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An Ethnographic Interpretation of Latino Perspectives on Family Engagement in Education

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AN ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION OF

LATINO PERSPECTIVES ON FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

by

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AN ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION OF

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In this period of intense demographic change and educational reform that strongly emphasizes the imperative of family engagement, yet implicates minority culture parents as not being involved, it behooves the field of education to take a closer look at the rigidity that schools utilize in their normalized perceptions and practices of parental involvement. Effective involvement can consist of a number of different activities, but only a few are acknowledged in educational discourse. Therefore, it is important to hear the perspectives of families of other cultures in order to bring to light new understanding that will assist schools in building stronger partnerships with under-served families.

Much research surrounding family engagement has been conducted, including some that focuses on immigrant populations. However, engagement between rural northwest Iowa schools and the rapidly growing Latino population has not been studied. At the same time, Iowa academic outcomes for Latino youth continue to lag behind those of the majority population. A possible solution to this issue is to enhance school-family partnerships, but we must also consider the culturally distinct ways that we perceive and practice engagement.

This study provided space for the voices of marginalized families to be heard in this important conversation regarding barriers that hinder Latino families full access to partnerships with their local schools. By listening to the responses of the Latino community regarding their perspective on family engagement using in-depth interviews via an ethnographic approach, I was able to uncover new insight that will enhance school efforts to foster a deeper sense of community which could positively impact student outcomes.

DEDICATION

To Robert Pollema, my sojourner in life. Thank you for your companionship and support on the adventures we have had together crossing national, perspectival, and educational borders, stretching our hearts and minds to see ideas, people and cultures in fresh new ways. I am especially grateful for how you along with Noah, Micah, and Anneka have been my biggest fans on this doctoral journey. I couldn't have done it without you!

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Dr. Edmund "Ted" Hamann

I have learned so much from you both in the classroom and through your writings on this topic. You are truly an expert in the field which I discovered even more as I found references to your work in multiple bodies of literature that related to my research. Thank you for your willingness to be on my committee so that I could continue to grow from your deep insight.

Dr. Jenelle Reeves

I love your passion for effectively teaching multilingual students. The concepts I learned in your courses and through your example set me on a path to earn an ESL endorsement which opened up a vast array of understanding that I would not have otherwise had. Thank you for your encouraging words and meaningful feedback at just the right time to spur on my growth.

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INTRODUCTION

I shall presume to speak for the profession in pointing out what we do know and what we don't. We know a great deal about children's behavior and development, and quite a bit about what can and does happen inside of families—parent, child interactions, family dynamics and all that. But we know precious little about the circumstances under which families live, how these circumstances affect their lives, and what might happen if the circumstances were altered…we have to learn a good deal more than we know at present about the actual experiences of families in different segments of our society. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 220)

In this chapter I will discuss family engagement as a problem of practice and the purpose and significance of this study in more detail. The conceptual framework that delineates the research including the Sense of Community Theory as the primary theoretical lens and Social Constructivism as an interpretive lens will also be presented. I will conclude the chapter by examining my positionality and stance as well as the limitations of the research.

Overview of the Issue

A very robust research base on the topic of family engagement, including some that focuses on immigrant populations throughout the United States, has been conducted in the past 30 years (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Quiroz & Greenfield, 1996; Valdéz, 1996). This research shows that effective collaboration between families and schools strongly correlates with higher student achievement. Furthermore, a growing body of research suggests there are many successful ways to involve parents in the education of their students and how people view engagement is culturally variable (Baquedano-Lopes, et al., 2013; Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 2007).   However, there is a paucity of research that

examines the effectiveness of school engagement efforts with more recent waves of Latino[1] immigration in the rural Midwest.

Other studies reveal that U.S. schools have normalized engagement practices that may seem unconventional to first generation Latino families and often disregard the cultural values, practices, and perspectives of these families (Pianta, 1999; Lopez, 2001). When first generation[2] Latino families support their students in ways that do not conform to the normalized engagement practices recognized by educators in the dominant culture, misperceptions arise concerning the families' value of education (Crosland & Doumbia, 2003). These misperceptions surrounding culturally determined values, practices, and other ways of knowing can create barriers between community schools and immigrant families which may negatively impact student outcomes and the families' intrinsic motivation to engage with the school due to a lack of sense of community (Mc Millan & Chavis, 1986; Ryan & Deci, 1985).

In order to collaborate effectively, educators need to critically examine entrenched methods of instructing parents to conform to ethnocentric practices of engagement and open up spaces for parents to share from their own perspectives and funds of knowledge[3]. Without a deep understanding of counter narratives emerging from

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[1] In this study, I use the term "Latino" to refer to people who are originally from countries in the western hemisphere and south of the United States. While I recognize the term "Latinx" as more commonly used in research, Hispanic people involved in this project indicated that they are more likely to identify as the former. Since I desire that this study reflects these perspectives in particular, I will use "Latino" throughout. Furthermore, I do not use the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" interchangeably. In this study, "Hispanic" refers to someone who speaks Spanish, regardless of which country they are from. "Latino" as noted above refers to someone who is originally from a Latin American country regardless of which language they speak.

[2] First generation= in a socio-linguistic sense- people who have immigrated to the U.S. after the age of 12 (Escobar & Powtowski, 2015).

[3] Funds of Knowledge= accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge (Gonzalez, et al., 2005).

Latino perspectives, dominant culture narratives will continue to implicate parents from minority cultures as being uninvolved in their students' education (Ozturk, 2013). Hegemonic methods of engaging minority parents in the education of their children falsely assume that the dominant society has a homogeneous and effective way of collaborating with families. This idea of parent involvement needs to be reframed in favor of a bidirectional, democratic form of discourse that allows the voices of the minority families to be heard. Thus, the impetus of this ethnographic research is to uncover subaltern[4] narratives of first-generation Latino parents so educators can interrogate their own deficit mentalities in order to promote family engagement in a just and culturally responsive way.

Furthermore, it is evident by looking at student outcomes for Latino students in particular that this population is underserved and underperforming in U.S. schools which makes it imperative for schools to seek to improve partnerships with the parents of these students by removing any barriers that stand in the way of effective engagement, according to the State Data Center of Iowa (Office of Latino Affairs, 2017). Many common barriers have been revealed through previous research and the subaltern narratives of the participants of this study reveal additional barriers that schools are not currently addressing. This research study was designed to gain insight into Latino perspectives on family engagement and thus reveal unaddressed barriers that inhibit it so that school communities will seek to build a deeper sense of community in an effort to improve academic outcomes for Latino students.

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[4] Subaltern-belonging to an inferior rank or position (Roberts, 2018).

<u>Research Context: The School District</u>

My research topic is timely and pertinent to my context of living in Sioux Center, Iowa in 2021. In addition to a PreK-8 private school with an almost exclusively white student population of about 500, the public school district serves close to 1,300 students in grades PreK-12 and is considered more diverse at 36% minority population than the state average of 22%. The primary minority group is Latino comprised of students mainly from Mexico and some from Guatemala[5]. The English as a Second Language program supports more than 275 students. Also, every classroom teacher in the middle and high school is trained in SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol)[6] in order to differentiate core content courses to target instruction to English language learners. A team of teachers form a cadre that stays current with the latest SIOP techniques and training and who serve to train other faculty members in using this model.

Fabiola Castelan Addink, ESL Director at Sioux Center Middle and High School stated recently in the local newspaper:

> "Sioux Center is a district that cares about every student, especially ELLs," she said. "There's so much time invested into how we can meet the needs of our English learners, which I think opens up opportunities for these students. Sometimes it seems, especially for Hispanic students, they don't see there's something beyond high school for them or that a diploma is not attainable," Addink continued. "I want them to see that's not true. I'm an example. I grew up in Sioux Center, came here [from Mexico] when I was three with my family and we didn't speak English. We had to struggle through. I didn't have this type of

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[5] Within this group of Latino students, roughly 89% are Mexican and 9% are Guatemalan, according to the Demographic Statistical Atlas (https://statisticalatlas.com/county/Iowa/Sioux-County/Ancestry).

[6] Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)= a research-based instructional model that provides linguistically modified instruction of grade-level content to build ELL's academic and language proficiency simultaneously. When used in heterogeneous classrooms of both EL and non-EL students, it has been shown to enhance instruction for both groups (Reeves, 2006).

support, but I'm a teacher now. I love being part of this program but I want to provide that kind of support — that they can dream of being doctors, lawyers, teachers — to the students." (Weilenga, 2018).

While the school may demonstrate a strong ethic of care, according to Castelan Addink, teachers in the district have expressed to me that they do not always feel equipped to best address the diversity of learning and language needs especially for English language learners. Another issue is the shortage of ESL teachers and classroom teachers who are culturally competent and have basic proficiency in Spanish. A large part of that responsibility lies on Teacher Preparation Programs and that is where I find the urgent need to strengthen and expand our program at Dordt University so that teacher candidates are better prepared to teach in diverse classrooms. Historically, faculty has not prioritized training teacher candidates to be qualified to teach immigrants who do not speak English. Fabiola Castelan Addink, Dordt alumna and ESL teacher at Sioux Center Community Schools, emphasized in an interview that she and her colleagues feel overwhelmed in their everyday tasks as ESL teachers without more highly trained personnel resources to fully meet the growing number and the needs of each student they serve.

To better understand effective pedagogy for multilingual learners, I have conducted more than 35 hours of classroom observation and interview time with four of the district's ESL instructors as well as 20 hours of volunteer service, providing push-in and pull-out support for students in the Newcomer's Program. Time spent in these classrooms and speaking with these teachers helped me gain insight into the issue of family engagement as well. From this data, I concluded that Sioux Center schools have relied heavily on traditional, exclusionary approaches to English language instruction, especially in the past, but are more recently striving to mainstream students earlier. The

ESL teachers shared with me that they felt pressured to process newly arriving emergent

bilingual students through the Newcomers Program as quickly as possible-- usually

within two to three semesters. Once the student could score proficient on the English

Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA), they were mainstreamed into the regular

classroom with SIOP and "push in" support. In order to achieve their goals, the bulk of

the instruction was given in English and students were expected to use English only at

school but were encouraged to use Spanish in their homes and churches. Furthermore, it

was and continues to be challenging to find qualified ESL teachers, so students are

rushed through the ESL support programs and into the regular classroom in anticipation

of the next wave of newcomer emergent bilingual students that will enroll. These

practices are supported by a "language-as-problem" orientation that continues to

dominate the field of language planning and policy in U.S. schools. (Ruiz, 1984)[7].

English-only and other restrictive language practices are built on the intuitive

sense that emergent bilinguals acquire the target language most efficiently and effectively

in an environment that provides maximum input by excluding all other languages from

the classroom even though this interpretation is not supported by current research.

However, these monoglossic practices come with a high social cost that reinforces deficit

views of language which position English language learners as inferior to their English-

speaking peers and devalues biliteracy.

It is also interesting to note the paradox of bilingualism evident in Sioux Center

schools where native Spanish-speakers are discouraged from using their heritage

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[7] In his research, Ruiz (1984) explains how language orientations influence the formation of "language attitudes" and how such attitudes ultimately impact language planning and policy imposed on the whole of a society.

languages, while nonnative speakers are encouraged to learn Spanish. This trend comes in conflict with the values of many Latino parents who desire that their children become biliterate. One mom shared with me last summer when I was conducting the pilot surveys/interviews for this study that she thought it would be good if the school would provide Spanish for heritage speakers so that her children would graduate with the title of bilingual. In recent years, the Iowa Department of Education has established recognition for bilingual students by placing a biliteracy seal on their high school diploma. However, Sioux Center schools have not yet instituted this policy.

The Broader Community

In some ways, the student population of our public school district is disproportionately distributed when considered within the context of the broader community of Sioux Center, Iowa which is much more homogenous demographically. This small rural community of about 7,389 residents prides itself in being the home of Dordt University and having a strong Dutch identity. In the 2000 Census, 67% claimed Dutch heritage. This was the largest percentage of Dutch Americans of any place in the country. The community of Sioux Center also enjoys the benefits of having rich, fertile soil for farming and more head of cattle than people which provide work for many in the business of agriculture and a very stable economy. The 1.6% unemployment rate in Sioux County is one of the lowest in the nation coupled with the fact that it is fifteenth in the nation in providing opportunities for people to raise their standard of living (Krause & Reeves, 2017). This is typically why immigrants settle here, beginning with the Dutch around 150 years ago to the more recent waves of Latino

immigration. According to census data from 2014, Sioux Center's population is comprised of 14% Latino.

On the surface, Sioux Center is the idyllic community-- clean, pristine, manicured lawns and everyone puts on a good front. Even the buildings of the downtown feature faux Dutch fronts and our neighboring Dutch community of Orange City takes that aspect of superficiality to an even higher level. With an immaculate exterior often comes a hidden interior and this, at times, seems to be the case in Sioux Center. One way to maintain a facade is to not let people know you too well. When they ask you how you are, the most common response is, "fine"; and if "you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." Many residents appear to be hospitable, but when one considers that the etymology of the word "hospitality" comes from the Greek word "xenophilia" which means "friend of the stranger," it becomes more apparent that Sioux Center as a community that does not always live up to its reputation.

If hospitality merely entailed welcoming and associating with those that are related to you and/or who share your common beliefs, practices, and values, then Sioux Center would fit the criteria, but welcoming the stranger does not come naturally. It is for this reason that Dordt University President, Dr. Eric Hoekstra, recently challenged our faculty and staff to stop playing "Dutch Bingo"[8] and to get rid of any vistages of the community shibboleth, "If you ain't Dutch, you ain't much." This message seemed to resonate with many in our faculty/staff community who have "immigrated" to Sioux Center, themselves, from other countries, states, and educational institutions. However,

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[8] Dutch Bingo is the familiar conversation piece that many in Sioux County engage in to try to figure out who is related to whom based on the person's last name.

the broader community still adheres quite a bit more visibly to a moral code based on compliance and conformity and readily forms close knit social groups. Though there is a semblance of the idyllic community here in Sioux Center, in reality it is actually quite difficult to create true community, especially if one is trying to enter from the outside.

Into this context, Latino immigrants have arrived throughout the last 25 years in various waves and form several separate sociolinguistic groups. The three primary groups are immigrants from urban Aguascalientes, Mexico who began immigrating first during the early 1990's. The second primary sociolinguistic group are Mexican immigrants from rural areas in Jalisco and Hidalgo. They arrived at roughly the same time or slightly later than the Aguascalientes group. The third group under consideration in this study is the most recent wave of Guatemalan immigrants who have not had as much time to acculturate, having arrived in Sioux Center within the last seven years. They are also more difficult to reach through conventional school efforts mainly because many in this sociolinguistic group do not speak Spanish nor English; rather they speak an indigenous Mayan language called Mam. The Newcomers[9] classes at Sioux Center Middle and High School are comprised mainly of Guatemalan students. Superintendent Gary McEldowney reported that four Guatemalan Newcomer students out of about 15 graduated in May of 2019, which was a cause for celebration because that number represented a 100% increase over the year prior. Since the Guatemalan students are the most at risk for not finishing high school, my research will also focus on this sociolinguistic group.

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[9] Newcomers= a program that focuses on helping students who are both non-proficient in Spanish and not up to grade level. The goal is to build students' proficiency in English and grade level performance in most subjects (Sioux Center News, 2018)

Statement of the Problem

> "For all of their virtues, however, for all of their dedication to raising good human beings and responsible adults, in the eyes of their teachers, the parents were failing their children. They did not respond to school communications in a timely fashion. They did not help their children at home. And they seemed not to have understood that without education their children would never be able to "make something of oneself." In fact, they worried little about individual achievement in mainstream terms. They were guided by beliefs about child rearing that emphasized respect and obedience. They did not understand the mother's role to include teaching school lessons to her children (Valdés, 1996, p. 201).

As the quote from the book *Con Respeto* above illustrates, there is sometimes a disconnect between Latino cultural values and those of the majority culture, especially regarding matters pertaining to education and parenting (Valdés, 1996). Most Iowans place high value on *education* which many mainstream educators often equate with "school." Additionally, Latino families place high value on *educación*[10] which embodies school and also includes so much more. Among Hispanics, the concept of *educación* stresses knowledge not only in an academic sense, but also in terms of moral respect for adults who act as teachers; adults within the social networks of the family who shape and mold the lives of the children in practical ways and that encourage them to flourish within their broader community (Gonzalez, et al., 2005). Thus, to a Latino parent, *educación* happens both inside and outside of the classroom where the school focuses on academic matters and the family attends primarily to moral development. Hence, many Latinos believe that they already partner with the school by teaching good manners and morals to their kids and by providing everything their students need in order to go to

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[10] Educación= a foundational cultural construct that provides instructions on how one should live in the world. With its emphasis on respect, responsibility, and sociality, it provides a benchmark against which all humans are to be judged, formally educated or not (Valenzuela, 1999).

school; for that reason, they are seeing their participatory role as something different from how U.S. educators might view their role. I will address this cultural mismatch[11] phenomenon more in depth in the next chapter.

Previous research indicates that Latino parents are highly interested in being involved in their children's education (Galindo & Medina, 2009, Auerbach, 2007), while other bodies of cross-cultural research suggest that there are many successful ways to involve parents in the education of their children and how people view engagement is culturally variable while acknowledging culturally variable views of engagement. (Baquedano-Lopes, Alexander & Hernandez, 2013, Barton, et al., 2004, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2007). There is also a growing national interest in parental engagement with schools and yet there is a paucity of research that examines how Latino parents, specifically, define their role in the education of their children (Zarate, 2007).

Unfortunately, research also suggests that marginalized families from minority cultures often are perceived by members of the majority community as unmotivated or uninvolved. Latino parents are often judged as being unconcerned about their children's education when, in actuality, these parents subscribe to an alternative cultural understanding (that runs counter to the dominant culture's normative views) of what it means to be involved (Ozturk, 2013). This discrepancy in understanding creates a barrier in the relationships between marginalized families and local schools; this is precisely what this dissertation attempts to address. As a scholar-practitioner in the CPED program at UNL, my problem of practice has been figuring out how to facilitate a process through

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[11] Cultural mismatch theory asserts that inequality is produced when the cultural norms in mainstream institutions do not match the norms prevalent among social groups which are under- represented in those institutions (Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012; Stephens &Townsend, 2015).

which schools can work to address family engagement inequities by considering the perspectives and values of diverse communities in order to facilitate meaningful collaboration with all families in school activities and educational tasks.

In order to build a bridge between different ways of understanding how parents can be engaged in their children's education we have to consider the perspectives of all stakeholders – educators and parents, members of the majority culture as well as the minority culture. Affirming cultural differences in no way implies common ground cannot be found, but common ground cannot be based on minimizing or ignoring other ways of knowing and being (Gonzales, Moll, and Amanti, 2009). Instead, community is formed around a healthy respect for a variety of perspectives. When we recognize and appreciate the cultural differences surrounding family engagement, we will also find values that we hold in common and can learn from each other in areas where we differ. However, when we ignore the perspectives of minoritized community members we are likely to succumb to a deficit mentality that places the blame on the parents for their children's low achievement (Valdés, 2005).

I started to get a glimpse of this misperception as I spoke with parents throughout the first phase of this project during the summer of 2018 when I piloted a survey I created and had the opportunity to have conversations with about twenty Latino parents of students from Sioux Center Community High School. Several initial findings came out of the pilot project. First of all, the research participants were not satisfied with merely filling out the survey in a matter of minutes and moving on. They wanted to talk about the items in length and explain their answers verbally. When I developed the survey, I envisioned that it would require about ten minutes to complete and I consciously

designed it so that it could be filled out efficiently so as not to demand an excessive amount time from the research participants. However, I discovered that the parents actually seemed more interested in having an in-depth conversation about their experiences rather than merely completing a survey. For this reason, I chose an intensive interview strategy (Seidman, 2013) as the primary method of data collection for this study.

Furthermore, each person who filled out a survey (Appendix B) responded "yes" to question #11- "Do you want to be more involved in your child's learning? and #12- "Are you already involved in your child's learning?" Much of the conversation that followed centered around these two questions and through it I discovered that the parents were involved in various ways, but not necessarily according to the culturally mediated ways that schools focus on. I also came to realize that the attendance data (Figure 3.1) that was collected and analyzed was only a very small indication of engagement and while most parents were not coming to school events such as parent-teachers conferences for various reasons, they are supporting their children's education in ways that are unique to their set of collectivist values and their cultural background and context. For instance, one mother told me that she did not come to school events because she was embarrassed that she does not speak English, but she made a point of talking with her daughter every day about school and social issues and ensured that she completed her homework. Another set of parents told me that they work overtime to run the family restaurant and do not put expectations on their children to work outside of school so that they could be involved in extracurriculars and focus on their coursework.

The connections and conversations from the pilot phase of this project confirmed that my level one data collection process of collecting attendance data at parent-teacher conferences and other school events was biased towards assuming that a very limited set of indicators are the sole criteria for assessing parent engagement. This bias reinforces the misperception that Latino parents are not motivated to be involved. This new understanding also helped me realize that I was not starting with the right question. I came into this study asking, "Are Latino parents engaged in the education of their students?" Granted, my good intentions were/are to dispel the misperception that they are not. However, this is still not the right question to begin with because it emerges from a deficit mentality. Instead, I am beginning with the question, "How are Latino parents engaged?" That is where schools need to start-- by affirming the unique ways minority culture parents are poised to support their children-- and then by reducing any barriers that the dominant culture creates, whether consciously or subconsciously, that would inhibit these families' partnership with school efforts.

Purpose of the Study

Much research on the topic of family engagement, including some that focuses on immigrant populations, has been conducted in the past 30 years. This study builds on this previous research base and is particularly timely because in the last decade more immigrant parents have reported barriers to engagement than non-immigrant families, on a national level (DeLuigi & Martelli, 2015, Turney & Kao, 2009). In Northwest Iowa, engagement efforts with recent waves of Latino immigrants have not yet been studied, while academic outcomes for Latino youth continue to lag behind the majority population, according to the State Data Center of Iowa (Office of Latino Affairs,

2017). On a local level, I have had several community leaders recently tell me that Latino parents do not prioritize their children's education. This points to the work that must be done to confront racialized generalizations that lead to barriers that prevent certain students from accessing academic success.

I believe the resolution of negative stereotypes will result when culturally responsive family engagement practices are realized. However, we first need to acknowledge diverse perspectives in how we define engagement and where those differences lie. Also, when we consider barriers, we need to consider different or additional barriers that may be preventing particular families from full access to partnership. One such barrier that I will examine in this study are school practices and ways of knowing and valuing that inhibit a sense of community and create theoretical and philosophical walls between the majority community (ie. school culture) and families from marginalized cultures. For example, many Latino students are socialized in collectivistic ways within their family groups and establish funds of knowledge through which they share information and resources so that they grow collectively rather than in competition with one another. U.S. schools, on the other hand, often adhere to a more individualistic value system built on competition (Moll, 2000). Attempting to traverse both value systems can often leave Latino students and their families feeling alienated from the school culture, which tends to reflect the worldview and values of the dominant culture.

By highlighting diverse parental responses regarding their perspectives on family engagement via an ethnographic approach, my research documented new perspectives that may aid school efforts to develop a greater sense of community which could

positively impact student achievement. Without the infusion of alternative perspectives, it is likely that schools will continue to utilize entrenched practices which currently are not working well for many families in the school community. If the goal is to see all parents and the school collaborating, educators need to let go of traditional methods of instructing parents in "our" way of partnering in education and create spaces for parents to share from their own perspectives and ways of understanding (Zarate, 2007).

Traditional methods of trying to involve minority parents in the education of their children falsely assumes that the dominant society has a homogeneous and effective way of doing school, and minority families need to engage in the way deemed appropriate by mainstream culture by doing conventional school activities in order to be successful. This idea of parent involvement needs to be reframed in favor of a more bidirectional, democratic form of discourse that allows the voices of the minority families to be heard.

I have come to appreciate the unique funds of knowledge that many Latino families bring with them to school through my ongoing involvement with community programs as an educator. For example, I have been observing barriers to family engagement within the Latino community for about three years as I have been actively involved with community initiatives as a board member for the Center for Assistance, Service and Advocacy (CASA)[12], leading Juntos[13] workshops through the Iowa State

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[12] CASA-Center for Advocacy, Service, and Assistance is a non-profit, 100% volunteer-run organization promoting healthy, diverse communities through empowerment, education, and advocacy.

[13] The Juntos program involves partnerships between community- based Iowa State University Extension staff, middle- and high schools, community organizations, community colleges and universities. Juntos assists youth to graduate from high school, as well as pursue and access higher education. https://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/juntos

University Extension Office, translating for special outreach events and leading College

and Career events in Spanish for our local public school district. Through these service

opportunities, I have been able to build some strong connections with members of the

Latino community and have had the opportunity to listen to their thoughts regarding this

topic. In considering their expressed desire to be actively involved in the education of

their children and the challenge that local school leaders have articulated in their attempts

to partner with the Latino community, my research focus is driven by these three

essential questions:

> · How do Latino parents view family engagement in education?
> · What are the barriers unique to this community that inhibit engagement with
> school communities?
> · What are ways educators and schools must work towards deconstructing these
> barriers and then welcome Latino families into educational partnerships?

Significance of the Study

While the context of this study is situated in Sioux Center, Iowa, I am also

confident that the findings could be transferable to other school districts throughout the

state of Iowa and beyond. From what I have seen so far, there is a paucity of current

research available regarding the effective partnership of local schools with Latino

families in the rural Northwest Iowa, one of the regions of "New Latino Diaspora" that

are realizing a rapid influx of immigrants in states that have not traditionally been home

to Latinos (Hamann & Harklau, 2010). These new destinations have relatively little

recent history with immigration and in many cases, little experience with racial, ethnic,

and linguistic diversity (Singer, 2009). Thus, schools in these contexts often lack access

to bilingual resources and teachers trained in TESOL[14] as compared to traditional

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[14] TESOL= Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

immigration zones. Also, more research is needed in order to more fully understand the

role of race and racialized identities of students and their families in diaspora regions

(Hamann & Harklau, 2010). Studies, thus far, in diaspora communities reveal

considerable ambivalence, paternalism and xenophobia (Richardson Bruna & Vann,

2007; Richardson Bruna, Vann, & Perales Escudero, 2007). This current study also

revealed systemic patterns of segregation and exclusion which is where my research

filled the knowledge gap especially as it addressed the Newcomer population comprised

primarily of indigenous Guatemalan families who have immigrated to Sioux Center, Iowa

within the last seven years.

One body of research, conducted by Sarah Gallo, Stanton Wortham, and Ian

Bennet (2015) in a mid-Atlantic suburb of about 35,000 residents, parallels the purpose

of this study in the sense that its focus centered around increasing parental engagement in

a region considered to be part of a New Latino Diaspora. It was a two-year project that

eventually led to a reframing of the typical parental involvement model in an effort to

include all voices in the conversation. In their analysis, Gallo, Worthham, & Bennet

(2015) explained:

> It is certainly the case that Mexican immigrant parents and children can benefit
> from learning various repertoires in English-- how to talk about academic subject
> matter, how to make requests of educational professionals, how to participate in
> politics, etc. However, a school may more productively involve immigrant
> parents if educators themselves master new repertoires for communicating with
> immigrants, if they recognize that they can build on repertoires in both Spanish
> and English that immigrant parents and children may already control, and if they
> acknowledge that educational success for any individual student means mastering
> an overlapping but somewhat heterogeneous set of repertoires (p. 265)[15].

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[15] Gallo, Wortham and Bennett (2015) use the term *repertoires* to describe the varying ways that
members of a community speak and believe. By using this term, they acknowledge that speaking the
same language or coming from the same culture does not mean that people share a full set of linguistic
and cultural concepts, values and practices. A speech community is more like a Venn diagram with many
overlapping circles.

If local schools could come to a better understanding of Latino perspectives on

family involvement in the education of their children, educators could then modify

current school outreach efforts in culturally responsive ways in order to foster a deeper

partnership which, according to current research, would likely allow students more access

to higher levels of achievement. A key component of my study is to listen to what

Mexican and Guatemalan community members have to say about this issue. All too

often, the majority community develops programs (e.g., Juntos) that are geared at

bringing new knowledge to the newcomer community, albeit with good intentions.

However, I believe it is imperative to create spaces for bidirectional discourse that

affirms a diversity of cultural repertoires and to listen to the counter narratives of

minoritized communities in order to discern barriers and adjust school efforts

accordingly. For that reason, my intended outcomes for this project were to:

1.) create space for diverse parent voices to be heard in the conversation on how local

schools can better foster pathways of partnership in order to improve educational

outcomes for their children.

2.) provide necessary insight to local schools so they can work to deconstruct barriers that

are preventing certain parents from fully participating in the schooling of their children.

3.) add to the research base that will especially be examined by my students in Dordt

University's teacher preparation program so that they are better equipped to effectively

connect with families of other cultures.

4.) create actionable research findings that will also be used for workshops and articles

for practicing teachers to promote the development of culturally responsive curriculum,

pedagogy, and further practitioner research.

Conceptual Framework-Sense of Community

This study specifically explored the possibility that a sense of community between schools and families of other cultures may be lacking which poses a barrier that has not yet been acknowledged locally. It is possible that not having a sense that they are well connected to the school community could contribute to the perception that these families are not motivated to engage in the visible ways (e.g., attending parent-teacher conferences and other school informational events) that we typically associate with parental engagement. Furthermore, it is likely that the immigrants, themselves, may not feel welcome to participate. Several people, including Latinos, have told me in casual conversation that some immigrants do not get involved in the education of their children because they are more focused on other things (e.g., work). A Latino minister in my community stated in an interview that some parents encourage their teenagers to drop out of school after the age of 16 so that they can earn an income and help the family. After hearing this sort of input, I decided to align the Family Engagement Survey (Appendix C) that I piloted with elements of the Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2009) to see if the barriers presenting themselves for some Latinos, particularly newcomers, are related to a lack of a sense of autonomy, competency, and connectedness. The *connectedness* element of this theory also relates to a decreased sense of community since not feeling a part of a particular community, whether the school community or the broader community, could create a perception of lack of motivation. The Sense of Community Theory might help to explain and remedy a lack of connectedness and open pathways for more families to engage with school efforts.

For that reason, this study primarily was built on a Sense of Community theoretical framework as defined by a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together. The four elements of this framework are membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs and a shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). I will briefly describe these elements as they relate to my problem of practice.

The first element of the Sense of Community theory is *membership* which is the feeling that one has invested part of oneself to become a member and therefore has a right to belong (Aronson & Mills, 1959; Buss & Portnoy, 1967). Within this element there should be a sense of belonging and identification in which members feel that according to common beliefs and expectations, they fit within the group and have a place there. There is a feeling of acceptance by the group and a willingness to sacrifice for it. The second element is *influence* which is a bi-directional concept. In one direction there is the idea that in order for a member to be part of the community, they have the hope to be able to participate and have influence within the group. The other direction involves the expectation that the community will have influence on its members.

A third element of the Sense of Community theory is the *integration and fulfillment of needs*. This idea can be summarized by stating that a strong community is able to bring people together in a way that people meet each other's needs while their own needs are met (Riley, 1970; Zander, Natsoulas, &Thomas, 1960). In this way there is a sense of symbiotic partnership as each member strives to meet their own needs while addressing the needs of the community. This brings us to the fourth element of this

theory—*shared emotional connection.* A shared emotional connection is partially based on a shared history, but that does not necessarily mean that group members need to share the same history in order to build community. However, they must be able to recognize and identify with it.

These four elements and how they interact with each other to foster a greater sense of community can be illustrated with the following:

Table 1
Elements of Sense of Community and Their Hypothesized Relationships

I. Membership

Common Symbol System

Boundaries

Sense of Belonging and Identification

Emotional Safety

Personal Investment

II. Influence

   A. Member openness to influence by community members ⬌ power of member to influence the community.

   B. Member need for consensual validation × community's need for conformity = community's power to influence members (community norms).

III. Integration and Fulfillment of Needs

   A. To the degree that communities successfully facilitate person–environment fit (meeting of needs) among members, members will be able to develop sense of community.

IV. Shared Emotional Connection

   A. Formula 1: Shared emotional connection = contact + high-quality interaction.

   B. Formula 2: High-quality interaction = (events with successful closure – ambiguity) × (event valence × sharedness of the event) + amount of honor given to members – amount of humiliation.

(McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

My data analysis highlighted these four elements in an effort to reveal any patterns of behavior or practices that may be inhibiting the formation of true community. I also analyzed the data in light of the Self-Determination Theory, a motivation theory first postulated by Richard Ryan and Edward Deci (1985). This is a theory that I teach in one of my courses at Dordt, and as I instruct my students that if anyone in their class appears to be unmotivated to engage in a task, the responsibility lies first with the educator to find a way to more effectively invite the student into the

learning activity. I believe the same holds true regarding family engagement. If it appears that some families are not engaging with local schools, it behooves the school to discover ways to strengthen their connection with the families. This might include examining elements of the Self-Determination theory that enhance intrinsic motivation such as: autonomy, competency, and relatedness. These two theories, in particular, formed the theoretical framework for the data collection and analysis. I have also explored ways that these theories intersect with other common barriers that have been revealed through decades of previous research (see Figure 3.4 on pg. 87).

Operating Assumptions

In order to begin building better bridges of collaboration and communication between local schools and families, especially those that are marginalized due to their cultural status, educators and parents can start on a foundation of those things that we all have in common. First of all, we need to acknowledge that we all have bias. Whether or not we account for our biases and what we do with them is the question. Also, there is no such thing as being "color blind." We deceive ourselves in believing that not seeing cultural and racial differences is even humanly possible, and even worse that we would view that as a virtue. Recognizing, appreciating, and encouraging the expression of diversity and various perspectives is central to what it means to be human. Beyond these thoughts, which emanate from my heart, Henderson and Mapp, et al. (2007) postulated four core beliefs that ground our efforts to work for engagement with all families regardless of the diverse nature of the school community.

Core Belief #1: All parents have dreams for their children and want the best for them. To make their point the researchers quote Roni Silverstein, an assistant principal in Montgomery County, Maryland, a diverse suburb, who said:

> The belief that minority parents don't care couldn't be farther from the
>
> truth. When you talk to them you realize that our American schools are the
>
> answer to their dreams. What they had to go through to get their children here is
>
> remarkable. Many of them work two or three jobs to stay here. They have the
>
> American dream in their hearts. If anything, they care more (Henderson, et al.,
>
> 2007, pg. 29).

Assuming that all families want the best for their children is the first step in cultivating and maintaining strong partnerships.

Core Belief #2: All parents have the capacity to support their children's learning. This assumption is not based on what languages parents speak or do not speak, what their previous school experience or level of education entailed or socioeconomic status. It is simply the acknowledgement that all families possess "funds of knowledge" that should be respected and tapped. I will elaborate more on this concept in a later section. Moreover, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (2007) found that there are three key concepts that influence the choices parents make regarding their involvement in their children's education: how they construct their role as a parent, how confident they feel about their ability to help their children, and whether they feel invited to participate by both their children and by the school.

Core Belief #3: Parents and school staff should be equal partners. Unfortunately, more often than not, relationships between schools and families are constructed on a

lopsided power base. Parents often see the teachers as "professionals" who hold the

power and as a result, may feel that their role is to help their children at home and only

come to school when asked. This mindset may especially hold true for families of other

cultures. Therefore, schools must intentionally be cognizant of their own positions of

power and do whatever they can to operate by a principle of reciprocity recognizing that

everyone who is interested in supporting children's development has something to offer

and should get something out of the relationship.

Core Belief #4: The responsibility for building partnerships between school and

home rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders. The lopsided power

differential described in the previous core belief plays out here as well as many families

see schools as powerful and intimidating institutions. Reaching out to parents is easier

for educators than "reaching in" to teachers is for parents. For this reason, school

leadership and staff need to take the first steps in building bridges of communication and

collaboration.

Social Constructivism as an Interpretive Framework

The four core beliefs stated in the previous section-- dreams, capacity, equality,

and partnership-- served as a good foundation to get the conversation regarding fostering

stronger partnerships between local schools and the Latino community started. In

addition, a social constructivist approach provided the vehicle by which we can co-

construct new knowledge in sustained discourse between families and schools (Vygotsky,

1978). This conversation was part of a problem-posing approach to education which,

according to Freire (1970/1990):

> ...regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils
> reality… Problem posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true

reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of men as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation (p. 71).

For Freire, dialogue was essential to problem-posing education. For a social constructivist, dialogue, or sustained discourse as it is often called, is essential to building knowledge. As Freire (1970/1990) noted in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* dialogue is "the encounter between men [sic], mediated by the world, in order to name [that is, to change] the world (p. 76)." He argued that sustained discourse helped students to develop critical consciousness [or *conscientiação*] of social, political, and economic disparities so that they can take action against them. This requires analysis, collaboratively and through dialogue, of who is and is not allowed access to resources and opportunities and how that access is allowed or denied. Ultimately, *conscientiação* requires questioning the status quo rather than taking it as a given. This type of dialogue relies on egalitarian, respectful relationships between teacher and students, or in the case of this study, the researcher and the participants.

Freire wrote that problem-posing education "cannot exist in the absence of a profound love for the world and its people…Founding itself upon love, humility, and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is a logical consequence" (1970/1990, p. 77-78). This type of horizontal relationship can also be referred to as reciprocity and aligns with a core belief that this study operates from that parents and school educators should be equal partners. Thus, the line between the role of teacher and student or, rather, transmitter of information versus recipient of information is blurred as the core objective throughout this research project is to build new knowledge so that new perspectives and deeper understandings are

illuminated. In this case, the researcher, who happens to be a teacher, was listening and learning from the research participant.

Throughout this study, the research participants were the primary purveyors of knowledge. My role was to ask the right questions to guide the conversation to deeper levels of understanding as I built new questions on emerging input from my research participants and to analyze that input in order to bring recommendations to the local schools and to the field of education as a whole. As social constructivists recognize, exposure to new input helps others engaged in the sustained discourse become aware of things that they did not yet know and leads to expansion of their cognitive structures. Sometimes this exposure to new insights creates cognitive dissonance and requires examination of prior beliefs and sometimes the reconstruction of those preconceived notions. Through sustained discourse, learners are forced to articulate their ideas more clearly which sharpens their conceptions and often leads to recognition of new connections (Brophy & Good, 2008).

As I examined this issue closely, I recognized that I had much to learn regarding cultural perspectives other than my own on family engagement. I believe that a social constructivist approach to acquiring this knowledge will not only build deeper, more generative understanding than the typical transmission approach, but will also serve to rectify, rather than reify the perceived power differential between schools and marginalized families. Coming to my research participants in the role of a learner, rather than as teacher was done to create a more reciprocal and horizontal relationship (Freire, 1970). This way of knowing aligns with constructivist principles that aim to build new knowledge through the dialogic process of active construction. Namely, that learners

construct their own unique representations of knowledge. Second, that learners make sense of new information by relating it to their prior knowledge. Finally, sometimes new learning results in a restructuring of existing knowledge or a change in the learner's understanding of key ideas (Brophy & Good, 2008).

Researcher Positionality

It has been my joy and privilege to have spent the majority of my career in education. I sensed from my childhood the calling to become a teacher and so pursued a Bachelor of Arts degree at Dordt University (formerly known as Dordt College) from 1987 to 1991 majoring in Elementary Education and Spanish. This degree opened the doors for me to serve as an elementary classroom teacher for five years first in southwest Minnesota and then in Belize, Central America. Later in my career I taught secondary Spanish and English for six years while also working on my Master of Education at Dordt. When my M.Ed was completed in 2014, I began teaching at Dordt University(formerly known as Dordt College) in the Education Department.

Teaching for me is not merely a job—it is a calling. I see my role as a teacher as that of a guide for my students and my primary goal for teaching is to equip my students to make a positive impact on society, specifically to become teachers that will train up their own students with a focus on serving others through their knowledge and competencies.

My second goal is to help prepare my students to recognize and address the diverse learning needs of the 21st century classroom. The demographics of our nation's schools are changing and, therefore, I strive to equip my students with insight surrounding the many ways that our classrooms reflect diversity particularly in regard to

inclusion and immigration and provide them with research-based strategies and pedagogies for reaching all students. My career and life's journey, at this point, are the conjoining of three areas that I am very passionate about—teaching, learning and Hispanic culture.

While pursuing my BA degree with a major in Elementary Education, I also chose a second major in Spanish primarily because my mother, who is a retired high school Spanish teacher, taught me how to speak Spanish as I was growing up and took our family to Mexico each year while I was in high school for the entire summer where she taught in a language training institute. I also participated in this college-level training. Thus, I spent the equivalent of one year living in Merida, Yucatan studying the Spanish language, culture, and history of Mexico. Needless to say, this formative time in my life made a huge impression on me and helped me see things through a new cultural lens. Since then, I have also had the opportunity to travel and study in other Spanish-speaking countries such as the Dominican Republic, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Spain.

My experience in cross-cultural study, bilingual abilities, and my initial teaching degree opened doors for me to teach Spanish to elementary students in Minnesota and then later to serve as a general classroom teacher in Belize, Central America for two years. Especially during my years in Belize, I was able to refine my Spanish proficiency and cultural competency. Later in my career, I taught Spanish at the secondary level while working on my M.Ed and I now find it a privilege to serve in the Education Department at Dordt University in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Census data clearly shows that the number of Latino students is soaring and is projected to reach 28 million by 2050 and surpass the number of non-Latino White students (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). At the same time, preservice teacher education programs such as the one I teach in, are not keeping pace with the "Latinization" of US schools as the National Center for Education Statistics (2006), reports that 83% of all teachers are White Euro-Americans while Latinos account for 7% of the teaching force in the U.S. I am encouraged in my effort to promote multicultural teacher preparation by the works of Raible and Irizarry (2011), who challenge institutions of higher education with the recruiting of greater numbers of Latino candidates into teacher preparation programs and eventually into the field of education, and also acknowledge the necessity, even the desirability of non-Latino teachers embracing the greater responsibility for the education of Latino students. In this way, teacher education can play a transformative role in the field of teaching by preparing candidates that are more responsive to the needs of Latino students and their families (Raible & Irizarry, 2011).

Not only am I compelled to address this problem of practice of bringing new perspectives on family engagement to light, I am also equipped. My previous experience in teaching in Central America and interacting with teachers and students from other cultures has prepared me to meet my goals for this work. I am also in a professional position as a professor at Dordt University to gain inroads with community leaders and certain segments of the Latino community since the college is highly regarded and trusted by most people. Another factor that has helped to facilitate this work is my involvement in the community through interpreter work I have done, leading workshops in the school district in Spanish, and participation as a board member for CASA (Center for

Assistance, Service, and Advocacy). I am bilingual in English and Spanish, so I was able to go directly to those I hope to serve through my research in order to hear their thoughts on how schools can best foster engagement with Latino families.

Another large piece of me that informs who I am as a researcher and my motivations for choosing this project is my Christian faith. I rely on the Bible as a guide for my life and recognize its central message is to "love God and love your neighbor as yourself.[16]" I believe God created all things and that humanity is the pinnacle of his creation. This truth alone gives supreme value to every human life. However, humanity has also been granted free will and thus, in our autonomy, we are capable of committing selfish acts that lead to the suffering of others. We are each individually and corporately responsible for the oppression our selfishness as a whole creates and must work to restore what has been broken in every area of society and creation. As individuals, we are not capable of working towards restoration in every area of society, but we can and must strive to bring wholeness in the areas where we have power and influence by advocating for those who do not. This is a part of my worldview that defines my life's purpose. If this were the only lens I looked through, it could easily become a limitation. However, especially during my doctoral studies, I have grown immensely in my ability to view my life and vocation through other philosophical frameworks as well. I have especially explored Critical Race Theory, considering ways it connects with and supports a Christian worldview built on the imperative to "act justly, love mercy and walk humbly[17]".

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[16] Matthew 22:37-39
[17] Micah 6:8

Limitations of the Study

I have identified five specific potential limitations to my research. First of all, the data collected from the interviews of my research participants was not intended to be representative of the entire culture sharing group. Latinos are often referred to as though they are one cultural group when in reality the community is made up of multiple sociolinguistic groups, even within the small community of Sioux Center, Iowa. Also, the sampling size was relatively small, consisting of survey and interview input from 31 different parents. For that reason, new insight produced in this qualitative study cannot readily generalize to the community as a whole.

A second limitation, that I have had to overcome, is my access to the Latino community and the outsider (etic) orientation from which this study was conducted. Some may claim that the ethnographer must be an insider as one cannot know the people she is researching unless she is one of them, but Wolcott (2008) reassures etic ethnographers that there is no monolithic insider (emic) view, either. Dr. Jean Clandinin (2000) considers this same limitation in the Bay Street School Research she conducted with Chinese Canadian students in Toronto, Ontario. Since Clandinin is not of Chinese heritage, nor is she from the large metropolis of Toronto, she described her field experience as "living in the midst" of various narrative inquiry spaces. Clandinin (2000) said:

> We sensed how different the lives of the children in this school must be from our own lives in our childhoods, growing up on vast unpopulated rural landscapes. Could we, with our journeys from there through academic halls in Chicago and Toronto meaningfully connect with the students, teachers, and parents with whom we would work if this project were to go forward?...what do we make of these different narrative trajectories? Does one have to be one of "them" to do the research?" (p.66).

In order to overcome this potential limitation, I connected regularly with at least three Latina friends that I have built relationships with over several years and who were willing to give me feedback on how my ideas and questions were forming. I wanted to communicate with my research participants in the most culturally sensitive way possible, so I am grateful for these honest friends who helped me understand how my questions and ideas might be perceived and whether I used the correct Spanish words. These friends connected me with a larger social network of people in order to gather my data. Also, my involvement with Juntos gave me exposure to the Latino community and over the course of the last five years I have been able to build some trust with several families.

A third limitation would be my own level of proficiency in Spanish. I have worked hard most of my life to learn Spanish, but I still have much to learn, and I continue to push myself to grow in my speaking ability and CALP-level (cognitive academic language proficiency) understanding. For this research project I had the assistance of two bilingual research assistants who are native speakers. Jazmín Mendieta Gauto and Abigail Mariel Barrientos Bravo aided me in my communication with my research participants and completed the majority of the transcribing and translating of the data we collected.

A fourth potential limitation was the context of this study as situated in a politically conservative region of Iowa. Nate Cohn (2015) wrote in The New York Times, "The region's leanings have their origins in Europe a century and more ago, when religious disputes in the Netherlands sent many conservative Dutch Protestants to the New World. They settled in places like Holland, Michigan and Pella, Iowa, in the south-central part of the state and eventually here in northwest Iowa." Because of its

conservative heritage, most of Sioux County votes Republican and a significant majority

vote a straight Republican ticket, according to the Sioux City Journal (2015). Since the

general perception is that Republicans oppose immigration, I believe this study was

especially important in order to bring some balance and clarity to this generalized

misperception.

The Sioux City Journal (2015) also lists decentralized government as a primary

motive for its conservative leanings. Moreover, most residents of Sioux County have

grown up hearing the immigration stories of their grandparents and great

grandparents. The community celebrates Dutch culture through festivals, architecture,

and foods (bakeries). I believe most people understand from personal experience that

acculturation[18] takes time, that there is value in biculturalism and in many ways the

community also celebrates Latino culture. Reporter, Daniel González wrote in the Des

Moines Register (2016):

> ...many residents in this deeply religious, deeply conservative and deeply
> Republican county have come to view the immigrants who have settled in Sioux
> Center-- both legal and illegal-- as hard working, enterprising people in search of
> a better life, much like their own Dutch ancestors.

On the other hand, there are those within the community that are insensitive to the

plight of the immigrant, but I believe this is because they have not taken the opportunity

to understand another perspective. I would like to provide the opportunity for the

community to see through the eyes of Latino neighbors on issues such as engagement in

education. Regardless of the political climate in Sioux County and the stereotypes that it

creates, immigrants keep coming. Sioux Center has strong schools, one of the lowest

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[18] Acculturation= the process of social, psychological, and cultural change that stems from the balancing
of two cultures while adapting to the prevailing culture of the society (Cole, 2018).

unemployment rates in the nation, and a peaceful community for families to

thrive. However, the various ethnic groups that make up our community, for the most

part, live amiably, while they also live separately. The issue, as I see it, is not racial

hostility, but racial segregation and this impacts the schools' engagement with

families. For that reason, I see the context of my study as both a limitation and an

opportunity to build more awareness.

The final limitation that I would like to mention is my own bias based on a recent

personal experience I have had with Sioux Center High School. One of my sons is a

graduate of this school. We transferred him from a private school at the beginning of his

junior year due to behavioral issues he was experiencing in his previous school. His story

is long and I am glad to share it, but for now I will summarize briefly. Micah is

diagnosed with depression, anxiety, ADHD and a sleep disorder. Because of his

diagnoses, the private school told us he could be on a 504 Plan. The plan was never

written, so the teachers at the private school punished him with detentions when he was

late to class, absent without a doctor's excuse or when he did not bring his textbook to

class. Over the course of two years, he had received almost 30 detentions, three

suspensions and an expulsion meeting with the school board almost entirely resulting

from infractions that were impacted by the mental/emotional disorders he was diagnosed

with.

Eventually, Micah gave up on school. When he turned 16, he told us he never

wanted to go back even if that meant he would not graduate. When we presented the

option of going to Sioux Center Community High School, he was willing to try

again. Gary McEldowney, now the superintendent of the district, was the principal at the

time. I was upfront with "Mac" and told him how Micah's disorders were affecting his

behavior and performance at school. In spite of the knowledge of Micah's challenges,

the administration and the teachers of Sioux Center High School collectively welcomed

and enfolded Micah without hesitation. Micah was put on an IEP, received the flexible

supports that he needed, and graduated in 2019.

Needless to say, my heart is filled with gratitude for Sioux Center High

School. That is the source of my overly positive tone regarding the school. The teachers

and administrators there made school work for my son and gave him a chance to

graduate. My interactions with school leaders concerning Micah have led to

conversations regarding providing flexible support and an inclusive environment for

immigrant students as well. I know that there is no perfect school and exclusionary

practices are often entrenched in the discourse, policy, and structure of most school

cultures in ways that they are not easily identified by the untrained mind. This study was

a way for me to train my mind to see those subtle (and sometimes not so subtle)

discursive and contextual influences that limit many opportunities for immigrant students

and place them on the margins of school life (Crosland & Doumbia, 2003). I know that I

need to look at my research context objectively and, thus, I have tried to bracket my own

personal experience in order to more faithfully reflect on school practices that build walls

rather than pathways for parental engagement with the Latino community.

Conclusion

Previous research has uncovered common barriers to family engagement in

education, as I will discuss more in depth in the next chapter. Many schools, including

the Sioux Center schools, are aware of these findings and are striving to resolve these

barriers. It is commonly understood that strong collaboration between schools and families correlates with higher student achievement overall.   However, a gap in achievement and high school completion still remains for Latino students as statistics from the Iowa Department of Education indicate: 39% of Latino youth in Iowa do not finish high school, compared to 8% of the general population who do not finish. Latinos have the highest high school dropout rates of any ethnic or racial group in the U.S. Furthermore, Latinos are statistically less likely than any other demographic group to pursue higher education (Office of Latino Affairs, 2017). Finally, they are more likely to perform below grade level. Some studies show an average gap of more than 20 percentage points on high stakes reading and math tests between Latinos and their white counterparts, for all age groups (American Federation of Teachers, 2004). Therefore, it is imperative for schools to take the initiative to intentionally seek out methods for effective family engagement. In spite of current school efforts, the missing piece(s) that may help to resolve this problem of practice have not yet been found as the previous statistics show that Latino students continue to be underserved in U.S. schools.

A strategy towards closing this achievement gap that informed this study is to look more closely at the barriers that impede family engagement--those that we already know and those that are yet to be discovered--in hopes of identifying them and then reducing them. Some of the barriers that have not been addressed fully yet in Iowa are misperceptions regarding values and common definitions of core ideas such as education and engagement that influence effective partnership and a sense of community. When we understand each other's perceptions of what education entails and what engagement looks like from different cultural viewpoints stronger bridges of collaboration and

communication can be constructed. Moreover, in order to understand, educators need to listen to the expressed values, histories, current lived experiences and cultural perceptions of Latino community members. These families have stories to tell, oftentimes counter narratives that have been silenced. These unheard perspectival insights will help schools tailor their efforts to better meet the holistic needs of all students.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Much effort has been placed on studying the effects of family engagement in education and after more than thirty years of research, practitioners in the field have gained quite a bit of insight and some improvement in educational outcomes has been realized as schools and families view their roles as a partnership with the goal of improving achievement. Most of the literature surveys the general population. In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on studying how engagement in education looks for minority populations and that is precisely where I wish to go with my research.

I am a parent and teacher myself and part of the majority population of my community. I know from experience how I have tried to connect with parents and how the schools that my children attend have attempted to connect with us as a family. We have been privileged with a strong sense of partnership on both sides and the positive outcomes of this collaborative relationship have been seen in the lives of our children. My personal experience lines up with the research findings that I will describe throughout this chapter and the implementation of the best practices that have evolved from these in-depth studies have encouraged us to become an active part of the school communities of which we are a part. My concern, however, is that the same strategies that have effectively welcomed my family as part of the middle-class, majority culture into full partnership with our local school are not serving other families as well, especially those of diverse sociolinguistic backgrounds.

This chapter will briefly review what has been discovered regarding family engagement in education as a way of giving a backdrop for the focus of my research which is intended to lead to improved communication and collaboration between the

local schools of the community under consideration and the growing Latino population. I

believe there are some general principles that apply to both communities—the majority

population, as well as Latino neighbors. However, cultural misunderstandings and

racialized perceptions likely pose as hindrances to family engagement and need to be

uncovered to reduce the barriers. It is especially imperative to take a closer look at the

Latino community in regard to this topic since Latino youth are at a higher risk for not

finishing high school and are less likely than other demographic groups to pursue higher

education (Office of Latino Affairs, 2017). If educators can take what we already know

about family engagement as a whole and apply the findings of this study to their efforts to

reach out to Mexican and Guatemalan families while at the same time discerning and

deconstructing misperceptions and other barriers that stand in the way of family

engagement, I believe student outcomes for minority communities can improve as well.

I will start with what we already know by summarizing what family engagement

is, why it is important, what barriers have already been discovered, and what we can do

to improve family engagement in schools. From this foundation, family engagement

perceptions and practices in the context of the Latino community, according to more

recent research, will be discussed. Finally, the third section of this chapter will examine

majority culture perceptions and practices from a critical stance.

Understanding Family Engagement with the Majority Community

"The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children's achievement. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school" (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, pg. 7).

When discussing engagement, first of all, it is important to define "family" broadly, recognizing that there are usually many significant adults in any child's life that represent varying relationships to that child. If we only define family as biological parents, we overlook the impact that other adults might have on educational outcomes. For the purposes of this study, "family" refers to *any caretaker a child may have in their life whether that is a biological mom and/or dad, foster parents, siblings, grandparents, etc*. It is also necessary to define "engagement." This term is used more prevalently in recent years as opposed to "involvement" to emphasize a more *active, democratic form of parent participation*. The concept of engagement pushes schools and parents to see their roles as two-way collaboration rather than "involving" parents in school activities which are focused on passive parent support. With this distinction in mind the terms *engagement* and *participation* will be used as opposed to *involvement* throughout this study.

Understanding the concept of engagement requires a systemic shift of mindset that acknowledges that partnership happens on several different levels (ie. home, school, and community), changes with students' age (ie. engaging high school parents requires different strategies than engaging elementary parents) and is the shared responsibility between both the schools and the families. This new mindset of engagement also recognizes that successful strategies need to move beyond traditional outreach events (ie. fundraisers, informational events, parent-teacher conferences) to full partnerships that foster mutual responsibility and collaborative interaction for improving outcomes for all students (Henderson, et al., 2007).

I am stating the obvious to say that family engagement is important, but I believe it is good to review what has been discovered through research as to why it is important and what students and schools stand to gain when it is done successfully. A study by Pianta (1999) shows that the relationship between the teacher and child is essential to positive outcomes and the foundation for knowing the unique nature of each student is understanding the familial background and home situation of each child noting that parents' values, attitudes, behaviors, cultures and religious beliefs all affect student learning in a variety of ways.

Other researchers confirm this insight. For instance, Steinberg (1996) found that parents communicate, whether consciously or subconsciously, specific messages to their children regarding school and learning, and they also influence their children's academic achievement via their own behaviors and the atmosphere in the home. Other recent research even suggests that parental involvement with academics in the home is more important than direct involvement in actual schools (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern & Duchane, 2007). Other bodies of research by Alexander and Entwisle (1988) and Halle, et al. (1997) found that parents' beliefs about their children's abilities are related to children's actual beliefs about themselves which impacts their sense of self-efficacy. According to Albert Bandura (1989), feelings of self-efficacy are related to student motivation which in turn impacts performance and achievement. Furthermore, family engagement has been found to relate to teacher expectations of student performance and student achievement, particularly in the context of at-risk communities (Cohen-Vogel et al., 2010). Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles & Sameroff (2001) also found through their study that

parents' values are directly related to students' educational values and to their occupational aspirations.

This is just a brief overview of the research that has already been conducted on the issue of family engagement. Through what has been discussed already, it is clear to see that the relationship between the family and the school has a powerful effect on student achievement. In addition to this, Farkas and Grolnick (2010) show correlation through their research regarding the provision of structure in the home by the family as it relates to beneficial outcomes for students. Their work shows that when families provide clear and consistent guidelines, predictable consequences, opportunities to meet expectations, information feedback, rationales for rules and expectations and act as authority figures in the home, these actions facilitate autonomous self-regulation in the classroom.

Furthermore, Henderson and Mapp (2002) have produced a large body of literature that shows the benefits that students receive when they have engaged families and also what it looks like to be an engaged family and what the primary characteristics of an engaged school are. They note that students with engaged families typically exhibit faster rates of literacy acquisition, earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in higher level programs, are promoted more and earn more credits, adapt better social skills and behavior and are more likely to graduate and go on to higher education. They state in their literature that engaged families know what their child should know and be able to do at the end of the year and how the child is doing throughout the school year. Families that are engaged in their children's education usually know what they can do to support what their child's learning in the classroom and how and when they are to take

action. Henderson and Mapp (2002) also describe what an engaged school looks like noting that these institutions welcome families into the school and the learning process. They communicate using multiple methods that encourage two-way collaboration in order to inform families about learning. Finally, they empower families to take action at home.

Research clearly shows that family engagement is a key component to student success and, therefore, it is a worthy ideal to strive for. However, we need to acknowledge the barriers that prevent it from happening as it should, identify those obstacles and then work to overcome them. Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies (2007) shed some insight into the most common obstacles to family engagement. First of all, through their study they have identified families not knowing how to contribute as a common barrier. Some parents believe they have talents, but they do not know whether they are needed or how to contribute them to the school. Also, many parents do not understand the school system. They are unfamiliar with the structure or the policies and, therefore, do not know what their rights are or how they can become involved. This is especially true for immigrant families who are navigating different cultures and languages. While acknowledging that these issues may pose as barriers it is also important not to frame them in a deficit perspective that views the parent as the problem. When lack of knowledge is the culprit, the responsibility lies with the school to provide whatever information and support is needed for parents to effectively engage.

A third common barrier is poverty which may create a situation that puts the whole family into survival mode. Parents without adequate resources often feel overwhelmed. Since they may be suffering from economic stress, their imperative may

be to first address their own needs for food, clothing, and shelter before they can focus on becoming more involved in their children's education. Other families may view that providing for the daily needs of their children is the primary way they support them in their education.

Another barrier that commonly stands in the way of family engagement is childcare (Henderson & Mapp, et al., 2007). Often, parents feel discouraged from bringing young children to school outreach events such as parent-teacher conferences and PTA meetings while childcare is often not provided at these events and, therefore, these families choose not to attend. Also, educators need to be sensitive to language barriers since parents who do not speak English as their first language may not understand newsletters, fliers, or speakers at meetings unless translation services are offered. In addition, educators must be cognizant of parents with disabilities and strive to accommodate for their specific needs since these parents may otherwise find it difficult or feel uncomfortable attending and contributing at meetings. Finally, lack of transportation or access to parking are common barriers which may prevent some families from visiting or attending school events. All these barriers and others that are unique to specific contexts must be addressed before families will feel welcomed into partnership with their community schools.

Another barrier this study checks for is varying perspectives on what engagement looks like. It is possible that the Latino families are wanting to engage or are feeling that they are engaged in their child(ren)'s education, but definitions of engagement are different. As mentioned before, it is also likely that we have differing perspectives even as to what education entails. In fact, when I piloted the Family Engagement Survey

(Appendix B) during the summer of 2018 with 20 different Latino parents, I found that every one of the Latino parents responded affirmatively to questions that asked whether they were already engaged in their children's education and whether they wanted to be even more involved (see questions 11 and 12 on survey). I found this input to be salient since others in my community had told me otherwise. The survey data confirmed my belief that Latinos already are engaged in their children's education; however, their perception of parental engagement occurs in different ways that are often overlooked by the majority community perspective. Therefore, the intensive interviews conducted later in this study provided a deeper understanding of how Latinos define engagement in their children's *educación* versus being involved in the education of children. These distinctions will be explained in the next section.

Understanding Engagement in Education with Latino Communities

A large body of cross-cultural research suggests that there are many successful ways to engage parents in the education of their children and, furthermore, how people view "involvement" is culturally variable (Zarate, 2007). For that reason, in order to evaluate "best practices" of parental engagement, we must examine how culture influences parent participation as well as schools' approaches to parents. Mainstream educators in U.S. schools have a certain idea in mind concerning what parental engagement looks like and generally understand it in terms of specific practices that parents participate in such as bake sales, fundraisers, PTA/PTO and "back-to-school" nights. It also often includes volunteering in schools, attending parent-teacher conferences, participating on school advisory boards as well as activities done at home to supplement classroom instruction such as reviewing homework (López, 2001).

The literature that I have already cited in the previous section of this chapter affirms these ideals and the preponderance of research affirms the positive outcomes of parental involvement for the majority culture. For that reason, the U.S. Department of Education states in its U.S. National Education Goals that by the year 2000, "Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children" (H.R. 1804, Sec. 102(8), 1994). However, in many ways educators are striving towards this goal from a cultural lens that differs from other perspectives in the community.

One way that differing perspectives have been revealed repeatedly is when the very concept of education is discussed with Latino parents. In research conducted by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, it was noted that Latino parents' perceptions of engagement could be grouped into two distinct categories-- academic involvement and life participation (see Table 2.1 on pg. 48). Academic involvement is understood to encompass activities associated with schoolwork, while life participation consists of ways that parents provided training in life skills and character qualities that were holistically integrated into their children's lives in school, as well as away from it. When asked to define parental engagement, Latino parents mentioned aspects of life participation much more frequently than those of academic involvement.

Table 2.1

Parents' Definitions of Parental Engagement

Academic Involvement	Life Participation
attend parent-teacher conferences	be aware of child's life
sign homework as required by the teacher	be aware of and monitor child
know when to expect report cards	be aware of child's peer group and interacting with peers' parents
ask about homework daily	teach good morals and respect of others
listen to the child read	communicate with child
visit classroom during open houses	be aware of and encourage child's abilities and career aspirations
ask questions about homework	provide general encouragement
ask friends, siblings, and other family members for homework help for child	discuss future planning
have high standards for academic performance	monitor school attendance
purchase materials required for class	exercise discipline and provide behavioral cuing
drive them to tutoring and school activities	establish trust with child
go to the library with them	provide advice on life issues
be present when required to pick up report at school	warn of danger outside the home, such as illegal drugs
	get to know teachers to assess child's safety
	volunteer to observe school environment
	encourage sibling to look out for each other

(Zarate, 2007)

Other research reveals this same distinction. Auerbach (2011) notes that in her experience preservice teachers find it eye-opening to learn about the traditional concept of *educación* among Latino immigrants, especially families that come from small towns or rural areas of Mexico and parts of Central America. For these families, *educación* is distinct from formal academic education, which is seen as the job of professional teachers; instead, it refers to character qualities and life skills such as respectful behavior, good manners, and moral training which parents see as their responsibility to inculcate in their children as the foundation for academic learning and for living well, in general (Delgado-Gaitlin, 2004; Valdés, 1996).

Evidence of this distinction is also embedded in the semantics of the Spanish language. When Hispanic parents ask a teacher whether their child is *bien educado/a* in the classroom*,* they are not asking about how the child is doing academically, but rather how the child is behaving overall. As I have been serving as an interpreter for parent-teacher conferences at public schools in Sioux Center for the last several years, it is striking to note how often Latino parents ask about their child's behavior at school when given the chance to pose questions to the teacher regarding their child's performance. Interview data in this study also confirmed this distinction. Latino parents interviewed nearly exclusively described aspects of life participation and training (*educación)* when asked how they support their children in education. Analysis of this data will be discussed in chapter four.

Auerbach (2011) also made the observation across more than a dozen years of qualitative research on family engagement, that Latino parents typically do not refer to the activity of engagement as "involvement", but rather as *apoyo* (support) which

includes a variety of ways these parents supported their children's education with verbal messages and *consejos* (narrative advice). Other studies shed insight on Latino perspectives on family engagement. For instance, Azmitia and Cooper (2002) reported on two longitudinal studies that investigated Latino students' transition from elementary to middle school that families played a key role in supporting students' present and future academic careers and moral pathways. They also noted that parents tended to stress the child's holistic development while schools emphasized academic achievement.

A qualitative case study conducted by Birch and Ferrin (2002) investigated Mexican American parental attitudes, characteristics, background, and resources that affect participation in children's education within a small community. In their research, they found that these parents viewed their role in their children's schooling as a major responsibility of parenthood. However, the parents told the interviewers that they felt they had little help to offer their children because they did not have the ability or time to make a difference and they did not know the specific steps to take to support their children's academic achievement.

Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, and Garnier (2001) conducted a longitudinal study of random sampling of 81 Latino children and their immigrant parents which tracked the parent's aspirations and expectations regarding their children's school experiences throughout elementary school. The study explored the relationship between student performance and parents' aspirations and expectations. The researchers found that when participating students started kindergarten, parents' expectations were unrelated to their children's achievement, but that as students advanced in grade level, parents' expectations became increasingly linked to how well they were "doing in school". On the

other hand, parents' aspirations remained consistently high and appeared to be almost entirely independent of student achievement as evidenced by more than 90% of the parents reporting their hopes that their children would attend college. The researchers noted, "Regardless of years in the United States, parents see a strong positive value to formal schooling, and they want their children to get as much of it as possible." (p. 566).

A yearlong case study was conducted by Peña (2000) in an urban Texas elementary school with a large population of Mexican American families. She found that parents' backgrounds-- including education levels and language-- and cultural values, family issues such as availability of transportation and childcare, the existence of "parent cliques," and attitudes among school staff members "influenced the ability of parents to take advantage of parent activities organized by the school staff" (p. 46).

Finally, Levine and Trickett (2000) observed in their study of family engagement among Latino parents' typical circumstances that made parents feel welcome. Some of these included being invited to school events, feeling that the principal had listened and offered plausible avenues for improvement, being treated respectfully by school personnel, being asked for their opinion, or having a teacher who was readily accessible, Spanish-speaking, or demonstratively grateful for parent input or support.

The literature mentioned above reveals that the perceptions of parents and educators concerning the purposes, goals, and outcomes of schooling may vary dramatically (Rutherford, 1995). Many underlying assumptions concerning common goals are made and blame over failure to achieve entrenched "common" goals is often assigned to parents. The intent of my study was not to find a deficit in any party's understanding regarding educational goals or perceptions on engagement that may

eventually lead to those goal, but we need to have a common understanding of the values that each party has for the education of their children and different viewpoints that contribute to successful completion of the educational process.

 I was specifically looking at Latino perspectives on parental engagement in education because Latinos comprise the second largest demographic group in our school district and are the largest population of immigrant students at Sioux Center Community Schools. Studies of immigrant Latino families have repeatedly shown that parents are highly interested in being involved in their children's education (Alexsaht-Snider, 1992; Diaz, 2000; Delgado-Gaitlan, 1992; Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1995), yet some members of my community feel that Latino families are not as motivated as the majority culture to partner with local schools. Auerbach (2011) notes the same observation in her research context. She quoted a district superintendent in Los Angeles who told her, "I get angry when I hear administrators say that in Latino households, education is not that important." and concluded that although deficit thinking about poor and minority families seems to be less blatant than in the past, some educators still assume that immigrant parents do not care about education. This attitude then is likely to inhibit motivation to collaborate and communicate and could wear away at a sense of community between the two cultural groups.

 Unfortunately, other research also suggests that marginalized families are perceived as "unmotivated" or "uninvolved" (Chavkin, 1993; Moles, 1993) and, therefore, are judged as being unconcerned or uncaring about their children's education when parents do not subscribe specifically to the dominant culture's normative views of being involved (Clark, 1983; Lightfoot, 1978). Other scholars suggest that traditional

involvement roles may even be outside the cultural repertoire of some parents--especially those who may have had limited opportunity to attend school, lack of socioeconomic resources, and/or negative experiences in prior educational institutions (Auerback, 1989; Delgado-Gaitlín, 1992; Valdés,1996). There are even some studies that would suggest that parents' perceptions of their own roles may render certain hegemonic "involvement" activities as incongruent with their own values and prior experiences. In any of these cases, parents who are not engaging in conventional ways may not be perceived by the dominant culture as being involved in the educational lives of their children (López, 2001).

In order to build a bridge between different ways of understanding how parents should be engaged in their children's education we have to examine the perspectives of all parties involved--educators and parents, members of the majority culture and minority cultures--and come to the realization that recognizing cultural differences in no way implies common ground can't be found. But common ground cannot be based on minimizing or ignoring cultural differences. Instead, it must be based on a healthy respect for a variety of cultural repertoires. Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) explain this idea by stating, "...instead of treating culture as a homogeneous and bounded set of practices and beliefs that is shared across a group, it focuses on shared histories of engagement but also include divergent capacity and commitment to heterogeneous ideals…" (pg.269). When we recognize and appreciate the cultural differences that we observe, we will also find values that we hold in common and can learn from each other in areas where we differ.

Interrogating Ethnocentric Practices from a Critical Stance

So far I have discussed how educators have long emphasized the importance of family engagement as a key feature of successful schooling. There is a large research base over the span of more than thirty years to support traditional engagement practices with majority communities in the U.S. This level of understanding, at best, enables educators to effectively connect with families that have the privilege of being "white" or who have assimilated to "white" cultural norms. The danger of limiting our examination to merely understanding family engagement practices that are normative to the majority community is that educators will expect all families to fit within that paradigm and form deficit mindsets towards those who do not since traditional definitions of engagement fail to incorporate marginalized communities (Lowenhaupt, 2012).

The second section of this chapter highlights ways Latino families view engagement differently which again is necessary insight for addressing the problem of practice surrounding the disconnect that often occurs between U.S. schools and Latino families. This insight alone does not fully address the issue at hand, though it may help schools identify hidden barriers not otherwise clearly seen by most majority culture educators. One such barrier may include the discrepancy in conceptualizing key aspects of family engagement such as what *educación*/education entails and how the different roles within the dynamic relationship between family and school are viewed. However, this insight alone does little to resolve any cultural mismatch in perspectives and practices. Furthermore, while there is correlational evidence to show that traditional engagement efforts positively impact academic outcomes for majority culture students, the same cannot be clearly seen in minority cultures.

Therefore, the findings from the research previously mentioned should lead educators to interrogate why we do what we do. In the case of immigrant families, questions regarding engagement must be viewed all the more critical since given their marginalized status in society, the improvement of engagement practices for these families "has the potential to contribute not only to academic achievement but also to an alteration, over time, of schools' core understandings of their role in promoting a more equal and more democratic society" (Shutz, 2006, p. 693). Deconstructed common and hidden barriers uncovered through investigation via a traditional or cultural mismatch framework merely aid minoritized families by providing access to better pathways of communication and collaboration with schools. However, this is only one step in the process. The other step is to invite families at the margins of the society into full participation in the education of their children.

The first step that merely grants access is unidirectional and it reinforces the idea that schools hold the power in the relationship with families because they can determine who has access and who does not. Too often, schools stop short in their efforts to engage minority culture families because they feel that deconstructing "common" barriers that prevent access to a strong parent-school relationship is enough. It is really only the start. The second and more critical step is the invitation into full participation into an educational partnership which allows every voice to be heard and valued. Access is attainable when barriers that inhibit engagement are dismantled. Full participation only happens in the context of a strong sense of community. To attain both access and participation, we must first consider at least three things that are wrong with traditional engagement practices.

First, several scholars have identified deeply held, deficit-oriented perspectives among educators as the cause of the failure of family engagement efforts (Bartolomé, 1994; Menchaca, 1995; Valencia, 1997). This form of discrimination appears in beliefs held by teachers and administrators such as the notion that Latino immigrants arrive in this country without preexisting knowledge to contribute. Valencia (1997) explains that deficit-thinking explains low achievement of ethnic minorities as "pathologies or deficits in their sociocultural background" (pg. 3). In her foundational work on Latino family engagement, Valdés (1996) identified misunderstanding between schools and families caused by "expectations that teachers had about what families should be, how they should view education, and how they should behave" (pg. 148). This perspective leads schools to focus on the perceived shortcomings of the family rather than questioning the effectiveness of their own policies and practices. Furthermore, in a deficit-oriented perspective, schools focus on how their work can solve the problems of their ethnic minority students, rather than capitalizing on their strengths (Lowenhaupt, 2014).

Secondly, critics of traditional engagement practices have noted ways that monolithic, ethnocentric definitions of families and engagement facilitate a disconnect between families and schools. In his study of engagement with immigrant families, Lopez (2001) critiqued traditional school practices which define parental engagement narrowly. He then challenged schools to strive to partner with parents on their own terms. He explained that "instead of trying to get marginalized parents involved in specific ways, schools should begin to identify the unique ways marginalized parents are already involved, and search for creative ways to capitalize on these and other subjugated forms of involvement" (Lopez, 2001, pg. 434).

In another study, Carreón, et al. (2005) called for greater focus on how immigrant families co-create engagement practices. They argue that researchers and practitioners alike should redirect focus not merely on how families participate in established school practices, but instead on the generative co-construction of engagement practices by families and the schools that serve them. These scholars have argued for more inclusive practices aimed at, "the empowerment of parents to be active in their children's education with whatever means they possess as well as the empowerment of schools to assist families in activating and developing parents' skills to enhance their children's academic development" (Chavez-Reyes, 2010, pg. 476).

The third critique is that traditional family engagement practices have been described as unequal partnerships in which schools determine acceptable practice for families without giving them a true voice in decisions regarding their children's education (Carreón, et al., 2005; Shutz, 2006; Warren et al., 2009). In the context of traditional immigrant destinations, family engagement practices which promote deficit-oriented perspectives, monolithic interpretations of the needs of immigrant families, and unequal power dynamics between families and schools have been found to hinder the process of acculturation and further marginalize newcomers most in need of school services (Valdés, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). Moreover, in research conducted within the context of the New Latino Diaspora suggests that deficit thinking among educators may promote family engagement practices that seek to ameliorate perceived deficits rather than support families to utilize the rich cultural assets these families bring to the school-home relationship (Brunn, 2002; Hamann, 2003; Villenas, 2002).

For example, in her study of a school in rural Iowa, Brunn (2002), described parental engagement programs that attempted to, "provide an avenue for the parents to access the social and academic resources of their children's school and of the local community" (pg. 198). These programs purposefully were offered before the afternoon shift at the local factory; provided classes on how to read to your child; and offered information such as housing assistance and procedures for communicating with the school. While these efforts were well-intended, they also revealed a perception of where schools felt the parents were lacking. Hamann (2003) explained that though these initiatives demonstrated the sincere intentions of schools, they also betrayed an underlying deficit-oriented perspective. He and others called for greater agency for Latino parents. Villenas (2002) advocated for educators to provide opportunities for Latino parents to use their own expertise to shape their children's education and to respect "their right to guide their children's upbringing and to retain various traditional, coherent goals" (Villenas, 2002, pg.23). As Hamann (2003) so aptly expressed, "attempts to be more responsive to local Latinos still largely excluded local Latinos from shaping what that response would look like" (pg. 92).

The traditional framework and the cultural mismatch framework are two possible, yet reductionistic, even problematic, explanations intended to lead towards a conceptualization of this issue. A better, more equitable explanation would be a power differential framework that could help identify the source of this disconnect as the school community's "culture of power" (Delpit, 1995). This perspective presumes that patterns exist that promote the inclusion and the exclusion of others from activities, experiences and resources that lead to effective engagement between home and school. Families

whose home and community environments reflect the majority culture are incorporated within social networks that implicitly transmit knowledge of these styles, patterns, and norms, equipping them to function well with the school community. Families outside of the mainstream, however, lack easy access to this "insider" knowledge (Boethel, 2003).

In addition, according to this perspective, families from majority culture backgrounds are linked to social networks that provide access to institutional agents who can, figuratively, open doors, smooth their way, and assure opportunities for success. School personnel, practices, and policies generally fail to acknowledge or address this implicit transmission of exclusion and inclusion patterns (Boethel, 2003). As Nieto (2002) observes, "Power and privilege, and how they are implicated in language, culture, and learning...typically have been invisible in school discourse. For instance, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory synthesized 64 cross-cultural research studies conducted on the topic of school, family, and community connections and found that although issues of power and privilege were prominent among theoretical and conceptual discussions of diversity, they were rarely addressed in the research studies identified for their review (Boethel, 2003).

Some researchers have found that one part of the solution to addressing power inequities involves the use of strategies similar to those posed by proponents of the "cultural mismatch" perspective, that is, orienting those outside the power elite to the culture of power. For example, Nieto (2002) states,

> In order to change academic failure to success, appropriate social and
> instructional interventions need to occur. For teachers, this means they need to
> first acknowledge students' differences and then act as a bridge between their
> students' differences and the culture of the dominant society (pg. 18).

Another researcher concerned with parent advocacy and agency is Delgado-Gaitan (1993), who reported that relationships among researchers, school personnel, and parents can afford new ways of understanding Latino parent engagement with schools. The findings of Delgado-Gaitan's (1990) ethnography helped to organize the Latino parent organization, Comité de Padres Latinos (COPLA). She argued that parent education programs for Spanish-speaking families need to facilitate understanding of the school system in the United States, done, of course, by regarding Latino parents as producers (and not merely consumers) of critical knowledge (Baquedano-López, et al., 2013).

This sort of power differential perspective is important to maintain reciprocal dialogic discourse which does not come naturally in educational settings. We must remember that our U.S. educational systems are built on ethnocentric mindsets that complicitly reify colonizing practices and promote success through notions of excellence based on Western values such as individually earned merit, which assumes a level playing field. Furthermore, they are also built on a "crisis of education" that is still attributed to communities of color. Thus, the majority community, which includes the school, is resistant to any change that may destabilize the power structure and therefore, reinforces ideologies of what is considered best for the nondominant students and their families. This approach denies other forms of knowledge and above all, parents' autonomy in decision making (Cruz, 2001; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Grande, 2004; Spring, 2001; Tuck, 2009; Villenas, 1996, among others).

Schools must strive for bidirectional discourse with parents regarding issues pertaining to the education of children. This is an equitable, decolonizing

practice. Unidirectional discourse, especially when addressing families from minority

cultures positions the majority culture as dominant over the families. This is racism as

defined as "the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby

the right to dominance" (Lorde, 1992, pg.496). It is impossible to create true community

within a racialized environment, therefore, a fourth framework-- critical race theory--

helps to illuminate ways that discrimination and racism pose as barriers to family

engagement. Critical race theory challenges the traditional claims that schools make

regarding objectivity, meritocracy, "color-blindness", race neutrality, and

equality. Critical race scholars argue that these traditional claims act as a camouflage for

the self-interests, power, and privilege of the dominant culture (Calmore, 1992;

Solórzano, 1997). Furthermore, critical race theory challenges White privilege and

exposes deficit-oriented perspectives that silence and distort the epistemologies of

marginalized[19] families.

Epistemological Considerations- What Counts as "Knowing"?

> "The use of a master narrative to represent a group is bound to provide a very
> narrow depiction of what it means to be Mexican-American, African-American,
> White, and so on...A master narrative essentializes and wipes out the complexities
> and richness of a group's cultural life...A monovocal account will engender not
> only stereotyping but also curricular choices that result in representations in
> which fellow members of a group represented cannot recognize themselves"
> (Montecinos, 1995, pg. 293-294).

The majority culture, which includes the school, has a particular way of knowing

and valuing certain bodies of knowledge which in many respects overlook and even come

in conflict with epistemologies and values of Latino communities. In the quote above,

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[19] Marginalized- often used to describe people, voices, perspectives, identities and phenomena that have
been left out or excluded from the center of dominant society (López, 2001).

Montecinos (1995) refers to these bodies of knowledge as master narratives; Solórzano

and Yosso (2002) call these narratives majoritarian stories and propose that one way to

unravel systemic racism in local schools is to listen to the counter narratives told by

minoritized community members. Therefore, the question educators need to continually

ask in order to overcome barriers to engagement is whose stories are privileged in

educational contexts and whose stories are distorted and silenced? Asking such questions

generates new, essential knowledge by looking to those who have been epistemologically

marginalized, silenced, and disempowered (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Since the majoritarian story is already heard clearly, even exclusively, in

educational settings, the intent of this study was to highlight the counter narratives of

Latino community members because the majority community has been remiss in

allowing these voices to be heard in important conversations regarding the education of

children. Furthermore, counter narratives often serve as tools for exposing, analyzing

and challenging the majoritarian stories of White privilege (Solórzano & Yosso,

2002). By nature, educators tend to assume the role of being the transmitters of

information and for far too long, have been telling marginalized communities how they

should view education and giving them prescribed sets of guidelines that will supposedly

lead to school success. Looking back now, schools can see that most of their effort to

bring information to the Latino community has not produced the student outcomes (ie.

high school completion, grade-level progression, etc.) they had hoped for, primarily

because the main solution for the socioeconomic failure offered by cultural deficit

majoritarian storytellers is cultural assimilation[20], specifically to White middle-class

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[20] Assimilation= the process of inculcating students in traditional American beliefs (Brophy & Good, 2008).

culture, as a means of success in school and life (Banfield, 1970; Bernstein, 1977; Schwartz, 1971). Methods employed by schools to promote this sort of cultural assimilation include learning English at the expense of losing Spanish and becoming an individual "American" success story by loosening or cutting ties with family and heritage culture and community. According to culture deficit majoritarian storytelling, a successful student of color is an assimilated student of color. This sort of narrative is inherent in school policies and curriculum and represents an insidious form of racism (Solózano, 1998; Valencia, 1997; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997).

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) also state that one of the functions of counter narratives is to build community among those at the margins of society, suggesting that a key to building stronger partnerships between home and school is a deeper understanding of the knowledge and values based on lived experiences and cultural backgrounds of marginalized community members. Where there is a cultural mismatch in perceptions and practices between the majority and minority communities, the concept of culture is often viewed as a challenge or a problem. To counter this majoritarian tendency, Gonzalez (2005) encourages multicultural educators to consider the funds of knowledge the marginalized families bring to a community. Choosing to focus on the practices of a culture sharing group as well as what they say about what they do can help to counter deficit models and may foster more respectful relationships between homes and schools. Acknowledging what the immigrant families have to offer, especially those funds of knowledge that might be unique to their culture, is a way of affirming the knowledge and skills that they possess which may create more reciprocity in the relationship between family and school.

Other researchers refer to the knowledge assets that families possess as part of their cultural capital which may include resources such as knowing how schools are organized, having a sense of entitlement to talk to a teacher, and understanding the words that educators use. These cultural assets have a strong effect on the family-school relationship (Henderson, et al., 2007). The problem remains that usually only a segment of the society possesses the cultural capital or funds of knowledge that are congruent with those valued by the school. Typically, white middle-class families have a real advantage because they share the same background, use the same vocabulary as the teachers, and understand the unspoken rules of school and community life (Henderson, et al., 2007). Lareau & Horvat (1999) in their study on social inclusion and exclusion found that even though school staff said that they welcomed all families, they recognized only a narrow band of behaviors and knowledge as acceptable. Their research concluded that differences in cultural capital and whether schools value and acknowledge families' funds of knowledge and cultural assets, both create and reinforce inequality.

Axiological Considerations- Whose Values Count?

When considering barriers that may impede partnerships between schools and families from other cultures, it is important to also analyze the value systems that each group emphasizes. While it is nearly impossible to understand the traditions, histories, and values of every culture represented in U.S. schools, understanding the collectivistic value system especially where it contrasts with the individualistic value system that is so prevalent within U.S, culture, including our schools, provides a manageable framework that could lead to the development of culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogies.

Collectivism is a cluster of interrelated values that emphasize the interdependence of community members, especially the family, and the social context for learning and knowledge (Rothstein-Fisch, C., et al., 1999). It is estimated that nearly 70% of the world's cultural groups, including many Latinos, adhere to this system of values. In contrast, schools quite often foster individualism, and thus encourage a sense of independence in the students and a value for individual achievement while disengaging information from its social context. This attitude pervades our school culture in the U.S. and also comes into conflict with the values of many immigrant students and their families.

Table 2.2

Sources of Home-School Conflict

Individualism	Collectivism
Child as individual	Child as part of the group
Independence	Helpfulness
Praise (for positive self-esteem)	Criticize (for normative behavior)
Cognitive skills	Social skills
Oral Expression	Listening to authority
Parents' role is to teach	Teachers' role is to educate
Personal property	Sharing

(Quiroz & Greenfield, 1996)

Schools and teachers who understand both the collectivistic value system of the Latino culture and the individualistic culture of U.S. schools can use practices that honor both home and school. This sort of deeper understanding helps to open doors to new

ways of thinking and acting for teachers by bringing to light specific cultural differences that are likely to diverge from conventional school-based practices and values. The collectivism/individualism framework also encourages teachers to interrogate their own practices and values as cultural in origin rather than simply the "right way" of doing things. This awareness creates a much more democratic and reciprocal environment within school cultures and classroom environments.

Another potential source of conflict of values between home and school could be found in the immersive nature of the school's English-language instruction. The pressure placed on schools and thus on EL students to gain proficiency in English at the fastest rate possible discourages immigrant students from maintaining their heritage language and thus their heritage culture. The students often progress through levels of English-language acquisition and acculturation to the dominant culture at a faster rate than their parents because of the intensity of the socialization process in English-only classrooms that they are exposed to on an almost daily basis. Eventually, this could lead to conflict in the home as parents find it necessary to rely on their children as language and culture brokers. Thus, schools need to consider the power imbalance this dynamic may create and its consequences for the parents' authority in the home and their children's socialization (Velázquez, 2014). Some parents see the socialization process that happens at school as a threat to their family's maintenance of heritage culture, language, and values. When this happens, high intensity language-acquisition models in an English-only school environment could pose as a barrier to the parents' motivation to engage with the very institution that from their perception is calling their children away from much of what they consider important.

Conclusion

As I review this vast expanse of literature on family engagement and cross-cultural connections, a new and sobering question came to my mind-- Even IF, educational professionals and the schools they serve, were able to dismantle all barriers that inhibit family engagement, including common barriers, hidden barriers, and barriers that may not even exist yet…. Even if that were even possible...Why would immigrant families want to partner with majority culture schools? Granted, schools are telling them that this is good for their children, that parental engagement produces positive academic outcomes. But do we know for sure that research that supports traditional engagement practices for majority culture families also applies equally to minoritized families? Do Latino parents really believe that or is it just another majoritarian myth similar to meritocracy[21]? We have already concluded and research confirms that Latino families are highly interested in supporting the education of their children, but buying into traditional engagement practices comes with a huge risk for these families since inherent in these traditional practices are deficit-oriented perspectives that implicate the parents for their children's low performance without even hearing their voice in this matter.

Traditional engagement practices are problematic for many immigrant families. They can actually become a source of discrimination when they focus on the shortcomings of the parents, rather than the unique funds of knowledge and other cultural assets, including values and perspectives that these families bring to the relationship between home and school. Traditional engagement practices may even become a barrier,

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[21] Meritocracy represents a vision in which power and privilege would be allocated by individual merit, not by social origins (Appiah,K, 2018).

in and of themselves, as they have been found to actually hinder acculturation and further marginalize newcomers, especially. At best, engagement, as oriented in a traditional or cultural mismatch framework, may help to deconstruct some common barriers or even shed light on hidden barriers that majority culture educators might not have otherwise seen. This may provide more access for engagement to happen, but this is only a part of the task. The more critical next step is to invite parents into full participation with schools where their voices are heard and their values matter. In order to realize this goal a true sense of community must be achieved.

Through this study, I aimed to give credit where credit is due, including to the schools in this community that, in many ways, are attentive and are striving to best meet the needs of Latino students and their families, albeit with limited bilingual, bicultural teaching personnel or faculty trained in TESOL. Regardless, these schools, I have observed, have gone to great lengths to foster access for Latino families to engage with the school, but as noted previously this is only part of the task of welcoming families into full participation. Continuing the work of deepening a sense of community within the school context may aid in forming richer educational partnerships. For that reason, the Psychological Sense of Community Theory will be used as a theoretical framework for analyzing the qualitative data extracted through the intensive interviews conducted for this study.

This information is imperative given our current age of intense educational reform that strongly emphasizes the importance of parental engagement, yet implicates marginalized parents as being uninvolved, educators need to take a closer look at the rigidity that schools utilize to determine the normalization of parental involvement. In

other words, engagement can consist of a number of different activities, but only a few are acknowledged in educational discourse (Lopéz, 2001). These marginalized forms of engagement and the families that utilize them not only challenge the status-quo but tell counter narratives that are often suppressed and excluded from academic literature because they do not conform to traditional interpretations of parental engagement. Data from the intensive interviews conducted for this project revealed some of these subjugated practices in such a way that an understanding of family involvement in education will be broadened and more culturally sensitive. These untold stories and the nuanced insights that develop from them are salient in order to discover barriers unique to the Latino community in the rural community under consideration that inhibit a sense of community. When these hidden barriers are uncovered, educators can better work with families to deconstruct these barriers, so all families have access and an open invitation to partner with schools in the education of their children.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

All aspects of the research methodology used in this study are reported in this chapter. This information is organized into the following sections: 1) research questions, 2) research design, 3) means of data collection, 4) participants and sampling, 5) means of data analysis, and 6) reliability and validity.

Research Questions

As stated in Chapter 1, this study seeks to answer these three primary questions:

- How do Latino parents in Sioux Center view family engagement in education?
- What are the barriers unique to this community that inhibit engagement with school communities?
- What are ways educators and schools must work toward deconstructing these barriers and then welcome Latino families into educational partnerships?

While I contemplated the intent for my research, I came to realize that my initial focus on fostering family engagement between local schools and Latino families as a problem of practice is laden with bias that the Latino families are not already involved and that there actually are barriers that hinder their engagement. This has been a meandering journey so far, but through my interactions with parents I was convicted that telling their story of engagement with local schools could best be articulated through qualitative methods that share their perspective of this issue rather than describing it in more quantitative forms as I originally intended to distribute surveys to a larger population. After much reflection, I chose qualitative methods because I feel that all too often we reduce minority groups to a statistic which can be dehumanizing. Through this project and in years leading up to this project I have had the opportunity to build

relationships with many of the Latino families in my community and several have afforded me the privilege to listen to their thoughts for improving education for their children.

There are several different theories that may help to uncover barriers associated with family engagement. I have utilized the Psychological Sense of Community Theory as a theoretical framework and ethnography as my primary methodology since theory plays an important role in focusing the researcher's attention. Ethnographers start with a broad explanation as to what they hope to find drawn from cognitive science in order to understand ideas and beliefs and to observe how individuals in a culture-sharing group behave in relation to this theory. (Fetterman, 2010). However, I feel that even choosing this methodology reveals a bias that this theory is universal and applies to Latino communities in the same way that it applies to U.S. culture. For that reason, I held onto ethnography loosely as my primary methodology since my study could have easily evolved (and it did) into a constructivist grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006) utilizing emergent themes leading to an awareness that modifications may need to be made to current theory and the findings that emerge out of the analysis of the data would be both deductive and inductive in nature and a new culturally sensitive iteration of the Sense of Community Theory may be found.

Research Design

Choosing a methodology was a bit of a struggle for me primarily because there are two qualitative approaches that I found very appealing. I was drawn to the constructivist grounded theory because of its systematic nature that provides both focus and flexibility. However, ethnography seemed to fit my research questions a bit more

tightly since I was seeking to gain understanding of a culture-sharing group's perspective of an issue.

Thus, I found myself gravitating towards the ethnographic approach more than grounded theory because I found comfort in being able to frame the analyzing of my data with a theory (ie. Sense of Community) or even theories (ie. Sense of Community and Self-Determination). I feared that otherwise, using ethnography without grounding it in theory would leave me circling in an endless pursuit of new knowledge and insight without a theoretical perspective through which I could make sense of it all. Charmaz (2006) cautions ethnographers about seeing data everywhere and nowhere. Starting with a theory (or two) in mind helped me focus my inquiry.

However, I hesitated in choosing to start with theory in mind because I did not want to assume that theories that have been studied among one people group apply universally to all or have the same or similar implications in other cultures. I contemplated, maybe it was better to start with a blank slate and come up with a new or a more nuanced theory after analyzing the data as a grounded theorist would do, but ethnography seemed to pay more attention to the perspectives of others which was really at the core of what I was striving to do in this study. All in all, my hope was to glean rich and thick data that is detailed, focused, and full and that reveals the research participants' views, feelings, intentions, and actions as well as the contexts and structures of their lives. I was confident that I could attain this goal using either one of these methodologies, but for the sake of this project, I initiated my research using ethnographic methods for data collection and analyzing, realizing that as my study progressed in its emergent style or in future studies using this same data set, I would need to shift a bit to a

more inductive way of examining my data if I find that the theories that frame my inquires do not provide a useful way of seeing and making sense of what is revealed in my data analysis.

Charmaz (2006), advises, "Methods are merely tools, but they do have consequences. Choose data collection methods that help answer your research questions with ingenuity and incisiveness. Let your research problem shape the methods you choose." What follows are several reasons why, drawing from Wolcott's (2008) guidance, I felt ethnography provided better tools for uncovering Latino perspectives on family engagement in education: 1) ethnography concerns itself with groups of people engaging in customary forms of social interaction, 2) it may provide the opportunity to learn or to use another language, 3) it emphasizes working with people rather than treating them like objects, 4) ethnography finds its orienting and overarching purpose in an underlying concern with cultural interpretation, 5) the ethnographer asks the ethnographic question with some idea of what the ethnographic answer might be, 6) ethnography entails both the way we study culture and the interpretive framework that we impose on what we study, 7) it translates experience into narrative text, 8) ethnography makes controlled comparison possible, while not being a comparative endeavor in and of itself; it implicitly does so by allowing differences to call attention to themselves, and 9) ethnography holds the potential for broadening perspectives, giving us a way of looking at and trying to understand the lives of others different from ourselves and, as a consequence, gaining some understanding of how we have come to organize our own lives.

A final reason why ethnography appeared to match the intent I had for this study is because this design is chosen when one wants to study the behaviors of a culture-sharing group (Haenfler, 2004). According to Creswell (2013), an ethnographer studies an intact culture-sharing group that has been interacting long enough to have shared or regular patterns of language and behavior. A detailed description of the culture-sharing group is essential in the beginning and then the researcher may focus on identifying patterns of the group around a particular cultural concept such as family engagement, in my case. The ethnography ends with a summary statement about how the cultural group functions in social contexts which allows the reader to gain new understanding about this group that would have otherwise been unfamiliar.

Data Collection

Level 1: Attendance Data

During second semester of the 2017-2018 academic year, I collected attendance data for school events such as parent-teacher conferences that were held in March and College and Career Night in April and compared the percentage of Latino families that attended versus non-Latino families. Since the number of Latino families and non-Latino families is not equally distributed within this school population (ie. high school population is comprised of about 24% Latino and 76% non-Latino), I denoted the percentage of each sub-group that attended these events. Looking back now, I realize the relatively low value that this particular data set supplies to this study, but it brought forth some helpful considerations as I will explain shortly.

Figure 3.1

Attendance Data from High School Events
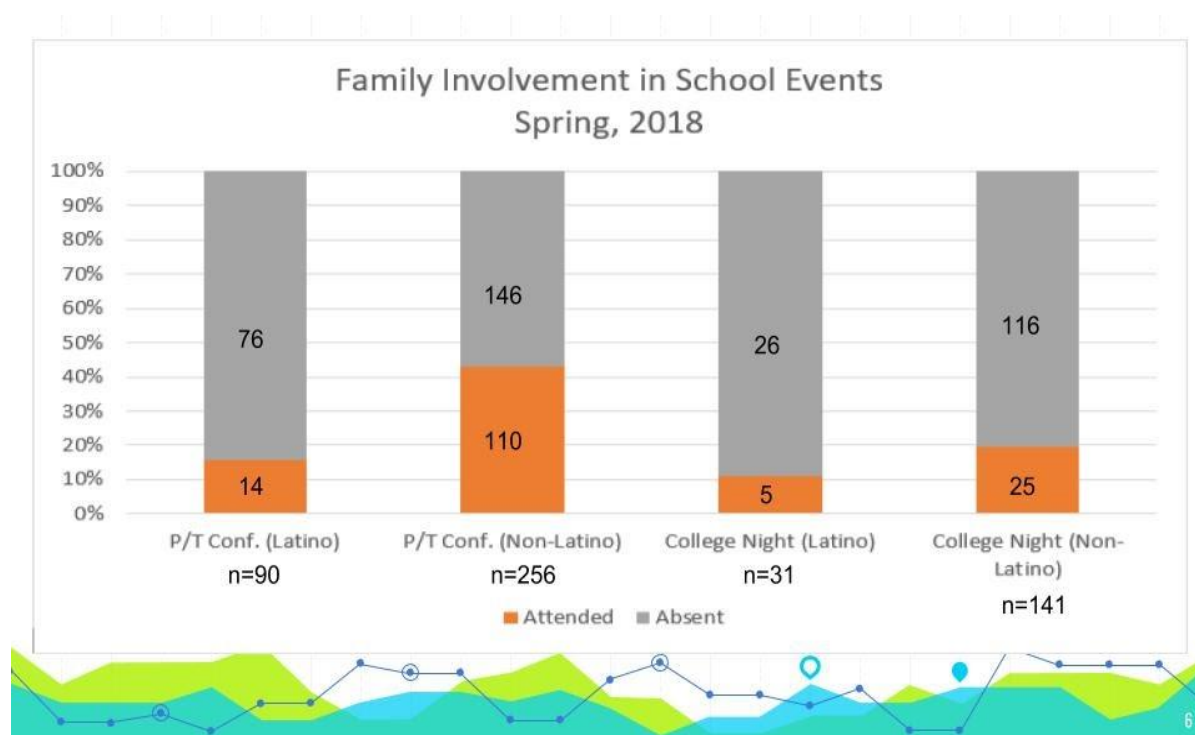
In the process of quantifying the attendance data that was collected from these

school events, I became more and more convicted to use qualitative measures rather than

quantitative to "tell the story" I was hoping to tell. In connection with a social

constructivist interpretive framework, I was hoping to communicate to my research

participants that the building of new knowledge is a joint effort, and they have an

important story to tell and a voice that needs to be heard in order for local schools to

better connect with them. A second consideration that came to my mind as I collected

and analyzed attendance data is that perhaps we, from our U.S. perspective, and Latinos

have a different definition of what family engagement entails and if so, the numbers

reflected on the chart did not truly manifest a realistic picture of engagement or may only

represent a very small piece of it and one that Latino families might view as not as

essential as other pieces. So, the quantitative data was helpful, but more as a means of redirecting my thinking towards more qualitative measures.

Level 2: Family Engagement Survey

The findings of level 1 of the data collection process affirmed my hypothesis (albeit, limited) that there is a discrepancy in the attendance patterns of Latino families as compared to non-Latino families at school informational events such as parent-teacher conferences and College Night. Following the analysis of this data, my research assistant, Jazmín Mendieta, and I distributed and collected data from 20 Latino participants as a pilot of this data collection phase using an instrument I had designed and Jaz had translated to Spanish (see Appendix C). With the survey, I was trying to determine the common barriers that might be preventing Latino families from being as involved as they would like to be. Common barriers, according to Henderson & Mapp (2007), might include:

- Not knowing how to contribute
- Believing they have nothing to contribute
- Language barriers
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of childcare
- Negative experiences in their own schooling or lack of schooling
- Conflicting work schedules
- or other special needs in the family

I was also checking for intrinsic motivation to be engaged using elements of the Self-Determination theory since several people (both Latino and non-Latino) had told me that Latinos, generally speaking, do not prioritize their children's education and were not motivated to partner with the community schools. I believe such racialized statements clearly betray a deficit perspective, so we inserted questions to see if families felt that they were already involved and whether or not they wanted to be more involved. (See

questions #11 and 12 on survey, Appendix B). If the answers to these questions were negative, other responses might reveal whether reasons for not being involved or lack of motivation to do so might be related to feelings of competency, relatedness, and autonomy. To that effect, Jaz and I coded our survey to highlight any of the elements of the Self-Determination Theory. (See Coded Survey in Appendix C).

Originally, my thoughts were that the survey would determine two or three of the biggest hindrances to communication and collaboration between local schools and the Latino community and then Jaz and I would further explore those barriers through individual or focus group interviews seeking to hear from the research participants themselves how schools could best reach out and overcome these barriers. However, as we met with Latino parents throughout the summer of 2018, a new consideration arose. I began to see clearly that Latinos were not one homogeneous group, but actually in the situation of our community, there are at least three distinct sociolinguistic groups that are considered Latino. This realization was coupled with the fact that these groups generally immigrated to our area in three different waves over the last twenty years. The third wave (mainly Guatemalans from rural areas) as opposed to the first two waves (mainly Mexican from urban and rural areas) were likely dealing with different sets of barriers and definitions of engagement due to their differing levels of language acquisition and acculturation to Iowa schools. With that realization, we added a request for information on the survey that checked for country of origin, years that the participant had lived in the U.S. and in Iowa, and the languages that they were proficient in, noting that speaking Mam (the indigenous language of the main Guatemalan sociolinguistic group) as opposed to Spanish posed additional barriers for this portion of the Latino population.

In the course of soliciting input via the pilot surveys, I also came to the realization that many of the Latino parents we were connecting with during the summer of 2018 were the "low hanging fruit" obtained through convenience sampling (Creswell, 2013) in the sense that they were people I knew from the Juntos workshops I had conducted in the past couple of years. So these were folks that were willing to come to workshops offered at Dordt University in response to newspaper advertisements and posters that were hung up around town in past years and so they were on my initial contact list and, honestly, they were pretty easy to connect with. Other people that filled out our survey were random contacts through the public library and a local food distribution center where we were allowed to set up a table and be present on several afternoons throughout the summer.

I did not use this survey in its entirety in my level 3 data collection process, but I did incorporate some of the questions from the Family Engagement Survey (see Appendix C) into the Interview Guides (see Appendix D).

<u>Level 3: Intensive Interviews</u>

This last phase of data collection went more in depth in seeking to understand the perspectives of Latino parents regarding partnerships with local schools. The other two stages leading up to this final phase were intended to reveal patterns that could be unpacked through interviews with individuals or small focus groups in order to gain a deeper understanding as to why those patterns are occurring. Some patterns were discerned through the Family Engagement Survey (Appendix B). For instance, all parents that completed the survey answered affirmatively to questions #11 and 12 indicating that they did feel they were involved in their children's education and they

would like to be even more involved. These findings confirmed that for these parents, lack of motivation is not the issue.

The answers to these questions led to conversations with some of the survey-completers regarding the various ways they were involved in their children's education. For instance, one mother told me that she did not attend school events such as parent-teacher conferences because she is embarrassed that she does not speak English, but she talks with her daughter everyday about school and ensures that there is time for her to complete her homework in the evening. Another set of parents told me that they run the family restaurant without putting expectations on their teenagers to work excessive hours so they can prioritize their schoolwork and participate in extracurricular activities. The parents in this situation worked overtime so that their children could access the full benefits of their schooling and this was their way of being involved rather than some of the other ways the majority culture might expect. Finally, I was starting to hear the sort of data that gets to the core of what I was hoping to find out so that schools can recognize the ways that these parents are contributing to their children's learning and support them in doing so.

Fetterman (2010) recommends approaching ethnographic research with a big net approach where the investigator selects a site with a cultural group and strives to gain an understanding of this group as a whole. The next step, according to Fetterman (2010) is to select members of the subculture utilizing a purposeful sampling strategy in order to gain perspective on chronological time in the social life of the group, people representative of the demographic group, and the context that leads to different forms of behavior. This was the sort of rich data I was able to glean through an in-depth

interviewing technique proposed by Irving Seidman (2013). My own involvement with the Latino community over a number of years likely added to this meaning-making and allowed me opportunities to engage some of my contacts in a series of in-depth interviews proposed by Seidman (2013).

The in-depth interview twashe data collection technique that fit best with my ethnographic questions because at its core is an interest in understanding the lived experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience from their perspective. Seidman's (2013) in-depth interview technique involves three separate interviews of 90 minutes each. The first one focused on the context of the participant's life experiences as they related to the topic at hand. The second interview of the same length focused on the participant's current lived experiences as they related to the topic, in this case, family engagement. The third and final interview asked the participant to reflect on the meaning of his or her experiences. Because each interview was meant to build on the preceding one, they were optimally spaced no more than a week apart and no less than a day apart.

My procedure for conducting the three data collecting events took place as follows: The first meeting began with an introduction to the researcher and an opportunity to ask questions about the study. The IRB letter of consent (see Appendix G) was reviewed and the participant(s) had the opportunity to sign it. The participant was then asked to complete a survey, followed by participant-researcher interview discourse focused on the life history of the participant. At the conclusion of the session, the participant was asked whether she would like to continue in the study. If so, a time and date was set for the second meeting.

Figure 3.2

Typical Data Collection Event Structure

Level 3: Data Collection Event

10-15 min.	Researcher and project introduction/ overview of the session
5 min.	Review of IRB informed consent
10-15 min.	Participant completion of survey- Escala de Actitudes
40-45 min.	Participant-Researcher interview discourse
5-10 min.	Presentation of incentive and scheduling of next interview
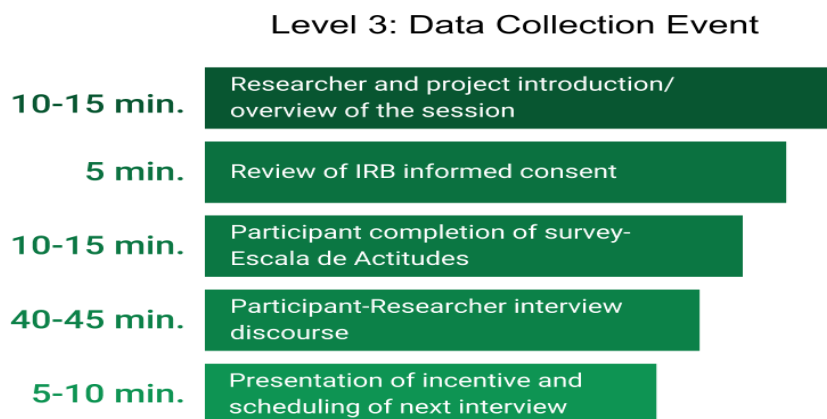
The second meeting began with a review of the transcript/audio file of the previous interview. In most cases, participants had access to this data at least 48 hours prior to the second interview so that they had an opportunity to clarify, amend, or ask further questions as a follow-up. They also received the questions at this time for the second interview to preview. The participant was asked to complete a survey, followed by participant-researcher interview discourse focused on details of their current lived experience. At the conclusion of the session, the participant was asked whether she would like to continue in the study. If so, a time and date was set for the third meeting.

The third meeting began with a review of the transcript/audio file of the previous interview. In most cases, participants had access to this data at least 48 hours prior to the third interview so that they had an opportunity to clarify, amend, or ask further questions as a follow-up. They also received the questions at this time for the third interview to

Figure 3.3

Timeline of Research Tasks and Events

Level 1: Attendance Data
Quantitative data collected at High School P/T Conferences and College and Career Night; N=256

March/April, 2018

Comprehensive Exam
Dissertation Proposal
IRB Approval

November, 2018-August, 2019

Coding of data and analysis

Sept.-Dec., 2020

Level 2: Pilot Study
Parent Engagement Survey soliciting quantitative and qualitative data distributed to 20 Latino parents

Summer, 2018

Level 3: Intensive Interviews- 11 Latino parents were interviewed 3 times each; 60-90 minute sessions

Sept. 2019-Sept., 2020

preview. The participant was asked to complete a short survey, followed by the

participant-researcher interview discourse focused on a reflection of the meaning of their

experience in engaging with schools. At the conclusion of the session, the interviewee

was thanked for their participation in the study and a Walmart gift card was presented.

The entire study concluded on December 15, 2020.

Participants and Sampling

Being involved with Juntos for three years has given me much opportunity to

connect with Latino neighbors and gain trust and friendships throughout the five weekly

workshops that involve a meal, collaboration, and information regarding how to support

our children in their learning.   From this group and from the Guatemalan church

community that I worship with, I was able to invite four parents to participate in the in-

depth interview series. I utilized a purposeful sampling technique to gain maximum

variation in the sample that consisted of first-generation immigrants from Mexico and

Guatemala in an effort to invite participation from a variety of different sociolinguistic

groups. The other seven parents were invited through snowball sampling (Creswell,

2013) where one participant facilitated my contact with another participant or a

community connection recommended people who would be interested in this study.

By the end of the data collection processes, I had interviewed 20 different parents

in a single event for the pilot stage (level 2) of the study and 11 different parents, in three

separate events, for the third and final stage of the data collection process. Thus, in

aggregate, I received qualitative input from 31 different Latino parents over 53 different

data collection events. My intention in the third stage was to conduct the three-part

intensive interview series with ten parents who were first generation Latino immigrants

themselves and who had children in Sioux Center schools (See Recruitment Brochure in Appendix H). However, upon initiating the interview process with one parent I came to find out that her children attended school in a neighboring community. Since I did not want to dishonor her, given that she wanted to continue with the interview process, I completed the three-part interview series with her, but did not use that data for this study.

Protection of Human Subjects

My relationship with the research participants involved at least three contacts in accordance with Seidman's (2013) model for in-depth interviewing. Initially, community members were invited to participate and provided information via the Recruitment Brochure and verbal explanation about the study. If community members chose to participate, they were presented with IRB consent (Appendix G) and the option to review all audio recordings and transcripts as they were produced. I offered to clarify, amend, or answer any questions in regard to the recorded and transcribed interviews.

To ensure confidentiality, the research participants were not asked to identify their name or school during the collection of the data. During transcription, pseudonyms were used to identify individual voices. The interview transcripts and recordings are being stored on a password secured computer. Also, the written survey responses (Escala de Actitudes-- See Appendix D: Intensive Interview Guides) were filled out anonymously, with no prompt requiring identification.

Hard copies of all documents are being stored in a locked file cabinet in my office. All digital data were stored on a password protected computer and were erased from the computer once the transcript had been drafted and participants had the chance to

review transcripts and recordings, if they chose. Participants received full explanations of these precautions in the Informed Consent document (Appendix G).

Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded using an iPhone app called "voice recorder" and were stored in Box as mp4 files until they were transcribed and translated into English. The transcripts were produced by myself, Jazmín Mendieta and Abigail Barrientos and included the exact phrasing of the participants, pronunciations, and grammatical structure of the newcomer voices including verbalized pauses and emotional interjections.

The design of this study was somewhat emergent in the sense that while the general theme for each interview remained immutable, the questions under each theme were customized to fit the context and the direction of the conversation. (See Appendix D: Intensive Interview Guides). After the data collection process was complete, I then conducted an in-depth analysis of the interview transcripts. All three phases of the data collection lasted about 2 years and 5 months beginning in March of 2018 and continuing through September of 2020. We had to take a pause from interviewing during the spring and summer months of 2020 because of COVID-19 concerns and so I focused my attention on analyzing the data I had at that point and we continued with the remaining interviews as soon as the IRB granted clearance in July of 2020. I followed Seidman's (2013) suggested procedure for analyzing the intensive interview data from September through December of 2020.

Seidman (2013) recommends a five-step approach for analyzing data gleaned through in-depth interviewing: 1) read the transcripts, 2) mark passages of interest, 3) label (code) passages, 4) put all passages of interest together under themes, and 5) craft a new narrative based on the new themed transcript. In a similar manner, Charmaz (2006) guides researchers using grounded theory methods for analyzing data to 1) study the data, 2) describe observed events, 3) answer fundamental questions about what is happening, and 4) develop theoretical categories to understand it. This is where the Sense of Community theory provided a useful framework. I used the four elements of this theory: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection, as themes around which to create my interview questions and code the data. Other themes that emerged were specific funds of knowledge mentioned, discrimination, family values, goals for "educación", specific ways that the families are engaging in "educación", and several other themes that emerged serendipitously which I will highlight in chapter four.

The level 3 intensive interviews conducted produced more than 400 pages of transcript data. I read through the transcripts three separate times. The first time I highlighted coded themes, specifically deducing themes around the Sense of Community Theory and made notes in the margins of the printed document also noting emerging, iterative themes. The second read-through and coding session was done electronically in MS Word using a macro called "Extract Data".   I inserted comments into the document with the different deductive (a priori) and inductive (emerging) themes. In the second reading, I especially kept an eye out for themes relating to common barriers and other emergent themes. The digital transcripts included line numbers and page numbers. When

the macro was run, lines of data categorized by code were grouped together into separate documents which I then read again for a third time in their new groupings according to separate deductively and inductively coded themes.

This coding format is recommended by Richards (2015) who argues that almost all data will need coding at least three times. Elliot (2018) also encourages researchers who are working with a project that is designed to view data through more than one lens as a way to test the fit of different theories to the data, for an example, to code multiple times. She notes that it may be important to keep frameworks separate, so a piece of data can be coded more than once, but only once within each framework.

Figure 3.4

Theoretical Intersections

Common Barriers (Henderson & Mapp, 2007)
CB1- not knowing how to contribute
CB2- believing they have nothing to contribute
CB3- language barriers
CB4- limited transportation
CB5- limited childcare
CB6- negative experience in school or interrupted schooling
CB7-other special needs in the family

SC 1. Membership	SC2. Influence
CB3, SD1	CB1, CB2, SD2

Psychological Sense of Community Theory
(McMillan&Chavis,1986)

SC3. Integration Fulfillment of Needs	SC4. Shared Emotional Connection
CB4, CB5, CB7	SD3, CB6

Self-Determination Theory (Ryan&Deci,1985)

SD1- Autonomy
SD2-Competency
SD3-Relatedness

Theoretical Intersections: Deductive Analysis

      The theories, Psychological Sense of Community and Self-Determination, that I used for my data collection and analysis intersect in various ways with the common barriers that have already been uncovered through previous research. The preceding graphic illustrates how the specific elements of these theories and the common barriers reported by Henderson and Mapp (2007) impact each other in both positive and negative ways. I used the elements of the Sense of Community Theory, Self Determination Theory, and common barriers to code my data and thus wrote pairs of questions in my interview guides that sought to align with these elements:

Emergent Themes: Inductive Analysis

      In line with my interest in both ethnographic and constructivist theory methodologies, I intentionally looked for both a priori and emergent themes, thus conducting deductive and inductive analysis within the same study. Creswell (2013) notes that the use of a priori codes "does serve to limit analysis to 'prefigured' codes rather than opening the codes up to reflect the view of the participants in a traditional qualitative way. Thus, Creswell (2013) encourages researchers who are using deductive analysis to be open to additional codes emerging during the analysis in a more inductive way. Elliot (2018) states that most pragmatic researchers will typically use both within the course of a single research project. She also says that emergent codes may evolve from concepts which the researcher has been sensitized to in the process of reading the literature in preparation for the research project (Elliot, 2018). This is so true in the case of this study. I began with theory in mind as a way to contain and delineate the inquiry process while at the same time providing space for marginalized voices and counter

narratives to be heard. The review of literature that I did leading into this project as presented in chapter two and especially the critical insight that challenges the status quo attuned my ear to listen to this additional knowledge that is often subverted by the majority culture. These topics helped to form the emergent codes as I read through the interview transcripts.

Reliability and Validity

Maintaining validity in an ethnographic study seems like it should not pose substantial concern since the data being mined centers around culture-sharing groups' perspectives and in a pluralistic society everyone's perspective should be seen as valid. But, alas, in the history of ethnography, pundits have been quick to point out the subjective nature of qualitative research in contrast with the objectivity that underlies notions of reliability and validity. One of the major differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches is that in in-depth interviewing we have to recognize the role of the instrument, namely the interviewer. If we accept that the information coming from the research participant is valid simply because it is somebody's perspective, but that perspective is mediated through the interviewer's interpretation of that perspective, it is that part of the transaction that I need to control for in my effort to maintain validity. In order to ensure that the transfer of insight from my research participants to the broader audience is as trustworthy as possible I audio recorded most of the interviews and transcribed every word and nonverbal communication (ie. coughs, laughs, sighs, pauses, etc.) of each interview. The exception to this is that three of the participants did not feel comfortable having themselves recorded. For those that did agree to be recorded, I also gave the participants the option to listen to the audio recordings and/or read the

transcripts or have them read to them, providing them an opportunity to clarify, amend, or ask questions regarding the interview before I analyzed the data.

Finally, the interviews were conducted in the language that the research participant chose and transcripts were written in that preferred language-- usually Spanish, but at times English. When the transcripts were written in Spanish, they were later translated to English and in chapter four both the section of text in Spanish and the English translation are presented, when applicable.

The three-event structure of Seidman's (2013) in-depth interview method also helped to ensure reliability in a variety of ways. 1) It places participant's comments in context right away in the first interview. 2) It encourages interviewing participants over the course of one to three weeks to account for idiosyncratic days and to check for the internal consistency of what they say. 3) And finally, by interviewing a number of participants, I was able to connect their experiences and check the comments of one participant against those of the others. This study was not meant to be a comparative study, but because I invited research participants from at least two different sociolinguistic groups (ie. Mexican and Guatemalan) within the Latino community, a comparative element quite naturally emerged as I analyzed the different perspectives inherent in these groups. Understanding these different ways of seeing helped to create new insight and maintain the reliability of the data and its interpretation.

Triangulation strategies also enhanced reliability. Triangulation centers on the idea of "convergence of multiple perspectives for mutual confirmation of data to ensure that all aspects of a phenomena have been investigated" (Krefting, 1991, p.219). I employed triangulation strategies by comparing data collected by two different means:

survey and interviews. I also triangulated sources by comparing contributions from a diverse group of research participants. If an enthusiastic response to a certain topic emerged from one individual, I looked to see if the topic generated the same kind of response in other interviews. I also explored ways that the experiences and perspectives of individuals from one sociolinguistic group aligned or conflicted with those of another.

Finally, theoretical triangulation tests ideas from diverse or competing theories. This study utilized theoretical foundations of the Sense of Community Theory (Mc Millan & Chavis, 1986) and the Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 1985) as a framework for making meaning of the findings in the areas that they intersect with theory. I have used pairs of questions throughout my three interview guides that address each of the elements of both theories and the common barriers multiple times. All these strategies were intended to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collection and analysis process.

Conclusion

In summary, this ethnographic research project was conducted to answer three primary questions:

- How do Latino parents in Sioux Center view family engagement?
- What are the barriers unique to this community that inhibit engagement with school communities?
- What are ways educators and schools must work towards deconstructing these barriers and then welcome Latino families into educational partnerships between home and school?

Data collection was completed in three different phases over a time frame of about 2 years and 5 months. The data from level three derived from Seidman's (2013) intensive interview strategy was especially under consideration in this study. Qualitative input was

solicited from 31 participants over the course of 53 data collection events in levels 2 and 3 utilizing surveys and intensive interviews. The research participants were all first-generation Latino parents who currently have children in Sioux Center schools. The interview data was analyzed both deductively and inductively to detect theoretical themes associated with the Sense of Community Theory and to look for other emerging themes as well. Transcripts were created word-for-word from the recorded interviews which were conducted mostly in Spanish and then translated to English. The findings presented in chapter four were produced from these transcripts.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

This research set out to understand Latino perspectives on family engagement in education. Toward this goal I used qualitative methods by gathering ethnographic data through surveys and intensive interviews (Seidman, 2013). In this chapter I will only be reporting findings from the intensive interviews conducted in the final phase of this project since they produced an overabundance of insight that is highly applicable to the research questions involved. Qualitative analysis involved working with this data in order to organize it into manageable units and to look for patterns to discover what can be learned and reported (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

This chapter reports the findings that aligned deductively with elements of McMillan & Chavis' (1986) Sense of Community Theory as well as elements of Ryan & Deci's (1985) Self-Determination Theory along with other previously researched common barriers that intersected with these established theories. In the process of culling these a priori themes, several emergent themes presented themselves inductively. This chapter will also report these emergent themes in areas where they show some relationship to the afore-mentioned theoretical elements.

The testimonies presented in this chapter represent a diverse group of ten participants, all mothers, originating from Mexico or Guatemala, collectively speaking three different languages- Spanish, Mam, and English. All the participants have one or more children in Sioux Center schools. Pseudonyms will be used in the presentation of the findings from these interviews to protect the privacy of these individuals.

This chapter begins with a brief introduction of the research participants focusing primarily on their level of acculturation to the community and a few details describing

their current lived experiences. Analysis of the data that follows points to findings

regarding these participants' perspectives on family engagement in education which leads

to answers to the research questions that drive this study, particularly the first two:

- How do Latino parents in Sioux Center view family engagement in education?

- What are the barriers unique to these families that inhibit engagement with school communities?

The Sense of Community Theory, which the findings are structured around help to

answer the third and final research question:

- What are ways educators and schools must work towards deconstructing these barriers and then welcome Latino families into educational partnerships?

More recommendations in response to this final question will be presented in chapter

five, several of which emanated directly from the research participants themselves.

Biographical Sketches of the Interview Participants

Participant #1: Maya grew up in Mexico City and has a university degree in Computer

Science. She came from a family with educated parents who pushed her to pursue higher

education. Her father graduated from a renowned university in Mexico City. Maya has

one son in elementary school. She is not currently married. She came to the U.S. seven

years ago and works at the local elementary school as an interpreter. Maya is

bilingual. Her interviews were conducted in both Spanish and English.

Participant #2: Lola grew up in Aquascalientes, an urban area of Mexico. She has lived

in the U.S. (Iowa) for more than twenty years having come at the age of 21. She is

married to a local farmer and has three kids that attend private school. She is actively

involved in her church communities and attends both an Anglo church and a Hispanic

church[22]. She works at a local college in cleaning and maintenance. Lola is bilingual. Her interviews were conducted in both Spanish and English.

Participant #3: Gabriella moved to Iowa in 2000 at the age of 12. She entered middle school as a school-designated ELL[23] and graduated from the local high school. She currently works at a bank in Sioux Center. She is originally from a small rural town in Jalisco, a state in northern Mexico. Gabriella is a single mom and has two sons—one in kindergarten and one in middle school. Gabriella is bilingual. Her interviews were conducted in both Spanish and English.

Participant #4: Liliana moved here when she was 17 and is now 34. She lived in California for a time before moving to Iowa. She is from the Mexican state of Jalisco. Her cousin, Gabriella (participant #3), also moved to Iowa at the same time. Liliana is a single mom of three children, ages 3, 10 and 16. She works at McDonald's. Liliana speaks Spanish as her first language and understands some English.

Participant #5: Ana and her husband grew up in rural Guatemala in the mountains. They have been in Iowa for two years. Ana's husband works on a dairy all night and sleeps all day. He is the only one living in their home who has a driver's license. They have five children: an 18-year-old daughter who has a baby of her own, a son who is in 8th grade, a son who is in 1st grade, a toddler (age 1 ½), and a 3-month-old baby. All the family members live in the same house—9 people in all, including the young man who is the father of the 18-year-old's baby. Ana speaks Mam as her first language and some

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[22] Anglo and Hispanic are used in this context to describe the language in which the church services are conducted, English and Spanish, respectively.
[23] English Language Learner- a description Gabriella gave for herself as recorded in interview transcripts.

Spanish. Her husband is highly proficient in Spanish, as well as Mam. He was present for

one of the interviews and helped interpret from Spanish to Mam. He said he would like to

take ESL[24] classes but does not have the time because of work and helping with the

children. The 8th grader is in the Newcomer's program at Sioux Center Middle School

and is doing well. He likes school. (I had the opportunity to observe for 25 hours in the

classroom where he spends most of his day.). This son also helped with interpreting the

interviews. A worry that the family was dealing with is that they were renting a house

that would no longer be available for them within the month at the time of the

interviews. They shared how difficult it is to find affordable housing in Sioux

Center. Update: Their lease was extended for three more months beyond the time that we

did the interviews. The family has since moved to a neighboring town and in the last few

months Ana's husband was deported.

Participant #6:-Mariana is originally from rural Guatemala. She has been in the U.S. for

8 years. She is currently single and has two little boys in PreK and 1ˢᵗ grade. Her

husband had been abusing her and she called the police and he was deported. Mariana

speaks Mam (a Guatemalan dialect) and Spanish. Her little boys speak Spanish, English

and Mam. She lives in the basement of a house that she shares with another Guatemalan

family.

Participant #7: Angelina is originally from rural Guatemala. She is married and has three

children, ages 6 and two teenagers. She was also pregnant and at the time of these

interviews was due in about a month. She is a leader in her church and sometimes is

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[24] English as a Second Language, according to school district designations. However, in his case it would be English as a Third or Additional Language.

asked to preach. She speaks both Spanish and Mam. (I found it interesting that of all the participants that I interviewed, the three Guatemalan women did not want their interviews to be recorded. For that reason, the research assistant and I both took field notes throughout the interviews and debriefed within an hour after each interview was conducted in order to write our compiled summary.)

Participant #8: Sofia is originally from an urban area of Aguascalientes, Mexico. She and her husband immigrated to the U.S. 17 years ago. Two of their children were born in Mexico and two were born in the U.S. Sofia's husband began working at a local dairy upon their arrival and was eventually advanced to becoming a manager at the dairy. Sofia works at a Dutch bakery. They were able to build a new house recently near the golf course. Both of their older two children are attending universities currently and the younger two children attend the local elementary and middle school. Sofia co-led Juntos with me in recent years. Sofia also serves on the school district's parent advisory committee and is an active member of the local Catholic church.

Participant #9: Valentina grew up in Mexico City. Her father had connections with Dordt University (formerly known as Dordt College), so she attended and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Communications and stayed in Sioux Center. She is bilingual and works with the Family Crisis Center. She has three children who have attended the private school in Sioux Center. Her husband is Canadian and is of Dutch heritage. Valentina identifies as Mexican and serves as a translator in the community. Her three children identify as American. They are mostly monolingual in English, with limited proficiency in Spanish and Dutch. Her youngest son is currently in high school. The two older children are currently attending state universities.

Participant #10: Camila is originally from the city of Guadalajara. She came to the U.S. in 1996 when she was 18 years old and first lived in Arizona before moving to Iowa. In Mexico she studied computers and English. Her husband is a truck-driver and they have three children. The oldest son has recently graduated from high school and now works in the community with A.T.&T. Her younger two daughters are in middle and high school. Camila is grateful that she and her husband recently were able to purchase an older farmhouse in the country that she has been decorating and fixing up. She attended Juntos in recent years.

Deductive Analysis: A priori Themes Derived from the Sense of Community Theory

I designed the questions in the intensive interviews and examined the data that was extracted from those interviews through the lens of the Sense of Community Theory because I suspected that a potential barrier to family engagement with community schools was related to whether or not Latino families felt they were a part of the broader community. In small, tight-knit communities, people tend to interact with each other in multiple overlapping societal spheres of which the school is one. If families feel marginalized in the broader community, it is possible that they may sense a disconnect from the school community as well. I wanted to test this theory to see if those sorts of perspectives emerged because I believe the Sense of Community Theory offers a clear structure on which to build recommendations for fostering a stronger sense of belonging around the four elements of this theory: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connections.

A priori Theme #1: Membership

According to the Sense of Community Theory, membership is that feeling one has of being a part of something. Members of a community feel like they know most of the people and are known. There are common expressions of membership such as language and common ways of being and doing. Coupled with these positive expressions of belonging, there also needs to be a sense of emotional safety, in other words, freedom from discrimination and deficit mentalities. When these aspects interact, members feel willing to identify with the community and put in time and effort to participate in the community. Another related deductive theme that was examined is language, which can be a common barrier to family engagement with community schools according to Henderson & Mapp (2007).

In my analysis of the interview data, the themes of language barriers and discrimination came up multiple times from different perspectives. Maya, who first served a neighboring community school district as a high school Spanish teacher spoke of discrimination as she experienced it in her early years after coming to Iowa,

"I had to drive and I spoke little English, and my students made fun of me. They saw me, I think, different because they didn't see me like them, right? With my accent and well, obviously I look like Hispanic and everything, and the first...the first weeks were very difficult. Very difficult because I wanted to leave. I felt nervous, my hands were sweating. At first I felt hurt because obviously as a Hispanic I felt discriminated against."

In recent years, Maya has begun serving in the Sioux Center schools as an interpreter and cultural liaison, and so she offered perspective on instances of discrimination, particularly in the way language is used, that she has witnessed in that context as well:

"Si, bueno, yo ví un caso de una familia que me dió tristeza porque el idioma es una barrera, es una barrera, es algo que te limita y, pues, tú eres mi vecino, y vivimos cerca, y tú hablas inglés, y yo hablo español, y a lo mejor nos podemos comunicar un poco. Te digo "good morning" y tú me dices "buenos días". Pero triste es cuando es de tu familia, como tu hijo, que ya no habla nada de español, y tú no hablas nada de inglés y, ¿cómo te comunicas con él?"

("Yes, well, I saw a case of a family that gave me sadness because language is a barrier, it is a barrier, it is something that limits you and, well. You are my neighbor, and we live nearby, and you speak English, and I speak Spanish, and maybe we can communicate a little. I say "good morning" and you say "good morning" to me. But sad is when he's from your family, like your son, that he doesn't speak any Spanish anymore, and you don't speak any English, and how do you communicate with him?")

In the above quote she is expressing the tension that many Latino parents feel of wanting their children to acquire proficiency in English, but not at the risk of losing the ability to interact with their family in Spanish. More findings will be presented along the theme of bilingualism in the fourth element that focuses on shared emotional connection. It is also related to the following quote where Maya discusses how this pressure leads to a break-down of emotional safety for Latino children and their parents,

"...es cierto, ellos se sienten presionados — obligados — porque es meterlos como de la noche a la mañana a un lugar donde: puro inglés. Puro... todo en inglés. Todo es diferentes para ellos porque yo sé que las escuelas, ya recuerdan lo que practicamos, son muy diferentes. Eh, y entonces, ah, yo no me imagino los chiquitos, cómo se sienten aunque la maestra abre los ojos y es muy expresiva pero hablándoles en inglés. Yo he visto mucho niños, por lo mismo que son pequeños lloran, se agarran de la mamá, y hemos, a mi me ha dolido ver también cómo la mamá llora y el niño está hasta pataleando en el piso, y no quiere estar en la escuela. Y sus primero días es como a nightmare [risas]. Porque no pueden ellos estar a gusto sienten que algo malo les va a pasar. Probablemente ellos están acostumbrados a ver otro tipo de gente, o escuchar otro idioma, otra forma de cómo son las instalaciones, verdad, entonces se sienten muy agobiados. Y hay maestros que los presionan que inglés, inglés, inglés, y entiendo que lo hagan pero a la vez es como un cambio muy radical."

("...it's true, they feel pressured —forced — because it's putting them in like overnight to a place where: pure English. Pure... all in English. Everything is different for them because I know that schools, they already remember what we practice, are very different. Uh, and then, ah, I can't imagine the little ones, how they feel even though the teacher opens her eyes and is very expressive but speaking to them in English. I've seen a lot of kids, so they're little crying, they grab the mom, and we've, it's hurt to see also how the

mom cries and the kid's even kicking on the floor, and she or he doesn't want to be at school. And his first days are like a nightmare[laughs]. Because they can't be at ease, they feel that something bad is going to happen to them. They're probably used to seeing other people, or hearing another language, another way of what the facilities are like, right, so they feel very overwhelmed. And there are teachers who pressure them that English, English, English, and I understand that they do, but at the same time it's like a very radical change.")

Maya also shared insight regarding her experiences with students and their families at school and in her own family life where everyday practices vary according to cultural norms and the sense of shame involved when the little boy urinated at recess,

"Entonces, es hasta una diferencia de cultura también. Porque yo les enseño, es como hasta un caso de verdad a mí me impactó. Llegó el director y así como con pena me dice, "Brenda, tienes que llamar al papá de este niño". Y yo diciendo, "no, pero pues qué hizo. Pues, quién sabe qué van a decir, de qué hizo el niño". Pues se puso a hacer pipí ahí en el recreo, ahí afuera en medio de todos. Y cómo tú, a veces hasta para mí es difícil hablar y decir eso al papá, ¿verdad?...Y entonces yo entiendo… incluso a mí me dijeron, es que ahí hay en Guatemala en la escuela, y ahí está como en el campo y entonces…"

("So, it's even a difference in culture as well. Because I teach them, it's like even a real case struck me. The principal came and just as he sorrily says, "Maya, you have to call this kid's dad." And I said, "No, but what did he do. Well, who knows what they're going to say, what the kid did." Well, he started peeing there at recess, out there in the middle of everybody. And how do you, sometimes even for me, are hard to talk and say that to Dad, right?...Even sometimes I feel sorry for him, don't I? And then I understand... even to me they told me, is that there is in Guatemala in the school, and there it is like in the countryside and then…")

Regarding an instance in her own lived experience, Maya shared,

"Yo sé que las fiestas americanas son diferentes que las de los latinos. Una fiesta americana es este-- voy a festejar el cumpleaños de mi hijo de cinco a siete. 5:00 en punto, siete en punto acabas. Los hispanos dicen empieza a las cinco; no hay hora de acabar. Llegan a las cinco voy a llegar a las siete yo cuando empieza la fiesta."

("I know that American parties are different from Hispanic parties. An American party is "I will be celebrating my son's birthday from 5-7:00 pm." At five o'clock you start and seven o'clock it ends. Hispanics start at 5:00 and there's no set ending time. They will arrive at 5:00, I will arrive at 7:00 when it starts.")

Culturally variable practices were mentioned by several other research participants as well. In many cases when practices varied according to cultural norms, deficit mentalities were created toward the minority community members and discrimination was realized. Lola cited these reasons for the discrimination she and her family have experienced,

> "Well somehow you know, just because you don't have the same accent, just because you didn't grow up in here, and all that, and then they have their own little circle, because it is true, then you are worthless...See Hispanics…we don't live like in six months, I have learned a little bit, but I still can't go that far. And my husband actually had to adjust to me and adjust to our things too, because all of my kids are kind of like that. All of the sudden something else happened on a weekend, guess what? that's how it is, we adjust. And that's kind of what I like about my culture, we adjust instead of kind of going by the book all the time. It doesn't mean that… if I say I'm going to help you, I am going to help you, but it doesn't mean that I am going to do it your way. That is when it comes diversity, and that is when it comes culturalism, different culture, different approach. And that is what has happened to me many times. Why does it happen to me? Because I like to be involved in my kids' things. If there is going to be another Mexican, is not going to happen to them because they are not involved, they don't want to, it is hard to deal with this kind of people. You know how hard it was when she was texting me asking "where is that book…."? I wanted to say a bad word, just say "I am in a concert, don't bother me." And finally kind of, in texting, I kind of put my voice a little bit louder and say "this book is here, if she has another question she can call me and find out" and that is when she went like "I am sorry, you must be so busy..." and she changed, but I had to be firm and kind of mean like she was. Then finally it was not even my fault. The book was with the other lady's child, somewhere, it was already done and everything, but she was making a big deal. There is where I see the power of privilege, I see it right there. Because I think if I would have been another white lady like the other ones, there were some "goodie-goodies on, that oh… talk like this," she would have not talked to her like that. And that is what bothers me, and that's what I want to teach the kids. Just because you see somebody younger, and just because you are somebody who is Mexican or Hispanic, or it seems that they are kind of dumb, or you know you what I mean? "Oh yeah they have a thick accent." No, you respect them the same way as you would treat anybody else."

Lola also explained how she felt this sort of deficit thinking and discrimination impacted the ways her children chose to identify. While Lola retains her Mexican identity, her high-school-aged daughters were showing resistance towards a bicultural

identity and wanted to identify only as American. This created negative emotional

tension which impacts feelings of emotional safety.

"Yo creo que depende también de las circumstancias, pero más que nada se creen que son americanos, sí. Pero muchas veces les afecta cuando a otra persona, digamos a (nombre de hija), que se ve más hispana, y la otra persona le dice, "ah, pero tú eres Mexicana". Osea, como que quieren decirle que ella es Mexicana, y ella como que, "no, no soy Mexicana". Entonces les afecta de esa manera…"

("I think that it depends also on the circumstances, but more than anything they think they are Americans, yes. But many times it affects them when the other person says to (daughter's name) that she looks more Hispanic and the other person says, "Ah, but you are Mexican. I mean, what do they want to say that she is Mexican and she is like, "No, I'm not Mexican." So it does affect in this way…")

Gabriela and Liliana, who are cousins, express hope that a sense of belonging is

developing, at least for them and their families. Liliana acknowledges that part of that is

her growing English language proficiency and the additional language support that is

being provided in the schools. In Gabriela's interviews, she shared with us,

"Como que muchos negocios o ya saben que necesitan alguien que hable español. Más gente están entendiendo que necesito sea que ya somos más y ya no hay que siempre hay una personas personas que todavía cómo que no entienden. Pero, pues, ahorita yo siento que se mira menos... no es racismo, pero si es racismo por una parte. Pero ya no nos miran tan raro como antes."

("Like in a lot of businesses or they know they need someone who speaks Spanish. More people are understanding that need. We are more already and there is no longer that…there is always a people who still do not understand. But, well, right now I feel like you see less... it's not racism, but it is racism on the one hand. But they don't look at us as weird as they used to.")

Regarding the role that English-language acquisition and the negotiation of

language barriers, Liliana shared these insights with us,

"Pero he aprendido, ya he aprendido un poco más inglés. Primero, cuando mi niño empezó a ir a la pre-school era difícil para mi, siempre tenía que tener un intérprete. Y los intérpretes no eran tan fáciles de encontrar como ahorita. Ahorita los niños, los niños que estaban, cuando yo llegué aquí, los niños que estaban chiquitos, ¿verdad? Los

mexicanos, bueno los hispanos que estaban chiquitos, ahorita ya, pues ya son unos jóvenes, entonces ahora todos esos jóvenes, ya ayudan a la comunidad. Si, por que ahorita, los niñitos que yo vi así, ahorita ya están en la escuela traduciendo."

("But I've learned, I've already learned a little more English. First, when my kid started going to pre-school, it was hard for me, I always had to have an interpreter. And the interpreters weren't as easy to find as they are right now. Right now, the kids, the kids who were, when I got here, the kids who were little, right? Mexicans, well Hispanics, who were young, now, because they are already young, so now all those young people, already help the community. Yes, because right now, the little boys I saw like this, they're already at school translating.")

"Para mi antes, por que estoy hablando de antes, era la lengua. Por que como ya había dicho no había tantos traductores como ahora. Ahorita entras, y las secretarias son bilingües y todo el mundo es bilingüe ahorita. Antes no, antes cuando mi hijo estaba en el kínder, si iba a faltar ni siquiera sabía yo cómo decirles "No va a poder ir a la escuela hoy."

("For me before, because I'm talking about before, it was the language. Because, as I had already said, there were not as many translators as there are now. Right now, you come in, and the secretaries are bilingual, and everyone is bilingual right now. Not before. Before when my son was in kindergarten, if he was going to miss, I didn't even know how to tell them "He's not going to be able to go to school today.")

While there is still much progress that must be realized towards dismantling discrimination, deficit thinking, language barriers, and ethnocentrism regarding culturally variable practices, these two mothers lead us to be hopeful by the change that has happened over many years and the other participants lead us to acknowledge the barriers that still present themselves and that inhibit Latino families from membership within the community and thus, the school community as a societal sphere within the broader community.

A priori Theme #2: Influence

The second element of the Sense of Community Theory through which I examined family engagement as it is experienced by the research participants is the concept of influence. Influence embodies the idea that it is important for a person to be a

part of a community because of the possibility that one can have a positive impact on others and they in turn can have a positive impact on the individual. It is a bi-directional construct that leads a person to have hope that the community is better because of the assets that each person brings to the group and the assets they can gain from the community. Norma Gonzalez' (2005), concept of funds of knowledge as accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge fits well within this element and helps shed light on why many Latino families feel marginalized from majority culture communities when their unique sociocultural assets and epistemological ways of knowing are overlooked or when community members remain completely ambivalent to the skills and strengths that they bring to the group.

In order to build the element of influence, minority community members must sense that they matter to the majority culture, that the leadership cares for them, and that together they will address issues that arise, ensuring that each person's voice is heard and valued. Several of the participants noted funds of knowledge that they possess. For instance, Liliana told us that a particular asset she has is that she can get a group of people to interact easily.

"Si, este me gusta mucho platicar con toda la gente. Como ahorita pues después de mi accidente tengo tres meses de que no trabajo, pero me manda textos la mánager, "Ay ya extraño aquí a la muchacha que hace que todas platiquen." Por que yo hago que todas platiquen y dice que ahorita pues no nadie platica."

("Yes, I really like to talk to all the people. As a thing, after my accident, I have three months of not working, but the manager sends me texts, "Oh I already miss the girl here who makes everyone talk." Because I make everyone talk and say that right now no one talks.")

Sofia and Valentina also expressed a desire to use their abilities and funds of knowledge to serve the community in a variety of different ways. The quote above and the two that follow show how these Latina mothers have had the opportunity to have a

positive impact on the community and were validated for the strengths and skills they have to offer. This recognition builds a greater sense of belonging because it emphasizes the positive influence members have on others in the community.

"Ok, pienso que tengo habilidades, puedo hacer cortes de cabello, puedo maquillar a persona, puedo ser independiente, puedo trabajar, puedo comunicarme con las personas. Um ¿Qué más? Se tratar una persona, se como atender a alguien, siempre me gusta talvez participar en la comunidad, me gusta ayudar a las personas, me gusta ser útil para alguien, eso me hace sentir importante para ellos. A lo mejor para la otra persona no, pero cuando… hace algunos años cuando la gente no sabia inglés para nada, la gente no sabia hacer una cita del doctor, la gente me hablaba y me decía "¿Me puedes ir ayudar a sacer una cita?" No sabía mucho pero podía hacer eso, entonces eso me hacía sentir bien y la gente me trataba diferente por que la podía ayudar, si tu le puedes ayudar ellos te tratan diferente, te tratan con cariño, eso para mi me ha causado mucha satisfacción."

("Ok, I think I have skills; I can do haircuts, I can do someone's makeup, I can be independent, I can work, I can communicate with people. Um, what else? I know how to treat people, I know how to assist someone, I always like maybe participating in the community, I like being helpful to people; that makes me feel I'm important to them. Maybe not for the other person, but a few years ago when people didn't know English at all, they didn't know how to make a doctor's appointment and they would talk to me and say, "Can you go help me get an appointment?" I didn't know much, but I could do that, so that made me feel good and people treated me different because I could help them—if you can help them they treat you differently, they're sweet toward you. That's been a source of great satisfaction for me.")

And in a position that is, you know, we were fortunate enough, that I am not needed to find a job, you know, because of money. So, you know, when this work at Family Crisis Center came up…and then I said, "This is something where I can use my abilities as a bilingual person!"

In terms of having influence in the context of the school community, Liliana indicated that she had a distinct role to play in the home-school transaction that she felt would influence the academic outcomes of her children. This gave her the sense that she was part of carrying out the goals of the school. These sentiments also reflect a nuanced conception of education and the roles that parents and educators play which will be discussed later in this chapter.

"Pues nosotros todo lo que hacemos es tratar de que todo el tiempo tengan sus trabajos hechos, sus tareas, tratar de que no falten a la escuela, lo menos posible, por que no pueden faltar. Pues en realidad los míos casi no faltan a la escuela, solamente que estén enfermos o así. Pero todo lo que la escuela les pide, pues nosotros tratamos de que ellos estén bien en todo eso. Nosotros queremos hacer nuestro trabajo para que ellos puedan hacer el de ellos...este yo creo que mi responsabilidad pues es mandarlos a la escuela. Tener todo, que estén limpios ellos, pues tengo que hacer yo mis responsabilidades para que la escuela pueda trabajar con ellos y hacer sus responsabilidades de la escuela. Por que si yo no coopero con la escuela entonces no van a salir las cosas bien ¿verdad?"

("Well, all we do is try to make sure that all the time they have their jobs done, their homework, try not to miss school, as little as possible, because they cannot miss. Well, actually, mine are almost never absent, just if they're sick or so. But everything the school asks of them, because we try to make them okay in all of that. We want to do our job so they can do theirs...this I think my responsibility is to send them to school. May they have everything, that they are clean. Because I have to do my responsibilities so that the school can work with them and do their school responsibilities. Because if I don't cooperate with school then things aren't going to work out, right?")

While acknowledging the funds of knowledge that people possess works in positive ways to build a sense of community, overlooking the skills and strengths that people have to offer hinders the building of influential relationships. Camila shared an account that she witnessed in a work situation in Arizona while Maya reflected on this same phenomenon in her own lived experiences. In both cases, the unique skill sets of highly trained professionals went unnoticed because of the ambivalence of the majority community regarding the specialized knowledge and skills these individuals have to offer. In Maya's situation, even though she is trained in Computer Science and was very successful in that field in Mexico, here in Iowa she serves in the community school district as an interpreter. The closest connection she has had so far here in Iowa to use her advanced knowledge and training in Computer Science is when she taught a sheltered Computer Skills class to English-language learners at a local high school. The women shared their perspectives as such,

"Yo cuando estaba en Arizona yo era supervisora de un grupo de limpieza, O.K. Y yo tenía un doctor que venía de El Salvador y estaba limpiando baños. Ahí venía de pasada, pero lo que me refiero es que muchos truncan sus profesiones."

("When I was in Arizona I was the supervisor for a cleaning group, O.K. And I have a doctor that had come from El Salvador and was cleaning bathrooms. This was in the past, but what I'm referring to is that many cut their professions short.")

"Tuve la oportunidad de, de, este, de hacer un proyecto en una empresa que se llama Crédito Real en México, eh, un robot mecánico. Por medio de Hp… Y fue un reto que para mí fue, estoy orgullosa de eso porque cuando yo entré a esa empresa me dijeron, ¿Quieres entrar? Hay este proyecto. Y hasta ahorita están puros ingenieros, puros hombres en el área de sistemas… Pero yo le agradezco a Dios que pude sacar ese proyecto. Y cuando yo me fuí de esa empresa, el robot trabajaba a la perfección, y yo hice todos los procesos…"

("I had the opportunity… to make a project in a company called Real Credit in Mexico, eh, a mechanical robot. Through Hp ... And it was a challenge that for me it was, I'm proud of that because when I entered that company they told me, do you want to enter? There is this project. And even now there are pure engineers, pure men in the systems area ...But I thank God that I was able to get that project out. And when I left that company, the robot worked perfectly, and I did all the processes…")

Not recognizing the funds of knowledge that Latino families have to offer is one condition that inhibits a sense of community. Another condition pertains to situations where families would like to have more influence and be more involved in the education of their children, but they feel they lack the knowledge and skills to do so. In phase two of this project when my research assistant and I distributed the Family Engagement Survey (see Appendices B and C) to 20 parents, all the parents indicated that they wanted to be more involved in the education of their children, yet Liliana and Sofia both mentioned that they did not feel fully equipped with content knowledge in math to be able to do that as they would wish. These feelings also relate to other common barriers studied by Henderson and Mapp (2007) such as not knowing how to contribute and believing they have nothing to contribute (see Figure 3.4, pg. 87). The element of

competency as part of the Self-Determination Theory also intersects with influence in the

sense these parents do not believe they possess the requisite knowledge to support their

children's learning in the ways they feel the school is expecting them to (Ryan & Deci,

1985).

"No, a mi me gustaría estar más involucrada en lo que yo le había dicho, por ejemplo, tareas, trabajo, pero a veces me lo impide pues eso de que no se exactamente lo que tengo que revisar, o en lo que tengo que ayudarle.

("No, I would like to be more involved in what I had told her, for example, tasks, work, but sometimes it impedes me because I don't know exactly what I have to review, or what I have to help you with.")

"En eso me gustaría estar más involucrada. En lo que los niños hacen en la escuela. Aja, todo eso. Y hay cosas que no puedo ayudar, pero por que yo no se. Osea, conocimiento, falta de conocimiento de las cosas."

("In that I would like to be more involved. What kids do at school. Aha, all that. And there are things I can't help, but because I don't know. I mean, knowledge, lack of knowledge of things.")

"Ah, pues siempre ando viendo que tengan sus cosas, sus tareas, ando viendo que… Bueno de las tareas no se las reviso, por ejemplo, a mi hijo grande no se las reviso por que hay unas cosas que yo ya no entiendo. Ya le están enseñando diferentes cosas. Por ejemplo, yo soy mala para el algebra..No estás sola...Ya cuando le ponen algebra y todo eso entonces nada más checo así ¿no? "pues si ya acabé mi tarea" pero en realidad no se si está bien o no ¿verdad?"

("Ah, I always check if they have their things, their tasks, I check that... Well, I don't check tasks, for example, I can't check my oldest son's tasks because there are some things I don't understand anymore. They're teaching him different things. For example, I'm bad at algebra...When they teach algebra and all that then I check if it's done, right? "I'm done with my homework" but I don't really know if it's right or not, right?")

"Ah, bueno. Cuando yo le quiero enseñar a mi hija um… matemáticas por decirlo así, tienen diferentes métodos para la enseñanza, entonces cuando yo le quiero enseñar a mi hija no me entiende por que tenemos otro método. Y ella quiere que yo le enseñe el método de ellos claro, es el mismo resultado, pero con otro camino. Y ellos no quieren oir, ellos quieren adaptarse…

quieren que yo les enseñe como su maestra, creo que esa es la barrera; la enseñanza, una manera diferente de enseñar. Puede ser la misma manera, pero la diferencia es que ellos quieren que nosotros nos adaptemos a su manera de enseñar."

("Ah, well. When I want to teach my daughter, um, math, for example, they have different teaching methods. So, when I want to teach my daughter, she doesn't understand me because we have a different method. And she wants me to teach her their method, of course. It's the same result, but a different way. And they don't want to hear it; they want to adapt…they want me to teach them like their teacher. I think that's the barrier: teaching, a different style of teaching. It could be the same way, but the difference is that they want us to adapt to their way of teaching.")

Another negative condition that occurs is when Latino parents do not feel heard or represented. This also impacts feelings of influence. Lola shared her perspective of this condition and her recommendation of how schools can represent the diversity inherent in the broader community. The recommendations that were offered by the research participants will be further explored in chapter five.

"So I can't go there, but things happen all the time, and it does happen in the school. That's my problem in school. If I am going to be a part of something in school then I have to feel like they are going to listen to me when I have to say something, you know? But yeah it was awful with this lady, it was like "That's enough...And I feel bad when they don't let me be, and then I have to become quiet and like "okay. I'll just be quiet then."

"First one, and I'm just gonna say it like this. I think they need to have a native Spanish speaker. And maybe as a teacher. And maybe be really good too. I mean so the kids are more involved in it and all that, maybe that's the first one, which is really hard sometimes right now. We're in the second generation, there's not that many teachers that are Hispanic teachers, but yeah, somebody like you [pointing to the research assistant who is Latina and a preservice teacher], completely different and all that. That's one, uhm, invite more people about, they have chapels all the time, maybe invite more diversity there…. Try to find more, everywhere…"

While there were several conditions that participants indicated were negatively impacting opportunities and motivation to connect with the school and broader community in influential ways, several mothers, including two of the Guatemalan participants, recounted situations in the schools where they spoke to the teacher and felt

heard. The first account came from Ana who said she met with her son's teacher before

the school year began and she feels comfortable talking with her and the office

staff. There was a situation where she felt that the distance her son had to walk to school

was too far and she wondered if there was a bus he could ride. Shortly afterwards, a bus

started coming to their house. Ana told me on another occasion she called the teacher to

see how her son was doing. In her own words, she said,

"Si, eso me dijó la maestra. Yo llamé a la maestra para hablar con la maestra. La maestra dijo que él siempre saluda a la maestra."

("Yes, this is what the teacher told me. I called the teacher to talk to the teacher. The teacher told me that he always greets the teacher.")

Another Guatemalan mother, Mariana, spoke of ways she had a positive influence

on her children's education, including times she interacted with the school. She said she

supported her children in their education by helping them with their homework and

projects and she goes to meetings at the school. Her friend sometimes helps them too

because she does not have much time. She mentioned that she has gone to school two

times for each of her sons. One time was to help with an art project that involved

painting boxes. Though she did not mention it in the interview, I have since interpreted

for a parent-teacher conference that she attended in person for one of her sons. Because

of this encounter, it is evident to me that she also participates in this way as well.

Gabriella highlighted her feelings regarding the leadership at one of the schools,

particularly noting how the school leaders sought to create a welcoming environment and

how they showed they cared for the students. This made quite an impression on her and

her friend so I will note her perspective here,

"Yeah I've heard it from people that moved here and even from like the principal or like people ...like when I drop off (name of sons) at (name of school)...like the principal is out there standing, like giving all the kids high fives or just like, "Hey, good morning!" Like and like my friend moved here from (name of neighboring town) maybe like a couple years ago and she's like, "Hey, who's that guy outside?" And they just stand there and like I think it's one of the counselors that stands by the four-way stop sign with other kids that help with the with the stop sign stuff so kids can cross the street in the morning. So they, you know, they trained these kids to, you know, I guess you've got to be part of... I don't know... I don't know, but it's like that I think it's one of the counselors and they have like 3 other kids that stand every morning by the stop sign by (name of school) the kids that are walking. They make sure they cross the street safe and like all the parents are dropping off their kids in the car. The principal... is the other guy, either one of those 2 are there giving each kid a high 5 every morning. "Good morning!" And then my friend was like who's that guy?" "It's probably the principal." And she's like, "They do that every day?" Like if it's raining, snowing, whatever, they're out. And she's like, "Wow that's crazy!" You know and like that for her was like-- Who does that? Really? And like at the middle school too, like (name of son) just started there he seems like if there's anything, like anything, he's like don't even think if it's dumb or it's not that big of a deal he's like let me know. I mean it's pretty cool."

Finally, Sofia related an experience she had where the superintendent invited her to be a member of a parent advocacy committee at the high school. Sofia accepted this invitation even though she got resistance from her teenage daughter in doing so. This gave Sofia a hope that her voice was valued and would be heard. In her own words,

"Yo tengo una buena experiencia, no se si conocen al súper intendente...Una vez el me preguntó "¿No quieres venir a la escuela y ser parte de la comunidad de padres?" Entonces y dije: "Ok... pero mi inglés está terrible," yo me sentía mal y mi hija, les preguntaron a mis dos hijos, les dijeron "¿Tu mamá quiere ser parte de la escuela?" Y mi hija me dice "No, tu no, tu no sabes inglés," y mi hijo no dijo nada. Y me mandaron otro mensaje "¿Puedes venir aquí a ser parte de nuestra comunidad?" Y yo dije "Ok," y mi hija me decía "No, tu no sabes, tu no sabes bien." Yo le dije "me invitó a mi," [inaudible] "A mi me eligió, el a mi me eligió, no le preguntó a otra persona y el conoce que yo no se, el sabe claramente que no se inglés... Y yo le decía "es que no le preguntó a otra persona, si el me preguntó a mi, yo voy a contestar, y si voy a ir" "No mami, tu no vas a ir" "Si voy a ir, el me dijo a mi, y el sabe que yo no se y el me conoce. El quiere que yo esté ahí y yo voy a estar ahí" Tal vez no diga nada, pero me están dando a conocer tantas cosas y me dice y me habla, y no le hablo mucho, pero yo estoy entendiendo lo que me está diciendo. Y me pregunta mi opinión, pero somos una mesa de puros americanos, son personas americanas, y yo que me siento, así como... un poco difícil para mi hablar, pero el me decía y parte no y parte si, y yo decía que si. Entonces eso a mi me gustó mucho, por que el quería que nosotros contribuyéramos y que yo diera mi punto. Entonces cuando yo conocía todo ese programa, yo ya

sabía que era lo que iba a pasar, y sabía... y mi hija ya sabía los "proms" que iban a hacer, entonces eso para mi fue una buena experiencia, que el aun me sigue invitando. "

("*I have a good experience. I don't know if you two know the superintendent. Once, he asked me, "Do you want to come to the school and be a part of the parents' community?" So, then I said, "Ok, but my English is terrible." I felt bad and my daughter, they asked my two children, and they told them, "Does your mom want to be part of the school?" And my daughter says, "No, not you. You don't know English." And my other son didn't say anything. And they sent me another message: "Can you come here to be part of our community?" And I said, "Ok." And my daughter would tell me, "No, you don't know, you don't know it well." And I told her, "He invited me," [inaudible] "he chose me, he chose me. He didn't ask someone else, and he knows that I don't know, he clearly knows that I don't know English...And I would say to her, "But he didn't ask someone else, he asked me. I'm going to answer, and I'm going to go." "No, mom, you're not going to go." "Yes, I will go. He asked me, and he knows that I don't know English and he knows me. He wants me to be there and I am going to be there." He may not say anything, but I am learning so many things through them, and he talks to me, and I don't say much back, but I'm understanding what he's saying to me." And he asks me what I think, but we're at a table full of Americans, they're all Americans, and I'm feeling a little...it's a little hard for me to talk, and he would talk to me and I'd understand part of it, and part of it I wouldn't, and I would say I would. So, I liked that a lot, because he wanted us to contribute and for me to give my point of view. So, when I was getting to know that program, I knew what was going to happen, and I knew...and my daughter already knew about the proms they were going to do. So that was a good experience for me, and he still keeps inviting me."*)

A priori Theme #3: Integration and Fulfillment of Needs

A third element of the Sense of Community Theory is the integration and

fulfillment of needs. This concept can be summarized by stating that a strong community

is able to bring people together in a way that people meet each other's needs while their

own needs are being met (Riley, 1970; Zander, Natsouluas, & Thomas, 1960). In this

way there is a sense of symbiotic partnership as each member strives to meet their own

needs within the community while at the same time striving to address the needs of the

community. To the extent that community members feel fulfilled in using their abilities

and funds of knowledge to meet specific needs within the group and that important needs

that they have are being addressed, the individual feels a sense of belonging in the community.

Some theoretical intersections that emerged throughout the interviews include mention of ways the schools are addressing other common barriers such as transportation, childcare and negotiating conflicting work schedules so that parents can attend school events. Another specific theme that parents highlighted their needs were being met were through the modes of communication that the schools implement. In all these areas, there is still much work to be done and some families still remain disconnected, particularly if they have limited access or knowledge of digital technology, but these Latina mothers expressed gratitude for the improvements that have been made over the years that enable them to receive more information from the schools than was realized in past years.

I will begin by highlighting ways the participants felt they were able to use their strengths and competencies to meet needs within the community since this emphasis fits well with the element of influence that was just discussed in the previous section. Maya, who serves as an interpreter and cultural liaison in the community school district feels fulfilled in her growth of knowledge in how educational systems function in the U.S. and in ways she is able to advocate for those for whom that system is not working. Maya told us,

"Entonces, uhm, pienso que, ah, la experiencia que yo tengo, que he adquirido a través de las escuelas, porque yo no conocía el sistema, verdad, aquí cómo se estudia todo, y a través del tiempo lo fuí aprendiendo. Entonces, ah, me siento, eh, me siento tranquila, y me siento, uhm, feliz de que las familias, eh, me tienen la confianza de acercarse conmigo y preguntarme lo que quieren. Me siento feliz de que a veces ellos sienten injusticias y vienen conmigo. Y me dicen, "¿Qué piensas tú que podamos hacer?" Y yo siempre trato de ser una voz para ellos. Y que trate de comunicarse con ellos lo más, lo mejor que pueda para que entiendan ellos, eh, los maestros y el director…"

("So, uhm, I think that, ah, the experience that I have, that I have acquired through schools, because I didn't know the system, right, here how everything is studied, and over time I learned it. So, ah, I feel, uh, I feel calm, and I feel, uhm, happy that families, uh, have the confidence to approach me and ask me what they want. I feel happy that sometimes they feel injustice and come to me. And they tell me, "What do you think we can do?" And I always try to be a voice for them. And try to communicate with them the most, the best you can so that they understand, uh, the teachers and the principal…")

Liliana also reflected on a way she felt her role in the community, specifically at her job in a local fast-food restaurant, is fulfilling a need.

"Por ejemplo, las personas de mi trabajo que a veces me platican problemas, o cosas así, trato de ayudar. Me gusta ayudar a las personas, siempre me gusta ayudar a las personas...aquí platico con muchas personas y a veces este, las personas a veces solo necesitan con quien platicar."

("For example, people in my work who sometimes talk to me about problems, or things like that, I try to help. I like to help people, I always like to help people...here I talk to many people and sometimes this, people sometimes just need to talk to.")

In the interviews, much conversation happened, as well, around the topic of how the schools were meeting the needs of the Latino families and what they could do more in order to deepen a sense of community and create additional opportunities of access for these families. The comments focused primarily on three common barriers uncovered by Henderson and Mapp (2007)--limited transportation, limited childcare and other special needs (see Figure 3.4, pg. 87). In the case of these participants, conflicting work schedules and illiteracy pose as barriers to being engaged as they would like in the activities of the school.

In regard to transportation, Maya and Gabriela both spoke of challenges families face, how those challenges are being addressed, but where needs still remain unfulfilled. Both participants mentioned the increasing cost of transportation when it is not provided by the school that has become prohibitive for many families. Specifically, both women

are speaking of the Rides van, which is the only paid taxi service available in Sioux Center.

"La escuela siempre está muy dispuesta a ayudar con transporte, eh, hay situaciones que se salen de las manos porque, ah, si la familia que no cuenta con un automóvil y viven cerca de la escuela, eh, tampoco califican para transporte de la escuela. Entonces yo he visto esos casos que a veces me conmueven hasta a veces en en invierno. Y pues, aunque vivas hasta dos cuadras, pues el invierno es el invierno aquí. Y caminar, hasta salir de tu casa a veces es difícil, ¿verdad? Con el invierno, entonces eso es algo triste que me ha tocado ver que desgraciadamente no se puede hacer mucho. Que bien que hay familias que cuando son recién llegados están con trabajo, y ellos están buscando pues que les ayuden. Pero necesitan ahí a veces pagar un taxi porque no tienen dinero, y es triste ver eso…"

("The school is always very willing to help with transportation. Uh, there are situations that get out of hand because, ah, if the family doesn't have a car and live near the school, uh, they don't qualify for school transportation either. So, I've seen those cases that sometimes move me up sometimes in winter. And so, even if you live up to two blocks, because winter is winter here. And walking, even leaving your house sometimes is hard, isn't it? With winter, then that's a sad thing that it's my turn to see that unfortunately not much can be done. How good that there are families that when they are Newcomers are in work, and they are looking to help them. But they need to sometimes pay for a taxi because they don't have money, and it's sad to see that…")

You know, it used to be $1.50 when we moved here which I know it's been like too long, but still. When it was super cold like during the winter and we lived like 3 blocks away from the Middle School, so then I didn't get the bus during the winter. When my parents would go to work, so I had to walk there. So only when it was like super bad or like they didn't clean the streets, I would call the taxi and it was like $1.50. But then I tried to do that, my cousin tried to do that for her daughter I think to get her from her daycare lady to preschool, I think. And she said she was going to pay like $3- 3.50. So it's just like, I guess it's $7.00 a day.

For Lola and Mariana, a barrier that inhibits them from connecting with the community as they would like results from their conflicting work schedules. Lola reflected,

"I did. I did have an opportunity. I don't have the opportunity so much now because my work takes so much time and then, yeah, I can't do that kind of stuff. I can't be out so much in the community, like, like I used to…"

Lack of transportation and conflicting work schedules also pose as a barrier for Marianna. Her full-time job is in a neighboring town about 20 miles away. She works from 6:15 am to around 2:30 pm. which she told us, allows her to spend more time with her sons. She explained that her work has been flexible with allowing her to take care of her sons and pick them up from school, if necessary. However, she said that when it is not possible for her to do so, some of her friends have helped her. Though she did not mention it, I suspect that illiteracy might pose as a barrier for her and for Ana. Ana specifically stated that she would like to be more involved but is not able to read and is likely blind in one eye. In her own words, she said,

"...como yo no puedo leer, no puedo entender y uno ojo no mira bien. Uno mira bien y el otro tiene carne."
("...as I can't read, I can't understand and one eye doesn't see well. One sees well and the other has meat.")

Both Guatemalan mothers are dealing with life circumstances that are very different and much more challenging than most of the other research participants. Yet, they viewed their role as a supporter in their children's education as very essential and of high priority. They both demonstrate with their actions that they are willing to cross multiple barriers to engage with the school community. However, the fulfillment of needs that they strive for happens primarily in their homes and for their survival as a family. After meeting these families, I was burdened by my perception that the integration of the needs of these families is not fully being realized by the efforts of the schools or of the broader community.

The next section will highlight discussions surrounding the modes of communication that are effectively being utilized which participants indicated are

meeting the needs of their families to be engaged in their children's education at school.

In the following quotes, Liliana and Gabriela describe weekly newsletters and digital

communications tools that they have access to and know how to use in order to

symbiotically partner with their children's schools.

"Pues la escuela tiene, pues también muy buen medio de comunicación, por que, yo al menos, cada… todos los lunes recibo como un reporte de mis hijos. Bueno, de mi hija la que está en quinto grado, es la maestra, te manda el reporte cada lunes por e-mail. Y de mi otro hijo pues ya ves tienen la página, donde puedes ver calificaciones, puedes ver todo, osea, estás totalmente comunicado por donde sea...Si te dan tu clave para cada uno de tus hijos, como yo tengo mi clave para mi hijo y para mi hija por separado. Y puedes ver sus calificaciones, puedes ver todo...Recibo todo, recibo todo. Recibo hasta ya ves las comidas, todo osea, ellos dan toda la información que uno necesita. Cada, cuando hay programas de banda, de coro, pues todo, todo está bien informado. Por ejemplo, ahorita con básquetbol hasta el coach te está informando todo, cada semana lo que está pasando."

("Well, the school also has a very good means of communication, because, I at least, every... every Monday I receive as a report from my children. Well, my daughter, the fifth grader, her teacher, sends you the report every Monday by e-mail. And my other son because you see they have the page, where you can see grades, you can see everything, that is, you're totally connected anywhere...Yes, you get your password for each of your children, as I have my password for my son and my daughter separately. And you can see their grades, you can see everything...I get everything, I get everything. I get up to you see the meals, everything, they give all the information you need. Everything, when there are band programs, choir, everything, everything is well informed. For example, right now with basketball even the coach is informing you everything, every week what is going on.")

"Si entonces eso yo la imprimo en el trabajo. Me llegan los lunes en la mañana a esta cruza la semana que viene y amigos del otro. Pero los lunes en la mañana me lo mandan y también hay una aplicación que me enseñaron y ahí me sale también la entrega me dice Alex entrego tal tarea...todo es como por internet y salgo y apoyo estar checando y yo sí mantengo al tanto con eso de estar checando. Creo que ya les entregó esto o Alex saco tanto calificacion en esto y cosas asi pero yo sí me voy a las juntas y yo quiero que le vaya bien."

("Yes, then I print it at work. I get them Monday mornings until the next week comes. But on Monday mornings they send it to me and there is also an application that I was shown, and there I get notified. It also tells me if (name of son) hands in homework... everything is like through the internet and I go out and I support. I start checking and I am on track

with all the checking. "I think he's already given you this" or "(Name of son) got such a grade on this" and stuff like that, but I'm going to the meetings and I want him to do well.")

However, Gabriela also mentioned in at least two separate conversations that while these modes of communication are appreciated and working well for her and her family at this point, this has not always been the case in the past and there are other Latino families that are still not able to readily access these tools or the information they connect the parents with.

"Creo que ya a cómo estaba antes a cómo está ahorita está como 100 por ciento mejor. Cierto y yo sé yo pido la información en inglés y en español siempre porque no lo entiendo, entiendo al otro ¿no? Pero creo que ya casi todas las notas como para field trips o de leer hasta los que... um... ¿qué fue el otro día que me dijo Max? No me recuerdo qué nota pero estaba todo está traducido. Este está súper. Las juntas también cuando necesitan que les traduzca. Se habla por teléfono también hay quien, no se quién te conteste en español pero creo que puedes hablar con alguien en español."

("I think how I was before how it is now is like 100 percent better. Right and I know I ask for the information in English and Spanish always because if I don't understand one, I understand the other, right? But I think almost every note like for field trips or reading up to those who... um... what was the other day (name of son) told me? I don't remember what note, but it was all translated. This is super. They join also when they need to be translated. There are also people who speak on the phone, I don't know who answers you in Spanish, but I think you can talk to someone in Spanish.")

"Yo pienso que no saben información de de cómo o sea cual sea el que aquí-- haz tu nombre de usuario, ya pero no explican cómo más detalladamente. Yo no sé así como mucho de computadoras pero más o menos se cómo buscarla ahí. Conocí lo que aquí me voy le busco. Pero lo pienso como para papás que no saben tanto sobre cómo usar aplicaciones yo pienso que batallarían más...Pero yo pienso que me facilito un poquito porque hablo ingles y yo puedo bien comunicar con los maestros pero no sé para otras personas y es más difícil ...Pero yo pienso que sí hay unos hispanos se le dificulta más...yo aquí más pero allá nos parecemos con computadoras mí ni nada de eso y aquí sí. Entonces muchas personas no saben usar el app en el telefono. Muchos no tienen computadora en la casa. Pero igual se puede hacer en el teléfono pero no ósea.. no creo.. no se nos facilita nosotros tanto. Por lo que no sabemos usar mucho este tipo de tecnología."

("I don't think they know how or whatever -- do your username, but they don't explain like more detailed. I don't know that much about computers, but I pretty much know how to look for it there. I knew, like I go here and search. But I think, for parents who don't know so much about how to use apps, I think they'd struggle more...: But I think I make it a little easier because I speak English and I can communicate well with the teachers. But I don't know for other people and it's harder ...But I think there are some Hispanics that it's harder for them... me here more but there we don't have computers or anything like that, and here we do. So a lot of people don't know how to use the app on the phone. A lot of people don't have a computer in the house. But it can still be done on the phone... I don't think so.. we don't get that much easier. So we don't know how to use this kind of technology much.")

Liliana commented on an additional provision that the schools offered-- hot lunch. She specifically noted how it was distributed differently from how she was used to in her own school experience in Mexico and felt the way it is offered here in the U.S. was more equitable.

"Este en México no te dan "lunche" gratis, no te dan comidas. Hay una tienda donde tu tienes que comprar, y donde si tu no tienes las posibilidades de comprar comida no compras, te quedas viendo a los niños que traen sus paletas y sus "Sabritas" y tu pues solamente si tu mamá te echó un "lunche," un sándwich o algo, pues sólo te comes eso. Es más difícil y es más discriminatorio ¿no? Por que aquí todos comen lo mismo...: Niños ricos, niños pobres, todos comen lo mismo y allá no. Allá si tienes dinero comes bien, si no, no comes."

("In Mexico they don't give you free lunch, they don't give you meals. There is a shop where you have to buy, and where if you do not have the chance to buy food do not buy, you stay to see the children who bring their paletas and their "Sabritas" and you because only if your mom prepared you a lunch, a sandwich or something, because you only eat that. It's harder and more discriminatory, isn't it? Because everyone here eats the same thing...Rich children, poor children, everyone eats the same thing and not there. There if you have money, you eat well, otherwise you don't eat.")

Gabriela was especially grateful for the ways the schools are attentive to the academic and language proficiency needs of the students. On three different occasions she offered these comments,

"No me recuerdo mucho...pero bien pero lo que yo pienso que aquí los maestros hacen mucho más por los niños que en México porque como aquí tan solo como mis niños tan solo por ser hispanos o porque yo hablo español bien les hacen una un no sé si es como

un test algo de ESL para saber que son fluyentés en inglés y si no los mandan con (nombre de la maestra) como para dar unas clases y asegurarse que hablan y saben el suficiente inglés como para seguir con cualquier otro niño…"

("I don't remember much... but well but what I think that here teachers do much more for children than in Mexico. Like here just like my children just because they are Hispanic or because I speak Spanish well they do a… I don't know if it's like a test, something for ESL to know if they are fluent in English. If they are not, they send them with (name of teacher) for a few classes and make sure they speak and know enough English to continue like any other child…")

"Yeah, like out there, it was like whatever. If you just don't pass sixth grade you just do six grade again, you know. And it's like you stay there till you get it. Like here, it's like if they see that your child is like falling behind or they're not getting it's like... boom! Somebody steps up and it's like OK we can work with him. We can do this and we're going to get you there. Yeah, you know. And out there it's like we'll see you next year again. (laughter) That's how it is."

"It's just crazy... OK, if I ever move, like yeah, that's my first priority-- my kids, my kids' school. I mean my kids but like their school like where are we going to find something just like it? Any help they need it's like, "Hey, we'll find you somebody to…" Or like, you know, if you're behind on this, so let's make a plan. Let's get this done. Like it's crazy, It's amazing."

Liliana, one of the mothers who had expressed low self-efficacy in her knowledge of the subjects her children needed help with at home, shared this comment of appreciation for the after-school program provided by the district. This program meets a need that Liliana does not feel equipped to fulfill.

"Y yo decía "¿No pos aquí que hago?" Osea no sabía ni que, y ya después me dijeron eso de que había tres días o cuatro días de ese programa de después de la escuela y ya yo me sentía bien, porque ya yo sabía de que mi hijo estaba aprendiendo y alguien más le estaba ayudando."

("And I was like, "What do I do?" I mean, I didn't even know that, and then they told me that there were three days or four days of that after-school program and I was already feeling good, because I already knew that my son was learning and someone else was helping him.")

Overall, the parents' perspectives on the amount of support and the various types of the support the schools provide was very positive. For the most part, it is perceived

that the school communities have been successful in getting the needs of these members

met as is apparent in the following two quotes by Liliana and Sofia, respectively.

"Yo estoy muy contenta con la escuela de mis hijos, osea en todo, osea nunca he tenido ningún conflicto con ellos por que siempre, todo lo que uno les pide o todo lo que uno necesita, ahí está, ayudas, o lo que sea. Siempre en juntas de maestros te dicen que si tu hijo necesita alguna ayuda… por ejemplo, si una ayuda especial, por ejemplo, te hacen saber de que tienen sus mentores pues. Te hacen saber de que hay psicólogos, hay personas que pueden ayudar a tus hijos. Y pues tu estás tranquila con eso por que tu sabes de que algo anda mal con tu hijo, osea te sientes respaldada, te sientes que alguien te va a ayudar."

("I'm very happy with my children's school, that is, I mean, I've never had any conflict with them because always, everything you ask them for or everything you need, there it is, help, or whatever. Always on teachers' meetings they tell you that if your child needs any help... for example, if a special aid, for example, let you know that they have mentors. They let you know that there are psychologists, there are people who can help your children. And because you're calm about that because you know something's wrong with your son, you're backed up, you feel like someone's going to help you.")

"And another thing I've seen is that the teachers are wonderful. They've been good all the years I've been here. They know how to treat kids; they treat them with respect and love. I don't know, I've really liked that, the educational part, actually. People love how they treat their children, and I'm delighted about how personalized the treatment is. As someone who lived in Mexico said, that when they lived in Mexico, people got hit or received poor treatment, disrespect, and bad behavior. Not here, this is something that anyone is going to notice. Anyone will say, "What a nice school." It's one of the things where people stay here; it's one of the most important: education and that children grow up with those values and system and that makes them not return to their countries of origin."

A priori Theme #4: Shared Emotional Connection

A fourth and final element of the Sense of Community Theory is shared

emotional connection. This sort of connection is partially based on a shared history, but

that does not mean that groups members have to share the same history in order to build

community. However, they must be able to share understanding of the previous

backgrounds and current lived experiences of other community members. Part of the

equation for this connection is high-quality interaction equals amount of honor given to members minus the amount of humiliation the interaction entails (see Table 1.1, pg. 22). This relates to affirming parents for their active role in education rather than developing deficit mindsets for their perceived "failure" to adhere to traditional engagement practices. Part of this affirmation is acknowledging cultural variations of family values in comparison to the values of the school communities. A major theme that emerged through this analysis was the families' desire that their children maintain their heritage language and culture.

If the research participants had a negative school experience growing up, this could pose as a possible barrier according to Henderson & Mapp (2007). This negative emotional reaction to school may inhibit parents from connecting with the schools their children attend. I read the data with this possibility in mind as well to check for correlations between a previous negative school experience and reticence towards connecting with their children's schools.

Another theoretical element that aligns with this framework is the third element of the Self-Determination Theory-- relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 1985). This theory suggests that when people feel a sense of connection, they are more intrinsically motivated to participate. I believe this is an important intersection between these two theories because a common deficit mindset regarding Latino parents is that they do not seem motivated to partner with schools (at least in traditional ways) and I believe the Sense of Community Theory shows us why that is and how we can reduce barriers that may be inhibiting intrinsic motivation. Other emergent themes include: a value for being bilingual and bicultural, understanding the significance of Latino customs, appreciation of diversity,

values of respect, good character and morals, and a value for personal interaction as opposed to merely written communication. These are all values that the research participants communicated were important to them and their families. When there is alignment between these values and the things schools deem as important, a greater sense of community can be built.

Several of the research participants discussed their desire for their children to grow and maintain proficiency in Spanish as part of their cultural identity and the practical benefit of being bilingual in the workforce. However, as already mentioned in the first element of this theory, some of the parents felt the schools were putting too much pressure on the children to speak English only, putting them at risk of losing their heritage language and thus their heritage culture. When this happens, parents may feel that the values of the schools (ie. English-only) are at odds with the values of the family (ie. maintenance of the heritage language). Maya and Gabriella shared their thoughts regarding this.

"Aha… Entonces es ahí donde yo pienso que tengo que trabajar con él un poco más. Pero, por lo mismo, él algunas veces me ha dicho, ¿por qué yo tengo que hablar español? ¿Si en la escuela hablan todos inglés? Le digo, pero acuérdate que yo tu mamá, soy de México, y tú tienes raíces hispanas, ok, y entonces tú quieres ir conmigo a México, tienes que hablar español, porque no quiero que hables allá inglés...:"

("Aha... So that's where I think I have to work with him a little bit more. But, for the same reason, he has sometimes told me, why do I have to speak Spanish? If they all speak English at school? I tell him, but remember that I am your mom. I'm from Mexico, and you have Hispanic roots, ok, and then you want to go with me to Mexico, you have to speak Spanish, because I don't want you to speak English there…")

"No, si, lo veo como una oportunidad porque, obviamente, a medida que él crece se comunica mejor, ¿verdad? Pero a la vez, eh, también el idioma ya es más rico, él ya usa más palabras y por lo, como dices tú, yo con mis orígenes Mexicana y todo, pues, yo hay palabras que a veces le digo en español y me dice que, "what is that?" Entonces ya trato de usar en inglés o trato de usar otra palabra, pero pienso, como dices tú es una

oportunidad para… Uno, darnos cuenta qué tan importante es la comunicación no importa qué edad tengas. Yo puedo tener 60 años, el podrá tener 18/20 y necesitamos comunicarnos, que me diga todo, qué le pasa etc. Entonces yo pienso que es una oportunidad para crecer ambos… yo aprender más inglés, él aprender más español y pedirle a Dios que la comunicación siempre fluya de los dos lados…"

("No, yes, I see it as an opportunity because, obviously, as he grows he communicates better, right? But at the same time, uh, also the language is already richer, he already uses more words and so, as you say, me with my Mexican origins and everything, well, I have words that sometimes I say to him in Spanish and he tells me that, "what is that?" So I'm already trying to use in English or I try to use another word, but I think, as you say it's an opportunity to... One, to realize how important communication is no matter how old you are. I can be 60 years old; he can be 18/20 and we need to communicate, tell me everything, what happens to him etc. So, I think it's an opportunity to grow both... I learn more English; he learns more Spanish and ask God that communication always flow from both sides…")

"I tell (name of son) all the time if you don't… like don't lose your Spanish. Like I got the job at the bank because I spoke Spanish. They didn't hear that I didn't have school, banking school or anything. They just needed someone who spoke Spanish and that's why I got my job. So you never know if…"

One of the Guatemalan mothers, Angelina, also agreed that there is a strong emphasis in the schools on speaking only English and being American. She said it would be good to affirm both Spanish and English as necessary for life and learning. On the other hand, Liliana mentioned that the school her children attend was making some strides to affirm bilingualism and biculturalism.

"Iban a poner una mesa para poner todas las cosas que llevaron las personas. También en el, la vitrina, tienen una vitrina como así de vidrio en el que pusieron las fotos de todos los hispanos que hablan dos idiomas. Si yo fui a las juntas de padres, la semana pasada y ahí estaba la foto de mis hijos. De que hablan, de que son bilingües, los estaban reconociendo de que hablan dos idiomas."

("They were going to set a table to put all the things that people brought. Also, in the, the display case, they have a glass display case in which they put the photos of all Hispanics who speak two languages. I went to the parent meetings, last week and there was my children's picture. That they talk about, that they are bilingual, they were acknowledging that they speak two languages.")

Figure 4.1

Display Featuring Liliana's Bilingual Children
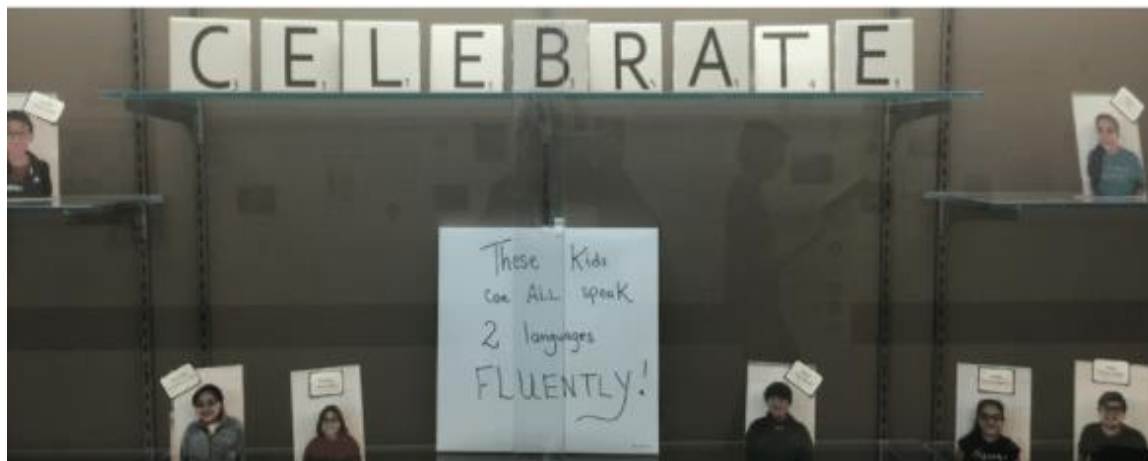
According to Henderson & Mapp (2007), prior school experiences often play a part in determining parents' participation in their own children's school experiences which is why a large part of the first intensive interview was focused on understanding the parents' previous school experiences in their native countries. One parent, Gabriela, attended primaria and part of secundaria[25] in Mexico and immigrated to the U.S. right before 8th grade so she completed junior high and high school in Sioux Center Community Schools. Her comments were especially salient in this discussion since her early experiences in U.S. schools were not particularly positive.

"Este empecé ir al escuela no me gustaba para nada este yo y mami llevaba al escuela yo me regresaba. Este era la cosa, yo no hable inglés y tampoco no me gustaba la comida pero…No comía… y en ese tiempo no había tanta que hablaba español...y éramos con (nombre de maestra), quien era mi ESL teacher. Y erámos yo y otro muchacho cómo se llama llegamos los dos al grado siete y no mas. Ella era la única que nos habla español... todo el inglés... todo, todo… Por eso no queria ir la escuela...Pero

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[25] In most Mexican school systems "primaria" is equivalent to U.S. grades 1-6 and "secundaria" is equivalent to grades 7-9.

como yo no quería ir a la escuela y mi mamá era la que más me decían, "tienes que ir pues para que aprendas inglés y ya aprendiendo ingles.... Mi mamá me puchaba mucho y yo mi mamá vivíamos cerquita de la escuela de la Middle School y nos íbamos caminando. Mi mamá me llevaba caminando y yo entraba la escuela y yo me regresaba. Mi mamá se regresaba caminando yo como a las 5 minutos y me salí de la escuela y regreso otra vez caminando y mamá me iba a llevar otra vez hasta que (nombre de maestra de ESL) dijo, "Ven la policía por tí si no vas a la escuela."

("I started going to school, I didn't like nothing. Mommy would take me to school and I would come back. This was the thing, I didn't speak English and I didn't like the food but...I didn't eat... I wouldn't eat... and at that time there wasn't many people who spoke Spanish...Well and we were with (name of teacher), who was my ESL teacher. And then me and another boy...we both got to grade seven and no more. She was the only one who spoke Spanish to us... all the English... Everything... That's why I didn't want to go to school...But since I didn't want to go to school and my mom was the one who said to me the most, "You have to go because you learn English and then learning English.... My mom pushed me a lot and my mom and I, we used to live next to Middle School and walk away. My mom would walk me and I'd walk into school and I'd come back. My mom would walk back around me at about 5 minutes and I left school and walk back again and Mom was going to take me back until (name of ESL teacher) said, "The police will come for you if you don't go to school.")

      While Gabriela talked about her negative experiences in Iowa schools, several other mothers described their previous experiences in schools in Mexico. Both Liliana and Valentina cited these negative experiences as reasons for them failing and eventually dropping out of secundaria.

"Pues mis papás no me… Mi mamá me apoyaba, mi papá no mucho, el tenía adicción, era alcohólico entonces no le interesaba ayudarme para estudiar. Pero mi mamá si y tenía una tía, hermana de mi mamá que ella me ayudó con los estudios, entonces mi mamá y mi tía pues pagaban mis cosas, me daban dinero para la escuela todos los días. Y si me apoyaban, ellas querían que yo estudiara en la universidad, pero pues yo les fallé, me salí."

("Well my parents don't... My mom supported me, my dad didn't much, he had an addiction, he was an alcoholic, so he wasn't interested in helping me study. But my mom was and I had an aunt, my mom's sister that she helped me with the studies, then my mom and aunt because they paid for my stuff, they gave me money for school every day. And if they supported me, they wanted me to study in college, but because I failed them, I dropped out.")

"And back then, the schools never really did anything, so they never really inquired: why was I all of a sudden just going down?...And then later on, the teachers were all, "Had we known, we would have helped!" But they never asked...And then, actually high school, I actually…um, dropped out of high school probably my sophomore year, no, my junior year…because it was just too hard and I was just not disciplined enough."

Mariana also reflected on her experiences in school in Guatemala. In Guatemala, she said it was common as a student to get physically hit if she misbehaved. She recounted one time when the teacher pulled her hair. This recollection shed some light on earlier comments she made regarding school not being a positive experience and the reason why she only went to school through 2nd grade. This seems to also impact her desire to be involved with local schools and ensure that her sons do well in school because she told us schools are much better here. For all these parents, the reality that they did not have positive school experiences did not seem to pose a barrier for them to engage with their children's school as all of them expressed in different parts of the interviews that they were actively participating in school events and partnering with the teachers and school leadership, etc. In several ways, these mothers communicated that they have hope that their children's experiences would be different from their own and they were committed to working with the schools to make that happen.

Part of having a shared emotional connection is being able to celebrate significant events and holidays together. However, Maya shared that the school did not understand the significance of Cinco de Mayo even though they tried to create a semblance of celebrating it together.

"Pero yo sí lo he dicho, porque hacen en la escuela, 5 de mayo. Las maestras cooperan, y ahí la comida. Incluso una vez recuerdo que el director me dijo que si podíamos traer música típica de México y pues yo, por animar y todo sí quería participar, pero yo le dije a quién organiza todo eso, "pues es que no. La independencia de México es el 16 de septiembre...Yo no sé quién lo inventó, alguien por ahí que no tenía bien claro lo de la historia mexicana les dijo, y se creyeron y ya lo adoptaron. Pero pues no es cierto, ¿no?

Es la verdad. Entonces, por esta parte que dices tú pues sí, yo pienso que la escuela puede seguir fomentando un poco eso, pero a veces es importante checar las raíces y ver qué es lo que se festeja y cómo lo hacen, ¿verdad?"

("But I did say it, because they do it at school, May 5th. The teachers cooperate, and there is the food. I even once remember that the director told me that if we could bring music typical of Mexico and because I, for cheering and everything did want to participate, but I told him who organizes all that, "well no. Mexico's independence is September 16...I don't know who invented it, someone out there who wasn't clear about Mexican history told them, and they believed and already adopted it. But it's not true, is it? It's the truth. So, for this part you say, yes, I think school can keep encouraging that a little bit, but sometimes it's important to check the roots and see what's celebrated and how they do it, right?")

Lola also shared that when the majority community does not understand common culture practices of minority communities, it creates a distance in relationships between cultures due to a lack of shared emotional connection and including physical evidence of that connection such as displays of affection.

"But it happens the same thing with the Anglo community, and the ones that were here before, you know? they feel like that. They will be courteous and they will be nice and they will say hi to you but they will not cross that other line...You are nice to me and all of that but you don't invite me to come any day in your own home...And somebody, I heard something one time about the African-Americans, because it is the same thing. You don't want, yeah you are nice to me and everything, but you don't want me to marry your daughter. That's the other thing, and that is exactly how I see it… and so we are comfortable with our own, and you know? And we don't see each other so much and when we see each other we are going to kiss and hug."

Valentina noted that she feels that her son's school does not support their family value of instilling a sense of independence in older high school students and also that the school over-emphasizes homework completion and grades. At the time of interviews, her son was about to begin his senior year in high school.

"...you know, by the time they're a junior in high school, and senior…they're adults, they know what to do. And then you have the school treating them as kids yet, you know? So, like, "Ok, I need to ask permission to do this, and I need to ask permission to do this, and I cannot do this, and I cannot wear this, and I cannot wear that!"…Well, same with homework, you know? I mean, the fact that, you know, you can…and we do it, but…you

know, but the fact that you can get a text when your kid is missing an assignment..right? It's like, maybe—ok, a freshman—but do I need it for my high school—my senior kid? I mean, he's going to go to college!... Grades are not… they're not…but anyway, I wish sometimes it would be different that they don't look at grades all the time…"

Another mismatch in values was expressed in the tendency of the schools to communicate with parents in writing while several of the mothers indicated that interpersonal communication was more effective and desirable for them and their families. To these mothers, an overabundance of written correspondence actually posed a barrier, and their hope was that schools would adopt a more culturally responsive way to communicate with them via a more relational mode of disseminating information in order to build stronger bonds of community. Lola and Maya shared these insights.

"Me parece que entre la comunidad latina que las relaciones entre personas y familia es muy importante. Los ángulos les gustan información, verdad, y los latinos tal vez le gustan más relación...Si. somos más como dicen Face to Face y platicar en persona verbalmente… Y yo yo si veo que los americanos, lo cual es una buena costumbre, diría yo que tiene mucho la costumbre de leer. También en México, no somos muy adictos a la lectura y eso es un factor que luego a veces afecta aquí. Porque si no lees, no te informas."

("It seems that in the Latino community relationship in between people and family is really important. Anglos appreciate information, right? But Latinos maybe look for more relationship...Yes, we are more face-to-face and verbally talking. I believe that Americans do have that habit, which is a good habit, of reading. Also, in Mexico we are not really passionate for reading and that later will affect here. If you don't read, you are not informed.")

"Pienso que la conexión de el maestro con los padres sería bueno tomar diez minutos y decirles "hey, esto es lo que estoy viendo de tus hijos, etc," y no esperar a los "parent-teachers conferences", y que "ay es que mire, es que no hace esto y el otro" ¿Por que no me hablas cuando estoy en medio de la cosa? Un poco más de comunicación. Pienso que para los hispanos es importante la comunicación en persona, tal vez no en persona, pero por teléfono o algo así."

("I think the teacher's connection to the parents would be nice to take ten minutes and say "hey, this is what I'm seeing of your kids, etc," and not wait for the parent-teachers conferences, and that "Oh look, he doesn't do this and the other" Why don't you talk to

me when I'm in the middle of it? A little more communication. I think communication in person is important for Hispanics, maybe not in person, but over the phone or something.")

Concerning written communication, Maya also noted,

"Es que, todo eso te abruma. A mi me abruma tener un montón de papeles de "newsletters" uno tras otro, tras otro, a veces con mi hijo yo choco con eso. Viene y me pone un papel ahí, todo un email, lo saca y lo imprime todo, y me lo pone así en a mesa, y eso a mi me abruma. Pero me doy cuenta que cuando alguien viene y te dice ¨hey sabes de esto, y lo otro, y lo otro," así es como nos comunicamos como hispanos, casi que es por el chisme ¿no? Somos conectados con el hablar. Entonces, yo es que le digo a la gente "¿sabes de esto?" y ellos dicen "No, no lo he leído," pero yo tampoco lo he leído, pero yo estoy más sumergida en la cultura americana."

("It just overwhelms you. I'm overwhelmed to have a bunch of newsletters, papers, one after the other, after another. Sometimes with my son, and I bump into that. He comes and puts a piece of paper in there, an email, pulls it out and prints everything, and puts it on my table, and that overwhelms me. But I realize that when someone comes and says," you know about this, and that, and that. That's how we communicate like Hispanics. It's almost because of gossip, isn't it? We're connected through talking. So, I just say to people "you know about this?" and they say "No, I haven't read it," but I haven't read it either, but I'm more immersed in American culture.")

Finally, I will highlight cultural differences and similarities that parents perceived related to moral and character values. Angelina, one of the Guatemalan mothers felt that some of the moral values taught in the schools came into conflict with values they adhere to based on their interpretation of the Bible and teachings of their church from a fundamentalist tradition as well as Guatemalan cultural norms. She told us that obeying God and respecting others is very important to them as a family. The school has some different values that come in opposition with their family values. Specifically, she mentioned teaching "safe sex" using condoms which is taught beginning in middle school. Angelina and her husband disagree with this teaching and support the Biblical view of abstinence until marriage. Another conflicting value or practice is appropriate ways to discipline children. She said in Guatemalan culture, it is generally not wrong to

spank a child, but the school opposes this view and would likely report abuse if it is discovered that a child has been spanked while being disciplined by a parent or guardian.

The other two Guatemalan mothers had input regarding what was important to them in the training up of their children and whether the school shared those same values. Mariana said the values of her boys' schools were that they learn to read and write. When prompted, she also said the school valued good behavior. When we asked if these primary values lined up with the values of the home, she said the school had higher values because she did not know how to read and write. She mentioned twice that she always indicates to her boys to listen and ask questions to the teacher telling them that it is for them, not her. Ana emphasized respecting others and behaving well as values in their home. In her own words,

"Si, yo siempre me preocupo por ellos, si se portan bien, si respeta a su maestra como respeta a su mamá. Por que respetar es bueno, cuando respeta a las personas, la vida tiene largo, o respetarnos a nosotros mismos."

("Yes, I always take care of them, if they behave well, if you respect your teacher as you respect your mom because respecting is good. When you respect people, life is long, or respecting ourselves.")

Maya and Sofia both indicated that they feel the schools are in alignment with their values at home especially in terms of promoting good character development. Maya noted the schools' effort to encourage an appreciation of diversity which is a value she also emphasizes in the home. Sofia explained her thoughts regarding the need for partnership between the family and the schools, comparing that relationship to a four-legged table that needs to be in balance. These are the kinds of sentiments that lead to a shared emotional connection-- the fourth element of the Sense of Community Theory.

"...o la finalidad de la escuela como tal es, eh, enseñar, ¿verdad? Y proporcionar educación de calidad a los estudiantes. Pero pienso que este tema ya es un poco, un tanto aparte, porque ya es más cultural, más de tu casa…. Sí es importante inculcar valores en la escuela como veo que en la escuela siempre inculcan que, "be safe, respectful" y todo ese tipo de cosas, ¿verdad? Y creo que parte de esas normas es que, "yo te respeto" que "eres de otro color de piel" o "otro color de ojos" o "no hablas el inglés" y yo respeto eso. Y eso lo inculca como tal la escuela siempre…. De igualdad de respeto."

("...or the purpose of the school as such is, uh, teaching, right? And provide quality education to students. But I think this issue is already a little, a bit apart, because it is already more cultural, more of your home.... It's important to instill values in school as I see that in school they always instill that, "be safe, respectful" and all that sort of thing, right? And I think part of those rules is that, "I respect you" that "you're another skin color" or "another eye color" or "you don't speak English" and I respect that. And that instills it as such the school always.... Equal respect.")

"The school tries to give the children, especially in the educational level at (name of school), in elementary, that's where they start out, and at middle school too. Afterwards it gets lost little by little, it really does. I wouldn't go so far as to say that there's bad values; I would venture to say that there are really good values. And that, with our kids, is complemented alongside the family, right? With what we start telling them, I think each of us is half of the whole. We're like part of a table. The base of a table can't be balanced on two legs; it must have four legs. The parents form one side and you all are the other two legs. In other words, we have to work together for there to be a balance. I think if there are good…the parents…well, I'm speaking for myself, right? That if we parents focus on our children and the school does the same, there will be good, good values."

Inductive Analysis: Emergent Themes

As previously noted in chapter three, this qualitative research drew from both ethnographic and grounded theory methodologies with ethnography being the primary method. This allowed me to structure the gathering and analyzing of the data around theory. For this study, I chose one primary theory, the Psychological Sense of Community Theory, combined with a secondary theory, Self-Determination, and other common barriers that have been discovered through extensive research. To understand how these theories relate, I looked for intersections between the different elements of
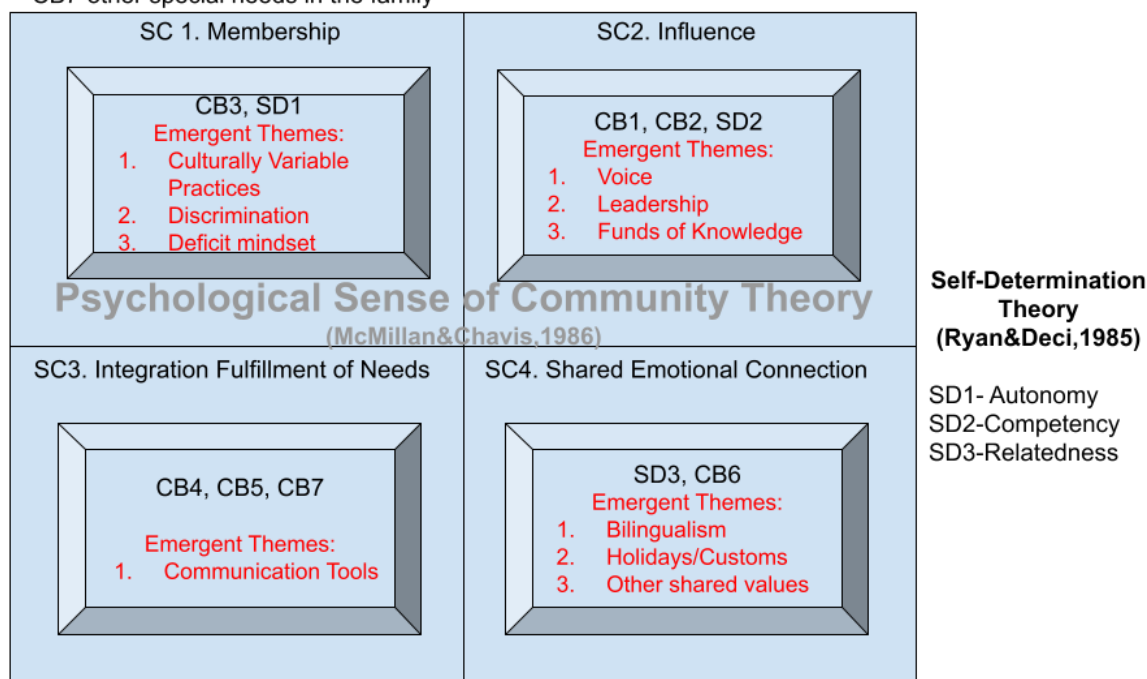
each. According to Krefting (1991), this sort of theoretical triangulation enhances the reliability of the data analysis. In my context, it was also helpful to bring clarity to perceptions that I have heard in the community over the last several years such as Latino families not being motivated to engage with the schools and language, childcare, work schedules being a barrier to engagement. I wanted to test for these elements while also connecting the phenomena to an established theory that might provide recommendations for addressing the divided nature of the community as a whole. This is what I perceive to be an overlooked barrier so I wanted to see what correlation there might be among elements of the Sense of Community Theory, the Self-Determination Theory, and other common barriers.

The following chart (as well as Figure 3.4 on pg. 87) examine ways that these theories intersect. I went into the study with this framework in mind in order to deduce themes around these elements. As I gathered and studied the data, other themes emerged as well. I have listed these emergent themes in each quadrant as they align with the various a priori elements of each theory. Several of these emergent themes which were inductively examined in this study interacted with the theoretical elements in positive ways such as: promoting bilingualism/biculturalism, acknowledging funds of knowledge, and other shared values. Other themes had a negative interaction with theoretical elements such as: discrimination and deficit mindset. Each of these emerging themes and their intersection with elements of the Sense of Community Theory are previously explained in this chapter.

Figure 4.2

Theoretical Intersections with Emergent Themes

Common Barriers (Henderson & Mapp, 2007)
CB1- not knowing how to contribute
CB2- believing they have nothing to contribute
CB3- language barriers
CB4- limited transportation
CB5- limited childcare
CB6- negative experience in school or interrupted schooling
CB7-other special needs in the family

SC 1. Membership	SC2. Influence
CB3, SD1 Emergent Themes: 1. Culturally Variable Practices 2. Discrimination 3. Deficit mindset	CB1, CB2, SD2 Emergent Themes: 1. Voice 2. Leadership 3. Funds of Knowledge
Psychological Sense of Community Theory (McMillan&Chavis,1986)	
SC3. Integration Fulfillment of Needs	SC4. Shared Emotional Connection
CB4, CB5, CB7 Emergent Themes: 1. Communication Tools	SD3, CB6 Emergent Themes: 1. Bilingualism 2. Holidays/Customs 3. Other shared values

Self-Determination Theory (Ryan&Deci,1985)

SD1- Autonomy
SD2-Competency
SD3-Relatedness

Additional Findings: Education vs. Educación

An additional key concept I went into this study looking for is a culturally nuanced understanding of what education entails and the roles that schools and parents play from the perspective of the research participants. Other researchers have studied this idea and have found that there is a discrepancy between Latino aspirations of education and their perceived roles, and the way U.S. schools typically view these concepts. Unfortunately, majority-culture educators do not always recognize these perspectives and implicate Latino parents as not wanting to be engaged with the schools.

The problem, as I see it, is a matter of semantics. When English-speaking people think of "education", academic training that happens at school is usually the first thing that comes to mind, and oftentimes almost exclusively which is why engaging in education has more of a nuanced orientation in mainstream U.S. culture of parents being actively involved at school. This also explains why school administrators expect particular actions taken on the part of the parents, centering all school activities around school schedules and on school grounds rather than extending the school into the community and arranging events and activities around the family's schedule.

On the other hand, the word "educación" in Spanish has a broader meaning. It does refer to the learning that happens at school, but even more so, it encapsulates the moral training and development of positive character traits which Latino families consider themselves ultimately responsible for in partnership with their children's schools who the parents view as primarily responsible for matters pertaining to academic learning. So while, these families may not demonstrate parental engagement in normative ways, there is ample evidence that shows that these families place education and e*ducación* in the forefront of their values (Auerbach, 2006; Quiñones& Marquez,Kiyama, 2014; Valdes, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). The data I collected and analyzed from the ten research participants I interviewed in this study confirmed what previous research has shown. What follows are some of the highlights from these conversations surrounding the conceptualization of education vs. *educación* from interviews with Lola, Gabriela, Liliana, and Sofia, respectively.

"I do think they're not the same. I do think that the word is confusing. Because, if I said: my hijo es muy bien educado, that means he's polite, that he's…"

"...like I was so educated that you don't "rezonga" them... Do you know what that is? You don't talk back to your parents.. Like, don't resist your parents or any older people, don't "rezongas." And here I see and look with my friends when I was growing up or with Alex's friends how they sometimes talk to their parents and those are not… But it is a thing that I teach them, to respect either the old people and obviously my family right? And in school it is also, be eager to study but respecting everyone. Because I still feel that if I don't raise them from the house, they will go to school and make a mess…"

"Pues yo pienso que aquí, siento ¿verdad? Que para los americanos, pienso que la educación es más un colegio. Yo lo he visto, por que, por ejemplo, yo en mi trabajo, yo he tratado muchos americanos y bueno también depende el tipo de trabajo. Donde yo trabajo yo veo muchos americanos que para mi, y no quiero que se ofenda verdad, pero son muy mal educados, no respetan a las personas. No les importa, nada ni siquiera su persona, no se cuidan. O sea, van sucios, van, no se. Este, responden feo, o sea por que una cosa es que tu le respondas feo a tu papá o a tu mamá a que tu le respondas feo a otro tipo de persona. Tu tienes que tener educación con otra persona no es nada tuyo. Siento que las culturas hispanas tienen un poquito más este, así como que agarran todo, en la educación todo junto para llegar a un [inaudible] Y aquí siento que como es nada más eso, un colegio, una situación económica, pienso que es eso."

("Well, I think here, I feel, right? That for Americans, I think education is more of a school. I have seen it, because, for example, I in my work, I have interacted with many Americans and well it also depends the type of work. Where I work I see many Americans who for me, and I don't want them to be offended, but they are very poorly educated, they don't respect people. They don't care about anything, nothing or even their person, they don't take care of each other. I mean, they're dirty, they go, I don't know. This one, they respond rudely, so it's because one thing is that you answer your dad or mom ugly that you answer ugly to another kind of person. You have to have an education with someone else is nothing of yours. I feel that Hispanic cultures have a little bit more this, as well as that they combine everything, in education all together to reach an [inaudible] And here I feel that since it's just that, a school, an economic situation, I think that's it.")

"Educación" is respect toward people, respect toward oneself, respect toward others, and knowledge…and on the other hand, knowledge is…if we know how we have to behave and have knowledge at the same time, and so that knowledge develops into an attitude, either positive or negative, depending each person's values. I have an experience; I have a sister who is a lawyer in Mexico, but she doesn't have "buena educación [good manners]" even though she is "bien educada [well-educated]." I don't know if this answers your question: my sister is super "educada" when it comes to knowledge, but not when it comes to values; she doesn't have those values. She is rude, she's not respectful, she's arrogant, you could say "rude" [original English] in a certain way. She can be really "educada" in a certain sense, but when it comes to her attitude…in other words, a person can have both; they can be "educada" [well-

mannered/educated] when it comes to behavior and knowledge, or they can lack both or only have one."

I will end with insight from two of the Guatemalan mothers. Mariana told us that to her being a good mother entailed spending time with her sons and going out with them. She also mentioned cooking for them, maintaining them and keeping them clean. She wants them to be respectful, to work hard, to live well at school ("vivir bien en la escuela"), and to be obedient. We could see how she valued obedience when we would come with small gifts and treats for the boys and she would require them to be orderly and take their turn when receiving them. She also told us that the school plays a separate role in education than she does at home, but the roles are joint.

Angelina, on the other hand, said her primary perception of "education" is that it trains students to be good—to be respectful to teachers and others, not use bad language, and that they are not proud or egotistical. Her definition has not changed a lot since moving from Guatemala to Iowa. She considers "education" and "school" to be distinct concepts. She said education also happens in the home. To support her children in their education she checks on their homework and ensures they complete it. She goes to the meetings at school. She and her husband financially provide what is needed for school, such as supplies. She feels that educating her children is a joint effort between the school and the home. The teachers' role is to teach the lessons. At home, they will make sure their children are doing the work. Angelina said the school could support her and her husband's role in this effort more by informing them as to how the children are behaving at school. She said most of the time, the school only lets them know how the children are doing academically, but they also want to know about how they are behaving themselves

so that they can correct poor behavior at home by removing privileges such as wifi and phones.

Conclusion

Chapter four established the findings of this study through presentation of participant data. The ten participants reported significant ways their experience with their children in community schools in Sioux Center, Iowa either enhances their sense of belonging to the community or creates barriers that inhibit them from engaging with local schools. These perspectives can help educators gain a deeper understanding of the research questions posed. In addition, the data further revealed the complexity embodied in the conception of what engagement in education entails and how to foster a sense of community according to different cultural viewpoints. Discussion of these findings will be presented in chapter five followed by recommendations for schools and implications for future research.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, I discuss the research findings as they address the

overarching research questions:

- How do Latino parents in Sioux Center view family engagement?
- What are the barriers unique to this community that inhibit engagement with school communities?
- What are ways educators and schools must work towards deconstructing these barriers and then welcome Latino families into educational partnerships between home and school?

In regard to the first research question, the findings of chapter four in the exact words and

language of the research participants reveal the views of at least ten Latino parents. The

discussion that follows seeks to unpack unique barriers around the four elements of the

Sense of Community Theory that Latino parents expressed are inhibiting them from

engaging with the school community, not necessarily because they do not have access (at

least partially), but rather because they do not feel welcome. The later part of this chapter

will address the third research question by means of the recommendations that are

presented.

Several of the recommendations emerged from the research participants,

themselves, since this study was designed to hear the voices of marginalized families.

These voices are followed by my recommendations based on this study and prior research

conducted by others. Implications for future research will follow and then a final

reflection where I conclude this project by adopting a research reflexivity lens to describe

my own experience with this qualitative project.

Overview of the Study

This study examined perspectives of Latino families regarding their engagement practices in the education of their children. In doing so, it sought to bring to light new knowledge and insight that is often subalterned in educational discourse and research. Because these counter narratives often go unheard, deficit mindsets regarding the involvement of Latino parents in education persist. Thus, these parents are often judged as being uninvolved in their children's education when, in actuality, these parents subscribe to an alternative cultural understanding (that runs counter to the dominant culture's normative views) of what it means to be involved (Ozturk, 2013). This study draws attention to the misperceptions that the majority culture commonly has which creates a barrier in the relationship between marginalized families and schools. When the minoritarian stories are heard, schools can then work towards creating a stronger sense of community by considering the perspectives and values of all families in order to facilitate meaningful collaboration with all families. Previous research supports family engagement as a key component of academic success and high school completion.

In the literature review, I explored the traditional methods of engaging families in education that U.S. schools typically and nearly exclusively utilize. Understanding family engagement with the majority community has been studied for more than thirty years and several common barriers have emerged that inhibit families from partnering with schools. Schools are cognizant of these common barriers and in many ways strive to address them, but families from minority cultures are still marginalized which compels schools to look for additional barriers that still remain. For this reason, cross-cultural literature was also reviewed which shows that there are many successful ways to involve

parents in the education of their children and how people view engagement is culturally

variable (Zarate, 2007). Research also shows that typically schools overlook these

culturally variable practices and instead expect all families to fit within the paradigm of

normalized engagement practices. The third section of this chapter interrogated majority

community engagement practices from a critical stance drawing attention to other ways

of knowing and other values that matter in the discourse between families and schools.

My research employed an ethnographic methodology to gain insight into the

perspectives of Latino parents regarding their engagement practices in the education of

their children. I utilized social constructivism as an interpretative framework to create

space for sustained discourse to occur for the disclosing of subalterned narratives. This

was a specific pedagogy intended to invert the reified power differential between Latino

parents and teachers. My objective in choosing this methodology was to position myself

as the learner and the research participants as teachers. The vehicle which I chose to

accomplish this objective was Seidman's (2013) intensive interview strategy. I also

piloted surveys prior to engaging in the interview strategy, though in chapter four I only

reported findings from data gleaned from the intensive interviews since they produced an

overabundance of insight for this project.

In aggregate, data was collected in three different phases over the course of two

years and five months. Three different types of data were collected, the first of which

was quantitative data revealing attendance patterns of Latino parents in school events

such as parent-teacher conferences. This level one data was found to not be useful in this

study and will not be considered in the discussion of the findings. Level two data

collection entailed distributing pilot surveys to 20 Latino parents. Their insights are

represented briefly and spontaneously throughout chapters 1-3 to explain the direction and focus of this study and how it has evolved.

The third phase of the data collection utilizing the intensive interviews constitutes the findings in chapter four featuring new knowledge and insight offered by ten out of the eleven participants who were interviewed three separate times. The research participants were all first-generation Latino parents who currently have children in Sioux Center schools. The interview data was analyzed both deductively and inductively to detect theoretical themes associated with the Sense of Community Theory, as well as the Self-Determination Theory and other common barriers and emerging themes. Transcripts were created word-for-word from the recorded interviews which were conducted mostly in Spanish and then translated to English.

Findings pertaining to each of the elements of the Sense of Community Theory revealed additional barriers associated with marginalized families' perceptions of membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection with the majority community. These insights are presented in the exact words of the participant in chapter four. In this chapter I discuss connections between these insights and the Sense of Community Theory, ending with recommendations and implications for future research, many of which come directly from the voices of the research participants.

Discussion

The discussion to be had will be directed to fellow educators as we consider ways to welcome Latino parents into a symbiotic relationship where schools and parents are working together to enhance academic outcomes for Latino youth. Some of the work of

dismantling common barriers that inhibit parents of all cultures from partnering with schools has already begun. Sioux Center schools, as reported by parents, have been effectively working towards reducing obstacles that present themselves for the majority culture as well as minority culture families. However, as was discovered in phase one of this study, discrepancies in attendance of school events still remain. My conclusion was that there were other barriers that were unaddressed and different ways that parents prefer to engage according to their cultural background. The problem actually lies in how the school community narrowly defines and practices family engagement according to our own ethnocentric viewpoint.

Phase two checked to see if motivation was a barrier since this is a common misperception about the Latino community. In this pilot stage, the responses to the surveys unanimously showed that Latino parents were indeed motivated to be involved in their children's education which led to consideration of another possible barrier that could be presenting itself-- a lack of a sense of community. For that reason, I designed the intensive interview guides in phase three of this study to align with the four elements of the Sense of Community Theory (McMillan & Chaves, 1986). In this section I will discuss the findings derived from the intensive interviews in light of the four elements of this theory, noting patterns of voices that revealed aspects of the Latino experience in Sioux Center schools and the community as whole that either connect in positive ways with each element of this theory and negative ways that reveal a disconnect and thus a barrier to family engagement with schools. Other intersections with related theories such as Ryan & Deci's (1985) Self-Determination Theory and other common barriers studied by Henderson and Mapp (2002) will also be noted.

<u>Sense of Community Theory Theme #1: Membership</u>

  Of all the elements of this theory, membership seemed to be negatively impacted the most. Consistent emergent themes of discrimination, deficit mindsets, and misunderstanding of different cultural practices arose. All the themes expressed by the participants break down a sense of membership to the community. Another common obstacle regarding language barriers was also mentioned multiple times, though participants noted that this was improving over time in the schools through the increasing availability and use of interpreters and school correspondence translated into Spanish. However, participants also mentioned that language differences posed a threat to a sense of emotional safety in the family as parents feared that their children would assimilate to the English-only culture of the school and lose their heritage language and thus their family's heritage culture. Several participants also noted the pressure that the English-only environment of the school placed on students and the shame involved when students did not conform quickly to majority culture practices. All these occurrences have the potential to negatively impact a sense of belonging to the community and could easily become barriers to current and future engagement with the school.

  That being said, several mothers related examples of positive progress in this area of membership as language barriers are decreasing for some of them and as one mother stated, "They don't look at us as weird as they used to." While that statement is encouraging in that the racialized environment that once characterized Sioux Center is becoming less discriminatory, at least for this family, it is important to note that when racism is part of the history of a community it takes years to undo the damage that it has

wreaked. Racial discrimination is a barrier to family engagement with schools that we will have to continually and constantly work to dismantle.

<u>Sense of Community Theory Theme #2: Influence</u>

A major theme that emerged around the element of influence can best be described by the concept of funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, et. al, 2005). These unique accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge, skills and competencies were used by several of the research participants to fill a need in the community. The mothers expressed great satisfaction in being able to offer a part of themselves in service to others in the community. This sort of service also helped to solicit a favorable response from other members of the community as one participant said, "if you can help them, they treat you differently; they're sweet toward you." This expression seems like a positive impact relating to the element of influence, but on the other hand, it reveals a very fickle characteristic of the community. What if the funds of the knowledge that a person possesses do not seem to help the community? Inherent in this quoted statement is the assumption that the person would not be treated sweetly. The problem as I see it, is when the unique funds of knowledge that a person possesses are not seen as helpful to the community or they are not acknowledged. When this happens a sense of influence is diminished which negatively impacts a sense of community.

The same thing can happen if a person's training and area of academic or vocational expertise goes unnoticed and untapped. A good example of this possible negative impact is seen in the stories Maya shared regarding her previous training in Mexico City and work in the field of computer science, including her development of a robotic arm for Hewlett Packard. Here in Iowa, very few people know this about Maya

and her professional background. While her bilingual gifts are being tapped to serve as an interpreter and cultural liaison in the community school district, her unique skills in the field of computer science are not being put to use at this time.

I found it interesting that when the participants spoke of having the opportunity to give voice to their thoughts and ideas, this usually happened within the context of the school. However, when the participants felt their voices were silenced, this usually happened within the context of the broader community. There was an additional example of a participant not being allowed to use their voice in a community-wide Bible Study that was not associated with any of the schools. Another mother recommended that there be more diversity represented in the schools, specifically referring to a private school. Her thoughts will be included later in this chapter in the recommendations section. However, all the aspects of the Latino experience in the school community thus far highlight negative impacts on influence as an element of a sense of community. When minority community members feel like their unique competencies and knowledge are not helpful to the community and when their voices are disregarded, they feel more marginalized and less willing to engage with the majority community.

Other common barriers that relate to a sense of influence or lack thereof are not knowing how to contribute or the parents' believing they have nothing to contribute. This sentiment was heard in a few of the interviews, especially when mothers felt that they were unable to help their children with homework because they did not understand the academic content themselves or they had been taught differently in their prior school experience or did not have the opportunity to complete their own schooling. One way the schools have sought to overcome this barrier is to provide after-

school homework help, but it begs the question as to how schools can further empower parents to help their own children. Providing support to the parents to enable them to help their own children with their homework would resolve the common barriers mentioned above and may serve to invite parents more fully into a home-school partnership.

However, as we can see from several of the comments that the mothers made, good leadership can go a long way in building influence and thus a strong sense of community. Several of the mothers mentioned their admiration of the school leaders, particularly administrators because of the way they exhibited care for the students and one of the mothers mentioned how the superintendent intentionally and persistently invited her to participate in the life and leadership of the school.

Sense of Community Theory Theme #3: Integration and Fulfillment of Needs

This element seems similar to the element of influence, but this one especially highlights whether or not there is a strong person-environment fit in terms of whether the person feels the community can meet their needs and whether they have something to offer the community to meet the needs found within it. Again, tapping into funds of knowledge and having the opportunity to use them to serve the community, several mothers expressed great satisfaction in being part of the community. For instance, Maya noted her role as an advocate for marginalized families who felt they were being treated unjustly in the school community. This example underscores the fact that while these participants expressed positive feelings of having their needs met and being able to meet the needs of others, there are other more marginalized families within the school community who would likely not feel the same.

Several of the common barriers intersect with this element of the Sense of Community Theory, namely: limited transportation, limited childcare, and other special needs of the family. Specifically, conflicting work schedules came up often as a barrier to engaging with the school in traditional school events and meetings. Overall, the participants felt the schools were doing their part to alleviate these barriers, yet work remains to be done, especially concerning the barrier of conflicting work schedules.

Much of the conversation around this element focused on communication tools that were utilized by the schools. The mothers expressed much gratitude for the schools' efforts to communicate with them in writing and electronically, in both Spanish and English. Several of the participants noted all the important information they had access to via digital platforms and learning management systems, though they noted that not every parent had access to the digital tools that they had, or wifi, or knowledge of how to use the tools if they did have internet access.

One mother specifically mentioned the hot lunch program as a way the needs of her family were met, and also how lunch was distributed equitably in the sense that everyone was offered the same lunch options regardless of income-level. There were several other comments that reflected the parents' gratitude and satisfaction with the schools. They often compared their own school experiences in their countries of origin with the experience their children are having here in Iowa. This led the mothers to have a very positive perception of the education their children are receiving here. While this is important insight that leads to a greater sense of community, it does beg the question as to whether or not the parents would feel the same if their children's experience was being

compared to the school experience majority culture peers are having and the opportunities they have access to.

<u>Sense of Community Theory Theme #4: Shared Emotional Connection</u>

One of the barriers that researchers Henderson & Mapp (2006) cite as common is the parents' own negative experience in school. When this happens oftentimes the parents are reticent to engage with their children's schools. In this study most of the participants recounted negative experiences in their own schooling and six out of the ten mothers dropped out before graduating from high school. However, this prior experience did not seem to negatively impact these mothers' desire to partner with their children's schools currently. They communicated a sense of hope that it would be better for their children here. That sense of hope and trust in the teachers and school leaders seems to create an emotional connection with the goals and leadership of the schools. Several mothers communicated that they felt the school leadership cared for them and their children. These sentiments build a shared emotional connection which is an essential part to building a strong sense of community.

However, there were also conversations around discrepancies in family values when compared to school values. As mentioned in the discussion of the first element of membership, language is a common barrier to family engagement with schools and families are grateful for their children's growing proficiency in English. However, there is a sense of loss when their children gravitate towards speaking English only and the parents wanted to ensure that their children were able to maintain their heritage language and culture as well. One mother expressed gratitude to the school for making a display to

celebrate students who spoke two languages. It was clear throughout the interviews that the parents valued bilingualism and biculturalism.

For this reason, I was encouraged to see the display mentioned above prominently set up at the entrance of the school building (Figure 4.1, pg. 126). However, it made me wonder how students who speak more than two languages should be given special honor as well. Acknowledging this exceptional competency would likely affirm Newcomer students and their families from Guatemala who are navigating at least three different languages-- English, Spanish, and Mam. It struck me that when we asked Mariana, one of the Guatemalan mothers, what accomplishments she was especially proud of, she struggled to respond until her little boys began translanguaging[26] in the three different languages noted above and we remarked that they were trilingual. Mariana did not see this as an accomplishment on her part to raise children who spoke three different languages. I believe schools can do more to affirm these parents for the extraordinary gift they have fostered and encouraged in the lives of their children.

Other comments made by the research participants also revealed possible negative impacts on a sense of community due to the fact that the majority culture has misunderstandings regarding significant Mexican holidays, namely Cinco de Mayo. This underscores the necessity for cultural groups to have a shared understanding of the previous backgrounds and histories of other groups even if we do not share those same histories. Another possible negative impact is related to absence of racial and ethnic diversity within the leadership and faculty, particularly in the private schools. One

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[26]Translanguaging= the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential (García, 2009).

recommendation from the research participant who mentioned this fact is that the school would have guest presenters who represented other cultural groups.

A final possible barrier mentioned by the research participants is a discrepancy in moral values between home and school and values related to unidirectional, written information versus interpersonal interaction. These discrepancies call for conversations to be had in order for parents to voice their perspectives and values. Trying to find common ground when possible could help to alleviate barriers related to a shared emotional connection.

Additional Findings: Conceptualization of Education vs. *Educación*

Aside from the theoretical elements that were deduced from the data analysis, I was interested in understanding more about Latino perspectives regarding education, specifically focusing this inquiry on what education entails and perceptions regarding who is responsible for different roles in the endeavor to attain positive educational outcomes. It became clear from the responses of the research participants that these mothers conceptualize education in a different way than members of the majority culture typically do. A case in point is that I asked my predominately white undergraduate students recently what idea(s) came to their minds when they heard the word "education". The overwhelming majority said, "school". Comparatively, research shows that for most Latino families *"educación"* also incorporates the values of personal development and respect for others as part of what it means to be educated and combines lessons taught in the home with lessons taught in the classroom (Auerbach, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999; Yosso, 2006). According to Auerbach (2002), the "cultural schema of educación has a powerful impact on how Latino immigrant parents participate in their

children's education," which often includes providing "moral support on the side-lines" rather than participating in normalized forms of parental involvement (p. 278).

It is clear from the data collected that the views of these participants align with previous research conducted regarding culturally variable conceptions of education. All the participants viewed the roles of the school and family in the task of educating children as distinct, yet complementary roles. The role of the family is generally focused on overseeing moral and character development as well as attending to physical needs of the child. The mothers felt that fulfilling their role in the home would help ensure that the children would be set up for doing well not only in school but in all of life. From their perspective, this is their participatory engagement with schools coupled with supporting their children in their academic development by ensuring they completed their homework and attend school.

It is important for mainstream educators to understand this distinction in order to value the effort of Latino parents and to critique the majority culture's normativity and ethnocentric nearsightedness that envelops the discourse on parental engagement and the extent to which schools and educational research exclude other viable pathways to and processes that positively impact educational outcomes. Furthermore, it is not lost on me that this sort of nearsightedness in looking at data is exactly what I nearly set out to do at the beginning of this study in phase one. I was merely looking for indicators of involvement that centered around visible practices that occur in the school rather than looking at *educación* in a way that valued the cultural backgrounds of the Latino parents.

Recommendations

The findings of this study point to several compelling recommendations which all center on building a more integrated community together where all have a sense of belonging. The recommendations I will share will be addressed to three distinct yet overlapping audiences: PreK-12 educators, district leaders, and teacher preparation program professionals. Several of the recommendations mentioned in this section issue forth from the exact words of the research participants.

Recommendation #1: Reach out to diverse families within the broader community

As an overarching recommendation at the close of this study I would encourage all educators, including district leaders and professors within teacher preparation programs to incorporate elements of ethnography into their daily life and professional practice. To the busy educator with more work on his/her "to do" list than time to accomplish it, this recommendation may seem unrealistic on the surface if we think of ethnography only as a research methodology. But it can be applied more broadly as an encouragement to educators to intentionally connect with those outside our typical social circles and simply listen to others in order to gain understanding from the perspectives of families who are part of different cultural-sharing groups. This, in effect, can become a mindset that we build our lives and practices around which will benefit not only our students in our classroom, but bring a greater sense of community on a broader scope as well. In order to do this, the educator must build relationships especially with marginalized families and seek to learn more about the specific ways of knowing and being of those outside of the majority culture. In this quest for connecting in interpersonal ways, Maya suggested,

"Another thing is that I think that the school should say "Ok the teacher will go and visit her or his student at home.""

Home visits were mentioned also by Lola in chapter four, but in noting that when you visit people in their homes, you communicate that you want to build relationships with them; that you care about them. Maya noted that this was a practice she was starting to implement with new families coming into the elementary school and wanted to encourage other teachers to participate in making home visits as well.

"If it's a Hispanic family\...Going to their homes sitting in their living rooms or chairs. Sometimes there are some now that they will offer your glass of water. They're new maybe... it will be good to incorporate this with new families. It doesn't matter what grade they are but having that connection of at least sitting with them and hearing a little bit more of how they got here because that helps us to understand. First up OK he doesn't have a job but at the same time it helps us understand problems that the kid might have, the necessities I will probably have at least at the beginning adapting to this country, to this school system. Then I think that is something good that should probably be considered in schools to be able to cover and shorten that gap of "What is this? Where am I? Is this a school? What are they talking about? I don't understand all the questions." We can address them... it makes them feel a little more comfortable and confident, right?"

Recommendation #2: Connect with families in interpersonal ways

In response to several mothers' insights regarding the majority culture value of written communication in comparison to how many Latino families value interpersonal connection, Gabriella shared this recommendation,

"Maybe sit with them. I know maybe there's a lot of them, right? But maybe even if it's 15 minutes and it's like a time just guidance, so they know what's there, because it's the same as when I came nobody explained to me, or anything... or my parents... nothing... anything."

What Gabriella is suggesting is the use of face-to-face conversations, especially as families are new to the community, to explain necessary details regarding navigating the school systems and the expectations involved. Sending this kind of information out to families in written form will not have the same effect as an interpersonal connection

which can be coupled with a home visit as mentioned in the first recommendation. Both of these together serve a dual purpose of communicating care for the family and for disseminating the pertinent information families need in order to understand the structure and expectations of the school.

 This recommendation is especially salient for non-Latino teachers as confirmed in other qualitative research that shows that crossing lines of racial/ethnic and linguistic differences is indispensable to working with Latino students. The teachers interviewed in a study conducted by Irizarry & Raible (2011) also concluded that learning with and from the community is integral to working effectively in the classroom with Latino students. They noted that "the dialectical relationships with students and families and their ongoing experiences in the community contributed to the knowledge base that informed their practice" (pg. 196).

Recommendation #3: Utilize culturally responsive pedagogies

 This study examined the culturally variable value systems of different groups within the home-school relationship. Because our communities remain segregated, the teaching force, which for the most part is composed of white, U.S.-born, monolingual, middle-class professionals, do not understand the sociocultural realities of marginalized families within the school community. Engaging with the Latino community will likely enhance teachers' understanding of other perspectives which will have a positive impact on the curriculum when we infuse our teaching with culturally responsive content and pedagogical approaches that better align with the epistemological and axiological resources and repertoires Latino students bring with them into the classroom.

For the most part, we do not know what we do not know. Unless educators are seeking to understand new perspectives, we will only maintain the status quo which increasingly is not working for a growing number of students that enter our classrooms from diverse backgrounds. Educators must avail themselves to further training in the area of culturally responsive pedagogy learning to employ constructivist methods that build on collectivistic values rather than adhering heavily on individualistic, traditional teacher-centered approaches. Unfortunately, while research clearly shows that classroom teachers are cognizant that they are largely untrained to work with English-language learners, at least one study showed that the majority are ambivalent to receiving additional training in order to make sense of teaching and learning in multilingual school environments (Reeves, 2006). Thus, it behooves teacher preparation programs to provide more rigorous, focused training to equip teacher candidates with cultural competence and knowledge of pedagogical approaches that align more closely with the learning needs and strengths of an increasingly diverse student population.

Recommendation #4: Affirm multilingualism/multiculturalism

Throughout the interviews for this study, participants expressed a desire for their children to maintain their heritage language while at the same time learning English. This finding relates to other qualitative research conducted with a larger group of Latino parents in the New Latino Diaspora region which concluded that it was important to all the mothers in the study that their children speak Spanish (Veláquez, 2014). This finding is consistent with a larger body of previous research as well that explored parental attitudes toward Spanish transmission in U.S. Latino communities (Schecter & Bayley, 2002; Veláquez, 2009; Worthy & Rodríguez-Galindo, 2006). It is

imperative for educators to take note of this research as well as the responses of the

participants that were given in this study. When we create English-only environments in

our schools we show disregard for the cultural values and identity that Latino families

wish to maintain. Furthermore, we set up possible situations of conflict in the home by

creating power imbalances as the children learn how to navigate an English-only

environment ahead of their parents. This unique dynamic negatively impacts a parents'

sense of influence as well as shared emotional connection as has been previously

discussed in relationship to the elements of the Sense of Community Theory.

Furthermore, educators must be better informed about language acquisition theory

in order to develop realistic expectations regarding the rate at which English-language

learners will likely advance through levels of proficiency. Current common practice that

is built on the perception that two years of support is sufficient for full-language

proficiency is not supported by research. This misperception may lead teachers to

erroneous conclusions regarding ELL's language ability, intelligence, or motivation

(Reeves, 2006). In reality, we can expect that full proficiency, including the ability to use

English in academic (CALP)[27], as well as in social situations (BICS)[28] may take more

than seven years (Cummins, 1979). Understanding the realistic trajectory of language

acquisition may help educators be more patient with the language learning process and

provide additional and different supports such as translanguaging and instructional

strategies such as SIOP that make general classroom content more comprehensible for EL

students (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000). Without this deeper understanding,

educators are likely to continue to create immersive English-only classroom

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[27] CALP= Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
[28] BICS= Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

environments which puts an inordinate level of stress on the student and their family and communicates disregard for the family's heritage language, culture, and identity.

Recommendation #5: Enhance cultural competence throughout teacher preparation programs and professional development

Equipping teachers to effectively attend to the first four recommendations is likely to be realized when teacher preparation programs place more emphasis on cultural competence infused with social justice perspectives throughout the program and not merely in a token "multicultural" course. All the professors in the Education department must be in solidarity around this objective to make comprehensive, culturally responsive pedagogy a priority in every course that is taught throughout the teacher preparation program. This shift is imperative since many teacher preparation programs still prepare teachers "from a monocultural perspective that eschews the pervasive impact of race, class, linguistic background, culture, gender, and ability and emphasizes instead a universal knowledge base for teaching" (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004, p. 933). Irizarry & Raible (2011) note that this under-preparation of teachers presents a significant challenge for Latino students since nearly 90% of teachers working with culturally and linguistically diverse students have taken less than nine hours of college or professional development credits aimed at preparing them to work effectively with this population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Furthermore, approximately one third of all EL students at the high school level nationwide have had teachers who had not earned a major, minor, or certification in bilingual education or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (Seastrom, Gruber, Henke, McGrath, & Cohen, 2002). To this end, our department needs to encourage students to consider completing a

ESL endorsement as well as expand online programs that lead to certification in

culturally responsive pedagogy and TESOL in addition to a Masters of Education track

with an emphasis in teaching multilingual learners.

In an effort to enhance cultural competence throughout teacher preparation

programs for both pre-service teachers and practicing teachers, I recommend that

professors in Education departments collaborate together around book discussions

designed to foster social justice perspectives. Three such collaborations have happened

in the last year at our institution. Over the summer of 2020 our department read and

discussed *Is Everyone Really Equal? (*Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Currently, I am

leading a book discussion on Kendi's (2019) *How to be an Antiracist* with a group of

university faculty members and students. Members of our department also recently

participated in a virtual conference workshop on *Cultural Competence Now* (Mayfield,

2020). This sort of training needs to continue within teaching faculties and increase in

availability and frequency.

I also believe that teaching professionals in teaching preparation programs should

engage with minority culture families within the broader community. It is important to

break out of our usual sociocultural circles and develop relationships with community

members from diverse backgrounds. This might mean opening our homes to a Latino

neighbor, regularly visiting or attending a Latino church, supporting EL students as an

aide in a K-12 classroom, volunteering in the community with diversity initiatives or

learning how to speak Spanish. These are all activities that I am currently engaged in

since I believe that immersing oneself in the cultures of marginalized families is the best

way to understand their perspectives and unique frames of reference which can then be

incorporated into our teaching of preservice teachers and professional development efforts with practicing teachers and graduate students.

A final recommendation for enhancing cultural competence in undergraduate students is to create opportunities for cross-cultural immersion in other, particularly Latin American and Hispanic countries. To this end, our department offers an annual service-learning experience to Education majors each spring in Belize where students are co-teaching with Belizean teachers in K-12 classrooms. We also offer a semester-long program in Nicaragua, Honduras, as well as Spain. Students also have the option to do their student-teaching practicum in these countries. We need to continue to develop opportunities such as these and encourage students to participate.

Recommendation #6: Create parental systems of support within the school communities

A final recommendation comes from Valentina who suggested that schools consider a support program that would enfold new families and walk alongside them as they acculturate to the new school system.

"I have a friend that…her daughter was a year older than (daughter's name)—and so she's still a good friend of mine—and I said, "I'm following you because you're the leader. You know what you're doing, so whatever you do, I have an idea for what to do for when (daughter's name) gets there."

This form of support may be especially pertinent for lingually and culturally diverse families especially from Latino backgrounds whose preferred forms of communication are interpersonal rather than unidirectional and in written form. A program model for schools to consider was launched in Central California more than thirty years ago. The Comite de Padres Latinos (COPLA) is a Latino parent organization that has become a formal agency through which Latinos can navigate the school system and advocate for their children's education (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001).

Implications for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study and the recommendations, especially those offered by the research participants themselves, it is apparent that there is much work to be done in implementing these insights for the advancement of a greater sense of community which positively impacts academic outcomes for marginalized students. This study is the first inquiry of its kind in Northwest Iowa and, thus, gaps still exist in what we understand about Latino perspectives on family engagement in education. The ten participants in this study provided a descriptive picture of their families' engagement experience with local schools and, in doing so, revealed patterns of strengths and weaknesses in the school climate and broader community.

Since I am an educator, throughout this project I envisioned teachers and others in positions of power within the field of education as my intended audience. Since my professional life has extended now to post-secondary teacher education, I see potential to enhance several areas of pre-service teacher training and professional development for current teachers. The list of implications provided here is not comprehensive but are focused especially on supporting the development of stronger partnerships between schools, families, and community. A large part of that work lies in the development of curriculum and training for pre-service and practicing teachers so that educational professionals are better equipped to support the success of Latino students by creating a climate of community within Iowa's schools. To that end, I offer these five recommendations for future research.

Research Area #1: The enhancement of current curriculum in the teacher preparation

program with perspectival insights from this study.

Focused work needs to be done in mapping cross-cultural and social justice

perspectives throughout the courses offered in our teacher preparation program. We have

begun this work, but new insights from this study will serve to enhance the continued

effort to ensure that our students are equipped with understanding of culturally responsive

pedagogies and diverse perspectives regarding educational issues that are essential for

meeting the learning needs of all students, including those from marginalized

communities. I also plan to lead an effort to create new curricula intended to be offered

as one-credit electives on topics that would enhance general education teachers'

competencies in working with English-language learners. These courses would include

training in speaking Spanish for classroom purposes, Latin American cultural

perspectives, and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) (Echevarria,Vogt &

Short, 2000).

Research Area #2: The development of online professional development modules for

practicing teachers

The electives mentioned above would also be developed in an online format for

continuing professional development targeted for current practicing teachers. This may

meet a need within our community school district as well since SIOP is the pedagogy

currently being used to include ELL's in the general classroom. The current faculty has

been trained to use it in the general classrooms, but in-coming faculty members often do

not come in with the necessary training. If Dordt could provide that training, the district

could focus their efforts and resources on other pertinent matters in their efforts to

support ELL's. The online format would also make this training opportunity available more broadly outside of this district.

Research Area #3: The development of an online M.Ed degree with an emphasis in ESL

Currently I teach the methods course for teaching a second language at the undergraduate level. I envision this research informing that course as well as the development of an M.Ed track with a stand-alone ESL endorsement embedded. We already have an online M.Ed program here at Dordt with emphases in teacher leadership, special education, developmental reading, early childhood, educational technology and instructional coaching. I would like to lead an effort to also add an M.Ed with a emphasis in Teaching Multilingual Learners which could lead to the completion of the state of Iowa's ESL endorsement (#104) and/or a TESOL certificate.

Research Area #4: Quantitative Research utilizing the Sense of Community Index 2 (SCI-2) instrument

This study indicated that membership was the element of the Sense of Community that was most negatively impacted in the lived experiences of the ten research participants. Their stories told of incidents of racial discrimination, language discrimination, and misperceptions due to culturally variable practices. Their first-hand accounts of these negative experiences that diminished their sense of belonging to the majority community told their story in deep and meaningful ways. However, a limitation of qualitative research is that it does not represent a broad research sample (in this case, Latino communities) in a general way. Rather, it is focused on a few people within this culture-sharing group. A complementary study that would give a broader view of this issue would be quantitative in nature and I would recommend distributing the Sense of

Community Index 2 (SCI-2) instrument to all Latino families within the school district to extrapolate findings around the four elements that can produce broader generalizations and consistent patterns of where a sense of community is lacking and which elements in particular need to be prioritized in our efforts to build a stronger sense of community.

The Sense of Community Index 2 (SCI-2) is the most frequently used quantitative measure of sense of community in the social sciences. It has been used in numerous studies covering different cultures as well as many contexts (ie. urban, suburban, rural, tribal, workplaces, schools, universities, etc.). Results of prior studies have demonstrated that this instrument has been a strong predictor of behaviors (such as participation) and a valid measurement instrument (Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008). I have requested permission from its creators at Community Science to use this index and have the survey in Spanish as well.

Research Area #5: Create a model for parental engagement support groups within the community school district based on COPLA (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001)

While I appreciate the objective behind the Juntos program that I have helped facilitate over the last several years, I am critical of the ethnocentric, lop-sided power differential it is built on. The curriculum comes across as White, majority-culture educational professionals and community leaders telling Latino families what they should do to engage with schools in order to promote academic success for their children. Even though the program design seems to me to be flawed in that way, I appreciate what has evolved out of it over the years and the conversations that have started. Several of the women in this study were actively involved with Juntos either as co-leaders or participants and at least two are now in leadership positions in the schools, specifically

Maya, Sofia, and Camila. In addition, the first research assistant, Jazmin Mendieta

Gauto, who was a university student at the beginning of this study, is now an ESL teacher

in the school district. I envision that women such as these and others, if interested, could

potentially form a parent support and advocacy team within the school district similar to

the Comite de Padres Latinos. This model was organically guided by Concha Delgado-

Gaitan in order to empower Latino parents to participate in home-school initiatives and to

make their perspectives, values, and needs known to the school. A similar model should

be developed and implemented in this area as well to take the place of Juntos. A program

that would allow parents to learn some of the classroom content that their children are

learning or to work in partnership with the public library for interested parents to be able

to complete a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) may also serve to empower

parents be able to assist their students with homework and have educational resources

often necessary for upward mobility.

Conclusion and Researcher Reflexivity

Literature related to cross-cultural perspectives on family engagement is

limited. Despite the paucity of research, the effective engagement of families in the

education of their children grows increasingly important due to Iowa's ongoing growth of

newcomer populations. I engaged in this study to add qualitative evidence to the narrative

of family engagement in a rural Iowa school district from the perspective of parents who

currently live that experience. My research further expanded the literature by giving new

application to McMillan and Chavez's Sense of Community Theory in regard to the

psychological elements that either enhance or hinder a sense of belonging to a

community-- membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and a shared

emotional connection. While recognizing previously discovered barriers to engagement, my hypothesis for this study was that an additional barrier unique to the Latino community revolved more around a sense of being segregated from the majority community, which includes the school community and I wanted to hear the perspectives of the families that may be experiencing this phenomenon.

This kind of knowledge is very important if we desire to include all families in school partnerships and thus, to give all students a chance to succeed. Evidence consistently shows that families have a major influence on their children's achievement and when schools, families and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school and are more likely to graduate and pursue higher education opportunities (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Therefore, enhancing partnerships between schools and families is imperative, especially with families that are typically marginalized.

I am grateful to the Latino parents throughout this study who offered their insight and honest reflection of the engagement efforts of the schools and broader community. These voices are typically not heard in educational conversations and they often challenge majoritarian stories and practices.   By unveiling the lived experiences of these parents, I hoped to discover and present a story that is often silenced. In this process, several aspects of that subaltern narrative, evidenced through the emerging themes, stood out to me as especially salient. First of all, while I did not specifically ask about outright discrimination and racism, several of the participants shared instances that they had experienced times when their voices were not heard, their values were

dismissed, their funds of knowledge were not acknowledged and their culturally variable practices were criticized.

Second, the distinct roles that Latino parents consider in the home and school relationship is notable and supported by other bodies of research. It became clear throughout the study that these families are deeply invested in the education of their children and whether or not Latino parents engage with the schools in normative ways, educators are compelled to operate from the assumption that they are interested in supporting their children in education and want what is best for them. The responsibility lies on the schools to discover how these families are supporting their children in education and affirm them for their efforts in the home while also welcoming them to partner with efforts at school.

Finally, it became apparent throughout the study that the parents desire that their children maintain their heritage language and culture. Again, this is a valuing aspect of education that is oftentimes overlooked as we attempt to push EL students through the proficiency levels of English language acquisition. Oftentimes the pressure on schools to develop students' cognitive academic language proficiency comes with the cost of exclusionary language ideologies that devalues the students' home language and culture and creates conflicting values and sometimes a power imbalance in the home as the children learn to navigate an English-only environment ahead of their parents. Schools need to pay careful attention to the negative impact this sort of dynamic may have on families and do whatever is possible to leverage students' native language and culture in their acquisition of English proficiency and promote an additive acculturation experience.

To close, I am deeply humbled by the openness with which these participants were willing to share their deeply insightful and, at times, painful experiences. I am grateful to each of the ten participants for her contribution in the co-creation of this ethnographic interpretation of Latino perspectives on family engagement in education. I understand that I could not have created such meaning independent of the research participants and that the opportunity to hear their perspective was made possible by their willingness to participate in this study. They allowed me the privilege to hear the marginalized voices and counter narratives that until now have gone unsolicited in research studies conducted in Northwest Iowa. Going forward, I trust the findings of this study and recommendations for future inquiry will lead to a greater understanding in order to equip Iowa educators to successfully support Latino families in their efforts to partner in their children's education and to welcome these families into full partnership with community school efforts.

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APPENDIX A
DEFINITION OF TERMS

Acculturation- Acculturation is a process of social, psychological, and cultural change that stems from the balancing of two cultures while adapting to the prevailing culture of the society (Cole, N., 2018).

Assimilation- the process of inculcating students in traditional American beliefs (Brophy & Good, 2008).

CASA- Center for Advocacy, Service, and Assistance-is a non-profit, 100% volunteer-run organization promoting healthy, diverse communities through empowerment, education, and advocacy. http://casasiouxcounty.org/about-us

Collectivism- a cluster of interrelated values that emphasizes the interdependence of a group-- especially the family (Rothstein-Fisch, C., et al. 1999).

Cultural Mismatch Framework-theory that asserts that inequality is produced when the cultural norms in mainstream institutions do not match the norms prevalent among social groups which are under- represented in those institutions (Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012; Stephens &Townsend, 2015).

Educación- a foundational cultural construct that provides instructions on how one should live in the world. With its emphasis on respect, responsibility, and sociality, it provides a benchmark against which all humans are to be judged, formally educated or not (Valenzuela, 1999).

Engagement- the term used in comparison to involvement to emphasize a more active, democratic form of parent participation. The concept of engagement pushes schools and parents to see their roles as two-way collaboration rather than "involving" parents in school activities which are focused on passive parent support (Henderson & Mapp, 2007).

Ethnocentrism- evaluation of other cultures according to preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one's own culture.

Family- any caretaker a child may have in their life whether that is a biological mom and/or dad, foster parents, siblings, grandparents, etc. (Henderson & Mapp, 2007).

Funds of Knowledge- accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge (Gonzalez, et al, 2005).

Juntos- The Juntos program involves partnerships between community- based Iowa State University Extension staff, middle- and high schools, community organizations, community colleges and universities. Juntos assists youth to graduate from high school, as well as pursue and access higher education.
https://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/juntos

Majoritarian Stories- Contemporary majoritarian stories often downplay the centrality of race and racism in social institutions like schools and promote deficit ideologies that blame social and educational inequities on non-dominant populations (Viesca, 2013).

Counter Narratives- the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society). The counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege. Counter-stories can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002)..

Marginalized- often used to describe people, voices, perspectives, identities, and phenomena that have been left out or excluded from the center of dominant society (Lopéz, 2001).

Meritocracy-represents a vision in which power and privilege would be allocated by individual merit, not by social origins (Appiah,K, 2018).

New Latino Diaspora- regions of the U.S. that are realizing a rapid influx of immigrants in states that have not traditionally been home to Latinos (Hamann & Harklau, 2010).

Newcomers- a program offered through the Sioux Center Community School District that focuses on helping students who are both non proficient in Spanish and not up to grade level become proficient in English and be on grade level with their peers in most subjects. Also, the students who are part of this program (Sioux Center News, 2018).

Racism- the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance (Lorde, 1992, pg. 496)

Repertoires- the varying ways that members of a community speak and believe. By using this term, they acknowledge that speaking the same language or coming from the same culture does not mean that people share a full set of linguistic and cultural concepts, values and practices. A speech community is more like a Venn diagram with many overlapping circles (Gallo, Wortham, & Bennett, 2015)

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)- a research-based instructional model that provides linguistically modified instruction of grade-level content to build ELL's academic and language proficiency simultaneously. When used in heterogeneous classrooms of both EL and non-EL students, it has been shown to enhance instruction for both groups (Reeves, 2006).

APPENDIX B
PILOT SURVEY IN ENGLISH

Family Engagement Survey

Name:_____

Phone #:_____

Child's school (Circle your choice):   Kinsey   SC Middle   SC High

Country of Origin (Circle your choice): Mexico   Guatemala   El Salvador   Honduras
          Other   If other, please specify: _____

Languages that you speak (Circle all that apply): Spanish   English   Ma'am
          Other   If other, please specify:_____

Please check "yes" or "no" for each item:	YES	NO
1. Do you know what to do to be more involved in your child's learning?(ie. attending parent-teacher conferences and events at school, supporting child in completing homework and school attendance, etc.)		
2. Do you feel you have the knowledge and skills to be involved in your child's learning in this way?		
3. Have you been asked to participate at school in some way (ie. help in the classroom, serve on a committee, visit the school, etc.) by a teacher or administrator?		
4. Have you ever been invited to a school event by another parent?		
5. When you have questions about your child's education, do you know who to contact at school?		
6. Do you know how to check your child's grades and attendance using Canvas and Infinite Campus?		
7. Are school notifications, school websites, school applications, and other forms of communication in the school available in your native language?		
8. Do you feel confident and comfortable talking to office staff?		
9. Do you feel confident and comfortable talking to your child's teacher(s)?		
10. Is the communication you receive from school difficult to understand?		
11. Do you want to be more involved in your child's learning?		
Are you already involved in your child's learning?		
13. Would you be more likely to attend more school events if childcare were provided?		
14. Do you have children under the age of 10 in your home?		
15. Would you be more likely to attend more school events if transportation were provided?		
16. Does your work schedule often conflict with the timing of school events?		
17. Do you typically work during the day?		
18. Do you typically work during the evening?		
19. Do you typically work during the weekends?		
20. Did you finish high school?		
21. Was your own previous school experience positive?		

22. What additional information would you like to receive from the school?

23. Are there additional situations or family circumstances that prevent you from being involved in your child's education as you would like? (ie. illness, disability, other obligations, etc.)

24. What other questions or concerns do you have regarding school?

25. What is the best way to contact you (circle your choice):

Phone   Text   Mail   Email

Thank you so much for your time and feedback in order to help our local school district better serve you and your family.

APPENDIX C
PILOT SURVEY IN SPANISH
CODED ACCORDING TO SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

Encuesta sobre el Compromiso Familiar

Nombre:_____Número de Teléfono:_____

Encierre en círculo a qué institución educativa su hijo/a va:

Kinsey   SC Middle   SC High School

Encierre en círculo cuál es su país de origen:

México   Guatemala   El Salvador   Honduras   Otro:_____

Encierre en círculo cuál es su lengua nativa:

Español (Latinoamérica)   Mam   Inglés   Otro:_____

Encierre en círculo las lenguas en las cuales usted puede comunicarse (leer, escribir, y hablar): **Español (Latinoamérica)   Mam   Inglés   Otro:_____**

Favor marque con una "x" en las casillas "si" o "no" para seleccionar su respuesta a las preguntas.	Si	No
1. **¿Usted sabe qué hacer para estar más involucrado en la educación de su hijo/a? (Por ejemplo, ir a reuniones escolares, ayudar a su hijo/a con sus deberes escolares y asegurarse de que su hijo/a esté yendo a clases, etc.)**		
2. **¿Usted siente que tiene el conocimiento y la capacidad para estar involucrado/a en la educación de su hijo/a como en los ejemplos mencionadas en la pregunta 1?**		
3. **¿Algún profesor/a o administrador/a se ha acercado a usted para pedirle que participe de alguna manera en la institución educativa de su hijo/a (Kinsey/SC Middle /SC High School)? Por ejemplo, ayudar en el salón de clase, servir en un comité, visitar la institución educativo de su hijo/a.**		
4. **¿Alguna vez ha sido invitado a un evento o reunión escolar por el/la padre o madre de otro estudiante?**		
5. **¿Usted sabe cómo contactar a la institución educativa (Kinsey/SC Middle/SC High School) a la que va su hijo/a cuando tiene una pregunta sobre la educación de su hijo/a?**		
6. **¿Usted sabe cómo chequear las calificaciones de su hijo/a en Canvas?**		
7. **¿Usted sabe cómo chequear la asistencia de su hijo/a en Infinite Campus?**		
8. **¿Usted recibe o encuentra las notificaciones escolares, sitios web escolares, u otras formas de comunicación en su lengua nativa?**		
9. **¿Usted se siente confiado/a y cómodo/a hablando con los empleados/as y administradores de la institución educativa a donde va su hijo/a?**		

10. ¿Usted se siente confiado/a y cómodo/a hablando con los maestros de su hijo/a?	
11. ¿Es difícil de entender los comunicados que te son mandados de Kinsey/SC Middle/SC High School?	
12. ¿Quiere estar más involucrado/a en la educación de tu hijo/a?	
13. ¿Ya estás involucrado/a en la educación de tu hijo/a?	
14. ¿Iría a más eventos y reuniones escolares si la institución educativa (Kinsey/SC Middle/SC High School) proveyera de cuidado a sus hijos/as más pequeños/as?	
15. ¿Usted tiene hijos/as menores de 10 años en su casa?	
16. ¿Usted iría a más eventos y reuniones escolares si la institución educativa (Kinsey/SC Middle/SC High School) proveyera de un transporte?	
17. ¿Los horarios de reuniones y eventos escolares hacen conflicto con su horario de trabajo?	
18. ¿Usted trabaja durante el día?	
19. ¿Usted trabaja durante las tardes?	
20. ¿Usted trabaja durante las noches?	
21. Usted trabaja los viernes, sábados y domingos?	
22. ¿Usted terminó la preparatoria? (grados 9-12)	
23. ¿Usted tuvo una experiencia escolar positiva?	

24. ¿Qué información adicional le gustaría recibir de la institución educativa de su hijo?

25. ¿Hay situaciones adicionales o circunstancias familiares que le impiden estar más involucrado/a en la educación de su hijo/a como a usted le gustaría? (Por ejemplo, enfermedad, una discapacidad, otras obligaciones, etc.)

26. ¿Qué otra pregunta usted tiene sobre la educación de su hijo/a?

27. ¿Cuál es la mejor manera de contactarte?

Teléfono:_____

Mensaje de texto:_____

Correo electrónico:_____

Correo:_____

Desde ya, muchas gracias por su tiempo y respuestas a esta encuesta que tiene el fin de informar a nuestras instituciones educativas locales cómo servir mejor a usted y a su familia

Color Code:

Autonomy Autonomy and Relatedness

Competency Autonomy and Competency and Relatedness

Relatedness

Autonomy and Competency

Competency and Relatedness

APPENDIX D
INTENSIVE INTERVIEW GUIDES

Data Collection Event #1: Focused Life History

Code Key-
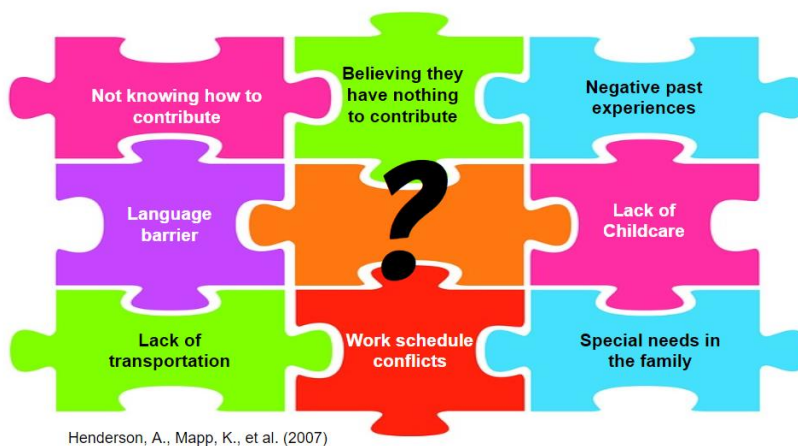CB= Common Barriers SC= Sense of Community Theory SD= Self-Determination
Theory

Reflecting on your family background check the box to the right that best matches your perception of each item below:	Very True	Some-what True	Some-what False	Very False
• Your own previous school experience was positive. CB6				
• Your parents supported you in your learning. SC4				
• Your parents placed a high value on school. SC4				
• School and education were seen as the same thing.				
• You possess unique skills and knowledge that you enjoy sharing or would enjoy sharing with others.CB2,SD2,SC2				

1. Where did you grow up?
2. How has life in Iowa been different from life in _____?
3. What was school like for you? CB6
4. What was the highest grade that you finished? SD2
5. How did your parents support you in your learning? SC4
6. How do you support your own children in their learning?
7. Based on your previous experiences, what does "educación" mean to you?
8. Have your perceptions regarding "educación" changed since moving to the U.S.?
9. What important lessons or skills did you learn growing up? CB2, SD2
10. What are some of your accomplishments that you are most proud of? CB2, SD2
11. Have you had the opportunity to share those skills and knowledge with others? If so, describe how. If not, do you desire that opportunity? CB2, SD2
12. What do you wish the school knew about your family's cultural background? SC1, SD3

Data Collection Event #2: Current Lived Experiences

Reflecting on your current lived experiences check the box to the right that best matches your perception of each item below:	Very True	Some-what True	Some-what False	Very False
• I am very involved in my child's education. CB1				
• I would like to be more involved in my child's learning at school, but I'm not sure what the school expects. CB1				
• I would like to be more involved in my child's learning at school, but there are obstacles in my life that prevent me from doing so. CB 3,4,5,7, SD1				
• I feel welcome at my child's school. SC1, SD3				
• My child feels welcome at his/her school. SC1, SD3				

1. Ethnically speaking, how do you prefer to identify yourself? SC1, SD3
2. How do your children prefer to identify? at home? at school? SC1, SD1, SD3, SC4
3. If they identify differently at school, why do you think that is? SC1, SD1, SD3, SC4
4. Does the way each of you identifies affect relationships in the home?
5. How can the school help affirm and maintain the identity that you desire for your family?
6. What do you perceive to be of value in your child's school? SC4, SD3
7. How do these values align or conflict with your family values? SC4, SD3
8. What barriers might there be that prevent you from supporting your child's learning as you would like? (Use graphic of puzzle pieces) CB1-7

Not knowing how to contribute

Believing they have nothing to contribute

Negative past experiences

Language barrier

?

Lack of Childcare

Lack of transportation

Work schedule conflicts

Special needs in the family

Henderson, A., Mapp, K., et al. (2007)

9.What do you wish the school understood about your current experience?

10. How can the school better meet the needs of your child? SC3

11. How can the school better communicate with you as a family?

Data Collection Event #3: Reflection On Engagement with Schools

Reflecting on the meaning of your previous and present life experiences check the box to the right that best matches your perception of each item below:	Very True	Some-what True	Some-what False	Very False
• I feel like I am a part of the school community. SC1, SD3				
• I am well informed about school news and events. SC1, SD3, CB3				
• I am well informed about my child's progress at school. SC1, SD3, CB3				
• I feel like I am a partner with the school in my child's learning. SC2				
• I feel like the school understands what is important to me and my family. SC4				

1. What are your hopes and dreams for your children? SD1
2. What does it mean to you to be a good parent? SC4
3. What values would you like to pass on to your children? SC4
4. What do you wish the school understood about your family values? SC3, SC4
5. What does it mean to you to support your children in their education? SD2, SC2
6. How are you currently supporting your children in their education? SD2, SC2
7. Do you believe that education should be a joint effort between the school and the home? If so, what do you perceive to be your role? the school's role? SD1, SD2, SC2
8. How can the school support you in your involvement in your child's education? SC3
9. What additional information would you like to receive from your child's school?
10. What questions do you have about your child's school?

APPENDIX E
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Nebraska Lincoln

Official Approval Letter for IRB project #19527 - New Project Form
August 19, 2019

Mary Pollema
Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education

John Raible
Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education
HENZ 25 UNL NE 685880355

IRB Number:
Project ID: 19527
Project Title: Latino Perspectives on Family Engagement with Local Schools

Dear Mary:

This letter is to officially notify you of the approval of your project by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is the Board's opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study based on the information provided. Your proposal is in compliance with this institution's Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects under the 2018 Requirements at 45 CFR 46.

o Review conducted using expedited review category 7 at 45 CFR 46.110
o Date of Approval: 08/19/2019
o Date of Expedited review: 07/07/2019 & 08/19/2019
o Date of Acceptance of Revisions: N/A
o Funding (Grant congruency, OSP Project/Form ID and Funding Sponsor Award Number, if applicable): N/A
o Consent waiver : N/A
o Review of specific regulatory criteria (contingent on funding source): 45 CFR 46
o Subpart B, C or D review : N/A

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Final Approval: 08/19/2019 and to begin your research upon acceptance or agreement with Dordt University. Please submit a change request form upon final confirmation for what/how Dordt University would like to process final approval.

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:
× Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
× Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
× Any protocol violation or protocol deviation
× An incarceration of a research participant in a protocol that was not approved to include prisoners
× Any knowledge of adverse audits or enforcement actions required by Sponsors
× Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;
× Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
× Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

Any changes to the project, including reduction of procedures, must be submitted and approved prior to implementation. A change request form must be submitted to initiate the review of a modification.

For projects which continue beyond one year from the starting date, an annual update of the project will be required by informing the IRB of the status of the study. The investigator must also advise the Board when this study is finished or discontinued by completing the Final Report form via NUgrant.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 402-472-6965.

Sincerely,

Rachel Wenzi, CIP
for the IRB

APPENDIX F
INFORMED CONSENT- ENGLISH

Title of Study: An Outsider's Ethnographic Interpretation of Latino Perspectives on Family Engagement in Education

Investigator: Mary Beth Pollema
Participant Group: Latino parents

INTRODUCTION
The purpose of this research study is to learn more about the perspective of Latino parents concerning their engagement with local schools. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a first generation immigrant from a Latin American country who currently has at least one child enrolled in a Sioux Center school. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to engage in a process of three separate data collecting events each lasting between 60-90 minutes conducted over the course of no more than a month. There will be an initial contact via phone, email or social media to set up the first event. After that, the data collection events will proceed as follows:

I. The first meeting will begin with an introduction to the researcher and an opportunity to ask questions about the study. The IRB letter of consent will be reviewed and the participant(s) will have the opportunity to sign it. The participant will then be asked to complete a survey, followed by participant-researcher interview discourse focused on the life history of the participant. At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be asked whether he/she/they would like to continue in the study. If so, a time and date will be set for the second meeting.

II. The second meeting will begin with a review of the transcript/audio file of the previous interview. Participants will have had access to this data at least 48 hours prior to the second interview so that they have an opportunity clarify, amend, or ask further questions as a follow-up. They will have also received the questions at this time for the second interview to preview. The participant will be asked to complete a survey, followed by participant-researcher interview discourse focused on details of their current lived experience. At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be asked whether he/she/they would like to continue in the study. If so, a time and date will be set for the third meeting.

III. The third meeting will begin with a review of the transcript/audio file of the previous interview. Participants will have had access to this data at least 48 hours prior to the third interview so that they have an opportunity clarify, amend, or ask further questions as a follow-up. They will have also received the questions at this time for the third interview to preview. The participant will be asked to complete a survey, followed by participant-

researcher interview discourse focused on a reflection of the meaning of their experience in engaging with schools. At the conclusion of the session, the participant will be thanked for their participation in the study and the incentive will be presented.
The entire study will conclude by December 15, 2020.

RISKS
While participating in this study, it is highly unlikely that you will encounter physical, psychological, or legal risk of any kind. As with any study regarding personal narrative, there
is a possibility of minimal emotional risk or ethical dilemma associated with disclosing personal sentiment. Every precaution will be taken to ensure minimal risk.

BENEFITS
If you decide to participate in this study you will be financially compensated with a $50 gift card from Walmart. It is hoped that the information gained through this inquiry will benefit Iowa educators by providing valuable insight into the experiences of Latino families in their efforts to engage with Iowa schools. The information may serve to better understand unique needs
of immigrant students and promote improved approaches for fostering their academic success.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or
leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty. You have the freedom to decline any question that you
do not wish to answer.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal
government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of the University of Nebraska, and the
Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research
studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These
records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: your identity will be kept confidential and any identifiers (such as name, place of residence, school enrollment, etc.) will be replaced with pseudonyms in the interview transcripts. All documentation of the interview will remain in the private computer files of

the researcher. Parties likely to view the data include the University of Nebraska's supervising

professors serving on the researcher's dissertation team. The data collected will be securely

retained for a period of no longer than one year. If the results of the study are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

• For further information about the study please contact the researcher

(320)905-4036, or the University of Nebraska supervising faculty member

jraible3@unl.edu.

• If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury,

please contact the IRB Administrator (402) 472-6965, irb@unl.edu.

****

***

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study

has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document, and that

your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed): _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date:_____

APPENDIX G
INFORMED CONSENT- SPANISH

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA LA PARTICIPACIÓN EN ESTUDIO SOCIAL Y CONDUCTUAL

IRB #: 2019081527EP

Título Formal del Estudio: Interpretación Etnográfica de las Perspectivas de Familias Latinas en la Vinculación y Participación del Proceso Educativo de Niños Y Adolescentes

Personal Autorizado para Dirigir el Estudio:

Investigadora Principal: Mary Beth Pollema, M.Ed.-Oficina:(712)722-6352
Celular: (320) 905-4036
Investigador Secundario: John Raible, Ph.D.- Oficina: (402) 472-6490
Asistente de Investigación: Abigail Barrientos- Celular (712) 441-9347

Información Importante:

Si aceptas participar en este estudio, este proyecto requiere: my
· Padres o tutores latinos que tienen hijos/as que asistan en las escuelas de Sioux Center
· Ser parte de una serie de tres sesiones de recolección de datos (90 minutos por sesión)
· Cada entrevista requerirá de tres visitas separadas por un mínimo de 24 horas y un máximo de 7 días
· Visitas que tomarán 4 ½ horas en total
· Diez participantes de manera anticipada
· Entender de que no existe ningún riesgo físico, psicológico, o legal asociado con este estudio
· Saber que usted recibirá: un vale o "gift-card" de Walmart por el valor de 15 dólares al completar la primera entrevista, un vale o "gift-card" de Walmart por el valor de 15 dólares al completar la segunda entrevista, y un vale o "gift-card" de Walmart por el valor de 20 dólares al completar la tercera entrevista.
· Saber que recibirás una copia de este formulario de consentimiento

Invitación

Estás invitado/a a participar en esta investigación. La información en este formulario le ayudará a decidir si usted quiere participar en este estudio, o si usted preferiría no participar en el estudio. Por favor, tómese el tiempo de decidir si a usted le gustaría participar del mismo. Si usted tiene preguntas sobre el estudio en sí, o sobre las sesiones, por favor no dude en contactar a la investigadora principal y/o asistente de investigación.

¿Por qué usted ha sido invitado a participar de este estudio?

El propósito de este estudio de investigación es aprender más sobre las perspectivas de padres latinos sobre la vinculación y participación en el proceso educativo de sus hijos/as. Usted está invitado a participar de este estudio porque usted es un inmigrante de primera generación de un país latinoamericano y, actualmente, usted tiene al menos un hijo/a que estudia en una de las escuelas de Sioux Center. También, usted tiene 19 años o más.

¿Por qué estamos dirigiendo este estudio de investigación?
El propósito de este estudio de investigación es entented las distintas perspectivas culturales sobre la vinculación y participación familiar en la educación de niños y adolescentes. Además, buscamos estudiar de cerca las barreras que se presentan a la comunidad latina, incluyendo aquellas que serán descubiertas, con esperanzas de crear solucionas a dichos obstáculos.

¿Qué estaremos haciendo en este estudio de investigación?

Si usted decide participar en este estudio, usted estará comprometido/a a participar de tres sesiones de recopilación de datos que, por separado, durarán de 60 a 90 minutos; estas sesiones, tomarán lugar dentro del curso de cuatro semanas. Habrá un contacto inicial por vía telefónica, email, o redes sociales para agendar el primera sesión. Las sesiones de recopilación de datos continuará de la siguiente manera:

    I.La primera sesión empezará con introducciones de la investigadora principal, y usted tendrá la oportunidad de hacer preguntas sobre este estudio. La investigadora principal y la asistente de investigación darán una breve explicación sobre la carta de consentimiento del IRB, y usted tendrá la oportunidad de firmar dicha carta. Acto seguido, usted tendrá la oportunidad de completar una encuesta y, de forma seguida, una entrevista sobre su historia de vida. Al final de esta reunión, se le dará un vale o "gift card" de Walmart por el valor de 15 dólares y se le consultará si desea continuar siendo parte de este estudio de investigación. Si usted desea seguir participando de este estudio, una segunda reunión será agendada en el momento. También, se le consultará cómo le gustaría recibir el audio de la entrevista y el documento de transcripción; tiene dos opciones: podría recibirlo vía email, o podría recibirlo personalmente en un pendrive.

    II.La segunda sesión empezará con la revisión de la transcripción y el audio de la sesión anterior. Usted ya será proveído/a con estos documentos para ese entonces con, por lo menos, 48 horas de anticipación a la segunda sesión; de esta manera, usted podrá clarificar, corregir, y hacer más preguntas como seguimiento. Usted también recibirá las preguntas de esta segunda reunión de antemano para poder leerlas antes de la sesión. Usted también tendrá la oportunidad de completar una encuesta, a la que le seguirá una entrevista de sus experiencias de vida actuales. Al final de esta reunión,

se le dará un vale o "gift card" de Walmart por el valor de 15 dólares y se le consultará si desea continuar siendo parte de este estudio de investigación. Si usted desea seguir participando de este estudio, una segunda reunión será agendada en el momento. También, se le consultará cómo le gustaría recibir el audio de la entrevista y el documento de transcripción; tiene dos opciones: podría recibirlo vía email, o podría recibirlo personalmente en un pendrive.

III. La tercera sesión iniciará con la revisión de la transcripción y el audio de la sesión anterior. Usted ya será proveído/a con estos documentos para ese entonces con, por lo menos, 48 horas de anticipación a la segunda sesión; de esta manera, usted podrá clarificar, corregir, y hacer más preguntas como seguimiento. Usted también recibirá las preguntas de esta tercera reunión de antemano para poder leerlas antes de la reunión. Usted también tendrá la oportunidad de completar una encuesta, a la que le seguirá una entrevista de sus experiencias de vida actuales. Al final de esta reunión, se le dará un vale o "gift card" de Walmart por el valor de 15 dólares y se le consultará si desea continuar siendo parte de este estudio de investigación. Si usted desea seguir participando de este estudio, una segunda reunión será agendada en el momento. También, se le consultará cómo le gustaría recibir el audio de la entrevista y el documento de transcripción; tiene dos opciones: podría recibirlo vía email, o podría recibirlo personalmente en un pendrive. El estudio entero concluirá el día 1 de Junio del 2020.

¿De qué manera se utilizará su información?

Los descubrimientos que deriven de la información proveída por el entrevistado/a resultarán en recomendaciones a escuelas locales. Estas recomendaciones permitirán a las escuelas modificar y mejorar la comunicación con familias latinas y, de esta manera, incrementar los logros de sus hijos/as y crear un sentido de comunidad y bienestar general.

¿Cuáles son los posibles riesgos al ser parte de este estudio de investigación?

Al participar de este estudio, es muy poco probable que usted corra un riesgo físico, psicológico, o legal de algún tipo. Y, como en cualquier estudio donde se exponen historias personales, hay una pequeña posibilidad de correr un riesgo emocional o pasar por un dilema ético al revelar información personal. Todas las precauciones serán tomadas para asegurar que los riesgos sean mínimos.

¿Cuáles son los posibles beneficios que usted podrá recibir?

No hay beneficios directos hacia su persona como participante de este estudio.

¿Cuáles son los posibles beneficios que otras personas podrán recibir a través de este estudio?

Se espera que la información obtenida a través de este estudio pueda beneficiar a las escuelas de Iowa, y a las familias a que estas escuelas sirven, al proveer la perspectiva de

las familias latinas y sus esfuerzos de comunicación y vinculación con las escuelas de Iowa. La información puede servir para entender mejor las necesidades únicas de estudiantes que son inmigrantes y también para promover métodos ya mejorados para fomentar el éxito académico.

¿Cuál es el costo monetario para participar de este estudio?

Usted no necesita aportar ninguna suma de dinero para poder participar de este estudio.

¿Recibirá usted una compensación al participar de este estudio?

¡Si! Usted recibirá un vale o "gift card" de Walmart por el valor de 15 dólares al completar la primera entrevista, un vale o "gift card" de Walmart por el valor de 15 dólares al completar la segunda entrevista, y un vale o "gift card" por el valor de 20 dólares al completar la tercera entrevista. La retribución será hecha al final de cada sesión de recolección de datos. Si usted completa las tres entrevistas, usted recibirá un total de 50 dólares en vales o "gift cards" de Walmart. Si usted no participa en un total de tres entrevistas, entonces usted simplemente recibirá el monto adecuado por cada entrevista en la cual usted si haya participado.

¿Qué debe hacer usted en caso de tener un problema relacionado al estudio durante las semanas que le toca ser entrevistado/a?

Su bienestar es de mayor interés para los miembros de este equipo de investigación. Si usted tiene un problema a resultado de participar de este estudio, favor contacte inmendiatamente a una de las personas nombradas al principio de esta forma de consentimiento.

¿Cómo se protejerá su información personal?

Se tomarán pasos rasonables para protejer la privacidad y confidencialidad de la información que usted proveerá para ser estudiada. Los archivos que identifiquen a participantes serán guardados con confidencialidada al punto que la ley y regulaciones lo permitan, y estos datos confidenciales no serán publicados en ninguna plataforma. Sin embargo, agencias regulatorias gubernamentales, departamentos de auditoría de la Universidad de Nebraska, y el Institutional Review Board (un comité que revisa y aprueba estudios que involucren a seres humanos) pueden inspeccionar y/o copiar sus archivos con fines de controlar la calidad del estudio y el análisis de datos. Estos archivos pueden contener información privada.

Para asegurar la confidencialidad al punto que la ley lo permita, las siguientes medidas serán tomadas: su identidad será confidencial y cualquier identificador (nombres, lugar de residencia, inscripción en la escuela, etc.) será reemplazado con pseudónimos en las transcripciones de las entrevistas. Toda la documentación de las entrevistas permanecerá en la computadora personal de la investigadora principal. Los audios guardados en formato MP3 serán archivados temporalmente en una nube digital, protegida por una

contraseña, llamada Box. Las transcripciones serán creados usando Microsoft Word, y serán guardados en formato PDF. Los partidos que podrían revisar la información confidencial incluyen a los profesores de la Universidad de Nebraska que supervisan la disertación de la investigadora principal.

Las únicas personas que tendrán acceso a tus archivos serán las investigadoras, el IRB, y personas, o agencias, o sponsors a medida que la ley lo requiera. Ka información de este estudio también podría ser publicada en artículos científicos or presentada en reuniones de investigación, pero la información será reportada de manera conjunta o resumida; por lo tanto su identidad será mantenida en confidencialidad.

¿Cuáles son sus derechos como un sujeto de investigación?

Usted puede hacer cualquier pregunta sobre este estudio y tener las respuestas a esas preguntas antes de comprometerse a participar en el estudio.

Para preguntas relacionadas con el estudio, favor contactar a las investigadoras nombradas al comienzo de esta nota de consentimiento.

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

Para hacer consultas sobre sus derechos o quejas sobre el contrato de investigación contacte al Institutional Review Board (IRB):

University of Nebraska-Lincoln | Universidad de Nebraska-Lincoln
- · Teléfono: 1(402)472-6965
- · Email: irb@unl.edu

Dordt University
- · Teléfono: 1(712)722-6038
- · Email: irb@dordt.edu

¿Qué pasará si usted decide no participar del estudio o si decide dejar de participar del estudio una vez que ya empezó el proceso?

Usted puede decidir no participar de este estudio, o también puede decidir renunciar a su participación antes, durante, o después de que la investigación haya empezado por cualquier motivo. Decidir no participar en este estudio, o decidir renunciar a su participación, no adectará su relación con las investigadoras o con la Universidad de Nebraska o con Dordt University.

Documento de consentimiento informado

Usted está tomando una decisión voluntaria de participar o no participar de este estudio. Firmar este fomulario significa que (1) usted ha leído y entendido esta forma de consentimiento, (2) usted ha recibido una explicación sobre la forma de consentimiento, (3) usted ha recibido respuestas a sus preguntas y (4) usted ha decidido participar en este estudio. Usted recibirá una copia de esta forma que podrá guardar.

Encuesta de Participación

La Universidad de Nebraska-Lincoln desea saber sobre su experiencia con esta investigación. Esta encuesta de 14 preguntas de opción múltiple es anónima. Esta encuesta debe ser completada después de completar su participación en este estudio. Favor completar esta encuesta opcional en: http://bit.ly/UNLresearchfeedback.

Nombre del Participante:

_____

(Nombre del Participante – Favor escribir claramente en letras separadas)

Firma del Participante:

_____

Firma del Participante de la Investigación   Fecha

APPENDIX H
RECRUITMENT BROCHURE

Compensación:

A cambio de participar en tres entrevistas por separado, recibirías una tarjeta de regalo (gift card) de Walmart por el valor de:

1ra entrevista - $15
2da entrevista - $15
3ra entrevista - $20

También tendrás la satisfacción de saber que tu voz importa, y que tus ideas pueden ayudar a nuestras escuelas a ser más efectivas al conectarse con familias de nuestra comunidad.

Este estudio está conducido por:

Mary Beth Pollema
(Investigadora Principal)
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———

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Este estudio está respaldado por:

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Dordt University
Sioux Center Community Schools
Sioux Center Christian School

Estás invitado/a a...

...ser parte de un proyecto que beneficiará a toda la comunidad Hispana

✔ ¿Eres originalmente de Latinoamérica?

✔ ¿Tienes un hijo/a que estudia en alguna de las escuelas de Sioux Center? (Kinsey, Sioux Center Christian, Sioux Center Middle, Sioux Center High)

Si tu respuestas son "sí" a estas dos preguntas, ¡Nos interesa entrevistarte!

- El propósito de este estudio es construir una base de conocimientos sobre distintas perspectivas culturales sobre el apoyo académico que los padres dan a sus hijos/as.
- Este estudio se enfoca en identificar las barreras que son de impedimento para la colaboración entre las escuelas de Sioux Center y las familias latinas.
- Las escuelas locales van a poder usar los descubrimientos de este estudio para poder abrir caminos que faciliten la comunicación entre familias latinas y las escuelas de Sioux Center.

Si eliges participar en este estudio, serás parte de tres entrevistas separadas en el transcurso de tres semanas aproximadamente. Cada entrevista durará entre 60-90 minutos y será conducida en la biblioteca pública de Sioux Center (Sioux Center Public Library)

Las entrevistas se enfocarán en:
· Tu propia experiencia en la escuela.
· Tu experiencia apoyando a tus hijos en el aprendizaje escolar.
· Tu perspectiva y opinión con el tipo de relacionamiento que tienes con la escuela a donde tu hijo-a actualmente asiste.