensions of the position. First, the job required figuring out, since it was a multifaceted and complex role. Second, the elements of the superintendent's responsibilities were not stable, but in flux. This suggested that relationships among the facets of the position were always moving and must always be attended to, even though they may be unpredictable. Two additional insights about the nature of the superintendent role emerged from the interviews. First, superintendents had to resolve any desire to "make everybody happy" because it was not possible. And second, the superintendent needed to be who he was, and "be true to what my convictions are," despite any risks. As Agusto reported, "I couldn't fear for my job. I have to say, "This is who I am. Take it or leave it." This is a huge step beyond youthful men who joined friends checking out a masters program, and more or less fell into it.

… [the superintendency] is in constant, evolving mode. It's in constant flux. I never feel like I have arrived. I would have to point to a frustration, if anything, in this job is that you never get your feet really fully set because just when you think you've got it figured out, there's always something new, always a new twist, always something. I did find, however, after about the

third year of being superintendent, I had an attitudinal change in my leadership style. It was because I came to the realization that I no longer could make everybody happy. If the board, who you have to respect, wasn't happy with the work I was doing, if the community wasn't happy that I couldn't make that the driving force behind who I was as a person. It was when I realized that I have to be true to what my convictions are, what I want to do, and then let the board deal with it then. I couldn't fear for my job. I have to say, "This is who I am. Take it or leave it." When I started to have that attitude, I found that the board actually rallied more so behind me. I wasn't really far off from what they were hoping for in the way of leadership. They wanted someone to have that conviction, and when that was established, I actually felt much better. At the same time, I don't take it for granted, and I always understand that this job is a privilege and I'm only there as long as the board says I'm there. So I'm going to make it really count. I'm going to do what I can do. At the time they're not happy, I move on. (Agusto)

Summary

The last few narratives were multiple experiences superintendents had as they achieved and maintained the superintendency. They spoke to the multiple internal dialogues and the socialization processes needed to successfully manage the superintendency. These interactions with others and actions on issues depict the ideal realizations and self-understandings to handle stressful events and/or individuals. These narratives told the story of how

Latinos, after years of climbing the ladder, were able to successfully manage

the overwhelming task of being a superintendent in school districts. These

Latino narratives were uniquely instructive for all those aspiring to become a

superintendent some day.

Chapter V

Reflections

Reflecting on the stories and restories of the five Latino superintendents, it becomes very clear that the path to the superintendency for Latinos is fraught with pitfalls, potholes, and other assorted roadblocks. The road is not smooth and requires a lot of give and take between the existing system and the person who eventually sits in the office. There is negotiation of identities, boundaries, and parameters that individuals undergo as they pursue the highest position in K-12 education.

It has become very apparent, in analyzing these stories of those who have made it and what they have undergone to begin to understand why there are so few Latinos in the position of superintendent. The journey is not without its hazards— hazards to identity, sense of self, loyalty to culture, and honesty to character. The journey is one of constantly having to weigh the consequences of your decisions against the sense of self that you bring to the position and the expectations of the dominant culture of who and what you should be.

Superintendents, as they climb the ladder to success, go through many different phases. The earlier steps consist of completing college, getting degrees, and becoming teachers. Then, later on, getting the nod to go into administration and becoming counselors, principals, district office administrators. Finally, the last step is achieving the level of superintendent with the support of a board member, a mentor, a colleague and/or the organization.

At each step of the way, the superintendent candidates have to negotiate with the mainstream system who they will be, who they will become and what they are willing to do. The system is designed for a certain type of candidate to be successful, as defined by CRT, the type of minority candidate that will forward the majority agenda; this puts Latinos in the position of having to negotiate their identity, their aspirations, their legacy, and their way of knowing the world. The climb to the top is not easy for any superintendent who makes it, for there are fewer and fewer positions and openings, so they are competing for a scarce commodity, therefore, the negotiations become more difficult and require more adherence to the mainstream norms.

The following table outlines the research questions, conclusions and the needed elements for a successful climb to the superintendency.

Table 1

Research Questions and Conclusions

Research question	Conclusions from Data	Key CRT Constructs
How do Latino superintendents negotiate their cultural, personal, and professional identities?	Negotiation is a process of paying attention to similarities and differences and to the structure of systems, making decisions about where to put one's professional energies, accepting mentoring or wisely declining it, aspiring to make a difference, building determination and confidence, and maintaining a certain level of ambition for moving within school systems. The relationships between categories are fluid. Identities are subject to external and internal influences. Under external there are the pressures from society such as educational institutions. From internal there is the sense of pride and achievement. Latino superintendents have created life narratives, likely related regularly, that trace their advancement from early socialization through their careers.	Socialization Identity Resiliency
What does identity mean to Latino educational leaders?	For the superintendents, identity is the outcome continuous processes and decisions about taking on multiple roles. These identities are fluid but based on strong families, connections to both cultures, and participation in activities that require development of determination, discipline and teamwork (e.g. sports, the military). All five participants acknowledge the everyday experience of crossing and straddling boundaries to negotiate their existence in a White male dominated field.	Identity Socialization Mentoring

Table 1--*Continued*

Research question	Conclusions from Data	Key CRT Constructs
How does the Latino identity change due to experiences, influences, and expectations from society, culture, family, and self?	Society places external pressures, where role models, educational placements, and military options add to identity. Culture functions internally, with influences coming from family, pride, in culture, and role models. Family creates external pressure that operates through socialization, and cultural processes, including language development. Self is in internal dialogue with society, culture and family, and is influenced by resilience, and by experiences that create social justice idealism, and a strong drive to achieve or to prove themselves to those who underestimate them because they are Mexican American.	Socialization Identity Social justice
What does a successful Latino educational leader "look like" according to the narratives gathered for this study?	These educational leaders are well-prepared to lead through education, professional experience, and mentoring. They are professionally experienced. They present an inclusive perspective on managing their districts. Last, they are able to reflect on their professional decisions and their movement between cultures because they have developed a good understanding of self, family, culture, profession that they can express clearly and cohesively. As a result of their experiences from childhood to the present day, they have developed revealing narratives that sum up their identities as Latino educational leaders.	Resiliency Identity Mentoring

The research questions explored were:

1. How do Latino superintendents negotiate their cultural, personal, and professional identities?

    a. What does identity mean to Latino educational leaders?

    b. How does the Latino identity change due to experiences, influences, and expectations from family, culture, society, and self?

    c. What does a successful Latino educational leader "look like" according to the narratives gathered for this study?

Implications for practice

The answers to the research questions are varied and complex. It appears that Latinos superintendents' identities are created by their personal understandings, cultural influences, and professional experiences within the context of schools, schooling, and educational systems.

These answers reflect CRT in that the dominant story often told about Latinos is from a subtractive and/or deficit- model (Valencia, 2002). CRT allows the Latino superintendent narrative to be heard, countering dominant and negative popular notions of Latinos, especially in some educational circles. This new found voice is able to express themes of language, culture, and race; and takes center place in openly discussing the lived experiences of Latinos as having a positive impact on their career and career choices (Yosso, 2006).

What does Latino superintendents' identity negotiation look like? Critical race theorists assert that Latino experiences are indeed assets versus deficits, and need to be

written about in that way. For example, poverty helps to build character, being

bicultural engenders empathy, and academic struggles foster understanding. In the

analysis of Latinos stories, Latino men were able to draw upon their multiple

experiences to navigate past structures and institutions once considered impenetrable.

Yosso's (2006) *Community Cultural Wealth* model demonstrates the "capitals"

required for Latino's to successfully navigate societies/institutional hierarchies. These

experiences are categorized in the following ways: aspirational capital, familial

capital, social capital, linguistic capital, resistant capital and navigational capital. In

applying these categories to the five Latino superintendents interviewed, it is evident

that they have the aspirational, familial, social, linguistic, and navigational capitals

which helped to make the superintendency attainable, and ultimately, successful.

But the pipeline issue is at least as important. Yosso (2006) asserts that Latinos

who are to participate in the education pipeline have to have the proper tools. Tools

such economic capital and wealth may not be applicable to many Latinos. However,

tools such as aspirations, linguistic abilities, familial experiences, and resistant

ideologies do help in creating the opportunities for them to fully engage the pipeline.

Furthermore, these four capitals help Latinos expand their tool kit by eventually

adding navigational abilities and social capital.

Pipeline issues are under the power of the outside self forces. Again,

navigating through and past these external forces such as social institutions is not a

given for many Latinos, it is a skill set learned outside of one's internal dialogue.

Exposure to such navigation without the aid of a mentor can be damaging and hurtful to one's self, career, and aspirations.

My Journey

At this point in the study, I will switch to a first person account and how my own story/restory helped me to make sense of the interviews, data and literature that I read. I feel this was important part of the study because it validated for me the premise of CRT, that there was a hegemonic theme in education and those who questioned the status quo or did not toe the line were suspect and often not given the nod to go forward.

This study happened at a very interesting time in my career. I have been called a Latino superstar administrator. Someone going through the ranks quickly, well liked, given the nod and provided opportunities for success. In fact, some would have said that I was going to climb to the superintendency with very few roadblocks and barriers. That I was going to "make it" in this white male domain because I had the leadership skills coupled with the personality to be one of "them."

At some level, I believed those individuals and when I quickly landed my first administrative position after completing my credential, I thought I was on my way. The feelings did not abate when I entered into an Ed.D program and was quickly selected as a principal for the site where I was the assistant. I was on my way and was even "passing" up others who had been there longer than I had. I had the requisite mentors, I had the support of my superiors and I had support of my faculty and staff. I was beginning to feel like the "golden boy" and was wondering if all of these notions

in CRT were going to just pass me by. Was I going to be the exception to the rule? Was I going to be different from the rest?

Ironically enough, Delgado (1995) stated, that the mainstream culture would only allow minorities in when there was something in it for them, but I was beginning to question that premise and wonder if I was being accepted just for who I was, what I represented, and how I was willing to portray myself. I was beginning to wonder if I was different from the rest and if CRT did not apply to me, or if, society had reached a point where race really was no longer an issue.

Then the reality of my life and my journey came full circle as I started dealing with the issues and concerns at my site and I started wondering, is this for real? Would a white male be experiencing the same thing?

The incident

As I was entering my second year as a school principal, I questioned the status quo on my campus. I entertained and acted on the thoughts of integrating students from different academic/educational programs on my campus in a couple of classes to provide more educational equity on campus. I intended to give students the opportunity to enroll in classes often reserved for one particular group. The board members appeared to understand what I was offering my students, and since our test scores were going up and we were closing the achievement gap, I felt we were on the right track.

I was asked to prepare a board presentation on my proposed changes. I spent a large part of my vacation time worried and focused on specifying these changes in a

Power Point. I consulted with various staff members and found the views to be

divergent, passionate, and intense. At the end of these meetings, there was an

agreement on how we would proceed with the changes and why.

For the next several months, I held parent meetings explaining my decisions,

attended board meetings where I listened to parents and teachers question the changes

I brought about, and ultimately sat with my supervisors as they shared their concerns

with my professional progress and management of the situation. I was starting to hear

people call me the "illegal alien" principal, question whether I truly cared about all

students, and wonder if I had what it took to be a leader.

How Much Do I Give Up

This was just one incident that happened on my campus that made me wonder,

not for the first time, but seriously, how much of myself do I have to give up to be

accepted by them.

As I was undergoing these experiences, I could not help but think of the

superintendents that I had interviewed. Did they ever feel this way? Did they ever feel

that they needed to give up a part of who they were to be accepted by the mainstream?

I began to wonder if I would make it, would I survive. Every time I felt myself put in

a position of compromising my culture, my values, my way of being in the world, my

Chicano Heritage, to be accepted by the mainstream, I had to ask, "how much of me

do I give up in order to be accepted by them?" How much does having a mentor

matter? Am I being promoted for who I am or for being able to advance their agenda?

Am I here because I am me, or because they needed a Chicano poster boy and I fit the

bill?

These were not easy questions to grapple with, reflect on, or take action on, but

I can admit they clouded my everyday view of life and living. I became acutely aware

of my race, of my Chicano-ness—not that I was not aware before, but every decision

seemed to be couched from that perspective…for me, for my faculty, for my superiors,

even for my mentor. I was a Latino male in a white man's world and after a year and

a half on the job, I was painfully aware that race did matter, it did make a difference

and if I was going to reach the highest position in public education, then I had some

decisions I needed to make. My biggest question was, "Am I willing to do what I

have to do?"

Hyperconformity

This led me to another level of analysis of why there were so few Latinos and

minorities in the superintendency, at every step of the way you were asked to give up a

little bit more of yourself and to conform to the norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes of

the mainstream. This was CRT at work. There were invisible rules out there about

how to play this game, and I was expected to conform to those rules, although no one

ever bothered telling me what they were, nor did they tell me who gets to break them

and who doesn't. I began to realize that all of us climbing the ladder; whether white,

black, brown, male and/or female had to conform at some level or another. However,

I also noticed that some of us had to conform more than others. The more we looked

different from the mainstream, the more we were expected to conform to the rules and regulations of a game we had not created, but were somehow in the midst of.

Go-No Go Decision

At this point of my career, I have been promoted to alternative high school principal. As I reflect on the five Latino men who are current superintendents in California, I have to definitively say that the Latino superintendency is a very real possibility. Most of these men intentionally sought the superintendency, although one mentioned he fell into the position because of his status as a board member, the other four were either encouraged to apply and/or went back to their former communities to serve as superintendents. Ultimately, they all went to the places they could and would make the biggest differences. Although two of these superintendents currently serve in large urban school districts, initially they served as assistant superintendents working their way up the ladder and until they finally got their big break. One superintendent serves at the county level and received his big break after several years serving as a continuation high school principal. One superintendent got his break at a small school district after serving as a special education coordinator and was long time elementary principal in a large urban school district.

Regardless of how the break occurred, what these Latino men did with their positions is of utmost importance. All superintendents felt they were making a difference in the lives of all children. Although not explicitly mentioning one group of students over another, their chosen career steps brought them close to highly populated Latino school districts. Because of their membership in CALSA, it was implied that

they had a passion and desire to see more Latinos in the administrative educational arena. All five men spoke about their culture and most spoke about being role models for students, one explicitly mentioning being a role model for Latino students. If we, aspiring superintendents, take the time to step outside ourselves and realize that our lives are meant to impact society at large, then the "go" nod will be the only and right choice to make.

Future Research

Latinas, Asians, African-Americans, Women and the Superintendency

Do others share similar stories? Have Latinas, Asians, African-Americans, and women endured the same struggles? Or have they achieved the same successes? Whether studying across states in our nation or across countries in our world, can superintendent experiences be categorized? If so, can we find patterns that can be shared with disenfranchised and/or troubled youth? Romo (1998) in discussing his findings amongst Latino educational leaders in San Diego, California felt that "Democracy is currently threatened by schools replicating hostile (passive) anti-Latino public sentiment, [and that] bicultural Latinos bring a dual consciousness to organizations and that leads [to] organizational relevance/transformation; dominant culture allies who share a dual consciousness may promote organizational transformation as well." So, can the Latino culture play a bigger role in our educational school systems? Can the cultural aspects of others bring about a unique and shared experience?

Latino Student Achievement

The other study I feel strongly about is Latino Student Achievement. Essentially, all of this is predicated that a Latino can close the gap, raise achievement levels, make a decided difference, and be a change agent that turns the tide for Latinos. However, I would like to see a study that looks specifically at Latino student achievement in districts run by Latinos versus those run by non-Latinos to see if Latinos make a difference. After understanding the socialization process, it seems as if superintendents can become so socialized into the mainstream that they run the risk of losing the essence of who they are and why they are there in the first place, to make a decided difference in the lives of all children.

Conclusions

The journey to the superintendency for Latinos is a very mixed experience of luck, skills, knowledge, and disposition. It appears as if the individual has to have the right fortitude, frame of reference, and aspirations to truly make it to the top and be successful. It is apparent that the road is not easy nor is it a straight and narrow path, it is truly a road with many pitfalls and roadblocks. It is obvious that the personal, cultural, and professional experiences of these individuals helped to shape who they are and the superintendents they have become. These stories, restories and counterstories help give all of us a poignant and heartfelt view of the lives of these individuals who truly lead from the heart.

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Appendix A

Family/Background

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself?

Probes: Demographics, your age, ethnicity, race, color, beliefs, religion

2. Can you tell me a little more about your background including information about

your family?

Childhood/Family Identity Development

3. Are there specific incidents/memories that reminded you that your family was either

different from other families or similar to families in your neighborhood?

Probes: Siblings, parents, geographic location, education, schooling, involvement in

education, early school experiences, cultural connections

4. Can you describe situations from your childhood that you believe impacted your

identity?

Probes: Did it involve race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or class, coping

mechanisms

5. Was there a time when you ever thought that you were different from other kids? If

so, can you please share about that? What did you do as a response?

Probes: Did it involve race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or class, coping

mechanisms

Educational Experiences

6. Tell me about your experiences in K-12 schools?

Probes: students, staff, demographics, achievement, school community, size of district, positive or negative, challenges, struggles, leadership roles

Career Development Experiences

7. Share with me about specific high school and college activities, successes, and failures that relate to your career success.

8. Share with me about you, your family, and childhood as they relate to your career success.

Probes: race (might include heritage, culture, ethnicity) family vacations, friends, celebrations, traditions, ritual, sports, family gathering, struggles, religion, college, university and things connected to identity.

9. Is there a family member/person who had a great influence on your career choices? Could you describe how that person impacted your career?

10. What life and/or educational experiences led you to a career in teaching and then administrative work?

Identity Development in Adult Years

10. What words would you use to describe yourself?

Probes: Mother, daughter, sister, partner, father, brother, husband, Latino/a, Chicano/a, Hispanic

11. How is the way you experience your race/ethnicity/language, similar to or different from when you were growing up?

Career Path/Mentoring Experiences

13. Who are the significant individuals who guided you through your career path?

How did they contribute to your success?

14. How important have networking, mentoring, and/or sponsorships been to you?

Social Justice

15. Do you feel an obligation to help other Latinos achieve the position of superintendent?

Resilience

16. Are there any barriers related to being a Latino administrator and/or superintendent?

17. Were there or could you share specific barriers you encountered along each step of your career?

Probes: Looking at your first asst principal, principal, district admin, asst supt positions

18. What strategies did you use to work through those situations?

19. What career strategies or factors have contributed the most to success in your career?

Attaining the Superintendency

20. Tell me the highlights that led you to the attainment of the superintendency?

21. Why do you believe you were hired?

22. What school district issues were you hired to solve?

23. Knowing what you know now, what changes would you have made in the course of you career path? Would it be the same or would you have chosen differently? Why?

Career Identity Development and Management of Identities

24. Can you recall stages or periods of time when you thought "you were you" but instead you realized it was a period of development? What do you remember most about each one of those experiences in your life and career developmental stages?

25. Is there a difference between being just a superintendent and a Latino superintendent?

26. Can you tell a little about your professional identity as a superintendent and how that differs from your cultural/racial/linguistic identities? Is there a difference?

27. If there is a difference, how do you manage your personal and professional identities?

Probe: Is there a feeling/struggle/conflict you can attach to managing multiple worlds?

Reflection/Social Justice

28. How did you become a superintendent?

29. If you were given a magic wand and could change one thing in your accessibility to the superintendency and for other Latinos, what would it be?

Appendix B

Definition of Terms

A research study should define the terms that are unique or specific to that study (Gay, 1992). For the purpose of this study, pertinent terms are defined as:

Career-paths- the general or progression of one's working life or one's professional achievements (American Heritage Dictionary, 1996).

Chicano/Chicana- a person self-reporting "Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent" and identifying the source of that affiliation as "Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano" (Gonzalez Baker, 1996, p. 6).

Counterstories- "recount[ing] the experiences and perspectives of racially and socially marginalized people" (Yosso, 2006).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) - CRT had its start in the mid-1970s with the work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman. Its outgrowth from the field of Critical Legal Studies (CLS) was a move from Bell and Freeman to appropriately include race as part of CLS's critique of mainstream legal ideology (Ladson-Billings, 1999). The importance of CRT fell not only on its questioning of the status quo, but its use as an intellectual and social tool to deconstruct oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruct human agency, and construct equitable and socially just relations of power (Ladson-Billings, 1999). In essence, CRT works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating other forms of subordination based on immigration status, sexuality, culture, language, phenotype, accent and surname (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2006).

Culture- a body of beliefs, usage and sanctions which are transmitted entirely by social means and administered to growing individuals by example, precept, and discipline...It constitutes the milieu, a body of influences which are necessary for the development of the individual mind in such functions as language, spoken and written forms (Ortiz, 1982 quoting Baldwin, J., 1913a: p. 129-130).

Ethnicity: classification or affiliation of a person based on race and history.

Ethnicity terminology- Based on the Census 2000, a number of choices may describe what a person considers himself/herself to be, including the terms: White, Black, Hispanic, American Indian, Asian, or Pacific Islander, as well as combination of races. According to the APA Manual, preference for nouns referring to racial and ethnic groups change often. For purposes of this study, the U.S. Bureau of Census Population (2000) was used a guideline for all with Mexican-American being a more specific class within the classification of Hispanic.

Hispanic- (a) A person of Latin American descent living in the U.S.; one of Cuban, Mexican, or Puerto Rican origin. (b) A term fabricated by the U.S. Census Bureau to include American residents who identified themselves as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central, and South American, and "other" Spanish descendants (Rochin & de la Torre, 1996, p. 63).

Identity- "…the concept of identity carries the full weight of the need for a sense of who one is, together with an overwhelming pace of change in surrounding social contexts-changes in the groups and networks in which people and their

identities are embedded and in the societal structures and practices in which those networks are themselves embedded" (Howard, 2000).

Latino- a term sometimes used as a substitute for "Hispanic" in order to lessen the implied European bias of the latter (Rochin & de la Torre, 1996, p. 63).

Majoritarian stories- "recount the experiences and perspectives of those with racial and social privilege" (Yosso, 2006).

Mentor- an influential person who helps one achieve his/her goal (Konnert & Augenstein, 1990).

Mexican-American- (a) any person of Mexican ancestry who is a citizen of the United States of America. (b) a term that appears to be most widely accepted and used in reference to all Americans who trace their ancestry to Mexico (McLemore & Romo, 1998).

The terms Hispanic and Latino will be used in this study to represent individuals residing in U.S. territories (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000) of Latin American, Spanish, and Mexican American ancestry, unless otherwise indicated by a particular study to mean a specific ethnicity. The term Chicano will be used to identify individuals who consider themselves to be of Mexican ancestry. This term is also used for Mexican Americans or for self-identification.

Narratives - a narrated account; a story. The art, technique, or process of narrating.

Parables - a simple story illustrating a moral or religious lesson.

Race- a social construct that a collective group acquires based on their roots, beliefs, and traditions (Torres & Ngin, 1995).

Racism- prejudice; bigotry; an attitudinal issue that marginalizes racial groups. A system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

Resilience- the successful adaptation of an individual to circumstances in spite of risk or adversity (Masten, 1994).

Restorying- "…the process in which the researcher gathers stories, analyzes them for key elements of the story and then rewrites the story to place it in a chronological sequence" (Creswell, 2002, p. 528).

School district- a geographic district and the public schools of which are administered together (American Heritage Dictionary, 1998).

Stories - a narrative, either true or fictitious, in prose or verse, designed to interest, amuse, or instruct the hearer or reader; tale. The typical story is usually set within a context/background of that which is considered normative- "Whiteness, academic English and middle class values" (Yosso, 2006).

Superintendent- the chief executive administrative officer of a school district who directs and coordinates the educational, administrative, and counseling activities of that district in accordance with governing board policy as well as state and federal statutes (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991).

Voice- expression in spoken or written words, or by other means. The right to present and receive consideration of one's desires or opinions. An expressed opinion or choice. An expressed will or desire.