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The Influence of Social and Cultural Capital on Student Engagement: The Need for School Counselors in Predominantly Hispanic Schools

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

By

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ABSTRACT

The Influence of Social and Cultural Capital on Student Engagement: The Need for School Counselors in Predominantly Hispanic Schools

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The premise of this research is to consider Pierre Bourdieu's social and cultural capital theoretical framework to analyze the life experiences of Mexican American high school students. This qualitative study examined the perceptions of two administrators, four counselors, three students, and three parents regarding the influence of social and cultural capital on student engagement. Three of the participants were first-generation working class Hispanic students with aspirations to attend a four-year university. The participants were interviewed through a semistructured interview protocol to identify what sources of capital are the most useful in creating better educational opportunities for Mexican American students. This qualitative study used a narrative inquiry design to gather data from the participants. This design allowed for the gathering of "authentic voices" of Mexican American students and those who work with them. This study validates the important role of social and cultural capital acquired at home and at school, and the needed access to quality resources and meaningful relationships. The finding and limitations reviewed in this study bring awareness to the need for social and cultural capital resources to improve social outcomes for low-income Hispanic students. Based on

the data findings, recommendations are made for school counselors and Hispanic students.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate my dissertation to Karolina Mora (June 21, 1987– May 5, 2014), a very close friend who lost her life in a tragic accident. She

represents the qualities I value in life: humanitarian, adventurous, and free spirited. I want to honor her by remembering her as I conclude my doctoral work.

Tables of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Chapter One

Introduction

As the impact of changing cultural and racial demographics becomes more apparent, so does the need for establishing educational norms in the 21st century that are just, equitable, and inclusive. According to Townley and Schmieder-Ramirez (2012), the diversity in student populations is growing due to the increased enrollment of students of color. Currently, California holds the largest public school population in the nation. Between the years 2001–2011, "the number of white students has declined by 17% and the number of African American students by 15%, while the number of Hispanic student population increased by 20%, Pacific Islander by 14%, and Asian students by 15%" (Townley & Schmieder-Ramirez, 2012, p. 36). As California's educational leaders consider the changing demographics, factors such as culture, ethnicity, language, poverty, race, and societal norms are critical components of educational discourse.

There continues to be a gap in educational attainment when different races or ethnic groups are compared. Hispanics graduate from high school at 63% and from college at 14%, which is significantly lower college rates than their Black peers at 20%, White peers at 30%, and Asian/ Pacific Islander peers at 52% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). More specifically, Mexican Americans, at 11%, have one of the lowest college attainment rates compared to other Hispanic ethnic groups in the nation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Hispanics are among one the fastest growing population but also represent the least engaged in education completion when compared to other ethnic groups. Applying the lens of Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) social reproduction theory of social and

cultural capital can elucidate the practice of education in guiding low-income Hispanic students.

Many parents of first-generation college-bound students have experienced challenges in assisting their children with college or career preparation. As Bryan, Holcomb-McCoy, Moore-Thomas, and Day-Vines (2009) have explained, families of color lack critical information to further their children's college aspirations and rely on institutional agents to provide them with college applications, information, and enabling options. Therefore, as implied in past research, social capital in the form of social networks and supportive relationships with quality resources demands further exploration in multicultural communities. Winkle-Wagner (2010) has explained that certain traditions or cultural habits are passed down from one family member to another, thus teaching children certain values or norms. Hispanic students are not reaching higher education at the same levels as other ethnic groups. Education values dominate culture, thus favoring certain traits or traditional groups (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). This study seeks to understand both social capital and cultural capital and its influence on Hispanic students, a nondominant group, to pursue higher education through student engagement.

The institutional agents often known for taking on responsibility in the secondary level for guiding students are school counselors. Because school counselors are usually in the frontlines of registering students, guiding course selection, and preparing them to be college- and career-ready, they are in an ideal position to shepherd students toward useful knowledge that keeps students engaged in furthering their career preparation. Therefore, the intent of the current study was to understand social and cultural capital theories, in order to assist school counselors who work closely with low-income Mexican American

students aspiring to be the first in their families to attend a university. The data responses were analyzed through the lens of Bourdieu's full social reproduction theory for its social and cultural capital theoretical framework.

Background

School Counselors' Role in Creating Capital

Today's school counselors are vital members of the educational team in mentoring students toward opportunities and making students aware of their abilities for future growth (Carey, 2010; Carrell & Carrell, 2006; McGannon, Carey, & Dimmitt, 2005). School counselors provide many resources that positively influence student outcomes—such as student academic achievement, student engagement, reducing the achievement gap, improving school attendance and graduation rates, student behavior, and aiding postsecondary transitions (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Bryan et al., 2009; Carey, 2010; Carrell & Carrell, 2006; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; McGannon et al., 2005). School counselors have gone through a transformative change in the last decade in order to meet accountability for standards-based education (McGannon et al., 2005). Standards-based educational reform has led to the creation of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model, which delineates the expectations for school counselors to address student's personal/social, academic, and career success (ASCA, 2004). Dahir (2004) has suggested that, through accountability, the creation of national standards for school counselor programs has allowed school counselors to play an integral role in the recent education agenda for student achievement. In addition, the development of student standards has allowed the counseling profession to move beyond mental health training, into research, theory, and practice that addresses advocating for

students' achievement and being educational leaders (McGannon et al., 2005). This phenomenon has opened up more opportunities for school counseling professionals to act as leaders in addressing the achievement gaps and the inequalities that exist in schools.

House and Hayes (2002) have suggested that school counselors have influenced promoting equity for students of color—who traditionally have been the least served—by helping students gain access to more rigorous courses, college preparatory courses, tutoring, and academic enrichment opportunities. Few studies have specifically considered Bourdieu's social and cultural capital in relation to the school counselor, but the present study reinforces how providing students information or access to rigorous courses or college preparatory programs is also providing access to a form of social capital. Furthermore, school counselors that teach students and their families how to successfully manage the bureaucratic system by teaching them how to make formal requests in school offices—for information about such things as financial aid and additional academic support (House & Hayes, 2002)—offers an example of Bourdieu's cultural capital being transmitted to a nondominant group. These are all important reasons to consider school counselors in high school social and cultural capital agents. This study explores how Hispanics students utilize Bourdieu's aspects of social and cultural capital to achieve higher educational goals in the hope of replicating them with lower-achieving Hispanic students.

Defining Social Inequality, Cultural Capital, and Social Capital

To address inequities experienced by students of color, school counselors need to be part of social networks in which information and resources about college planning are being shared (Ahn, 2010; Farmer-Hinton, 2008). Often, students of color have difficulty

accessing information and resources from their own personal networks due to the lack of community and family college attainment—although there may very well be aspirations to attend college (Farmer-Hilton, 2008; Saunders & Serna, 2004). Therefore, using Bourdieu's cultural capital theory framework—along with the aspects of field, habitus, and social capital—can serve as an analytical tool to understand how social background impacts educational access (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). In this study, the principles of social capital and cultural capital were used in defining and interpreting the types of relationships and teachings school counselors share with their students. This relationship would ideally allow school counselors to embed students from minority groups in an exchange of resources and information—many of whom normally do not have access to networks with experience in realizing higher education attainment.

Social inequalities can be more closely examined through Bourdieu's full theory of social reproduction, which serves as an explanation of "how marginalized individuals continue to remain underserved, underrepresented, and generally disadvantaged" in educational research (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 83). Social reproduction explains how economic structures and institutions represent how domination is perpetuated and, ultimately, how inequalities are maintained in society (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). As seen in the literature, dominant culture is often represented by what knowledge, social skills, or cultural capital is valued and privileged in certain environments, causing marginalization to those who do not possess it (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Marginalized groups find their skills and knowledge unappreciated in particular settings, causing certain social conflicts and struggles that reinforce the dominant culture. This structure justifies the usefulness of understanding Bourdieu's full theoretical framework in the context of inequality through

social reproduction. Because educational environments usually reflect larger society, it is important to examine unequal access to resources, services, and support in schools through the cultural capital framework and its corresponding functions.

Little research has been conducted on the work of school counselors in relation to Bourdieu's cultural capital and social capital framework. Moreover, aspects of race, gender, and ethnicity in a diverse educational setting are often overlooked when studying only cultural capital. This oversight results in the undervaluing or confusion of interpretations of nondominant cultural capital in educational research, as most studies have focused on dominant White cultural capital (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). This dearth of research represents a problem for states such as California, which consistently records growth in its Hispanic student population. Hispanic students are often marginalized and perceived as deficient in cultural and social capital compared to holders of dominant cultural capital. Therefore, it is imperative for educational justice leaders to understand these theories in the context of a pruritic country (different cultures, incomes, ethnicities) and expand original theories and previous research to include aspects of Hispanic cultural capital and social capital.

Cultural Capital

Cultural Capital is a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, taste, preferences, norms, or traditions that act as a form of currency in social settings (Bourdieu, 1984). Involvement in certain cultural activities through education or family origins results in the possession of knowledge, skills, abilities, norms, preferences, or mannerisms that are basically habituated—and can grant social privilege, "acceptance, recognition, inclusion, or even social mobility" to some students over others (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 5). This

is why certain aspects of Bourdieu's theory—such as capital—act as symbolic currency that affect social mobility or social reward in particular fields. Furthermore, cultural capital is often associated with academic standards attributed to a particular class by the dominant group, leaving nondominant groups or the "otherized" to be regarded as not possessing sufficient high-status cultural capital, which thus limits social reward (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 29). In addition, administrators, teachers, school counselors, or any other member of the school system may reward students who demonstrate a certain transmission of the "right kind" of cultural capital from their family (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This bias may affect the student's educational trajectory—whether it is acted on unconsciously or not—as an educator's perceived notion of valuable cultural capital can calibrate the amount of attention or privilege certain students receive in school settings. The role of the school counselors allows them to be precisely positioned to advocate for all students and be change agents in making a difference in students by helping to even the playing field, especially when the valuable social capital students have is with their school counselor.

Social Capital

School counselors can make a significant impact on changing the "cultural mismatch" (Howard, 2010, p. 30) ideology in schools predominantly with students of color, by understanding the impact of cultural capital, particularly in diverse schools. In addition, school counselors can be key players as social capital for students of color. Social capital is having a connection to a network based on a group membership that serves as an enrichment of knowledge, support, and resources, such as the relationship between a student and counselor, which can contribute to their social welfare—

a connection that can later be rewarded or recognized in educational realms or other social settings (Bourdieu, 1986). In addition to informing students and providing resources about college and financial aid that can prepare students for college and career attainment, school counselors can assist students of color in developing their knowledge about what cultural norms, skills, and abilities are most highly rewarded in particular settings, such as high school and college. Blackburn (2010) has pointed out that those who do not contact school counselors are more likely to delay college or make unguided postsecondary choices. To help more students of color be successful, then, there needs to be a reshaping force that allows for growth in culturally relevant skills and knowledge that will be highly rewarding in their education and will, it is hoped, lead to better social outcomes. Figure 1 depicts the symbolic transaction between social and cultural capital in Bourdieu's theory, which results in social reproduction and ultimately influences social mobility from one generation to next. Bourdieu (1984) has explained less tangible but visible class-based inequalities present in society. The arrows demonstrate how certain knowledge and skills (culture) can be exchanged in a habitual or unconscious manner among people within a particular social setting (field). Bourdieu's full theory, as illustrated below, shows how certain social outcomes continue to be reproduced among certain social classes. The field (i.e., schools) is a structure or setting that gives social or cultural capital a value or allows its reproduction. The arrows below also demonstrate that certain traits of social and cultural capital can be exchanged among members with different valued capital, which means that exposure or connection to certain capital would produce certain social outcomes for different groups.

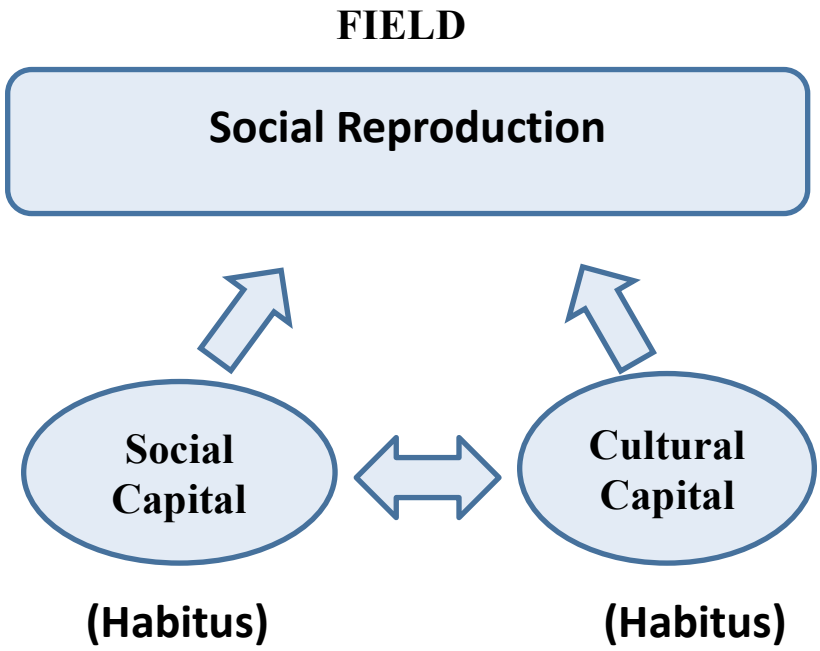


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework as depicted by Bourdieu's theory of Social and Cultural capital on Social Reproduction.

This dissertation applied Bourdieu's theory to understand how social and cultural capital influences Hispanic student engagement. The concepts of social capital through relationships with school counselors and other school agents are explored in Chapter 2. In addition to the review of literature, this study contributes to understandings of cultural capital and social capital valued in educational setting with a predominant Hispanic student population. The interviews provide insight about low-income Mexican decent students who are typically portrayed as having limited cultural capital and social capital.

Current Situation

There is an ongoing issue with the lack of understanding by educators, national leaders, and policy makers as to what a school counselor does to impact student educational outcomes (McGannon et al., 2005). This lack of understanding directly influences how local funding gets distributed to support counselors in schools. Although

school counselors are ideally positioned to make a difference as social and cultural capital agents to improve student outcomes, there continues to be scant recognition of their roles built into current education reform initiatives or local stakeholders. Therefore, part of the intent of this study was to examine the school counselor's role in social and cultural capital and its impact on different aspects of student engagement. One of the most important parts of this study was to provide voices to those who are often omitted from academic literature. The voices of the people in this study contributed to awareness of experienced struggles in educational institutes in the hope of enacting change and enriching the existing cultural and social habitus in schools.

In addition to the lack of understanding of school counselor's potential for educational justice leadership, the national budget crisis has made it very difficult for public schools to financially support programs—specifically school counseling—that provide social and cultural capital opportunities. Funding has often become part of the inequalities in educational institutions. As explained in the figure above, social systems will continue to perpetuate certain social outcomes unless structures and resources are in place to aid the reproduction of capital that is valued or rewarded in fields that create opportunities for advancement. Low-income students and students of color are highly concentrated in school districts that are financially disadvantaged when compared to funding in more affluent communities through Average Daily Attendance (ADA) (Henfield, Owens, & Moore, 2008), thus limiting support for and access to rich sources of social and cultural capital needed by students of color. Bryan et al. (2009) have indicated that students in large schools, low socioeconomic areas, and schools with fewer counselors were less likely to contact a school counselor for college information.

Limiting access to counselors perpetuates inequalities. The inequalities in school funding can also affect API scores, professional development, teacher quality, proficiency in subjects, and the number of high school graduates with University of California/California State University course requirement completion (Rodriguez, 2007). According to Bourdieu, middle class teachers and well-funded schools have high quotients of social and cultural currency. The deficits become glaring when considering current societal outcomes for individuals of color due to inequalities in education and communities. Inequality of resources represents an unjust public education system; therefore, this study considered a setting in which both the student population is predominantly Hispanic and resources may be similar to many schools with similar demographics found in Southern California. These similarities will be important in determining what structures of social and cultural capital are in place for students to achieve higher social outcomes through academic engagement.

Problem

Historically, Hispanics students have been the least represented in higher education institutions, although they continue to be among the fastest growing population in the nation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). According to Howard (2010), "The Latino population will triple in size over the next several decades and will account for most of the nation's population growth between 2005 and 2050" (p. 37). This study looks at various sources of social and cultural capital that can better assist students in pursuing higher education. Therefore, this research has considered Bourdieusian aspects of social and cultural capital in a particular *field* to explain that capital's impact on academic achievement for low-income students of Mexican American background. This research

was accomplished by investigating the unique perception of four school counselors, two administrators, three students, and three parents of an urban school district located in Southern California. Because school counselors hold an important position in assisting students who may need guidance or mentoring for graduating, helping explore college options, creating access to the application process, and finding careers, their perspectives regarding a students' social and cultural capital were critical for this research.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the following ways:

1. Provide qualitative data regarding professional development for the understanding of social and cultural capital opportunities, in efforts to enhance the services of school counselors who assist Hispanic/Latino students achieve higher educational goals;
2. Assist in making school counselors' time with students more effective through an understanding of social and cultural capital theories in diverse schools;
3. Provide more effective ways for educators to communicate with parents and students of color in urban schools regarding preparation for graduation, college, and careers choices;
4. Contribute to the understanding of a marginalized group through Bourdieu's theoretical framework in the context of an education setting and its impact on social reproduction;
5. Provide a voice to those students who have been voiceless in the academic literature and understand the experiences and recognize inequities; and

6. Stimulate further research that examines the role of different social and cultural capitals to address inequalities in diverse educational settings.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to examine the perceptions of administrators, school counselors, parents, and students regarding the influence of social and cultural capital on students' educational engagement. This research provided a unique perspective on marginalized first-generation working class Hispanic students who aspire to attend college, by examining the data through Bourdieu's theoretical framework of social and cultural capital and its influence on student engagement.

Research Questions

The current study was guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent does social and cultural capital influence student engagement as perceived by administrators, counselors, students, and parents in predominately Hispanic schools?
2. What common themes related to a social and cultural capital theoretical framework emerged when observing and listing to authentic voices of administrators, counselors, parents, and students?
3. Based on the study's findings of social and cultural capital, what recommendations can be made to contribute to the evolving leadership role of school counselors?
4. Based on the themes that emerged, what recommendations can be made for Latino Hispanic students who are economically marginalized to prepare them for college and careers after high school?

In 2004, Saunders and Serna found, “Hispanics are as likely as Whites to enroll in a 4-year college or university after adding measurements of social and cultural capital to control for gender, costs, benefits, financial recourses, and ability” (p.148). By listening to the voices of administrators, counselors, students, and parents in predominately Hispanic schools, the researcher was able to determine the roles of social and cultural capital on the achievement of first generation Hispanic students. Specifically, the participants in the current study revealed the different social capital and cultural capital utilized in their schools and their community to develop student engagement.

Question two prompted reflection on nondominant authentic voices that are often not heard in research that considers social and cultural capital as a theoretical framework. According to Winkle-Wagner (2010), “Educational institutions present an excellent location to understand the way cultural capital is reinforced, rewarded, and acquired,” but nondominant groups are often perceived as not obtaining the cultural capital that is needed to excel academically (p.29). The themes provided guidelines on how families and schools can assist first generation Hispanic students on their college and career preparation.

Questions three collected recommendations for school counselor who would like to have a transformative effect on students who are not reaching postsecondary education to further develop their social status. Question four gathered information for underprivileged Hispanic students whose parents did not attend college. The recommendations were based upon themes that emerged from the data and the findings.

Limitations

The following limitations of the study must be noted:

1. The study was restricted to the school district's two administrators, four school counselors, three students, and three parents of Mexican background.
2. The study was confined to the respondents' perceptions of their own experiences and assumptions. School counselors were asked to respond to both their perceptions about their own profession/work and their understanding of their students. Administrators were asked about their knowledge and understanding of a school counselor's work and the role of the school counselor with students of color.
3. The investigation was limited to the interpretation and analysis of 12 interviews, observations, and documents related to the participants.

The unique characteristics of the participating urban school district, located in a major metropolitan area in Southern California, can contribute to the knowledge of other school districts that have similar philosophies, student demographics, and family ethnic backgrounds; however, it may only be possible to apply aspects of the findings of this study to schools that are similar in educational background, family/community, and "fields." The study was limited to the participants' experiences, socioeconomic background, educational background, perspectives, and biases. The findings of the study were limited to the data collected from 12 participants at the time of the research. The researcher's own interpretation of the finding may also serve as a limitation of this study. In addition, biases regarding the school counselor's capital may be related to the unique

personalities of the specific counselors cited here, aspects that are nontransferrable from counselor to counselor.

Definition of Terms

The following terms used in this study were defined to provide and enhance the understanding of this research.

Academic Achievement: Academic achievement is measured through different academic requirement needed to meet college and career-ready goals.

Academic Success: Academic success is measured through different requirements needed to meet college and career-ready goals.

Administrators: Administrators are people who hold the role of principal and vice principle of secondary schools in grades 6–12.

American School Counselor Association (ASCA): ASCA is the professional organization for school counselors in America.

Counseling: Counseling is an interactive process between a school counselor and the student/s or parents of the student.

Cultural Capital: According to Bourdieu (1984), cultural capital is a class-based socialization of culturally relevant skills, abilities, tastes, preferences, or norms that act as a form of currency in social settings.

Educational Leader: An educational leader is any educator in the position to advocate for the student—such as principal, vice principal, teacher, counselors, and school/district personnel.

Field: "The field is the space in which cultural competence, or knowledge of particular taste, dispositions, or norms, is both produced and given a price…Cultural capital depends on the idea of field" (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p.7).

First Generation or First Generation Student: For this study, the phrase refers to a student who is the first to attend a college or university in his or her generation.

Habitus: The assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, and even language deeply embedded in the educational traditions, institutions, practices, and community. Habitus is the underlying principles that drive practice (Grenfell, 2012). They are often so ingrained (because they have been inherited) that "most of us are not even aware of them" (Shields, 2013, p. 49).

High School: High school is an educational institution that provides educational curriculum to students in 9th–12th grades.

Low-Socioeconomics Status (SES): Families who qualify for free or reduced-cost lunch by the federal program through the national school lunch program. This study will use low-income or working class to refer to this group of students or families.

Middle Schools: Middle schools are educational institutions that provide educational curriculum to students in 6th–8th grade.

Perception: A perception is an understanding or knowledge about an individual or group of people, based on previous experiences or assumptions.

School-Based Social Capital: School-based social capital is the social connections or social networks that are in schools that can be used to improve one's life outcome or social mobility (Lin, Cook, & Burt, 2001).

School Counselor or Counselor: A school counselor or counselor is a full-time school district employee who processes a California pupil personnel service credential and is authorized by the state of California to provide counseling to all students. For this study, school counselor and counselor will be used interchangeably and are meant to have the same definition.

Social Capital: Social capital is a social connection, network, or relationship in formal or informal settings that works as a form of capital in formal or informal settings by sharing quality resources, experiences, and social connections (Bourdieu, 1986).

Student Engagement: "Engagement is associated with positive academic outcomes, including achievement, and persistence in school" (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004, p. 87). Student engagement in this study is gauged by the following markers: enrollment in college prerequest courses, enrollment in advance placement or honor courses, graduation rate, grade point average, completion of financial aid/university application, and participation in college- and career-oriented activities. These markers are representative of academic engagement and aspiration to attend higher education. Finn and Zimmer (2012) have defined these markers as academic engagement, social engagement, cognitive engagement, and affective engagement.

Student/s of Color: For this study, a student of color is a student with a specific ethnic background such as Mexican—but thus category includes all parts of central/ south Latin America, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. For this study, the words Latino/a and Hispanic will be used interchangeably, as participants of the study may often conflate the two terms during their descriptions to mean same descent. All participants in this study were of Mexican decent and were born in America, that is they were Mexican-American.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters, a reference page, and appendixes. Chapter One introduces the study, with an overview of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, and the definition of terms. Chapter Two is a review of the literature related to cultural capital, social capital, and the significance of school counselors in educational outcomes. Chapter Three delineates the research design and methodology of the study, including disclosure of the kind of research, sample population, instrumentation, data collection, interpretation, and analysis of the data and study limitations. Chapter Four analyzes the findings of the study. Chapter Five contains the summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for action and further study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

The voices of school counselors who advocate for marginalized students are mostly absent from the critical social justice literature written about school counseling (McMahon, Singh, Urbano, & Haston, 2010); as a result, there is a greater need for the counselor to take on a transformative leadership role when advocating for multiculturally and economically disenfranchised students. Conducting research that addresses issues experienced by culturally marginalized groups can help fill in the gaps in the literature for those students whose voices are still not heard. Considering their role in administration, student's schoolwork, and—most importantly— Student's families, counselors are in a unique position to fully embrace their potential as educational justice leaders. According to Winkle-Wagner (2010), "Educational institutions present an excellent location to understand the way cultural capital is reinforced, rewarded, and acquired," as students who acquire "forms of cultural capital valued by the dominant groups will be more highly rewarded" (pp. 17–18). By understanding different theoretical perspectives and theoretical frameworks, school counselors can contribute to the construction of knowledge and empower other educational leaders to assist marginalized individuals—specifically students of color—in having better social outcomes. Furthermore, if counselors engage with ideas of social and cultural capital, they can more critically understand the situations in their own work with relation to improving the outcomes of diverse student groups. This review of literature, then, elucidates, analyzes, and critically reflects on the work and studies of other scholars and researchers that are relevant to

students of color and school counselors, through a lens of a social and cultural capital that analyzes student achievement.

Overcoming the Reproduction of Inequality

Inequalities and injustices are so ingrained in certain institutions and in wider society that educational leaders must critically reflect on the changes they can enact within their schools and communities. As school counselor-leaders become transformative through a social justice lens, they begin to search for real changes in attitudes, norms, perspectives, and education institutions. According to Shields (2013), we must attend to the social and cultural contexts within education in order to address the issues of oppressed and marginalized groups in wider society. Therefore, this study has a strong focus on cultural and social capital and is concerned specifically with school counselors' ability to recognize the quantity of this capital possessed by students of color. These students may not be perceived as having certain of the networks or abilities needed to participate in the process of social mobility, which starts in formal schooling. The perpetuation of privilege often means maintaining the status quo, obscuring the reality that inappropriate power or entitlement is granted to some at the expense of others, thus creating uneven playing fields (Shields, 2013). According to the work of Sauder and Serna (2004), access to social and cultural capital through social connection in first-generation Hispanic students can begin to disrupt social reproduction, while creating a college attainment mentality. Bourdieu's work on social reproduction allows a discussion of social and racial inequalities where access to acquiring and learning how to use certain forms of capital for social mobility are limited for certain groups, especially those economically disenfranchised students (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The issue is that

certain cultures are perceived as having more value than those with people of color, and many interpretations of Bourdieu's cultural capital are associated with a White middle class standard in the U.S. (Yosso, 2005). America perpetuates the marginalization or exclusion of the culture of diverse students by having an educational curriculum that clearly values a dominant White majority (Shields, 2013). For educational leaders, the goal must be to learn not to make assumptions about forms of capital possessed and inherited by privileged groups, so that we can initiate change that is just, inclusive, and equitable.

The Ishimaru (2013) study offers an example of principals who have attempted to share leadership by *bonding* social capital and *bridging* social capital, taken from the conceptual framework of social capital theory. "*Bonding* social capital" (Ishimaru, 2013, p. 9) was demonstrated by low-income Latino families engaged in relationships of mutual trust and support in order to work together toward a common goal of change to support their children's success. In efforts to better navigate the school system, the educators and low-income families engaged in "*bridging* social capital" (p. 9)—creating a network built on trust, reciprocity, support, and a common interest—thus affording the Latino parents access to institutional knowledge and resources (Ishimaru, 2013). This study resembled aspects of Bourdieu's theory on capital, whereby certain connections, resources, or knowledge can be transmitted to act as symbolic currency that can contribute to better social outcomes or educational reward (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Ishimaru (2013) has contributed to the theory of social capital by demonstrating that educators who have valuable social capital are able to bridge between themselves and the students and parents that need it. This development is not normally shown in the

literature. Ishimaru (2013) examined this dynamic when looking at the relationship between educators and low-income Latino parents, particularly attending to how the relationship allowed for the sharing of knowledge and resources that supports the common goal of student success. This literature review explains how individuals with different backgrounds often face unequal power dynamics, and how bonding and bridging allows educational leaders to serve and access their own social capital to influence a system. This study seeks to make clear that people of color are able to network with those in their own community by working together to achieve a shared goal or vision, thus demonstrating the transferability of social capital between individuals. In doing so, people show the potential for social change. Because so few studies have looked into this dynamic, this study offers an opportunity to develop an understanding of how and when this takes place.

Bridging social capital in relation to counselors and students of color from low-income neighborhoods creates a relationship of trust with access to institutional knowledge and resources. All students deserve access and support in order to succeed academically and to be prepared for a successful adulthood in this global society. Students should also have the opportunity to select from a wide array of substantial postsecondary options, including college, upon graduation (House & Hayes, 2002). School counselors can initiate meaningful and equitable change by simply providing valuable information. As such, they can promote equity and a socially just education for all students by building strong relationships, examining inequalities, and acknowledging differences in one's lived experience—especially for those currently not being adequately served (Shields, 2004). Working in this way will allow school counselors to empower

other educators to critically reflect upon their assumptions about race, ethnicity, class, and culture. To help those who have traditionally been the least served by schools to become better prepared for the future, there must be recognition of the valuable knowledge that students of color bring to school through their lived experiences (Shields, 2004).

Pitfalls of Deficit Thinking

The literature has multiple references to the deficit thinking found in educational institutions today (Howard, 2010; Shields, 2004/2013). Deficit thinking is usually associated with a group of students that is often marginalized in schools due to the perception that it has limited abilities. Such thinking is often consistent with assigning blame for poor performance based on generalizations about the cognitive deficits of a group of people (Howard, 2010). This response can result in a habitual belief that this performance is not an isolated problem (with this particular person) but one with all of the people in this class (Shields, 2004). Furthermore, this perception can lead to the kind of stereotype that can affect a student's academic achievement. According to Howard (2010), this belief system is a remnant from the eugenics movement that allowed certain individuals to subscribe to the idea that White European people were superior in almost every way to other populations. "As a result, students who struggled academically are frequently viewed as cognitively, culturally, or linguistically deficient" (Howard, 2010, p. 30). This prejudice can reinforce a negative spiral for students of color and students from low-income backgrounds, and worsen the existing achievement gap for students in these groups. Taken together, these beliefs pose an existential threat to students—who should be receiving proactive measures that focus on their potential, instead of their deficits.

Deficit thinking ties into the problem of not being able to recognize the values in cultures, ethnicities, and languages, and overlooks how different social classes enrich society. In a multicultural society, such as the one in the United States, it is important for critical educational leaders to raise awareness about the importance of the experiences and knowledge that students outside the dominant culture bring to the classroom. Shields (2013) has explained how color-blindness basically rejects the true differences—such as ethnicity, culture, and language—of individuals whose skin color is not white. This phenomenon has come to be known as "color-blind racism" (Shields, 2013). Even as critical social justice leaders recognize the ongoing discrimination and prejudice experienced by people of color, and reject deficit-base thinking, some educators still subscribe to a deficit-based paradigm that seeks to replace their students' cultural knowledge and communication with one that is more consistent with dominant cultural norms (Valencia, 1997). Therefore, school counselors need to engage in self-reflection, in order not to mirror these distorted biases about academic strengths or abilities when advising students of color about their future career or about how they may fit into wider society.

Refinements to Bourdieu's Framework

Cultural capital is a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, taste, preferences, norms, or traditions that act as a form of currency in social settings (Bourdieu, 1984). The current study strives to advance the culture capital theory by developing knowledge about the valuable cultural capital that students of color bring to multicultural environments—a concept that is underrepresented in both literature and practice. Winkle-Wagner (2010) has used the term "otherized" cultural capital to identify the inclusion of nondominant,

marginalized, or underrepresented populations that were not conceptualized in earlier work based on Bourdieu's culture capital theory. She goes on to say that the "Bourdieucian framework" has been often associated with "dominant, high status, or elite group of society" in earlier research, which made the analysis only applicable to certain homogeneous groups (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 29). Lareau and Weininger (2003) argued for a different use of Bourdieu's cultural capital after critically assessing several studies that explicitly measured for "highbrow" (p. 568) cultural participation. These scholars have found this approach inadequate as a measure for educational settings because it focuses mainly on competence and knowledge of high-status culture. Lareau and Weininger (2003) concluded by suggesting: "Cultural capital in school setting must identify the particular expectations–both formal and, especially, informal–by means of which school personnel appraise students" (p. 588). Their article provides an important premise for this search as it looks at working class Hispanic students and families.

When considering the pluralistic nature of US society, a weakness becomes evident in applying Bourdieu's theory because class markers in this country are often diffuse and partially invisible. The traditions and habitus are shared broadly, across ethnic and class lines, so that it can be difficult to understand a person's socio-economic status from appearances alone. People in the United States idealize the middle class and want to be seen as part of it—and so we seem to have a shared culture. A famous example is that of Warren Buffet, a billionaire who continues to live in the same small house he always has (Kane, 2012). These facets of life in the United States are not comparable to the situation in France when Bourdieu formulated his theory, and so additional work is required when applying his theories to the fluid class situation in the United States.

Bourdieu's concern with the growth of a middle class (*petit bourgeoisie*) considers economic power structures that were resistant to change because of inherited and unequal privileges that perpetuated and maintained inequality between two class groups (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). As this paradigm translates to the U.S., we see a place where education is compulsory and every student—theoretically—has equal access to an education, where—if they work hard and attend a university—the belief is that they will succeed and be financially better off than the last generation. The way we differentiate ourselves, then, becomes race and ethnicity, whereby a White dominant culture has a sense of entitlement and power in the United States, thus marginalizing other races and ethnicities. For this reason, researchers who use Bourdieu's theory in the future should consider these important differences when studying social reproduction in the pluralistic United States.

The Effects of Habitus and Field in Education

School counselors can be key players in the management of social capital for students of color (Ahn, 2010). By understanding the impact of cultural capital particularly in diverse schools, school counselors can have a significant impact on demystifying the use of the "cultural mismatch" (Howard, 2010, p. 30) model in schools with predominantly students of color. Those connected to a network that serves as a source of knowledge and resources—such as the relationship between a student and counselor—can contribute to the former's social welfare. This connection can be a form of social capital transmitted as symbolic capital from counselor to student—symbolic capital that can then be rewarded or recognized in educational realms or other social settings (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu's cultural capital theory framework—along with the aspects of field, habitus and social capital—helps us explicate how social background impacts

educational access (Winkle-Wagner, 2010), which is why it is imperative that educational justice leaders understand this theory more fully and its effect on education in the United States.

A study by Saunders and Serna (2004) documented the experience of first-generation Latino students who enrolled in a 4-year university immediately after graduating from high school. The findings indicated that "Hispanics are as likely as Whites to enroll in a 4-year college or university after adding measurements of social and cultural capital to control for gender, costs, benefits, financial recourses, and ability" (p.148). Furthermore, Hispanics with limited access to such capital benefit from developing relationships with teachers, counselors, and other school mentors, increasing the sort of capital that will be beneficial for college enrollment (Saunders & Serna, 2004). These social connections to capital have shown to be a specific factor in college enrollment for Hispanic high school students with otherwise limited networks of capital.

In the United States, the abilities, norms, taste, and skills associated with White culture are often privileged in educational institutions, thus marginalizing people of color (Yosso, 2005). Shields (2013) explained that the distinctions based on this system of privilege are not necessarily misconceptions or prejudice, but are part of a deficit-thinking entrenched in the "*habitus* of schooling" in the U.S. (p. 123). Unfortunately, educators' assumptions about ability perpetuates injustices and inequities (Shields, 2013), making it impossible for certain students to succeed in some Bourdieucian *fields*. Different fields have different rules, placing different values on different traits depending on the circumstances in which a person finds him- or herself (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Such variability can be seen in the fact that school counselors place certain students in

rewarded groups—or in a certain academic track that leads to a particular set of postsecondary options—because they possess the set of skills that is rewarded in academia. This *sort-first* mentality—trying to judge people's inherent potential before they have received proper training—is opposed to one in which you help a person acquire the skills needed to function in the different fields. Such deficit-reinforcing practices then become part of a school's *habitus* in such a way that educators cease being aware of them, and may not realize that they are giving preference to a particular student, or set of students (Shields, 2013; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Different ethnic groups often have unique and valuable traditions, abilities, and forms of expressing culture that are not even recognized in the context of the dominant culture's norms (Yosso, 2005). This oversight can result in a mismatch between what educators look for and what students bring, leading to students of color being devalued.

Using a critical pedagogical lens, Yosso (2005) challenged dominant culture ideologies and previous interpretations of cultural capital. Critical race theory (CRT) allows researchers to shift from a deficit view of students of color and their communities to a place that recognizes their cultural value. Critical race theory (CRT), as defined by Gloria Ladson-Billings (2009), is a way of exploring race and racism in society by giving voice to individuals of color or marginalized groups that have been silenced. This work offers an example of how critical leadership can be applied to give "voice to some of the most marginalized voices in leadership and academia to date" (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012, p.107). Traditional assumptions about cultural capital exclude socially disadvantaged groups, and often times people of color's cultural capital goes unrecognized and unacknowledged (Yosso, 2005). Yosso's (2005) research provides six

forms of capital—what she calls "*community culture wealth*" (p. 70)—which offers an alternative to the assumption that people of color do not posses the social and cultural capital required for social mobility. Through the use of CRT, Yosso (2005) has challenged institutionalized dominant ideologies of White privilege while recognizing and validating the experiences of people of color. Yosso (2005) demonstrated the array of cultural knowledge, language, skills, abilities, and networks used and acquired by people of color, which is part of her critique on past deficit theorizing and the omission of voices from people of color in research.

Schools are often not designed to include groups outside the dominant group, thus sending a "subtle and implicit message that [other groups] really do not belong" (Shields, 2013, p. 49). Shields (2013) has proceeded to argue that many educators are conditioned and socialized to understand the status quo as the way to succeed. Shields (2013) explained that cultural marginalization in educational institutions is part of prevailing inequalities in the traditional curriculum of the dominant White majority. McLaren (2003) has argued that knowledge is socially constructed by the dominant culture, and that we construct knowledge through interaction with "culture, context, custom, and historical specificity" (p.63). Knowing that culturally marginalized groups simply possess *different forms* of cultural capital may prove beneficial for communities often seen as having limited access to greater social mobility and academic success. Taking these facets together, we may begin to see ways in which more inclusive values can begin to take precedence.

In the meantime, a narrative study by Martinez and Ulanoff (2013) of Latino parents and teachers in the Boyle Heights/East Los Angeles community demonstrated the

creation of social and cultural capital through community networks. This study explored two community organizations that create "social and cultural capital to increase student achievement and promote social justice" (Martinez & Ulanoff, 2013, p.196). They achieved this goal through their ability both to encourage culturally responsive teachings and to recognize familial assets—instead of focusing on the deficits.

Previously, Yosso's (2005) research argued that cultural capital is not only inherited or obtained by the White middle class, but also can be accumulated through specific forms of skills and abilities valued by the dominant group in society. Kose (2007) has encouraged educators to engage in professional learning that "builds cultural capital, [and] provokes dispositions committed to providing students with the language, knowledge, and skills necessary to thrive in the dominant culture of school in society, and [equips them] with cultural capital to access the culture of power" (p. 292). In addition, to reward a student for having the "right" dominant cultural capital traits, educational leaders have the responsibility to first learn and be critical about the diverse cultural capital that already exists among those groups. Thus, we form a new *habitus* that deconstructs deficit thinking and that is now more relevant as the country becomes more culturally diverse. This process is what Shields (2013) has referred to as the "deconstruction of existing knowledge frameworks and co-constructing of new ones" (p.116) in order to not perpetuate inequalities and injustices. New thoughts and actions such as these can provoke new standards of justice at a global level, as educators begin to learn about these students in a more critical and intentional way.

Critical Leadership and Consciousness-Raising

Educational leadership with a critical and social justice perspective is "raising the critical consciousness of students" (Shields, 2013, p. 2), for example by being aware of their social or cultural capital and how it is valued at school. Educators must understand dominant social and cultural capital in order to engage in critical reflection, analysis, and action. The current study sought to have schools with predominantly Hispanic populations reflect on how they improve student outcomes through critical reflection on social and cultural capital.

Shields's idea is grounded in Paulo Freire's (1970) concept of *conscientization*, a translation for his term *conscientização*. *Conscientization* allows for critical reflection and empowerment of students through relationships—relationships that seek to understand the students' background, lived experiences, and social realities (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003). According to their analysis of first generation Hispanic students, Saunder and Serna (2004) demonstrated that critical consciousness of capital gained through certain networks fostered relationships and opened access to information that could assist in the process of college attainment. Educational leaders, such as school counselors, are in an ideal position to advocate for students, build relationships, and empower students to reach higher educational levels and opportunities through social and cultural capital consciousness.

In this study, the principles of social capital will define and interpret the types of relationships school counselors have with their students. This relationship would ideally allow school counselors to facilitate an exchange of resources and information for students in marginalized groups who normally do not have access to networks with

experience in realizing college attainment. The research of Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzallez (1992) confirmed that a teacher's desire to learn about his or her student's domestic situation can be useful in the classroom and lead to more meaningful relationships. They explained that these experiences—or "funds of knowledge"—often surpass the abilities and skills that can be identified in a scholastic context. Funds of knowledge are the social networks that families connect in order to acquire skills and labor abilities that help them succeed in a socially and economically challenging environment (Moll et al., 1992). Because these networks can be adaptive and may involve multiple people outside the family's home supporting the needs of the student (Moll et al., 1992), there is no reason why this model could not apply to school counselors. The research concludes that a student's multiple spheres of knowledge can be used to bridge home to school, especially when educators have a better understanding of the student's multicultural experiences at home.

Shields (2013) explained how, in culturally diverse communities, educational leaders are responsible for addressing aspects of culture, exclusion, and marginalization through discussions—ones that require moral courage and an activist-style approach. Earlier, Shields (2010) investigated how two educational leaders used transformative leadership to question justice and democracy in addressing inequalities and unjust practices in their schools. The two participants in the study began "by challenging [the] inappropriate uses of power and privilege that create or perpetuate inequality and injustice" (Shields, 2010, p. 564). Multiple interviews and observations confirmed that social justice, deep democracy, and leadership for equity constructed their framework. To create real change in their schools, they had to deconstruct existing knowledge and be

willing to take risks— which meant balancing comments or taking criticism for being the first school district to try new things (Shields, 2010).

As students of low-income families progress through their schooling and need guidance and advice, their parents may become increasingly limited in their capacity to provide informational support that will assist their children in overcoming educational barriers (Bryan et al., 2009). School counselors as transformative leaders have the potential to alter school programs, creating access to classes that will allow knowledge and skills to be shared with a more diverse population. Their assistance with the college admissions process can provide the strong network and social capital that is currently a limited resource for students of color who are first generation college-bound (Bryan et al., 2009). This type of connection would ideally allow school counselors to provide an exchange of resources and information to many students in marginalized groups who normally do not have access to networks with experience in realizing college attainment. Ultimately, it would provide students of color the same vital information used for social mobility in dominant society.

Although different ethnic groups have rich skills, educators do not make their best attempt to use these forms of capital as scaffolding to connect these particular skills to those needed in formal education settings. Likewise, often educators and members of our society are not aware that these forms have value as well as the potential to engage students and contribute to their economic potential in a dominant society. Similarly, some students lose their parents' language in the process of assimilating. For example, a study by Flores, Ojeda, Huang, Gee, and Lee (2004) found that Mexican American students who lived in a rural community and acculturated to Anglo culture were more likely to

have higher levels of educational goals than students with lower levels of Anglo acculturation. In addition, being bilingual is often seen as a deficit, because a lot of public schooling reinforces English-only curriculum; thus, after a short period of time, students of color end up English-only as well. Macedo (1997) has characterized this phenomenon as robbing the student from the opportunity to develop his or her voice, to critically think, reflect, and cultivate his or her culture and history for "a positive sense of self-worth" (p.279).

As mentioned previously, the number of languages spoken and the number of students who are English learners in California have increased. At least 57 languages are spoken in California, and the Spanish language is the most prevalent language other than English, with 85% of the English learning population speaking it (Townley & Schmieder-Ramirez, 2012). Moll et al. (1992) found that a child's ability to use the English language to mediate between the family and the outside world functions as an asset in Spanish-speaking working class households. However, Yosso (2005) expressed a belief that this linguistic capital in children of color is not valued or used in schooling—which means a good opportunity for a socially conscious educator is being lost because "they arrive at school with multiple language and communication skills" (p. 78). California has the potential to serve as a very rich source of linguistic wealth, which critical leaders can utilize, finding ways to connect it to social capital at a global level.

According to Santamaria and Santamaria (2012), determining whether a conversation needs to be initiated to correct false assumptions or erroneous stereotypes is important when applying critical leadership. The authors have demonstrated that there are opportunities to use a critical lens to support marginalized students by talking about these

issues in everyday social settings. This possibility is valuable because current educators who have certain social and cultural capital may not be aware of how to relate to, value, or assist students with different access to social and cultural capital. Being able to have these courageous conversations at schools may create new opportunities for students to feel more engaged and connected to their teachers. In addition, getting students who have been culturally and economically disenfranchised in dominant society ready to succeed in colleges requires an application of transformative leadership that intentionally addresses social justice and educational equity (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012). The challenge is to be able to engage both boldly and tactfully, as there is a risk of either losing the leadership position or of being assimilated too much into the status quo.

As Bryan et al. (2009) have revealed, families of color that lack the critical information to further their college aspirations rely on institutional agents to provide college applications, information, and enabling options. The institutional agents often known for taking on responsibility in academic guidance at the secondary level are school counselors. Because school counselors are usually at the frontlines of registering students, guiding course selection, and preparing them to be college- and career-ready, they are in an ideal position to shepherd students toward resourceful knowledge. Critical leadership shows the important role the school counselor can take in effectively advising students of color by helping them navigate unique inequalities and recognizing the abilities and skills each student brings.

Social Justice Barriers for Educational Counseling Services

School counselors have been conspicuously absent from educational reform reports and are often viewed as peripheral to the main function of schooling

and academic achievement (Stone & Clark, 2001). Through the Race to the Top Program, President Obama's Blueprint for Educational Reform (2010) revealed the need to adopt standards intended to prepare students for colleges and careers—but there is no mention of school counselors being among the professionals who provide those services even though they are fully qualified and trained in such domains (Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2011). Their article further explains that school counselors are not being regarded as key career and college professionals in the new reforms, which may be due to the phenomenon of high student-to-counselor ratios or that of school counselors having too many noncounseling-related responsibilities that do not directly address student engagement or achievement data. Such findings have suggested that, with so many distractions, counselors are greatly limited in fulfilling their leadership roles. The limitations has resulted in counselors struggling at the periphery of educational leadership, as well as a greater need for the counselor's voice in demonstrating his or her efforts and desire to work toward common goals.

Historically, the student-to-school counselor ratio has remained high in California, even as other states in the nation have been able to maintain lower student-to-school counselor ratios comparatively speaking. Evidence that school counselors influence student engagement has had a profound effect in ensuring that more school counseling positions are in existence today, although the evidence shows a more pronounced effect with respect to student-to-school counselor ratios. The ideal 250:1 student-to-counselor ratio is recognized by the United States Department of Education and the Department of Public Instruction as the ideal number to ensure that students have adequate access to counselors' services. Unfortunately, with a national average of 457:1

(American Counseling Association [ACA], 2011; College Board, 2011), the United States is far from reaching the recommended ratio, as it is nearly double the recommended amount. According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), only four states (Louisiana, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Wyoming) have reached compliance with the American Counseling Association's (ACA) recommended ratio of 250:1 (Beach, 2010). Many states fall far below the required amount, but states such as Arizona, California, Minnesota, and Utah are the worst offenders (College Board, 2011; NCES, 2010). The ratios contribute to national average trends in student-to-school counseling between 1998 and 2009. In 2009–2010, California reported having a student-to-counselor ratio of 810:1 (NCES, 2010), or more than three times the recommended amount. Large caseloads put school counselors in a difficult position to provide adequate support for every student.

Although many publications demonstrate that the national average is slowly heading in the right direction, student-to-school counselor ratios remain very high for the majority of the states (ACA, 2011; Barstow, Campbell, & Lum, 2009; Beach, 2010; College Board, 2011). Contributing to this phenomenon is the continued lack of awareness about what school counselors' programs are doing to address achievement gaps in the current push for educational success in different ethnic groups (McGannon et al., 2005). According to McGannon et al. (2005), a review of over 15 studies "indicate[d] that in schools with more fully implemented [counseling] programs students reported earning higher grades, having better relationships with teachers, [and] feeling greater satisfaction with school…[;] high school students reported that career and college information was accessible"(p. 9). Today's school counselors are vital members of the

education team, providing many resources that influence positive student outcomes, such as aiding college transitions, student achievement, student engagement, reducing the achievement gap, improving school attendance and graduation rates, and improving student behavior (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Bryan et al., 2009; Carey, 2010; Carrell & Carrell, 2006; Lapan et al., 1997; McGannon et al., 2005). Therefore, greater utilization of their expertise would go far to address inequities and achievement gaps.

Although all students should have equal access to quality education regardless of race, culture, or income status, inequalities exist in education. The inequalities in school funding can affect testing scores, professional development, teacher quality, proficiency in subjects, and even rates of University of California/California State University course completion (Rodriguez, 2007), which means that access to rich social and cultural capital is needed to provide better opportunities for students who need them most. Blackburn (2010) has stated that, "students who are poorly counseled in high school are more likely to delay college and make questionable higher education choices" (Par. 4). Also, Bryan et al. (2009) indicated that students in large schools, low socioeconomic areas, or in schools with fewer counselors were less likely to contact a school counselor for college information. Limiting support services—such as those of school counselors—mean more social capital and cultural capital access are needed to prepare students to reach higher educational goals. The literature has indicated a significant and adverse effect on students who do not seek school counselors, as they are more likely to delay college or make unguided postsecondary choices (Blackburn, 2010). The nation's trend of a school counselor's time spent on college admissions planning dropped from 38.8% in 2006 to 26.0% in 2009 (College Board, 2011). School counselors in higher poverty schools and

higher minority demographics were more likely to have noncounseling responsibilities or clerical work, which prevented them from having time to provide adequate college information to all students (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Bryan et al., 2009). Bryan et al. (2009) concluded from the results that students in schools with lower student-to-school counselor ratios are more likely to contact school counselors for assistance with the college choice process. As policymakers focus on college and career readiness, they must understand how high student-to-school counseling ratios and budget cuts have an effect on school counseling effectiveness and student engagement.

Types of Student Engagement

The relationship between student engagement and positive educational outcomes (such as maintaining a certain grade point average, graduating from high school, and entering a postsecondary institution) are all indicators for measuring levels of student engagement. Bingham and Okagaki (2012) have looked at how the quality of relationships a minority student has with teachers, peers, family members, and friends influences his or her engagement in school. They found that the relation between engagement and school achievement is a complex one for ethnic minority students. The findings also showed that ethnic and culture membership was an important factor for minority students in valuing and engaging in school (Bingham & Okagaki, 2012). In addition, teacher relationships were the crucial component in the minority student's engagement or disengagement. Bingham and Okagaki (2013) also found that minority students received cues from their parents based on their parents' academic expectations for them. The higher the value parents placed on education, the better quality of engagement the student had both to school and in choosing supportive friends that also

value education (Bingham & Okagaki, 2012). These findings reflect the primacy of students' relationships in shaping their attitudes to education and, ultimately, their level of engagement.

Finn and Zimmer's (2012) *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement* points to distinct types of student engagement, which they categorize as academic engagement, social engagement, cognitive engagement, and affective engagement. For example, academically engaged students demonstrate a high level of execution in class assignments. They tend to thrive in the institutional part of school. Socially engaged students tend to participate in school and in extracurricular activities, as well as to interact actively with teachers and peers. They tend to thrive in the social aspects of school. Cognitively engaged students tend to use "other cognitive strategies to guide their learning" (p.103) by using higher levels of cognitive learning. They enjoy school for the learning. Lastly, affective engagement "is a level of emotional response characterized by feelings of involvement in school as a place and set of activities worth pursuing" (Finn & Zimmer, 2012, p.103). Affectively engaged student tend to value school *if they have a sense of belonging.* They feel that the staff and others appreciate their presence. This type of engagement is very important for students who may or may not be marginalized and feel unwelcome in a school environment. Figure 2 shows the types of engagement found in schools, along with the distinct behaviors associated with each type of engagement.

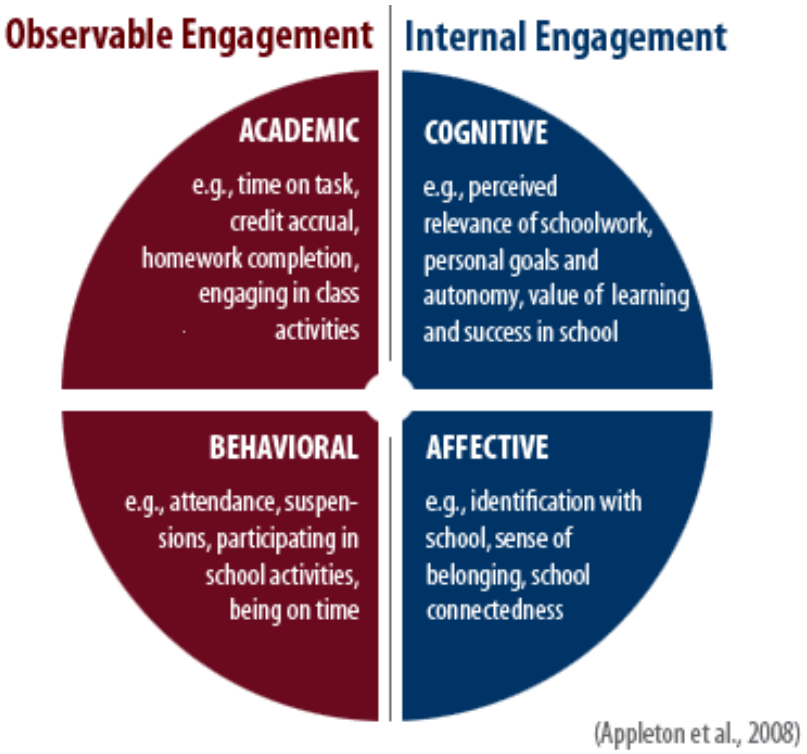


Figure 2. Student Engagement by Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong 2008.

Conclusion

Given the unique position of school counselors—in that they have daily interactions and the opportunity to build relationships with staff, students and students' families in a way that no other staff member has—there is tremendous potential for their work to positively transform the process of education in their communities. For those attempting to do so, this review has provided the opportunity to make school counselors and educators aware of the themes, terms, and barriers related to enacting positive social change. These include factors both internal and external. Central to these concerns are aspects of Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, which includes an understanding of how habitus, field, social capital, and cultural capital in education interact and the role they play in reproducing social inequalities; as well as the refinements of the theory, which include the transferability of such capital to people of color in marginalized

groups, and recognition of the existing cultural capital that such groups have on their own—apart from dominant culture.

Likewise, counselors seeking to implement a social justice leadership program must be aware of the risk of deficit-based thinking, of becoming acclimated to the status quo, and of the possibility to raise consciousness. Some ways of doing so are by having courageous conversations, attempting conscientization, connecting funds of knowledge, practicing self-reflection, and seeking to empower others through relationships. When working with people, we must remain ever aware of the negative influence of privilege and power.

By applying critical educational leadership skills, counselors will begin to earn the attention of other practitioners—researchers and policymakers—as well as contribute to the growth of critical reflection in the general public, in concerned parents, and in the most important stakeholders of all: the children themselves.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

Chapter Three describes the research methodology and procedures used to examine factors concerning social and cultural capital and their influence on student achievement and engagement as perceived by counselors and administrators of students of color in urban schools. After the purpose statement and research questions, this chapter is divided as follows: a description of the research design, the sample and population, instrumentation, data collection procedures, analytical tools, and the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with a short summary of the methodology and how it leads into the analysis of the data collected.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to examine the perceptions of administrators, school counselors, parents, and students regarding the influence of social and cultural capital on students' educational engagement. This research provided a unique perspective on marginalized first-generation working class Hispanic students who aspire to attend college, by examining the data through Bourdieu's theoretical framework of social and cultural capital and its influence on student engagement.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does social and cultural capital influence student engagement as perceived by administrators, counselors, students, and parents in predominately Hispanic schools?

2. What common themes related to a social and cultural capital theoretical framework emerged when observing and listing to authentic voices of administrators, counselors, parents, and students?

3. Based on the study's findings of social and cultural capital, what recommendations can be made to contribute to the evolving leadership role of school counselors?

4. Based on the themes that emerged, what recommendations can be made for Latino Hispanic students who are economically marginalized to prepare them for college and careers after high school?

Research Design

The narrative inquiry method (Chase, 2005, 2011; Clandinin & Connelly, 1990 and 2006; Creswell, 2013) allowed the researcher to analyze the participants' written and oral stories about their lives and told experiences. Data were gathered through face-to-face interviews, observations, documented descriptors of the environment, and personal journals or *personal narratives* (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2006). Open-ended questions were answered through interviews with participants and were the main form of data collection for this study. Interviewing is a reliable way to narrate participants' own lived experiences in qualitative studies (Chase, 2005, 2011). Therefore, the dynamic relationship between the researcher and the interviewer is very important during the interview, analysis, and even the writing process (Chase, 2005). By treating the interviewee as the narrator during the interview and during the interpretation process, the participant's "voice" is more authentic (Chase, 2005). Voice is the way the narrator communicates certain actions, events, and even uniqueness thorough expressed emotions,

thoughts, and interpretations of life and culture (Chase, 2005, 2011). The voice of the researcher is also important when it comes to interpreting the participants' particular biographical experience in order to convey a clear representation of the experience as understood by the participant (Chase, 2005). The researcher should encourage the participant to speak and be engaged during the interview. In many fields that have adopted narrative inquiry methodology, such strategies have supported research that seeks to understand cultural experiences, historical events, and social processes while acknowledging each individual circumstance in an organizational or social membership, setting, or location (Chase, 2005, 2011). This is why "narrative inquiry is increasingly used in studies of educational experience" as qualitative research (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p. 2).

After receiving IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval, this researcher sought permission from the superintendent and the governing board of the local school district to conduct the study. The researcher identified the participants based on criteria that met the scope of the study and invited them to be part of the study. A permission form was sent home through arrangements with a high school, and the researcher selected the appropriate participants. They signed a voluntary consent form before participating in the study. The purpose of the study was explained, and they were told that it was voluntary and that they could leave the project at any time.

Data Collection

The narrative inquiry procedures allowed the researcher to understand human experience through individual views of social location and history. The researcher prepared for the narrative interviews by readying questions broad enough to invite the

participants to tell their stories. During the interview process, the researcher must listen to the voices in each narrative (Chase, 2005). This researcher recorded and transcribed the interviews in a way that "capture[s] voices of individuals as they are" (Lichtman, 2006, p. 33). In doing so, it is important to write down field notes. Field notes are what Bogdan and Biklen (2003) have described as a "written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data" (p.111). (The interview questions used with the participants during the data collection are included in Appendixes G through J.)

Analysis Procedures

It is the hope of the researcher that theoretical concepts from the narrative inquiry can help form social change with the urgency of social justice (Chase, 2011). The silenced voices that attempt to understand the past experiences of marginalized groups are often referred to as *testimonios* due to their relation to the voices of oppressed people who need urgent attention (Chase, 2011). This study intended to reveal the voices of the voiceless in academia. These voices are ones that many critical race theorists would argue are entrenched in a social reality of inequalities (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 2006). Therefore, through the use of narrative inquiry and a critical lens focused on authentic voices, educational leaders will be able to grow professionally in their ability to recognize and address the inequalities challenging students of color in dominant institutions.

After being collected through documents and transcriptions of the audiotape, data were organized, evaluated, and analyzed. The researcher identified "recurring themes and patterns" (Ochoa, 2000, p. 87) when evaluating the data. To identify common themes from the narratives or responses, the researcher read and reread the data several times, as

did the research advisor or research assistant from the same program in order to concretely agree upon prevalent themes. Finally, the researcher triangulated the data from interviews (administrators, students, parents, and counselors) on the same topics and questions. This measure was useful in understanding different perceptions of the same issues (Perez & McDonough, 2008). Then the researcher drew connections between the narratives and the themes in order to determine answers to the research questions.

Role of the Researcher

A researcher and analyzer must interpret the identity or voices constructed by the participant. These stories may reveal a broader purpose, such as the concepts of growth, culture, and society. According to Lichtman (2006), "[T]he researcher plays a pivotal role; it is through his or her eyes and ears that data are collected, information is gathered, settings are viewed, and realities are constructed" (p.12). In addition, collecting and gathering data require security regarding where the data are examined and where the participant responses are kept. Data were kept in a locked file cabinet and the researcher was the sole possessor of the personal information.

Researcher's Personal Perspective

In this project, there were many overlapping circumstances between the researcher and the participants. On one hand, her life mirrored the lives of the students as an Hispanic female who was the first in her family to graduate from college. On the other hand, her work reflects years of experience working as a school counselor, mirroring the role of the school staff interviewed. The researcher was aware of the experiences of Hispanic students not only from being around them, but also from having lived the experience first hand. Going back to the community to help such students as a school

counselor anchored her experience further. She conducted the research while studying educational justice leadership at the doctoral level in Southern California. It is inescapable that issues of race, class, gender, and culture are directly addressed in this work, and that emphasis would be given to issues of inequalities and injustices. The coursework in such a doctoral program has given the researcher a better lens through which to view the counseling profession and the realities and differing quality of service that students receive—as well as the inequalities in dire need of correction. In addition, the influence of critical race theory (CRT), as defined by Gloria Ladson-Billings (2009), offers an important form of exploring race and racism in society by giving voice to individuals of color or marginalized groups that have been silenced. A CRT lens through storytelling allows researchers to recognize experiences and knowledge from silenced voices through qualitative research. It can be said that the principles of critical pedagogy are committed to supporting the "empowerment of culturally marginalized and economically disenfranchised students" through the development of participation, unique voices, and social action (Darder et al., 2003, pp. 9–10). Therefore, it can be said that CRT influenced the researcher as well as the intent of this research. Finally, the researcher conducted the research in the very school district she attended for much of her schooling—from grade school to high school graduation. During the time of this study, the researcher was neither employed nor had been employed in the district the study was conducted. The researcher's premise was that many educators do not fully understand the impact or the role of the school counselor in student education attainment; therefore the interviews were conducted with school staff who were former or current counselors.

Setting

The high schools selected for this study were chosen based on the unique racial and ethnic background of the students and families who attended the schools. Both of the high schools were considered primarily Hispanic-serving schools because the majority (>70% and 89%) of the students were Hispanic (DataQuest, 2013). The "enrollment by ethnicity" data found at the California Department of Education Department website claimed that the district had over 78% Hispanic/Latino students enrolled during the 2012–2013 academic year. In the 10 years previous to the study, the enrollment of Hispanic/Latino students had consistently gone up from 64%, to where it was at the time of the study, at 78% (DataQuest, 2013). The district had a history of serving predominantly Hispanic families whose children would be the first to attend college in their family. In addition, approximately 71% of students were eligible for the free or reduced-priced lunch program in the first high school and 84% in the second high school (DataQuest, 2013).

The school district was located in a metropolitan area in Southern California, where the principal researcher was raised and where she attended schools in the district for the majority of her education. The urban city itself was surrounded by several options for colleges, with public and private universities and community colleges that students could attend after high school. Figures 3 and 4, below, represent information from the city demographics where the school district was located. The data were gathered from U.S Census, 2010.

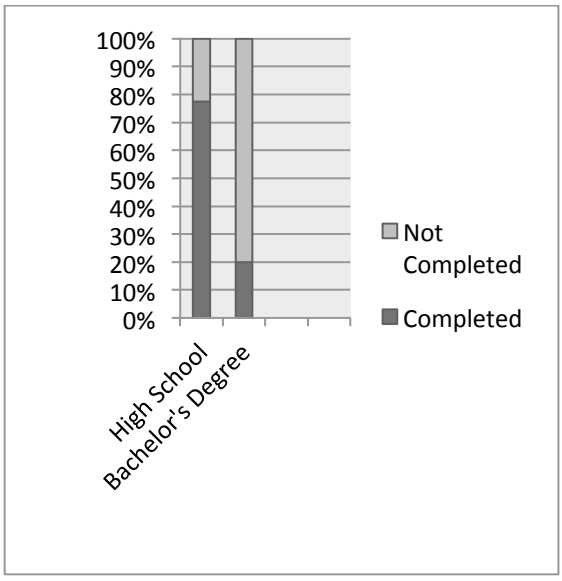


Figure 3. Level of education.

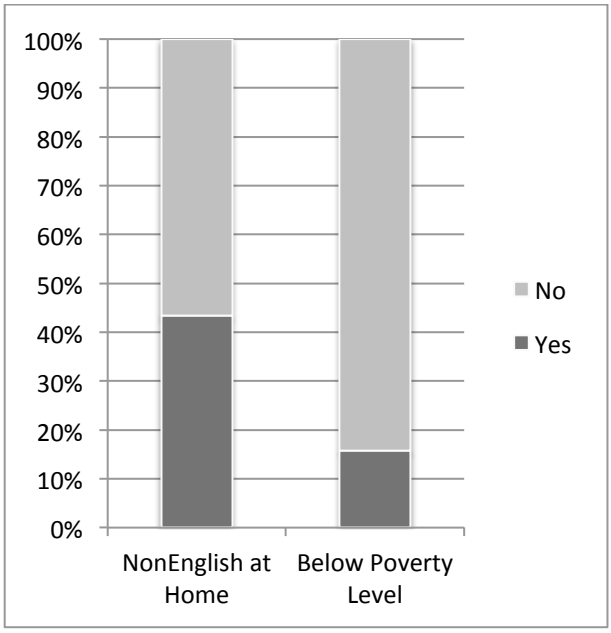


Figure 4. Language use and poverty level in the city.

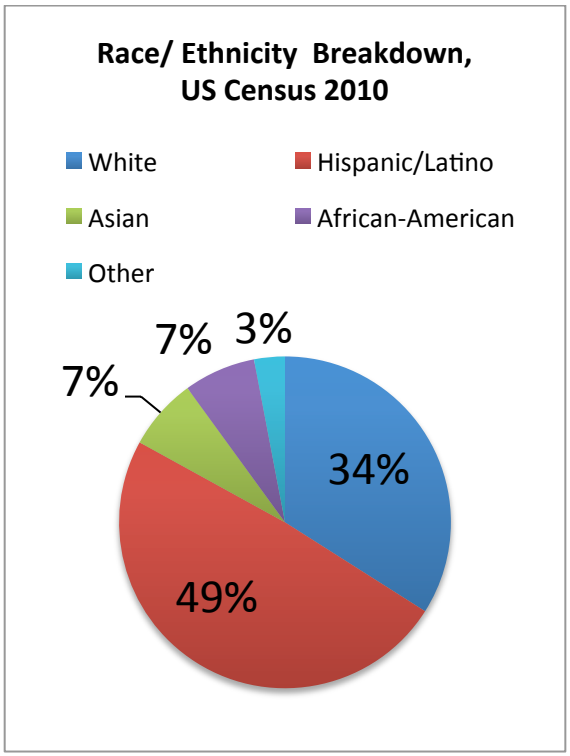


Figure 5. City's race/ethnicity population.

The figures represent a community that is majority Hispanic/Latino, but with a significant White population. Figure 4 shows that many of households do not speak English at home. Finally, a significant number of the community does not have a 4-year university degree.

Participants

The qualitative participants were purposefully selected—they were all part of the same school district in a city in Southern California. Upon receiving permission from the superintendent and governing board of the local school district, the researcher identified and invited participants to be part of the study. Once a group of participants was identified as meeting the necessary criteria, they were asked for voluntary consent prior to participating in the study. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and provided a written form consent form signed by both parties and a parent (if applicable). She explained that their participation was voluntary, and they had the right to leave the

project at any time. Consent forms were translated into Spanish for Spanish-speaking participants to insure there was no "deception" (Creswell, 2013, p. 173) in this study.

Because it is often very difficult to generalize the results of a small-sample qualitative study to other large groups, it is in the interest of being able to learn something unique about a group that made the selection of the participants very specific, thus resulting in "purposeful sampling" (Creswell, 2013, p. 154). Firstly, the selection included two female and one male Mexican American students and two female and one male Mexican-immigrant parents. They were working-class, and their children participated in a free or reduced-priced school lunch program.

Secondly, the selection for counselors included two White female and two Latina female counselors. The selection for administrators included one Black male and one White female with experience in school counseling prior to becoming administrators. All of the district employees ranged from middle to upper class, as the salary for their position can range from $89,000 to 99,000 for counselors and from $91,000 to 120,000 for administrators per year. All educators who participated in this study had been part of the district for several years, and their experience ranged from 8 to 20 years. Because the ethnic population in terms of composition had not shifted dramatically in this range of time, the staff had interacted predominantly with Hispanic students for the majority of their careers.

Table 1:

Basic Participant Data

Participants*	***Ethnicity***	***Gender***	***College Degree***
Administrator 1	African American	Male	Doctorate
Administrator 2	Caucasian	Female	Masters
Counselor 1	Caucasian	Female	Masters
Counselor 2	Hispanic Caucasian	Female	Masters
Counselor 3	Caucasian	Female	Masters
Counselor 4	Mexican American	Female	Masters
Miranda	Mexican American	Female	High school student
Javier	Mexican American	Male	High school student
Alejandra	Mexican American	Female	High school student
Gloria	Mexican	Female	no degree-Parent
Maria	Mexican	Female	no degree-Parent
Manuel	Mexican	Male	no degree-Parent

***** *Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant to protect his or her identity.*

Instrumentation

The inquiry in this qualitative research was composed of observations, interview data, and public school data. The open-ended questions used in the interview process were designed by a focus group of doctoral students alongside the dissertation chair of this study. The advisor was a professor at the University of Redlands who has worked with other doctoral students that used a thematic format. The thematic group looked at similar literature and composed research questioned specific to the unanswered literature.

They determined that the interview questions were broad enough to fit a thematic purpose and, at the same time, could be used with different types of participants to gather meaningful and sufficient data to answer a variety of research questions related to similar theories. In addition, variations of the questions used in this study had been used in other studies with other doctoral students to broaden understanding of the thematic topics of social cultural capital, social class, and funds of knowledge. The advisor of this study chaired these other studies, and so the questions had been validated with over 100 people in past research.

Narrative inquiry was an excellent method for capturing the details of the life experience or stories of the individuals in this population. This qualitative study used 10 standard open-ended questions, as well as probing questions, to retrieve data in a way that would allow participants to tell their stories. The researcher developed a specific interview protocol to access the experiences, self-reflections, and awareness levels of administrators, counselors, students, and parents. She interviewed the participants in order to collect different perspectives about the same issues. The methodology used for the qualitative data enabled the researcher to conduct a narrative inquiry that directly addressed the research questions. She triangulated the data of interview and focus group data from four sources (administrators, counselors, parents, and students) on the same topics and questions (Perez & McDonough, 2008). To validate the information contained in this study, the primary investigator utilized various validation techniques in the analysis of the data. The first set that was taken was to insure purposeful selection. The interviewed students and families had had interaction with interviewed members of the school. The researcher asked them questions that allowed them to express their unique

perspectives. Also, once the themes were formulated, several debriefing sessions took place with another doctoral candidate researcher and the doctoral professor advising this study to analyze the data alongside the principal researcher in order to agree on the related themes and results.

Assumptions

It is fair to assume that, in many public schools, students come into contact with a much smaller number of counselors in their educational career than with other types of educational agents, such as teachers. The assumption is that their impressions of school counselors can be skewed by this limited experience. Moreover, the students—in answering the interview questions—may be overly generalizing based on a small sample size from their own limited contact with school counselors. Nevertheless, all of the statements from the participants will be assumed to be truthful. The researcher had never worked with any of the students and families that were intervened in the study and did not work for the school district in which the study was conducted.

Research has typically demonstrated that the majority of the school counselors are of a White, middle class background, and therefore do not share the cultural, ethnic, and economic background as minority students. The researcher assumed that most students had had counselors that were not of the same race as them, and therefore that this difference might limit the school counselors' understanding of the students' social and cultural capital as well as of their struggles and daily lives. As seen in the city's demographic figures above, it is fair to assume that Hispanic students have had abundant interaction with what theorists calls "the dominant culture."

Reflections and Limitations

A significant limitation for many qualitative studies comes with having a smaller sample size of participants than is normally used when collecting data. Although it is important to point out that qualitative studies are able to elucidate the felt experience of students—as compared to the raw statistical and numerical representations found in quantitative studies—these two realms of knowledge and representation are able to enhance each other in order to arrive at a more complete conclusion when determining the results. Another limitation is that the results might not be generalized to the situation found in other states or cities that have different demographics and cultural circumstances. Lastly, the perceptions, lived experiences, and possible biases are limited to the 12 people interviewed. The participants had unique ethnic backgrounds, educational levels, and income levels, all of which are reflected in what they have to say.

Summary

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to examine the perceptions of school counselors, administrators, students, and parents regarding the influence of social and cultural capital on students' educational engagement. This research provides a unique perspective on marginalized first-generation Hispanic students who aspire to attend college, by examining the data through Bourdieu's theoretical framework of social and cultural capital.

The methodology of narrative inquiry used for the qualitative study enabled the researcher to conduct interviews that elicited representations of the authentic voices of the participants. They described their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences about selective educational settings. The sociological concepts manifested in the participants' experience

were analyzed in order to answer the research questions. The collection of written experiences from the school counselors provided additional qualitative data from the open-ended questions.

Chapter Four

Findings

Introduction

The review of literature found that a working-class Hispanic household, in which an aspiring student is the first in his or her family to attend a 4-year university, faces limited access to the capital that is necessary to arrive and succeed at a college. Many of these studies show how imperative it is to seek relationships, resources, and social networks (Blackburn 2010; Bryan et al., 2009; Ishimaru, 2013; Saunders & Serna, 2004). These elements of social and cultural capital proved crucial to the findings for this study regarding student engagement. The findings of the current study support the assumption that school counselors are useful resources for assisting first-generation Mexican American students to improve their social capital and aspects dominant cultural capital. Most importantly, the study identifies elements of nondominant social and cultural capital that Mexican American students possess to keep them engaged. Finally, the study explains how these factors contribute to different aspects of engagement that keep them on track to becoming college- and career-ready.

The objectives of this current study were: (a) to understand the role of social and cultural capital and its influence on student engagement in predominately Hispanic schools; (b) to listen to the authentic voices of administrators, counselors, parents, and students, and to identify aspects of social and cultural capital through a qualitative method; (c) to advise school counselors about the implications based on the findings; (d) to make recommendations to economically marginalized Latino/Hispanic students in order to better prepare them for college or a career after high school.

This chapter consists of the following sections; data collection procedures, data analysis, introduction of the participants, common themes, data findings/emerging themes, and a conclusion.

Data Collection Procedures

Data came from these meetings and consists of 12 digitally recorded semistructured interviews. The interviews ranged from an average of 35 to 55 minutes in length. Additional data were comprised of home visits, school visits, observations, and public school data and records. The participants were two administrators, four counselors, three students, and three parents. The researcher invited a group of 11th and 12th grade high school students meeting the following criteria: (a) self-identified as Mexican American; (b) parents were working class and did not attend college; (c) were the first in their nuclear family to attend college; and (d) identified as being college-bound. College-bound students have the following characteristics: (a) ability to maintain a 3.0 or above grade point average (although the majority of the students interviewed surpassed 3.5); (b) are involved in abundant extracurricular activities (i.e., clubs, sports, college prep programs, or community service), and (c) are taking courses that meet the entrance requirements for a 4-year university. Very often, many of these courses involve Advance Placement (AP) and honor courses that allow the students to experience a more rigorous curriculum. This study used purposeful selection in identifying participants that met the guidelines described. It was very important to maintain consistency with the selection of the participants.

Data Analysis

This section explains the strategies used in analyzing the data. This description is consistent with Creswell's (2013) recommendation of analysis strategies by "preparing and organizing data for analysis, then reducing data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data into figures, tables, or a discussion" (p. 75). The process of data analysis for this study began with transcribing each of the 12 digitally recorded interviews, and later reading the transcription several times. The next step was to listen to the recordings while paying close attention to how each participant (i.e., administrator, counselor, parent, or student) answered a variation of the same question through each participant's unique perspective.

After that step, (a) the responses were analyzed to identify common codes through the different responses of each interview; (b) the coded transcriptions led to an understanding of recurring themes in the data; (c) the themes that were most relevant to the theoretical framework were used to answer the research questions; (d) the most accurate interpretations were found through debriefing with the dissertation chair and other doctoral students who were participating in the thematic dissertation, as well as by triangulating the responses of the participants.

"Triangulation" helps validate the thematic process, and is defined as the ability to use multiple data sets to corroborate the evidence, thus validating the researcher's findings (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). The different scale of participants (i.e., administrator, counselor, parents, and student) allowed for corroboration of the evidence from different perspectives.

Introducing the Participants

All of the interviews were conducted individually during the months of October and November 2013. The researcher told the participants not to discuss their participation with other potential participants. This avoided influencing other participants' answers and secured their identities. The following table represents the 12 individuals who were selected to participate in the study.

Table 2

List of Participants (by Pseudonyms, Ethnicity, and Gender)

Participants	***Ethnicity***	***Gender***
Administrator 1	African American	Male
Administrator 2	Caucasian	Female
Counselor 1	Caucasian	Female
Counselor 2	Hispanic Caucasian	Female
Counselor 3	Caucasian	Female
Counselor 4	Mexican American	Female
Miranda (Student)	Mexican American	Female
Javier (Student)	Mexican American	Male
Alejandra (Student)	Mexican American	Female
Gloria (Parent)	Mexican	Female
Maria (Parent)	Mexican	Female
Manuel (Parent)	Mexican	Male

The Staff

The researcher interviewed the counselors first. Three of the counselor interviews were conducted in their school offices during the month of October. These educational professionals were in the midst of one of their busiest months, spending great quantities of time in writing scholarship letters, assisting students during what is crunch-time for many college applications, as well as planning the upcoming parent conferences. All of this work was on top of daily obligations, consisting of their student caseload sprinkled

with noncounseling assignments given to them by their administrators. They were very cautious and eager in trying to be helpful participants during the interview, making sure that all of the questions were answered fully. Stepping into their brightly colored offices—spaces meant to be as welcoming as possible—with some having large heaps of paper stacked every which way—some smaller—they seemed dedicated to their craft. After the researcher made several attempts to meet with the fourth counselor, the latter was accommodating enough to finally meet on one of her days off at a small café over Thanksgiving break. Meeting with this particular counselor in this nonstructured setting led to a longer, more flowing interview, rich in detail and content.

The researcher then interviewed the school administrators. Speaking with the two administrators individually, the researcher was able to easily find a time after school to meet with them, as they remained there for long hours tending to their responsibilities both on campus and at sporting events. Speaking with them in their respective offices, the researcher could sense the ambition driving them as leaders, answering questions in such a way as to show a wider understanding of the schools' operations and a certain degree of wisdom gained from years in the halls of education.

Lastly, the researcher interviewed the students and parents, all of who come from the same school as Counselors 1, 2 and 3.

The Students

The backgrounds of the three students fit the parameters mentioned previously; for these students, being first-generation college-bound Mexican American students was a struggle. These three particular students were the first to show interest in participating in the study during the open invitation period.

All three participants were in midst of their junior year in high school. Though the invitations were sent to students in their senior year as well, the seniors seemed to be more concerned with other matters related to their hectic final year. The three participants faced the initial period of the college application process—unlike the seniors, who were focused on meeting application deadlines during the month when the data was collected (October–November). Another commonality among the three participants was difficulty coordinating schedules to have the parents present—and so the three interviews were conducted with the student alone.

A different perspective was gained from hearing the students' voices and the ways they disagreed with the counselor and administrators. During the interview, the students freely opened up about their situations and experiences at school, as well as about their struggles and hopes.

Miranda. In this interview, Miranda expressed feeling a lot of pressure to do well in school, and felt anxiety from not having As or Bs on her recent class assignments. Her mother dropped her off for the interview because both of the parents spent a lot of time working, even during the Thanksgiving break, when I spoke to her. Miranda also mentioned that she was an only child and must work independently. She seemed bookish to the researcher, and was interested in doing the interview even though her parents couldn't participate. Miranda was interested in attending a 4-year university after high school because her parents always told her how important education is and how important it is to seize this opportunity. They had not had these opportunities themselves during their adolescence in Mexico (before meeting in California in their 20s) Miranda's

extracurricular activities included running cross-country and track, taking honors courses, and participating in clubs.

Javier. This young man invited me to interview him at his home after his parents granted him permission to participate in the study. His parents were unable to participate in the interview due to their demanding work schedules during the Thanksgiving break. When I arrived at the home, I was quickly approached by the student and realized that he was the one in charge of seeing after his younger siblings during his parents' absence. Javier was the oldest of three siblings. The student lived in a recent suburban development that was mostly homogenous: "You know, having all these neighbors that are mostly rich, but most of them are not Latinos, they are mostly Asian and Whites," as he described it. His parents had not finished high school, and at times seemed unable to pay the bills. Nonetheless, they always supported him in his quest for a college degree. The student mentioned that his father was from Mexico and his mother from Guatemala, though Javier was born in America. He was currently the vice president of a Latino support group, and participated in the AVID program and took AP courses.

Alejandra. This interview was arranged during the Thanksgiving break. For this participant, her mother's schedule allowed her mom to participate in the study as a parent. Both of the interviews took place the same day at the dining room table in their home. She was the oldest of four siblings (including one that was a newborn infant). Both parents were born in Mexico and were very supportive of her college ambitions. This young woman, an 11th-grade student, had participated in the AVID program since middle school. She was also involved in several sports, including track and cross-country, and she was taking AP classes and honors classes. She was very busy because she was also

involved with her church, which required a significant time investment but paid her in volunteer hours. She expressed that even though she often found all this work demanding, she realized the impact it was having on her educational trajectory. She felt that all of these facets were working together to strengthen her candidacy as the first person in her family to attend college.

The Parents

Parents had the most difficult time of all participants setting up a time to meet with the researcher due to their demanding work schedules. Alejandra was the only student whose parent (her mother) participated in the interview even though the mom worked. The other students' parents expressed that it was very difficult for them to participate in the study because of their work schedules.

Gloria. This participant invited me to her home to conduct the interview on a Sunday morning—the day she was most able to spend time with her family. Her house was nicely decorated with Christmas ornaments. As she was finished attending to her family, she expressed how happy she was that the school district had approved this study and that she would be part of it. She seemed eager to be of service in something that might improve the trajectory of many Latino students. She was born in Mexico and worked while raising four girls (including Alejandra) that attended the school district where the data were collected. She tried hard to be involved at school through her daughter's events and parent workshops despite working a lot.

Maria. Upon my arrival, I was greeted by Maria and asked if I needed anything to drink. As I sat at the dining table, I noticed the mom had recently gotten out of the shower and was cleaning up the kitchen. She appeared tired and explained that she had

worked a graveyard shift. She had just recently gotten home from it. Clearly, her day was not close to ending. This parent was a woman who was born in Mexico and was raising a family while maintaining a job. She went to parent conferences once in a while but had yet to meet her children's counselors.

Manuel. This participant was the husband of Maria and was very pleased to be part of the study. He felt that he often worked long hours and demonstrated his pride in being involved in something related to his child's education. Their home appeared very clean but not extravagant. He expressed that he was unable to attend many school functions due to his work schedule, though he looked pleased to be part of the study. Because he often worked, he found it helpful to have the interviewer come to his home.

The following figures illustrate the themes that emerged from the data analysis. These are the primary factors that provide evidence for the themes and how they relate to social and cultural capital theory. All the themes allow a deeper understanding and description of the lives that Hispanic students live, as well as of the factors that are most influential in their academic progress.

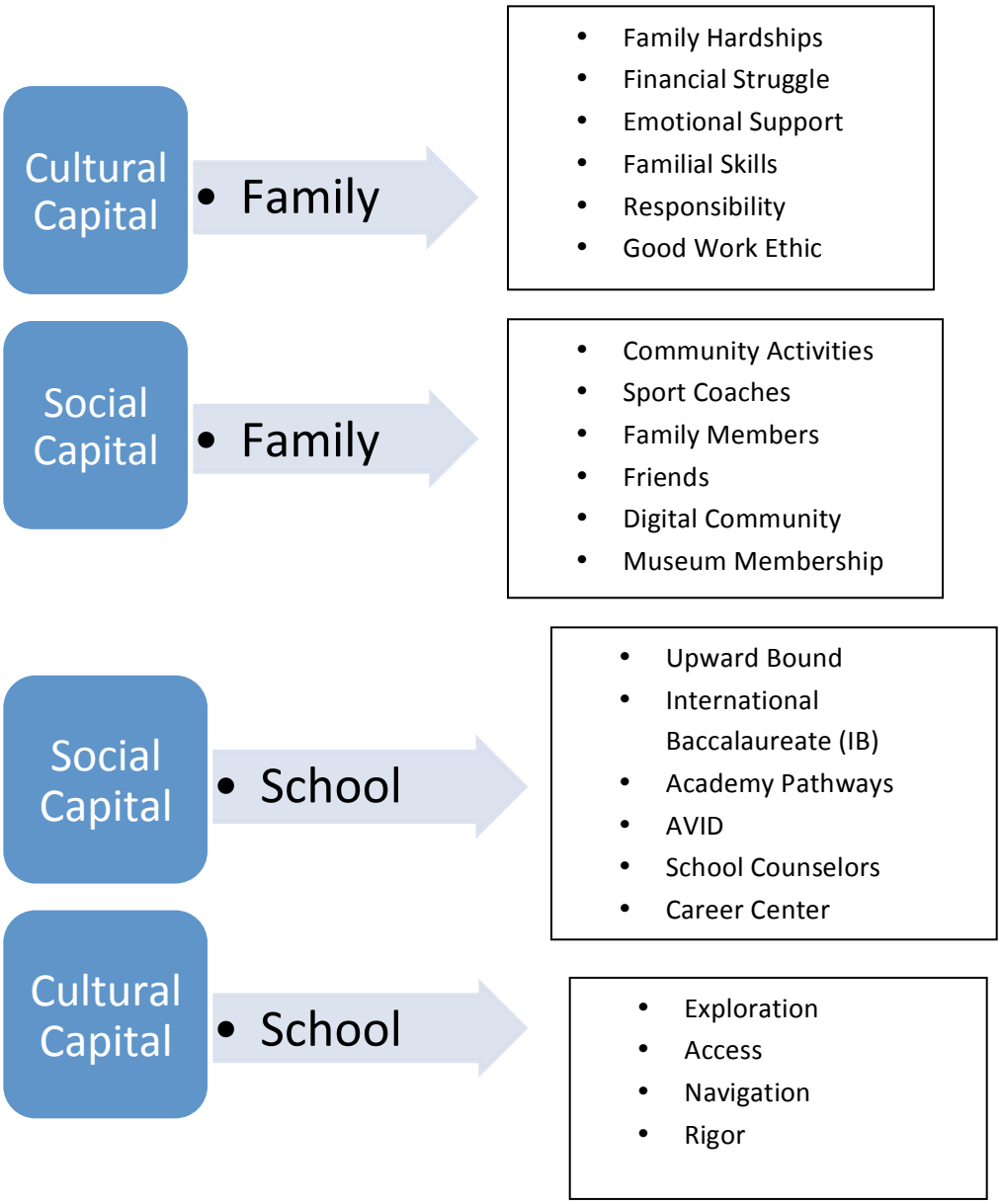


Figure 6: Research themes and primary influences support student engagement findings.

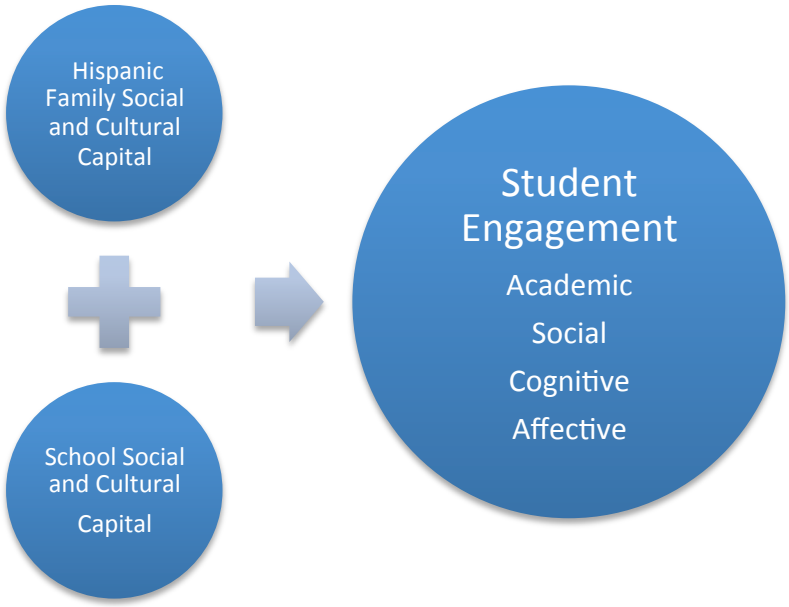


Figure 7. Influence of social and cultural capital on student engagement.

Data Findings: Emerging Themes

The authentic and valuable perceived experiences of each participant are a unique feature of reporting qualitative data. With narrative inquiry, it is important to broadcast the voices of Mexican American students that are not often heard. The research uses direct quotations from the participants' interviews when reporting the findings. This method will not only allow one to hear the authenticity of their voices, but also provide a descriptive narrative that facilitates the researcher's interpretation of the data. Conducting this narrative inquiry will allow further understanding of the influence of social and cultural capital in Mexican American student engagement. The researcher interpreted how specific networks and relationships in and out schools have influenced both the student's social and cultural capital.

Theme 1: Becoming Academically Engaged

Students who wish to be the first in their families to go to a university have specific lived experiences that contribute to their desire for a higher education. When listening to the authentic voices of Mexican American students, one can plainly see that their family and cultural backgrounds are large contributors to forming their goals. Administrators, counselors, and parents—to different extents—all recognize the support provided by families. The abilities and commitments that these students have in order to do well academically relate to the set of skills found in the theoretical framework under *family cultural capital.*

Family hardships. Three out of the three students participants explained that they would be the first in their family to attend a university with the hope of pursuing a higher degree. In addition, all three of the students were the oldest among their siblings. These students were able to imagine how hard it was for their parents to have not pursued a formal education in the United States. Miranda explained, "My parents didn't go to college but they always told me how important education is and how lucky it is to have it and how important it is." She proceeded to say that her father loved school when he lived in Mexico, but that he had to leave school to help his family financially. Most of the students revealed an understanding of the struggles their parents experienced in Mexico and how much more difficult it would be to get ahead in a different country.

Gloria felt that it was often up to the student to make a mature decision of what path he or she wanted to take. She said as much because many Mexican parents must work such long hours, and hope their children can make the connection between education level and quality of job. She believed some parents never finished high school

and have their children go on to college, but then there are also a lot of Latinos who end up dropping of high school. Gloria explained this situation in the following way:

> I, who don't have the English like they do, and who wasn't born here, and I who didn't have the availability of resources that they have. . . .They don't have the option of saying that 'they can't do it', because if they don't do it, it's because they don't want to.[1]

With so many resources and support available, she found it difficult to believe that students born in the United States don't succeed academically. A common theme among Mexican-born parents is that their hardships largely come from their lack of schooling, and they hope their children will learn from their difficult experiences. Gloria explained that her family was experiencing hardships because of this lack of resources—things that her daughters now have. Thus she believed that it is up to them to avail themselves of the advantages, possibilities, and knowledge before them.

An administrator interviewed in the study described how such hardships are often worse than any educator could imagine. She was aware that sometimes several families were living in the same student's home. She described the following:

> I would be lying to if I didn't say that those factors um definitely impact students if they're barely able to eat at home you know there's no electricity, whatever those things impacts students, the difference is, is that I believe every student can learn and I believe that every single kid um can graduate from High School . . . I have kids tell me, I have to study in the bathroom because it's so noisy and you know there are too many things going on that I don't have any privacy to study any other that in the bathroom and you know what that's unfortunate. (**Administrator 2)**

A counselor described her understanding of the struggles among Hispanic parents who felt they had to leave school and not pursue higher education. The counselor

[1] "Yo que no tengo el ingles, que ellas tienen, y que no naci aquí, y que no tenia las ofertas de recursos como ellas tienen…. no tienen opción de decir que no pueden, porque si no lo hacen es porque no quieren."

reflected on one of her cases, and said that the hardships parents endure are often undertaken to demonstrate to their children how valuable education is. At the same time, they are trying to make the sacrifice needed for them to be able to excel. In her words:

> I think that if the lower social economic, if they do not have a lot of money they can either just tell their kids "Look hurry and graduate we need to get working and contribute to the family" Or, or it can I heard many of my Hispanic parents say, **"I don't want you to live the way we live. I want you to do better**." So, so there is a split the parents push, you know, I want you do to better, more A's, I want you to go to college, I want you to have everything we didn't have. We worked hard so you don't have to do this." I had a mother last week say **"I work hard with my back, so you can work hard with your brain." (Counselor 1)**

The first parents above demonstrated how cultural patterns can also negatively impact student academic engagement. The second parents' lived experiences showed students how they would be better off changing the pattern and going to college. Manuel and Maria also communicated to their children that the hardships and sacrifices being made were so that their children might have a better future. The parents both expressed to their students the need to make better decisions about their future but through different mentoring styles. For example, Maria told them to not worry so much about material items, such as new name-brand clothing, because education is what is important. She explained her belief that education drives most people's success.

Financial struggle. All of the families and students interviewed were from the working class. The students expressed a desire to pursue education in order to not grow up struggling to pay bills. As Javier explained:

> Especially now with the economy it's really rough and I see my parents sometimes struggling to pay the bills, so that makes me want to get a good job, that way I don't have to worry about that, and if I ever have a family I don't have to worry about them, you know, being hungry or losing their health.

Miranda expressed that her father did the best he could to buy the supplies she needed for school:

> Well my dad always did the best he can to get me anything I need, like, if I need a calculator, or books or anything. He always tell me I will do the best I can, I can get you that. I feel like this, he always tells me that whatever you decided to do as long as you're happy with it. Money doesn't really matter as much as your moral values and how you grow up to be a person and what you decided to do that makes you happy.

As Miranda demonstrated, often in some Hispanic families, moral values, ethics, and manners are culturally taught as having great symbolic value. Miranda's father also told her

> how important it is to go to school, how it can kinda change your life and it's easier for you to live an easier life, you're not struggling as much with payments or paying bills. It's a much better for you.

This struggle showed them that a way out was by becoming educated and acquiring a college degree. Javier's parents were stuck in minimum wage job and helped him understand that he and his siblings needed to take advantage of the educational opportunities in America:

> So growing up they always told me, **"You need to go to college, you don't want to be like me, you don't want to have this job where you only get minimum wage,** you want to be able to support your family and not be worry about the bills and everything," so having a Latinos parents definitely, kinda, pushed me to go to college, and get the higher education so I don't have to worry about that, and then how like when I'm set and have a good job and then I can return the favor and help them pay the bills or something. **(Javier)**

Alejandra explained that many students lose interest in college because of the high cost. She said they felt that going to college might bring the family down and therefore they might not try so hard academically. She explained, "I think it's just, if you're not informed because there is a lot of help, there is a lot, you could even apply for

scholarships, you could ask people how they did it." Therefore, lacking this knowledge can limit a student's motivation to move ahead with college. As Javier explained. his cousin's lack of knowledge resulted in the cousins dropping out of high school. During the interview, Javier explained that his cousins wanted fast and easy money, and did not realize they may get stuck in low-paying jobs. This story offers an example of how financial hardships may have a negative effect on student engagement. This response, in turn, causes continued social reproduction, when one family's lack of knowledge affects the next generation.

Emotional support. The participants feel it was very important to give and receive emotional support and encouragement in order to be resilient in life despite the struggles that many families face. All of the students expressed that if it were not for their parents' support and encouragement, it would be very difficult to keep working toward their educational goals. All of the parents interviewed agreed that, as parents, they needed to be involved in their children's lives and be very supportive of their education. Gloria explained, in her own words,[2] "The kids need support. At the least, we can support them, and maybe, while we didn't have the academics in Mexico, we can support them emotionally." Another parent, Maria, agreed that emotional support was important because, as much as they worked to provide for them financially, emotional support was even more necessary to keep them motivated.

Miranda had a father who As she explained:

> **They always teach me to keep on going even if you feel like you can't do it.** Keep on going. My dad for example, whenever I go running (says) it whenever there's a hill. I always want to stop, I just want to stop, like I

[2] "Los hijos necesitan el apoyo. Por lo menos los podemos ir a apoyarlos, y a la mejor, cuando no tenemos en México lo académico, podemos apoyar emocionalmente."

> can't do it anymore. But, he always tell me No, no, no, you always can tell how good a person is going to be if they keep on going through the hard stuff. If you give up, anyone can do the easy stuff but if you keep on going through the hard stuff that's how you can tell you can go and you can keep on going. So he kinda, always supports me and encourages me to keep on going when I feel like I just can't do it. **(Miranda)**

Whenever he saw her reading, he made a point to compliment her and let her know how proud that made him. She expressed that she could face any adversity she may face with her father's support. Alejandra's family's emotional support influenced her to stay on track with her goals. As she put it, "My family influences it a lot. Like there is always been, I guess you can say planted in my head. 'You're going to college, you're going to do good in school."

All of the students who were interviewed saw the emotional support and encouragement from their family—specifically their parents—to be the common factor keeping them engaged and working toward their academic goals.

Familial skills. All of the Mexican American students that were interviewed were bilingual in the Spanish language and expressed how useful they found having this skill. Many of the students expressed that because they live in California with a large population of Hispanics, they saw speaking Spanish as an asset on their resume. Furthermore, they explained that learning more about Mexican culture and current events was an advantage when it came to academics in high school. As one of the students expressed, her culturally relevant skills could be used as currency in educational settings:

> Traveling as well, when I go to Mexico I feel like I learn more about what is happening in Mexico and what is happening with my family . . . sometimes knowing a lot more outside of school helps me academically. You need to know a lot more, most of the time my prompts in English require you to know a lot more about the world, what's happening around you, what's happening in your culture, what's happening in this and when

> you write your essay you can kinda write more stuff if you know more about your culture. **(Miranda)**

Alejandra felt that by being fluent in Spanish, she was able to take other college prep classes in place of the required foreign language class. Likewise, Miranda felt that her background helped her in other classes. When given an essay prompt, she recognized that her knowledge of Mexico gave her more material to use when writing. Based on Bourdieu's theoretical framework and definition of cultural capital, we see how cognitively engaged students find rewards in using their cultural knowledge in different fields.

A school counselor interviewed described her ability to recognize the cultural capital possessed by students at her school:

> I think there is something to learn about their traditions, at home, I hear about kids who, just the other day a young man he loves México. He loves working in the ranch with his grandfather. He knows how to do all these things with animals that I would never dream of doing. **(Counselor 1)**

Another counselor explained how important it is to have cultural sensitivity when interacting with different Hispanic families, because they may have diverse cultural references and attitudes. The counselor pointed out that understanding the parent's culture gives her insight as to why certain dates of the year would not work for school functions. She further explained that she finds it important to make references to cultural events or food chain stores that are found in the community in order to better connect with parents. This is also a way to let parents know that the school personnel have an understanding of their cultural capital and their experience, helping to gain credibility and build trust between the counselor and the family. As the counselor pointed out:

> Well, that's extremely important, and I think that's where I have the, the honor and the privilege of, you know, understanding the community, I am bilingual, I come from a background very similar to the background of a lot of those children that attend those school. And if you have that cultural insight, um, it it can help you once you're counseling the family and the student, um, someone that has not lived in poverty, um, someone that has not have had a family member incarcerated, someone who you know has not experienced neglect or abuse in the cultural context. Maybe it might be different, you know, in another ethnic community, but this specific community which is predominately Chicano/Latino, um, it really helps to have that insight when you're counseling them, especially because I studied abroad in Mexico, and so I understand, um, a lot of the experiences that the parents come with, and that really helped me when counseling them, and it really helps validating their frame of reference, and helping them move forward and embracing you know this new academic system. (**Counselor 4)**

Another student described how her culture is very important and how she wanted to show others that people of her ethnicity can achieve a higher education. She also enjoyed being part of groups that celebrate that desire and that support minority students who share the goal of attending a university:

> I think it might depend on the person how much it impacts them because a lot of people are like "my culture is super important" a lot of people feel like their culture is super important but I think it really depends on the person. For me it's a lot, impacts me a lot, because I know, I don't want, it's not that being American is bad but I want to have my roots, I don't know how to explain it but my cultural background is important, the culture part of it. **(Alejandra)**

Responsibility. All three students expressed an internal need to do very well academically, whether to prove to people that it can be done or that Latinos can start taking advantage of their educational opportunities. Javier showed cognitive engagement by comprehending complex ideas about educational opportunities that his parents did not have:

> You know, having all these neighbors that are mostly rich, but most of them are not Latinos, they are mostly Asian and Whites. So it makes me

> want to prove to them that not just them could be rich or just better off. It just makes me realize that now Latinos are just aren't really taking advantage of the situation. **(Javier)**

Javier's remark shows that social engagement is part of his education, understanding as he did that those who participate get ahead in life. Affective engagement is shown in Alejandra's quote:

> I think like at church my friends and the older ones are like "How are you doing in school?" you don't want to tell "Oh I'm doing really bad at school," it is also, kinda, to make yourself feel better a little better is to push yourself to be that good person, so if someone ask you "How are you doing in school?" you can be like "Great!" **(Alejandra)**

She showed a similar desire to push herself because of the value placed on school and the emotional response she evoked when she did well. The students' academic engagement stemmed from their desire to eventually occupy positions of power and wealth that their parents did not have. These remarks demonstrate how self-perceptions of living on the margin of society influences personal goals and levels of academic engagement.

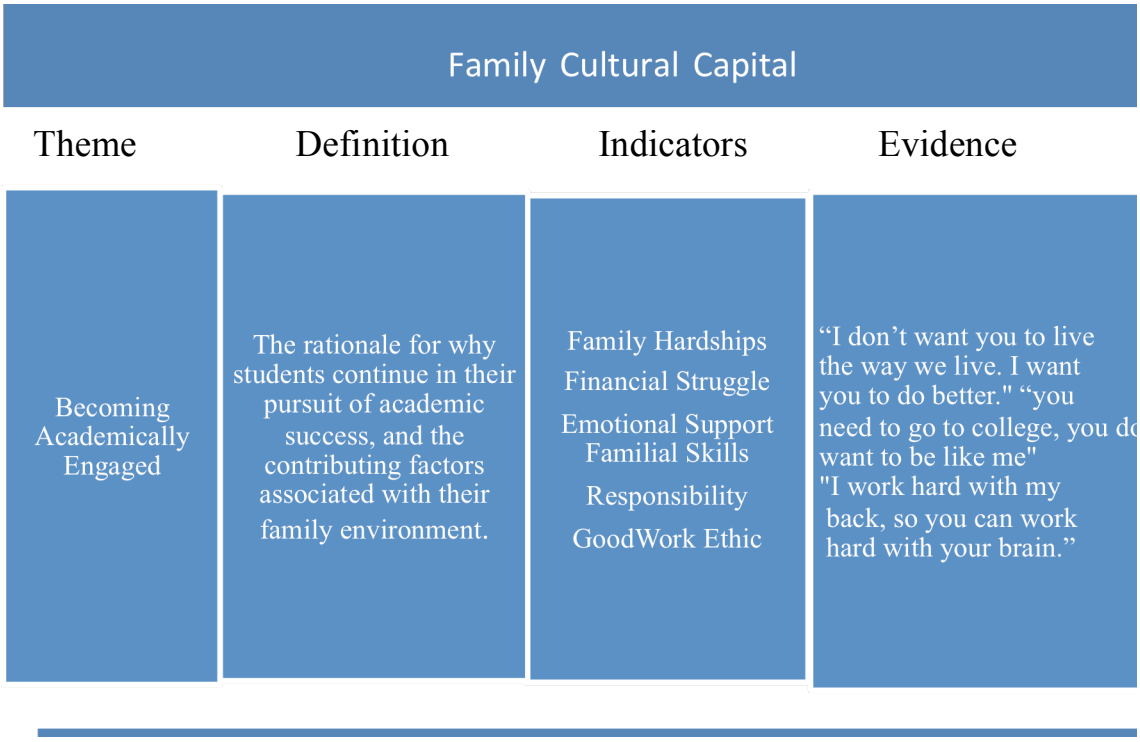
Good work ethic. All three students chose to spend most of their free time doing homework. They said that there was a lot of homework to be done in order to be successful. Because the students took advanced placement classes and honor classes, they often had a heavier workload than usual. When the students had some free time ,they chose to spend it either with family members, at church, or playing sports. The administrator described how she perceived the students in her school:

> What I like about this school site is the students here like I'd told you earlier, **they are, they will give you 150% if they know that you care, um, they are hard workers** they are scrappers, they will come any time of day or night to do something that is related to school, cause a lot of them school is their social time, many of our families don't have cars, a lot of these kids had never been to Disneyland, so any thing that we can do

> here, they are very appreciative of that, they want to get involved, so I'm very proud of the culture here, I'm very proud of the high level of pride and respect that it is here, um, I'm very proud of the accomplishments of our students. **(Administrator 2)**

The desire to work hard in school and stay engaged in their academic preparation issued from many of the factors presented above. Students who are children of of working-class Mexican parents often recognize that the missing link to their parents' opportunities for achieving social mobility has often been factors such as higher education, mastery of the English language, and the proper legal documentation. Cognitive engagement is demonstrated when students are willing to take all they have learned from their families—and from other available resources—to change their circumstances, whereas others find themselves in a situation of social reproduction that perpetuates the inequalities of their parents' generation. These behaviors show how student engagement improves when educators support the student's feelings of belonging.

Table 3: *Summary of Cultural Capital Found in Hispanic Families*



Perceived Limitations: Several counselors pointed out that certain family decisions were made without a full understanding of the impact they would have on the students. Such lack of cause-and-effect insight can imply a poor level of the cognitive engagement needed to guide different educational goals. This also demonstrates a need to have partnerships or networks and sources of educational information that can educate families in better decision-making. One of the Maria's parents commented that she believed that, if Hispanic parents were more involved in their child's educational process, then they would take the opportunity to attend meetings and make decisions that prioritize education. One counselor interpreted the issue in her own words:

> Unfortunately, the lack of self-motivation in the student, just the lack of information, because they might be the first one in the family to go on, and a lot of it has to do with fear, um, there's even fear within the family

> structure, because they're so dependent on the student, if the student leaves, who's going to help the family? Because that student works a part time job and they contribute. (**Counselor 4)**

It can be difficult to generalize and say that family hardships will always lead students to pursue higher education. As counselor 4 indicates, lack of information can have a negative influence on a student's engagement, especially if the family is depending on the student financially. A counselor explained that one solution is to show parents the relevance of perusing higher education in today's economy. "So sometimes we have to educate families, like we've done Parent Nights this year for every grade level, so they understand how important it is to graduate high school and go on for more education" (**Counselor 2)**

Social engagement in social capital activities can facilitate change and improve the trajectory of students. The counselors often tried to have the information presented both in Spanish and English due to the demographics at the school—something dependent on the accessibility of bilingual counselors. The next perceived limitation is how students and teachers often may not have a deep understanding of each other's social circumstances. According to Javier:

> I think it might, it's always nice to see a teacher that knows what you're going through and can relate to you and that can help, but I have teachers that are like white and of course they didn't or they aren't living what I lived through but it does not mean I get bad grades in their class. (**Javier)**

Hispanic students often perceive the educator's lack of knowledge about their cultural capital as not having interest in the students or in their jobs. This perception can have a negative impact on the student's affective engagement. Affectively engaged students feel included or have a sense of belong when they interact with teachers. This is how one student described the challenge:

> Some teachers are they're not as interested or they don't like to teach. Sometimes I hear teachers complain about their job. Like, umm they don't like it. So what did they take this job if they don't like to teach? I think sometimes they don't really care or put as much effort as they can into it. (**Miranda)**

A counselor explained that this misunderstanding takes place because teachers often do not have a wide understanding of the many family responsibilities Hispanic students have:

> They have these different life skills that sometimes the teachers do not understand, that they have to make time to help the parent go to court, that they have to make time to help the parent go to welfare, or that they have to make the time, or they have to miss school to go to the doctor because the parent can't understand, they have to go in there as the translator service, so it's like, "Why you miss? *Oh, I had to go to court*. Why?" The one that had to go to court was the parent, not me, and at certain points, I have seen students resent their parents or their guardians for that. (**Counselor 4)**

The following description by an administrator explains the differing degrees of awareness among the teachers about the students' cultural capital.

> I think it's a mixed group, um, I'll be honest with you, you know, uh, you have some, um, it really is like a bell curve, you know, you have some on the lower end, who think you know that the kids can type all of their homework. And they wanna, they wanna have that expectation. And then you have the other extreme where it's like, oh you know, they must have terrible lives. And you've got everything in between, where it's like yes they're capable but they might need some supports. And so, um, you know, understanding some of those traditional pieces, you know, or you know, holiday pieces, and when people leave, you know, to go do traditional holiday things, you know, or you know vacation times, and you know really it is, you know, it's just kind of a bell where it's um all over the place. (**Administrator 1)**

He concluded that educators may often have to be more critical to see each student as individuals rather than as a homogenized mass. Generalizing about all students because

of their ethnic, economic, or parental educational background may limit the demonstration and reception of the true and available cultural capital that students bring to school. The limitations described in this section can provide insight into how the lack of knowledge about students' cultural capital results in a negative effect on student engagement. As Miranda pointed out above, the affective engagement level of students tends to mirror the teacher's level of perceived engagement with them. Ultimately, this dynamic can contribute to the lack of social engagement, whereby students withdraw from participating in educational activities at school.

Theme 2: Meaningful Relationships Found Outside of School

Specific relationships and resources in the community allow students to increase their social networks, not only creating opportunities to meet new people who can empower students, but also granting them membership into certain groups. In these groups, the students have the chance to participate in activities that develop valuable skills and abilities.

Community activities/church. Gloria explained that going to church and serving the community had had an impact on her daughter's emotional and cognitive engagement. Likewise, every student interviewed recognized the community library as an important resource. As Javier explained, "The community resources, well they do have libraries that have more books then the schools have, so that's really great because they offer internet, books, and good places to study." The students similarly demonstrated interest in different community activities to develop different skills that they may not be able to pick up in a regular high school classroom. For example, Alejandra said she really enjoyed singing in her choir at church—a skill she was able to develop through her

membership there. This example shows how the student's involvement in community activities leads to skills that are useful in boosting their social engagement.

Through different community networks the students were developing different skills and abilities outside the classroom. As one of the counselors pointed out, she discovered that listening to traditional music is linked to certain social networks that students and family have in the community. Also, certain traditions and values would be passed down to the next generation:

> A mariachi band that use to play over at [the middle school] I don't know if it still going on but um I think that helps kids too. So they learn about their music, their culture, as well as um the places of worship. (**Counselor 1)**

Sport coaches. Miranda and Alejandra both mentioned being in cross-country and track. They explained how it helped them develop time-management skills. Balancing home, school, and outside activities kept these students very busy and focused individuals—more engaged. As Alejandra told the interviewer, balancing is a big part of her life—a skill she felt would help her in college to stay more affectively engaged:

> The team is and it's another family to me and it pushes me be better not only in my sport but also . . .for college and stuff like that, and my teammates also a big influence how I see school and how I push myself my motivation. They are good influences. I think like more like motivation, determination, and responsibility, you have to balance your classes, with your sport and not just your sport your family like for example I have my sport, my school, my family and then I go to church and I have to balance all that out . . . I think there is going to be so much involved for college that you need to balance your family with school a lot more when you go to college. **(Alejandra)**

Maria and Manuel both explained that sports had always played a role in the development of all their children's academic engagement. They expressed that participating in physical sports had helped with their development, health, and motivation—all of which kept them

engaged and their school grades up. The parents explained that if the students did not have a certain grade point average, then they were not allowed to participate in sports. Maria said she was involved in sports herself growing up, which was why her daughter played basketball. Manuel said he also played sports when he was growing up, and therefore coached his own children to play sports as a form of relaxation. As mentioned earlier, Miranda's father kept her engaged in academics by coaching her through real life scenarios while they ran together, linking the two types of challenges in her mind.

Family members. Having friends who motivate students or having older friends or extended family members who have gone on to a university can really encourage students to go on to college. Gloria explained that having family friends who were professional Latino role models—such as lawyers and teachers—really made an impression on her own children. She explained that these individuals made a point to ask her daughter how she is doing academically, how she is doing in school, and then to push her to keep doing well academically, telling her that she can do it. Counselor 1 also commented about how when Latino students from this community go to college and then come back, the students in the high school really listen to them because they are role models. One of the students described his interaction:

> Um mostly like friends and family that have older siblings that have or going through college, so they usually tell "it's really scary, but don't worry about it, you will get through it" and it pushes me on to follow that dream to go to college. **(Javier)**

Similarly, Maria said that her daughter had a cousin getting a college degree, which motivated her daughter to go straight to a university after high school. Having role models influenced the student's academic, affective, social, and cognitive engagement. A college degree seems more accessible for low-income students who have role models

who have done it themselves. There is also a sense of belonging when students see people like them getting ahead.

Friends. Miranda explained that when her friends saw her struggling at school they supported her and explained math problems so she would not end up feeling so uncomfortable:

> Oh yeah well friends. I think my friends really help me out if you ever feel stressed we kinda just help each other not feel stress, maybe we just a break and then come back to it. We kinda motivate each other like it's not the end of the world if we don't do this you can do better. We motivate each other, my friends keep kind of normal like I don't go crazy. **(Miranda)**

Digital community. Technology now serves as a new tool to reach out to multiple individuals, to form relationships, and to connect to information from everywhere. As Javier explained:

> Most of my learning, I watch a lot of YouTube videos but it's just video games it's mostly, sometimes I watch educational videos and that helps a lot too and I can apply that to school. I use to read a lot and that also helps. Like Reading a book called Sophie's World and learning about philosophy just to not only apply to school but life in general. **(Javier)**

With the current push to be connected to the Internet, social media, and other online resources, it is important to consider how technology is used to navigate additional sources of social capital. Maria (the parent) said she and her husband had learned to rely on automated calls made by a phone system used at the school that reported to them when a student was not turning in assignments or was missing school. Because she and her husband worked long hours, they often left in the morning before their children began walking to school. This phone system

served as a communication link between school and home, and kept the children accountable and engaged earlier rather than later.

Museum membership. Visiting certain educational institutions increased student knowledge and ability to reference outside information, in turn increasing their cognitive engagement in the classroom. Although many participants in the study pointed out that it was difficult for some of the students' families to take them to places such as museums, university campuses, or symphonies, Miranda had the following to say:

> Museums can help too. That helps me out. I remember going to the museum of tolerance once during middle school to learn about the Holocaust and that really helped me. I learned a lot of stuff about the world it helped me learn a lot about history the world. **(Miranda)**

Because Miranda made a reference to a museum visit, it is reasonable to infer the impact it had on her engagement. One of the school counselors summarized this theme by expressing her belief that there are several networks outside of school that many educators may not fully appreciate:

> I think it depends on each individual student. I mean some I'm sure they do most of their learning at home. I'm sure other students, maybe with their friends, could be negative or positive. Some maybe with their church groups, you know, whatever different groups they're in, their activities outside of school. Um, you know I always, when we do personal statements and stuff, I'm just amazed at the wonderful things they're doing, they have lessons, they play, and you know, first string in the [local university name], um, symphony, it's just like, they do amazing things. So there's other places, I know, that they're learning. And they may work at their parents' store, or restaurant or whatever, there's other places they're learning, um, but I just don't have, um, all that knowledge. (**Counselor 3)**

This remark illuminates a disconnect in the way the schools view themselves—as the greatest influence on students' education—and that failing to appreciate the influence of other groups shows another way they are failing to engage with the students' cultural

capital. Several of the participants pointed out different access points outside of school that provided Hispanic students the opportunity to learn from different groups and individuals, thus demonstrating that students find it useful to be involved in various networks throughout their community. Librarians, church members, coaches, friends, and extended family members were all part of social networks that had an influence on their motivation to stay engaged in school. Through these networks, these students acquired skills that helped in their preparation and desire to attend a university after high school.

The results from this section demonstrate that social capital is helpful to developing new and existing cultural capital. The students' involvement in community activities not only increased their networks with knowledgeable individuals, but also fostered their cultural capital. Positive social networks contributed to positive student engagement. Table 4 summarizes the findings gathered from participant comments.

Table 4: *Summary of Social Capital Found Outside of School*

Family Social Capital			
Theme	Definition	Indicators	Evidence
Meaningful Relationships Found Outside of School	The availability of community networks or relationships that are most significant contributors in the student's lives, which function as social capital for students found outside of the educational institution	Community Activities/Church Sport coaches Family Members Friends Digital Community Museum Membership	"The team is and it's another family to me and it pushes me to be better not only in my sport " "Friends and family that have older siblings that have or going through college"

Perceived Limitations: The following counselor described how much students rely on information from their friends. "Friends, hands-down, friends. So they'll come in here, come into my office, give me misinformation, and I said, 'Really?'" Unfortunately, that information is not as reliable and can often misinform students about their options. She explained another limitation: "Another thing I highly dislike, it's very disheartening, because we can't even get technology to work, you know it's like an act of god to get internet access for these students" (**Counselor 4).** Javier described the Internet and books as being very useful sources of capital for him. They allowed him to do better in school. The students interviewed did a lot of reading and needed the Internet for projects or class assignments. Access to working technology was viewed as a necessary tool for keeping students engaged. One administrator—while remarking on how teachers overestimate the

ability of Hispanic or Latino students' online access—he contradicted the view of Counselor 4 about how often the children relied on libraries for doing their research:

> Um really the internet, I mean, I really haven't seen kids, they're not big, like, library goers, like years ago people would go to the local library and they would check out books. Most of them, you know, not so much the case anymore. Most kids now they hop onto the internet, and they, um, if they wanna know something, or if they want to learn about something, whatever it is, that's where they find out, you know, and so, sometimes that information might be accurate, sometimes it's not, you know, and then also from each other. (**Administrator 1)**

Overall, the students interviewed perceived their local library as a very resourceful place in the community. As Miranda said, "The library that helps me . . . with my research when I have a project or anything to do." It is necessary to acknowledge how important libraries and librarians are as social capital contributing to Mexican American students' engagement to their academic work.

Theme 3: Specific Networks Most Useful in Schools

High school has specific social capital that allows students and parents to develop relationships. The high school environment can create new opportunities to meet people with different access to unique social and cultural capital. There is broader access to different social and cultural capital because of the diversity in ethnicity, class, interests, and expertise. Thus, because social and cultural capital influences student engagement, attention should be placed on the resources, activities, and staff available to positively influence different types of student engagement.

Gloria (the parent) saw the high school as a source full of opportunities for her children to be successful in this country. All of the parents and most students interviewed agreed that programs and clubs found in school engaged students academically. Through

their participation in such organizations, these students are better prepared for a career or college after high school.

Upward Bound. Counselor 4 explained that the high school had two forms of Upward Bound, a college support program. One was through the local community college, and the other through the University of California. The support programs catered to first-generation, low-income minority students. She explained, "If they don't meet any of those criteria, another criteria is students who need to improve their grades, so it could . . . be their GPA." Upward Bound is a program that provides students with the social capital networks and relationships to successfully apply and be ready for a university. They also have an International Baccalaureate (IB) and the AVID program.

Administrator 1 added that Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), AVID, and International Baccalaureate (IB) were "flagship programs" that keep students engaged academically and focus them on postsecondary goals, such as a 4-year university. Noticeable behaviors point to a student's level of engagement; therefore, when those indicators are negative, the recovery opportunities are even more important for the district. He added that the school offered a variety of support classes for limited English students, support classes for mathematics, CAHSEE (California High School Exit Exam) prep classes, and a variety of tutoring opportunities.

Academy programs/pathways. Administrator 2 explained that the school offered many pathways for a student—whether a rigorous course load, a recovery path, or a career academy path. She added that the IB program at the school had open access for anyone who would like to take on that type of course load. There were career academies for students who already have a good idea as to what career they may pursue after high

school. She mentioned, “We also just started a plant-animal academy this year, which is through our agriculture program . . . construction academy, pathway now which is where students can be in the crane construction academy all four years.” These offerings allowed students to take a variety of classes that have a different academy focus and still develop abilities and hands-on skills. These types of academies were very successful at the school, suggesting that the students find their education more engaging when it is related to their future goals. One of the students described the available programs thusly:

> [T]hey offer AVID, health academy, business academy, so people who already know what they want to do in life they can have that advance over others because they can kinda get practice in that area and then they can kinda see if they do like it and if they don’t they can change their mind**. (Javier)**

The following students described what they perceived to be the school’s greatest assets:

> **I feel like our school has a bunch of clubs and that offer you all these opportunities and chance to learn more about college and how you can get there**, as well as the announcements that they sometimes announced meetings that you can sometimes go to, to whatever interests you. Whatever interest, just you whatever you guys want to do like sports, clubs. **(Miranda)**

> Such as health academy and business academy, so people who are interested in medical fields they can already have a head start above everyone else, and same for people who want to do business. Also the AVID course for those that really don’t know how get there but they want to get there. Um, and what else um the counselors they’re pretty well, they kinda meet with everyone once at least once a year. Since not many people try to go. **(Javier)**

Javier described other sources of capital he found meaningful at his school. It is important to note that many of these sources of social capital have dedicated school agents that allow students to explore college and career options, thereby influencing their level of engagement.

AVID. AVID stands for Advancement Via Independent Determination, and is a nationally recognized college readiness program. AVID uses research-based methods of instruction and curriculum to teach critical skills, such as organizational study skills and problem-solving skills. Students meet with an AVID teacher during a class period. In the AVID class, students find like-minded peers, role models, and often college tutors who offer enrichment and motivating activities, promoting greater academic engagement. AVID allows opportunities to build relationships with individuals that make college seem more attainable through the skills they gain. The following is a description of a student's experience with AVID:

> AVID really helped me to pushed me more to be more focused to be more focused, to be determined, to pass my classes, to go to college, everything. It's really helpful. It keeps me in check, like we'll all have those times when we struggle in just yourself and if you're down or feeling like sad at home or something you might not feel that much motivation, but when you get to class and they are like have you done your community service or how are you doing in your classes or like your binder checks, how organized you are I don't know I think that just makes me more push because it keep you in check. **(Alejandra)**

Alejandra further explained that the social capital gained from being in the program was something upon which she relied. During the interview, she said that being part of this group is what kept her academically engaged. They taught her different parts of the college application, worked on the personal statement portion of the application, and provided opportunities to develop her resume with community service. All these activities functioned as part of a class assignment, and so kept her motivated to complete them to pass the class. Javier explained the following for students who may not have access to AVID:

> I know for the AVID program I'm sure for those they don't really have problems, but if you look at people who aren't that the program, I'm sure they are struggling and not really sure if they want to go to college. (**Javier)**

Javier perceived students who are not socially engaged in AVID as being less engaged academically and even unclear about their goals. A counselor provided this perspective:

> We have a very good AVID department here, and I'm just a very big proponent of AVID, I think it's the number one things that helps minority kids, 80% of people who kids who join AVID graduate from college, what I also like about the AVID program it teaches them how to use a planner, notes. . . (**Counselor 1)**

Limited networks weaken the potential gains from social capital that positively influence academic engagement. Javier found it difficult to meet his postsecondary goals. It is evident that he relied on the social capital gained through AVID to facilitate achieving his college goals. Counselor 3 added, "I think AVID works in a way to support students academically through their culture." Many of the skills students learn in the AVID class provide an opportunity to fill in the gaps of the students' cultural capital if their parents did not attend college.

School counselors. Counselors are the academic mentors of the students. Counselors guide students in making decisions about their future college or career goals. As Counselor 1 explained, "[W]e talked about . . . graduation, what you need to graduate, but not only that. And A-G requirements, PSAT, SAT, the importance of passing the CAHSEE, we talked about grades and what you needed to get good grades." In these meetings, the counselor let the students know about multiple resources such as clubs, academy programs, course offerings, and the career center. These meetings helped students gain access to resources that would ultimately lead to their greater student

engagement. The following is what some of the administrators had to say about counselors as a source of capital:

> Um I think I honestly do think that they're really good. Um. I think they're fully competent, I think that they're very experienced, um, and so, and they come with a wealth of skills . . . Um, um, in our district, I feel like there's a good combination of counselors. **(Administrator 1)**

> Our counselors are always actively involved in all of this as far as going in talking to the freshman focus classes, going in and helping them with their tenure plan, doing the parent workshops that include the tenure plan as well as they do another parent workshop that talks about financial aid, it talks about um the A-to-G requirements, um we constantly whatever information we give our students we also give our parents because um you and I both know that because of the language concern with our EL students mostly, I mean we are 80% Hispanic, most of our students a lot of our students their parents don't speak any English and so we want to keep them constantly in the know because that helps them be able to support their students in you know um possibilities after post-high school plans. **(Administrator 2)**

It is evident in speaking with the participants that some counselors develop student engagement through conversations about academic and personal goals. And, worth noting is that both administrators who were interviewed also had a school counseling background. Some individuals utilized counselors as a source of capital more often than other students and families. Even though Miranda did not go out of her way to build a relationship with the school counselor, she had a friend who found the relationship rewarding. She said,

> I know there is a one kid that goes every single day to ask them about college because he wants to be a lawyer or something like that but I don't know what college he wants to go to, but he always talks everyday like so I always hear different perspective, so I don't know. **(Miranda)**

It is important to hear different perspectives, she explained. Even though school counselors may be perceived as having useful information, not every student takes

advantage of them. Javier described his interaction with the school counselors at his school:

> Um, I think they are really good. Like I said they try to meet with all students at least once. Then they always offer opportunities to go and meet them even make meetings with them, but not a lot of people take advantage of it. My mom really takes advantage of it, every time she has a question she tried calling them, even though I personally don't but they do a pretty good job. **(Javier)**

Javier described how his mother made an effort to develop a valuable relationship with the school counselor. This is not true for all students or parents: it is important to recognize how often the Hispanic population underutilizes sources of capital. The parents interviewed for this study admitted having almost no interaction with the school counselor all these years. Maria (the parent) explained that her lack of interaction was due to her long work schedule. However, these parents had also not received a personal call from the counseling office. Gloria explained how this school year (the year of this study) she had had a more positive relationship with her daughter's counselor. The counselor returned phone calls immediately and was more involved in her daughter's academic goals. Javier added:

> I said before, they usually try to meet up with the students once a year, always asking questions "Oh do you have any idea about what you want to do? And if you want to go to college, and they also they kinda try to help you with scholarships and educational purposes . . . AVID helps a long way but it can't do everything so where AVID falls **I can go to the school counselor that might know more about it and they can help me more**. (**Javier)**

The students were aware of the school counselor's function, as they had at least one interaction per school year. The following is a narrative of a counselor describing her own work:

> I think we are awesome, we always are trying to improve we are all pretty competitive specially with other schools in the district and so we are always thinking on other ways we can have the higher numbers the better percentages and we all care about our students and what they are doing with their lives and um we want them to be successful and feel good about themselves and so um I think we really look into the whole student to beyond the academics um we are really good we always hearing your school is really good about making referrals for the different emotional support, um agencies we have coming in to this school, or you know talking to the students ourselves doing anti-bulling presentations, I just think we have a really call it a well oiled machine, **that we work together as a team supporting each other to do what's best for the students**… **(Counselor 1)**

Many of the counselors explained how involved they were in communicating with different groups. They maintained the communication line between teachers, parents, community resources, and colleges about newly updated information. One of the counselors explained how she used her links to different networks and programs at school to communicate with the teachers regarding student needs. These efforts were undertaken to maximize student engagement.

Career center. The career center is normally perceived as a source of capital on high school campuses. This environment allows for self-exploration, develops skills, and engages students in order for them to determine what they want given their options after high school. Miranda provided an example of how symbolic capital transactions occur within the career center's facilities. This transaction will not only benefit her but also keep her returning to the career center:

> I think the career center. That's really good. If you want to get scholarships or you want to learn more about college. You can just go on to the career center anytime you want and just ask. There is a lady there you can ask her questions: "What should I do?" what would . . . if you don't even know which career you want to do you can ask her and she will help you decide. **(Miranda)**

This remark shows the value and impact on student engagement that takes place when social capital and the students' needs are met. In addition, in having a positive interaction with certain facilities such as a career center, Miranda will now speak to other students about her experience in a positive way.

Cultural clubs. Electing to be part of certain clubs in school speaks of the students' commitment to being involved in school-related activities. These groups allow students to be part of a network in which they can develop meaningful relationships with their peers and with sources of capital. Cultural clubs show the school's investment in valuing the student's cultural capital, which influences their affective engagement. As discussed earlier, this mutual sign of respect means that the students will be more engaged in the school and in their schoolwork. The following are the interviewed students' personal experience with the cultural clubs found at their school:

> Well they do offer a lot of clubs like Latinos Working Together, which I'm the vice president of, and also like Black Student Union and Asian Student Union, so you do, they do have clubs where you can, it does not only have to be Latinos or blacks it could be anyone that just likes the culture and you can meet other people with the same interests . . . **(Javier)**

Similarly, Alejandra continued:

> Latinos Working Together and they do a lot of community service they do a lot of activities that involves their culture but education at the same time like they'll go to community service and at the same time they will be doing festivities together like, things they will do is Dia de los Muertos, they do some dance. I think they perform somewhere else, they get you motivated at the same time and you're with people that understand that do the same traditions that you have and everything that you were taught. **You don't feel alone because you see that everyone is trying to get somewhere together**. **(Alejandra)**

Being part of this social network not only allowed the students to develop certain cultural skills, but also enriched the network with like-minded people who will

potentially broaden the social and affective engagement level of other students. The cultural clubs also showed how students were engaged in educational activities and community service that empowered them to develop a college-going culture. It is important to support students through cultural groups as they enrich and develop students' cultural appreciation. To the participants, these clubs are important, as they provide another avenue for being connected to their school.

In summary, the interviews implied that school administration and counselors work directly with the city's resources and local universities, and that this interaction expands their capability in connecting students to more information and greater networks. These different social capital programs improve student engagement through the relationships created when participating. Table 5 shows the social connection that proved to be the most helpful and most utilized in the school district to which the participants belonged.

Table 5: *Summary of Social Capital Found in School*

School Social Capital			
Theme	Definition	Indicators	Evidence
Specific networks most useful in schools	The social capital most regarded as social connections in helping students become connected to new resources or knowledge, specifically about higher education found in schools	Upward Bound IB Academy Pathways AVID School Counselors Career Center Cultural Clubs	"I feel like our school h a bunch of clubs and th offer you all these opportunities and chanc to learn more about college a you can get there" "I can go to the school cou that might know more about they can help me more

Perceived limitations, Some participants felt that access to certain social capital was limited to some students. This opinion is concerning when the findings demonstrate that connection to certain social capital empowers students to become more academically engaged. As Javier put it:

> We have an ASB program that is mostly for future leaders but the school um mostly Mexican and Latinos but when you look at the leadership programs it like only Asians it is really odd to see that because you know, because it is a Latino school you think it would be mostly Latino but when you look at it is mostly Asians so you do see that Latinos are not really stepping up and they are letting other people step up for them. **(Javier)**

Javier perceived the associated student body (ASB) or student government as not accurately representing the school's demographics. This observation demands further investigation regarding the participation gap among Hispanic students in school leadership positions. By developing students' cultural capital and connecting them to sources of social capital in this way, students will enjoy the experience of participating that will continue into their future adult life. Another concern regarding access to social capital came in the following statement from a discussion with a counselor:

> We offer to postsecondary access and information, counselors… conduct large scale presentations in the classroom, in the fall and in the spring, which is comprehensive information in every single English class and we do it by class, freshman sophomore, juniors seniors, and all the information is geared towards that specific grade . . . But what about the kids that are absent on that day? What about the ones that were not paying attention? What about the ones that had a bad day and they were zoned out the entire presentation. **(Counselor 4)**

She pointed out that given such limited time with students, the information presented in a mass assembly is not the most effective way to build a memorable relationship with students. In addition, the time constrains experienced by counselors significantly impacted their effectiveness in building social and cultural capital. The following explains how a student was affected by this lack of connection:

> I don't think the school counselors, think, help as much as they should be most of the time you need guidance . . . I kinda feel like counselors need to kinda get more involved with the students education and a sense that you don't see them often they come in once a year 9^{th} 10^{th} 11^{th} 12^{th} and kinda talk about your transcript and what you are going to do with college. **(Miranda)**

It can be inferred that the relationship with her counselor is lacking. Counseling relationships can be limited by the amount of time available per student. Even if there are

sources of social capital in place, students may not take advantage of them due to a participation gap. The student evinced a need for counselors to be more involved in a way that would make them seem more approachable. The following are narratives of administrators, students, and counselors, and provide insight into this perceived limitation:

> I feel like most of the school counselors are very approachable. Um, the ones who may not be as approachable its more of a personality difference than it is necessarily of them being a school counselor . . . So school counselors are charged you know with a lot of work that happens, . . . and I think like schools live in a culture where you're supposed to always be available. You know, and every time I show up, you're supposed to see me, no matter what, and that's hard, because you know no other professional organization or group has that. You know you can't just show up to your doctor's office, you can't just show up to you know . . . Um that's not the case with schools for whatever reason people think, you know, if I knock on a school counselor's door, they better open up and they better come see me as if they don't have other things that are going on. So it's not always that they're not approachable, but it just may appear that way because they've got some other priorities going on. (**Administrator 1)**

Miranda (the student) further explained her views:

> I feel like they always feel busy. I don't know when I talk to them they always welcome me like "HI" very formal. I don't know maybe it's just me I take it too personal. (laughs) But I feel like they should be friendlier I feel kinda scared when I walk in. Not in a weird way but maybe like I'm bothering you or something. **(Miranda)**

Javier offered a different perspective: "From my experience, my school counselors have always been very friendly. I have met with them several times but I do know that other students some of them say they are intimidating or scary." The student was asked why he thought students felt this way; he replied in the following way:

> I'm not really sure, but my friend had the same counselor I did, and it was back to back and I came out saying, "She was really friendly," and he said,

> "She was intimidating." It might be because he did not have higher classes than I did. I like took mostly honors and he took mostly regular. **(Javier)**

Javier's rationale for the differing students' perceptions of the same counselor may be due to the level of engagement—both that of the student and that of the counselor. Because Javier was at a high level of engagement, he perceived a higher level of engagement with the counselor. As a counselor explained:

> Its very difficult to um to make you know very detailed assessments, on what the student need is, and you know if you have a line out the door, when you do these one on one meetings, you have to keep it moving really really fast, and then on top of that if you have an administrator telling you, to keep your sessions to less than five minutes, um there's only so much you can do with that, and that's a directive from an administrator that has occurred to me directly. **(Counselor 4)**

To build a lasting and meaningful relationship, time must be allocated to meet during the school day. As counselor and student both expressed, they have limited time with which to meet individually:

> School counselors, there is so many students that they can't always focus with just one students. Like, I think last year they started trying to call the seniors first and giving priority to seniors, so they can know where they are behind if they are doing to just check up on them . . . I think they are good counselors but they don't have enough time as they would like to have. (**Alejandra)**

Several counselors concurred, explaining that the reason they had limited time with students was that they were often responsible for many different duties at school;

> I think, like, we're all tied down, like as far as being really busy, like, so its hard when we get duties that, um, don't have to do with our job, like testing, being a proctor for a test, or um being in charge of testing, um stuff that takes us away from the kids. Um, that's when it's hard to deal with, um

> but we still try to meet the students needs when, I mean when it's for college. (**Counselor 2)**
>
> I think the school counselors are um, overworked and weren't, we are not allowed to function to we're not, I feel that a lot of the time we do not play the counselor role. (**Counselor 4)**

In sum, this sections findings revealed that counselors are a great source of social capital—especially for students who are the first to go to college. The data also point out certain challenges, such as the limited time allocated to building lasting relationships with students—interactions that influence positive student engagement. The most important limitation noted in this section was that school counselors sometimes don't raise the student's level of engagement if the students are not completely engaged themselves.

Theme 4: The Influence of Educational Habitus on Student Engagement (Cultural Capital)

The high school had specific social capital that allowed students and parents to develop their own cultural capital. Accrual of cultural capital took place by promoting certain knowledge about colleges or skills, such as applying for college or financial aid. These may be normal services counselors offer, but they still can powerfully impact a family's decision about college for its children. The following indicators describe the cultural skills that emerged from the student's social capital relationships with school counselors.

Exploration. Many educators and students perceive the school environment as a place for exploration. Students are able to learn more about the subjects they prefer and topics that interest them the most. Counselors take these opportunities to match their discoveries with possible career options. The student must investigate and engage in

further exploration to determine what is the best postsecondary option for him or her. The counselor explained how exploration and their relationship to the students were connected:

> Um we tell them they can explore they can explore majors for major do different universities and we give them the websites for CSU or [community] college or the UC website, so even now they haven't listen to us everything other single other year. They can get up to speed if they have the right classes, um and then we meet with our students who don't meet the requirements for the 4-year university, we meet with them second semester, and talk about the community college or any other pathway that they're looking for, we have workshops on um to get them through the application for the community college and also to prepare them for the assessment test, and then we usually do a workshop also about the 2-year contract um for transfer students. (**Counselor 3)**

Making sure the students are guided through their exploration is a major part of the counselor-student dynamic; counselors are the ones who insure that students take the right steps to meet certain goals. As mentioned above, if a student decides he or she wants to go to college, the counselor ensures that the student takes the appropriate classes required for college application.

Access. Being able to provide or present certain options to first-generation students is part of creating opportunities. Students who lack the right social networks at school are missing the information that comes with being part of these groups. Counselors are a great source of information, and ensure that a student fulfills the right requirements to enter college. They do this by ensuring access:

> When we do registration, it is one-on-one, because we do a presentation on one day, and they bring them in the next day to do registration for the next school year, and there we can address, like, lacking credits, or you got a great GPA come and see me next fall, I'll give you the fee waiver for the college board, so you can register for the SAT. (**Counselor 4)**

Counselors safeguard that students have the appropriate credits, classes, and GPA, as well as access to other groups and opportunities. Creating a culture of access also allows students to be more engaged in their own postsecondary process. During one-on-one counseling meetings, counselors are able to address the student level of engagement. They can provide access to additional resources such as enrollment in college prep classes or information about college-oriented programs. During these meetings, counselors provide fee waivers to ensure that students who are under a certain income level have access to completing college entrance exams. As counselor 1 informed us, "We offer the PSAT free to every 9th and 10th grader and we did presentations specifically on the PSAT to get kids involved and engaged." Oftentimes, it only takes creating access to allow students to take advantage of additional resources.

Navigation. The findings demonstrate that often a navigational tool or vehicle is needed to get through certain institutionalized systems. Without the specific know-how required, it is difficult for some students and families to get through the institution on their own. An educated agent has the cultural capital to share with and teach individuals, so they can gain skills that will be useful in navigating on his or her own. The narrative below shows how networking with a source of social capital has been demonstrated to improve the cultural capital of students and families:

> I think we do, and I think every year we tend to do more and more, because they come from families that are, they don't have the experience doing it and we actually do have the experience, we've gone to college, we have children going, that's where you learn a lot, when you have your own children going to college and they can't figure it out either (laughs) So you learn that they do need an adult to help them. Um, **maneuver through the system, because a lot of times it's not set up to be very easy for them to navigate**. **(Counselor 3)**

The students below describe how being on your own is not helpful. Gaining navigational skills allowed her to keep looking for information from people she perceived as having the most know-how about a subject (the people who act as her social capital). It was important for her to seek different sources of information because she understood different people had the cultural capital she needed to gain:

> They don't take enough time with their SAT's because there is not one guiding them and their counselor do try to do that but they have so many students that they can't always get to everyone, but I think if your involved a program it helps you way more than if your just alone and just depending on your counselor call you in then being involved and go ask your counselor or ask the AVID teacher or any teacher because they had to have gone somewhere to be a teacher**. (Alejandra)**

Lacking or possessing certain dominant cultural capital for getting through a meaningful activity is crucial to whether a student achieves his or her educational goals. One counselor agreed that it was important to maintain interactive relationships with students in order to built cultural capital. Counselor 3 explained the disconnect for students desiring to go to college and knowing how to do it.

> I used to think I could just give them all the information, and they would go on their merry way and do it, but um they're really finding there's a gap between kids saying they want to going to college, to doing their application, everything we help them with, and then over the summer something happens or doesn't happen. (**Counselor 3)**

Such difficulties indicate that the role of a counselor does not stop at providing the information; a counselor must remain a consistent presence throughout the process. It can thus be inferred that social capital relationships need to be actively engaged to the point that rewards are actualized.

Rigor. Students need to take a requisite set of classes to be successful in the future and in college, which means the student must choose whether to take more

rigorous courses to prepare them for the rigor of college classes. As an administrator explained:

> If you think about high schools, their primary goal up until you know right now where we're doing common core was to graduate students. I mean, in the end, the whole point was to get them a diploma. Um, a secondary point was college and career readiness. And now we're taking that as like, really, the first point. We want to make you college and career ready because that's what your diploma should mean, is that you're able to transition to something in a post-secondary environment. And so um you know I think now more we're building programs and we're doing things to kind of focus in on, you know, this idea of college and career readiness. (**Administrator 1)**

The administrator pointed out how the district as a whole was moving toward providing more opportunities to increase the preparedness of more students. Then, when they leave high school, they are prepared to enter most postsecondary sectors. Increasing preparation means increasing rigor, which is the kind of cultural capital acquired at school that helps first-generation college students. As mentioned, often in order to go to an AVID, Academy, or the IB program, the student is presented with the options and chooses to take the path based on advice from a counselor or other program coordinator. The interviewed students had high levels of engagement, therefore they often elected to take more rigorous courses. The following chart summarizes the findings on the influence of educational habitus on student engagement.

Table 6:

Summary of Cultural Capital Found in School

School Cultural Capital			
Theme	Definition	Indicators	Evidence
Influential educational habitus on student engagement	The habits most utilized from their participation in relationships that allows for the students' development, and acquiring, of a different set of skills, knowledge, and abilities that contribute to student engagement. More specifically, the impact of counselors' cultural capital	Exploration Access Navigation Rigor	"Being involved and go ask your counselor or ask the AVID teacher or any teacher because they had to have gone somewhere to be a teacher." "Maneuver through the system, because a lot of times it's not set up to be very easy for them to navigate."

Perceived limitations: The school must provide access and rigorous course selection for students who want to succeed. Because counselors are charged with providing those options and opportunities, they need to feel supported in creating access to these different networks. As a counselor shared, this was not always been the case:

> Another huge challenge with getting students college and career ready is counselors try to place the students in the correct courses, and the instructors will do anything to filter them out and get them out of their class. They will do anything, and unfortunately we don't have support from the administration, and the administration sides with the faculty member and just says, "Just get em out." So even if there's, if the classes are available, sometimes you cannot put the student there because, um, admin supports the faculty**. (Counselor 4)**

Similarly, an administrator shared his own observation regarding the issue:

> One of the things that I guess I dislike about it, and I guess I would say it's true of all districts, is that, you know, sometimes, um, we can be more political organizations than, you know, for students' interests, and so um, I don't like places where we don't put kids first, and it's one of the you know models of most districts, **students are our first priority, but that's not always the case. It's not always reflected in everything that we do.** In some instances, you know, the staff, the people that we hire, they are the first priority. And that's difficult, because, I'd like to think that everybody came in, uh uh everyone came in with students as an important feature, but where they are at on the priority list is different for everyone. Some people it's number one, some people it's number two, some people it's number . . . twenty! **(Administrator 1)**

By connecting the two separate responses, we are able to understand why some administration may support the faculty—but with the result that there are less rigorous courses offered that would benefit students. In this scenario, a student who is already less engaged would remain less engaged because the needs of faculty take precedence.

Conclusion

The four themes that emerged in the analysis of the data illustrate how both family and school work together to influence students' engagement and motivation to do well academically. The four themes contribute to knowledge about social and cultural capital that circulates on and off school grounds. Without meaningful relationships in the students' lives, it would be challenging for them to be part of groups and activities that develop cultural capital. That the participants interviewed had high levels of engagement due to these factors points to the conclusion that relationships and development of cultural capital are needed. The findings contribute to the understanding that social capital works to allow students from a different social class to acquire and be exposed to the various forms of cultural capital needed in different fields. It is important to note that

the finding allows for an in-depth understanding of the limitations that impact student engagement. Abundant cultural capital coupled with social capital is essential in motivating students to pursue, access, and become more engaged in higher academic goals.

All 12 interviews with administrators, counselors, parents, and students from a predominately Hispanic high school provided the data needed to answer the study's research questions. Chapter 5 connects the research findings to the literature reviewed earlier and makes recommendations for future research and best practices based on the implications found in social and cultural capital with relation to first-generation Mexican American students' engagement.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The final chapter of this study focuses on a discussion of the findings and their connection to the literature presented in Chapter Two (Blackburn 2010; Bryan et al., 2009; Ishimaru, 2013; Saunders & Serna, 2004). The four themes that emerged from the data provided answers to the research questions about how student engagement can be supported with social and cultural capital to improve outcomes for Hispanics students. The findings also allow further understanding of Bourdieu's social reproduction framework and its application as a perspective in understanding the engagement of Hispanic students in school. The research used a qualitative, semistructured interview protocol to identify the structures most helpful in assisting first-generation working-class Mexican-American students to do well academically. The results allow for deeper insight into the different dynamics of cultural and social capital acquired by Hispanic families and how it is reinforced and rewarded in a unique urban home and school setting.

Still more research is needed to appreciate the social reproduction of Hispanic individuals. As discussed in Chapter Two, Mexican Americans have one of the lowest college education attainments in comparison to other Hispanic ethnic groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). This reality ultimately perpetuates inequalities in income, housing, and family resources, so if Hispanic students were more engaged in education they would be more likely to pursue and attain a postsecondary degree. Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital theory, along with the aspects of field, habitus, and social capital, explains the importance that all of these factors work together for a student to be able to navigate the educational system. This, in turn, lead to improved social mobility rather than to remaining stuck with the inequalities of past generations. Often, the types of

symbolic transactions that Bourdieu discussed are best documented when looking at how educational institutions themselves perpetuate certain social outcomes, according to Winkle-Wagner (2010). The research pointed to how limited access of the information and institutional resources perpetuate certain negative social outcomes. Ahn (2010) and Farmer-Hilton (2008) and Saunders and Serna (2004) explained that students of color may often be inspired to attend college but their families lack the particular cultural capital necessary for higher education attainment. The findings in this study supported that this continues to be true for undereducated first-generation Mexican American families. Farmer-Hinton (2008) have supported the idea that school counselors must be part of the student's social networks so that information and resources about college will be shared. Moreover, scholars such as Yosso (2005) recognize that Hispanics have other forms of capital that are often not recognized by White dominant-culture ideologies. The findings from the current study confirmed the findings of Yosso, and revealed that Mexican Americans have different forms of cultural capital that are beneficial in assisting and supporting Hispanics to reach higher education. Similarly, Winkle-Wagner (2010) pointed to an interpretation of Bourdieu's theory of nondominant or "otherized" cultural capital as needing further research support, as it has often been overlooked. In this study, data was gathered to support the idea that Mexican American students have a wealth of cultural capital that often requires recognition from an educational institution to more fully engage students in a way that results in better outcomes. To understand the results, this study used literature and past studies to better inform and support the findings.

Research Questions Addressed

The research questions that guided the narrative inquiry study aimed to ascertain what aspects of social and cultural capital traits contribute to first-generation, working-class Mexican American students' engagement in pursuing higher education. Using Bourdieu's full social and cultural capital theory, the research addressed the following questions:

1. To what extent does social and cultural capital influence student engagement as perceived by administrators, counselors, students, and parents in predominately Hispanic schools?
2. What common themes related to social and cultural capital theoretical framework emerged when observing and listing to authentic voices of administrators, counselors, parents, and students?
3. Based on the study's findings of social and cultural capital, what recommendations can be made to contribute to the evolving leadership role of school counselors?
4. Based on the themes that emerged, what recommendations can be made for Latino Hispanic students who are economically marginalized to prepare them for college and careers after high school?

Summary of Findings and Links to Literature

To what extent does social and cultural capital influence student engagement as perceived by administrators, counselors, students, and parents in predominately Hispanic schools?

After listening to all the participants, it was evident that the skills and abilities acquired at home and school were necessary in encouraging and developing a student's aspirations to attend college and therefore to be a more engaged student. It is important for educators to understand the different circumstances that Hispanic students experience at home in order to make connections at school that reinforce different aspects of engagement. It was pointed out by all of the participants that parents and students often do not know how to navigate certain educational systems, and so rely on counselors or college preparatory networks to assist them. This finding confirmed the need for educators to share a social capital component with low-income Hispanic families approaching the college process for the first time, as indicated by Ishimaru (2013). The findings should encourage more educators to consider the current educational circumstances that perpetuate deficit-thinking about certain student's abilities. The findings also confirmed that Mexican American students come from a rich cultural background that encourages them to succeed—but they often need a vehicle to take them to the next step. Excluding students based on presumptions can have a negative effect on all forms of social engagement—academic, social, cognitive, and affective.

Educators who have a broader understanding of social and cultural capital and its influence on students' levels of engagement can prepare them to be more successful. The findings indicated that educators who developed intentional relationships with Hispanic students gave them the capacity to acquire and exchange capital. Contrary to what other studies have considered when looking at working-class minorities, Mexican Americans come with their own set of skills, which are often not recognized as such. The educational implication for improving student engagement is that Hispanic cultural

capital should be understood and recognized by dominant institutional sources in order to have the student feel acknowledged. This recognition would help them become more engaged. Furthermore, the findings identified various places in which symbolic capital is acquired through college-preparatory activities at high schools. Lack of information and understanding allows the transaction to go unrecognized by the participants involved, causing many students to be filtered out from receiving these dominant cultural opportunities and capital. Therefore, to better influence student engagement, more communication is needed among all stakeholders on how and why certain overlooked transactions are, in fact, quite meaningful in the future development of the student.

Summary of Themes

What common themes related to social and cultural capital theoretical framework emerged when observing and listing to authentic voices of administrators, counselors, parents, and students?

The findings allowed for an understanding of how four valuable themes elucidate the process of social reproduction for young, first-generation, Mexican American students. By listening to the authentic voices of the participants, looking at Bourdieu's form of capital, and considering how low-income Hispanic families interacted with available resources, the researcher gained an understanding of why these students seemed to be more engaged. The themes that emerged from the data are as follows:

1. Theme One: Becoming Academically Engaged (Family Cultural Capital)
2. Theme Two: Meaningful Relationships Found Outside of School (Family Social Capital)
3. Theme Three: Specific Networks Most Useful in Schools (School Social Capital)

4. Theme Four: Influential Educational Habitus on Students' Engagement (School Cultural Capital)

Theme one allowed the research to gain a unique perspective on the lived experiences of Mexican American students whose parents are working class and have never attended higher education. The students' narrated experiences demonstrated very unique forms of capital—not typically derived from the same experiences of the elite dominant culture in America. These narratives provided insight into how certain traits, norms, abilities, preferences, traditions, and knowledge have influenced their decisions to become academically and socially engaged as high school students. In other words, the student's cultural capital, as seen in Chapter Four, supports the family cultural expectations for Hispanic students to work hard and to seize their opportunities, which some families take to mean graduating from high school with the requirements to pursue a 4-year university education, and others take to mean entering the work force as soon as possible. Unfortunately, as seen in social reproduction literature, many Hispanic students are marginalized because society only values certain traits represented by the White majority. Many fail to direct their hard work ethic into education. It is time to start paying attention to how some students are encouraged to pursue higher education and others are excluded from that conversation.

This study confirmed Yosso's (2005) interpretations that the nondominant Hispanic culture often goes unrecognized in practice and in the academic literature. The results also supported the idea that Mexican American students require access and connections to White-dominant social capital in order to navigate the systems that prepare students for higher education attainment. This idea can be seen in theme three.

Many of the data in theme one were consistent with Yosso's (2005) definition of community cultural wealth, which is a broader perspective on the cultural capital accessible to Hispanic communities. For example, "linguistic capital" and aggregate family skills, "aspirational capital" and family hardships, "familial capital" and responsibility, "social capital" and emotional support—and the potential lack of these support systems—all correlated to the Yosso's (2005) definitions of capital and what was in this study. Contrary to deficit-thinking about parental lack of support for their child's education, the data in theme one describes the real struggles many Hispanic families face. Certain students have a mindset that finds strength in adversity, and are able to capitalize on their hardships in a way that leads them to greater engagement and success. Students who may not have the insight can benefit from a counselor who understands how challenges can result in positive outcomes when support system are put in place, as shown in this study. This study concluded that this wealth of challenges was able to push some students toward becoming highly engaged.

Theme two outlined meaningful narratives that demonstrated how Mexican American students were supported by meaningful relationships they made outside of school. The study found these connections to be a form of social capital that the students accrue outside of school hours. Contrary to the kind of deficit-thinking assumptions that are made about working-class Hispanics, the Mexican American narratives demonstrated how important their group memberships outside of school were for them. Such memberships were influential in their motivation to remain engaged with their graduation plans and college goals.

Theme three explored how the most relevant programs, individuals, and activities found in schools assisted Mexican American students to stay informed and motivated in their aspirations to be the first in their family to attend a 4-year university. According to Coleman (1988), different channels of information exist. He has defined social capital as a social relationship that acts as a beneficial resource to people. The results of this study demonstrated that counselors are a beneficial source of information if and when the relationship is built during high school. Theme three contributed to the idea that school counselors are a source of social capital that works to help students develop additional skills, knowledge, and norms. It was found in the study that the counselors who built strong and consistent relationships with students provided social capital that lead to greater development of cultural capital and school habitus.

Finally, theme four explored how *habitus* (or the student's cultural habits) is an important factor in developing cultural capital at school. The cultural capital explored in theme four can be seen as currency in higher education systems or other dominant *fields*. It is about developing both the students and their families so they can successfully manage the bureaucratic systems that are often too complicated for many Hispanic families. Such examples include educating families in making formal requests in the school office for academic support, and informing students and parents about seeking accurate information about financial aid, college applications, and the necessity of taking rigorous courses (House & Hayes, 2002).

Each of the themes function within the theoretical framework (Figure 8) that takes place in developing college-going Mexican American students. Each of the participant's narratives in this study provided educators with the insight into the importance of

building relationships with Hispanic students whose parents have never attended college. To foster college access and help students of color transition into being college and career ready, school counselors need to work closely with high school students to ensure that they are fulfilling their responsibilities as students. Understanding how to better utilize a student's cultural capital can improve social relationships with students and, ultimately, lead to better social outcomes for this ethnic group. Furthermore, many of the relationships that students built through other social networks, such as in clubs and activities, provided insight into how certain networks lead to other supportive networks. The themes presented in the findings demonstrate the progress of student engagement and their development of social capital, and how these factors lead to advancement and opportunities in other *fields*.

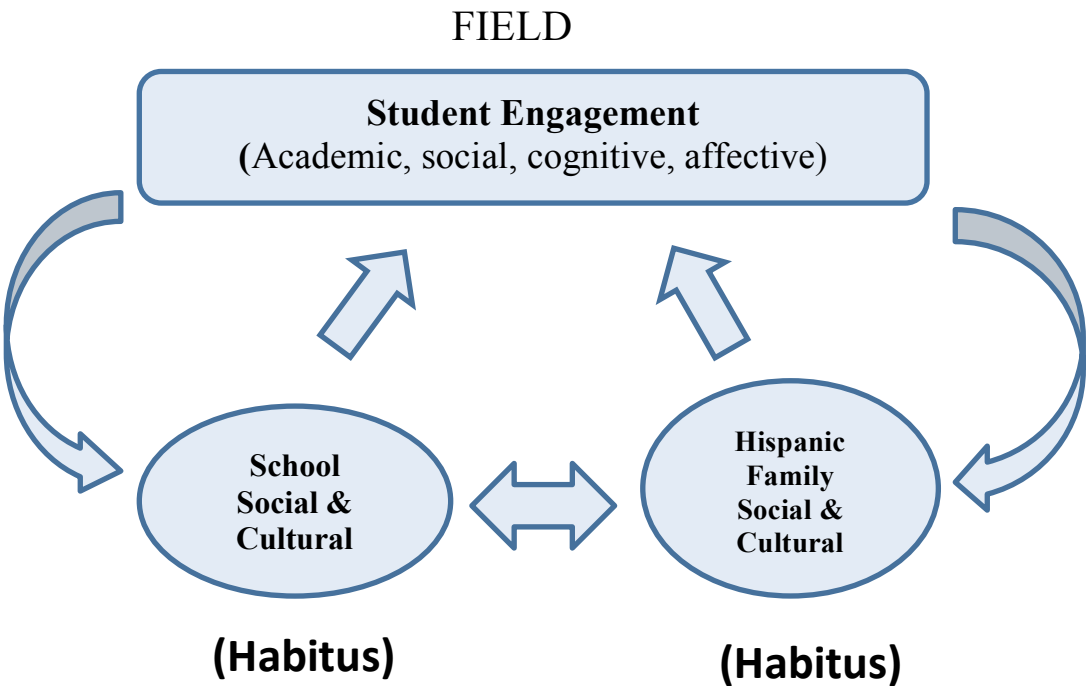


Figure 8. Theoretical framework including findings.

After applying the findings from this study to the theoretical framework, the following conclusions can be posited: (a) social capital influencing student engagement existed both in and out of school; (b) family cultural capital as well as the school's cultural capital contributed to the student's level of academic engagement; (c) the greater the level of student engagement, the more it influenced the sources of social and cultural capital found both in school and home; (d) educators' and families' levels of engagement and the exchange of information about each other's capital allowed for better decisions that positively impacted student engagement.

Based on the study's findings of social and cultural capital, what recommendations can be made to contribute to the evolving leadership role of school counselors?

Simmons (2011) has explored the phenomenon of social capital deficits to explain how minority students who are low income and first-generation—with similar academic grades to their privileged peers—are more likely to attend vocational schools, community college, and for-profit universities instead of more selective 4-year universities. Similarly, this study's findings indicate that whereas relationships are vital to developing the cultural capital that first-generation working-class Latinos need to achieve better outcomes later in life, such students saw the attention required for these relationships as lacking (as seen in theme three). Even as counselors are precisely positioned in schools to advocate for all students, often their efforts are diffused through different responsibilities at school sites, making it seem to Hispanic students that the counselors are too busy to develop a resourceful relationship with them. Therefore, the recommendation for school counselors is to make greater community outreach efforts to empower and educate

parents and families about both school habitus and supporting their community in reaching educational goals.

Participants perceived the counselors as having a wealth of knowledge when it comes to explaining the stages of preparation required for college admissions that can help many first-generation students of color. At the same time, participants saw the counselors as not having the free time to adequately provide this personalized information for all students (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Bryan et al., 2009). The schools that participated in this study had similar caseload numbers as the "national average of 457:1" (ACA, 2011; College Board, 2011), even though the American Counseling Association's (ACA) recommended ratio is 250:1 (Beach, 2010). Such large caseloads put school counselors in a very challenging position to adequately provide support for every student. School leaders such as principals and superintendents must work to address this issue in their schools. Furthermore, the data found in theme three support the recommendation that school counselors in predominantly Hispanic high school advocate sharing, education about, and recognizing capital with those who most stand to benefit from it. This effort can be achieved by assisting Hispanic students and families in finding the engagement opportunities that would disrupt the perpetuation of inequalities that limit so many Hispanic students from moving on to higher education.

In 2001, Stone and Clark stated that school counselors have been conspicuously absent from educational reform reports and are often viewed as peripheral to the main function of schooling and academic achievement—but this absence is still conspicuous today in 2014. A predominant reason for this is that counselors must use data as they

work in their school districts in a leadership capacity to educate others about the role of the school counselor in college and career preparation.

School counselors have always been great proponents of advocacy work without intentionally realizing the great source of social capital and cultural capital that they represent inside and outside of schools. This reservoir of resources is especially valuable for the work they do with the many first-generation Hispanic communities and other minorities. The hope is that through this study, school counselors realize what a great asset they play in the lives of marginalized students, and therefore make a greater effort to connect with such students and their families. For counselors to take a leadership role in their school on these issues, they will need to: (a) engage other staff in discussing and understanding how culture and social capital work and collaborate on decisions that will prepare more students for college and a career; (b) include the community and the parents in school activities and go out into the communities themselves to educate parents about the requirements to be college ready; (c) empower students to understand their culture within the school and to be aware of how to maneuver among social capital groups in a productive way; (d) continually work with teachers to discuss the necessity of working with different social backgrounds, and seeing their challenges as opportunities and not disadvantages or deficits.

By not understanding the extent to which the Hispanic culture is centered around the community, counselors fail to realize the benefits of recruiting family members and utilizing their closeness to the student to engage them further in their future. Therefore, the recommendations are as follows: first, through their understanding of how cultural capital works, and second, by appreciating the importance of connecting students to other

fountains of social capital, the counselors will have greater success in encouraging the students' development and engagement. Thirdly, recognizing that Hispanic students possess their own cultural capital and that the school needs to be able to use it in the symbolic exchanges that the school will find as rewarding. Fourth, making the effort to reach out to less engaged students and their families to have them understand how social and cultural capital function to affect future outcomes.

Based on the themes that emerged, what recommendations can be made for Latino/Hispanic students who are economically marginalized to prepare them for college and careers after high school?

The emerging themes indicate that in order to fully develop abilities and skills that will support Latino aspiration and maintain their engagement in school, the focus will need to be on their participation in capital-rich activities both at home and at school. The commonalities among all of the Mexican American students interviewed were their positive reaction to difficult and challenging experiences (theme one). The concern is that many Hispanic students who have not successfully been able to transform their hardships into growth-opportunities are also not aware of the people and networks that wish to build supportive relationships with them. The capital provided by counselors can be one of the most useful tools for marginalized students to access higher education through different networks (theme three). Bryan et al. (2009) showed concern that students in large schools, low socioeconomic areas, and schools with a lower number of counselors were less likely to contact a school counselor for college information. Similarly, the findings from this data set indicate—in theme three—that school counselors may often be perceived as intimidating due to the limited efforts and/or opportunities counselors have

in meeting with students, especially those who do not have the habit of reaching out for help. Fortunately, the data also indicate that different networks can be built within a school system in linking first-generation aspiring college students to the appropriate sources of capital.

The recommendation for Hispanic students is to vigorously seek rich and supportive networks in their school and community—ones that will assist them in overcoming their limitations or lack of knowledge about pursuing a college education. Many of the networks seen in theme two and three act and function as fountains of information that motivate students to reach their academic goals and postsecondary plans. The reason that Hispanic students do not succeed, according to the student participants of this study, is that they fail to participate fully in the opportunities and networks available to them in the school and the community.

Limitations

This dissertation introduces literature that deepens the understanding of the different dynamics of cultural capital in how it is acquired, reinforced, and rewarded. This dynamic takes place in a unique school and home setting with predominantly Hispanic students. The findings also introduced limitations in each of the themes discussed. Theme one outlined a lack of understanding about cultural capital. The results here showed the lack of understanding on the part of the parents and teachers. If parents do not understand how to use their cultural capital to appropriately motivate their children academically, then the students may not see the value in pursuing higher education. The result is lower student engagement and the social reproduction of existing inequalities. Another limitation, according to some of the students and counselors, is the

different expectations teachers have of students. As discussed in the review of literature, there is an epidemic in diverse schools whereby some teachers send subtle messages to certain students about their abilities, expectations, or culture, resulting in deficit thinking (Shields, 2013). These expectations vary depending on how well the teachers understand Hispanic cultural capital or nondominant cultural capital. Not being aware of student's may be a deficiency in the teacher's perspective about a student and could affect their ability to build a meaningful relationship. Often teachers have different ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds, making it more difficult to stay in touch with nondominant values. In theme two, the accuracy of the information gathered by students from outside networks was seen as a limitation because people and outside agencies might not have college expertise. Counselors and other school agents believe that students can misunderstand some of the college and financial aid information when someone other than a school official is presenting it.

The next limitation found in theme three was a discussion of social capital, and related to how the social relationship with a school counselor can be a stumbling block to a student's engagement. This concern can manifest in diverse ways, such as insufficient time to know students individually, or few counselors with whom to develop meaningful relationships. This perceived limitation was especially impactful and central to this study because it touched on an issue central to social preproduction. Other scholars have written about how problematic it is for marginalized students not to have (or choose not to pursue) access to the social capital networks in school. It has been written that school counselors in higher poverty schools with higher minority demographics were more likely to have noncounseling responsibilities, or clerical work, which does not allow them

time to adequately provide college information to all students (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Bryan et al., 2009). The students interviewed in this study perceived their counselors as having limited time to see all students more than once a year (theme three). This arrangement limits not only each student's opportunity to successfully build a social capital connection but also the opportunity to see school counselors as more approachable. The last limitation was explored in the fourth theme, which also touches on access to certain college-prep classes. Student may be easily taken out of rigorous courses without first exploring optional interventions to keep them there. In the process, they may lose a chance to develop skills needed for the future, such those that might help them with college and career readiness. This concern then touches on whether the interests of the teachers surpass the interest of the students. Taken one at a time, none of these limitations is particularly hazardous, but when all of the limitations converge—as they do in many schools— student engagement suffers and inequalities are cyclically reproduced. Educational leaders must pay close attention to whose needs are being served—nondominant or dominant groups—and who is being impacted by the decisions being made at schools districts.

Implications of the Current Study for Future Practice

Although the sample studied here represented a small group of Mexican American students and families and a small number of educators from an urban high school setting, it has provided useful insight as to how important cultural and social capital are in developing college aspirations and student engagement. The current study was purposefully limited to college-bound high school Hispanic students who had already shown great academic progress. Such selection allowed further understanding

about nondominant cultural capital and its effect on an Hispanic student's ability to succeed in high school. The study demonstrated the implications of not critically understanding the way school agents act as social capital for many minority students. Focusing on cultural capital and the way it functions in education makes it clear that greater effort is needed to provide training in the ways each school agent can function as a source of social capital for non-college bound students and their families. When school agents cease to overlook the abilities and skills that these students and families have—skills that have made their families resilient and strong—the students and families will find their stories reflected in the school's estimation rather than continuing to be marginalized. It is worth determining ways to transfer these findings to groups of Hispanic of students who are not engaged so that they may develop a college aspirational culture. Understanding marginalized cultural capital also requires more exploration of different ethnic groups—in order to understand the different nuances that make each ethic group unique.

Personal Insights

My perspective as a professional school counselor and researcher has grown after conducting this study. I have been able to relate to so many of the participant's voices and to other Hispanic students as a Mexican American first-generation college student. Similarly, as a counselor, I find myself left with a sense of frustration when research findings establish that meaningful relationships with students of color are critical for social change, but that they are not always fostered in schools with the students who need them the most. Many students of colors are not encouraged to build trusting relationships with educators, which limits their potential to access the social capital needed to pursue

higher education. In my own work as a counselor, I have noticed students who visit counselors (access to capital) more consistently than other students. I also see teachers who have more students in their room during lunch or after school than any other teacher. This can only mean that some educators are missing out on opportunities to reach out to students. If relationships are key to social capital, there must be a sense of urgency for districts to assist school staff in finding ways to relate more with the culture and values of the students they teach. It is important to expand my effort to reach the students that may need extra encouragement in accessing college and career information and to urge others to do the same by understanding the implications of *not* doing it.

The narratives of the participants have supported my own lived experience and demonstrate the need for educational change when it comes perpetuating better outcomes for the Hispanic student population. The Hispanic student population continues to grow, as does the educational achievement gap for this group. Educational leaders cannot continue to do the same things they have done in the past and expect to have a different result. We need change and innovative ideas in reaching out to students through social and cultural capital development in schools and the community. In my experience, social capital obtained through Upward Bound, a college-prep program, and a caring school counselor were the most instrumental in equipping me with the resources needed to access a college education. Social capital is crucial for Mexican American students, but educators who do not recognize their part in providing access may be inadvertently leaving many students unable to reach their true potential. Therefore, I hope that more educational leaders are listening to how first-generation students have become more successful academically in order that they may reproduce those efforts in a lager scale.

Listening to the voices of the participants has enriched my own voice as a school counselor and researcher. I hope to start implementing what I have learned in this study in my own counseling practice. House and Hayes (2002) described how school counselors have an influence in promoting equity by affording access to more rigorous courses, college preparatory programs, and tutoring and academic enrichment opportunities for students of color who traditionally have been the least served. Although the awareness of school counselors is important, school districts also need to adequately staff counselors and provide them adequate resources, technology, and training to make them more effective at what they already do. Such recommendations can be implemented, but there must be support from administration in order that counselors and teachers have the appropriate resources to enrich students. Listening to the student participants made it evident that some students are less likely to seek the assistance of school counselors. This creates an opportunity to start addressing concerns for the lack of social capital in the lives of marginalized Hispanic students—though school administration will have to start considering student-counselor ratios and how they factor into the scale of work a caring school counselor can provide.

As an educational justice leader, I hope to encourage more thoughtful face-to-face or innovative interaction with students who are not likely to visit me throughout the school year regarding college or career opportunities. Administrators, counselors, teachers, and parents must work collaboratively toward a centralized school vision that focuses on developing college and career aspirations. These steps would require school counselors to take a leadership role in providing intervention for students who may not be taking advantage of the social capital opportunities needed to form more counseling-

student relationships. Such an intervention should include the following: academic course planning, encouraging extracurricular involvement (social capital), and offering guidance about college and career assessments/exploration, the college admissions process, and college affordability education. School members should collaborate to find transformative ways to fulfill the role as social capital providers for first-generation minority students. It is time to stop perpetuating a status quo that exclusively values certain dominant-culture traits and the abilities of certain students over others, and time to promote equity and opportunities through collaborative partnerships and caring relationships.

Recommendations for Future Research

The participants' narratives provided specific traits of social and cultural capital utilized by Mexican-American students to become academically engaged. My findings broadened our understanding of Bourdieu's full theoretical structure in the context of the experiences of Mexican American students in an urban public high-school setting with predominantly Hispanic students. However, to further develop new theories with Bourdieu's concept of social and cultural capital and marginalized groups, the researcher suggests the following for further studies:

- The consideration of a different setting, especially one in an inner-city school district of a larger metropolitan area where there is differing access to capital, greater diversity, and the use of new local control funding formula.
- Factors such as parental educational level, income level or class, and different ethnic groups may also be variables that can contribute to a different

understanding of cultural capital in other marginalized groups. These factors can be considered through a quantitative study approach.

- Conducting a study in a setting in which the participants have gone through professional development concerning aspects of social and cultural capital, and in which schools have created an accountability program to strengthen relationships with minority students. Looking at different groups such as classified staff and community members would be an excellent way to compare results.
- Finally, a longitudinal study that looks at both social and cultural capital experiences by Hispanic groups through college degree attainment, in order to understand situations in which their social or cultural capital had to evolve in order for them to remain successful.

Conclusion

This study has allowed a further understanding about one of the largest and fastest growing ethnic groups in California. The participants' authentic "voices" supported how important caring relationships are in preparing Hispanic students for better social outcomes through education engagement. Social reproduction of inequalities will continue to exist, and educational leaders must become critically aware of their responsibilities in promoting caring and socially aware communities. Educators are responsible for the changes possible within their schools that can influence outcomes in the greater society and community. Once educators recognize that cultural capital in education is an important factor in students and their academic engagement, we can start making a difference in recognizing and rewarding Hispanic cultural capital by creating a sense of belonging for nondominant groups in schools. This study concludes that capital

circulates between schools and homes, and that the differences in student engagement and outcomes depend on how this capital is utilized and recognized in different fields: as a student or family member, do you make an effort to access it? As a counselor, do you make an effort to share it? With whom? And, as an administrator, do you lower the counselor-to-student rations enough for relationships to develop, while building networks and supporting clubs that are so important for students? Although the student participants in this study had found success, they felt that the answers to these questions have often been *no.* At the moment, they are the exception and not the rule, but it is our responsibility to replicate school programs that assist the growth and recognition of social and cultural capital for more Hispanic communities.

Figure 8 offers a graphic of the refinements and contributions made to Bourdieu's framework during this study. Such changes include the effects of nondominant social and cultural capital on social reproduction and student engagement. Finally, educational leadership requires constant attention to social inequities and the allocation of resources in order to improve the outcomes of marginalized students.

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Appendix A

Letter to School District

[redacted]

April 8, 2013

Dear Superintendent and Members of the Board:

My purpose in writing this letter is to make known my intent and request your permission to conduct a study in your school district. Presently, I am a doctoral student at the University of Redlands in the Department of Education for Leadership and Educational Justice. It is my intention to study the impact of the school counselor on student engagement as perceived by administrators, counselors, students and parents.

I am hereby requesting your permission to conduct research interviews with secondary school counselors and administrators, and to distribute permission slips to parents for student participation. The research will in no way reveal the names or identity of the research subjects or the participating schools. It is my intention that the research information will assist school counselors in supporting student academic achievement in environments where the population is predominantly Latino/a. It is also my hope that this research enhances the understanding of the school counselors' role in fostering college access and students' transition into college and career environments. Since California is so enriched with a diversity of students and culture, I would like to highlight how school counselors' efforts serve specifically students of color who are first-generation college-bound. Finally, this study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which reviews research involving human subjects for any risk of ethical, physical or psychological harm.

Attached you will find the interview questions that will be asked of the participants, as well as the permission slips, a brief abstract of the study and the IRB approval. If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me or my dissertation chair Dr. Jose Lalas (jose_lalas@redlands.edu; 909-748-8792). Your cooperation, assistance, and prompt response will be highly anticipated.

Sincerely,

Joanna Dorado Ed. M. PPS
Doctoral Student
joanna_dorado@redlands.edu
951-905-0241

Appendix B

Approval Letter from School District

May 6, 2013

Joanna Dorado, Ed. M. PPS
Doctoral Student
joanna_dorado@redlands.edu

Re: Notice of Approval for Research Study

Dear Joanna,

Your request to conduct a study in Unified School District in accordance with the IRB guidelines has been reviewed and approved by the District.

Attached you will find the District's Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 6162.8 in regards to academic research. Please follow the protocol listed in this policy and continue to work closely with the District liaison designated as Monalisa Hasson.

Sincerely,

Monalisa Hasson. Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Human Resources Development

Enclosures: BP 6162.8 and AR 6162.8

Appendix C

Letter to Parents and Students (English and Spanish)

Dear Parents,

I am a doctoral student at the University of Redlands and I will be completing my dissertation this school year. As part of my study I would like to interview a selected group of students and their parents about their family experience with their school. The short interviews will be done at a time convenient for you. I am also bilingual (Spanish/English) and we can conduct the interviews in either language. The purpose of the study is to gain more in depth understanding of Latino/ Hispanic families and their students. This is in order to better understand how school counselors can better help students become more engaged in college transition. As the researcher, I will be using the students' voices and storytelling for the research data and participants will be recorded.

If you would like to participate or allow your son or daughter to participate please fill out the form below and sign the attached agreement. I appreciate your time and I would be happy to discuss this with you if you have any questions.

Joanna Dorado

951-905-0241

School & AVID counselor

- ✓ Yes, I will allow my son or daughter's voice and storytelling to be used for Ms. Dorado's research study.

Student's name: _____

Parent's Name Printed:_____

Parent's Signature: _____

Yes, I will allow Ms. Dorado to interview me at a time I decide to be convenient.

Name Printed:

Parent's Signature:

Phone number: (_____) _____ - _____

What time is best time of day to reach you?

Morning before school : 7:00am-7:30 am_____

Afternoon : 3:00pm-6:00pm_____

Evening : 6:00pm-9:00pm_____

Other : _____

Estimado Padres de familia,

Yo soy una estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad de Redlands y estoy a punto de completer mi tesis este año. Como parte de estudio me gustaría entrevistar a un grupo selecto de padres y estudiantes de acerca de sus experiencias con nuestra. Las entrevistas se realizarán en un momento conveniente para usted. Yo soy bilingue y hablo español e ingles. El propósito del estudio es para obtener un major conocimiento de las familias y estudiantes Latinas/ Hispanas en nuentra cominandad escolar. Esto es para al fin de saber cómo ayudar a los estudiantes a que tengan un major deseo de aprender. Y también utilizaré las voz de los estudiantes al igual que las historias personales para el estudio de investigacion. Por lo tanto, si desea participar o permitir que su hijo o hija participle en este estudio, por favor, llene el siguiente formulario y firme el acuerdo adjunto. Agradezco su tiempo y me encantaría platicar con usted más acerca de este estudio o si tiene alguna pregunta.

Joanna Dorado

951-905-0241

Consejera de escuela y AVID

- ✓ Sí, Yo le doy permiso a la Senora Dorado que utilicé, para este estudio, la voz e historias personales de mi hijo(s) o hija(s).

Nombre del estudiante:

Padre o Madre imprima su nombre:

Padre o Madre firme su nombre:

Sí, Yo de doy permiso a la Señora Dorado para que me entreviste en un momento cuando sea conveniente para mí.

Nombre del estudiante: _____

Nombre del padre o de la madre:_____

Firma del padre o de la madre: _____

¿Cual es su número de teléfono? (_____) _____ - _____

¿Cual es el major momento del día para comunicarme con usted?

En la mañana antes de la escuela: 7:00am-7:30 am____

En la tarde : 3:00pm- 6:00pm____

E la noche : 6:00pm- 9:00pm____

Otra hora: _____

Appendix D

Consent Form (All Participants)

University of Redlands

Doctorate in Leadership for Educational Justice

Informed Consent Form (ICF)

This informed consent form is for administrators, counselors, students and parents from the Alvord Unified School District, which are being invited to participate in a research study for a dissertation satisfaction.

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- **Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)**
- **Participants Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)**

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form

Part I: Information Sheet

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I am a doctoral student in the Ed.D. program at the University of Redlands, entitled Leadership for Educational Justice. As a requirement for the doctorate degree, this dissertation study will focus on the relationship between school counselors, school programs, Mexican-American families and its influence on student outcomes that are first generation college-bound. I would like to examine the perception of school counselors, teachers, administrators, and Mexican-American families regarding the role that secondary school counselors have on student achievement. I want to learn how cultural and social networks play a role on student's academic success. Therefore, I am interested in your perceptions on the topic considering that you are part of a setting where this interaction is taking place. Your contribution to the study can result in unique recommendations for improvement on student engagement and the future career of educators and school counselors.

This study will involve several participants, one interview per participant of approximately 45 minutes in length (it will be digitally recorded). You are being invited to participate in one of these interviews as a participant in this research study, because I feel that your experience and knowledge in education can contribute to furthering the understanding of school counselors and their influence on student outcomes in predominantly Hispanic (Latino/a) high schools.

Participation in this study is completely **voluntary**. If you do not wish to participate, we can stop the interview at any time. You are welcome to discuss your participation in the interview with anyone with whom you feel comfortable, and you can take time to think about whether or not you would like to participate. If you do not understand any part of the information provided here or any question or concept that will be discussed in the interview, I will be happy to explain it to you. Please feel free to ask questions at any time now or during the interview.

There is a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information in this interview.

If we ask you any question that makes you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer the question. You do not have to give us any reason for not responding to any question. Please rest assured that your responses will be kept anonymous, and only the researcher and research team will know who actually participated in the interview. The information that is collected for this study will be kept private and will include a pseudonym (fake name) instead of your actual name. If you would like a copy of the results, you can contact the researcher directly via email. While there is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study, your participation would help contribute to scholarly writing and knowledge of your experiences. (This study may be used for publication or presented at type of professional conference but there will never be a reference to the name of the participants or the name of the schools.)

Part II: Participant Consent

I have been invited to participate in a dissertation research study on high school students pursuing higher education and the influence of their school counselor or similar mentors.

I have read the above information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study; with the understanding there is no compensation.

Print Name of Participant_____

*Signature of Parent if Participant is under 18 _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands the project and their involvement. I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions

about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher_____

Signature of Researcher_____

Date _____

Day/month/year

If you require additional information or need to get in contact with the researcher conducting the study, please keep the following information:

Researcher's name: Joanna Dorado

Email: Joanna_Dorado@Redlands.edu

Telephone number: 951-905-0241

Research Advisor: Dr. Jose Lalas

Email: Jose_Lalas@Redlands.edu
Telephone number: 909-748-8792

* This research study has been IRB approved for Human Subjects Protection, if you have any question please contact us.

Appendix E

Consent Form (Spanish)

University of Redlands

Doctorate in Leadership for Educational Justice

Consentimiento Informado

Este formulario de consentimiento informado (CI) es para administradores, consejeros, estudiantes y padres del Distrito Escolar Unificado Alvord (AUSD por sus siglas en Ingles), quienes están invitados a participar en un estudio para una disertación doctoral.

Este consentimiento informado contiene dos partes:

- Documento de Información (un resumen de la investigación y su proceso)
- Consentimiento de los participantes (formulario de consentimiento)

Se le dará una copia del formulario de consentimiento informado.

Parte I: Formulario de Información

Gracias por acceder a reunirse conmigo hoy. Soy una estudiante de doctorado en educación (Ed.D.) de la Universidad de Redlands, en el campo de Liderazgo en Educación Justa. Como requisito para el doctorado, el enfoque de esta disertación es la relación/correlación entre consejeros, programas escolares, familias México-Americanas y su influencia en los resultados académicos de los estudiantes (de primera generación con metas universitarias). Quiero analizar la percepción en familias México-Americanas del rol de los consejeros, maestros, administradores con respecto al rendimiento académico de los estudiantes. Aspiro a entender y analizar los impactos socioculturales en la vida académica del estudiante. Por ende, estoy interesado en tu percepción del tema, tomando en consideración que te desenvuelves/vives en un entorno de esta índole/ de este tipo. Tu contribución al estudio puede brindar mejoras y recomendaciones para mejorar la participación de los estudiantes y el futuro profesional de los educadores y consejeros.

El estudio incluirá múltiples participantes; una entrevista por participante, con una hora de duración en promedio; la entrevista será grabada. Como partícipe del estudio estas invitado a formar parte de esta misma (entrevista), considero que tu conocimiento y experiencia(s) en educación pueden contribuir a fomentar la comprensión e influencia de los consejeros en

estudiantes y sus posteriores resultados en escuelas secundarias con predominio Hispano (latino/a).

La participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. La misma puede detenerse en cualquier momento si así lo decides. Te exhorto a charlar de tu participación en la entrevista con alguien de confianza, a su vez, utiliza ese tiempo para decidir si quieres ser parte del estudio. Si no entiendes alguna parte de la información aquí proporcionada o surge cualquier pregunta sobre algún concepto que será discutido en la entrevista, estaré encantado de explicártelo. No dudes en formular preguntas conforme surgen y/o a lo largo de tu partición en el estudio, incluso durante la entrevista.

Existe el riesgo de que puedas compartir información personal y/o confidencial en esta entrevista. Si en algún momento durante la entrevista se le formula alguna pregunta que sea incomoda, no es necesario que la respondas, menos aun, dar una razón (explicación). Ten la certeza que las tus respuestas serán anónimas y solo el investigador y su equipo sabrán la identidad de los participantes. La información recopilada para este estudio se mantendrá privada y contará con un seudónimo (nombre falso) en lugar de su nombre. Si deseas una copia de los resultados, puede ponerse en contacto directo con el investigador por correo electrónico. Si bien no hay un beneficio directo por tu participación en este estudio, tu colaboración contribuye a enriquecer la educación de estudiantes. (Este estudio puede ser publicado o expuesto en una conferencia profesional, pero nunca existirá una referencia al nombre de los participantes y/o las escuelas.)

Parte II : Formulario de Consentimiento

Estoy invitado a participar en un estudio de disertación en la influencia de mentores y/o consejeros en estudiantes de la escuela secundaria en busca de educación superior.

He leído la información que se me presento, tuve la oportunidad de formular todas las preguntas necesarias, las respuestas se me presentaron en una forma clara y concisa. Expreso mi consentimiento para participar en este estudio; entiendo que no hay compensación monetaria y puedo dejar de participar en el momento que yo lo decida.

Apellido y Nombre(s) del Participante_____

* Firma de los padres o tutor si el participante es menor de edad_____

Firma del Participante _____

Fecha _____

Día / mes / año

Declaración del investigador

He leído con precisión la hoja de información del participante potencial, en la medida de mis capacidades me cercioro que el participante comprenda el proyecto y su participación. Ratifico que el participante tuvo la oportunidad de inquirir sobre el estudio, y todas las preguntas formuladas por el participante han sido contestadas correctamente y en la medida de mi capacidad. Confirmo que el individuo no ha sido coaccionado a dar su consentimiento y el mismo (consentimiento) ha sido libre y voluntario.

Se ha proporcionado una copia de este CI al participante.

Apellido y Nombre(s) del Participante_____

Firma del Investigador _____

Fecha _____

Día / mes / año

Appendix F

Interview Protocol Administrator

Interview Protocol for Administrators

Interviewee:
Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:

1) Tell me about your school and what it offers to meet student goals.
    a) How do you think this has influenced your student's decision about post-secondary plans?
2) Tell me what you think about the school counselors at your school.
3) Share your opinion about the following factors in how they relate to the achievement of students in your school: family cultural background, parental educational level, household income, and social status.
4) In what ways does the school utilize student's cultural resources to help them academically? To what degree is the staff aware of the student's cultural traditions and their effects on the classroom engagement?
5) Name some challenges the school faces in the area of mental health (the student's emotional needs, self-confidence, etc.), college and career readiness, graduation rates, and college transition rates.
6) Tell me what makes you proud of this school site;
    a) What do you like about this school? What are its greatest assets?
    b) What do you dislike about this school? What can be done better?
7) What do you think are the community resources or networks most helpful for your student's achievement? Share how specific networks or relationships have assisted your student's knowledge about college and careers.
8) How welcome do you feel in your school? How approachable are school counselors?

9) How do you involve yourself in efforts to ensure student academic achievement?

9) Other than school, where do your students do the most of their learning? From whom? Other than the home? From whom?

11) Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your school culture, student's culture, school counselors, other mentors, college-career readiness, networks and relationships or anything related to those topics? Share.

Appendix G

Interview Protocol School Counselor

Interviewee:
Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:

9) Tell me about your school and what it offers to meet student goals.
    b) How do you think this has influenced your student's decision about post-secondary plans?
10) Tell me what you think about the school counselors at your school.
11) Share your opinion about the following factors in how they relate to the achievement of students in your school: family cultural background, parental educational level, household income, and social status.
12) In what ways does the school utilize student's cultural resources to help them academically? To what degree is the staff or counselors aware of the student's cultural traditions and their effects on the classroom engagement?
13) Name some challenges the school faces in the area of mental health (the student's emotional needs, self-confidence, etc.), college and career readiness, graduation rates, and college transition rates.
14) Tell me what makes you proud of this school site;
    c) What do you like about this school? What are its greatest assets?
    d) What do you dislike about this school? What can be done better?
15) What do you think are the community resources or networks most helpful for your student's achievement? Share how specific networks or relationships have assisted your student's knowledge about college and careers.
16) How appreciated do you feel in your school? Are all counselors approachable?

10) How do you involve yourself in efforts to ensure student academic achievement?

11) Other than school, where do your students do the most of their learning? From whom? Other than the home? From whom?

11) Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your school culture, student's culture, school counselors, other mentors, college-career readiness, networks and relationships or anything related to these topics?

Appendix H

Interview Protocol Parents (Spanish)

Interviewee:

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

1) ¿Cuénteme acerca de la escuela de su hija/o y sobre lo que la escuela ofrece para que su hija/o cumpla sus metas?

a) ¿Cómo cree que esto ha influenciado la decisión de su hija/o acerca de sus planes después de la preparatoria?

2) ¿Cuénteme lo que opina acerca de los consejeros de la escuela de su hija/o?

3) Podría compartir conmigo su opinión acerca de los siguientes temas y como afectan los logras de los estudiantes de la escuela de su hija/o: el historial cultural de la familia, nivel de educación de los padres, ingresos de la familia, y estatus social.

4) ¿De qué manera la escuela de su hija/o utiliza los recursos culturales de su hija/o para ayudarle a (él/ella) académicamente? ¿Hasta que nivel el personal de la escuela de su hija/o están consientes de las tradiciones y cultura de su hija/o y como afectan su nivel de compromiso dentro del salón?

5) ¿Nombre algunas dificultades/problemas que la escuela enfrenta en la área de salud mental (las necesidades emocionales de los estudiantes, auto estima, etc.), colegio y preparación para ejercer una carera, porcentaje de estudiantes que se gradúan, y porcentaje de estudiantes que asisten al colegio/universidad?

6) Cuénteme sobre lo que lo/la engullese de la escuela de su hija/o;

a) ¿Cuáles son los beneficios de que su hija/o asista a esta escuela en particular?

b) ¿Qué es lo que no le gusta de esta escuela en particular? ¿Qué se pudiera hacer mejor?

7) ¿Cuáles son los recursos comunitarios que más le ayudan a su hija/o alcanzar sus logros? Por favor comparta conmigo como especificas relaciones o alianzas/conexiones le han ayudado a su hija/o tener conocimiento acerca del colegio y careras.

8) ¿Qué tan bienvenido se siente en la escuela de su hija/o? ¿Cuénteme de la impresión que tiene sobre como lo reciben los consejeros de la escuela? ¿Cómo lo/la involucran a usted en el progreso académico de su hija/o? ¿Qué tan accesibles son los consejeros de la escuela?

a) ¿Cómo se involucra usted en los logros académicos de su hija/o? ¿Por qué eligió esos métodos?

b) Aparte de la escuela, ¿en que otro lugar su hija/o hace la mayoría de su aprendizaje? ¿De quién? ¿Además del hogar? ¿Quién le enseña?

9) ¿Cuénteme como su hija/o pasa su tiempo en la casa (durante las tardes, los fines de semana)?

a) ¿Cómo es que sus habilidades dentro del hogar son diferentes a sus habilidades en la escuela?

b) ¿Su hija/o puede demostrar sus talentos/habilidades en un lugar más que en otro?

c) ¿Cuáles normas o tradiciones le han ayudado a su hija/o hacer mejor académicamente?

10) ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría decirme acera de la cultura o ambiente escolar de la escuela de su hija/o, sobre la cultura/ ambiente estudiantil, consejeros de la escuela, otros mentores, preparación para el colegio/la universidad y careras, conexiones/ relaciones o algún otro tema relacionado a esos asuntos? Por favor comparta conmigo.

Appendix I

Interview Protocol Students

Interviewee:
Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:

17) Tell me about your school and what it offers to meet student goals.

    c) How do you think this has influenced your decision about post-secondary plans?

18) Tell me what you think about the school counselors at your school.

19) Share your opinion about the following factors in how they relate to the achievement of students in your school: family cultural background, parental educational level, household income, and social status.

20) In what ways does the school utilize your cultural resources to help you academically? To what degree is the staff aware of student's cultural traditions and their effects on the classroom's level of engagement?

21) Name some challenges the school faces in the area of mental health (the student's emotional needs, self-confidence, etc.), college and career readiness, graduation rates, and college transition rates.

22) Tell me what makes you proud of your school;

    e) What do you like about this school? What are its greatest assets?

    f) What do you dislike about this school? What can be done better?

23) What do you think are the community resources or networks most helpful for your achievement? Share how specific networks or relationships have assisted your knowledge about college and careers.

24) How welcome do you feel in your school? Tell me about your impression of how the school counselors welcome you? How do they involve you in your academic progress? How approachable are school counselors?

   a) How do you involve yourself in efforts to ensure academic achievement? Why did you choose those methods?

   b) Other than school, where do you do the most of your learning? From whom? Other than the home? From whom?

25) Tell me how you spend your time at home (weekends, evenings). a) How do your abilities at home differ from your abilities/skills at school?

   b) Are you able to showcase your talents more in one place than the other?

   c) What family norms or traditions have assisted you in doing better academically?

26) Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your school culture, student's culture, school counselors, other mentors, college-career readiness, networks and relationships or anything related to those topics? Share.