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Latino Parent Leadership: Through the Eyes of Latino Parent Leaders

A dissertation study submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

Carla de la Torre

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2016

The Dissertation of Carla de la Torre is approved, and is acceptable in quality and form

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

California State University, San Marcos

2016

DEDICATION

A mí ángel de la guarda…gracias por el regalo de fuerza y fortaleza. / To my guardian angel…thank you for the gift of strength and fortitude.

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LIST OF KEY TERMS

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Families: Families who come from diverse cultural, linguistic, social and economic backgrounds.

Latino Parents: Latino parents refers to those Latino parents who are new-to-the U.S. school system and who have children identified as English Learners.

Parent Involvement: School staff develops the vision and assigns tasks to parents, where parents who volunteer are directed by school staff.

Parent Engagement: School staff encourage parents to help develop a join vision, where parents are considered leaders or potential leaders.

District Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)/English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC): DELAC is a district level federally and state mandated parent committee platform for English Learner parents to actively engage in their child's education & advise the district's local governing board on programs and services for English learners. ELAC is the site level version of this committee and feeds DELAC membership.

School and District Culture: Within this study both school and district culture will be used interchangeably because they are connected in that the schools form the district and because participants are living in both settings.

Long Term English Learners (LTELs): English learner students who have been in the U.S. school system and who have not been reclassified as English fluent proficient.

Dual Language Immersion Program: A program designed to instruct students in English and another target language in order to develop bilingualism, biliteracy and biculturalism.

The California English Language Development Test (CELDT): The California English language proficiency test administered to English learners to measure levels of English proficiency.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Latino Parent Leadership: Through the Eyes of Latino Parent Leaders

by

Carla de la Torre

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, San Diego, 2016

California State University San Marcos, 2016

Professor Alice Quiocho, Chair

The impact of parental involvement in a child's academic success has been well-documented; however there is considerably less research that focuses specifically on Latino parent engagement and its potential to improve schools given the rising numbers of Latino students attending U.S. schools. Few studies have focused on the strengths that Latino families pass onto their children and how those strengths can be leveraged to better connect schools with Latino parents and develop schools where students feel their parents are respected (Rioja-Cortez & Bustos Flores, 2009). This research study set out to explore Latino parent engagement through the eyes of Latino parent leaders within one

school district. The purpose of this research study was to identify and analyze how and why Latino parents become engaged within a school and district culture; in addition to learning what potential factors may exist that move Latino parents along a continuum of involvement and engagement into leadership and change agency. The researcher was interested in learning about Latino parent leadership, based on a hypothesis that Latino parent leadership may have the potential to impact the schooling experiences for Latino children and their families. A review of existing literature on parental engagement among Latinos, helped to develop a conceptual framework where four major themes emerge: 1.) Parent engagement produces more positive outcomes than traditional types of parent involvement; 2.) School personnel and Latino parents differ in their perceptions regarding what constitutes as parent involvement; 3.) Latino parents utilize culturally embedded strategies to promote their children's education; and 4.) Home-based forms of engagement have been found to be more effective than school-based involvement. The four themes came together to shape a conceptual framework where whenever Latino parent backgrounds were valued and treated as legitimate sources of strength and when these Latino parents could identify with these strengths and use these strengths to connect with new forms of school information and knowledge, Latino parent leadership could be born and develop. In short, this study seeks to better understand Latino parent engagement and leadership as experienced by a group of Latino parent leaders in one school district.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The gap in Latino student achievement has been associated with a number of different educational factors such as the cultural disconnect between teachers and students, the language barrier experienced by English Learners and school personnel, the lack of dual-immersion programs or culturally relevant instruction, segregation, and poverty. However, another factor that is often overlooked is a school's ability to recognize and embrace the key role Latino parents play in their child's schooling experience (Zarate, 2007). Research on the topic of parental involvement has increased and, although evidence exists suggesting a link between parent involvement and student achievement (Hill & Taylor, 2004) fewer studies have focused specifically on the Latino community. Given the continual gaps in achievement among Latino students, educators and policy makers must assess how well they are meeting the needs of this significant subgroup of students. If studies show that parent involvement has been linked to student success (Hill & Taylor, 2004), then logic would follow that a vital component of meeting the needs of Latino students will also require an inquiry into the extent to which schools are effectively engaging the parents of Latino children.

Although there may be individuals who question the importance of parental involvement, the fact is federal and state policies not only support the idea of parental involvement, but also require it. Section 1118 of the No Child Left Behind Act requires Title 1 schools to dedicate a portion of their funding to parental involvement activities (Cavanagh, 2012). Furthermore, California's State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlackson, released the *Family Engagement Framework, a Tool for California*

School Districts to provide districts with research regarding the importance of family engagement as it relates to student achievement and help schools engage parents in their children's education (Torlackson, 2012). Tom Torlackson (2012) is quoted as saying, "Parents are every child's first teacher. The good news is you don't need an advanced degree to help your child succeed at school. It's the little things that make a big difference—reading at home, talking with your child about school, and setting high expectations." (Torlackson, 2012, p.1)

The role parents play in their children's academic success is touted as important by policy makers, in addition to educators and researchers. Unfortunately, existing misalignments between parent involvement policies and actual parent involvement practices create situations where adhering to parent involvement policies become little more than a symbolic effort on the part of schools. Even with existing parent involvement policies firmly in place, they do little-or-nothing to specifically target Latino parents and other culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) groups.

Sadly, the exclusion of Latino parents within a school culture may contribute to the continued achievement gap among Latino students, with the hypothesis being that when Latino parents feel valued and connected to a school culture they can more readily ask questions and voice their opinions which may improve the educational outcomes for their children. This research study may shed light on this issue by studying a group of Latino parents within one school district who are engaged as leaders both at their schools and at their district.

Statement of the Problem

Latinos are overrepresented in low-wage earning jobs in the United States and underrepresented in Universities (Zarate, 2007). This can be explained, in part, by the low rates of educational outcomes for Latino students. According to data collected from the California Department of Education (Torlackson, 2011) website, Latino and English Learner students are most impacted by the achievement gap which affects culturally and linguistically diverse groups of students. Approximately 67% of Latino students and 56% of English Learners graduate high school. Another report by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) evaluates testing results of fourth grade and eighth grade students in reading and math for the 2009 school year. The findings state that Latino students scored 20 points lower on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scale. (Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011) "Hispanic students lag by the same amount today as they did in 1990, which means that the achievement gap between Hispanic and White students has been largely unchanged for the past two decades" (Webley, 2011). Within the Latino subgroup is the subset of English Learner students who are underperforming Latino students. The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) demonstrates this gap in eighth grade reading, where they found a 39 point discrepancy between English Learner students and English-Only/Latino students (Webley, 2011).

The achievement gap suffered by Latino students affects more than just the Latino community, as it has implications for the United States as a whole. The Latino population continues to steadily increase within the U.S., as does the urgency among politicians and policy makers to find solutions to close this gap for the future stability and success of the

country (Hill& Torres, 2010). Furthermore, U.S. schools have the moral imperative to bridge this gap in order to foster equity and justice for all of its children. The gap in Latino student achievement has been associated with a number of different educational factors, however one factor that is often overlooked is a school's ability to recognize and embrace the key role Latino parents play in their child's schooling experience (Zarate, 2007).

The question of parental engagement is not new to the conversation of student achievement. Joyce Epstein, one of the seminal researchers on this subject, has spent several years studying the importance engaging parents in their children's education. She is known for the Epstein Model of Parent Involvement and the six types of parent involvement. In her work, Epstein found that students benefit when they hear the common message, both in the home and at school, that their education matters. She explains that students develop in three settings: family; school; and the community. She clarifies by noting that when students feel cared for and supported in all three settings they will do better academically. Epstein defines this as the Overlapping Sphere of Influence Theory (Epstein, 1995). While Epstein points out that most educators and parents express a desire to work together, often times they don't know where to start. This notion becomes even more notable when considering how schools work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families, such as Latinos.

Existing literature describes certain barriers within schools that limit parental involvement among diverse groups of parents, specifically among Latino families. These barriers are often misunderstood on the part of the school as a lack of interest by parents, which can also lead to parents being blamed for insufficient success of their children (Hill

& Torres, 2010). There are strategies that have the potential to promote effective collaboration between schools and parents in general. However when applied to culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) parents, these strategies may not align with a parent's culture or worldview which can lead to lower levels of trust among Latino parents towards the school and, therefore, lower levels of Latino parent school engagement. Unfortunately, this can be interpreted through a deficit perspective on the part of school personnel where the deficiency is seen as lying with the parents (Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011, p. 3). There is a need for schools to find out the engagement preferences of Latino families and recognize the strengths that Latino families pass onto their children and use those strengths as a way to increase sense of connectedness between Latino families and schools (Rioja-Cortez & Bustos Flores, 2009).

Researchers have studied a variety of family values that Latino parents pass onto their children which help to shape their school and life experiences. Some of these values include *respeto* (respect), *consejos* (advice), *ganas* (desire/drive), *empeño* (dedication), estudios (studies)*, vergüenza* (dignity/shame) (Delgado-Gaitán, 1994; Hill, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010; Valdés, 1994). These concepts make a significant contribution to parent engagement literature by describing what Latino parents do teach their children, rather than simply focusing on the barriers Latino parents face when engaging in their child's education. In other words, this kind of research provides a lens that takes into account the rich cultural attributes that parents extend to their children, as opposed to a deficit-model where Latino families are treated as though they are lacking certain qualities needed for student success (Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011).

The danger of a deficit-based model is the release of responsibility by schools as they blame parents when students do not achieve, which also lends itself to the notion that something has to change in Latino parents before they can be considered as engaged or involved parents, rather than schools reflecting on their own potential lack of experience engaging CLD parents. (Gibson, 2002; Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011). By pinpointing Latino parental values and treating them as strengths, a paradigm shift can happen. Schools can learn to see Latino parents for who they really are, which can lead to stronger relationships, productive interactions, and deep understandings among both parents and school personnel (Hill & Torres, 2010). In this way, a transformation can happen where parent engagement initiatives may begin to effectively engage Latino parents by validating Latino parent strengths and, therefore, increasing Latino parent leadership so Latino parents can have a voice in guiding schools on how to better serve Latino children.

In summary much of the existing Latino parent research has examined barriers to Latino parent engagement and ways to eliminate these barriers, but fewer studies have looked at Latino parents using their own strengths and preferred methods of engagement and its potential to shape Latino parent leadership. The purpose of this dissertation is to add to the existing body of research on Latino parent involvement by investigating how and why Latino parents become engaged in a school culture by studying a group of Latino parent leaders within a single school district.

Proposed Study

The purpose of this study was to look at how Latino parents become engaged within a school culture and analyze their path towards leadership. The benefit of increased Latino parent engagement and leadership comes from the belief that an increase in Latino parent engagement and leadership has the potential to improve the educational outcomes of Latino students and, therefore, may help to close the achievement gap. This research will look at Latino parent engagement as a pathway towards Latino parent leadership through the examination of one group of Latino parents within a single school district.

Research Questions

The research questions that were used to guide this study are as follows:

1. How do Latino parents in this school district view and define their own parent engagement and why did this group of parent leaders become engaged?

2. What factors exist, if any, which move Latino parents along a continuum from involvement to engagement, towards leadership and beyond, where there may be potential for parents to become change agents?

Increasing Latino parent engagement may be a key factor to closing the achievement gap among Latino students. This research study draws on the following bodies of literature: 1.) Parent engagement strategies vs. traditional types of parent involvement; 2.) School personnel and Latino parents perceptions of parent involvement; 3.) Latino parents utilization of culturally embedded strategies to promote their children's

education; and 4.) Home-based forms of engagement that have been found to be more effective than school-based involvement. In addition, the following frameworks form the conceptual model that was used to frame this study.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study is framed using parent involvement research that focuses on "engagement" as described by Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009); Ferlazzo and Hammond's (2009) work describe parent engagement as being about active involvement vs. passive involvement of parents. Social capital and cultural capital frameworks are applied to explain initial challenges Latino parents face when engaging with the school culture and how, at the same time, social and capital frameworks when tied with community cultural wealth theory can be utilized to help parents understand their potential role within a school setting. In addition, Ecologies of Parental Engagement discusses how parents interact within a given school environment to move their roles as parents from involvement to engagement. These frameworks are integrated to develop a structure to help me explore and analyze the concept of Latino parent engagement.

Ferlazzo and Hammond's (2009) Involvement versus Engagement. Based on the work of Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) there is a clear difference between parent involvement and parent engagement. For the purposes of this study, it is important to distinguish between involvement and engagement because both terms are often referenced in parent participation research. This study suggests both involvement and engagement are forms of parent participation, but the way in which they are carried out are quite different. Engagement methods of parent participation treat parents as active

participants within the school culture who are free to voice their comments, concerns, preferences, and priorities, which will be important when studying Latino parents' preferred methods of participating within a school culture. Another theoretical framework used to develop the analytical structure used in this study is social and cultural capital.

Social Capital and Cultural Capital. Social Capital can be explained as the expectations in social relationships, social control and information channels (Coleman, 1988; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Yan & Lin, 2005). Based on traditional parent involvement, when a parent visits a school they have the potential to gain access to: 1.) Information, for example, school events and activities; 2.) Skills, such as how to teach their child at home, 3.) Access to resources, like study-aides, and 4.) Sources of social control such as being able to participate in decision-making committees. For the purposes of this study, social capital will focus on the knowledge that can be gained through parents collaborating with each other and other stakeholders within the school culture. This knowledge of how to collaborate with a diverse group of adults in a school can lead to resources and other benefits for all parties involved in the collaboration. Cultural capital is another important factor to consider in relation to social capital. Cultural capital can be explained as the positive consequence resulting from alignment between a family's worldview and the expected practices within a given educational institution (Hill, 2009). The greater a family's cultural capital, the more connected they are to the school community and the greater the chance of acquiring the social capital benefits available (Hill, 2009).

Community Cultural Wealth Framework. The Community Cultural Capital framework focuses on the strengths of underserved groups such as people of color and

culturally and linguistically diverse populations as they access spaces that are not created with their backgrounds in mind and are not in alignment with their world lens. There are six components of community cultural wealth: familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, resistant capital, linguistic capital and aspirational capital. Familial capital is "cultural knowledge nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition." (Yosso, 2006) Social capital can be described as the contacts, networks, connections with people and community resources that individuals use to traverse through society's institutions Navigational capital refers to the ways in which the participants make their way through social institutions (U.S. schools) that were not created with Latinos in mind. Resistant capital involves having a skill-set to apply defiance whenever needed in order to challenge injustices and inequalities; it also involves conserving and passing on cultural wealth to others. Linguistic capital includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style. Aspirational capital involves the ability to hold on to hopes and dreams, even in the face of obstacles or when the means to achieve such goals seem unattainable (Yosso, 2006). The community cultural wealth framework has been applied to Latino student outcomes in other studies, but the researcher did not find any literature where this framework was applied to Latino parent experiences and leadership. However, the researcher felt that this framework could be appropriate for this study because it provided a way to conceptualize the strengths Latino parents in this study exemplified and discussed during the investigation.

Ecologies of Parental Engagement. An additional framework that will help better understand parent engagement is the Ecologies of Parental Engagement (EPE). This

framework explains parent engagement as an active process within the social world. In this setting engagement is more than just an outcome, but rather "a set of relationships and actions." (Barton et al., 2004, p. 6) EPE provides a holistic approach to parent engagement, which includes parents' experiences and natural resources as a way to explain their relationships within a school environment. Similar to Ferlazzo's (2011) work, EPE focuses on the "how" and "why" parents are engaged in their child's education. The framework sheds light on parental engagement by describing parents as both authors and agents in the school community.

Methods

The research design of this study was an ethnographic case study that used multiple methods to answer research questions. The research questions in this study focused on exploring Latino parent engagement through the eyes of a group of Latino parent leaders within a single school district. This study focused on exploring one semi-urban district that has been successful in closing the achievement gap between Latinos and other groups of students; in addition to extraordinary efforts to engage Latino parents as leaders. Data was collected from one-on-one interviews, observations of the District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) meetings, as well as informal meetings and conferences where Latino parent leaders interact. Furthermore, document analysis of meeting agendas and minutes was also included within the data collection. The data collected provided qualitative information about what factors may exist, if any, that motivate this group of Latino parents to engage within the school culture as leaders.

Significance and Rationale for the Selection of the Study Site

Oak Harp Unified School District was selected because it serves a large number of Hispanic/Latino students and these students represent the type of learner who most often underperforms on standardized measures of achievement. Oak Harp USD has continually defied the odds and consistently made gains in student achievement over the past ten years. In fact, this district was one of the few that successfully avoided Program Improvement (PI) until recently when accountability targets were approaching 100%.

In order for a district to avoid Program Improvement (PI) federal law mandates that every school and district must steadily improve each year until, ultimately in the year 2014, all students are proficient in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Each school and district is reviewed annually by the California State Board of Education to determine if students are making Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) based upon several factors including: 1.) California's accountability measurement of progress, the Academic Performance Index (API); 2.) The percentage of students scoring at the "proficient" or "advanced" level on the California Standards Tests for English-Language Arts and Mathematics; 3.) The percentage of students participating in state tests; and, 4.) The graduation rate and 10th grade results of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). If these criteria are not met for two years in a row, federal law requires schools and districts that receive federal Title I funds to be identified for Program Improvement (PI).

Oak Harp USD consistently met their achievement targets over the last decade and is currently known as one of the top-performing districts within a county of 23 school districts. Therefore, something can be learned from this district's success. In 2014, Oak

Harp USD was recognized as having the highest reclassification rate (the percentage of English Learner students meeting the criteria needed to demonstrate English proficiency and no longer require English language support services) in their county. The Oak Harp reclassification rate was 17.4%, which was well above the county and state average which fell between 10-12%.

One key attribute of such success has been the increased engagement of Latino parent leaders within the school district as evidenced by parents utilizing their voice within leadership roles both at their school sites and the district. Through the examination of highly engaged Latino parents within one school district, this research has the potential to provide examples for educational leaders hoping to improve their own districts' quality of Latino parent engagement or other Latino parents who wish to learn more about a potential pathway towards leadership and change agency. Few studies report on initiatives that have included parents as equal partners and active agents of change. This study investigated Latino parental engagement and leadership through the eyes of Latino parent leaders within one successful district.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review about Latino Parent Engagement is to explore how Latino parents approach parent involvement and how Latino parents do engage in relation to their child's schooling experience. Unfortunately, educational institutions can be a source of alienation for Latino parents and often times there is a mismatch of expectations between schools and parents on how to best support students. This can lead to misunderstandings where schools blame Latino parents for insufficient student success and where schools begin to believe the myth that Latino parents do not value the education of their children (Hill & Torres, 2010; Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011). This literature review sets out to understand the complexity surrounding the question of Latino parent engagement

Parent Involvement and Parent Engagement: What is the difference?

The term "parent involvement" can mean different things to different people, but for the most part parental involvement has been based on White, middle-class values (Berger 1991; Delgado-Gaitán, 1992; Larotta & Yamamura, 2011). Traditionally, parental involvement has meant volunteering within the school setting, attending parent meetings, attending and assisting with field-trips and other school events, communicating with teachers on a regular basis, participating in fundraising, helping with homework, checking student progress, and becoming involved in parent organizations such as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) (Larotta & Yamamura, 2011, Zarate, 2007). While this kind of involvement may appear to be beneficial for students, the assumptions on which they are grounded are problematic (Larotta & Yamamura, 2011;

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Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011). This conception of parent involvement

assumes that parents have a working knowledge of the United States School System and

that parents see the value, have the desire and/or ability to be available in such a

prescribed way (Larotta & Yamamura, 2011).

Another troublesome issue with the traditional concept of parental involvement

lies in who has the power to define it. Historically, school officials and policy makers

have determined what constitutes as appropriate forms of parent involvement, rather than

the parents themselves (Berger 1991; Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011;

Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, & Hernandez, 2003). This sabotages the potential for a

genuine home-school connection, because parent's values/beliefs are not included and

their voices are not heard.

Of greater concern, is that schools base their expectations of parental involvement

on such inward and narrow ideologies that when CLD parents utilize a differing approach

from the school's contrived notion of involvement they are deemed as uncaring, and

negative stereotypes can ensue (De Gaetano, 2007; Delagado-Gaitán, 1992, 2007;

Marschall, 2006; Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011; Valdés 1996). These

stereotypes are dangerous for students as they may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy

where school personnel believe parents do not care and, therefore, release themselves

from the responsibility for student outcomes (Delgado-Gaitán, 1992).

Equally unsettling are the contradictions that exist around the subject of Latino

parent engagement. Latino parents are blamed when they are not "visible" within the

school setting, while at the same time they are "dismissed and repressed" when

exercising their leadership and providing their input (Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, &

Ochoa, 2011; Shannon, 1996). Further complicating this paradox is that white parents are viewed as catalysts for their children's success, while Latino parents are often regarded as a hindrance for their children (Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011). Due to these serious shortcomings, conscientious schools may choose to transform their parent involvement practices. One such transformation would be to move towards parent engagement, in place of traditional parent involvement.

Parent engagement entails a shift in thinking that requires schools to move beyond traditional forms of parent involvement. Existing research posits that schools "engage" parents when they move from a simple involvement activities that focus on "what" parents can do and instead, focus on understanding the "how" and "why" of the work parents do within a school community (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004; Larotta & Yamamura, 2011). In an article by Larry Ferlazzo entitled, "*Involvement or Engagement,*" (2011) he discusses the important distinction between involvement and engagement.

Ferlazzo explains that parent involvement means the school is inviting parents to "show up" and "do" something the school deems is important, whereas engagement includes parents in an equal partnership where they are moved to do what they feel is important. He adds that schools that want to inspire involvement lead with their mouths by telling parents what matters most in their child's education, whereas schools that want to inspire engagement lead with their ears and listen to the concerns and priorities of the parents themselves. Ferlazzo states that, "The goal of family engagement is not to serve clients but to gain partners." (Ferlazzo, 2011, p.1)

Ecologies of Parent Engagement (EPE)

Similar research describes parent engagement using the Ecologies of Parent Engagement (EPE) framework (Barton et al., 2004). This framework explains parent engagement as an active process within the social world. In this setting engagement is more than just an outcome, but rather "a set of relationships and actions." (Barton et al., 2004, p. 6) EPE provides a holistic approach for parent engagement, which includes parents' experiences and natural resources as a way to explain their relationship within a school environment. Similar to Ferlazzo's (2011) work, EPE focuses on the "how" and "why" parents are engaged in their child's education. This involves both social and cultural negotiations between the home-school environments (Barton et al., 2004). Essentially, EPE reveals that parent actions for engagement are bound by the contexts in which they take place.

For example, in a qualitative study (Barton et al., 2004) based on narrative inquiry, a parent reveals the transformative experience of moving towards engagement as per the EPE framework. In this study, one parent shared that, although she always had wanted for her child to succeed, she was not always involved. She did not feel that she had the knowledge needed to participate in a meaningful way and, therefore, felt she had nothing to offer towards school discussions and decision-making. However, she began to participate upon coming into contact with a teacher who seemed to genuinely care and advocate for her son. The positive experience opened a "space" for this parent to feel welcome in the school setting, where she had not felt "invited" before. She began participating in a variety of traditional ways and reported the activities in which she was involved were more about educating her, than for helping her to "advocate" for her kids.

Nonetheless, her developing knowledge about "traditional" parent involvement helped her to activate the pre-existing types of knowledge and resources that were natural to her, such as asking questions, voicing her concerns and opinions. This experience helped her see involvement as more than just being present, but instead she learned to use all of her knowledge to become "part of the fabric of the school" by using her voice (Barton et al., 2004, p.7).

The EPE framework centers on parents participating in relation to their environment. It recognizes that parent engagement is more than an individual decision to participate or not participate. It treats parent engagement as an entire system of social interactions and provides insight on how parents interact with others, the institution, activities and the resources available (Barton, et al., 2004). Traditional parent involvement is designed around an assumptive congruency in behaviors, values, and attitudes between the home-school settings, but this congruency is only possible when families and schools are linked by similar backgrounds and worldviews (Hill, 2009). In the case of Latino families, who hold different ideas as to the role they play in their child's education, there are certain constraints that arise from these differences (Lee & Bowen, 2006).

Social and Cultural Capital

The constraints that arise from the differences between the perspectives of school personnel and Latino parents become clear when applying the concepts of social and cultural capital. Social Capital can be explained as the expectations in social relationships, social control and information channels (Coleman, 1988; Lee & Bowen,

2006; Yan & Lin, 2005). Based on traditional parent involvement, when a parent visits a school they have the potential to gain access to: 1.) Information, for example, school events and activities; 2.) Skills, such as how to teach their child at home, 3.) Access to resources, like study-aides, and 4.) Sources of social control such as being able to participate on decision-making committees. In addition, through interactions with other parents in the school community parents are also able to build their social networks and gain additional parenting resources (Lee & Bowen, 2006; Yan & Lin, 2005). All of these forms of social capital have the potential to promote student success. Conversely, inequalities of social capital exist when CLD families, such as Latinos, have different experiences regarding parent involvement and are not aware of how to gain access to social capital and, therefore without access, cannot benefit in the same way White families do.

For example, White, middle-class parents inherently understand their role in the U.S. school system, having gone through it themselves. This allows them to approach school personnel with confidence should a question arise about their children's education. As a result, White parents are deemed "good parents" by fitting within the school norms and they receive the information needed to support their children in school. On the contrary, a qualitative study conducted by Susan Auerbach (2002) found that Latino parents are not comfortable questioning school personnel and, therefore, do not have the same opportunities to access school information. Rather than being regarded as "good parents," Latinos reported that they were made to feel ignorant by school personnel (Auerbach, 2002).

Cultural capital is another important factor to consider in relation to social capital. Cultural capital can be explained as the positive consequence resulting from alignment between a family's worldview and the expected practices within a given educational institution (Hill, 2009). The greater a family's cultural capital, the more connected they are to the school community and the greater the chance of acquiring the social capital benefits available (Hill, 2009). White families form their cultural capital in conjunction with forming their worldviews as they are growing up, which leads to a number of social benefits. In the essay "White Privilege," Peggy McIntosh (1988) highlights the entitlements that White families enjoy in this country, many they may not even be aware of. She coined the term "Invisible Knapsack," to describe the special provisions possessed by Whites, which are not equally distributed to CLD groups of people for reasons of culture, language, customs, etc.

For example, White families can participate within the school setting and feel a relative sense of belonging, rather than feeling isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared. (McIntosh, 1988) On the other hand, CLD families have to learn new ways of thinking and "being" in order to align themselves with the school's cultural capital, which is needed to increase their social capital. The end result is inequality. Differences in cultural capital reduce the ability of Latino parents to obtain the advantages of social capital (Hill, 2009; Lee & Bowen, 2006).

To counter the misconception that CLD families "lack" any capital, there is another framework that explains the many types of capital CLD families, such as Latinos do possess, the Community of Cultural Wealth framework. This framework describes the types of capital and strengths that CLD people develop and utilize in order to navigate

through environments and systems that were not created with their needs and/or preferences in mind. This framework describes six forms of capital CLD people may possess and use: familial, social, navigational, linguistic, resistant, and aspirational (Yosso, 2006).

Familial capital involves the bond that is formed by being a part of *familia* or a form of "kinship" where individuals feel they belong and are not alone, where there exists a collective strength among members and, often times, there can be a sense of a shared struggle. Social capital can be described as the supportive social networks CLD people develop in order to assist one another while steering through society's systems. Navigational capital refers to the ways CLD people make their way through social institutions that may not fit or address their needs and preferences. Resistant capital involves having a skill-set to apply defiance whenever needed in order to challenge injustices and inequalities; it also involves conserving and passing on cultural wealth to others. Linguistic capital includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style. Aspirational capital involves the ability to hold on to hopes and dreams, even in the face of obstacles or when the means to achieve such goals seem unattainable (Yosso, 2006). This framework helps to describe the many attributes that Latino families do bring with them as they enter the U.S. school system for the first time and may provide possible points of connection for families and schools as a way where all forms of capital are recognized as valuable.

The EPE framework, social and cultural capital, in addition to the community cultural wealth framework, help to explain the variations of Latino parent engagement explored in this paper (Yan & Lin, 2005). In order to reach the goal of genuine Latino

parent engagement, schools will also need to form meaningful partnerships with parents by eliciting their voices and opinions.

Motivations for Engagement among Latino Parents

As schools work towards inviting authentic and active participation of Latino parents, there is also much to be gleaned by studying what factors motivate parent collaboration within a school community. Although research suggests there are certain cultural and linguistic barriers Latino parents face in regards to becoming engaged in their child's education, in order for schools to overcome such barriers, it is critical to ask, "Why would Latino parents want to become engaged with U.S. schools?" It is important to study the motivators that drive Latino parents to become engaged within a school system, aside from the obvious love they feel towards their children. Answering this question can help schools better understand the Latino community and foster more meaningful partnerships with parents.

According to one study conducted by Dr. Pablo M. Jasis and Dr. Rosario Ordonez-Jasis (2012), there are two factors that motivate parents to participate in their child's education: *tequio* and advocacy. *Tequio* describes a sense of community service that parents from South Eastern Mexico are familiar with and where there is a feeling that each individual must do their part for the good of all (Jasis and Ordonez-Jasis, 2012, p. 47). This was an ethnographic study where the researchers studied three different school settings and three different school programs that were led by parents. They explored the reasons that these parents participated in such programs. They found that parents found

strength in group solidarity and wanted to advocate so their kids would have access to a quality education.

Another study conducted by Ivonne De Gaetano (2007) was centered on a similar theme. She looked at the ways in which Latino parents are marginalized and blamed for not being involved in their child's education and found that when schools approach parents in a culturally relevant manner, parents are more likely to become engaged. She led a quantitative study where parents were provided with workshops that validated their own culture as a resource for students and promoted self-advocacy skills. The result was an increase in parental engagement where parents voiced their position regarding school issues.

Equally important to valuing parent culture and promoting self-advocacy skills, the actual racial makeup of a school community may be related to the successful parent engagement among Latino families (Marschall, 2006; Shaw, 2009). According to one study, The Theory of Symbolic Representation may explain the low numbers of Latino parent involvement in schools. This theory posits that CLD families take notice when White leaders have more influence than leaders that represent diverse groups of people and therefore internalize a sense of powerlessness. "These attitudes change, however, when they see people ''like themselves'' in positions of authority." (Shah, 2009, p. 213) In his analysis, Shah found that Latino representation within schools can influence parent engagement.

In a similar fashion, quantitative research conducted by Melissa Marschall (2006) looked at how Latino representation on governing school boards led to increases in Latino parent engagement. Not only did the parents see themselves represented in the

school board leadership, but the leadership made the needs of the community a focus for teachers and school personnel. She concluded her study by discussing the need for teachers and schools to involve parents in culturally relevant ways. Her research demonstrated that this successfully motivated parent engagement and as a result there were significant gains in Latino student achievement (Marschall, 2006).

Schools that wish to successfully engage Latino parents may begin by building an equal partnership where parents can participate in their child's education in a way that is meaningful as defined by their own values and beliefs. This level of engagement requires schools to recognize the strengths already in existence within the Latino culture and work within the Latino culture to motivate and unlock the talents Latino parents have to offer. Moreover, schools may have better success at engaging Latino parents when there is diversity reflected among school staff and leadership. In this way, parents can identify with school personnel and feel represented within the school community. In order to reach the goal of Latino family engagement, it is also necessary to address the varying perceptions around the topic.

Varying Perceptions of Parent Engagement

Another complexity regarding Latino parent engagement is the mismatch between parent and school perceptions of parent engagement. Often times there may be a lack of communication among these two parties as to what each expects from the other, resulting in different definitions of what it means for parents to be involved or engaged in their child's education. Further compounding the issue are the popular misconceptions surrounding Latino parents. For example, there are perceptions that Latino parents do not

participate within the school arena and, therefore, do not care about their children or their education (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). However, research does not support this idea. To the contrary, the literature suggests that Latino parents value education and make numerous positive contributions to their children's lives (Hill & Torres, 2010; Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011; Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006).

Even so, these negative perceptions persist among educators and school leadership. According to Dr. Alice Quiocho and Dr. Annette Daoud, (2006) these ideas may be "rooted" in the negative feelings people harbor towards immigrants in U.S. society and the fear associated with how linguistically and culturally diverse people may affect the larger population (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). Similar research has used Critical Race Theory to describe how schools maintain a capitalistic culture that places people, who live in poverty, and who are culturally and linguistically diverse, in a subordinate position preventing real partnerships among parents and school personnel. (Barton et. al., 2004) These obstructions of equality become a major challenge to parent engagement. Power struggles regarding, not only who has the authority to determine appropriate forms of engagement, but who is responsible for initiating engagement result.

According to researcher Jasmine A. Mena (2011), it is the responsibility of the school to reach out to Latino parents and make them aware of how they can best support their child's education within the U.S. school system. Literature on the topic of Latino family engagement suggests that not all parents understand teacher expectations and these expectations need to be made explicit for Latino parents (Barton, et. al., 2004, p. 3-12; Marschall, 2006). Moreover, Title I schools are required to set aside monies and

develop a plan for parent engagement, which exhibits the federal government's

concurrence regarding the school's responsibility to the parents they serve. Although

parent involvement literature and federal law point the responsibility for parent

engagement at the school, the reality is that many educators still hold low expectations

for CLD parents, which hinders the possibility for a strong home-school connection. Dr.

Shu Wa Wong and Dr. Jan Hughes (2006) conducted a study and found that, based on

parent questionnaires, minority parents reported higher levels of involvement than the

teachers reported for them—making visible the mismatch between parent/teacher

perceptions.

School Personnel Perceptions and Worldview

School personnel perceptions of parent engagement tend to fall in stark contrast to

that of Latino parents. To begin with, school personnel (meaning teachers, counselors,

principals, and paraprofessionals) have little to no training that focuses on how to interact

with parents and the community. In a qualitative study, (Zarate, 2007) school personnel

were interviewed and reported parent-teacher organizations as evidence of parent

engagement. In addition, they listed back-to-school nights, open houses, and parent-

teacher conferences as pathways towards a solid home-school connection. This

perception greatly differs from that of parents, who were also interviewed and, who

described social relationships as the most valuable instrument for connecting with their

children's school (Zarate, 2007).

School personnel perceptions and worldviews center on the White-middle-class

values of individualism (Hill, 2009; Trumbull et al., 2003). Individualism teaches

independence, self-expression, self-sufficiency and achievement. From this world-view, children are to become individuals who will one day be independent of their families (Hill, 2009; Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011; Trumbull et al., 2003). This contrasts with Latino family worldviews who value interdependence and collectivism (Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011; Trumbull et al., 2003).

Another example of individualism is evident in the interactions teachers have with their students. Teachers may say to students, "Worry about yourself," "Work independently," and "it is your responsibility, not mine." However, in Latino cultures this type of teaching may be viewed as uncaring and cold (Hill & Torres, 2010). Latinos believe that people in authority have an obligation to the people they serve. Thus, Latino parents view teachers as having an obligation (*obligación*) to the students they serve (Hill, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010). They may feel that teachers should do more or care more about their children, rather than just focusing the responsibility onto the child (Hill, 2009).

School personnel are often unaware of the differences in cultural perspectives and worldviews of Latino parents and, thus, are not able to understand their own perceptions as one of the challenges to Latino Parent engagement. School personnel do not recognize that Latino parents do not hold the same point of reference regarding education or engagement and, therefore, are not mindful to their own biases and misconceptions about Latino parents.

Latino Parent Perceptions and Worldview

One of the greatest misconceptions surrounding Latino parent engagement is that Latino parents do not want to be involved in the school community and, therefore, must not care about their children (Delagado-Gaitán, 1992, 2007; Marschall, 2006; Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011; Valdés, 1996). This could not be farther from the truth for Latino families, some who are recent immigrants and have left the comforts of their home countries; such as values, beliefs, loved-ones, language and cuisine, etc., to offer their children a chance at a better future in a new country (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Latino parents deeply love and care for their children, however they do not have the cultural capital to fully understand the expectations U.S. schools have for parents. Latino parents greatly respect teaching as a profession and feel that teachers are academic experts who should not be questioned (Hill & Torres, 2010; Yan & Lin, 2005). This cultural belief makes Latino parents feel uneasy when approaching school personnel; however it often gets misconstrued as a lack of interest in education (De Gaetano, 2007; Delagado-Gaitán, 1992, 2007; Marschall, 2006; Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011; Valdés, 1996). Moreover, in Latin American countries the term "education" has a broader meaning than in the U.S. (Auerbach, 2002; Delgado-Gaitán, 1992; Hill & Torres, 2010; Trumbull, et al., 2003; Valdés, 1996). In Spanish, *educación,* denotes more than just academics, it also includes morals, values, behavior, and respect (Auerbach, 2002; Hill & Torres, 2010; Valdés, 1996). Latino parents fully embrace their pivotal role in teaching their children these important characteristics, but feel teachers are the key to teaching academics since they are the experts.

In a study conducted by Dr. Zarate (2007), parents described themselves as responsible for the "life participation" of their children. Their view of educating their children was more holistic. They focused on monitoring the lives of their children, shaping their character, providing moral guidance and promoting trust and communication with their children (Valdés, 1996). Latino parents stated their belief that the parent-child relationship will serve their children well in the classroom (Zarate, 2007). Latino parents believe these types of experiences hold more value than solely "showing up" to school events (Hill & Torres, 2010; Trumbull, et al., 2003).

Furthermore, Latino parents do not always understand the politics and purposes behind traditional forms of parental involvement. Helping out in the office, chaperoning events or attending an Open House, for example, where parents do not have the opportunity to interact with the teacher in a personal manner regarding their children can make little sense to a Latino parent. The link between participating in these types of events and supporting their child and/or the community may not be as clear to Latino parents (Peña, 2000; Yan & Lin, 2005). In addition, Latino parents do not fully understand the politics behind this type of participation where parents who attend school events are viewed as supportive and those who don't may be deemed as unconcerned (Peña, 2000; Yan & Lin, 2005). Schools that desire Latino parent engagement must make participation opportunities and a rationale for participation explicit for Latino parents in order to bridge the cultural gap and create comprehensible and effective communication.

In addition to being aware of Latino perceptions regarding the role of the school and the education of their children, it is also critical to understand differences in

worldviews among U.S. Schools and Latino parents. Whereas U.S. schools tend to be centered on individualism and personal self-attainment, Latino families believe in collectivism and understanding oneself in relation to ones' community (Hill, 2009; Trumbull et al., 2003; Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011). Trumbull et al. (2003) conducted a qualitative study involving seven elementary school teachers who worked with predominantly Latino families and found that, as the teachers learned to better understand collectivism and the ways in which Latino families highly value social relationships through professional development, their engagement with Latino families improved. Research shows that Latino parents would like to have informal relationships and friendly conversations with their children's teachers, but instead report feeling talked-down-to, inferior and disrespected (Auerbach, 2002; Hill & Torres, 2010; Trumbull et al., 2003).

Although existing literature on Latino parent engagement discusses the linguistic barriers parents face, other studies have found that parents do not feel as challenged by language differences as they do by social and cultural barriers, which is another example of the importance of social relationships in the Latino culture (Hill & Torres, 2010; Ramirez, 2003; Zarate, 2007). In a qualitative study conducted by Ramirez (2003), parents shared that, for them, the most important part of the school-home relationship is for school personnel to care about their children and their families. In short, Latino families want to feel respected and valued through personal relationships with their children's teachers and the school (Hill & Torres, 2010; Ramirez, 2003).

Another cultural factor to consider is that Latino parents often find their own worldviews at odds with U.S. school expectations. Research has shown that Latino

parents have stricter views on things like school work, dress-codes and behavior (Hill & Torres, 2010). Latino immigrant families may have experienced more centralized kinds of schooling in their home countries making it difficult for them to relate to the less disciplined, freedom-of-expression approach in the U.S. (Hill & Torres, 2010). Latino parents report feeling that the culture they wish to preserve is disrespected and devalued by school personnel (Hill & Torres, 2010; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). In an interview conversation with Dr. Quiocho (personal interview, November, 8th, 2012) she captures the sense of devaluation felt by Latino parents:

> When a White student takes a vacation with his/her family to travel somewhere in the world, the school views this as an opportunity for enrichment and sends a work packet along. However when a Mexican student visits México with their family, the school devalues this experience, questions parent commitment towards education and requests that authorities fine the family for allowing their child to miss school.

Latino parents also feel their values and authority are questioned and undermined by school personnel (Hill & Torres, 2010; Yan & Lin, 2005). For example, as mentioned earlier, Latino families value social relationships and collectivism. This drives family dynamics in the home where each member of the family is expected to contribute to the well-being of the entire household (Hill, 2009). Children are expected to assist with household responsibilities and even financial responsibilities when appropriate.

School personnel may misunderstand Latino values around responsibility and contribution as a lack of regard for education (Hill & Torres, 2010). Children become contributing members of their family make them invaluable to the family's survival, however U.S. schools expect children to be obedient at all times and may not value the leadership skills these children possess at a young age (Hill & Torres, 2010). Parents are

often confused by negative phone calls they receive regarding their children's behavior when these same children are considered a vital resource at home (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Unfortunately, when negative phone calls outnumber other forms of outreach to Latino parents and when insensitivities towards Latino cultures are the norm, the likelihood of Latino families wanting to participate in a home-school connection decreases (Hill, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010; Peña, 2000). In order for change to take place, schools must begin to recognize the strengths of the Latino community and value the culturally embedded strategies Latino families utilize to teach their children, much of which is "invisible" to school personnel (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Valuing the Strengths of the Latino Culture and Invisible Parent Engagement:

Latino families possess a variety of culturally embedded values that promote the success of their children. Since these values are taught in the home through the close relationships Latinos cultivate with their children, they are not visible to school personnel and, therefore, are not typically recognized as valuable (Hill & Torres, 2010). However, there is growing research around the notion that schools can draw upon the knowledge and skills found within the households of Latino families in order to better support students (Moll, Amanti, Nelf, and Gonzalez, 1992).

According to a qualitative, ethnographic study (Moll et al., 1992) school personnel can learn from parents and their "funds of knowledge" as a way to improve education. This kind of research is a much needed shift away from literature that treated CLD parent involvement based on a deficit model, which blamed student struggles in the classroom on family environments and practices (Delgado-Gaitán, 1992). The work of

the following researchers shows that Latino families have a wealth-of-knowledge to share with their children in support of their education (Delgado-Gaitán, 1992; Moll, et al., 1992; Hill & Torres, 2010).

Latino Parent Values as Strengths for Engagement

Researchers have studied a variety of family values that Latino parents pass onto their children which help to shape their school and life experiences. Some of these values include *respeto* (respect), *consejos* (advice), *ganas* (desire/drive), *empeño* (dedication), estudios (studies), *vergüenza* (dignity/shame) (Delgado-Gaitán, 1994; Hill, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010; Valdés, 1994). These concepts make a significant contribution to parent engagement literature by describing what Latino parents "do" teach their children, rather than what they "don't do" or "don't have." In other words, this kind of research provides a lens that takes into account the rich cultural traits that parents extend to their children, as opposed to a deficit-model where Latino families are treated as though they are lacking certain attributes (Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011). The danger of a deficit model is the release of responsibility by schools as they blame parents when students do not succeed (Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011). By pinpointing Latino-parent-values and treating them as strengths, a paradigm shift can take place. Schools can learn to see Latino parents for who they really are, which can lead to stronger relationships, productive interactions, and deep understandings among both parents and school personnel (Hill & Torres, 2010).

To begin with, the word *respeto* means more than just respect. Much of the research about the term *respeto* comes from an ethnographic study from Guadalupe

Valdéz (1996) where she interviewed Mexican-born families. She describes *respeto* as Latino parents teaching their children about attitudes towards individuals and/or the roles they occupy (Valdés, 1996). This is especially important among family members where *respeto* can also take on a sense of appreciation, obligation and contribution towards others (Hill, 2009). *Respeto* teaches children about how families show they care about one another. By taking care of each other and fulfilling their roles in the family, they also learn how to earn respect (Valdés, 1996). *Respeto* has also been described as related to behavior (Delgado-Gaitán, 1992). Latino parents are interested in how well their child behaves at school, because *respeto* is highly valued and taught in the home (Delgado-Gaitán, 1992).

Another important way Latino parents support their children is through the use of *consejos.* Concha Delgado-Gaitán (1994) collected data from Mexican families for over 8 years which revealed the importance of *consejos*. Latino parents teach their children about life by sharing nurturing advice (Auerbach, 2002; Delgado-Gaitán, 1994). This advice takes the form of narrative stories about their own experiences of those of others (Auerbach, 2002; Delgado-Gaitán, 1994; Hill &Torres, 2010). For example, researchers Hill and Torres (2010) conducted an analysis of Latino parent engagement literature and discovered that, as a result of parent's high aspirations for their children, they may take them to work with them so they can share their personal experiences and *consejos* about why school matters and provide the example that if they don't do well in school they may end up doing the same laborious work (Hill, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010).

Latino parents also teach their children about *ganas*, which is a way to push themselves to achieve. This can be explained as a persons' drive for success (Auerbach,

2007; Hill and Torres, 2010). Additionally, *empeño* is the dedication to work towards a given goal and *estudios* relates to diligent studying that will lead to achievement (Auerbach, 2007; Hill and Torres, 2010). Last, Latino parents also teach their children *vergüenza* which captures the idea that children should maintain a sense of dignity and shame so that they conduct themselves as honorable and noble human beings, rather than prideful or foolish (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Researchers Yan and Lin (2005) also found benefits in Latino parenting styles, which they describe as Authoritative-Permissive. This kind of parenting is responsibility-oriented where all members of the family, including children are expected to be productive, take advantage of opportunities, and be responsible (Hill, 2009; Hill and Torres, 2010). Parents are authoritative in that they do not allow their children to "waste time" and they are strict in regards to household duties, but also permissive in that they trust their children to handle their own responsibilities (Hill & Torres, 2010). Authoritative-Permissive parenting has been linked to better mental-health, because children view their parents as caring (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Yan & Lin, 2005).

In brief, Latino parents have a wealth-of-knowledge to pass onto their children and they teach many values that promote positive student attributes that may potentially impact achievement. Unfortunately, because this type of engagement is not visible within the school setting, Latino parents do not get the recognition other parents receive by attending school events. This point raises the question, "what kinds of parent engagement matter most?"

The Impact of Home-based Parent Engagement:

Home-based parent engagement is another area of study in parent involvement literature. Home-based engagement is also synonymous with the term academic socialization (Hill and Tyson, 2009). This term refers to parents communicating their expectations for education and its value, linking schoolwork to current events, fostering educational and occupational aspirations, discussing learning strategies with children, and making preparations and plans for the future (Hill and Tyson, 2009). Academic Socialization allows for parents to maintain involvement in their child's education while also affirming their child's independence and advancing their decision making skills. This includes strategies like communication between parents and their children about school, engagement with school work, taking children out to events that foster academic success and creating a positive learning environment at home.

Home-based engagement focuses on the knowledge, talents and skills that are natural to the parent and build upon the relationship between the child and the parent. Hill's study looked at middle school students and found that parental involvement is "positively related to student achievement" and academic socialization had the strongest positive relation with achievement (Hill and Tyson, 2009). Interestingly, a study performed by Inna Altschul (2011) resulted in similar findings among Latinos in comparison to the research done by Hill and Tyson where academic socialization had the most impact on student achievement (2009).This study looked at six forms of parental involvement that encompassed school involvement, home involvement and investments of time and money.

The six areas covered in this study were: 1.) Parents being involved with school organizations (school, time); 2.) Parents discussing school matters with their child at home (home, time); 3.) Parents assisting their child with homework (home, time); 4.) Parents and children engaging in enriching activities at home (Home, time); 5.) Parents investing in educational resources in the home (home, money); and 6.) Parents investing in extracurricular instruction for their child (home, money). This was a quantitative study that used data from the National Education Longitudinal Study to look at how parental involvement affected the achievement of 8th grade and 10th grade students. In the end, like Hill and Tyson's study (2009), the result was that home-based involvement proved to be most effective.

Other researchers, such as Jasmine A. Mena (2012) and Jeremy D. Finn, (1998) support the idea that home-environment can influence achievement, such as: organizing and monitoring a child's time, helping with homework, and discussing that school matters with the child. Contrary to other literature, their work highlights how parent attendance within school settings has not been strongly correlated with achievement gains, although teachers usually respond more favorably to students and families who participate in traditional forms of involvement. However, empirically it does little to improve student outcomes. In her research, Mena (2012) discusses other factors that may make home-based involvement necessary for Latino parents who are employed in low-wage-earning positions which may require them to work multiple jobs. She states that these parents may show a high socio-economic status due to the fact that they work two-to-three jobs, but in this situation parents would have little-to-no time for traditional types

of parent involvement, therefore, making home-based involvement extremely important for these families.

The literature reviewed in this paper suggests that schools need to shift their thinking and recognize the rich and diverse ways in which Latino families are already involved in their child's schooling experience (Altschul, 2011). Although educators may look more favorably at parents who attend traditional forms of family involvement activities, it is important to recognize they do not have the same impact on students as home-based engagement (Finn, 1998; Mena, 2011). This information may help educators as they think about providing more of an inclusive platform for Latino parent engagement. This will require moving from a deficit-based model towards a positive appreciation of what parents already bring to the table through home-based engagement.

Summary and Conclusion

If schools truly aspire to achieve authentic Latino parent engagement, then understanding the limitations of traditional family involvement as a first step is key. Traditional forms of parent involvement may not be enough to effectively connect with Latino families. Moreover, traditional types of family involvement ignore the cultural differences, perceptions, and world views of CLD families, including Latinos. Even more problematic is that it also ignores the white-middle-class cultural biases and assumptions traditional parent involvement is built on. Schools need to recognize these factors in order to embrace all CLD families, specifically Latinos, and be mindful of the implicit curriculum and expectations that Latino parents may not have access to or be aware of (Hill, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010). Latino families value education and want to be a part

of their children's success in school, but may have another point-of-reference or approach for reaching that goal. Latino parents may desire engagement over involvement, because it leads to genuine connections with their children and with the school. Schools can gain insight from the ways in which Latino families successfully engage with their children and use this new learning as a way to promote meaningful relationships with Latino parents and their children.

The literature reviewed in this study suggests that Latino parents are already engaged in ways that schools need to recognize and build upon, but equally important is that it highlights the strengths within the Latino community. This raises an important question: Can Latino parent engagement lead to leadership? What factors exist, if any that help Latino parents move beyond engagement towards leadership where they can become empowered as change agents who use their strengths to make a difference in the educational experiences and outcomes of Latino students and mark their place within the educational system and their communities?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

  The previous chapters defined the importance of conducting a study about Latino parent engagement in order to learn more about how Latino parents engage as parent leaders and partners in helping schools close the achievement gap for Latino students. The literature review highlights the need to differentiate between parent involvement and parent engagement (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009). It is also important to recognize that Latino parents have culturally embedded parent engagement strategies to support their child's education that may differ from the traditional methods prescribed in the American School System. As stated in the literature review, culturally appropriate practices have the potential to increase Latino parent engagement; in addition to growing new forms social and cultural capital. The researcher hypothesized that by engaging Latino parents in culturally appropriate ways, social and cultural capital will be built upon, and parents would become more actively involved within the school culture and move along a continuum from engagement towards leadership. This study set out to build upon the limited amount of research focused on Latino parent engagement and Latino parent leadership. This chapter explains the research design methodology that was used to explore Latino parent engagement and leadership within one school district.

Case Study Methodology

  This proposed study draws on the ethnographic methodology using a case study. Case studies are an appropriate method when the researcher wants to understand how a

phenomenon is taking place within a real life context (Yin, 2009 p.2). A case study

allows the researcher to perform an in-depth exploration of a bound system or process

(Creswell, 2012). Scientists use qualitative methods such as case studies to collect

information about cultural activities and norms by engaging with the participants in any

given setting through observations, interviews, and other data collection measures

(Creswell, 2012). Moreover, researchers are collecting information to attempt to identify

themes and patterns that might lead to an eventual understanding of why things occur the

way they do in the case under study. This type of research is truly inductive

(constructivist) in nature. In other words, researchers are trying to make meaning of the

themes and patterns that exist in a natural setting according to the participants'

perspective.

This qualitative study will focus on the following questions:

1. How do Latino parents in this school district view and define their own

   parent engagement and why did this group of parent leaders become

   engaged?

2. What factors exist, if any, which move Latino parents along a continuum

   from involvement to engagement, towards leadership and beyond, where

   there may be potential for parents to become change agents?

"From close, systematic attention to the field notes as data, the ethnographer seeks

to generate as many ideas, issues, topics, and themes as possible. This is an inductive

process." (Emmerson, 2011 p. 166) This quote captures the spirit of discovery involved

in qualitative research. This research design was exploratory with the goal of uncovering

methods of increasing Latino parent engagement and Latino parent leadership. The

researcher created a conceptual framework that served as a foundation for theory

development. The researcher hypothesized that when Latino parents are in an

environment where their perspective, culture and backgrounds are valued, as per

community cultural wealth theory, and when they can connect these experiences to new

experiences, as per social and cultural capital theories, Latino parents become "a part of"

this new environment on their own terms, as per the EPE framework, in such a way that

they shape their new environment in addition to their continued experiences, becoming

fully engaged leaders who have potential for change agency and beyond. Figure 1 is a

visual model for this conceptual framework:
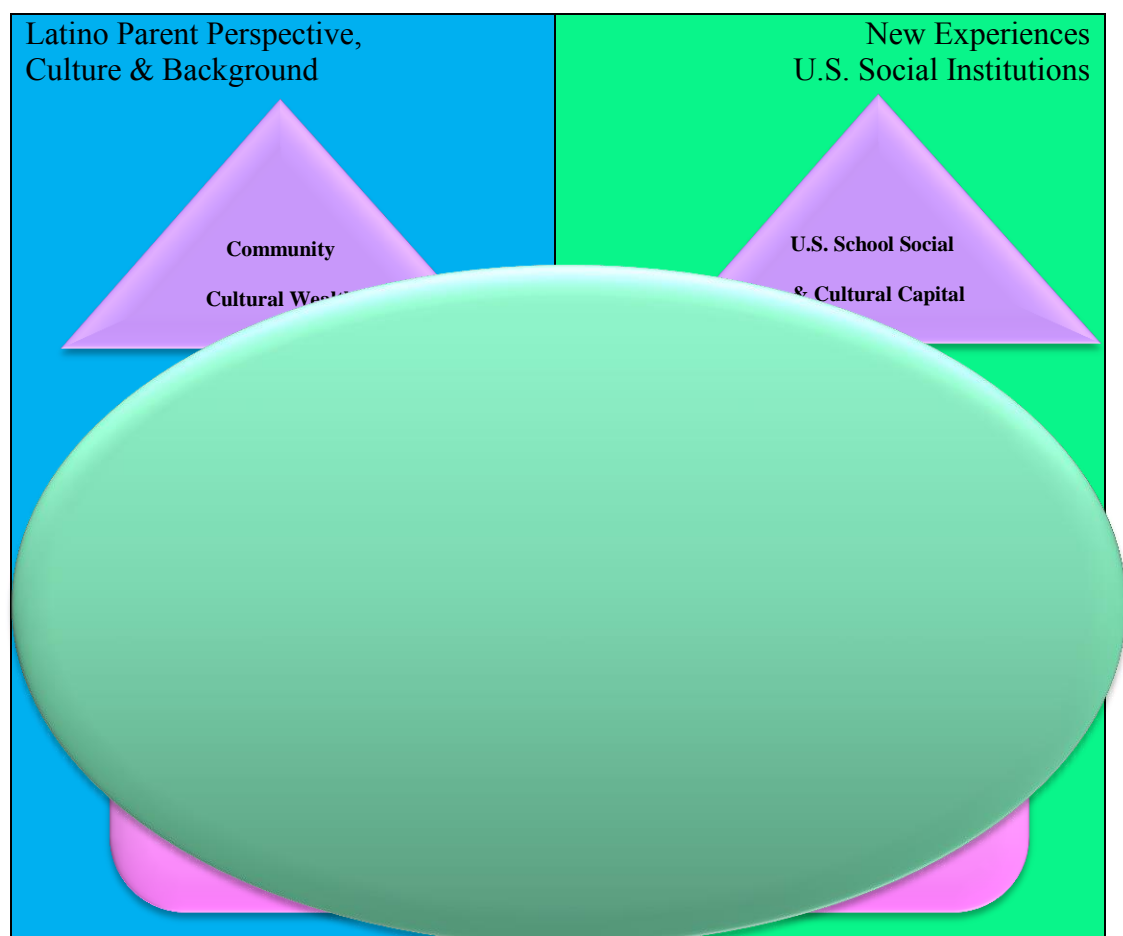
Figure 1. Latino Parent Leadership and Beyond Conceptual Framework Context of the Study and Site Selection.

An important element of case study research is the careful selection of participants (Merriam, 1998). Purposeful sampling techniques were used in this study. In purposeful sampling the researcher selects a sample based on his or her experience or knowledge of the group to be sampled (Gay & Airasian, 2000, p.138). The study used an ethnographic case study, because the district being studied is unique in the manner in which it engages Latino parents and in the academic success among Latino students (Creswell, 2012). This research study provided an opportunity to learn how Latino parents are engaging as leaders within one school district. Purposeful sampling was appropriate for this research design, because a small group of Latino parent leaders within one school district can provide an information-rich case, where a great deal can be learned about Latino parent leadership by focusing on an in-depth understanding of the needs, interests, and incentives of this small number of carefully selected Latino parent leaders.

Location and description. The study district is located in Southern California. It is comprised of 12 elementary schools, four middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, one continuation high school, and one virtual school. This district serves approximately 20,000 students, and the communities within this district reflect a spectrum of socioeconomic levels. The demographic breakdown is as follows: American Indian: .26%; Asian: 1.58%; Pacific Islander: .32%; Filipino: 1.58%; Latino: 72.73%; African American: 14.48%; White: 5.88%; Two or More Races: 18.22%; and 4,968 (25%) of the students are identified as English Learners. In addition, 83.66% of the students in the district receive free and/or reduced lunch.

Participant Selection. For the purpose of this study, a purposeful sample of individuals and groups of participants were invited to be interviewed. The participants included district parent leaders participating in the District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC), the site English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) and the district leadership program; all of which are conducted in Spanish. DELAC parent leaders were an appropriate investigative starting point, because they are Latino parents who are demonstrating engagement and leadership through their roles on the District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC). The Latino parent leaders in this study include ten Latino parent leaders who were interviewed and observed; and there was one participant observer.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the methods for maintaining confidentiality, and their right to not participate in this study. The primary language of the participants in this study was Spanish; although one participant was fully bilingual and utilized both Spanish and English throughout the study. The researcher is also bilingual and biliterate in Spanish and English, therefore invitations, explanations, forms, and interviews were all offered in the Spanish language, as well as English. Participants were invited to use their language of preference throughout this study.

Methods. The research timeline took place within a period of two months. Following IRB and district permission to conduct the study, the researcher began this study by analyzing documents such as DELAC agendas, minutes, presentation slides and other documents distributed at DELAC meetings. For phase two, the researcher sought out participant consent to schedule one-on-one interviews with the participants mentioned above. The researcher hoped the interviews would help to identify any patterns or themes

that may exist in regards to how Latino parent leaders engage in leadership roles. The final phase was to attend parent DELAC meetings and other informal meetings where parents would be present. This final step allowed the researcher to observe Latino parents in an environment where their leadership skills may be demonstrated and used in real-time. All forms of data were collected and analyzed in order to explore any alignments and misalignments between the documents, the interviews of Latino parent leaders and observations of Latino parent leader meetings.

Interviews. Interviews included one-to-one interviews of ten purposely selected Latino Parent Leaders. The interviews were a maximum of one hour in length and were comprised of open-ended questions followed with probing when necessary to process informant responses. The intent was to gather data from these Latino parent leaders about their thoughts, beliefs, and reflections in regards to their own engagement and leadership. The interviews were informed by the literature and theoretical frameworks utilized in this study. Examples of the questions that were posed to participants include:

- *Dígame cómo se ve a sí mismo participando en el distrito escolar como padre de familia.* Translation: Tell me how you see yourself participating in the school district as a parent.
- *¿Qué lo llevó a involucrarse en la participación de padres de familia en el Distrito Escolar Unificado de Oak Harp?* What led you to become an involved in parent Translation participation in Oak Harp Unified School District?
- *¿Cómo y por qué se hizo parte del Comité Consultivo para Aprendientes de Inglés?* Translation: How and why did you become a part of the English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)?
- *¿Cómo lo llevo su experiencia en ELAC a participar en el Comité Consultivo para Aprendientes de Inglés del Distrito (DELAC)?* Translation: How did your experience in ELAC lead to participation in the District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)?

- *¿Qué fue lo que influyó en su decisión de involucrarse más de lleno en el distrito escolar?* Translation: What was it that influenced your decision to become more deeply engaged in the school district?

Observations. Observations took place at the district office during parent-led DELAC meetings. These observations were prearranged with both the district and the parent leaders being observed. Permission was granted by all DELAC members through a hand-vote where all those in favor or against granting permission could do so. Prior to both observations the entire DELAC body voted in favor of granting permission for the observations. Observations took place on two occasions and each lasted two hours in length. Field notes were taken for data analysis.

Document Analysis. The document analysis portion of this study included gathering DELAC meeting minutes, DELAC meeting agendas, DELAC meeting slide presentations and samples other handouts, flyers, etc. that were distributed during DELAC meetings. The researcher studied these documents to find patterns around how parents engaged and exercised potential leadership skills in real-time during their interactions with each other, other parents and school personnel.

Data Collection and Storage. Data were collected over a two month period between March 2015 and April 2015. All data gathered from participants were collected with the explicit permission from the participants and in full compliance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. The data that were collected were kept confidential by password protecting the documents associated with the interviews, observations and document analysis. The actual recordings were kept in a secure file cabinet on lock within my house and on my password-protected computer and will be destroyed within three years of the completion of the study. The transcription logs are

also password-protected documents that will be stored on my personal computer. Once the data files were imported into a qualitative data analysis program the passwords had to be removed from the files, but the data file in the data analysis program was assigned a password.

  Data Analysis. The common features of qualitative research are a reliance on interpretation involving intensive field preparation, rich data collected in the field, and the researcher as the primary synthesizing and interpretative agent of data analysis (Gay & Airasian, 2000, p. 232). In this study, qualitative data included three data sets (interviews, observations and document analysis) were coded using In Vivo and descriptive coding. In Vivo coding consists of utilizing words or short phrases of the participants in order to capture their voice and deepen the understanding of the cultures and views among participants; In vivo coding is appropriate for this particular investigation because coding with the actual words of a marginalized population, as is certainly the case with Latino parent leaders, allows participants to use their voice and deepens the understanding of the cultures and views among participants. Descriptive coding uses labels to summarize the topic of the passage (King, 2008; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Once coded, the researcher explored patterns and trends that may have led to specific outcomes regarding Latino parent engagement experiences. The researcher then analyzed the results to determine if they held true throughout the data and created coding "bins" or categories. Due to the emergent design of this qualitative study, the researcher remained flexible as new details emerged.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to learn how Latino parent leaders define their own engagement and how they engage within this single school district as leaders; in addition this investigation set out to examine the find any possible factors, that if present, may have helped these Latino parent leaders move along a continuum from basic involvement into leadership and beyond. Through the use of a qualitative study the researcher hoped to explore ways to better meet the needs of potential Latino parent leaders so that Latino parent leadership can be encouraged and embraced. The researcher also hoped that this study might have potential implications for professional learning by providing information to both parents and school personnel; in addition contributing to the literature surrounding Latino parent engagement and building new literature about Latino Parent Leadership. I explained the guidelines for conducting my research and analyzing the data. Ultimately, the research that I conducted was to serve Latino parents and students by adding to our knowledge and improving outcomes (Creswell, 2012).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This case study examined Latino parent engagement and leadership through the eyes of Latino parent leaders who are demonstrating exemplary parent leadership in a single school district in order to identify the contributing factors mediating Latino parental engagement at a leadership level. Based on current research, there is a need to explore Latino parent leadership as a means of influencing Latino parent participation and student outcomes. This study explored Latino parent engagement as a potential pathway towards Latino parent leadership and beyond.

Key bodies of literature used to frame the findings came from research in the area of parent participation and Latino parent experiences in relation to the schooling of their children: 1.) Parent engagement produces more positive outcomes than traditional types of parent involvement; 2.) School personnel and Latino parents differ in their perceptions regarding what constitutes as parent involvement; 3.) Latino parents utilize culturally embedded strategies to promote their children's education; and 4.) Home-based forms of engagement have been found to be more effective than school-based involvement.

In short, this proposal seeks to better understand Latino parent engagement and leadership as experienced by a group of Latino parent leaders in one school district. Latino parent leaders that practiced the principles of engagement and demonstrated leadership roles were selected as a best example for this study. These Latino parent leaders appeared to make conscious efforts to effectively participate in their school community. This study illuminates the factors and processes of how one group of Latino parent leaders seemed to effectively improve their participation through their District

English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC); in addition to other leadership roles both at the district and site level.

Community cultural wealth theory, social and cultural capital frameworks, as well as engagement and ecologies of parental engagement frameworks were applied to identify how these Latino parents were able to use their own strengths and resources to build upon their existing knowledge in order to engage within the U.S. school system and move into leadership towards change agency. The approach suggested here demonstrates how parent leaders who served on the DELAC committee were not only involved, but grew into engagement which led to leadership where participants began serving as brokers for other Latino parents and their district.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The findings of this qualitative study are presented in this chapter and are based upon the analysis of Latino parent leader interviews, DELAC meeting observations and DELAC meeting documents such as agendas, minutes, etc. The chapter is organized based on significant results, the literature that supports the results and anecdotal quotes from the interviews collected. Three data sets (interviews, observations and document analysis) were coded using In Vivo and descriptive coding. In Vivo coding consists of utilizing words or short phrases of the participants in order to capture their voice and deepen the understanding of the cultures and views among participants; descriptive coding uses labels to summarize the topic of the passage (King, 2008; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014).

From the data, 83 codes emerged. From all of the codes, data were organized into

themes and were then connected back to the concepts identified in the literature and theoretical frameworks of this study. The number of sources possible for coding is therefore 30, ten participants multiplied by three distinct data sets. Ten key findings manifested themselves strongly through the data collection process. Six of the findings were connected back to the six components of Community Cultural Wealth Theory in order to capture the kinds of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts participants discussed when explaining how and why they became engaged parent leaders. These findings are presented in the framework of the following community cultural capital: familial, social, navigational, linguistic, aspirational, and resistant.

The four additional findings are rooted in the conceptual framework and provided an account of the key developmental factors that moved these Latino parents from involvement-to-leadership and onward towards becoming agents of change. The researcher looked at how many times a particular code was noted, and from how many sources. Additionally, the codes were viewed in terms of content. Some codes were only noted a few times, however they were significant in terms of content and related back to the literature and theoretical frameworks. After this the researcher coded the DELAC observation and document data, looking only for the prominent themes that related to the key ten findings. These themes are interrelated and build upon one another to produce Latino parent leaders who can then transform into agents of change.

Context. A total of ten participants were interviewed one-on-one for this study. Participants were comprised of ten Latino parent leaders. Parent leaders were identified through their participation on the DELAC committee, in addition to enrollment in the

district level parent leadership program. Table 2 below outlines the demographic make-up represented by the participants.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Participant Demographics		
Gender	Female 8	Male 2
Cultural Background	Mexican 8	Central American 2
Language(s)	Spanish Dominant 9	Bilingual (Spanish/English) 1
Years of Service	2-to-4 Years 5	1-to-2 Years 5

Parent leader participants were made up of eight females and two males. Participants were selected because they represented parents from the Latino culture and were identified as exemplary parent leaders through their participation in DELAC and the district parent leadership program. Parent participants had varying years of service and experience in DELAC, but for the most part they fit into one of two groups: veteran parent leaders with two-to-four years of service and novice parent leaders with one-to-two years of service.

Eight participants identified themselves as being of Mexican descent: seven parents were born in Mexico and one parent was born in California to parents from Mexico. Two participants described themselves as being of Central American descent: one participant was born in Guatemala and the other participant was born in El Salvador. The majority of participants were Spanish dominant speakers and interviews were conducted in Spanish with the exception of one bilingual Spanish-English speaker who

provided responses in English to interview questions, but participated in DELAC and other meetings in Spanish. For the purposes of quoting participants, all names and places given are pseudonyms.

The following section outlines the key components on how and why Latino parents became engaged in this school district and how they define such engagement; in addition there are developmental factors revealed in this study that appear to support parent leaders in transition from involvement towards leadership and beyond where parents transform into change agents. This study uses the community cultural wealth model which shifts the view from a deficit perspective to a strengths based perspective where the assets that communities of color acquire are recognized and valued (Yosso, 2006). In contrast, much of the literature and current practices surrounding Latino parent participation focus on the barriers Latino families face in relation the U.S. school system and treat Latino families as intellectually and culturally inferior. There is a need for schools to recognize the strengths that Latino families embody and pass onto their children in order to increase the sense of connectedness between Latino families and schools, which in turn, may carry the potential to transform Latino student outcomes, while also empowering the Latino community as a whole (Rioja-Cortez & Bustos Flores, 2009).

Procedure

The data are organized by the two research questions posed in this study. The six components of how Latino parent leaders viewed and defined their engagement and the four developmental factors in Latino parent leadership and change agency are linked to

the research questions and the themes that emerged during coding are then explained.

Figure 2. shows the six components and the themes they are linked to for question 1.
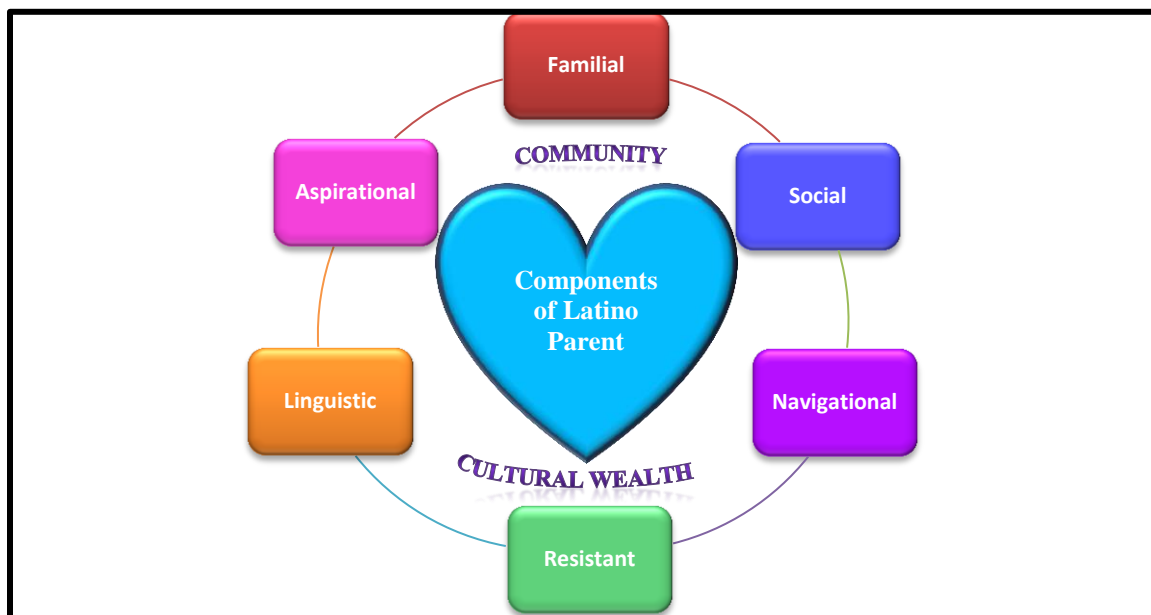
Figure 2. Components of Latino Parent Engagement in relation to research question 1

Research Question 1

How do Latino parent leaders in this school district view and define their own parent

engagement and why did this group of parent leaders become engaged?

The participants in the study frequently referenced specific kinds of experiences,

skills and networks when describing their engagement process within their school district

and these finding are presented within the community cultural framework. The

community cultural framework focuses on the strengths of underserved groups of people,

such as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) populations, as they access spaces

that are not created with their backgrounds in mind and systems that are not aligned to

their world views. Based on the interviews and other data collected in this study, the six

components of community cultural wealth outline how this group of Latino parent leaders

defined their engagement within their schools and the district. Exploring Latino parent

engagement through this assets-based lens was encouraging to the findings of this

investigation given the limited amount of research supporting positive Latino parent and

school community connectedness.

Familial Capital

Familial capital is "cultural knowledge nurtured among *familia* (kin) that

carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition." (Yosso, 2006) This

component of cultural wealth encompasses a broader definition of family than the

traditional U.S. sense of the word which tends to be equated with the nuclear family. In

the case of familial capital, the term "family" can include the extended family, both living

and deceased relatives, social networks and the community to which you belong.

Familial capital allows for "kinship" within families and among families where lessons of

caring, coping and "providing *educación*" are modeled (Auerbach, 2002; Hill & Torres,

2010; Valdés, 1996; Yosso, 2006). Whereas U.S. schools promote the value of

individualism and personal self-attainment, Latino families nurture the belief of

collectivism and understanding oneself in relation to ones' community (Hill, 2009;

Trumbull et al., 2003; Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011).

In this way familial capital provides a sense of connectedness, belonging, and

motivation around common causes where there is a feeling of "being a part of a collective

community." (Yosso, 2006) In this study participants made numerous references to

familia and familial capital when discussing their engagement within the school and

district culture. Participants made mention of the love of children, love of community, how they were influenced by family and/or community members and the desire to positively influence family and/or community members as being important explanations for their engagement and leadership development.

Table 2. Familial Capital, All References

Familial Capital	Number of References
	181
Home Leadership	21
Love of Children	75
Love of Community	42
Family/Community Role Model	28

Table 2 shows that Latino parent leaders within this school district frequently discussed the component of familial capital when describing their engagement and leadership. The following quotes demonstrate examples of the familial capital these Latino parents possess and put to use through their school engagement and leadership experiences. Many parents identified the first step of their engagement and leadership as the moment they became parents, realizing their children would be looking to them as examples and as first teachers.

> *Nosotros empezamos a ser líderes desde que estamos con nuestros hijos, pero tenemos que hacer consciencia al respecto. Van creciendo y depende como uno, es reflejo de ti, entonces. Todo empieza desde el principio, desde que ya eres mamá. A veces no te das cuenta, porque pasas etapas. Nadie nace con un manual. Entonces, esas partes fueron las que a mí me llevaron a hacer parte de [la escuela], si se puede decir, el amor a los hijos.* Translation: We become leaders from the time we are with our children, but we have to be conscious about it. They start growing up, and it depends on us, it's a reflection of us. It all starts from the beginning, from the time you're a mom. Sometimes you don't realize it, because you go through phases. Nobody is born with a manual. So those are the parts that led me to become part of the [school], if you can put it this way, it was the love of my children. (Inés, interview, March 26, 2015)

Entonces como papá es, un, un gran, es una gran responsabilidad el ser un individuo ejemplar y de ser un individuo ejemplar pues tiende a ser un individuo más líder en su hogar y en su sociedad. Translation: So as a parent, it's a huge responsibility to be an exemplary individual and from being an exemplary individual one becomes a leader in one's home and one's society. (Gabriel, interview, March 26, 2015)

I think the feeling didn't come about until I was a mom. I mean, really the only activities I did in high school, I was in orchestra. I did choir. Things like that. In college, I really didn't do much. I just went to school. I didn't join any of the committees. I didn't join any of the groups or any of the clubs. But I really think that as a mom, my commitment was to improve. Initially, it was just to improve the [school] experience my daughter was having. (María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

Participants stated the love of their children and the desire to keep them safe and support them in their new schooling experience is what first motivated them to become involved in the school culture. Cecilia, a parent leader explained her reason for wanting to be engaged in the school system, *"Yo no estudié en este país, entonces yo quiero que mis hijos sean personas universitarias, y para eso necesito conocer cómo funciona el sistema escolar de este país."* Translation: "I did not study in this country, so I want my children to be college people, and for that, I need to know how the school system works in this country." (Cecilia, Interview, March 26, 2015) Many parents expressed a concern and a need to push themselves to become involved and learn more about what U.S. schools would be like for their children even if that was a difficult and uncomfortable step for them to take.

> *Mi decisión de involucrarme más acá es porque yo quiero que mis niños salgan adelante. Yo quiero que ellos tengan una carrera, que sean lo mejor, que tengan lo mejor, y más que nada por eso, porque quiero estar informada para que ellos puedan.* Translation: My decision to become more involved here was because I want my children to succeed. I want them to have a career, to be the best, to have the best, and most

importantly it was for that reason, because I want to be informed so that they can succeed. (Mónica, interview, March 25, 2015)

La primera y la más, más, más grande de mis razones fueron mis hijos. Ellos fueron mi, mi, mi motor que me… bueno, en todos mis aspectos, no, que me han motivado a seguir aprendiendo más, pero la principal razón es que nosotros llegamos a este país y no conocíamos el sistema educativo y ellos fueron mi razón, mi motor porque yo como cualquier mami deseo lo mejor para ellos, y deseo ayudarlos a todo lo que estén en mis manos. Translation: The first and most, most, most important reason were my children. They were my driving force, well in all aspects, that have motivated me to continue learning more. But the main reason is that we came to this country and we didn't know the educational system; and they were my reason, my driving force because as any mother, I want the best for them, and I want to help them with all that it's in my hands. (Catalina, interview, March 26, 2015)

Catalina explained that she was also moved by the admiration her children who witnessed her initial challenges of becoming involved.

Ellos saben mis limitaciones como familia, verdad. A nivel personal saben que mi inglés no es bueno, el miedo normal a lo desconocido, entonces cuando ellos me veían que yo iba y no… de una manera muy respetuosa a dirigirme con las personas de la escuela, aunque a lo mejor en ese momento no hablaran inglés, y veían que la mamá no tenía miedo, entonces eso fue así como que muy maravilloso ver la admiración de ellos hacia lo que la mamá estaba haciendo sin importar las limitaciones que ella tuviera. Eso fue algo grande para mí. Translation: They know my limitations, as a family. And at the individual level, they know that my English is not good, the natural fear of the unknown, so when they would see that I would, and not…in the most respectful way, approach the school personnel, even if at that time they didn't speak English, they would see that their mom was fearless, so it was wonderful to see their admiration towards what their mother was doing regardless of her limitations. That was huge for me. (Catalina, interview, March 26, 2015)

Parent leaders, such as Patricio, also discussed love of their community as a way to explain their engagement, *"El grupo completo [de padres lideres]…pues, amamos a la gente, amamos a la comunidad, realmente tenemos un profundo sentir por el desarrollo del pueblo hispano."* Translation: "The entire group [of parent leaders]…well, we love

our people, we love our community, we really have a deep sense of growth for the

Hispanic population." (Patricio, Interview, March 26, 2015) There were many references

regarding meeting the needs of the community and "being there for others" as part of

how and why Latino parent leaders became engaged in their school and district.

> *Las necesidades de la comunidad. Eso fue lo que sentía que es importante. No nada más para mí, las necesidades de nuestros niños…Eso fue de hecho algo que teníamos en común, no importando la nacionalidad, la raza, ni nada de eso, sino que hay una persona como ser humano que un día llegó como yo llegué, no importando de donde, es migrante. Y, esa persona empieza y no sabe nada del sistema [escolar]. No sabe muchas cosas que el distrito ofrece…información que hay y, eso es para beneficio de un futuro mejor que a veces, por razones, no lo vemos de esa manera. Pero en mí, eso era, ese era mi sentir, mi forma de pensar, mi inspiración, de querer comunicar.* Translation: The needs of the community. That's what I felt was important. No just for me, but the needs of our children…that was actually something we had in common, regardless of nationality, race, or anything like that, but that there is a person, a human being that came the same way I did, regardless of where that place was, she is an immigrant. And that person does not know anything about the [school] system. She does not know about many things that the district offers…existing information, and that is for the benefit of a better future that at times, for different reasons, we don't see it that way. But for me, that was it, that was my feeling, my way of thinking, my inspiration, of wanting to communicate. (Inés, Interview March 24, 2015)

Furthermore, participants referenced having a family role model as part of their

own reason for wanting to become engaged. Catalina shares that her enjoyment of

volunteering stems from the influence of her parents, *" Es bien curioso porque a mí*

siempre, desde chiquita, yo creo que por ejemplo a mis papás, me ha gustado mucho el

voluntariado. En los niveles que sea mi posibilidad, verdad, pero siempre me ha

gustado." Translation: "It's funny because ever since I was little, maybe it was because

of my parent's example, I have always liked volunteering. At the levels that I'm able to,

of course, but I have always like it." (Catalina, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Viene de mi mamá, porque mi mamá es una persona a la cual adoro. Yo digo que viene de mi mamá, porque mi mamá es una persona que ella siempre está dando; ella da todo de sí por el prójimo. Entonces, yo pienso que eso viene de ahí que yo siento eso de dar, de dar; no me importa que no me den. Translation: It comes from my mom, because my mom is a person that I adore. I say it comes from my mom because my mom is a person who is always giving; she gives all of herself to others. So I believe that my sense of giving to others stems from there; it doesn't matter if I don't get anything in return. (Mónica, Interview, March 25, 2015)

[Mi papá] sí tenía una forma de liderazgo, siempre de ayudar a las personas y decir lo que sentía. Y, había personas que no les gustaba y agarrábamos unos enemigos. Es una cosecha de enemigos. Pero él era muy así y siempre nos inculcaba el respeto, más a los mayores. Entonces, ¿de dónde nace esto?, de una niñez, de un ejemplo…en mi forma de pensar, cuando tú ya eres papá, tú ya eres un líder. Translation: [My father] had leadership qualities, always helping people and expressing what he felt. And there were people who didn't like that, so we made a few enemies. A harvest of enemies. But that's how he was and they would always instill respect towards others, especially older people. So where does this stem from? From my childhood, from an example…The way I see it is that when you're a parent, you are already a leader. (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

Estaba con mis abuelitos. Mi abuelito dio la cara por mí. Yo no sabía ahorita lo que era el "bullying", también antes había "bullying", pero no se veía así. Yo pasaba con mi abuelito porque íbamos a demandar a la maestra al distrito, y la Secretaría de Educación que es en México, y cuando pasaba con mi abuelito, la profesora no más estaba atenta para ver a qué horas pasábamos en el camino para gritarnos. ¡Ahí va la llorona! Y era una burla. Y yo me acuerdo mucho de mi abuelito, la primera vez que me lo hicieron yo iba de aquel lado y mi abuelito me pasó de este lado y me puso sobre su brazo, bajo su hombro. Me dijo: "no te preocupes mi hija, aquí estoy yo que te voy a defender." Y eso lo agarré y lo aplico ahora para con mis hijos o para cualquier persona que necesite ayuda porque estamos para eso… el carácter de mi abuelito siento que me ayudó a superarlo. Si mi abuelito era así ¿por qué yo no? Esa valentía me salió de situaciones difíciles. Translation: I was with my grandparents. My grandfather stood up for me. I did not know what "bullying" was, back then "bullying" already existed but it wasn't viewed the same way. I would walk with my grandpa because we were going to sue the teacher, the district, and the Secretary of Education in Mexico, and when I would walk with my grandfather, the teacher was on the lookout to see what time we would pass by so she could yell at us. "There goes the crybaby!" That was an insult. And I remember my grandfather,

the first time they did that to me, I was walking on one side and my grandfather came to where I was and put his arm around me and told me: "Don't worry *mija*, I'm here and I'm going to defend you." So I learned a lesson and I use it with my own children or anybody else that needs help because that's what we're here for…my grandfather's personality, I believe, helped me overcome it. If my grandfather was the way he was, why couldn't I be like him too? My courage stems from difficult situations. (Bárbara, Interview, March 26, 2015)

The above statements demonstrate familial capital as being a key component related to how and why these Latino parent leaders became engaged within their schools and districts. The importance of familial capital was also captured during the observation of this district's parent-led DELAC meetings; in addition to document analysis of the agendas and slide presentations. Participants frequently related information being discussed to the ways in which it could help children, the community, and tied it to their own backgrounds experiences. For example, Mónica makes a point regarding children in the community and asks to share her own experience as a way to engage with other parents around a common purpose *"Y más que nada también estar pendientes, estar pendientes de los avances de nuestros hijos porque… ¿puedo compartir mi experiencia?"* Translation: "And most importantly be aware, be aware of our children's progress because…may I share my experience?" (Mónica, DELAC Observation) I observed that even during formal presentations, our parents would take a topic and personalize it with personal and family experiences.

> *Pues yo… yo me sentí sorprendida primero porque no sabía de este programa, ¿adónde lo estaban metiendo a mi hijo?. Primero sorprendida y ya después que supeun poquito, bueno, me asusté también porque pensaba que a mi niño me lo iban a hacer a un ladito de todos los demás niños, porque pensé, dije, "bueno, no le van a dar las mismas clases, ¿qué está pasando? qué ¿por qué a él lo van a ofrecer algo diferente?" Pero ya después comprendí que era una ayuda más que le iban a dar a él, que era algo bueno pues, era algo positivo.* Translation: Well, at first I was

surprised because I didn't know about this program, where were they putting my child? I was surprised and then I learned a bit about it, well, I was a little scared too because I thought they would separate my son from all the other children, because I thought "ok, so he's not going to get the same classes, what is going on here? Why are they offering him something different?" But then I realized that he was getting additional help, and it was something good, something positive. (Cecilia, DELAC Observation)

During DELAC meetings parent leaders talked about the need to prepare other parents in the community so they would not be fearful of changes within the school district,*"Tenemos que estar preparando a los padres para los cambios que van a haber, y para que ellos no se vayan a asustar y sepan cómo se va a manejar y como se va trabajar."* Translation: "We have to prepare parents for the changes ahead, so they don't get scared and also so that they know how this is going to be handled and how it's going to work." (Inés, DELAC Observation) The idea of "kinship" and "giving back" to other Latino families was also echoed when a parent leader spoke to a novice administrator from another school district who was in attendance to learn from these parent leaders as he begins his work with the parents in his school district:

> *Quiero darle las gracias al caballero que está aquí porque también es parte de nuestra comunidad hispana. A usted donde usted vaya usted está viendo la necesidad que tenemos como comunidad, está mirando que necesitamos ayuda, y ojala que cuando usted salga de esta puerta piense y agarre lo mejor de esto.* Translation: I want to thank the gentleman that is here today because he is also part of our Hispanic community. Wherever you go, you're seeing the needs that we have as a community, you realize we need help and I hope that when you walk out the door, you think about it and take with you the best of this. (Inés, DELAC Observation)

Another parent leader also talked about the richness of the bond that is formed through familial capital and the potential impact this kind of community bond can have on children within the community.

Están representando a un tremendo equipo de padres hispanos que tenemos el orgullo y la posibilidad de haber cambiado el futuro de nuestros hijos, pero para bien, ¿sí me explico? Translation: You're representing a tremendous group of Hispanic parents that has the pride and possibility of having changed our children's future, for good, did I make myself clear? (Patricio, DELAC Observation)

Social Capital

Participants also credited social capital as a component of their engagement as Latino parent leaders in this school district. Social capital can be described as the contacts, networks, connections with people and community resources that individuals use to traverse through society's institutions (Yosso, 2006). Social capital can provide individuals with tangible benefits and/or emotional benefits such as the courage a parent could need to request that their child be tested for the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program, running for a leadership position on a school/parent committee, or bringing an idea/priority/concern to the Board of Education, etc. The possibilities of how and why parents use their social capital are numerous. It was clear that participants in this study recognized and utilized their social capital in their engagement as parent leaders.

Table 3. Social Capital, All References

Social Capital	Number of References 204
Supportive Network	66
Mentors (Parents, Admin, Teachers, etc.)	36
Parents Empowering Parents	87
Social/Cultural Capital	15

Table 3 shows that Latino parent leaders within this school district also highlighted social capital as an integral part of describing their own engagement and

leadership. The following quotes demonstrate examples of the importance of social capital to the participants in this study.

The parent leaders in this study talked about individuals who they felt they could trust or who cared about them that would encourage, inspire and motivate to participate and believe in their own potential. The kinds of individuals that were mentioned were other parent colleagues and mentor, teachers, administrators, and even the children of the participants.

> *Para mí todo comenzó con una directora de la escuela donde iban mis niños en primaria; ella tenía mucho entusiasmo en que yo participara en las juntas y en todo eso, entonces ella me propuso que yo fuera la presidenta de ELAC, era presidenta de ELAC, y a parte tenía que venir al distrito para llevar toda la información, so era representante también de la escuela. Y yo le decía: "Pero es que no voy a poder, pero es que me da mucha vergüenza", y ella decía: "No, tú puedes hacerlo". Y ella fue una persona que me ayudó muchísimo, tanto a superar mis miedos y todo eso.*
> Translation: For me, it all started with the principal at my children's elementary; she was very excited about my participation in the meetings and all, so she proposed that I became the ELAC President, I was the ELAC President and I also had to come to the District to get all the information, so I was also the school's representative. And I would tell her "I'm not going to be able to do it, I'm very bashful", and she would tell me: "No, you can do it". She was someone that helped me a lot to overcome my fears and all. (Mónica, Interview, March 25, 2015)

> *Yo no vine por mi sola porque yo no sabía. Yo, pues era mi primer niño entonces pues no estaba familiarizada con estas cosas, sino una maestra de mi hijo fue la que me involucró y otra compañera que ella venia también antes y ya me invitó a que viniera a las juntas. "Vamos para que escuches, mira que hablan de esto y de esto". "O.K. Sí", le digo, "sí, sí voy".* Translation: I didn't come on my own because I didn't know. It was my first child and I was not familiarized with those things, but one of my son's teachers got me involved. And also a friend that used to come here before invited me so we could come together. "Let's go so you can listen, they talk about this and that." "O.K., yes", I told her, "yes, I will go." (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

> Me invitaron a la primer junta de ELAC, yo no sabía qué era, pero yo y a los años, pues la maestra que está encargada, miró que no faltaba, que

estaba yo ahí constante, y me preguntó si podía tomar un papel en el comité, y yo acepté con gusto. Translation: I was invited to the first ELAC meeting, I didn't know what it was but the teacher was in charge saw that I never missed, that I was there constantly, and she asked me if I could become part of the committee and I gladly accepted. (Cecilia, Interview, March 26, 2015)

The following quote captures one participant described her daughter as the person who encouraged her to begin building her social network with the school setting, , *"Y bueno, y mi híja me dijo, "mira, mira, ahí está el maestro que se encarga de ese comité." Un maestro maravilloso, Mr. Santos, ¿lo puedo mencionar?, maravilloso. Entonces ella fue la que me motivó.* Translation: "And my daughter told me, "look, look, there's the teacher in charge of the committee." A wonderful teacher, Mr. Santos, can I mention him? Wonderful. So she was the one who motivated me." (Catalina, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Other participants talked about how district or site leaders made it a priority to "be" with them, to get to know them and build relationships that made them feel more powerful and connected within the school/district culture. Here is an example one participant provided regarding the district superintendent: *"Yo vine a la primera [junta] de DELAC aquí en el distrito y ese día llegó el señor José Parra, el joven José, yo me pregunté cómo era que él tenía tiempo de estar aquí con nosotros…"* Translation: "I came to the first DELAC [meeting] here at the District and that day Mr. José Parra showed up, young man José, I wondered how it was that he had time to be here with us…" (Lucía, Interview, March 26, 2015). This comment not only highlights that this participant felt supported by the Superintendent, but it also demonstrates the quality of

social capital that she felt her and the committee had with him by her joking nature of the

comment, *"el joven José"* (young man José).

This appeared to be due to the fact that the Superintendent not only made himself

available at all DELAC meetings, but he also joked with parents about his age among

other things. During DELAC observations, I noticed "play" and informal conversation

styles among all participants which seemed to create a "friendly" and "comfortable"

social network among all stakeholders. This part of social capital overlaps with findings

regarding linguistic capital which will be discussed further within another section of this

study.

In short, parents stressed that social networks are key for other parents who are

just starting to become involved and who need confidence to continue growing as

engaged parents and potential leaders:

> *Si no se sienten muy seguros que busquen apoyo de otras personas, en el aspecto de que tengan conocimiento y que las personas quieran hacerlo, que estén disponibles…pero que están empezando y no se sienten con la confianza, este, estimularlos, más que nada, darles la confianza de que pueden, que lo van a lograr… Que no te intimide.* Translation: If they don't feel very confident, they should seek the support of other people. In regards to having knowledge and that the people are willing to do it, make themselves available…but they're starting out and they don't feel very confident, we should stimulate them, most importantly, make them feel confident that they can and will do it…Don't let it intimidate you. (Inés, March 24, 2015)

The importance of social networks were also noted in my field notes during

DELAC observations. During both observations, there were parent leaders who had

purposefully invited new parents from their site to attend the district level meeting and

stated they wanted new individuals to have the opportunity to meet other parent leaders,

the district Family Engagement staff and to have the opportunity to meet the district

Superintendent in person. These parent leaders shared that this was part of them

developing other leaders, *"Y seguimos sembrando más lideres…motivándoles…para que*

conozcan todos y para que disfruten de nuestras lindísimas juntas." Translation: "And

we continue to sow more leaders…motivating them…so that everybody knows about and

enjoys our beautiful meetings." (Catalina, DELAC Observation). The importance of

social networks displayed themselves through analysis of the DELAC minutes where

there was a pattern at the end of every meeting where school site representatives

introduced themselves and the types of events and services being provided at their

various different sites. It was noted in the researcher's field notes that when something

peaked interest among the group or addressed a potential need or priority, these Latino

parents now had a point of contact via the social network formed through DELAC

participation.

> *En la Spring Gardens se siguen dando los talleres para padres. Una cosa que Luce tan positiva se estaban dando cada mes pero como no había tanta asistencia ahora se va a hacer cada dos meses, pero se están dando talleres para apoyar a los papás a que ayudemos a los niños a hacer tareas. Y se siguen dando talleres para los padres. Los maestros están trabajando mucho, cada mes hay un taller para que aprendamos como ayudar a los niños en matemáticas, en todas las áreas.* Translation: At Spring Gardens, they continue to offer parent workshops. Something very positive was happening every month but since we didn't have a lot of attendance, now it's going to happen every two months. But they continue giving workshops to support parents so we can help our children do their homework. And they continue to offer parent workshops. The teachers are working hard, every month they have a workshop so we can learn how to help our kids in math and in other areas. (Gabriel, DELAC Observation)

It was evident during DELAC observations that participants took advantage of

these network opportunities based on the informal conversations the researcher observed

around different parents attending the different events and commenting or asking

questions regarding such events.

> *En la escuela Lincoln se dieron esas clases pero solo se dieron cinco y se acabó, pero toda la gente quiere continuar. No sé si alguien puede tener acceso a esa lista de todas las personas que asistían porque esa gente sí está interesada, iban cerca de 10, 15 personas, para poder darle continuidad allí.* Translation: At Lincoln school they offered those classes, but they only gave five and it was over, but everybody wants them to continue. I don't know if someone has access to the list of people who used to attend because they really are interested. We would have close to 10 or 15 people in attendance, so we can continue with them. (Guadalupe, DELAC Observation)

Inés summarized the potential benefit of social capital to Latino parents during

her interview, *"Porque cuando estamos involucrados… podemos conocer otras cosas*

que no sabíamos. Y eso beneficia también a tu familia." Translation: "Because when we

are involved…we can learn about other things we didn't know about. And that benefits

your family as well." (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)\

Navigational Capital

Within this study, navigational capital refers to the ways in which the participants

make their way through social institutions (U.S. schools) that were not created with

Latinos in mind. Maneuvering through the U.S. school system requires a set of skills and

knowledge (Yosso, 2006). Social and navigational capital appear to work together as the

participants in the study credited their social networks with helping them learn about how

the school system works, where they could get additional information and voice their

opinions. As mentioned earlier, these parents described other parent leaders/mentors,

teachers, administrators and children as being a part of their social network. Participants

made many references that aligned themselves to the importance of navigational capital

as to how they exercise their leadership.

Table 4. Navigational Capital, All References

Navigational Capital	Number of References 277
Information	105
Know-How	46
Broker/Connector/Transmitter/Pass Torch	67
Communications with Community	59

The following data help to showcase the value of navigational capital for these

Latino parent leaders. First of all, participants talked about the importance of being well-

informed and having access to purposeful information. These parent leaders drew upon

their existing social capital and used their navigational capital to obtain information

and/or connect other parents with information.

> *Como dije antes, Guadalupe Ramírez estaba ahí metida y ella era la presidenta cuando yo entré a la primera junta… Y así fue que una de las mamás líderes, realmente fue la que me hizo captar la atención, Guadalupe Ramírez lo hizo de una forma en la que, lo hizo de una forma en la que yo sentí con autoridad, pero no autoritaria sino autoridad en el sentido de que ella estaba empoderada con la información, yo necesitaba la información porque yo no sabía de qué se trataba y ella estaba ahí...*
> Translation: As I mentioned before, Guadalupe Ramírez was there and she was the president when I entered the first meeting…And that is how a parent leader, the person that really caught my attention, Guadalupe Ramírez did it in a way that I felt had authority, but not bossy, authority in the sense that she was empowered with the information, and I needed that information because I had no idea what this was about and she was there. (Lucía, Interview, March 26, 2015)

These parents referred to themselves as brokers, connectors, and "transmitters of

information" while also alluding that there is a constant passing of the "torch" so that

parents continue to help other parents.

Porque las personas con quien yo convivo o platico o hablo, este, comparto, comparto información a estas personas que se pueden también beneficiar. Y también, pues les digo que sean parte de. Pero, en esa parte yo les introduzco en mi forma de pensar, como voy yo trabajando, pero ellos toman las decisiones. Así, empezamos a dar confianza a otro padre, entonces, empieza a descubrir su potencial que tiene ahí pero que tiene como dormido. Translation: The people I spend time with or speak with, I share information with them so they can also benefit from it. And I also tell them to become involved. And I introduce them to my way of thinking, how I work but they make their own decisions. That's how we start making other parents feel confident, and then they discover their own potential which they have but in a way it's dormant. (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

No quiero yo nomás quedarme con la receta. Que otros se aprovechen, por ejemplo, la información… es muy valiosa…y tenemos esa información,…yo siento que es mi trabajo. De lo que yo sé, enseñarles a otras personas. ¿Qué programas hay?, por ejemplo. ¿Qué información nueva tienen sobre lo que se esté hablando?. Entonces, me gusta tener informados a los demás papás, para lo mismo, para que también ellos se sientan involucrados. Que salgan preguntas de ellos. Translation: I don't want to be the only one with the recipe. Others should take advantage, for example; the information is very valuable…and we have that information…I feel it's my duty to teach other people what I know. For example, what programs are there and what new information is being talked about? I would like to inform other parents so that they can also feel involved. So they can ask questions. (Bárbara, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Ella estaba descubriéndose a sí misma, el potencial que tenía y, a veces, como Que le da confianza de poder seguir y, ella, al estar haciendo eso está también, va a haber otra persona que va a poder hablar sus experiencias propias, con otro papá que también esté sentado en la misma situación, entonces, eso va a ayudar a que otros papás sean parte de [esto] y cómo se pueda trabajar. Translation: She was discovering herself, her potential, and sometimes that gives her confidence to continue. And by doing this, there will be another person who is going to be able to talk about their own experiences with another parent that may be in the same situation. That is going to help them be a part of [this] and know how it works. (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

Participants stated that this was important because not every parent had the

"know-how", means or *valor* (courage) to go to the school or district to vocalize

priorities and needs. For example, Cecilia talked about her initial struggle of not knowing how to participate within a school setting, *"Es algo que tú sientes, bueno, es algo que yo sentí porque yo desde antes decía: "Qué interesante poder ayudar en una escuela, poder ayudar en tu comunidad", pero no sabía cómo hacerlo."* Translation: "It's something you feel, well, it's something that I felt because I used to say: 'How interesting to be able to help in your school, be able to help in your community', but I didn't know how to go about doing it." (Cecilia, Interview, March 26, 2015). Parents talked about how not everyone knows how to become engaged or in some cases, due to life circumstances such as holding multiple jobs and/or family responsibilities, they may not have the opportunity to take their questions and ideas forward. *"Muchas mamás están trabajando, a veces cuando se trabaja se hace más duro, tienen que limitar más su tiempo a cosas porque tienen que trabajar ocho horas y también darle un poco de tiempo a los quehaceres de la casa..."* Translation: "Many moms are working, sometimes when you have to work it becomes harder, they have to limit the time they can dedicate to some things because they have to work eight hours and also spend some time doing shores at home…" (Lucía, Interviews, March 26, 2015)

> I think it's important to reflect constantly. Instead of blaming people for something or saying they don't want to do this because – I know…we've come across a lot of people who think the parents don't want to… "parents don't want to come the school site visits. They don't want to come to back to school night. They don't want to because they don't care." I think that's completely inaccurate. I think everybody at some level very differently care for their children. In our culture, I think it's more common that people are working two jobs. Mom and dad have to work two or three jobs to help make ends meet. So sometimes it's not that they don't want to or that they don't care; it's that they really can't. They don't have, I mean, most of these jobs will not allow you to leave early or take time off. (María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

Parents appeared to feel driven by the fact that they have learned how to use their navigational capital within the school system and had a strong desire to share this knowledge with other parents in similar situations.

> *Un caso en específico donde una, una mamá de familia se me acercó porque sabía que yo era madre líder de la escuela a la que pertenecemos, y ella estaba muy desesperada… y ella estaba muy desesperada porque ella decía que nadie la quería ayudar, entonces me dijo, "pensé en ti. Cuando yo hablé a la escuela, hablé directamente y no me quisieron ayudar, yo pensé en ti." Entonces para mí fue como un honor muy grande pero también yo sentí que era una responsabilidad muy grande, y yo no quería quedarle mal a esa mami…Yo dije, "uh-uh, yo no quiero fallarle a nadie.* Translation: A specific case was with a mother, she approached me because she knew I was a parent leader at the school we both belong to. She was desperate…she was desperate because she said nobody wanted to help her and she told me: "I thought about you. When I called the school, I called them directly and they didn't want to help me, so I thought about you." So to me that was a great honor but I also felt a huge responsibility, I did not want to fail this mother…I told myself: "oh, I don't want to fail anybody." (Catalina, Interview, March 26, 2015)

> They didn't understand. So they were kind of in a panic because they weren't sure if it was good or bad. So they approached me and asked me to translate what they said. Then a few days later, they asked me to help them with the homework. Then, they asked me if I could sit in the meeting with them because they wanted to talk with the teacher. So, I think, I realized that I could serve people because I was bi-lingual. That's why I think when I realized I could serve a purpose in helping them because…I didn't want to see their children struggle or not get the best education because their moms couldn't communicate.(María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

Parents also stated they are in a better position than school employees to get the information to the community since they are more connected to the community in their role as parents and felt they could better identify with parents and, in turn, parents could better identify with them, possibly feeling more comfortable due to their shared experiences and backgrounds.

La diferencia es que de cuando tú eres madre puedes identificarte con otros padresen la misma situación, a lo mejor también el empleado, okay, en esa parte no, pero yo le puedo decir, porque yo no he sido empleada del distrito pero sí le puedo decir como mamá. Ellos se identifican más contigo porque, a veces, los términos que estamos usando son muy comunes entre nosotros, okay, podemos usar unos términos que son graciosos. Translation: The difference is that when you're a mother, you can identify yourself with other parents in the same situation. Maybe even as an employee, well maybe in that regard I can't because I have never been employed by the district but I can speak as a mother. They identify with you because sometimes the terms that we use are very common among us, okay, we can use some funny terms. (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

The researcher also witnessed parents using their navigational capital during DELAC meetings, where these Latino parent leaders led their own meetings and informed one another on different district initiatives and programs. Participants presented to each other and other fellow parents on topics such as the educational shifts regarding the California Common Core Standards and the Next Generation English Language Development Standards, the district STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) initiative; in addition to other topics tied to community priorities and needs such as health and wellbeing, educational and employment opportunities, and other quality-of-life related presentations. DELAC observation and document analysis of meeting minutes also revealed that participants spoke to other parents about other important initiatives such as the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) used to fund California schools and how they could make their voice heard through a survey tool:

Necesitamos aumentar el número de padres de familia que llenan esta encuesta para que su voz sea escuchada, para que el año que entra los servicios que se estén dando que vayan de acuerdo a con lo que ustedes necesitan y lo que quieren para sus hijos. Translation: We need to increase the number of parents that fill out this survey so their voice can

be heard, so that next year the services that they offer can be aligned with what you need and wish for your children. (Catalina, DELAC Observation)

Participants also used the meetings themselves as part of their navigational capital feeling certain this was an appropriate setting to make requests to district leadership. For example, it was observed that one participant spoke to the administrator in charge of State and Federal Programs, using her English skills, to explain her desire to move away from peer-tutoring and provide teacher-led tutoring for students "Because like I said it can be like in one table will be big kids, and one student is going to help them, but we need like a teacher to be like supervising. That's what we need them, the money for." (Lucia, DELAC Observation)

Resistant Capital

Resistant capital involves having a skill-set to apply defiance whenever needed in order to challenge injustices and inequalities; it also involves conserving and passing on cultural wealth to others. In this way, parents of color, teach their children to develop behaviors and attitudes that challenge the status quo (Yosso, 2006). This kind of capital is transformative in that it works to change oppressive systems (Yosso, 2006). Although the interview questions were designed around Appreciative Inquiry, a model of questioning that highlights the positive aspects of a system or phenomena, participants told stories about using resistant capital through their persistence, creativity and bravery even in the most uncomfortable of situations. An interesting part of this conversation is that they used resistant capital both to make change within the school capital and to make changes they felt were needed within their own community with other parent mindsets.

Table 5. Resistant Capital, All References

Resistant Capital	Number of References 200
School Environments and Dynamics	56
Persistence/Determination	64
Community Mindsets	36
*Valor/*Courage	26

The following quotes show the ways in which these Latino parent leaders discussed different kinds of resistant capital. Firstly, participants in this study made mention of a variety of school environments and dynamics that were both positive and negative. Since this portion of the study discusses participant use of resistant capital, the focus is on capturing parent stories that highlight the different ways they overcame potential obstacles and how these experiences continued to form their leadership perspectives.

Parent leaders in this study talked about the many ways a Latino parent must use resistant capital to gain information, assistance and voice their opinions. Parents talked about the need to be persistent and determined against all odds and even in uncomfortable and unfamiliar environments and situations.

> *Cuando entró él a la primaria y me invitaron a la primera junta de ELAC, yo no sabía qué era, pero yo decidí ir para saber qué era, y para involucrarme en el mundo en el que mi hijo ahora iba a estar. Entonces, decidí ir a la primera junta. Las primeras juntas me sentí perdida la verdad, pero de todos modos decidí seguir yendo aun cuando no me sentía cómoda; pero con el tiempo, fui tomándole cariño.* Translation: When he started elementary school and they invited me to the first ELAC meeting, I didn't know what that was but I decided to go to find out. And it was about becoming involved in the world that my son was going to be part of. So I decided to go to the first meeting. I felt lost during the first meetings quite frankly, but I decided to keep going even when I didn't feel comfortable; but with time I began warming up to it. (Cecilia, Interviews, March 26, 2015)

DELAC was once a month…but those first experiences were awful. They were negative. I mean, people weren't respectful of each other or of the District personnel. So it was a very negative experience, but I continued to go because I knew it was part of my responsibility. I was trying to turn that around. (María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

One of the participants expressed the that she makes sure to voice her questions as part of her leadership and states she feels is how she ended up in a leadership role through DELAC, *"Siempre voy a preguntar y por esa razón es por la que llegué acá, siempre pregunto, me gusta preguntar."* Translation: "I'm always going to ask [questions] and that is the reason I ended up here, I always ask, I like to ask." (Lucía, Interview March 26, 2015) In the same sense, another participant talked about using resistant capital to push for answers and help:

Siempre traten de preguntar algo en la escuela, no importa lo que ustedes quieran preguntar si no saben en el idioma, busquen, busquen quién, si creen que en la escuela no hablan en español entonces busquen a alguien o sea el consejo es que nunca se queden ahí, busquen, busquen cómo saber del sistema, busquen cómo ayudarles a sus hijos en todo lo que se pueda. Translation: Always try to ask something at the school, it doesn't matter if you don't want to ask because you don't know the language, find out, find someone. If you don't think that they speak Spanish at the school, then find someone, what I mean is don't ever just stand there, find out, find out about the system and find out how you can help your children in everything you can. (Bárbara, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Another pattern that emerged around the idea of resistant capital was the need to overcome potential intimidation and fear by using *valor* (courage). However, many of the participants in this study stated that this is not always an easy feat during initial involvement. Parents stated it is something that has to be developed through the recognition of other forms of capital such as social capital developed through meeting other parent leaders like themselves to provide advice on how to use their resistant capital

and *valor* (courage) in a professional manner. One parent explains, *"Muchos a lo mejor no van a tener el valor o el carácter de acercarse a la escuela como por ejemplo yo me acerqué."* Translation: "Many will probably not have the courage or character to draw close to the school, for example, the way that I got close." (Catalina, Interviews, March 26, 2015)

Another participant shares how he would advise other parents who are thinking about becoming engaged within a school setting, *"Que no tengan miedo. En muchas ocasiones lo que frena es el temor."* Translation: "Don't be afraid. A lot of times what stops us is fear." (Patricio, March 26, 2015) Bárbara explains how pushing past any fear and using her *valor* (courage) helped her to take on an active leadership role and transform herself into a "transmitter" of knowledge for others:

> *Salió mi nombre y todas votaron por mí. Porque una tiene miedo a agarrar un cargo en la escuela cuando tú no conoces…entonces yo dije: "Bueno, es algo queno he vivido pero no creo que me vayan a matar o algo así, no creo que me vaya a pasar algo malo, ¿no? Voy a ver de qué se trata." Y es cómo empezó mi involucramiento con la escuela y con el distrito, ahí fue donde nací, nació otra persona. Creer yo que yo puedo hacerlo. Creer en lo que estoy haciendo para poderlo transmitir.*
> Translation: My name came up and everybody voted for me. We are afraid to take charge in school when we don't have the knowledge…so than I said: "Well, it's something I haven't experienced but I don't think it's going to kill me or anything like that, I don't think anything bad will happen, right? I'm going to find out what this is about." And that's how my engagement with the school and the district began, that's when I was born, a new person was born. Believing that I can do it, believing in what I'm doing so I can transmit it. (Bárbara, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Another participant shared her her determination to engage within the school setting even without speaking the English language, *"Yo, cuando empecé, yo no sabía nada de inglés, pero eso no era mi obstáculo para ir a ayudar y las maestras se esmeraban conmigo porque veían que yo también me esmeraba al estar ahí y eso es lo*

que siempre he buscado y me ha gustado." Translation: "When I started, I didn't know any English but that was not an obstacle to go help, and the teachers would try because they could see that I was dedicated by being there and that's what I always strive for and I've enjoyed." (Cecilia, Interviews, March 26, 2015)

Although existing research documents parent activism as a way to put resistant capital to use, the parents in this talked about their preference exercise their resistant capital in what they described as positive and professional in manner (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010). Participants described a sense of pride in feeling like they had a set of skills that set them apart from a parent who simply complains and identified themselves as parent leaders who have a certain understanding and technique for being a positive force within their school and district environment. The following quotes capture their thoughts and feelings on this matter:

> You can have parents who want to go in there and just fight and challenge everything and create an uproar. Or you can start off with a small cohort of parents that are positive, understand, and can guide. Then, expand from there… It's higher quality. So when you have higher quality, you can have goals. You can have methods to reach those goals. You're pulling on everybody's strengths. (María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

> *Pero mira, lo que te comentaba ese día, uno tiene que aprender a madurar, a sertranquilo, a saber esperar, a, bueno no sé, esperar tu tiempo, a ser paciente,soportar, de repente, y, ¡mira! hubo cambios. Hubo cambios ahí en ese lugar yahora estoy trabajando bien, desarrollando muchas actividades.* Translation: Look, what I had mentioned to you that day is that we have to learn to mature, to be easygoing and learn how to wait for, well, I don't know, wait for your time. Be patient, endure, and suddenly, look! There are the changes. There were changes at that place and now I'm working just fine, developing many activities. (Patricio, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Another participant tells how she handled a difficult situation and persevered:

Yo lo digo como mamá porque me ha tocado vivirlo. Mi limitante del inglés a mi me llegó a tener sentimientos tristes porque yo no me podía comunicar y la persona no había sido tan sensible conmigo, pero no fue una barrera. Yo dije, "no, yo aquí no me detengo, yo tengo que hacerlo, tengo que salir adelante, y también tengo que tener la sensibilidad de que a lo mejor esa persona no tuvo su mejor día." No por eso la voy a catalogar que es una mala persona. Hay que comprender, todos tenemos malos días… Cuando yo regresé a la escuela yo no regresé con una actitud ¡ay! triunfante o, mira yo pude más que tú. No. Incluso yo en mi casa tengo granolas para mi niño. O sea, agarré una granola y yo con una sonrisa, así la sonrisa más sincera y más grande que yo tenía, entré a esa oficina y cuando la persona que no había sido amable conmigo me vio, se quedó como diciendo, "qué hace ella aquí si yo ya le dije que no la puedo ayudar." Entonces yo le dije, yo me metí al internet porque no sabía cómo decir que usted tenga un maravilloso día y puse que usted tenga un maravilloso día." Le dije, "Oh, have a good day." Y le dije eso y cuando ella se quedó así inmediatamente me regaló una sonrisa y me dijo, "¿te puedo ayudar en algo?" Yo dije, "Oh, my God, aquí cambió todo."
Translation: I say this as a mother because I've been through it. My limited English produced me sad feelings because I wasn't able to communicate and the person wasn't sensitive it but it wasn't a barrier. I told myself: "No, I'm not stopping now, I have to do it, I have to succeed and I have to think that maybe the person was not having their best day." I'm not going to label them as a bad person. We have to be understanding, we all have bad days…When I returned to the school I didn't have the attitude of "yes! Victory" or "I had more power than you." No, I have granola bars for my son at home. So I took one of the granola bars and with a smile, the biggest and most sincere smile that I could give, I walked into the office and the person that hadn't been too friendly before looked at me like saying "what is she doing here? I already told her I can't help her." So I told her that I had logged into the internet because I didn't know how to say 'have a wonderful day,' and typed 'have a wonderful day.' I told her "Oh, have a good day." And when I told her that she gave me a smile and told me "Can I help you with anything?" and I said "Oh my god, everything changed now." (Catalina, Interview March 26, 2015)

It is important to note that participant overwhelmingly stated that they felt their leadership and voice were valued within the Oak Harp School District and this may be a possible explanation for their unique views and approach in regards to resistant capital.

Es muy difícil que tú como padre líder, tú puedes hablar de tu experiencia, y yo la verdad honestamente pues he tenido mis barreras culturales y del idioma, pero yo no he tenido malas experiencias que yo pueda compartir,

verdad, y es muy difícil como padre líder cuando tú te paras frente a un grupo y a lo mejor ellos han tenido otro tipo de experiencias, y hacerlos cambiar la visión de lo que ellos han visto es difícil realmente, realmente es difícil pero no creo que sea imposible. Translation: It's very difficult as a parent leader, you can speak about your own experience and honestly, I have had my own cultural and language barriers but I haven't had bad experiences that I could share. It's very difficult as a parent leader when you stand before a crowd and maybe they've had different experiences, and making them change their views of what they have seen is quite difficult. It's quite difficult but I don't think it's impossible. (Catalina, Interview, March 26, 2015)

One unexpected finding was that participants described not only facing obstacles from within the school setting, which is the focus of existing research around Latino parent barriers/obstacles, but these parents also described having to face certain challenges within their own community and exercise their resistant capital in an attempt to change community mindsets in regards to parent participation. One participant talked about how she was criticized and judged by other parents as not having enough to do at home due to the fact that she was using her time to serve others in the school and community:

> *Hubo personas que una vez sí me dijeron, que no tenía yo que hacer. Sí, me dijeron: "Ay pues ve tú porque yo creo que tú no tienes quehacer." Pues este, yo dije, yo pienso que la educación o lo que yo tengo que apoyar son a los que van a la universidad.* Translation: There were people that at one point did tell me that I must not have anything to do. Yes, they told me "Well, you go because you must not have chores to do." And I believe that what I have to give my support to is the education and the ones going to college. (Guadalupe, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Other participants discussed a cultural mindset that may be limiting parent participation in that some people are so driven by their work-ethic and the desire to provide financially for their families that they may not understand the potential value and benefit of engaging within a school setting when there is not financial compensation. One participant shared

her response in an effort to help the community see volunteerism in a new way:

> *Les estaba pasando casi lo mismo que a mí, que pensaban que Guadalupe trabaja para la escuela y entonces muchas mamás me preguntaron como en la segunda sesión, porque ya era el segundo mes, "¿y le están pagando?" Y yo les dije, "no, no me están pagando" y me dicen, "¿por qué? ¿Por qué no le pagan?" Y les digo: "Esto es voluntario y ¿saben?, si nosotros hacemos muchas cosas por nuestros hijos en la casa, ¿por qué no lo vamos a hacer por su educación? ¿Acaso usted cobra por cocinar? Esto es para nuestros hijos y es nada más para nuestros hijos. No vamos a cobrar porque les vamos a enseñar a nuestros hijos cómo avanzar en los estudios", entonces me decían: "¿sí verdad? Y al final ¿quién va a ser el beneficiado? ¿Quién va a sacar una A+?" el niño, ¿no?" Entonces ya las mamás se empezaban a interesar.* Translation: They were experiencing the same thing that I had experienced, they thought that Guadalupe worked for the school and many moms asked me during the second session, because this was already the second month, "And to they pay you?" and I answered: "No, they're not paying me" and then they said: "Why? Why don't they pay you?" and I said to them: "This is voluntary and you know what? If we already do many things for our children at home, why wouldn't we do the same for their education? Do you charge them to cook? This is for our children and only for our children. We are not going to charge to teach our children how to make progress in their education." And they would say: "Yes, that's right." And at the end of the day, "Who will be the one getting the benefit? Who is going to get an A+? The child, am I right?" So the moms began to show interest. (Lucía, Interviews, March 26, 2015)

Participants used their resistant capital to develop the grit needed to reach other parents and community members who they described as somewhat difficult, but who they believed were worthy and valuable so they challenged themselves to not give up and continue their work with difficult parents as well:

> *Encontrar nuevas personas lindas a lo mejor, porque no decirlo, otras que no son tan amables, pero que se vuelven un reto para ti. Yo cuando me he encontrado con personas que no son tan amables, en vez de darme la vuelta y decir, "no lo voy a intentar." Al contrario, digo yo, "¿sabes qué? no, es un reto y yo tengo que demostrarme a mí misma que yo puedo con ese reto." Y tratar de cambiar lo que yo pueda ver negativo a positivo.* Translation: Finding new nice people and why not say it, finding others that are not so nice, they become a personal challenge for me. When I've encountered people who are not very nice, instead of turning around and

say "I'm not going to try with them," quite the contrary, I say "you know what? This is a challenge and I have to prove to myself that I can handle this challenge." And I try to change what I can see as negative to something positive. (Catalina, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Clearly, the participants in this study drew upon their resiliency skills to move forward with their own engagement and leadership development. The experiences that required the use of resistant capital seemed to inspire parents to want to make a difference for other parents so they would not have to face some of the painful challenges that Latino families tend to come across in their attempts to become a part of the school community. Parents were determined to help others and also challenge the status quo through the use of a positive force.

This was also evident in the field notes the researcher took during DELAC observations. Probably, one of the biggest findings noted during this study were the kinds of questions parents were asking during meetings and the way in which they were asking questions. Not only was it evident that participants in study were fully active and running their own DELAC meetings, rather than traditional forms of involvement where parents "show-up" as silent observers, but parents were also exercising their group leadership to ask "why" questions when they didn't understand or agree, instead of simply accepting district and/or Board decisions. An example of this was when a question about Long Term English Learner students (English Learners who have been receiving English language support for 5 or more years and who have not yet met the reclassification goal to needed longer require services) arose and Inés began to speak:

> *Sí, y también yo pienso que al estar monitoreando ustedes y evaluando pueden tener un record y también pueden ver qué es lo que necesitamos implementar para llegar a esas metas, o qué es lo que nos hace falta. Y si lo estamos trabajando en una manera correcta que lleguemos a los*

*resultados, y si no, ¿qué vamos a hacer para hacer cambios y trabajar
para llegar a esas metas?* Translation: Yes, I also think that by monitoring
and assessing them, you can have a record and you can see what we need
to implement in order to reach those goals, or what are we missing. And if
we're doing something in a way that produces results and if we're not,
what changes are we going to make to reach those goals? (Inés, DELAC
Observation)

This same type of resistant capital was noted through document analysis where

within the meeting minutes there were evidence of "opening" and "closing" activities

where this group of parent leaders were asking to reflect on where the district is and what

their role could be in challenging the status quo to continually move the district forward

to reach goals. I also had the opportunity to examine DELAC minutes over the period of

3 years and noted that this group of parents used their meetings as a space where they

could share their experiences, prioritize their ideas and needs, find way to make those

needs known in a positive way that did appear to make tangible changes within the

district. The following initiatives came to fruition as a result of the leadership on behalf

of these Latino parent leaders: A specialized program for Long Term English Learners

(LTEL) students, the addition of bilingual office personnel at every site to receive

parents, increased employment of bilingual aides within classrooms, an improved parent

campaign on the importance of CELDT testing, the addition of a Dual Language

Immersion program within the district and these parents also advocated for an interim

principal to become the official principal at one of the middle school sites. The

participants in this study used their resistant capital to make change.

Linguistic Capital

Linguistic capital includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style. Linguistic capital recognizes that Latino parents are working both from within and among many different languages and communication styles. This component recognizes the multiple language and communication skills that Latinos bring with them in their engagement with the U.S. school system. This can include living between bilingualism and code switching, but also encompasses language styles and preferences such as storytelling traditions that may include listening and retelling of oral histories, anecdotal stories, (*cuentos)*, and proverbs *(dichos)* (Delgado-Gaitán, 1994; Hill, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010; Valdés, 1994; Yosso, 2006). Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) persons who live between languages gain multiple strategies and benefits such as audience awareness, cross-cultural awareness, civic and familial responsibility (Yosso, 2006).

Table 6. Linguistic Capital, All References

Linguistic Capital	Number of References 94
Cuentos & Dichos/Stories & Proverbs	53
Spanish, Bilingualism & Code Switching	34
Formal Language vs. Informal Language	7

Although references to linguistic capital do not appear to show up as many times as some of the other types of capital that parents talked about with the researcher, it was still significantly displayed throughout this study in the ways that participants responded and in the communication styles they used both during interviews and during the DELAC meetings observed. The researcher began to wonder if this was a skill that was so

inherent to participants, as described by the popular catchphrase "a fish in water," that

participants didn't feel the need to discuss it because it may quite possibly be such a part

of who they are there are, it is not even recognized. With that being said, there were

participants that referenced certain kinds of linguistic capital and the researcher witnessed

many uses of linguistic capital during interview conversations with participants and in her

examination of DELAC meetings and DELAC documents.

    Many of the participants in this study used *cuentos* (anecdotal stories), *dichos*

(proverbs) and other kinds of metaphorical language skills to explain themselves and

their experiences. The following quotes are examples of the linguistic capital participants

used to drive their points home when describing their views on engagement and

leadership:

> *Es como dices, si un panadero de enfrente diera la receta a otro panadero los dos tendrían el mismo éxito. Pero no hay eso en nuestras personas, se quedan con la receta, pudiendo ayudar a otro. No poniéndole el pie, sino poniéndole algo para que pueda subir también. Esa es la diferencia que quiero hacer.* Translation: It's like you mentioned, if a baker gives his recipe to another baker they will both have the same success. But that is not what we see in our people, they keep the recipe even when they can help others. Not by putting an obstacle in front of them but by putting a stepping stone. That is the difference I want to point out. (Bárbara, Interview, March 26, 2015)

> *Empieza todo por algo. Es como, por decir, empiezas por una escalera, ¿podríaponer un ejemplo para que se pueda entender? En una escalera vas subiendo un escalón y vas subiendo otro escalón pero ahí, puedo decir, una escalera pero de conocimiento. Entonces, el conocimiento lo vas distribuyendo y luego esa escalera te va llevando arriba a otro escalón pero de más conocimiento. Entonces así diría yo, describirlo de esa manera, una escalera, otra escalera, otra escalera.* Translation: Everything starts somewhere. It's like starting with a ladder; can I give an example so you can understand? So in a ladder, you're one step and then another step, and here I can say it's a ladder but a ladder of knowledge. So you're sharing the knowledge and that ladder takes you up another step of

even more knowledge. So that's how I would put it, like a stair with one step and another step and another. (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

Entonces, nacen los guajolotitos y nace el aguilucho. Entonces, el aguilucho,su papá guajolote, lo empieza a enseñar que tiene que ser igual que todos los demás guajolotes, porque, de acuerdo a ellos, era un guajolote, y él crece con toda la idea, el aguilucho, de que él era un guajolote. Cuenta la historia de que él volteaba hacia arriba y veía las águilas volar y él sentía algo en su corazón que le impresionaba, que le impactaba. "Si yo un día pudiera volar como esos aguiluchos"—decía. Pero dicen que llegaba su papá guajolote, le picaba la cabeza y le decía: "¡qué volteas para allá arriba! Tú eres un guajolote como nosotros. Todos nuestros familiares, todos nuestros ancestros han sido guajolotes y tú eres un guajolote y tus descendientes van a ser guajolotes también." Entonces, el aguilucho estaba frustrado. Pero él sabía que no pertenecía a ese grupo de guajolotes. Él sentía que su corazón estaba allá arriba, con los que volaban muy alto. Entonces, dicen que un día, iba caminando el aguilucho y estaba un búho en un árbol y le dice: "¿Qué pasó aguilucho cómo estás?" Y volteó el aguilucho y le dice: "¿cómo que aguilucho?" "No, soy un guajolote, provengo de una familia de guajolotes, mi familia, por tradición, ha sido de guajolotes y mi descendencia va a ser guajolotes." Le dice: "¡No, tú eres un aguilucho!" "No me vaciles. Yo, cuánto hubiera dado por ser un aguilucho, pero soy un guajolote." "No hombre, ven." Y lo lleva a un estanque y se asoma el aguilucho y se ve y se da cuenta de que no es guajolote. Se da cuenta que es un aguilucho, un aguilucho que ya estaba creciendo. Que ya no era un aguilucho pequeño. Ya era un aguilucho joven, desarrollado. Pero tenía mucho miedo de volar porque estaba atrofiado. Yo, a veces creo que así nos pasa a nosotros… Translation: And so the turkey chicks (poults) were born and the eaglet was born. So the eaglet, and his father; a turkey, began to teach him that he had to be like all the other turkeys because according to them, he was a turkey and the eaglet believes that he is a turkey. The story goes on to say that the eaglet would look up and see the eagles fly and he felt something in his heart, something that made an impact. "If I could only fly like one of those eagles"—he would say. But his father would come and peck his head and say to him: "What are you doing looking up! You are a turkey like the rest of us. Our families, all of our ancestors were turkeys and you are a turkey and your descendants will also be turkeys." And the eaglet felt frustrated. He knew he didn't belong in that group of turkeys. His heart was up there, with the soaring eagles. The story says that one day he was walking and there was an owl standing on a tree and he tells the eaglet: "What's going on eaglet, how are you doing?" And the eaglet turned to him and said: "No, I'm a turkey, I come from a family of turkeys, in my family we're all turkeys and my descendants will be turkeys." "No, you are an eaglet!" "Don't mess with me, what I would

give to be an eagle, but I'm a turkey." "No man, come." And the owl takes him to a pond and the eaglet sees himself and realizes that he is not a turkey. He realizes that he's an eaglet, an eaglet that was growing up. He wasn't an eaglet anymore; he was a young eagle, a growing eagle. But he was afraid to fly because he had become atrophied. I sometimes think that the same thing happens to us… (Patricio, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Participants also talked about the importance of being able to master both formal and informal kinds of communication in order to be able to be able to relate to a variety of different audiences which included administrators, teachers, parent leaders and other parents, etc.

> *Traté de llegarles de otra forma, como decir, positivamente siempre porque a veces yo tenía que escuchar mucho, te digo, he escuchado muchas historias y yo tenía que escucharlas mucho, porque decía: "Yo también necesito saber qué necesitan ellas para poder apoyarlas y que ellas entiendan el programa." Porque muchas veces el vocabulario que uno utiliza tiene que ver, les tuve que hablar como pa'tras, y les decía, "¿cómo está?" Me decían-- "No aquí batallando", que yo casi no uso esa palabra y tuve que hablar con ellas así porque tuve que usar lo que ellas usan. Cuando estoy en el DELAC, me siento de otra forma y digo que ya uso mi vocabulario académico y es otro nivel pero vas acoplando a todos los niveles para ir jalando las necesidades de las mamás.* Translation: I tried to reach them through different way, how can I put it? By always being positive because sometimes I had to listen for a while, let me tell you, I have heard many stories and I had to listen because I would tell myself: "I need to find out what they need so I can support them so they can understand the program." Because sometimes the vocabulary that we use sometimes matters, I had to say things like *"pa'tras."* I would ask them: "How are you doing?" and they would say: "Just here, *batallando* (struggling)," I rarely use that word and I had to talk with them the same way, using what they used. When I'm at DELAC, I feel different and I say I use my academic language, it's on another level but you adapt to all levels to get to the moms' needs. (Lucía, Interview, March 26, 2015)

> *Damos esa impresión de que tenemos mucho para los papás, ellos van a decir ¿qué es eso?, pero darles una información como tal vez trabajar en el sentido de la información se les va a dar, que sea concisa, clara, lo más sencillo porque es una audiencia muy mixta.* Translation: We give the impression that we have a lot for parents; they might say what is this? But giving them information, work it in a way that the information that

we give them is concise, clear and as simple as possible because we have
a mixed audience. (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

This switching between formal and informal language was also an interesting

pattern that was noted in the researcher field notes during DELAC meeting observations

and through analysis of DELAC minutes and slide presentations. Participants

demonstrated a variety of language choices and styles based on their audience and their

purpose. The researcher observed that even during formal presentations, the parents

would take a topic and personalize it with stories and anecdotes. In other words, many

formal interactions morphed into informal ones. This type of discourse worked well for

the parents based on the participation rate of these conversations. During informal

conversations information was constructed, in addition to being presented. The researcher

noticed that during these times the majority, if not all parents, would engage in

conversation. The formal and informal conversations witnessed were a blend of

background knowledge and new knowledge that was shared among the participants. The

participants showed evidence of increased engagement during informal/personalized

conversations, but also displayed confidence on how to use their voice during formal

presentations as well. A pattern of parents introducing a topic formally, discussing it

informally, and summarizing learning formally may be developing at the DELAC

meetings.

These observations highlighted the importance of linguistic capital and how

different modes of communication may impact Latino parent engagement and leadership.

María talked about how these types of interactions made the information and the

meetings held more meaningful, "To me, because we were all talking, it made it fun and

it made the time pass really quick…plus, I feel like I got a lot of first-hand information about people's experiences with programs and not just program information. I was thankful." (María, DELAC observation)

Another important pattern that was noted regarding linguistic capital were the references parents made in regards to having to navigate between multiple languages while also emphasizing their belief in the value of multiple languages and cultures:

> *Porque tú estás aprendiendo de una mamá que viene de México y su cultura y sus orígenes y sus tradiciones y viene de otra cultura que es de Guatemala que es de tu papá, que es bellísima, que te debes sentir orgullosa. Y que hay una [cultura] de aquí. Es lo que les inculco y les digo: "Si tú sabes más idiomas mucho mejor, mucho mejor." Entonces, pues, con ellos el español, si yo supiera más idiomas yo se los enseñara.* Translation: Because you're learning from a mother that comes from Mexico and her culture and her roots and traditions and there's another culture from Guatemala, your dad's which is beautiful and you should feel proud. And there's a [culture] here. That's what I instill in them, and I tell them: "If you know more languages, even better, much better." So with them it's Spanish, if I knew more languages, I would teach it them."
> (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

> *Tengo, eh, personas que hablan, que son asiáticas hablan inglés, y lo poco que yo hablo de inglés entonces yo trato también de involucrarlas, de hablar con ellas y así. Porque el [programa] de aprendientes de inglés no solamente son para nosotros los latinos o para los de habla hispana sino también para los asiáticos y otros. Sí, otros idiomas y otras razas. Entonces también hacerles, hacerles saber a ellos que no nada más nos están apoyando a nosotros porque somos latinos, no si aquí van todos. Todas las razas vamos.* Translation: There are people that speak, Asian people that speak English and with the little English that I speak I try to engage them, talk to them. Because the English Learner [program] is not just for Latinos or for Spanish speakers, it's also for Asians and others. Yes, other languages and races. So I also let them know that they're not only supporting us because we're Latinos, no, it's for everybody.
> (Guadalupe, Interview, March 26, 2015)

> We have native speaking, parents only speaking English native speakers. We have Spanish only. We have those who are bi-lingual in our group. It's very good to see the collaboration. (María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

Parents also exhibited a comfort with code switching, or using English and Spanish interchangeably, based on their abilities in both languages. For example Guadalupe uses code switching to tell of her experience while adding humor to the conversation *"Tu puedes dar esas clases también." Dije: "¿yo?, estoy media tímida." Yo le dije: "No I don't think so." Me dice: "Tú puedes, yo sé que tú puedes y tú lo vas a hacer."* Translation: "You can give those classes too." I said: "me? I'm shy." I told her: "No, I don't think so." She told me: "You can do it, I know you can and you will." (Guadalupe, Interview, March 26, 2015) Parents appeared to take pride in their ability to code switch and talked about picking up new ways of using language from one another, *"Y me gustó esta escuela porque tenemos un principal genial, creo que esa es la palabra y como diría Catalina, "he is wonderful!"* Translation: "And I liked this school because we have a wonderful principal, I believe that is the word, as Catalina would put it, "he is wonderful!" (Guadulpe, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Aspirational Capital

Aspirational capital involves the ability to hold on to hopes and dreams, even in the face of obstacles or when the means to achieve such goals seem unattainable (Yosso, 2006). Aspirational capital is developed within and appeared to overlap with familial and social capital, in that participants both drew inspiration from familial and social contexts or were inspired to make changes to impact familial and social contexts.

Table 7. Aspirational Capital, All References

Aspirational Capital	Number of References 317
Vision, Mission & Purpose	66
Innovation, Action, & Change	124
Desarollo/Growth & Transformation	87
Rewarding & Motivating Service	40

Table 7 shows the number of references in relation to aspirational capital. This is significant because participants in this study appear to be highly motivated to engage and participate as leaders within the context of the aspirations they hold for their families and society. The following quotes capture the kinds of aspirational capital that Latino parents in this study discussed.

All participants in this study exhibited and talked about a sense of vision, mission and/or purpose. This usually started within the context of their family and expanded into mentions of having a vision or a purpose to make a difference in society.

> *Si yo lo estoy logrando pues, otros individuos pueden lograr al mismo tiempo y ¿qué vamos a lograr? Hacer un cambio social más positivo, más humano, más dirigido y con soluciones positivas acerca de… de ser mejor persona cada vez, ser más consciente y escuchar a hacer un buen cambio del, de ¿cómo se llama? Del, de la tierra.* Translation: If I'm doing it, other people can achieve it at the same time and what are we going to achieve? A positive social change, more humane, more focused and with positive solutions to be…to be a better person, be more conscious and listen to make a positive change in the, what do you call it? The world. (Gabriel, Interview, March 24, 2015)
>
> *Yo creo que por algo Estados Unidos es un país bendecido y que de aquí pueden salir personas preparadas. Así digo yo, como saetas. Para un día regresar a sus comunidades de origen a hacer una transformación. Yo creo que este país puede bendecir. Y lo digo igual, con toda honestidad. Entonces, yo pienso que nosotros podemos fomentar otro tipo de cultura. Yo creo que ahora las revoluciones se tienen que hacer a través del intelecto. Yo comparto la idea de que hagamos una revolución, pero una revolución intelectual. Yo creo que lo más importante puede ser el poder*

impactar o el poder, empoderar a los demás, o sea, el poder contagiarlos de la misma visión, del mismo proyecto, del mismo espíritu. Translation: I believe there is a reason as to why this country is blessed, and that well educated people come from here. That's how I say it, like arrows. So one day they can return to their communities of origin and make a transformation. I believe this country can bless. And I say it in all honesty. So I believe we can promote a different kind of culture. I believe that nowadays revolutions start with intellect. I share the idea of starting an intellectual revolution. I believe that the most important aspect is being able to make an impact, or being able to empower others, in other words, being able to transmit to them the same vision, the same project, the same spirit. (Patricio, Interview, March 26, 2015)

This finding was a remarkable because despite any potential social, cultural, and linguistic barriers these parents were relentless with the belief in their own self-efficacy and hope for a better future. For example, all participants made references regarding a vision that their children and other children, especially Latino children, would attend university. A majority of participants in this study had not completed a university education themselves and were new to the institutional processes involved with achieving this goal, but they talked about their vision with conviction and complete confidence. *"Va a ser una persona con una mejor cultura, mejor académicamente y una persona que va a llegar a la universidad porque ese es mi objetivo, que ellas lleguen a la universidad…"* Translation: "She is going to be a person with a better culture, academically better and a person that is going to college because that is my goal that they go to college…" (Bárbara, March 26, 2015) In general, all participants showed high aspirations for their children's education. An example of this is demonstrated in Cecilia's comment during her interview, *"Yo no estudié en este país, entonces yo quiero que mis hijos sean personas universitarias, y para eso necesito conocer cómo funciona el sistema escolar de este país."* Translation: "I didn't study in this country, so if I want my children

to be college people, I need to learn how the school system works in this country."

(Cecilia, Interview, March 26, 2015)

All participants made references of wanting their children and other Latino children to have a bright future and hopefully find themselves in much better circumstances than their own or those of other parents, "I think investing in our children and giving them the tools, we're investing in our future." (María, Interview, March 27, 2015) Another participant also stated, *"Sentí muy en el fondo de mi corazón que el futuro de nuestros muchachos hispanos, pues no nada más debe estar destinado a trabajar de jardineros, o en la construcción…"* Translation: "I felt it deep in my heart that the future of our Hispanic youth should not just be destined to work as gardeners or in construction…" (Inés, March 24, 2015)

> *Lo que influyó fue esto: Mis hijos, o sea el querer cambiar lo que nosotros vivimos de cierta manera. Darles una buena educación, un futuro. Y como yo digo, en mi persona, uno no tiene dinero, pero tiene uno todas las ganas de que nuestros hijos lleguen a una universidad, y que sean no solamente universitarios sino una persona de bien, que sirva a su comunidad y que sea exitosa en ayudar a los demás también.* Translation: What had an influence was this: my children, in other words, wanting to change what we went through in a way. Giving them a good education, a future. And the way I put it, personally, is that we don't have money but we have the desire for our children to go to college and to be not just college educated but also good people, to serve their community, to be successful and to help others too. (Cecilia, Interview, March 26, 2015)

One exciting finding was that the parent leaders in this study talked about coming to hold high aspirations for themselves as well. Participants talked about things liked doing something "bigger" with their life and/or making a significant contribution in society and the world, *"Porque imagínate si pudiéramos cambiar el mundo en donde estamos ahorita a otro nivel mejor."* Translation: "Because imagine if we could change

the world we're in right now to a better level." (Monica, Interview, March 25, 2015)

These types of comments were juxtaposed alongside other mentions of life struggles or

potential barriers they must overcome. Regardless of challenging circumstances, these

parents held high aspirations for themselves, their children and even for society. In the

following quote one of the participants discusses the existence of racism in the

community and the desire she has to be an instrument of change:

> *Hay racismo entre mismos hispanos, hay envidias, verdad, y yo quiero ser el que una a esas personas. Yo no odio, al contrario, yo siento que doy amor. Doy amor a las personas. Este, como yo soy feliz quiero que los demás lo sean. Esa es una diferencia en las personas. El cómo somos, la información que ya tengo quiero que otros la tengan para que hagan la diferencia en sus vidas. No, no más quiero ser yo.* Translation: There is racism among Hispanics, there is jealousy, right, and I want to be the one to unite those people. I don't hate, quite the contrary, I feel I give love. I give love to people. Since I'm happy, I want others to be happy. That's one of the differences in people. The way we are, I want others to have the information that I have so it can make a difference in their lives. (Bárbara, Interview, March, 26, 2015)

Parents in this study also talked about the many aspirational rewards they are

experiencing as a result of their engagement and work as parent leaders within this school

district and the community.

> *Pero yo siento bonito poder saber que yo estoy haciendo algo para mi comunidad; o sea, eso me llena como ser humano. Y requiere mucho tiempo, sí, pero es una satisfacción bonita, que aunque termines en la noche cansada, porque tenemos nuestro rol de mamás también, pero es una satisfacción…muy bonita.* Translation: It feels nice to know that I'm doing something for my community; it fulfills me as a human being. It requires a lot of time, yes, but it's a wonderful satisfaction that even if you're tired at the end of the night, because we also have our role as mothers, it's a very nice satisfaction… (Cecilia, Interview, March, 26, 2015)

> *¿Cómo te diré? Sentirme como que puedo yo ayudar a otra persona me hace sentir bien, cuando me dicen 'oh puedes hacer eso, ¿me puedes ayudar aquí?' Cualquier información que yo pueda dar o cualquier cosa*

que yo pueda hacer por esa persona me, no sé, me satisface mucho. Me llena eso de poder ayudar, siento como si me hicieran el día. Translation: How can I put it? Knowing that I can help other people makes me feel good, when they tell me 'oh, you can do this, can you help me here?' Any information that I can give or any other thing that I can do for others, I don't know, it brings me great satisfaction. It fulfills me to be able to help, I feel it makes my day. (Guadaulpe, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Parents described this as *desarrollo* or a transformational growth. Participants talked about how they thought their "evolution" and "growth" was over, but how they have found that their engagement and leadership experiences have rekindled for them what it feels like to grow again, to give back, to be learning anew, to know there is something else for them and to connect to a purpose. All parents referenced their engagement and leadership as highly rewarding and motivating for them.

Anteponemos cualquier cosa por los niños, pero a nivel personal sí me sentí… de hecho, bueno… me siento hasta como mal decirlo, pero sí me he llegado a sentir orgullosa de mí misma porque he podido ver que no todo acabó ya [para mí]. Por ejemplo, que yo sé que mis hijos son mi número uno, son mi máximo, son mi sueño, que logren sus metas, pero yo no sabía que yo podía seguir logrando metas, que yo podía seguir venciendo barreras, y al empezar a descubrirlo, dije, "wow Catalina… wow, ¿qué estás haciendo? Todavía hay mucho, no puedes conformarte, no puedes quedarte ahí." Hice mi parte que me correspondía, que me tocaba en mi país, en mi México querido, pero yo no sabía que al llegar a otro país con otra cultura, con otro idioma, todavía iban a haber oportunidades para mí como persona para mi crecimiento. Y si soy honesta y aunque me cueste un poquito decirlo, sí me he sentido y de repente digo, "wow, no puedo creer que tú estés haciendo esto." Yo no sé si se puede decir que me siento orgullosa de mí, pero… pero esa misma voz interior me dice, "sigue, sigue, sigue, no te detengas." Translation: We put our children above everything else, but at the personal level, as a matter of fact, I felt, well I still feel bad saying it, but I have felt proud of myself because I've seen that it hasn't all ended [for me] yet. For example, I know my children are my number one, they're my all, my dream, that they reach their goals, but I didn't know that I could continue reaching goals, that I could continue to overcome barriers and when I discovered it, I said "wow Catalina…wow, what are you doing? There's still so much more, you can't settle, you can't stay there." I did my part in my country, in my beloved Mexico, but I didn't know

that when I arrived to this country, with another culture, another language, I would still have opportunities for me as a person, for my growth. And frankly, even if it's a little difficult for me to say it, sometimes I've felt and I say "wow, I can't believe you're doing this." I don't know if I can say I feel proud of myself, but that inner voice tells me: "keep going, keep going, keep going, don't stop." (Catalina, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Tenía mi autoestima muy baja, y esto me ha – tú sabes, me ha…haz de cuenta como si hubieras destapado algo, así grande. Siento bonito de estar aquí ayudando y participando, es una experiencia bien bonita, la verdad que sí. Translation: My self-esteem was very low and this has, you know, it has…just imagine that you have uncovered something, something big. It feels nice to be here helping and participating. It's a beautiful experience, it really is. (Mónica, Interview, March 25, 2015)

During DELAC observations and document analysis of meeting minutes it was also noted that parents expressed aspirational capital when they discussed presentation topics among themselves and the importance of roles they played in relation to the topics at hand, *"Nada más para recordarnos a nosotros que no se nos olvide de que nosotros somos parte de nuestros hijos y tenemos un papel tan importante que a veces nosotros no nos damos cuenta."* Translation: "Just to remind ourselves not to forget that we're part of our children and we have such an important role that sometimes we don't even realize it." (Mónica, DELAC Observation)

Entonces nosotros todos tenemos esa capacidad, tenemos el entendimiento, tenemos el conocimiento en estos momentos. Entonces al ponernos las manos y hacer fuerza, esto va caminando para el buen futuro de nuestros hijos. Entonces nada más quería compartir eso. Están los maestros, está el distrito, y estamos nosotros. Entonces tenemos todo lo que necesitamos para que nuestros estudiantes, nuestros hijos salgan adelante y tengan un buen futuro. Translation: So we all have this ability, we have an understanding, we have knowledge right now. So by joining our hands and strengths, this can work for a better future for our children. (Lucía, DELAC Observation)

Research Question 2

What factors exist, if any, that move Latino parents along a continuum from involvement to engagement to leadership and beyond towards empowerment and becoming agents of change?
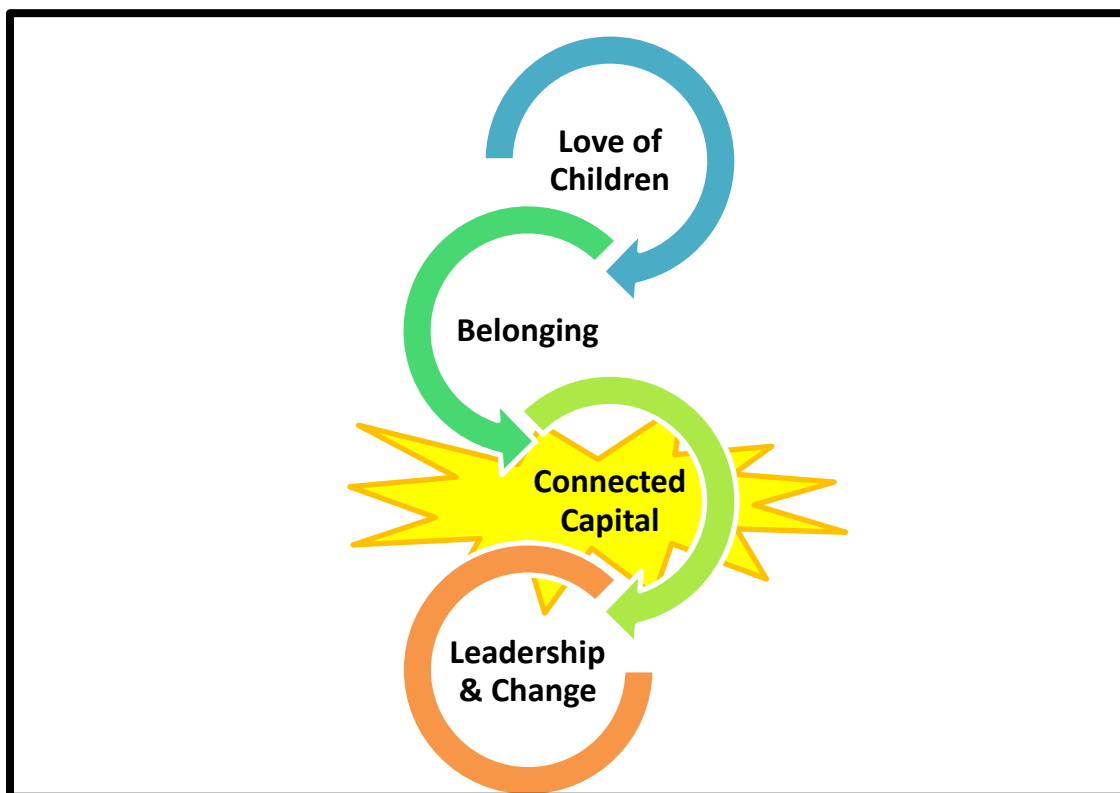
Figure 3. The Developmental Factors For Latino Parent Leadership And Beyond

Figure 3 shows the developmental factors that move Latino parent leaders from basic parent involvement to engagement; towards leadership and beyond. These findings revealed themselves through a review and analysis of the interviews, DELAC observations and document analysis. Many things that participants did and said were able to be coded into several overlapping categories, and a review of the data revealed that although the factors are distinctive, they are also interrelated and build upon one another.

Table 8. Developmental Factors For Latino Parent Leadership And Beyond, All
References

Four Development Factors for Latino Parent Leadership & Beyond	Number of References 204
Love of Children	66
Belonging	36
Connected Capital	87
Leadership and Change	15

Love of Children

This study revealed that the Latino parent leaders in this school single school
district credit the love they feel for their children as the initial factor that motivated their
desire to first become involved within a school setting. Although the category "love of
children" may seem like an obvious factor that would relate to parent participation in
general, it is a significant finding in this study because it is the driving force that pushes
parents past their comfort levels into engagement and is a factor that often goes
unrecognized by school personnel due to the mismatch of expectations surrounding what
parent participation consists of. This "mismatch" of expectations has been documented
through the limited research around Latino parent involvement (Hill & Torres, 2010;
Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011; Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011; Quiocho &
Daoud, 2006).

Latino parents may not be aware of school expectations regarding parent
participation and, therefore, may not involve themselves in the ways schools would
anticipate. At the same time, school staff may not be aware of the preferred ways in
which Latino parents engage and support their children's education. This lack of
understanding is detrimental when Latino parents are not engaging as expected by the

school because it can lead the school to blame parents and question whether Latino parents truly care about their children. (Hill & Torres, 2010; Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011; Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006).

This idea could not be farther from the truth for Latino families, especially recent immigrants who have left the comforts of their home countries; such as values, beliefs, loved-ones, language and cuisine, etc., to offer their children a better future in a new country (Hill & Torres, 2010). Latino parents deeply love and care for their children, however their cultural capital may not fully align itself to the school cultural capital. Latino parents greatly respect teaching as a profession and feel that teachers are academic experts who should not be questioned (Hill & Torres, 2010; Yan & Lin, 2005). Existing literature also suggests that Latino parents value education and make numerous positive contributions to their children's lives (Hill & Torres, 2010; Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011; Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006).

The data in this study highlights "love of children" as an important catalyst for Latino parent engagement and leadership regardless of potential challenges and misunderstandings. This is the first step in a series of four developmental factors that revealed themselves during the investigation and seems to be the key factor that places parents on a path of engagement even when they are unsure, uncomfortable and vulnerable during those initial steps. Many parents shared that when their children began school, they felt a need to learn more about what their children's school experience would be like in the United States. Many parents wanted to learn about what would be expected of their children, what they would be exposed to, and to make sure their children would be taken care of in this new school system, *"Primeramente, pues... Saber*

bastante acerca de qué tipo de enseñanza mis hijas están sometidas a través del distrito

escolar; eso implica a qué tipo de estrés mis hijas también están sometidas."

Translation: "First of all, well…Finding out about what kind of instruction my daughters

are being exposed to in the school district; including what kind of stress my daughters are

undergoing." (Gabriel, Interview, March 24, 2015)

Another participant shared the following experience that led to her initial

participation within the school setting:

> *A parte [del hecho] de que mi hija fue prematura, ella tuvo que tener*
> *tratos más especiales que otros niños, entonces, yo estuve más*
> *involucrada. Llega ella al Kinder, entonces yo me empiezo más a*
> *involucrar. Y sí estaba involucrada, pero tenía que cuidar de ella…Sí,*
> *empecé a aprender y a enrolar, y ya después también miré que había*
> *necesidades en nuestra comunidad.* Translation: Aside [from the fact] that
> my daughter was born prematurely, she had more special treatment than
> other children, so I was more involved. When she started kindergarten, I
> became more involved. And I was involved but I had to take care of her. I
> started learning and recruiting, and later I realized that we also had needs
> within our community. (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

Parents wanted to ensure their children would be successful in this new environment and

the driving factor that put them on the track to become involved. Although the literature

reviewed in this study and the involvement vs. engagement theoretical framework used in

this study describes involvement as a low level type of parent participation in that parents

are treated as recipients of information rather than decision-makers or producers of

information, the participants in this study highlighted "first showing up" out of love for

their children as an important step in their journey towards leadership. In most cases, this

meant attending a parent event like "back-to-school-night", visiting their child's

classroom, or attending a parent meeting. *"Mi niño entró a primer año de primaria en*

Stoneridge Elementary School. Yo me acuerdo que cuando entró mi niño, yo asistí por

primera ocasión a una reunión de ELAC dentro de la escuela." Translation: "My son

started his first year of elementary at Stoneridge Elementary School. I remember that

when my son began school, I attended an ELAC meeting in the school for the first time."

(Patricio, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Parents discussed this initial step as one of the most challenging steps in that it

required a certain level of *valor* (courage) and bravery in order to be able to put oneself

into an unknown situation where parents would feel vulnerable and uncertain about their

presence in this new setting. Patricio explains some of the feelings Latino parents are

confronted with as they wrestle with the idea of engaging within a culture that is new to

them, *"Yo, a veces creo que así nos pasa a nosotros. A veces, cuando llegamos a este*

país y nos llenamos de miedos, de temores, de inseguridad…" Translation: "Sometimes I

believe that happens to us. Sometimes when we arrive to this country we become filled

with worries and fears, with insecurity…" (Patricio, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Translation: (Patricio, Interview, March 26, 2015) Inés talks about helping parents to

overcome fear and build confidence, while also developing a mindset where leadership is

about learning:

> *Y si no se sienten con la confianza, este, estimularlos. Más que nada,*
> *darles la confianza de que pueden, que lo van a lograr y que si no sale*
> *bien, está bien. Que no te intimide. Entonces, a nuestros líderes les toca*
> *esa parte, "no te preocupes, a todos nos pasa, está bien, nadie nació*
> *sabiendo.* Translation: And if they don't feel confident, well, let's
> encourage them. Most importantly, give them the confidence that they can
> do it, that they will do it and if it doesn't turn out good, it's ok. Don't let it
> intimidate you. So this part is up to our leaders, "don't worry, it happens
> to all of us, no one was born knowing." (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

Participants described this kind of involvement as requiring some form of

leadership and resilience. The Latino parent leaders in this study also discussed how not all parents are able to make this initial step even when the desire is there and even though they love their children deeply. They talked about how these initial steps can be so overwhelming and intimidating that they may not have the emotional strength or confidence to proceed. One participant talked about how the support of others can help parents get over the initial intimidation that comes from being new to the social and cultural capital of the U.S. school system, *"Yo entiendo que a veces en nuestra cultura nos sentimos tímidos, nos sentimos inseguros, y, a veces, necesitamos de un apoyo de otra persona."* Translation: "I understand that sometimes in our culture we feel shy, we feel insecure and, at times, we need another person's support." (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015) As was noted in research question 1, the participants talked about other parents who may not have the means to do so due to their work responsibilities:

> In our culture, I think it's more common that people are working two jobs. Mom and dad have to work two or three jobs to help make ends meet. So sometimes it's not that they don't want to or that they don't care; it's that they really can't. They don't have, I mean, most of these jobs will not allow you to leave early or take time off. (María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

These ideas appeared to weigh heavily of many of the participants, as they stated they could identify with these kinds of struggle themselves and felt these struggles are common to the Latino community. In any case, participants stressed that initially the love of their children is what propelled them to make the choice to become involved within the school culture. Interestingly, participants also made many references to developing a "love" and concern for all children as part of their engagement.

> *Ese fue uno de los motivos por lo que dije que no quería que los niños pasaran por esto y lleguen y como te dije, muchas mamás me han contado*

que tienen hijos todavía aquí chiquitos y algunos en high school y están sufriendo eso. Entonces yo pensé que estaba en nuestras manos la mayor parte, que es apoyar a los niños. Translation: That was one of the reasons I said I didn't want the children to go through this, and come, as I mentioned, many mothers have told me that they have small children and others are in high school and they're suffering. So I thought that most of the work was in our hands, which is to support the children. (Lucía, Interview, March 26, 2015)

This quote captures the sincere concern for student success these parents felt in general, rather than just worrying about the success of their own kids. Through the factor of "love of children" these Latino parent leaders demonstrated a strong student-centered focus in their approach towards engagement and leadership.

The factor "love of children" also revealed itself during DELAC meeting observations and document analysis of DELAC minutes where parents often connected the topics being discussed to their own personal experiences with their own children or expressing the ways that the information being shared would help benefit children in general.

A mí me tocó de que mi hijo no salía del programa y ya estaba en el octavo grado y pues yo sabía que si iba a high school todavía en el programa, no iba a poder agarrar las clases electivas. Entonces yo sabía que estaba agarrándolo con todo lo que necesitaba para salir del programa, entonces lo que hice fue hablar con su maestra. Translation: I experienced the issue that my son was not exiting the program and he was in eighth grade and I knew that if he moved on to high school still being in the program, he was not going to get elective classes. So I knew that I was doing everything he needed to be exited from the program so what I did was talk to his teacher. (Mónica, DELAC Observation)

This group of Latino parent leaders consistently demonstrated a student-centered focus across all data points.

Belonging

Upon taking those initial steps to become involved within a school setting based on the love participants felt for their children, the next developmental factor they mentioned was the importance of developing a sense of belonging so they could make sense of their role within this new environment. This finding is significant because it sheds light on how these parents moved from basic involvement towards becoming actively engaged.

Previous research on the topic of Latino parent participation posits that parents of diverse backgrounds are historically sent messages of disrespect from the school community and made to feel as though they don't belong. The literature reviewed in this study reported that Latino parents can feel unwelcome and marginalized within the U.S. school setting and based on the negative beliefs held by their children's school, Latino parents may be discouraged to participate. Research suggests discriminatory messages arise from the conscious and unconscious stereotypes about culturally and linguistically diverse families held by school personnel (Arias & Murillo-Campbell, 2008; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Ramirez, 2003; Valdes, 1996). Other studies also examined how Latino parents who wanted to be involved, but were discriminated against, used activism as an avenue to get their needs met and ensure their voice was heard (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Jasis and Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012.

Within this study, parents echoed the significant impact a sense of "belonging" has on parent participation. These Latino parent leaders talked about their numerous experiences, both positive and negative, that shaped their feeling of belonging within the school environment. In all cases, the participants in this study discussed the importance

of feeling valued and respected. Interview data from parents suggests that parents were highly motivated to move into deeper levels of participation when exposed to interactions where they felt they were wanted, where they felt there was a space and role for them, where purposeful information was provided and discussed and where they could discover ways to actively serve others.

All participants in this study told stories about how they were first "invited" to attend their first parents meetings and a pattern around the invitation process seemed to emerge showing that this in an important piece of building a sense of belonging among Latino parents. These invitations came as a result of parents first setting foot onto school grounds which, as previously discussed, was motivated by the love they feel for their children. Furthermore, these invitations came from a variety of different individuals: teachers, administrators, and other parent friends/mentors.

> *Después, me invitó a su oficina, platicamos y me dijo: "Patricio, yo te quiero en mi equipo." Y me invitó a participar en su equipo, me invitó a presentar dentro del grupo de DELAC y, de ahí, me nombraron ese año presidente de DELAC y, pues, estuvimos participando, apoyando y ayudando durante cuatro años. Cuatro años estuvimos ahí ayudando. Y yo creo que ha valido la pena.* Translation: Later I was invited to the office. We talked and [she] said "Patricio, I want you on my team." And invited me to participate on the team, invited me to present at a DELAC group and from there, they elected me DELAC president that year and we participated, offering help and support for four years. We were there helping for four years. I believe it was worth it. (Patricio, Interview, March 26, 2015)

> *Me invitaron a la primera junta de ELAC, yo no sabía qué era, pero yo con los años, pues la maestra que está encargada, miró que no faltaba, que estaba yo ahí constante, y me preguntó si podía tomar un papel en el comité, y yo acepté con gusto.* Translation: I was invited to the first ELAC meeting, I didn't know what it was but the teacher who was in charge saw that I never missed, that I was there constantly,and she asked me if I could become part of the committee and I gladly accepted. (Cecilia, Interview, March 26, 2015)

> *Y si venía una vez y otra vez no, y así ya cuando empecé [a ir] más y*
> *entonces ya me dijo la maestra de mi hijo que es de tercer año, me dijo*
> *cuando yo estuve ya más fuerte en el comité, que fue cuando me dijo que*
> *ella quería que yo fuera su representante de la escuela. Y dije "O.K."*
> Translation: I would go one day but not the other, but when I started
> [going] more, my son's teacher, who is in third grade, told me when I had
> become stronger in the committee, which is when she told me that she
> wanted me to be her school representative. And I said "O.K."
> (Guadalupe, Interview, March 26, 2015)

It was apparent by the number of comments made about "being invited" that this was

important to participants and is consistent with other research that supports the invitation

process as an effective form of outreach in motivated parents to become engaged within

their child's school and other kinds of parent offerings (Epstein, 1986; Hoover-Dempsey

et al., 1995, 2005; Simon, 2004).

This leads to the next point related to belonging that surfaced through data

analysis, all parents identified "attending a type of parent meeting" and/or having a safe

space where they could receive purposeful information in a comfortable setting as a key

piece to help develop their sense of belonging. Many parents discussed the different types

of meeting dynamics they would encounter throughout their engagement experiences.

Sometimes these encounters were not the most positive, but in these cases participants

described using their resistant capital of resiliency and their familial capital of "love of

their children" as a way to stay motivated in order to continue attending meetings. One

participant shared how even when the meeting dynamics were not optimal, she continued

to push herself to participate, *"Al principio cuando antes era diferente…y pues era como*

un poquito aburrida las clases y sí como que decía, "ay ahora no tengo ganas de ir."

Pero siempre fui constante." Translation: "At first it was different…the classes where

kind of boring and I would just say to myself "I don't feel like going today." But I was

always constant." (Guadalupe, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Parents also talked about their frustration when information was not meaningful

for attendees and when the information was overshadowed by complaints or bird-walking

conversations. "Those first experiences were awful. They were negative. I mean, people

weren't respectful of each other or of the District personnel. So it was a very negative

experience, but I continued to go because I knew it was part of my responsibility."

(María, Interview, March 27, 2015) The Latino parent leaders overwhelmingly made

mention of the quality of information received and discussed as being something that

mattered greatly during this stage where they were developing their sense of belonging.

> *"Vine a la junta como nada, venía a oír y no quería participar, nada más*
> *quería escuchar, venía – pues uno no viene todavía están enseñado y*
> *ahorita como fue pasando el tiempo, cada junta que pasaba eran cosas*
> *que te motivaban…Y decía, "ay ahora sí no quiero faltar y ahora no voy a*
> *faltar."* Translation: "I came to the meeting like nothing, I came to listen
> but I didn't want to participate, I just wanted to listen. So I would come,
> and they're teaching us and now as time has gone by, every passing
> meeting had things that were motivating. And I would tell myself "oh,
> now I don't want to miss, today I'm not going to miss." (Guadalupe,
> March 26, 2015)

Parents talked about moving towards full engaged when they started to receive

information they felt related to their children, to their own personal goals, and to the

needs of their community. *El distrito tiene que tener la información de los padres, de*

las necesidades y también el dar un respaldo a los padres para que tengan confianza,

tienen que ganarse la confianza de los papás." Translation: "The district has to have the

parents' information, regarding their needs and also give the parents support so they can

feel confident, they have to earn the parents' trust. (Bárbara, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Parents in this study were clear about their appreciation of purposeful meetings where information was usable either for themselves or their community.

Parents also discussed how gaining quality information helped them to develop a better understanding of the school culture and the different viewpoints of other parents, the teachers, the administrators and even the students. This feeling of "understanding" and "knowing" school culture in relation to community culture appeared to increase their sense of belonging. One participant explains how once they felt valued for their own background knowledge, for their community cultural wealth, and were able to actively participate using these assets their experience began to change:

> I think that was kind of the turning point for our DELAC. Then when we were asked to become more involved and contribute and share, that really made a connection that what we had to bring was valuable and not just what the school or district was saying. Our experiences as parents, our background knowledge, our knowing our children better than the teachers, and better than school personnel. (María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

Interestingly, participants discussed how once they reached a state of feeling as though they belonged, they were then able to reflect on the needs of those around them. Once parents felt a part of the school culture they were developmentally able to acquire an awareness of how they might be able to help and serve others.

> *Me empecé a involucrar y empecé a ver que también había más necesidades de personas así como yo. Que tenían necesidad de saber, las calificaciones, cómo se está trabajando, cuando hay un niño que es reclasificado. Yo no sabía nada, nada, es como alguien tiene una venda en los ojos y no puedes ver. Okay, y empecé a mirar que había herramientas. Ahorita, en los últimos años, he mirado que ha habido cambios."*
> Translation: I started to become involved and I noticed that there were other peoples' needs, people like myself. They had the need of finding out more, about the grades, how things work, when there's a child that is reclassified. I didn't know anything, nothing, it's like someone who has a blindfold and can't see. So okay, I realized that there were tools available.

In recent years, I have noticed there has been change. (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

Parents described being extremely motivated by this new awareness of how they could help others.

> *...que nos da, informaciones muy, muy, muy de verdad, bien muy buena información. Muy informativas y me motiva, te digo, me motiva a mí, salgo y digo: "ay, ahora voy a hacer esto. Ahora les voy a decir a la escuela." Y yo creo que eso es más bien la motivación...también.*
> Translation: …that they give us information very, very, very, and I mean very good information. Very informational, and it motivates me, I tell you, it motivates me. I leave and say "oh, today I'm going to do this. I'm going to say this to the school." And I believe *t*hat's also due to motivation. (Guadalupe, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Many mentioned this awareness as a reason for their continued commitment to engagement in addition to the already existing "love of children" factor.

Lastly, another key indicator of belonging was being entrusted a position of responsibility within the school and on the various committees parents served on. All participants in this study were voted to be the DELAC rep for their site and many participants were their site ELAC presidents, vice presidents, etc. All participants described these roles as being a vote of confidence from their site community and something they felt honored to do. All parent leaders stated that being chosen by their peers or recommended by a school leader to fulfill a leadership position heightened the sense of responsibility.

> *Si él [el Director] confió en mí, y si él me tuvo suficiente confianza para mandarme [a representar en la junta de DELAC], entonces ahí va. Y, dije: "me pone de nerviecitos." Pero digo "¿por qué no puedo?" Sí, ¡claro que puedo!, lo voy a hacer y para motivar a otros papás, otros papás que estén en donde yo estaba y sigan arriba también. Motivar a más padres y darles la energía que tiene uno y a darles lo que uno sabe e implementar lo que uno ya sabe y no creas que es tan fácil pero sí puedo.*
> Translation: Yes, [the Principal] believed in me, he had enough trust in me

to send me [to DELAC as a representative]. So there it goes, and I said to myself, "it makes me a little nervous." But I said "why can't I do it?" ¡of course I can do it! I'm going to do it to motivate other parents, other parents that may be in the place I once was and they can soar too. Motivate more parents and give them our energy and what we know, implement what we know but don't think it's too easy, but I can do it. (Guadalupe, Interview, March 26, 2015)

It seemed to be at this stage of belonging where parents moved from involvement to being actively engaged in a way where they arrived at a point where they felt empowered to ask questions, give opinions and think about serving others. The data in this study reveals the importance of parents feeling valued in a way that they belong within a school setting in order for them to become empowered and move even further along in their engagement as leaders.

The factor "belonging" also revealed itself during DELAC meeting observations and document analysis of DELAC minutes where parents shared their experiences with one another regarding the feeling of belonging and knowing "they were not alone":

> *Y precisamente esa oportunidad que la tuve yo también junto con todos ustedes, de permanecer a este grupo y de formar parte de este comité. Yo me acuerdo cuando yo empecé llegar a las juntas igual que ustedes, y decía, "wow," yo venía aquí y varias personas me acogían.* Translation: It is precisely the opportunity that I also had, just like all of you, to belong to this group and to form part of this committee. I remember when I started coming to the meetings just like you did, and I would tell myself "wow," I would come here and several people made me feel welcome. (Patricio, DELAC Observation)

Connected Capital

Connected capital was the most dynamic developmental factor found in this study in that it seems to be the "tipping point" of when parents first started to recognize and identify a role for themselves as leaders and possible change agents. During interviews

the participants shared that as they moved from the first steps of involvement out of love for their children, towards gaining a sense of belonging and the ways in which they were participating began to change. Parents talked about voicing their ideas, priorities, concerns, and questions. It was at that point that parents also began to develop an awareness of the needs of those around them.

According to existing parent participation research that distinguishes between basic involvement and active engagement, parents are simply involved during experiences where the school is inviting parents to "show up" and "do" something the school deems is important, whereas engagement happens during experiences where parents feel they are in a partnership with the school and where they are moved to do what they feel is important (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004; Ferlazzo, 2011; Larotta & Yamamura, 2011). The interactions parents in this study described, where they stated they felt as though they "belonged" as a part of the fabric of the school and where they were empowered to ask questions and give input, seem to show parents were moving from involvement to engagement through the developmental factor of belonging revealed in this study. The developmental factor of belonging seemed to inspire participants to actively engage in ways that they may not have been able to without the confidence that comes from feeling valued and "a part of."

Based on data results, once the developmental factor of belonging had been well developed parents experienced an incremental growth in their engagement and leadership, which will be referred to as "connected capital." The Latino parent leaders in this study shared that once they felt confident in the feeling that they "belonged" and

could actively engage, they became more and more aware of the strengths and attributes they could offer both their school and community.

For example, at this stage a parent shared feeling as though she had received enough information regarding school capital through her belonging to and participation within DELAC, that she had gained an increased perspective regarding the school culture in such a way that she was now confident branching out into other forms of school leadership opportunities such as PTO, "Cuando comencé a venir a DELAC, comencé a aprender, y ese aprendizaje me dio armas para sentirme segura, y poderme hacer voluntaria. Como ahorita yo en mi caso que soy voluntaria en PTO, y PTO es mucho trabajo." Translation: "When I started coming to DELAC, I started to learn and that knowledge gave me tools to make me feel confident and become a volunteer. At the moment, I'm a volunteer for PTO and PTO takes a lot of work." (Cecilia, Interview, March 26, 2015)

> *Pues aparte de servir, es ayudar, es también guiar, y más que nada informar, informar a los padres. Por eso te decía anteriormente que tiene uno una responsabilidad, porque tiene uno qué venir a aprender a escuchar todo lo que senos dice para poder informar a los papás, y también de cierta manera involucrarlos más también.* Translation: Well, besides serving, it's also helping, and guiding but most importantly it's to inform, inform parents. As I mentioned earlier, we have a responsibility, because we have to come and learn and listen to everything that's being shared so we can inform parents and also, in a way, engage them more. (Cecilia, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Parents described themselves as connectors of people (school and community), transmitters of knowledge and information, and brokers who could understand both school points of view and community points of view, where they overlap, where they are different. *"A la vez yo dije, "wow, qué bonito, ¿no?, qué bonito que las personas puedan*

confiar en mí, que yo soy solo una simple madre de familia igual que ellas, igual que

ellas." Solamente que tú sí tienes la información..." Translation: "I said to myself: "wow,

how nice, right? How nice is it that people can trust me, someone who is just a mere

parent, just like them." It's just that you do have the information…" (Catalina, Interview,

March 26, 2015) These Latino parent leaders begin to see a new role for themselves,

where they would be able to help people better understand one another. This phenomenon

will be coined as "connected capital" for the purpose of this study. Connected capital is

the developmental factor participants described where they linked their own cultural

community wealth with the new kinds of school capital they learned about through

participation within the school setting and meetings.

The research findings in this study seem to show that this point of connection

ignites parents to move from engagement into transformed Latino parent leaders. The

participants in this study made references in regards to how they added to their own

community cultural wealth through their discovery of school types of capital and at that

point felt they had the ability to begin their work as leaders and change agents.

> I think when parents are involved and they understand the educational
> system limitations, there are things that we can change. There are things
> that we need to work with. Giving those limitations, yes, we can lobby.
> We can do this and that… But if we forget to work on what we have, our
> strengths or work on the limitations that we have and really try to make
> the best of them, we're limiting ourselves. I think more importantly is that
> it makes parents feel they're contributing to district. (María, Interview,
> March 27, 2015)

Participants talked about the process of connecting capital as being important in growing

future leaders as well:

> *A como ellos van a educar, eso no se va a cambiar, pero darles las*
> *herramientas adicionales y estrategias nuevas es como pueden ellos*

descubrir ese potencial que tienen. Entonces, y también, ya cuando empiezas a hacer consciencia de todo esto y empiezas a decir de los papás, en primera que tienen un gran potencial, que son especiales, y tanto ellos como sus hijos son especiales. Que hay por qué trabajar, que hay un futuro. Un futuro más allá del que ahorita hay pero ese futuro se tiene que sembrar. Entonces, y tenemos que sembrarlo y tenemos que saber de algunas herramientas para que sea más efectivo y también explicarles qué objetivos quieren y conectar a nuevas maneras de obtenerlas. Translation: The way they're educating, that isn't going to change, but by giving them the additional tools and new strategies so they can discover the potential they possess. When you start becoming conscious of all this and tell parents, first of all, that they have great potential, that they're special and their children are special. That there's something to work for, that there's a future. A future beyond what we have now but you have to sow that future. So we have to sow it and we have to know about certain tools so it can be more effective and also explain their desired objectives and connect to new ways of reaching them. (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

Parents demonstrated an immense amount of pride around their skill and expertise as a result of connected capital. Parents felt they were well-poised to serve in leadership roles in new and innovative ways where they could possibly be more effective with Latino parent outreach as a result of their connected capital. *"La diferencia es que de cuando tú eres madre, puedes identificarte con otros padres en la misma situación…"* Translation: "The difference is that when you're a mother, you can identify yourself with other parents in the same situation…" (Inés, Interview, March 24, 2015)

I think as parents if you give advice or invitation or anything; it comes across very different because you have that connection. We're Latino parents. I think most of the teachers, I mean, there's been a big change. A lot of them are Caucasian. So you don't have a connection with them. You don't know if you're getting reprimanded. You don't know why the invitation is coming or why they're giving you advice. But if you hear from other parents who are going through similar situations, similar experiences; and then you connect. It's more like taking advice from a friend than getting preached to. (María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

Participants told stories about using their connected capital to become "positive" leaders who could bring about "positive" change. This idea was important to the parents in this study because they felt if required more skill then simply making your voice know through making complaints.

> *Hay personas que se me acercan con preguntas, "sabe que mi niño tiene esta situación con su maestra" y yo les digo, "okay," si fuera otra "¡quéjate al distrito! No, "¿sabes qué?, platica con las otras mamás de los niños, si están pasando lo mismo con esa maestra o si nada más es tu niño." Y les doy consejos, "puedes hablar con la directora, o puedes hablar con la maestra, o puedes hablar con la maestra que nos ayuda en lo que es ELAC."* Translation: There's people that approach me with questions, "you know, my son has this situation with his teacher" and I tell them "okay," If I was any different I would tell them to "put a complaint with the district!" No, "you know what? Talk to other moms to see if they're going through the same thing with that teacher or if it's just your son." I give them advice, "you can talk with the principal, or you can talk with the teacher or talk with the teacher that helps us in ELAC." (Bárbara, Interview, March 26, 2015)

> You can have parents who want to go in there and just fight and challenge everything and create an uproar. Or you can start off with a small cohort of parents that are positive, understand, and can guide. Then, expand from there… It's higher quality. So when you have higher quality, you can have goals. You can have methods to reach those goals. You're pulling on everybody's strengths. (María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

> Or they [parents] want things done a certain way, but that's not always in line with the California Education Code. So I think representing but also being that sounding board sometimes. Sometimes when you say things out loud and you hear yourself, you kind of come to understand things differently for both and creating kind of a middle ground. So I have to represent. If there is something that I feel very strongly about, it's figuring out how to do it in a positive way where you get results. If you attack or fight or push back, sometimes it's negative and it sets you back instead of moving forward. (María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

Parents shared they wanted to make a positive impact within the schools and community. The participants in this study owned their strengths of community cultural wealth and were able to use those strengths through their interactions with both school

personnel and the community; in addition to their own personal transformational growth as leaders.

> *Yo creo que es un proceso. Es un proceso que, a lo mejor definitivamente ya alguien tiene, ¿no? Yo no creo tanto en el destino, pero sí creo en que las personas pueden ir sembrando en su vida, en su mente, en su corazón algo que se llama convicción. Y, cuando tú siembras convicción en tu corazón, eres terco, eres férreo. Bueno, yo he tenido que transformarme de terco en determinante, que es un proceso. No es lo mismo ser terco a ya tener una determinación, un plan, un propósito, un objetivo y una visión.* Translation: It think it's a process. It's a process that definitely someone has established, right? I don't believe too much in destiny, but I do believe that people can sow in their life, in their mind and heart something called conviction. And when you sow a firm belief in your heart, you're stubborn, relentless. Well I have had to transform myself from stubborn to determined, it's a process. It's not the same thing being stubborn than to have determination, a plan, a purpose, a goal and a vision. (Patricio, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Participants described truly seeing themselves as a voice for other parents and, therefore, could help school better understand the needs and priorities of the community while also improving the connection and quality of experiences Latino parents would have within the schools district-wide, *"Me veo como un padre portavoz, un padre voluntario que estoy viniendo a dar información… para poder compartirlo con otros padres y mi escuela, así es como me veo."* Translation: "I see myself as a parent spokesperson, a parent volunteer who is coming to give information…to be able to share it with other parents and my school, that's how I see myself." (Bárbara, Interview, March 26, 2015) Parents also referenced themselves as a voice for the school personnel, whom they stated had many good ideas, but may not have the same connection or point of reference such as the community cultural wealth capital needed best serve Latino students and families.

> The principal is Anglo. I didn't think she really understood, I mean, I think in her mind she was looking at numbers more than really reaching out. So I kind of had to not play on that but take advantage that she wanted numbers where I wanted results. So I felt like she was very supportive, but I also felt like she was hesitant because she didn't know where it was going…I had to be sensitive to that, but at the same time know that my focus was to support. (María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

María, a participant in this study explains how she is able to understand and connect both the cultural point of view and the school point of view; she uses her connected capital to finds solutions for families and the school:

> So I know that when they change – before parents can walk on campus without having to go through the office. So they went into a closed campus. There was a lot of resistance. I understand culturally because we want to be close to our children. We want to be involved. We want to be there. I understand the cultural resistance to it, but also turning that around. Part of that culture, we want to do that because we want to keep them safe. So if we really want to keep them safe, we want to work with the school to make sure that they are safe when we're not there. (María, Interview, March27, 2015)

Leadership and Change

This study seems show a continuum of how this group of Latino parent leaders moved into leadership roles and beyond; such as change agency. Literature supporting these findings can be described by the work of Barton, Drake, Peña and St. Louis & George (2004) who found that once parents become engaged and interact utilizing their strengths and resources, they are able to create a space and a role for themselves where they can thrive and bloom into deeper forms of parent participation, such as leadership and change agency. The parent leaders in this study were found to have changed as a result of their experiences and connected capital, which gave rise to higher levels of parent engagement and eventually fully activated leadership.

In fact, the participants in this study referred to themselves as leaders on several occasions, but in a variety of ways which will be described in further detail below. Participants stated having the desire to "make change" in their schools, communities and even society. They also expressed the belief that they have the potential to make change. *"Yo sé que al venir a estar aquí [el distrito], no es solo para aprender y pasar un rato bien, sino para comprometerme con mi comunidad."* Translation: "I know that by coming here [to the district], it's not only to learn and have a good time but it's also to commit to my community." (Bárbara, Interview, March 26, 2015)

> *Si unimos esas dos fuerzas va a hacer una diferencia tremenda. Por eso yo sí creo y estoy cien por ciento segura que la participación de los padres de familia en la educación, en las escuelas, que se involucren, va a ser una diferencia que después nadie nos va a poder parar. Los niños van a llegar hasta el cielo a alcanzar sus metas, seguro que sí. Eso va a hacer una diferencia muy fuerte, muy positiva.* Translation: If we combine those two forces, it's going to make a tremendous difference. That's why I believe and I'm one hundred percent sure that parent participation in education, in the schools, being involved, will make a difference that no one will be able to stop us. It will be a huge difference, very positive. (Catalina, Interview, March 26, 2015)

> *A lo mejor no tenemos el título que tienen todos los maestros y los directores, o los ponderados, o los doctorados, pero también así si demostramos que somos un comité [de padres] entregado, que tiene respeto y valores, nos van a respetar, nos van a dar la voz que nosotros necesitamos para ser escuchados, y eso es lo que yo, yo creo.* Translation: Maybe we don't have the degree that all the teachers, the principals, the powerful or the doctors have, but if we can also show that we are a committed [parent] committee which is respectful and has values, they will respect us, they will give us the voice that we need to be heard, and that is what I believe. (Catalina, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Participants in this story talked about their work with other parents and gave specific examples of how they are using their connected capital to reach others and make a difference within their school district and the community. The following quote provides

an example of how these parents used their community cultural wealth and tied it to the

school capital to express a need and make change that made sense to all parties involved:

> Again, I say that our district listens because when we were going through
> the Local Control Funding Formula/Local Control Accountability Plan,
> they took parents' opinions into account. Not just about the funding and
> where to place it, but about specific classes. I mean, forever parents were
> asking about art classes and music classes. We got them. We got them
> and not because we were asking because we want our children to have
> music and art just to keep them busy; but because we see the importance
> that those subjects play in a whole student. Now once children are
> applying for university, they want to see a whole student who's
> volunteered, who has taken extra-curricular activities not only academic
> but also extra-curricular. So I think that we really made a positive
> difference. (María, Interview, March 27, 2015)

It was evident through both DELAC meeting observations and document analysis

of DELAC minutes that these participants exercised their role as Latino parent leaders by

providing specific recommendations for the district and it's schools in numerous areas.

> *Sí, y también yo pienso que al estar monitoreando ustedes y evaluando
> pueden tener un record y también pueden ver qué es lo que necesitamos
> implementar para llegar a esas metas, o qué es lo que nos hace falta. Y si
> lo estamos trabajando en una manera correcta que lleguemos a los
> resultados, y si no, ¿qué vamos a hacer para hacer cambios y trabajar
> para llegar a esas metas?* Translation: Yes, I also think that by monitoring
> and assessing them, you can have a record and you can see what we need
> to implement in order to reach those goals, or what are we missing. And if
> we're doing something in a way that produces results and if we're not,
> what changes are we going to make to reach those goals? (Inés, DELAC
> Observation)

Another focus for the participants in this study was student outcomes, which

demonstrated the student-centered philosophy of these parent leaders. One participant

shared her vision regarding parents partnering with schools around the common purpose

of supporting students:

> *Que nosotros, padres trabajando con maestros, con directores, con el
> distrito, sería algo fabuloso porque los dos queremos [lo mismo]; el*

maestro quiere que sus alumnos estén bien, y el papá quiere que su hijo esté bien. Si trabajáramos en equipo, sería…trabajando en equipo, sería lo más bonito. Translation: That we as parents, work with the teachers, with principals, with the district would be fabulous because we both want the [same thing]; teachers want their students to do well and the parent wants their child to do well. If we work as a team, it would be…working as a team would be beautiful. (Bárbara, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Parent leaders gave a clear rationale for why they chose to concentrate their leadership efforts on improved engagement of Latino families and student outcomes, in that they desired to make a difference in society as Latinos and for other Latinos. The following quote comes from one participant who talks about how she wishes for other Latino parents to realize their potential and connect with their passion and purpose in order to help others:

Me encantaría que todos los papás [Latinos] dijeran: "¿sabes? soy ignorante en esto pero quiero aprender." Que hubiera esa chispa. Porque vinimos a este país a trabajar ¿para qué? para comer. ¿Para qué?, para vivir, y ahí le estamos dando vueltas como los hámsteres. En vez de decir, "yo vine aquí ¿para qué?, ¿qué quiere Dios para mí, que yo haga con las demás personas?, ¿cómo puedo yo ayudar a los demás? Translation: I would love it if all [Latino] parents would say: "you know what? I don't know this but I want to learn." To have that spark. Because we came to this country to work, what for? To eat. What for? To live and there we are, going around in circles like the hamsters. Instead of saying "I came here but for what? What does God want me to do with other people? How can I help others? (Bárbara, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Furthermore, many participants also stressed the importance of reaching out to other communities who may be new to the U.S. School System and stated the importance of multiculturalism; as well as recognizing the many languages spoken in the United States.

Yo no nada más hablo por los hispanos, ¿no? yo no sé, pero realmente, yo pienso que se tiene que abrir la visión para un país, vuelvo a repetirlo, [un país] multicultural, donde todos merecen los mismos derechos, las mismas oportunidades, y la misma posibilidad de tener un futuro mejor.

Translation: I'm not just speaking for Hispanics right? I don't know, but I firmly believe that we have to broaden our vision for this country, and I repeat, a multicultural [country], where we all deserve she same rights, the same opportunities and the same change to have a better future. (Patricio, Interview, March 26, 2015)

However, parents definitely stressed that Latinos should be well represented within the multicultural, multilingual, global society they described.

Esa es la diferencia que yo quiero hacer. Que los hispanos se noten, y que los hispanos no nos vean como gente no más trabajadora del campo, que nos vean como empresarios, como líderes, como personas que valemos que nos valoramos. Translation: That is the difference I want to make. For Hispanics to be noticed, and not just be viewed as field workers, but to be viewed as business people, as leaders, as valuable people, that we value ourselves. (Bárbara, Interview, March, 26, 2015)

All participants made mention of wanting to "make a difference" and leave a legacy for their kids and the community *"Yo me veo, porque siempre veo que uno debe de dejar en inglés es legacy…"* Translation: "I see myself, because one should always leave what you call in English a legacy…" (Lucía, March 26, 2015)

Hay muchas herramientas, y que no es una pérdida de tiempo sino una ganancia, es una ganancia, porque al tener más conocimientos, aparte de que ayudas a tus hijos.. pues vas a ayudar a otros papás. Yo he escuchado por ahí, que los países avanzados son países educados, y yo creo que sí es verdad, porque entre más educación o conocimiento tengas, sobre lo que sea, puedes ayudar a tu comunidad y puedes ser un buen ciudadano para tu comunidad, porque tú ya sabes, estás capacitado; entonces, no solamente vas a ser un buen papá y líder para tu escuela, sino vas a ser un buen padre en tu casa, y un buen ciudadano en la calle. Translation: There are a lot of tools, and it's not a waste of time but an advantage, it's an advantage because by having more knowledge, besides helping your children…you can help other parents. I have heard that the advanced countries are educated countries, and I believe that to be true because the more education or knowledge that you have, about anything, you can help your community and you can be a good citizen for your community because you already know, you're capable; so you are not only going to be a good parent and leader for your school but you're also going to be a good parent at home and a good citizen on the streets. (Bárbara, Interview, March 26, 2015)

As mentioned earlier in this study, parents described feeling a transformational growth or *un desarollo*. A participant in this study mentions how these parents had a desire to continually grow and improve personally, *"Estos padres y madres están dispuestos a superarse personalmente…cada vez se superan más."* Translation: "These fathers and mothers are willing to personally better themselves…they better themselves every time." (Gabriel, Interview, March 24, 2015) The parents in this study discussed how prior to becoming engaged within their role as leaders they thought their own personal growth and evolution was over, but through their engagement and leadership experiences they were able to reconnect with the personal satisfaction of growing as individuals and had a new opportunity to use their strengths and talents.

> *Esto es un estilo de motivación diferente, que no lo había tenido, porque desde que llegue acá, con dos años y medio de universidad que ya no pude recuperar, los dejé perdidos, porque cuando vine acá, como una persona inmigrante, fui, estuve yendo a la escuela, solamente para aprender inglés…esto es diferente. Yo pienso voy, voy creciendo más, a ser mayor cada vez.* Translation: This is a different motivation style, which I hadn't experienced before. Because ever since I arrived here, with two and a half years of college that I wasn't able to recuperate, they were lost. Because when I came to here, as an immigrant, I went, I was going to school just to learn English…this is different, I think. I'm making more growth, becoming increasingly better. (Gabriel, Interview, March 24, 2015)

This feeling of *desarrollo* (transformational growth) was described as something parents found fulfilling and something the fed their leadership.

> *Desde que me empecé a involucrar… ha sido como un aliciente para mí porque me ha motivado y hasta estoy pensando en más proyectos que quiero hacer y le pido a Dios que pueda desarrollarlos en la comunidad.* Translation: Ever since I became more involved… it has been an incentive for me because it has motivated me and I'm even thinking about more projects that I want to do. And I pray to God that I can develop them in the community. (Lucía, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Pero yo siento bonito poder saber que yo estoy haciendo algo para mi comunidad; o sea, eso me llena como ser humano. Y requiere mucho tiempo, sí, pero es una satisfacción bonita, que aunque tú termines en la noche cansada, porque tenemos nuestro rol de mamás también, pero es una satisfacción que te queda de servir muy bonita. Translation: It feels nice to know that I'm doing something for my community; it fulfills me as a human being. It requires a lot of time, yes, but it's a wonderful satisfaction that even if you're tired at the end of the night, because we also have our role as mothers, it's a very nice satisfaction… (Cecilia, Interview, March 26,2015)

Interestingly, parents also clearly identified the type of leadership style they utilize. Every single participant in this study mentioned not feeling comfortable with the term "leader" if it was to hold the connotation of a hierarchy-type of leadership. All participants wanted to make clear that they do not see themselves above other parents or staff; and defined more of a partnership-type role or a service-providing type role for their preferred leadership style. Parents appeared to consciously engage as leaders around this preference. The type of leadership they said they felt most comfortable with was closely aligned to the idea of "team" and "partnerships." In the following quote, the participant describes her feelings on this matter and how she carefully uses "we" statements to ensure a collaborative type of leadership message.

A veces no me siento líder, la verdad te lo digo así, yo no me quiero sentir. Yo no sé, soy muy sencilla, muy simple y muy transparente y siempre les digo a mis mamás que están conmigo en ELAC les digo, "vamos a hablar de esto," yo no les digo que esto está pasando sino que les digo, "vamos a tener esta información para que sepamos," y ya sigo, entonces trato de que yo no estoy arriba, yo estoy con ellas. Translation: Sometimes I don't feel like a leader, I tell you in all honesty, I don't want to feel like one. I don't know, I'm very simple, transparent and I always tell the moms that are with me in ELAC, I tell them "we're going to talk about this," I don't tell them that something is happening, I tell them "we have this information so we are in the know" and I move on, so I try not to be above them, I'm with them. (Lucía, Interview, March 26, 2015)

Another participant shared the way she wants to be viewed as a leader and elaborated that she is still growing in her leadership, which was also commonly mentioned by other parent leaders in this study:

> *Yo sí quiero ser un padre líder que digan, que… híjole, se oye fuerte, pero yo sí quiero ser un padre líder que digan, "ella me inspira, o yo llegué igual o peor de la situación que ella tenía y si ella lo pudo hacer ¿por qué yo no?", yo quiero ser como, como líder, esa inspiración. Yo quiero representar ese papel. Y me falta mucho, yo sé que a lo mejor, incluso van a pasar muchos años pero yo dando mi mejor esfuerzo a lo mejor algún día, verdad, no sé.* Translation: I do want to be a parent leader so they can say, ok it sounds a bit too much but I do want to be a parent leader so they can say "she inspires me" or "I'm in the same or even worse situation that she was and if she was able to do it, why can't I?" I want to be that leader, an inspiration. I want to represent the role. And many years will go by but by putting forth my best effort, who knows, maybe one day right? I don't know. (Catalina, Interview, March 26, 2015)

As was noted in research question 1, data indicated parents made real change occur within the study district. Evidence from DELAC minutes indicated parent leaders were instrumental in changing the reclassification process of the district in order to improve educational outcomes for English learners. Parents in this study appeared to learn they could take action and make a real difference. They gained the confidence of knowing what was going on in the district and to provide an opinion and a voice for improvement efforts. Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) and Epstein (1988) explain the higher the parents' sense of efficacy the more inclined they will be to get involved in leadership roles in order to improve school effectiveness and student achievement. Not only did these Latino parent leaders make change, many went on to receive employment opportunities and hold top level leadership positions on parent committees as a result of their skillful leadership.

Two participants in this study became employed by the California Association of Bilingual Education (CABE) upon being observed during parent leadership opportunities within the district. Another participant was asked to hired to work for a community-based organization after being observed providing trainings to other parents during DELAC meetings. Gabriel, a participant in this study, talked about how he has expanded his leadership role at work and received a promotion where he felt he now had the confidence and leadership skills to empower others in that area of his life, as well as what he was doing for the school community. Inés began taking courses at a local university in order to start her own business and had a solid plan of action to make that business a reality within one year. Another participant was in the process of developing her own parent outreach program and had already convinced one site to pilot the program for the upcoming school year. She shared she had hopes it could be provided district wide with a cadre of parent leaders in the future. Furthermore, half of the participants are currently serving or served on the DELAC leadership team in the roles of president, vice president, and/or secretary and all participants were identified as leaders through their site leadership roles on the site committee, ELAC, Clearly, the parents in this study had identified themselves as engaged leaders and could speak to their leadership preferences and experiences.

Parents highlighted throughout this study that, to them, their journey as leaders began at the moment they became parents and grew based on their experiences which have been captured through the four developmental factors documented in this study. The four developmental factors describe these parents movement from basic involvement, to engagement, to brokers of connected capital, into leadership and beyond.

This idea adds to the literature on Latino parent engagement and encompasses the notion that parents can also become key players in leadership roles and can in fact serve as advocates and change agents for other Latino families and community members.

Summary

As these flourishing parent leaders started to connect their own community cultural wealth to what they were learning regarding school types of capital, they began to understand the unique needs within their schools and community. This knowledge and awareness seemed to increase the participant's motivation and passion to serve as leaders within this school district. Through their interactions with other parent leaders and school personnel, they began to collaborate, use and grow their social and navigational networks which seemed to enable them to continue to deepen their engagement and push them farther into leadership.

These parents described a transformational type of growth and development where they began to see themselves as a voice for other Latino families within the district and felt they had the connected capital to better serve these families. The Latino parent leaders in this study seemed to enhance their understanding about how they fit within the school culture and their own potential as leaders (Barton, Drake, Peña, and St. Louis & George, 2004). Parents seemed to develop an understanding of their own value and importance as a part of school and community improvement efforts.

Ecologies of parental engagement, a theoretical framework used in this study, seems to be in place among these Latino parent leaders because the Ecologies of parental engagement framework lends itself to explaining how these parents made sense of their

roles as engaged leaders within a school setting after drawing strength from their own community cultural wealth and acquiring information regarding school forms of capital; they were then able to reach an understanding as to their potential as Latino parent leaders.

Based on the data collected it appears that these Latino parent leaders created a space for themselves and identified a role for themselves in leadership. Data from this study revealed parents began to leverage resources to conduct their work both with their schools and also with other parents in the community. It is important to note that Ecologies of parental engagement appear to evolve from a relational phenomenon that can explain increased levels of parent engagement. Community cultural wealth also highlights that culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) families have an exception skillset based on relationships through familial, social and navigational capital. In short, these two theories appear to support one another in such a way that together they may shed light on parent engagement and leadership experiences that target Latino parents.

This study can further inform work focused on new ways of conceptualizing Latino parental engagement and leadership, one that defines Latino parents as creators and instrumental drivers within the school setting (Barton, Drake, Peña, and St. Louis & George 2004). Ecologies of parental engagement redefines parental engagement as a dynamic interactive process in which parents draw on multiple experiences and resources to determine their interaction with schools and among school stakeholders (Barton et al., 2004). Ecologies of parental engagement appears to be an anchor that grounds the results of this study around the four developmental factors, where different levels of parent resources and experiences, propelled the participants along a continuum that led parents

to serve as leaders and change agents within this school district. Ecologies of parental engagement helps to explain how these different levels of Latino parent experiences shaped parents and moved them through the four developmental factors described in this study, which led them towards making higher level contributions to organizational change in this single school district.

The evolutionary process outlined in this chapter appears to demonstrate the process of how these Latino parents moved along a continuum from basic involvement, to engaged parents who could then serve as brokers/transmitters of connected capital where they transform into leaders and courageous agents of change. The following chapter offers a discussion of the findings and possible implications for practice and policy, as well as suggestions for future research. By placing these findings within the greater body of research this study can assist other Latino parents, schools and districts in their efforts to better engage Latino parent as leaders.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research conducted in this study was intended to explore how any why Latino parents engage as school leaders; in addition to learning about the ways in which Latino parents enter into leadership roles where they have a voice that can bring about change within their school/district culture and their community. This research looked at how engaged Latino parent leaders made their transformation into leadership through the examination of one successful District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC). This chapter begins with a brief summary of the problem, the methodology, and the findings followed by conclusions, recommendations and closing remarks

Summary of the Problem

Numerous research studies report that parent engagement is a significant yet often missing element that greatly influences student success within school (Fan & Chen, 2001). One challenge regarding parent engagement is that many parents; especially Latino parents and other culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) parents are unaware of their potential role in their children's education. Educational institutions such as the U.S. school system can be a source of alienation for Latino parents due to a mismatch of expectations between schools and parents on how to best support students (Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, & Ochoa, 2011). These misalignments and barriers are detrimental in that they can lead to misunderstandings on behalf of the school as a lack of interest by parents and where Latino parents are blamed for insufficient academic success of their children (Hill & Torres, 2010). There is a need for schools and districts to recognize the strengths that Latino families pass onto their children and use those strengths as a way to

increase the sense of connectedness between Latino families and schools (Rioja-Cortez & Bustos Flores, 2009).

Summary of Methodology.

The research base for Latino parent engagement has concentrated on the barriers that inhibit Latino parents from becoming involved within the school and district community. Many studies have focused on the question of how to increase Latino parent involvement by removing barriers so parents are able to expand their understanding of the ways they can participated in their children's education at home and at school (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Fewer studies have focused on the examination of successful Latino parent leaders and the inherit assets Latino parents bring with them as they engage as leaders within the U.S. school system.

Research in the area of Latino parent leadership deserves further attention based on a hypothesis which stems from what was learned through the literature review that an increase in Latino parent engagement and leadership has the potential to improve the educational outcomes of Latino students and, therefore, may help to close the achievement gap. This research study utilized a strengths based approach, focusing on a group of successful Latino parent leaders within one school district in order to discover how and why these Latino parents became engaged as leaders; in addition to learning about any potential factors, if any, that helped parents move along a continuum from basic involvement towards becoming leaders and agents of change.

The methodology utilized in this study was case study within a bound-system, a single school district, and was appropriate for examining a phenomenon within a real-life

setting (Creswell, 2012). This methodology allowed the researcher to collect information and identify themes and patterns surrounding how this group of successful Latino parent leaders viewed and defined their own leadership roles and experiences. This methodology was also anchored in the theoretical frameworks and literature review which focus on Latino parent experiences within the U.S. school system and a case study approach supported this kind of exploration. The summary of the findings presented here are divided into two sections based on the primary research questions.

Summary of Findings

Findings from this study revealed Latino parent leaders within this school district viewed and defined their engagement through an assets-based lens. The types of strengths, skills, and tools mentioned by participants in this study aligned to the six components of community cultural wealth, a theoretical framework used to support this study. In addition, this study brought to light four developmental factors that appeared to move this group of parent leaders from involvement to engagement, into leadership and beyond. These developmental factors were interconnected and built upon one another towards a transformation participants in this study called *un desarrollo* or a transformational growth in their life.

Table 9. Emergent Framework for Latino Parent Engagement & Leadership

Six Components of Self-Identified Latino Parent Engagement/Leadership
Familial Capital
Social Capital
Navigational Capital
Linguistic Capital
Resistant Capital
Aspirational Capital
Four Developmental Factors in Latino Parent Leadership and Beyond
Love of Children
Belonging
Connected Capital
Leadership and Change

Research Question 1. Components of how Latino Parent Leaders Engage.

The first research question was intended to address how Latino parent leaders within one school district viewed and defined their own parental engagement as DELAC leaders. Although this question was the first of the two, in some ways it represents the most complex and most emergent finding of this study in that it highlights how Latino parents, themselves, see and rationalize their own engagement and leadership. Participants in this study described their engagement and leadership in alignment to the assets-based lens of community cultural wealth, a theory that captures the strengths within culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) groups of people. The fact that parent leaders in this study described their engagement and leadership in such a way that it fit within the framework of the six components of community cultural wealth was an unexpected outcome that appeared to emerge naturally among parents.

This was a significant finding in that it demonstrates the strengths inherit to Latino families, that are used as they maneuver within the U.S. school system. In this

way, the Latino parent leaders in this study described being able to attain leadership within a new environment not designed to align with their world views, backgrounds and perspectives. Although parents in this study approached engagement through a different background and cultural lens, they were able to provide support for their children and others by capitalizing on the assets that came natural to them. In this way, they described being able to build their own capacity in such a way that they could better connect within the school while also connecting with their own community. Without the presence of these extremely important components of community wealth, it is possible that participants may not have the motivation take those difficult first steps towards parent involvement in such a new and intimidating environment (Altschul, 2011; Finn, 1998; Hill and Tyson, 2009; Mena, 2011, Yosso, 2006).

The study findings suggest that Latino parent bring with them an already existing set of skills and strengths that can go unrecognized within the U.S. educational settings. Traditional school rhetoric continues to call for "parent involvement" and often this rhetoric does not account for the ways in which Latino parents are engaged within their children's lives and education. All forms of parent participation need to be reexamined in order to include the assets and resources Latino parents bring with them as they engage within the school and district culture. Mainstream school settings have underestimated the strengths that Latino families pass along to their children and the potential impact they can have on the school and the community; as well as the potential impact they can have on other parents due to their ability to forge strong connections around shared backgrounds and identities.

This kind of parent engagement, when based on the natural strengths within the Latino community, can become the basis for understanding the cultural systems of Latino students, families and communities. This awareness has the potential augment the connectedness of Latino families within the U.S. school culture; in addition to also improving Latino student outcomes. For example, some practices common in Latino households, such as families taking children to work with them should not be misunderstood as parents valuing work over education. From a community cultural wealth perspective this can be an opportunity to pass on familial and aspirational capital by sharing personal experiences and *consejos* with children about why school matters and provide a real-life example of the kind of laborious work that will be required should a child not do well in school (Hill, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010). Schools can improve their understanding of Latino families by recognizing these forms of capital as valid and legitimate kinds of knowledge that can be utilized to better serve Latino families and student success.

Public schools are traditionally structured to promote parent involvement based on a deficit model where parents and children are treated as being "disadvantaged" and "lacking" the social and cultural capital needed to be successful within a school setting. The data from this study focuses on the strengths within the Latino community, where Latino parent leaders use their familial, social, navigational, linguistic, resistant, and aspirational capital to navigate within the U.S. school culture. Parents in this study reported the use of community cultural capital in a variety of ways that supported their engagement and leadership. For example, participants stressed the importance of familial capital when they talked about how their love of children and the desire to help other

families like themselves were the drivers that motivated them to get involved in the first place and continued to fuel their on-going engagement.

The parent leaders in this study also discussed the use of social and navigational capital when they mentioned the different informational and network opportunities provided through parent meetings and committees. Parent leaders talked about learning "where" and "how" to get the types of information they needed to advocate for their children and the community by consciously seeking out people "like themselves" and/or people they felt they could trust to help. Parent leaders went on to share stories of how they have transformed themselves and now serve as that type of support person for other parents who are new to the U.S. school system. These relationships constitute social capital in that they enable the achievement of goals that would have otherwise been impossible for an individual. In this regard, outcomes and goals are not individualistic, but rather result from a collective process of commitments among and between individuals who form a type of community bond, which is highlighted in the community cultural wealth framework. In this study, social capital and navigational capital fostered trust, norms and expectations among parents who came to share a common goal of supporting children while also empowering other parents.

Another finding was that participants in this study discussed how they used resistant and linguistic capital in order to execute and legitimize their leadership both within school settings, as well as within their own communities. Parent leaders recounted challenging experiences where they overcame obstacles in order to serve as brokers and "transmitters of knowledge" for the school and other parents. Participants stated they were not always made to feel welcomed by school personnel and even made mention of

the constant risk of being shunned by fellow parents who criticized their engagement within the school culture. In these cases, parents drew upon their resiliency skills in order to persevere in their leadership and service efforts. Examples include using creative strategies such as charm to "win-over" unfriendly staff members and parents, using *valor* or courage to persevere and leverage their resources to push past any potential barriers and challenge the status quo for the good of children and the community.

Furthermore, parents talked about the use of linguistic capital needed to reach the variety of stakeholders they come into contact with on a daily basis. Linguistic capital recognizes the multiple language and communication skills that Latinos possess as they engage within the U.S. school system. This includes bilingualism and code switching, but also encompasses language styles and preferences such as storytelling traditions that may include listening and retelling of oral histories, anecdotal stories, (*cuentos)*, and proverbs *(dichos)* (Delgado-Gaitán, 1994; Hill, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010; Valdés, 1994; Yosso, 2006). The participants in this study emphasized the value of being able to relate to different people through the use of formal and informal types of communication. Communication styles were observed at DELAC meetings, where participants were able to effectively switch and merge both formal and informal modes of communication. Participants referenced this as a skill they have developed in order to connect with school personnel as per their preferred communication style, in addition to connecting with other community members based on any possible differences regarding their preferred communication styles. The parent leaders stressed that one style was not better-than-the-

other, but that they felt it was important for them to communicate with people b

these preferences in order to be effective in their role as Latino parent leaders.

Another significant finding was that despite these parents being new to the U.S.

school system they held high aspirations and hopes for the difference they could make

within their school sites, their district and society in general. Many participants stated

that although they were not initially aware of how to engage within the U.S. school

environment, they had a strong desire to help their children and make a positive

difference in their schools and the community. Participants described aspirational capital

when the talked about the belief in their own self-efficacy to make these desires a reality.

One major challenge parents in this study reported was the intimidation they felt as they

took their initial steps towards involvement and "not knowing" what to expect or how

they could provide value.

All study participants stated they did not feel comfortable referring to themselves

using the term "leader" in the traditional sense of the word, yet they provided a variety of

examples on how they are successfully supporting their schools and district while also

leading other parents to higher levels of school engagement. Parents in this study

appeared to prefer a leadership style that includes serving others through a partnership-

role, over a hierarchy-type of leadership. The researcher witnessed evidence of this

partnership-based form of leadership developing through examination of transcribed field

notes. The researcher noticed many references to "we" vs. "I" statements. During

interviews there were numerous comments referencing being appreciative of one another

(DELAC), proud of one another and feeling like the DELAC team has made a

transformation into leadership. Participants stated that they desire to lead alongside other

parents, rather than believing they are above anyone else. Moreover, parent leaders

shared they purposefully utilize strategies and linguistic capital to connect with other

parents so as to not be seen as more knowledgeable or important than anyone else.

Instead parents in this study described themselves as "brokers", "transmitters of

knowledge", "servants", "connectors", and "a voice" for others.

This study makes it clear that these Latino parents indeed possess leadership skills

and a leadership identity, however they employ their community cultural wealth to

engage as leaders on their own terms and they connect this capital with the school's

forms of capital in order to help others like themselves. In other words, being new to the

U.S. school culture does not equate the absence of leadership skills that can be applied to

support Latino family-school connectedness and positively influence school outcomes.

This finding is significant because it sheds light on the cultural strengths already

embodied by Latinos that can be drawn upon to further Latino parent leadership.

Research Question 2. Beyond Involvement to Engagement, Leadership & Change.

The second research question focused on the process by which parent moved

along a continuum from involvement to engagement, into leadership and beyond. The

findings related to this question suggest the existence of an evolutionary process

encompassing four developmental factors. This initial stage in the process appears to be

driven by the love these Latino parents feel for their children and community and results

in a transformational growth or *un desarrollo* where Latino parents develop a sense of

purpose and vision as leaders and change agents.

What was found in this study is that parents first volunteer to become involved within a school culture out of love for their children and a desire to support them. Many participants described the importance of becoming parents and how this milestone marked the beginning of their leadership. In fact, participants made many references about becoming leaders at the moment they became parents. Parents in this study seemed to take their role as parents seriously and wanted to be an example and a support for their children. Once their children entered a U.S. school for the first time, parents shared that they were motivated to learn more about their child's schooling experience in order to make sure their child's needs would be taken care of even if they spoke a language other than English and came from a different background and culture.

Once taking that initial step to be present at the school site out of love of their children, participants reported the importance of receiving an "invitation" from a trusted teacher, a site principal, fellow-parent companions and even from their children to become involved in parent meetings, committees and/or workshops. This combination of being formally invited to participate; in addition to the quality of information and networks that were formed during parent participation allowed parents in this study to develop a feeling of "belonging" in such a way that they could make their questions, ideas, priorities and concerns known. In this way, by developing a sense of belonging they were able to become comfortable enough that that could look beyond their own needs and began to extend their focus to include both the needs of the school and other parents in the community.

Upon gaining an understanding of the possible school and community needs, participants reported a feeling of "wanting to do more." Many of these initial

opportunities that parents described started at the site level through the English Learner

Advisory Committees (ELAC), however parents also talked about how their election to

leadership positions such as, ELAC president, vice-president, and/or the District English

Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) representative, felt like a "vote of confidence"

from their site and their peers, which increased their sense of "responsibility" and

leadership efforts. All of these elements came together for parents to make them feel as

though they authentically "belonged" as an integral part of their school community and

that they served a purpose role in that environment. This process seemed to replicate

itself and intensify, according to participants, once they became engaged at the district

level through DELAC. Through both site and district engagement parents began to

understand the unique needs of English learners and the families of English Learners

through their participation in committee meetings and professional learning opportunities

such as workshops and conferences offered within the district, at the county and at a state

and national level.

As parents became more self-aware of their own strengths in relation to the U.S.

school system and more knowledgeable about the needs of schools and the community,

their engagement and passion to serve others appeared to increase. Participants in this

study talked a lot about how their engagement experience led to *un desarrollo* (a

transformational growth) where they began to evolve and change. This is an extremely

important finding because parents seemed to be describing a "tipping-point" where they

went from participating to gain knowledge out of love for their children and community

towards an active process where they became leaders through their role as "connectors"

of capital. The literature reviewed in this study explains how that the social and cultural

capital expectations of mainstream U.S. school culture may differ from the funds of knowledge and the community cultural wealth capital that Latino and other CLD parents may bring within them into the school environment. The data presented within this study appears to show how this group Latino parent leaders used the cultural strengths inherit to them to learn about and make sense of the U.S. school system while still holding on to their own cultural identities and, in doing so, were able to connect their own capital to that of the school setting which catapulted them into unique leaders with a specialized set of skills.

This dynamic self-realization sparked leadership within these participants. Parents shared that they began to see their role within the school culture differently. Upon realizing their unique and special talent as "connectors" of capital, based on the interviews collected, parents begin to see themselves as a voice for other parents of the district; as well as an effective and trustworthy transmitter of information to the community. A remarkable finding was that parents talked about how their connected capital opened a road for them that put them in a unique position to be able to understand a variety of needs among the community and schools. They shared how they were now able to understand where ideas and needs overlap and could effectively serve both their community and their schools. They felt they could build a common ground in order to enhance stronger school-community connections. Participants also talked about understanding the differences between perspectives and the reason for those differences, which allows them to explain things to all stakeholders while avoiding potential misunderstanding. Participants reported a great deal of personal satisfaction in discovering their distinctive value within the school and community. This self-realization

and sense of ability appeared to ignite parent leaders to become advocates and change agents for Latino students and families.

All parents within this study made references to themselves as leaders who have a purpose and a mission. However, an interesting finding was that in every single interview the participants stressed that they do not feel comfortable with the traditional definition of a leader if it means you are "better," "more-than," or "superior" to someone else. Latino parents in this study stated that they were the kind of leaders that served others and simply wanted to help people meet their needs and make a positive difference within the community. There were also many mentions of "still learning" about how to serve others and how this learning is an on-going process. These finding seems to suggest that parent leaders within this study prefer a partner-based-type of leadership over a hierarchy-model of leadership. With this being said it was clear, based on interview comments where participants referred to their personal leadership style and approaches that they did indeed identify as leaders who have many skills and talents to offer.

Parents talked a great deal about wanting to make a difference for students and families within their community and society as a whole. Participants in this study also highlighted the importance of not forgetting other communities who may also be new to the U.S. school system and have similar experiences to Latinos. Parents stated it was important for them to embrace multiculturalism and the benefits of living within a global society; participants shared they wanted to instill this idea in their children as well because they felt it would help them in life. However, participants emphasized their vision for Latinos to be well represented within the global society and they hoped to be a part of that kind of work.

Through DELAC meeting observations and document analysis, it was evident that these Latino parent leaders were in fact leading and working as change agents within this school district. One of the most noteworthy findings had to do with the kinds of questions parents were asking as leaders. These parents were not silent observers and takers of information, but rather active participants who led their own meetings. The researcher observed parents exercise their group leadership to ask "why" questions when they didn't understand or agree, instead of simply accepting district and/or Board decisions. The data in this study showed that these Latino parent leaders were making real changes such as: developing programs to promote bilingualism and other programs to continue meeting the diverse needs of English Learner students, establishing the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) as a priority across the district, increasing the quantity of bilingual staff at the front-desk of every site, and even advocating for the kind of principals they want within their schools. These Latino parent leaders discovered their own power to use their connected capital to bring about real change within this school district.

Limitations

Generalizability. The need to research Latino parent engagement and leadership is quite weighty. However, this study is limited in scope as it examines the actions, reflections and beliefs of a small group of participants. The knowledge that is created through the interviews, observations and document analysis may impact the parent leaders and other stakeholders who belong to this one school district. Generalizability is

not the goal of this study, rather the goal is to attempt to capture the participant experiences and add to the literature about Latino parent engagement and leadership.

Participant Selection. Participants in this study were comprised of ten Latino parent leaders who were identified through their membership on the District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC), the site level English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), and who also participated in the district parent leadership program consisting of 12 workshops offered in Spanish. Participants were representatives from elementary sites, middle school sites, and high school sites within the school district and are parents to English Learner students and students who have been Reclassified as English proficient. This population of Latino parents was an appropriate investigative target due to evidence of parent engagement and leadership as demonstrated through their participation on parent leadership committees.

For the purpose of this study, a purposeful sample of individuals were interviewed and observed. Purposeful sampling is appropriate for this research design, because a small group of Latino parent leaders within one school district can provide an information-rich case, where a great deal can be learned about Latino parent leadership by focusing on an in-depth understanding of the needs, interests, and incentives of this small number of carefully selected Latino parent leaders. The participant selection may be viewed as a possible limitation because in essence the participants in this study are serving as leaders in three different capacities: ELAC, DELAC and participants in the district parent leadership program. This may result in an atypical sample compared to the general population of Latino parents within the school district. However, this was also

necessary because of the use of Appreciative Inquiry; the researcher wanted exemplars of Latino parent engagement and leadership.

Sample Size. Second, the sample size is to be considered a limitation (n = 10). Although the researcher tried to capture the true thoughts, feeling and beliefs of the participants by interviewing, observing, and using document analysis data, the mere size of the sample is a limitation. As a result of the small population of parent leaders that participated in this study, the sample size may present an aspect of homogeneous sampling, where all parents serve the same district and all participated in the same leadership experiences.

Positionality. Third, researcher bias and positionality is a limitation. The researcher is an administrator within the district in which this study took place and collaborates with the Latino parent leaders though her work with DELAC. The researcher knew most of the participants and had a working relationship with them prior to the study commencing. This fact could be detrimental to the study in that participants may be fearful when providing information knowing that the researcher is an employee of the school district. To address this issue, the researcher ensured that confidentiality was protected and pseudonyms were used when referring to parent leaders and naming the school district. Another potential limit is researcher bias and the researcher made strategic efforts to reduce the risks of such biases. The researcher studied multiple sources of data such as interviews, observations and document analysis. In addition, the researcher maintained a critical distance through a metacognitive awareness of her role as investigator, rather than informant. The researcher remained open to what the data revealed and used member checks to ensure accurate interpretation of the data. An

advantage of working within the district of study is that the researcher has a developed

rapport with the individuals involved in this study that will allowed for an insider's view

to the process of how Latino parent leaders view and define engagement within this

school district. In summary, the researcher tried to minimize the risk and bias within this

study, while using her position within the school district as a strength. Irrespective of

these limitations, this study serves to contribute to the literature about Latino parent

engagement and leadership.

Implications for Practice

Latino children are among the fastest growing school population and are at the

same time consistently the lowest performing; making Latino students the most

vulnerable group to the achievement gap (Lee & Bowen, 2006; Torlackson, 2011).

Research posits that students learn better when home, school, and community share

responsibilities for their success (Epstein, 1995). However, educational institutions can

be a source of alienation for Latino parents due to a mismatch of expectations between

schools and parents on how to best support students (Olivos, Jimenez-Catellanos, &

Ochoa, 2011). These misalignments and barriers can lead to misunderstandings on behalf

of the school as a lack of interest by parents and where Latino parents are blamed for

insufficient academic success of their children (Hill & Torres, 2010).

This research study examined Latino parent leaders through interviews,

observations and document analysis in order to explore whether there are factors in

existence that allow Latino parents to break through potential barriers/misunderstandings

where they can become engaged and increase their sense of efficacy, leadership, and

connectedness within a U.S. school system (Rioja-Cortez & Bustos Flores, 2009). The

hypothetical benefit of increased Latino parent engagement and leadership came from the

belief that an increase in Latino parent engagement and leadership has the potential to

improve the educational outcomes of Latino students and, therefore, may help to close

the achievement gap.

The findings of this study suggest that Latino parents not only view their

engagement as important, but they may also bring a unique and added value to the kinds

of engagement and leadership they are able to offer. Therefore, it is crucial for schools to

connect with Latino parents and work together to carve out pathways where Latino

parents can engage on their own terms utilizing their preferred styles of leadership in

such a way that they are able to take their place within the school setting and empower

themselves to make changes to positively impact Latino families within the community.

This type of transformation can only take place when parents "own" their engagement

and leadership as described in the work of Ferrazlo (2011) and Epstein (1988).

Based on the findings within this study, schools would be wise to revamp their

parent participation efforts to begin by capitalizing on the natural love Latino parents

have for children and the community. Many school initiatives begin with more

knowledge and compliance based types of interactions in order to "bring parents up to

speed", however this study reveals it may be more effective to start with the work of the

heart. Latino parents may be more likely to become engaged when there is recognition of

the importance of "love of family" in order start on a common ground with a shared

purpose around supporting children. Perhaps student-centered and parent/child

relationship types of outreach opportunities could be an appropriate starting point to help

draw in more parents and make those first steps towards involvement and engagement more relatable and less intimidating. For example, a school might start the school year with a family type gathering that is structured like a social event, where parents and children can interact through stories, games and/or activities designed to celebrate familial capital. This could be done in addition to events like the traditional "Back-to-School" events. This would allow schools to take advantage of the strengths and motivations that parents already possess and may help to strengthen parent social capital by providing a space where supportive networks can be developed. In turn, this also provides parents with a solid point of reference and a starting point where they are already experiencing success, rather than attending an event to learn about something completely new.

In addition to the potential benefit to having Latino parents first connect with the school around the common goal of "love of children", the next logical step for increasing Latino parent engagement and leadership appears to be providing a space where parents can feel as though they authentically belong. There is a great deal of parent participation literature surrounding the providing of a welcoming environment, etc. and although those factors continue to be important, parents in this study described a desire for belonging on a more purposeful level where supportive networks and quality information are in existence in order to gain an understanding of the school culture and an awareness of their role in helping others. As discussed in previous studies, the importance of being formally "invited" to belong was an important theme. Schools should keep this in mind by brainstorming creative ways to make parents feel "invited." For example, a school might choose to set aside monies to invest in family engagement personnel whose sole

focus would be to ensure parents "belong" by providing services like personalized invitations, by becoming a trusted point-of-contact for parents and by empowering parents with a self-awareness of their important role in schools; as well as their potential leadership role. The developmental factor of belonging is important and should not be overlooked because it as though parents move from simple involvement to active engagement within this setting. This aligns to current parent engagement literature (Epstein, 1988; Ferrlazo, 2011) that describes how parents move from involvement to engagement due becoming a part of decisions and being able to provide input.

One of the most potentially most noteworthy implications from this study is the need to recognize the already existing types of capital and funds of knowledge Latino families bring with them to the U.S. schooling environment. Traditional school rhetoric focuses on "teaching" parents about the social and cultural capital of the school, while ignoring the strengths and assets inherit to the families schools are charged to serve. This is imperative, because as this study highlights, Latino parents may use their existing community cultural wealth to actively engage within the school setting on their own terms, therefore, allowing for them to connect with any additional forms of school social and cultural capital in a way that makes sense and feels comfortable to them. Once parents develop their connected capital and become self-aware of their special role and talents within a school culture they seem more likely to advance towards leadership and change agency. Therefore, a potential goal for schools and districts may be to provide opportunities and experiences for employees, families and community members to learn about the richness around the diverse forms of capital that exist within a school culture, in

order for participants to gain an appreciation for all forms of capital and help increase

Latino and CLD family engagement and leadership.

Parents in this study talked about being empowered with a *desarrollo* or

transformational growth, where they understand how to use their strengths within the

school culture, are were then able to define their role within the school setting as per

Ecologies of parent engagement (EPE) (Barton, Drake, Peña, and St. Louis & George

2004). This appeared to lead parents to higher levels of engagement and leadership where

they wanted to become more invested. The Latino parent leaders in this study stated a

sense of pride in what they were able to offer their communities, which inspired them to

use their voices as a way help schools and the district discover improved methods of

reaching other Latino families. Therefore, schools and districts who have Latino parent

leaders already in existence within their community would be wise to partner with them

in order to support and further develop their leadership, but also to draw upon their talent

and unique vantage point regarding how to improve family outreach initiatives.

Lastly, participants clearly defined their leadership style as being partnership

driven. Schools and the district can make room for parents to exercise this type of

leadership in order to support the success of their Latino parent leaders. As schools and

districts work towards engaging Latino parents as potential leaders they should remember

to provide partnership leadership roles as an option for parents. For example, Latino

parents may feel more supported when provided the opportunity to co-lead parent

committees or work as a collective group of leaders rather than as a single leader as is the

case with many elected positions currently in place in many school settings. Another

idea could be to create a structure where parents could coach one another into leadership

positions similar to an apprenticeship. This study suggests it is important for schools to embrace the types of leadership styles that work best for their Latino parents, rather than forcing them into a hierarchy-type of leadership. A possible example of this would be to refrain from forcing parents to use things like "Roberts Rules of Order," a meeting protocol often used in U.S. schools during formal meetings and instead elicit feedback from the parents themselves around their desired meeting protocols and modes of communication, etc. Schools can benefit by exploring Latino parent's preferred styles of engagement and leadership.

Implications for Future Research

Research about Latino parent engagement and leadership is scant. Considering that the topic of Latino parent engagement and leadership is fairly emergent, much of the reviewed literature is about Latino parent involvement and overcoming barriers to involvement, rather than specifically focusing on Latino parent leadership. A great deal of existing literature surrounding Latino parent involvement speaks about Latino parents who wanted to be involved but were discriminated against and were moved towards activism as a means to defend their rights and challenge the schools who did not show respect for their children and families' cultural and linguistic differences (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Jasis and Ordoñez-Jasis, 2010). While challenging barriers and obstacles through activism is a worthy area to study, the fact remains there is a need learn about how to proactively increase the connectedness among Latino families and schools before injustices take place and where schools fail the Latino communities. This dissertation sought out to explore ways to

increase Latino parent engagement and leadership as a way for Latino parents to exercise their voice for a quality experiences and outcomes for Latino families and children.

An area of future research that could yield some very useful information about Latino parent engagement and its impact on Latino student achievement would be a mixed-methods or a quantitative study that looks at student data and the impact that Latino parent engagement may have on student academic outcomes. Research that looks specifically at Latino parent engagement and how it relates to student achievement would contribute to the research regarding the potential impact of Latino parent participation. Specifically targeting Latino parents and students would yield further data about the strengths and needs within the Latino community.

Another area of future research could be to explore the impact of school personnel attitudes and dispositions in relation to Latino parent engagement. Most administrators, teachers and school employees have never had any sort of training on how to effectively partner with Latino parents, let alone understand the values and strengths inherent within Latino families that can be taken advantage of when seeking to improve schooling outcomes for students and connectedness with families. Examining the impact of professional learning around this topic could provide further insight on how schools and parents can co-construct positive partnerships that foster productive outcomes for the school and community.

Lastly, this study serves to add to the literature about Latino parent engagement and leadership. There is a great deal of literature that states schools should limit cultural and linguistic barriers so that they can successfully work with Latino families. However, there is little information available on engaging Latino families as leaders and change

agents (Hill & Taylor, 2004). This researcher encountered very few investigations that could shed light on best practices around Latino parent leadership, which led the researcher on a journey to begin this discussion around how a group of exemplary Latino parents became engaged as successful leaders within this single school district.

Social Justice and Equity

Latino children are among the fastest growing school population and are at the same time consistently the lowest performing which may perpetuate the trend where Latinos are overrepresented in low-wage earning jobs in and underrepresented in universities (Lee & Bowen, 2006; Zarate, 2007). Existing research suggests that students learn better when home, school, and community share responsibilities for their success (Epstein, 1995). Moreover, it seems that when parents are fully engaged as a means of serving the students, this can lead to greater student achievement (Byrk & Schneider, 2002). However, traditional forms of parent involvement may not be enough to effectively connect with Latino families. Moreover, traditional types of family involvement ignore the cultural differences, perceptions, and world views of CLD families, including Latinos. Even more problematic is that it also ignores the white-middle-class cultural biases and assumptions traditional parent involvement is built on. It is critical that schools recognize these factors in order to embrace all CLD families, specifically Latinos, and become mindful of the implicit curriculum and expectations that Latino parents may not have access to or be aware of (Hill, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010).

This study highlights that Latino families value education and want to be a part of their children's success in school, but may have another point-of-reference or approach

for reaching that goal. Latino parents may desire engagement over involvement, because it leads to genuine connections with their children and the school; in addition to better fitting their preferred modes of interacting within the school setting. Schools can gain insight from the ways in which Latino families successfully engage within the school and community using their own forms of capital and knowledge. This new learning may be key to promoting meaningful relationships with Latino parents and their children.

This study suggests that Latino parents value engagement and can evolve into leaders when they connect their own ways of "knowing and doing" to the types of social and cultural capital expected within the U.S. school system. There is a need for schools to recognize the strengths within the Latino community and use those strengths as a way to increase the sense of connectedness between Latino families and schools (Rioja-Cortez & Bustos Flores, 2009). Based on literature reviewed and the data results of this study, the researcher believes that an increase in Latino parent engagement and leadership has the potential to improve the educational outcomes of Latino students and, therefore, may help to close the achievement gap.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how Latino parent leaders view and define their own engagement and to explore any factors, if in existence, that move Latino parents along a continuum from involvement to engagement to leadership and beyond. The data show that the Latino parents within this study viewed and defined their engagement through a strengths-based lens which aligned to the theoretical framework of community cultural wealth. In addition, this study brought to light four developmental

factors that appeared to propel this group of parent leaders from simple involvement into becoming leaders and potential agents of change for their schools and community. This study used Appreciative Inquiry as its foundation to seek out the thoughts, reflections and stories of Latino parent leaders in regards to their own engagement and leadership journey. The theories of Engagement over Involvement, Social/Cultural Capital in relation to Community Cultural Wealth and Ecologies of Parent Engagement were used as frameworks to study Latino parent leader engagement and the findings serve to motivate other researchers to examine other factors that may help define and augment Latino parent leadership. The implications of the findings include suggestions for improving Latino parent participation practices, initiatives, and strengthening Latino parent leadership. It is this researcher's hope that this study helps to shed light upon a marginalized group of parents and give voice to their story of leadership and change.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Parent Leader Interview Questions/Entrevista a un padre de familia líder

1. Tell me how you see yourself participating in the school district as a parent.
   Dígame cómo se ve a sí mismo participando en el distrito escolar como padre de familia.
2. What led you to become an involved in parent participation in Val Verde Unified School District (VVUSD)?
   ¿Qué lo llevó a involucrarse en la participación de padres de familia en el Distrito Escolar Unificado de Val Verde?
3. How and why did you become a part of the English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)?
   ¿Cómo y por qué se hizo parte del Comité Consultivo para Aprendientes de Inglés?
4. How did your experience in ELAC lead to participation in the District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)?
   ¿Cómo lo llevo su experiencia en ELAC a participar en el Comité Consultivo para Aprendientes de Inglés del Distrito (DELAC)?
5. What was it that influenced your decision to become more deeply engaged in the school district?
   ¿Qué fue lo que influyó en su decisión de involucrarse más de lleno en el distrito escolar?
6. How do you view your work as a parent leader/what roles do you play as a parent leader?
   ¿Cómo ve su trabajo como padre de familia líder? ¿Qué funciones desempeña como padre de familia líder?
7. What is your role as a parent leader that supports the district mission to increase parent engagement?
   ¿Cuál es su papel como padre de familia líder que apoya la misión del distrito de aumentar la participación de los padres de familia?
8. If you see yourself as a leader, do you see yourself as a contributor who is listened to as involved in your role of leadership?
   Si usted se ve como un líder, ¿Se ve a sí mismo como un contribuyente que es escuchado en su papel de líder?
9. Is there some experience that makes you want to reach out to other parents and encourage them to become parent leaders?
   ¿Hay alguna experiencia que lo motive a querer llegar a otros padres de familia y animarlos a convertirse en padres de familia líderes?
10. How do you see parents contributing to the district in such a way that will make a positive difference in their children and other children as well?
    ¿Cómo ve usted a los padres de familia contribuir en el distrito de tal manera que haga una diferencia positiva en sus hijos así como en otros niños?

Appendix B: Consent to Act as a Research Subject (English and Spanish)

<div align="right">Participant # _____</div>

<div align="center">Consent to Act as a Research Subject</div>

Invitation to Participate

Carla de la Torre, a doctoral candidate in the Joint Doctoral Program between UCSD and CSUSM, with approval of the Val Verde Unified School District (VVUSD) is conducting a research study to find out about parent structures that promote and support Latino parent engagement and leadership. As a parent leader who is a member of the District Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) and a participant of the VVUSD Parent Leadership Class your permission is requested to participate in this study. There will be approximately 10-12 parents participating in individual interviews as part of this study. This study has the following objective: To explore how and why Latino parents become engaged as Parent Leaders within a school district.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine Latino parent leaders through interviews, observations and document analysis in order to explore whether there are factors in existence that allow Latino parents to break through potential barriers/misunderstandings where they can become engaged and increase their sense of efficacy, leadership, and connectedness within a U.S. school system (Rioja-Cortez & Bustos Flores, 2009). The hypothetical benefit of increased Latino parent engagement and leadership comes from the belief that an increase in Latino parent engagement and leadership has the potential to improve the educational outcomes of Latino students.

Description of Procedures

You will be asked to allow me to observe twice, for a two-hour-period during two DELAC meetings, to allow me to perform document analysis of DELAC documents (agendas, minutes, hand-outs, etc.) and participate in a one-on-one interview. The interview will have a conversational style and will be conducted in Spanish and/or English based on your preference. The interview will last approximately 45- 60 minutes. During the interview, you will be asked about your first-hand experience as a Latino Parent Leader within the school district. With your permission, the interview will be audio taped and transcribed. You will be provided with a transcript of the interview for checking and clarifying purposes. The interviews will be held in a location that is mutually agreed upon by the participant and researcher (district office, or neutral off-site location).

Risks and Inconveniences

There are minimal risks to participating in this study. These include:

1. Loss of personal time necessary to participate in the interview and review of the interview transcript.

2. A potential for the loss of confidentiality. This is unlikely since no participant names will be used. Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Research records may be reviewed by the CSUSM Institutional Review Board.

3. Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant findings.

Safeguards

1. Interview sessions will be set for 45 minutes, restricted to 60 minutes.
2. Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher for analysis purposes. Only the researcher and transcriber will listen to and transcribe the information you provide. The audiotapes will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than July 2015.
3. Pseudonyms for parent leaders will be used to minimize the risk of identification.
4. You will be given the opportunity to review the transcribed interview and to eliminate any comments or references you feel may be identifiable or have negative connotations. Your responses will not be linked to your name or address.
5. During the interview, if you are experiencing a negative emotional response, the interview will be stopped and you will be directed to appropriate resources.
6. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any time. If the length of the interview becomes inconvenient, you may stop at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

Benefits

The potential benefit for you as a participant includes satisfaction in serving the needs of other Latino parents, schools and communities that may ultimately result in increased engagement of Latino families within schools; as well as enhancing parent leadership practices. This study also has potential implications for professional development by providing information to both parents and school personnel; and will contribute to the literature about Latino Parent Engagement and build the literature on Latino Parent Leadership.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation is the interview is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in the interview at any time without penalty. You will be told if any important new information is found during the course of this study that may affect your wanting to continue. The results are in no way related to any evaluation or judgment of the district or parents.

Incentives

There is no compensation of cost for your participation in this study.

Questions/Contact Information

Carla de la Torre has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have any additional questions or research-related problems, you may reach Carla de la Torre at (951) 377-9455. You have received a copy of this consent document. Questions about your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Institutional Review Board at 760-750-4029. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

□ I agree to participate in this research study. □ I agree to have the interview audio taped.

_____   _____

Participant's Name Date

_____

Participant's Signature

_____

This document has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at California State University San Marcos Expiration Date: March 23, 2016

Consentimiento para actuar como sujeto de investigación

Invitación para participar
Carla de la Torre, candidata doctoral en el Programa Conjunto de Doctorado entre UCSD
y CSUSM, con permiso del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Val Verde (VVUSD) está
conduciendo un estudio para investigar qué procedimientos por parte de padres
promueven y apoyan la participación familiar y el liderazgo de padres. Como miembro
del Comité Consultivo para Aprendientes de Inglés del Distrito (DELAC) y participante
en las clases de liderazgo de padres del VVUSD, necesitamos que usted dé su
consentimiento para poder participar en este estudio. Habrá aproximadamente 10-12
padres participando en entrevistas individuales como parte de este estudio. El estudio
tiene el siguiente objetivo: Explorar cómo y por qué los padres se convierten en padres
líderes adentro de un distrito escolar.

Propósito
El propósito de este estudio es examinar a padres líderes que son latinos a través de
entrevistas, observaciones y un análisis de documentos con el fin de explorar si existen
factores que permiten a los padres lideres romper posibles barreras/malentendidos donde
pueden llegar a ser involucrados y aumentar su sentido de eficacia, liderazgo y conexión
dentro del sistema escolar de los Estados Unidos (Rioja-Cortez y Bustos Flores, 2009). El
hipotético beneficio de una mayor participación y liderazgo de los padres latinos proviene
de la creencia de que un aumento del liderazgo de los padres latinos tiene el potencial de
mejorar los resultados educativos de los estudiantes latinos.

Descripción del Procedimiento
Se le pedirá que me permita observar dos veces, para un período de dos horas durante dos
reuniones del DELAC, que me permita realizar un análisis de documentos de DELAC
(agendas, minutos, folletos, etc.) y participar en un una entrevista individual. La
entrevista tendrá un estilo conversacional y se realizará en español y / o inglés basado en
su preferencia de lenguaje. La entrevista tendrá una duración aproximada de 45 a 60
minutos. Durante la entrevista, se le preguntará acerca de su experiencia personal como
Líder de Padres Latinos dentro del distrito escolar. Con su permiso, la entrevista será
grabada en audio y transcrita. Se le proporcionará con una transcripción de la entrevista
para su revisión, corrección y aclaración Las entrevistas se realizarán en un lugar que
escojan entre el participante y la persona encargada de este estudio (las oficinas del
distrito o algún otro lugar neutral).

Riesgos e inconvenientes
Hay muy pocos riesgos al participar en este estudio. Algunos de ellos son:
1. Gastar el tiempo personal necesario para participar en la entrevista y para repasar la
transcripción de la entrevista.
2. La posibilidad de que conozca la identidad del participante en el estudio. Ello es muy
poco probable porque no se usarán los nombres de los participantes. La información del

estudio se protegerá hasta donde lo permita la ley. La documentación del estudio podría ser examinada por el Comité de Revisión Institucional de CSUSM.

3. Ya que este es un estudio de investigación, también pueden existir riesgos desconocidos que son impredecibles. Se le informará si se llegara a existir un riesgo significativo.

Garantías

1. Las sesiones de la entrevista se establecerán durante 45 minutos, restringidos a los 60 minutos.

2. Sus datos de las entrevistas se mantendrán confidenciales, disponible sólo para la investigadora para análisis. Sólo la investigadora y transcriptor escucharán y transcribir la información que proporcione. Las grabaciones de audio serán destruidas después del análisis final; más tardar en julio de 2015.

3. Los seudónimos para padres líderes serán utilizados para reducir al mínimo el riesgo de identificación.

4. Se le dará la oportunidad de revisar la entrevista transcrita y de eliminar cualquier comentario o referencias que cree que puede ser identificable o tener connotaciones negativas. Sus respuestas no estarán conectado a su nombre o dirección.

5. Durante la entrevista, si usted está experimentando una respuesta emocional negativa, la entrevista se detendrá y se le dirigirá hacia los recursos apropiados.

6. Su participación es completamente voluntaria, y puede ser retirada en cualquier momento. Si la duración de la entrevista llega a ser inconveniente, puede dar por terminada la entrevista en cualquier momento. No hay consecuencias si decide no participar.

Beneficios

El beneficio potencial para usted como participante incluye la satisfacción en asistir a otros padres latinos, escuelas y la comunidad que últimamente puede resultar en una mayor participación de las familias latinas en las escuelas; igual que aumentar las prácticas de liderazgo de los padres. Este estudio también tiene implicaciones potenciales para el aprendizaje profesional de proporcionar información a los padres y personal de los planteles escolares; y contribuirá a la literatura acerca de participación de padres latinos y construirá la literatura sobre el Liderazgo de padres latinos.

Participación Voluntaria

Su participación es la entrevista es voluntaria. Usted puede dejar de participar en la entrevista en cualquier momento sin consecuencia alguna. Se le informará a usted si surgiera alguna nueva información durante este estudio que pudiera afectar su deseo de continuar. Los resultados de ninguna manera son una evaluación o juicio del distrito o de los padres.

Incentivos

No habrá compensación económica por su participación en este estudio.

Preguntas / Información de contacto

Carla de la Torre ha explicado este estudio y ha respondido a mis preguntas. Si tiene preguntas adicionales o problemas relacionados a este estudio, usted puede contactar a Carla de la Torre al (951) 377- 9455. Se le entregó a usted una copia de este documento de consentimiento. Preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante de la investigación deben ser dirigidas al Comité de Revisión Institucional al 760-750-4029. Se le dará una copia de este formulario para sus archivos.

□ Estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio de investigación. □ Estoy de acuerdo que la entrevista será grabada.

_____ _____
Nombre del participante Fecha

_____
Firma del participante

This document has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at California State University San Marcos Expiration Date: March 23, 2016

Appendix C: District Leader Informed Consent

Val Verde Unified School District

975 W Morgan Street • Perris, CA 92571 • 951-940-6100

BOARD OF EDUCATION:
Julio Gonzalez
Marla Kirkland
Suzanne Stotlar
Michael M. Vargas
D. Shelly Yarbrough

Juan López
Superintendent

R. Darrin Watters
Assistant Superintendent
Business Services

Michael McCormick
Assistant Superintendent
Education Services

Christi Barrett
Assistant Superintendent
Human Resources

January 20, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am Michael McCormick, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services in the Val Verde Unified School District. Carla de la Torre is the Coordinator of English Learner Support Services K-12 in our school district and I am her direct supervisor. She has shared information with me regarding her research project and she has my permission to perform her research within our school district.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at (951) 940-6100 ext. 10401

Sincerely,

Michael McCormick
Assistant Superintendent
Education Services

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