

ABSTRACT

SANTILLAN-CARRILLO, MARTHA ILIANA. A Closer Look at Latinos Living in North Carolina: Creating a Blueprint for Community Programs. (Under the direction of Dr. Nichole L. Huff).

Hispanic communities are often marginalized due to ascribed needs, such as lack of English proficiency and cultural competence, which can serve as barriers that further exclude Latinos from American society at large. In an effort to dispel negative subjective constructs and create improved programming tools designed to revitalize strengthen Latin American communities, the present study examined perceived needs and assets of a local Latino sample. Specifically, focus group interviews were conducted with 13 Latina mothers living in three urban North Carolina communities. Findings from a thematic content analysis suggest that despite the challenges and barriers these communities face, adult programming centered on women, familialism, and resiliency have the potential to further Latinos' efforts to succeed and thrive in their communities. An assets-based approach to preventative family life education that involves Latina community leadership is recommended to enhance current community programs and empower Hispanic communities at large. Implications for professionals are discussed.

© Copyright 2015 by Martha Iliana Santillan-Carrillo

All Rights Reserved

A Closer Look at Latinos Living in North Carolina:
Creating a Blueprint for Community Programs

by
Martha Iliana Santillan-Carrillo

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

Family Life and Youth Development

Raleigh, North Carolina

2015

APPROVED BY:

Nichole L. Huff, Ph.D., CFLE
Committee Chair

Kimberly Allen, Ph.D., BBC
Committee Member

Annie Hardison-Moody, Ph.D.
Committee Member

DEDICATION

Madison, words cannot express how grateful I am to have you in my life. You are my reason for being, my little box of happiness. Thank you for your everlasting patience and compassion. You are only 11 years old, yet you are wise and kind beyond measure. Thank you for always encouraging me, I know you believe in me and I will never let you down. We are the “Mommy and Monks Team,” and together, we are invincible. I am stronger with you and because of you. I love you more than anything in the whole wide world, and you know it!

Mamá, papá, and Juanito, a los tres los quiero muchísimo! Despite the distance, I always feel your presence and support. Mami, thank you for believing in me full heartedly, you taught me how to dream, you are the reason why I am not afraid to aim high. Papá, thank you for coaching me, for always helping me find the strength I need to go on, you have helped me believe in my ability to accomplish great deeds. Juanito, you are the best brother anyone could ever have, thank you for being you, for the reality-checks, the laughs, the support, and the unconditional love.

Lalito, my best friend, husband, and the love of my life - Your continued support means so much to me. Even though we are miles and miles apart, I feel your love and support. I love you with all that I am.

BIOGRAPHY

Iliana spent most of her childhood in Mexico City. She moved to Washington State with her mother and brother at the age of twelve. As immigrants, Iliana and her family overcame a myriad of obstacles. Hard work, dedication, and perseverance helped Iliana become the first member of her family to attend and graduate from college. She attended Western Washington University and Meredith College, where she graduated in 2008 as a Magna Cum Laude. Immediately after graduation she transitioned from being an ESL (English as a Second Language) Instructional Assistant to an ESL Teacher. Her personal experience and fervent desire to serve the immigrant community enabled her to touch the lives of many families. The students and families she worked with shaped her as a teacher and fueled her passion and desire to do more. After 10 years as an educator, Iliana decided to attend North Carolina State University, where she will receive her M.S. in Family Life and Youth Development in May 2015. Currently, through her work as a Community Organizer at El Pueblo, Iliana works with youth and adult community members to develop campaigns for social justice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My heart felt gratitude and appreciation are extended to the Family Life and Community Science professors at NCSU, especially Dr. Huff, Dr. Allen, and Dr. Hardison-Moody, thank you for your patience and insightfulness, your feedback and comments made this thesis research project stronger. I truly appreciate your honesty and willingness to help me.

Dr. Huff, thank you for the interest you took in me, both personally and professionally, your affirmation and belief in my academic potential mean a lot to me. I feel honored to have been your student and advisee; you are an outstanding professor, and a patient and knowledgeable advisor. I admire your work ethic and truly appreciate all the time and effort you invested in me. Thank you for listening to my many research ideas and fueling my desire to further my educational and professional endeavors.

Lupita, Olga, and Maria, thank you for welcoming me into your homes and communities, the three of you are some of the most amazing women I have had the opportunity to work with. I look forward to witnessing your development into community leaders! It is because of women like you that I want to spend the rest of my life working towards empowering Latinas and Hispanic families. Si se puede!

Lavita, thank you so much for your encouragement and understanding, I admire your strength and your ability to lift up the spirits of those around you. I know you are destined for greatness.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	2
Social Exclusion of Latino Immigrants	3
Implementing an Assets-Based Approach	5
Social Capital and Familialism	6
Women’s Role in Acculturation	7
The Current Study.....	9
Methods.....	10
Participants.....	10
Procedures.....	13
Focus interview protocol.....	13
Focus group procedures	14
Data Analysis Procedures	15
Results.....	16
Social Inclusion.....	16
Parental Involvement	19
Recreational Programs	23

Discussion..... 26

 Breaking Language Barriers 27

 Increased Need for Educational Support 27

 Building on Family and Community Assets..... 29

Implications..... 32

Cultural capital..... 32

Human capital..... 33

Social capital 33

Future Directions 33

Conclusion 35

References..... 37

Appendices..... 43

 Appendix A..... 44

 Appendix B 45

 Appendix C..... 46

Introduction

North Carolina has experienced a large influx of Latinos over the last decade. According to the U.S Census Bureau (2013), the Hispanic population in North Carolina is nearing 890,000, which is approximately 8.9% of North Carolina's population. This is an increase of 506,050 from 13 years prior. In an effort to support ethnic minorities, decrease social exclusion, and enhance their quality of life, many educational facilities, churches, non-profit organizations, and community centers have created and implemented a variety of programs designed to meet the academic and recreational needs of Latinos. However, it is quite rare for these programs to integrate cultural elements and community-based leadership into their practice (Monkman, Ronald, & Delimon Theramene, 2005). Historically, Spanish translations of English-branded curriculums and commercial programs are often based on assumed needs and are used with Spanish-speaking populations without taking into consideration cultural integration and community assets (Vesely, Ewaida, & Anderson, 2014).

In order for Latino immigrants, especially, to thrive and make increased societal contributions after relocation, they must be equipped with the educational, emotional, social, and financial skills they need to flourish in America (Madrid, 2011; Tienda, 1995). Program developers should align immigrant curricula with a community's needs and capitalize on its assets, all while acknowledging and implementing cultural elements (Baldwin, 1999). Prescriptive community-based programming often fails to take into consideration specific nuances faced by vulnerable and underserved populations, including cultural factors,

limitations, and resources. A more thorough study of Hispanic communities and a clearer understanding of Latino viewpoints are necessary in order to create accessible, effective, and sustainable programs. Specifically, the present study identifies existing needs and assets of Latina Mothers living in urban North Carolina communities. Implementing programs geared towards fulfilling the perceived needs of community members, particularly by capitalizing on the current assets of Hispanic mothers, could potentially increase participation of Latinos in community-based programs and events. Based on findings from the presented study, the involvement of Latina community members (especially mothers) in planning, implementing, and evaluating such programs may increase program accountability, participation, and sustainability.

Literature Review

Latino communities are often categorized based on their need of services, guidance, and resources; however, little attention is given to either the resiliency qualities they possess (i.e., capacities or assets) or the interventions needed to address the variety of complex and unique challenges they face (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). In order to better understand current urban Latino communities in North Carolina and beyond, it is important to evaluate the adversities they face and assets they possess from a cultural perspective. Focusing on deficits alone will continue to foster a sense of deficiency and outside dependency; however, finding the unique qualities and assets of Latino communities will assist in the development of more personalized and sustainable strengths-based community programs.

Because Latinos are a vulnerable population in the United States, whether they immigrated to the U.S. legally or illegally, they often experience bias, prejudice, and racism (Cline & Necochea, 2001). Barriers such as levels of education, language, citizenship status, and access to resources can marginalize Latinos, further limiting their opportunities to thrive in America. Further, these barriers have the propensity to infiltrate every aspect of their lives (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). First-generation immigrants are at a disadvantage in terms of adequate health care, financial resources, and access to education for themselves and their children (Madrid, 2011; Tienda, 1995). Despite the survival and resiliency mechanisms they have developed in order to ease the negative impact of immigration, the playing field has not been leveled. A variety of resources and opportunities are needed in order to decrease the social exclusion of Latino immigrants, as well as to present adequate opportunities for Latinos to both survive and thrive in American society.

Social Exclusion of Latino Immigrants

Despite the large presence and influence of Hispanics in the United States, there is a prevailing view that focuses on the misconception that minorities are culturally deficient (Monzo & Rueda, 2006; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). Individuals, as well as service-based institutions (e.g., churches, community centers), have historically viewed low-income urban neighborhoods as “problems.” Programs focused solely on deficits denigrate communities and dissipate ownership, as community members are led to believe that their needs can only be met by outsiders (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1997). Vulnerable communities are at

increased risk for internalizing views that further exclude and disregard their assets and contributions.

Latinos are also often criticized because of their inability to speak English. According to Brown and Patten (2014), about 39.3% of the Latino population spoke English “less than very well” in 2012. Potential language barriers can adversely affect most every aspect of Latino family life, thus making it especially challenging to acquire the skills necessary to acculturate to American society. Lack of communication with institutions, organizations, and governmental entities can limit the access Hispanic populations have to information and resources. Limited English proficiency is one of many factors that avert the inclusion of Latinos in larger societal contexts. Lack of education and specialized skills derail their efforts to advance professionally; only about one-half of Mexican immigrant parents have a high school education (Crosnoe & Lopez-Turley, 2011). Low levels of education have implications for Latino children as well, as many immigrant parents struggle with understanding the academic demands of the American school system. Because of these difficulties, low educational achievement continues to be problematic among U.S. Hispanic children (Currie & Thomas, 1999).

Lack of English proficiency, low levels of parental education, and an educationally subjective view of Latino children’s academic achievement have lead many educators to erroneously believe that minority communities have very little to offer mainstream society. However, according to Guerra and Valverde (2008), “this type of deficit thinking must be eliminated and replaced with the belief that parents and the community have much to offer”

(p. 5). With regard to education, for example, Rodriguez, Castillo, and Gandara (2013) argue that Latino psychocultural factors are associated with academic motivation. Furthermore, as Hossain and Shipman (2009) suggest, despite major obstacles many immigrant parents place higher academic demands on their children; they expect them to succeed in the U.S. and they go through great lengths to ensure that this happens.

Implementing an Assets-Based Approach

In an effort to move beyond historical programming models for Latino Americans that focus on deficits and stereotyped needs, research suggests that community programs use an assets-based approach to providing family life education, which can bring community members together by involving them in visual, intuitive, and non-linear processes that encourage leadership and accountability (Sharpe, Greaney, Lee, & Royce, 2000). It is important to note, however, that focusing on assets does not equate to disregarding problems; instead, a community assets approach seeks to identify, support, and mobilize existing community resources. These resources lie in capacity-focused alternatives, which develop actions based on the needs, capabilities, skills, and assets of the community. As McKnight and Kretzmann (1997) note, “Identifying the variety and richness of skills, talents, and experiences of low-income neighborhoods provides a base upon which to build new approaches and enterprises” (p. 160). Once these assets are identified, new opportunities for preventative education can be developed.

Programs focusing on preventative education and leadership development are an emerging trend. For instance, Oregon State University’s 4-H Youth Development and

Mentoring Programs implement a culturally responsive assets-based approach when working with Latino youth, which argues that Latinos are not seamlessly integrated into existing community programs and therefore efforts should be made to understand and implement specific cultural characteristics into community-based programs (Hobbs, 2004). Hobbs argues that although program foci will differ, program design and delivery should be tailored in order to serve people from a wide range of cultures. Further, Hobbs's programming model for Latinos acknowledges cultural nuances such as parental input, which manifests itself in the parents' desire for their children to understand and value their native culture.

Social Capital and Familialism

An asset-based model focuses on existing strengths that are inherent in social relationships (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). Social capital in the Latino community manifests itself in *familialism*, which “involves a deeply ingrained sense of the individual being inextricably rooted in the family. The term encompasses attitudes, behaviors, and family structures within an extended family system” (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007, p. 53). Research suggests that Latinos value family connectedness and feel that it is their familial obligation to support and care for one another. According to Villenas and Deyhle (1999), Latinos base their success in familialism, which encompasses commitment, loyalty to the family, and involved relationships between parents and children.

In the case of two-parent Latino households, literature suggests that both parents are committed to the success of their families and children (Cabrera & Bradley, 2012). It is often challenging, however, for Latino fathers to take part in their child's education and academic

development due to demanding work schedules and increased feelings of financial responsibility to the family, (Sarcho, 2007). Oftentimes Hispanic men work 12 to 16 hour days or hold multiple low-paying jobs that prevent or limit their physical participation in family activities (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). In an effort to ease the burden of financial responsibility, many Hispanic women now work for paid wages outside of the home. While the number of Latina mothers in the workforce has increased, their roles, responsibilities, and at-home demands have not changed (Luna, 2013). Latina mothers who work outside of the home—like many other mothers regardless of race or ethnicity—continue to care for their children’s basic and educational needs, in addition to working full time jobs and handling homemaking responsibilities (Hossain & Shipman, 2009). Thus, capitalizing on the role of Latina mothers in the acculturation of Latino immigrant families in the United States is crucial.

Women’s Role in Acculturation

Historically, many studies have focused on identifying factors that contribute to Latinos’ exclusion and inability to navigate American systems at large; however, current research seeks to better understand the psychocultural qualities and cultural beliefs that fuel Latinos’ desire to survive and thrive in their host country. Rodriguez, Castillo, and Gandara (2013) argue that a strengths-based approach has the potential to showcase strengths *Latinas* in particular. Highlighting and placing value on these assets allows women to navigate and negotiate personal and familial acculturation, with the underlying understanding that their

own personal attributes and values are as important as those of the host country (Monzo & Rueda, 2006).

Acquisition of American cultural practices is neither simple nor entirely beneficial. Negotiating acculturation requires balance and time; furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that Latino families often seek the development of bilingual as well as bicultural identities for themselves and their children (Monzo & Rueda, 2006). In an effort to facilitate this cultural negotiation, efforts should be made to encourage and give Latino families an opportunity to be active in their own development by allowing them to select and balance their cultural resources. Thus, instead of focusing on a replacement model of acculturation, programmers and individuals working with Latinos, particularly mothers, could find strengths in analyzing gender-specific roles that encompass their adherence to *familialismo*. According to Castillo, Perez, Castillo, and Ghosheh (2010), Latinas are responsible for providing physical and emotional support to the family, in addition to raising their children and taking care of their home. The inherent power that comes with these responsibilities allows women to focus and take charge of the care and wellbeing of their families, and subsequently the acculturation of their family to life in America.

Changing demographic demands for Latina mothers have led to an increase in decision-making power among female Latino immigrants that has dynamic implications for community-based education efforts (Fisher, Harvey, & Driscoll, 2009; Luna, 2013; Quinones-Mayo & Dampsey, 2005). Systemically, the unique role of women in larger systems extends their reach from their household to outside environments, such as their

communities and workplaces. Consequently, women hold great potential for building strong communities. Women have been touted as the primary building blocks needed to rebuild and enhance communities, including their capacity to identify community assets that are most readily available (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1997). Incorporating women in community development efforts is not only fitting, but also necessary in order to develop sustainable, community-led programs. Their strengths lie in their cultural knowledge, potential to develop relationships, and perceived ability to sustain community-based programs.

The Current Study

In order to conceptualize community leadership, particularly in Latino communities, programmers and educators must nurture local relationships and detect and mentor potential community leaders. Seeing community members, namely women, as assets, understanding their perspectives, and involving them in the development of community-based programs are all part of an enhanced blueprint for community-based programs (Amendola, 2013). Thus, the purpose of the current study was to explore Latina perceptions of the strengths and limitations of selected urban Latino communities in North Carolina. The study was designed to offer perspectives of the lived experiences of Latina immigrants in order to increase professional understanding regarding the unique challenges of urban Latino communities in order to enhance and better tailor community-based outreach and education efforts. Identifying and implementing programs geared towards addressing Latinas' perceived needs and capitalizing on current assets may increase participation of Latino families in community-based prevention programs and events.

Methods

Because research suggests that Hispanic groups prefer personal rather than impersonal contact (Delgado, 1979), an interview approach was used in the study's design. Specifically, focus group interviews were conducted in three distinct North Carolina Latino communities in order to gauge their perceived assets and needs.

Participants

After receiving University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, convenience-sampling techniques were used to recruit participants from one of three Hispanic communities in an urban city in central North Carolina. Three distinct Latino communities were selected from the same county as targeted areas from which to recruit participants. The Primary Investigator (PI), who works for a North Carolina non-profit Latino advocacy organization, contacted one female resident from each community who had anecdotally expressed an interest in improving the current situation of her community.

As purposively selected, the subjects who agreed to participate in one of the three focus groups were asked to invite others in their respective communities to participate who may share their interest. Snowball sampling continued until the targeted sample size was obtained (i.e., 3-6 women per focus group). Eligibility requirements for participation required that individuals (1) were of Latino/Hispanic descent; (2) were over the age of 18; (3) were female; (4) lived within the targeted community; and (5) were concerned about their community. Only female participants were recruited for participation in the study for several reasons: (1) to control for homogeneity of the sample; (2) to foster a safe and inclusive

atmosphere that is conducive for open dialogue during the focus group discussions; (3) because the researcher, who is assuming the role of an insider in the qualitative research design, is a female of Latino descent; and (4) because literature supports a predominately matriarchal society in immigrant Latino communities, especially with regard to community involvement and family resource management (Fisher, Harvey, & Driscoll, 2009; Quinones-Mayo, & Depsey, 2005). Current studies on Hispanic women speak to maternal influence over the family unit; therefore, it is important to acknowledge that all of the women involved in this study were mothers. Two participants had children in Mexico, which is noted in the demographic information of sample.

Final recruitment efforts resulted in a sample of $N = 13$ total female participants ranging in age from 25 to 45 ($M = 32$, $SD = 4.8$). Collectively, the sample has lived in the United States between 7 to 13 years ($M = 10.2$, $SD = 2.1$) and their respective communities 3 to 13 years ($M = 7.8$, $SD = 3.7$). Table 1 provides a demographic sketch of the sample.

Table 1. *Demographic Information of Sample*

<i>Category M (SD)</i>	<i>Group 1</i>	<i>Group 2</i>	<i>Group 3</i>
Age	36.3 (7.5)	30 (3.5)	31.6 (2.9)
Time Living in Community	10.7 (2.1)	6.2 (2.9)	8.3 (4.9)
Time Living in the United States	11(2)	8.7 (1.4)	11.75 (1.9)

Total N = 13; Group 1 n = 3; Group 2 n = 6; Group 3 n = 4

<i>Category</i>	<i>(% of total N)</i>	<i>N</i>
<i>Country of Origin</i>		
Mexico	69.2	9
Other (Central America)	30.8	4
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	31.0	4
Married	38.5	5
Cohabiting	30.5	4
<i>Ages of Children Living at Home*</i>		
0-4	37.1	10
5-9	48.1	13
10-15	14.8	4
<i>Level of Adult Education in Home</i>		
Elementary School	17.4	-
Middle School	52.2	-
Some High School	17.4	-
Some College	13.0	-

**Total children reported by sample = 17*

Procedures

Three independent focus group discussions were held in an accessible and convenient location for participants within one of the three selected communities (e.g., local community center). On the day of each focus group, participants were greeted by the PI and asked to provide informed consent and complete a short demographic questionnaire before the focus group discussion. It is of merit to note that the researcher is of Latino descent, thus she was able to assume the role of an insider in the study. The use of ethnic/racial insiders in the recruitment of underserved populations is well documented in literature (see Chavez, 2008; De Andrade, 2000). The researcher's personal experience in the ethnographic process is described below.

Focus interview protocol. Finn and Checkoway (1998) argue that adult educators must detect target publics' personal struggles and establish programs in which participants are active contributors as opposed to passive recipients. Further, detailed cultural factors must be considered. Umana-Taylor and Bamaca (2004) argue that focus groups provide an intimate, safe, and homogenous setting, which creates a more comfortable ambiance. This promotes ease of conversation and comfortable disclosures. However, lowering the affective filter is just a starting point when working with vulnerable populations. Ojeda, Flores, Meza, and Morales (2011, p. 194) highlight three crucial aspects to consider when interacting with Latinos: Whether it is the first time meeting the individual or not, researchers must engage in (1) *plática*/small talk in order to demonstrate respect to the cultural value of (2) *personalismo*/personal engagement, which together influence the participants' perception and

comfort level with the researcher and build up (3) *confianza*/trust. Latinos need to feel understood and safe in order to disclose personal information. In addition to following these simple practices, Ojeda et al. (2011) also recommend that the researcher be not only bilingual, but also bicultural. The aforementioned recommendations were utilized when designing the present study.

In an effort to briefly capture the above ethnographic interview process in the present study, the primary investigator offers a narrative of her experience in order to give a more accurate and personal account of her role as a participant observer:

“The focus group interviews entailed more than a simple conversation. Participants welcomed me in their communities with an elaborate and hearty meal. Notions of structured one-way conversations and time constraints vanished as I realized the extent of their efforts to not only be there, but to also share an intimate moment with me. Plática/small talk resembled more than a simple exchange of pleasantries, it felt like a friendly dinner conversation. Sharing stories, anecdotes, and jokes brought us together. Participants took a personal interest in me, they asked me questions and the conversation was fluid and amicable. Sharing personal information about myself allowed us to find common ground. I became part of the group. The women repeatedly told me they were proud of me; a few have called me to check on my progress. They want me to do more; they want their stories to be told; they want me to be their voice.”

Focus group procedures. A private meeting room was secured for each focus group. Each discussion lasted approximately 1 hour ($M = 46$ minutes). Audio from each focus group

interview was recorded using a password-protected computer through a software audio-recording application. Participants were given aliases in order to protect their privacy and the PI abstained from disclosing personal or identifying information that might identify individuals or their communities when transcribing the discussions. Focus group questions asked participants to describe their families and communities in terms of strengths and areas for growth (e.g., *What are the strengths of your community, what makes it a great place to live? What are areas of growth for your community? What could be done to make it a better place? With regard to the family relationship you described, what are you most proud of?*). See Appendices A-C for the master questionnaires used by the PI during each focus group discussion.

Data Analysis Procedures

As the focus groups were completed, the PI transcribed the audio recordings. Field notes taken before and after the focus group sessions and other observations were reviewed and incorporated as appropriate. In order to protect the identity of the participants, the information was coded according to community and participant number. The transcripts and field notes were analyzed using both thematic and triangular approaches (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Further, according to Umana-Taylor and Bamaca (2004), when studying Latino populations multiple perspectives and interpretations of data should be considered. Thus, the data was triangulated by a researcher (i.e., the faculty sponsor) who is familiar with both Spanish language and cultures, but not of Hispanic descent, in order to (1) reconcile differences and theoretical perspectives, and (2) to further analyze outcomes in order to

corroborate the findings (Ramprogus, 2005). An integration of Latino and American experiences and points of view help to make the analysis of the findings more rich and transcendent.

In order to dimensionalize and make sense of the data, themes were identified by scrutinizing and coding the information (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). This practice prevented researchers from enclosing the information to fit a framework or a theoretical interest. The primary and triangulated investigator convened to discuss coding procedures, and then transcripts were merged and assessed using categorization and open coding, first by question, and then for recurring themes.

Results

Qualitative data was analyzed by question according to aggregate responses across focus groups. In reviewing participants' responses, limitations that were frequently mentioned during the focus group interviews were also closely interwoven with responses that depicted potential community assets. Questions about participants' families, relationships, communities, and perceived shortfalls and assets, lead to an analysis of three overarching themes that were further classified as being both barriers and assets for participants: (1) social inclusion, (2) parental involvement, and (3) family recreation.

Social Inclusion

Across focus groups, all participants expressed a desire to feel included and participate in their communities at large. According to participants, social inclusion would enable them to take part in educational and recreational events; further, it would increase

their levels of interaction with the community. Participants reported feeling “barred” and confined. Women in this study reported that they are eager to collaborate with others in order to enhance their communities; however, at this point, they collectively reported their options as limited, since their daily interactions are typically confined to fellow Spanish-speakers only. As one participant noted, *“What I would like to improve on the most is... I think, with my family...how to have the second language... I need to improve on that because that is an obstacle that we as parents have with our families.”* Another participant added that in spite of, and because of the language barrier, they could develop and implement activities amongst themselves, she stated:

“[We could have] like a workshop, and not necessarily me and you at your house, more like a group and say, “Oh you have a talent? You know how to do something? OK, teach us...then at least you all learn how to do something...[we] get together and learn.”

With regard to the significance of having workshops or events in close proximity to the participants, it is essential to note that local immigration regulations prevent many of the participants from driving, as they are not eligible to apply for a driver’s license. As one participant noted: *“There are many things I would change about my community, but the first one is to get a license.”*

As a result of participants expressing their desires for social inclusion, *social exclusion* emerged as a direct effect of the language barrier. Mothers, in particular, felt that they were unable to participate in basic tasks and activities required to care for themselves and their families because they did not speak English. Major impediments included

participation in their child's education, meeting basic medical needs, ensuring adequate living space for their families, and perhaps most importantly, being able to fulfill essential tasks as required for daily living. For example, one participant shared that she relies on her English-speaking husband to go grocery shopping, do laundry, talk to the landlord, take her children to the doctor, and above all, meet the educational needs of her children. She stated: *"I don't know English, my husband knows it well...He goes to the meetings, I tell him 'It is better if you go.'"*

For many of the mothers in the sample, not being able to speak English had adverse effects that trickled down to matters concerning their children, particularly being included in school-related experiences and decisions. Shared examples of this included not being able to schedule and participate in parent-teacher conferences. One mother revealed that she was trying to schedule a conference with the teacher at her son's school; however, because she relies heavily on a school-provided translator, the process has been slowed immensely. She said, *"[If] there is none, they call you and tell you that the translator is not available"* and then you cannot schedule the meeting. Another mother added, *"[referring to her son's teacher] She speaks pure English and I don't understand, so I won't know what she is talking about."* Another participant expressed that she had to go through great lengths to understand the school's rules and regulations, noting:

"The exact rules, I don't understand them, because of the most part, everything is sent home in English; one has to find a way, maybe on the telephone [internet], asking the child, things of that nature, until you find a way, this limits me, but I try to find the solution."

Select participants reported that their determination to feel socially included lead them to engage in educational efforts to learn the English language. In their efforts to learn English, several women explained that they joined ESL classes (English as a Second Language) at their local community center or church. Unfortunately, they described their experiences as discouraging. Participants who reported having attended classes at one point explained that they ultimately decided to “drop out.” They cited several reasons such as transportation, scheduling, lack of proficiency levels, and teacher qualifications. One participant stated:

“English classes for parents should be accessible, they should have various schedules and people should really know how to teach, because there are many churches that say “come, come,” or centers that say, “come, we’ll teach you,” but we can’t. It would be nice to have someone who is really prepared to do that – to teach.”

Another participant echoed, *“I got to the third level [and] the teacher that we had would always say ‘I don’t want you to speak Spanish, I only want you to communicate with me in English...’ That is when I got discouraged.”*

Parental Involvement

In many instances, as demonstrated in the above section on *social inclusion*, the language barrier created interdependence between family members. Participants reported relying heavily on one another to cover the fundamental needs of their families. A recurring consensus in the sample was that both parents shared domestic and childrearing responsibilities to some extent. Participants reported that working together promotes family

unity and a sense of communal responsibility. Further, companionship was perceived as being nurtured through constant interactions and interdependence. One participant's response captured the overall sentiments of the sample:

“What makes me really proud about my family is the unity and communication and the levels of participation we have, because in everything, I believe that in everything we all participate a little bit, we all work together, whether it is taking care of the house or school, in everything.”

Participants also reported fathers as being particularly vested in their children's education, taking pride to note that they go through great lengths in order to participate in their child's academic development. Oftentimes fathers have to request time off in order to join their wives in parent-teacher conferences. One mother said: *“[speaking of her husband] He tries to speak with his boss and says: ‘I will leave half an hour before because I have a meeting with my son [son's teacher] and I have to attend.’”*

Also included in the theme parental involvement was the expressed desire by participants to improve interactions between them and their children, The women disclosed an interest in enhancing the ways in which they educate and discipline their kids. The majority of participants said that they resort to spanking as a means to discipline their children. This practice was reported as being rooted in their own childhood experiences: the women revealed that their own parents used spanking and corporal punishment; thus, they integrated and normalized this habit. One particular mother shared her experience hitting her son and the anguish it brought her:

“One time I... how do I explain this to you? I hit my son, I don't know how, but I didn't want to, and I overdid it. I cried with him because I tell him ‘My son, it hurt me more to hit you because... with me... to me... I suffered a lot of mistreatment, and I don't want the same thing to happen to you my love.’”

Select participants reported that this practice was neither efficient, nor beneficial to their children. One mother shared that she needed patience in order to avoid hitting her children, she said: *“[I need] the same, patience. I get to a limit and I say ‘enough...’ Sometimes I am about to...I want to hit them until I get tired, but then I say ‘no.’ I know that hitting them is not a solution.”* Another stated that she also needed more help in this area, saying: *“I would like to learn more about how to get more help, how to educate my children or my family, without having to scream or hit them, how to do it with words.”*

Finally, with regard to *parental involvement*, the women in the sample reported that they have the propensity to be overinvolved in or overanxious about their children’s lives, often as a way to safeguard their children from an unfamiliar world. One participant shared that her lack of understanding of American educational standards and resources, combined with her preconceived cultural norms, prevented her from enrolling her child in preschool. When speaking of “sheltering” her child, she said: *“At first I said, ‘Oh, how will I send her to school? She is too small.’”* This particular mother was initially under the impression that her child was not developmentally ready to be enrolled in preschool; however, she goes on to share that an experience with her son changed her mind completely: *“...it happened with my son. I didn't send him to school soon, he enrolled when he was five years old... He didn't*

know anything; he was lost... He suffered a lot." The experience helped this mother to understand the importance of preschool; she is now an avid advocate of early childhood education.

When discussing older children, the sample reported the inevitability that their customs were continually infused by cultural standards of American society, noting the indirect effects on family development and interactions. A sense of family unity, interdependence, and cohesion was still reported among all family members, regardless of their child's age; however, the sample discussed how American notions of independence and educational rites of passage dispel some elements woven into the Latino cultural fabric. For example, one participant argued that her son's transition to college would bring about several complications for him and countless apprehensions for family members:

"I am worried about my eldest son, when he goes out, when he leaves to go to college or university, I think that he is going to have new friends, and he might get involved in many things; all that stuff about smoking and the gangs. I think about all that, I would not want him to be involved in anything like that."

A second mother echoed her concern and added that she is worried about teaching her daughter about sex: *"[It would be difficult] to give them information about STDs, about how to use a condom maybe, or at what age you can have sexual relationships; that is very difficult for us parents."* She also acknowledges the need to have outside support when navigating this topic by stating: *"I think that one has to find a person who can guide you as a parent, how to treat your child a certain age."*

Recreational Programs

The final qualitative theme that emerged from the focus group discussions centered on the specific desire among participants to create recreational programs in their communities. This included crafting, cooking, learning new skills (such as cosmetology), and exercising. Citizen-led initiatives were of particular note as the women felt the need to lead efforts geared towards integrating family-centered recreational programs in their communities. The potential for community-based leadership development was evident; many of the initiatives that participants reported wanting to pursue, they believed would not only meet the recreational needs of Latinos, but could also promote efforts to expand cultural understanding among Latinos and Americans as they demonstrated their skills and talents. One mother shared that recreational activities would bring her back “a little piece of her country” and plausibly showcase and share Hispanic cultural attributes: *“We need a place where you can go and have fun with our family, maybe like you said, Zumba classes, I don’t know, maybe traditional dances, anything, but in our own language.”* Participants would like to have a space to showcase their heritage and abilities, a second participant reiterated the desire to share cultural knowledge, she said: *“[I can make] piñatas, OK, well then, we can get together 4-5 people and we can make, I don’t know, two dozens of piñatas.”*

Women across all three communities argued that family-centered recreational activities are needed in order to foster family unity and community development among Latino American populations. Participants also noted that such activities should embrace all

family members, including husbands, and therefore large community events should be framed around work schedules. One participant stated:

“I think that we need more events on weekends, like where can the family go on weekends? Sometimes because of the economic situation, you cannot go to the movies or any other place where you have to spend money; so yeah, events where the whole family could go and have fun, have a good time.”

In addition to larger family activities, participants said they wanted increased access to activities designed to meet their physical and emotional health concerns. Participants reported having feelings of stress and “saturation;” their many roles and overwhelming schedules prevent them from engaging in activities that help them better cope with day-to-day life demands. In describing her daily schedule, one mother said:

“I have to wake up, wake up my child at a certain hour - at 7am, take him to the bus, but before that, leave the little one with the babysitter, then go to work, get out of work, pick both of them up, go home, cook, take showers, eat dinner. I am not going to say I clean, but at least I pick up a little bit. It is 9 or 10pm when you finally rest, so there is no time for anything.”

Despite their busy schedules, select participants made efforts to engage in physical activities. Fitness classes involving dancing, such as Zumba, were talked about enthusiastically and at length. Participants cited the emotional benefits of having time to do an activity that allows them an opportunity to release stress. One mother described her desire

to have the social supports and personal time necessary to engage in time for herself. She referenced her friend's experiences who regularly attends Zumba classes:

"[Referring to her friend] She is nice and her husband is a good person, he comes home from work and once he gets home, she goes to take Zumba because she says that is where she lets everything out, all the stress, everything goes away, she leaves everything when she does Zumba."

In addition to wanting opportunities that foster emotional and physical benefits, participants also expressed the desire to engage in skill-building courses. Women in the sample stated the importance of skill building, particularly around technology, in order to enhance family life. Participants argued that technology-based courses would enable women to become more familiar with using their high-tech devices and access Internet-based resources for the sake of their children. One participant echoed that she worries that her child knows more about technology than she does: *"What worries me is that they [children] are growing and growing, and then they...at their age...seven years old, [they] know how to use more technology than me."* Because the sample reported relying on technology to bridge the barrier between home and school, community programs designed to increase online skillsets were of interest. Moreover, budgeting and financial responsibility classes were also mentioned as having the potential to positively influence their savings efforts and create investment opportunities. One participant said that she does not like to *"waste money on frivolous things."* Another participant followed: *"[I would like to know] how to save money, how to not waste money, how does it affect my children? How can I benefit them?"* Engaging

in skill-building courses around topics such as technology, financial education, and family resource management would allow participants to refine their leadership capacity at home, in the workplace, and in their communities.

Discussion

Findings from the present study support extant literature that depicts the vulnerability of Hispanic families in terms of their perceived deficits. Not only did participants report experiencing discriminatory (and sometimes hostile) environments both in and outside of their communities, but they also reported a lack of the basic skills needed in order to survive and succeed in the United States. Social exclusion and a prevalence of deficiency-oriented models have led low-income urban communities to think of themselves as defective (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1997). In the case of Latinos, they are often viewed through a one-sided negative lens in which their shortcomings and debilities are emphasized. These notions reported in literature were paralleled in the sample. These perceptions and realities depreciate communities and instill a sense of dependency and inadequacy instead of showcasing ways Latino communities can contribute to community empowerment and capacity-building efforts (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).

Accentuating shortcomings and deficits reinforce the historically passive roles of Latinos. In an effort to steer away from passive, needs based models, this study showcases the willingness and ability of Hispanics, particularly women to take on an active role in leading their communities towards empowerment and self sufficiency.

Breaking Language Barriers

Racial, ethnic, and class discrimination make it challenging for Latinos to experience social inclusion (Falicov, 2005). As demonstrated by the sample, Latinos feel marginalized by their inability to speak English, which positions them as substandard without considering the potential of their becoming bilingual (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). Participants shared that outside organizations note this deficiency and with well-intentioned efforts create programs aimed to address this barrier. Such programs fail, however, in part because of their lack of consideration for the capacities, skills, and assets of the community at hand. The language barrier sets the foundation for a system that further excludes immigrants and disregards their abilities and contributions. According to Falicov (2005), the social climate of structural exclusion is not only suffered by Latino parents, but also by their children, as their sense of self esteem decreases and opportunities to participate in the society at large are placed even further out of reach.

Increased Need for Educational Support

Structural exclusion paired with the inability to speak English mars educational attainment for Hispanic parents, as well their children. As described by participants, despite their best efforts, it is difficult for them to further their own education and fully participate in the academic development of their children. Opportunities to access educational resources do not only require language accessibility, but also U.S. cultural competence. Conceptualizing a cultural context in parenting education is a crucial aspect of developing family life education programs for Latinos. Furthermore, in terms of support at home, one participant suggested

that community centers offer to help children with homework, since some parents are unable to do so. She articulated that community centers should focus on *“supporting children on the areas that they need it the most, like reading, and supporting them with their homework, like 15-10 minutes of reading, maybe math too, since that is what they need to get good grades.”*

Although Hispanic children are at a disadvantage when they are integrated into the American culture, these unfavorable experiences can be seen as opportunities to learn and grow for all parties involved. For example, enrolling children in school is a difficult and unavoidable task for parents, but what is even more challenging for immigrant Latino parents is navigating American educational standards and norms. Hispanic children are ascribed certain cultural expectations that often clash with those of America (e.g., initiative and outspokenness are frowned upon when coming from children in Latino families, as such behavior can be seen as disrespectful). However, in American schools, students are encouraged and praised for their contributions and assertiveness. One participant’s response captured the differences between American and Hispanic student expectations:

“The problem is that they [Americans] don’t understand the way Hispanics behave; for example, I think that all Americans talk and talk, and they move and do this and that, but we teach our children that when an adult is speaking they have to stay quiet until they ask them something... Americans are very hyperactive, and I think that his teachers want my son to speak more.”

Further, participants reported associating young adults’ independence with frailness and lack of moral judgment. Mothers with older children were concerned about their

adolescents' friendships with outsiders; they feared that at this vulnerable age, teenagers could be encouraged to engage in sexual activities and consume drugs and alcohol.

Participants discussed the desire to both assimilate and accommodate their colliding worlds, but fear of resignation and cultural loss prevented change. Replacement models of acculturation assume that acquisition of U.S cultural practices is not only simple, but also necessary. However, participants' responses build a solid argument for an inclusive and bi-directional acculturation process.

Social exclusion, language barriers, cultural limitations, and even fear can immobilize growth among Latinos — whether personal, social, familial, or communal. If Latinos see themselves as incapable of taking charge of their own lives and of their communities, they remain passive recipients. This cycle generates more dependency rather than empowerment. In order to dispel this construct, community programmers must strive to recognize the capacities of local people and their associations in order to build powerful, autonomous, and sustainable community-based programs (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).

Building on Family and Community Assets

All communities are unique in terms of population and location, which is especially true when speaking of marginalized communities. Before developing a curriculum or implementing a Spanish version of an English-branded one, community programmers should involve community members in the process to assess both needs and assets. They must spend a significant amount of time in the community in order to establish mutual respect and trust, as the role a community programmer should be one of support as opposed to one of

leadership (Ojeda et al., 2011). In facilitating this process, outside community experts should begin by identifying, supporting, and mobilizing existing resources instead of placing emphasis on what the community lacks (Sharpe, Greaney, Lee & Royce, 2000). The asset-focused approach utilized in the present study did not disregard areas of need, but instead conceptualized them by capitalizing on assets.

As demonstrated by the finding, factors such as resiliency and family unity have helped Hispanics to be resilient despite the many barriers they face. According to Villenas and Deyhle (1999), “Families are the starting point for surviving and effecting resistance to cultural assault” (p.441). In order for families to overcome transitions and surpass difficulties, families need to synchronize adaptability and efforts to preserve continuity (Falicov, 2005). Family solidarity, cohesion, and interdependence are not only important to Latinos in the sample, but also essential for their survival and success. Familialism can be conceptualized through an assets framework as “bonding social capital,” which is evident in families who can depend on one another for basic survival in times of stress (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). Basic survival needs, as expressed in this study, required leverage between Hispanic mothers and fathers. Latino men provided financial resources, transportation, and oftentimes English-language support; they worked together with their spouses in order to ensure that their family’s needs were met. Further, relational resilience proved to be a relatable asset, as family connectedness fostered a sense of obligation in families (Falicov, 2005). The success of the family unit was rooted in familialism and positive relationships between family members.

According to (Shetgiri et al., 2009), Latino children also benefit from protective factors such as parental support, which especially may help children overcome obstacles in reach of their educational goals. The Hispanic mothers in this study described parental involvement as a priority to ensure that their children's basic needs were met. They also expressed interest in enhancing their parenting skills in order to further develop their relationships with their children. Furthermore, in spite of their negative experiences in ESL courses, for example, participants remained interested in learning the language and finding effective programs so that they could be better equipped to meet their children's expanded social and educational needs.

Lastly, one of the major assets Latino communities possess is their collective struggle to channel their social, cultural, and human capital, which can be renewed into community-based leadership and empowerment movements (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). The struggles Latinos face in order to acculturate to American society may be empowering if channeled to stimulate community leadership and activism (Jaes Falcov, 2005). Leading efforts to create mechanisms of participatory decision-making rely heavily on enhancing the capacities of community members who had previously been excluded from decision-making processes (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). This is particularly relevant for Latino women like those represented by the sample. Thus, in order to create empowering and sustainable community-based programs, community-driven leadership must be in place. In the words of McKnight and Kretzmann (1997), "Significant community development takes place when local people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort" (p.158). As

demonstrated in this study, Hispanic women offer perspectives into their communities' needs and are interested incorporating their strengths in order to affect change.

Implications

Involving community members in the development of community-based programs could potentially increase participation, effectiveness, and sustainability. Interviewing women who are already vested in their families, social networks, and communities enables program developers to obtain a better understanding of both the intricate issues urban Latinos face and the concealed support-mechanisms they have in place.

Women in particular must be consulted with and considered by community program developers. Through a strengths based approach, programmers can begin to apply a cultural lens when analyzing and implementing women's perspectives in program development. Hispanic women are inherently adhered to *familialismo*; therefore, interest in their family's well-being and influence over the physical and emotional aspects of the family unit should be seen as not only assets, but also starting points for effective program development.

Hispanic communities offer what are often untapped resources that should be considered and implemented in program planning for Latinos. Thus, from the results of this study, and by building upon the concepts of assets and social capital (Emery & Flora, 2006), three considerations are suggested for professionals who work with Latino communities: cultural capital, human capital, and social capital.

Cultural capital. Latinos place a high degree of value in their culture and traditions; understanding how Latino Americans view the world and integrating opportunities for them

to share and express their creativity, innovation, and influence could potentially encourage them to seek opportunities to lead cross-cultural educational efforts.

Human capital. Hispanic community members possess skills and abilities they can share with others in order to enhance community relationships and resources. As suggested by this study, Hispanic women may be eager to share their skills and abilities with one another and should be seen as assets to creating sustainable community action. Further, they should be provided with opportunities to develop leadership roles.

Social capital. Also essential in the development of fruitful and sustainable community programs is recognizing the connectedness among Latino populations. As suggested by literature and supported by the study, at the heart of Latino families and communities are interdependence and cohesion. In order to truly empower communities, programmers must identify social capital and develop systematic mechanisms that evaluate collective/family impact as opposed to individual projects (Emery & Flora, 2006).

Future Directions

In analyzing holistic community changes, participants and outside facilitators must base their evaluation efforts on looking at success indicators and potential areas for support. Future research and programming should consider a holistic approach or family life education curriculum that unifies needs with assets in order to give women, in particular, an opportunity to lead their community's efforts to succeed and thrive in the United States.

Educational foci for programmers should focus on the benefits of bilingualism as opposed to the inability of participants to speak English (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). Further,

efforts should be made to include participatory decision-making (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). Community members could even be encouraged to contribute in the development of an English curriculum, for example. Leadership opportunities may emerge as the development of a successful English program (as defined by constituents) comes to fruition.

Maximizing human capital could potentially give way to community members leading efforts to create programs in which they share their skills and abilities with the community at large. Women in this study suggested the following ideas for skill-building courses: technology, budgeting, financial responsibility, recreational classes such as Zumba, and cooking to name a few.

Latinos are increasingly giving public expression to their rich cultural inheritance, which helps build relationships among community members and instills a sense of control and leadership of their community (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1997). Participants in this study proposed cultural festivals on weekends, showcasing Spanish films, folkloric dances, cross cultural discussions, etc.

Finally, the cultural construct of familialism has been identified as a strength in Latino families (Shetgiri, Kataoka, Ryan, Miller, Chung, & Schuster, 2009). The Hispanic mothers involved in this study shared an interest in developing and enhancing their parenting skills. Participants recommended the following topics: strategies to improve discipline practices, marital communication skills, early childhood education, parenting teenagers, sexual education, risks involved with drugs and alcohol, and fostering responsibility and independence.

Conclusion

This qualitative study is limited by the small sample size and the location of participants who were concentrated in three different low-income communities within one county in North Carolina. Thus, the findings in this study may not be representative of other Latino populations. Fathers and other family members (e.g., children, adolescents, extended sources of support such as grandparents) were not included in this study. Consequently, the findings are limited as they are reported only from the viewpoint of the mother.

In closing, findings from the present study suggest that Latinas in the sample are interested in three central areas with regard to community-based education efforts: social inclusion, parenting involvement, and educational and recreational opportunities for themselves and their families. These areas of interest are intertwined with their needs, assets, and limitations.

Understanding the perspectives of Latino populations with regard to the barriers they face facilitates the replication of effective programs and increases community-based leadership and accountability. Further, capitalizing on these assets has the potential to transform the way in which educators and community programmers look at Latino communities (Nieto, 2006; Ramirez, 2006). Imposing branded, top-down, or mainstream programs that have been translated for Spanish-speaking audiences, but were not designed for them, has and will continue to produce disappointing results for both participants and programmers. To echo the words of McKnight and Kretzmann (1997), “Our greatest assets are our people. But people in low income neighborhoods are seldom regarded as assets”

(p.159). Change starts from within; giving community members leadership skills, providing them with support and mentoring, and directly involving them in addressing the matters faced by their communities will conceivably create a collective community identity that will discover, implement, and sustain innovative practices in order to improve both individual members and the community at large.

References

- Amendola, M. G. (2013). Community-based participatory research with Hispanic/Latino leaders and members. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(6), 1-24. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1505017464?accountid=12725>
- Bacallao, M. L., & Smokowski, P. R. (2007). The costs of getting ahead: Mexican family system changes after immigration. *Family Relations*, 56(1), 52-66. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.prox.lib.ncsu.edu/stable/4541647>
- Baldwin, D. (1999). Community-based experiences and cultural competence. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 38(5), 195-6. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/203972852?accountid=12725>
- Brown, A., & Patten, E. (2014, April 29). Statistical portrait of Hispanics in the United States, 2012. Retrieved from Pew Research Center website: <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2014/04/29/statistical-portrait-of-hispanics-in-the-united-states-2012/>
- Cabrera, N. C., & Bradley, R. H. (2012). Latino fathers and their children. *Child Development Perspectives*, 6(3), 232-238. doi:10.1111/j.1750-8606.2012.00249.x
- Castillo, L. G., Perez, F. V., Castillo, R., & Ghosheh, M. R. (2010). Construction and initial validation of the Marianismo Beliefs Scale. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly*, 23(2), 163-175. doi:10.1080/09515071003776036

- Chavez, C. (2008). Conceptualizing from the inside: Advantages, complications, and demands on insider positionality. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(3), 474-494.
Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-3/chavez.pdf>
- Cleaveland, C. (2012). 'In this country, you suffer a lot': Undocumented Mexican immigrant experiences. *Qualitative Social Work*, 11(6), 566-586. doi:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1473325011409475>
- Cline, Z., & Necochea, J. (2001). Basta ya! Latino parents fighting entrenched racism. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 25(1), 89-114. Retrieved from
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/222053678?accountid=12725>
- Crosnoe, R., & Lopez Turley, R. N. (2011). K-12 educational outcomes of immigrant youth. *The Future of Children*, 21(1), 129-152. doi:10.1353/foc.2011.0008
- Currie, J., & Thomas, D. (1999). Does head start help Hispanic children. *Journal of Public Economics*, 74(2), 235-262. doi:10.1016/S0047-2727(99)00027-4
- De Andrade, L. L. (2000). Negotiating from the inside: Constructing racial and ethnic identity in qualitative research. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 29(3), 268-290. doi: 10.1177/089124100129023918
- Delgado, M. (1979). A grass-roots model for needs assessment in Hispanic communities. *Child Welfare*, 58(9), 571-576. Retrieved from
<http://proxying.lib.ncsu.edu/index.php?url=/docview/61528858?accountid=12725>
- Emery, M., & Flora, C. (2006). Spiraling-up: Mapping community transformation with community capitals framework. *Community Development*, 37(1), 19-35.

- Falicov, C. J. (2005). Ambiguous loss: Risk and resilience in Latino immigrant families. *The new immigration: An interdisciplinary reader*, 197-206.
- Fischer, C., Harvey, E. A., & Driscoll, P. (2009). Parent-centered parenting values among Latino immigrant mothers. *Journal of Family Studies*, 15(3), 296-308.
- Guerra, P. L., & Valverde, L. A. (2008). Latino communities and schools: Tapping assets for student success. *The Education Digest*, 73(6), 4-8. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/218191739?accountid=12725>
- Hobbs, B. B. (2004). Latino outreach programs: Why they need to be different. *Journal of Extension*, 42(4). Retrieved from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2004august/comm1.php>
- Hossain, Z., & Shipman, V. (2009). Mexican immigrant fathers' and mothers' engagement with school-age children. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 31(4), 468-491. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0739986309342943>
- Knouse, S. B. (2013). Mentoring for Hispanics. *Review of Business*, 33(2), 80-90. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1471854143?accountid=12725>
- Luna, S. G. (2013). Hispanic women in industry. *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal*, 28(4), 49-55. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1510496499?accountid=12725>
- Madrid, E. M. (2011). The Latino achievement gap. *Multicultural Education*, 18(3), 7-12. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/926978300?accountid=12725>

Mathie, A., & Cunningham, G. (2003). From clients to citizens: Asset-based community development as a strategy for community-driven development. *Development in Practice, 13*(5), 474-486.

McKnight, J. L., & Kretzmann, J. P. (1997). Mapping Community Chapter 10 Capacity. *Community organizing and community building for health, 157*.

Monkman, K., Ronald, M., & Delimon Theramene, F. (2005). Social and cultural capital in an urban Latino school community. *Urban Education, 40*(1), 4-33. doi: 10.1177/0042085904270416

Monzo, L. D., & Rueda, R. (2006). A sociocultural perspective on acculturation: Latino immigrant families negotiating diverse discipline practices. *Education and Urban Society, 38*(2), 188-203. doi:10.1177/0013124505284293

Nieto, E. (2006). In the midst of a Latino leadership crisis. *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy, 19*, 83-92.

Quinones-Mayo, Y., & Dempsey, P. (2005). Finding the bicultural balance: Immigrant Latino mothers raising "American" adolescents. *Child Welfare, 84*(5), 649-667.

Retrieved from

<http://proxying.lib.ncsu.edu/index.php?url=/docview/61335884?accountid=12725>

Ramirez, A. (2006). Hispanic leadership development and its policy impact. *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy, 18*, 85-89.

- Rodriguez, K. M., Castillo, L. G., & Gandara, L. (2013). The influence of marianismo, ganas, and academic motivation on Latina adolescents' academic achievement intentions. *Journal Of Latina/O Psychology, 1*(4), 218-226. doi:10.1037/lat0000008
- Saracho, O. N. (2007). Hispanic father-child sociocultural literacy practices. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 6*(3), 272-283. doi: 10.1177/1538192707302878
- Sharpe, P. A., Greaney, M. L., Lee, P. R., & Royce, S. W. (2000). Assets-oriented community assessment. *Public Health Reports, 115*(2-3), 205.
- Shetgiri, R., Kataoka, S. H., Ryan, G. W., Askew, L. M., Chung, P. J., & Schuster, M. A. (2009). Risk and resilience in Latinos: A community-based participatory research study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 37*(6), S217-S224.
- Tienda, M. (1995). Latinos and the American pie: Can Latinos achieve economic parity? *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 17*(4), 403-429.
doi: 10.1177/07399863950174001
- Umana-Taylor, A. J., & Bamaca, M. Y. (2004). Conducting focus groups with Latino populations: Lessons from the field. *Family Relations, 53*(3), 261-272. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/prox.lib.ncsu.edu/stable/3700344>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). North Carolina Quick Facts from the US Census Bureau. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37000.html>
- Vesely, C. K., Ewaida, M., & Anderson, E. A. (2014). Cultural competence of parenting education programs used by Latino families. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 36*(1), 27-47. doi: 10.1177/0739986313510694

Villagran, M. (2001). Community building and Latino families. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 40(3), 224-227. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/217949285?accountid=12725>

Villenas, S., & Deyhle, D. (1999). Critical race theory and ethnographies challenging the stereotypes: Latino families, schooling, resilience and resistance. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 29(4), 413-445.

Appendices

Appendix A

Focus Group Interview Questions

1. What are the strengths of your community, what makes it a great place to live?
 - a. For children and adults?
 - b. What are areas of growth for your community? What could be done to make it a better place?

2. Describe the relationships in your family unit, particularly the people living in your household.
 - a. With regard to the family relationship you described, what are you most proud of?
 - b. Are there things you would like to improve? Explain.

3. What skills do you think families need to live happy, healthy, and productive lives?

4. How often do you communicate with your child's school?
 - a. How fully do you feel that you understand how your child's school operates (e.g., procedures, administration, rules, expectations)?

5. How would you describe communication between you and your child?
 - a. Daily/everyday communication?
 - b. Conflict resolution?
 - c. Discuss strengths and areas for growth.

6. *For participants with teenagers:* If you have a teenage child, what are some areas of concern you have about parenting during the teenage years? *For other participants:* If your child has not reached this stage, think about the future...
 - a. What information or skills could professionals provide you with to better parent during this life stage?

7. As a parent and/or partner/spouse, what challenges do you face in your roles?
 - a. How do you manage these challenges?
 - b. How do you take care of yourself?

8. In terms of family life and education, what topics would you like to learn more about?

9. Finally, describe your community in one word or phrase.
 - a. If you had a magic wand, would you change anything? If so, explain.

Appendix B

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Ethnicity
2. Name of Community
3. Amount of time living in Community
4. Amount of time living in the United States
5. Marital Status
6. Age
7. Ages of children living at home
8. Levels of education of family members [*Include yourself, members of your current household (e.g., children, spouse/partner), and members of your family of origin (e.g., parents, siblings, close next of kin)*]

Appendix C

**North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH
This form is valid from 2/25/14 through 2/25/15**

Title of Study: A Closer Look at Latino Communities in North Carolina:
Creating a Blueprint for Community Programs

Principal Investigator: Martha Iliana Santillan-Carrillo (misantil@ncsu.edu or 360-920-9141)

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Nichole Huff (nichole_huff@ncsu.edu or 919-515-9155)

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to identify current needs and assets of Latinos living in urban communities within Wake County, North Carolina. Through focused group discussions, the study will assess local Latino communities in order to design a blueprint that professionals can use to create more effective community programs for Latino audiences.

What are some general things I should know about research studies?

- Your participation in this study is voluntary.
- You have the right to be part of this study, to choose not to participate, or to stop participating at any time.
- It is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information about anything in the study.
- If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s).
- A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 30-45 minute focused group discussion with 3-5 other Latino women about ways to improve your local community. Audio will be recorded during the discussion. Participants will be asked questions about their communities, social networks, and family lives.

Benefits and Risks

You will not gain direct benefits from participating in the study; however, findings and implications produced by this research have the potential to increase the knowledge of professionals working with Latino communities, especially with regard to better understanding perceived community needs and assets in order to enhance community-based outreach and education efforts.

There are no anticipated risks to participating in this study; however, participants will be asked questions that may be perceived as sensitive or personal topics to discuss in a group setting. If you feel uncomfortable or distressed during or after the study, the researchers can provide you with contact information for low or no cost resources in your community that you can utilize at your discretion. Further, you have the right to stop participating at any time.

Confidentiality

All participants are reminded of the sensitive and confidential nature of the study. Thus, participants are asked to maintain privacy after the conclusion of the focus group. Participants are asked to retain privacy around matters including revealing the names or identities of others who participate in the study, as well as disclosing any responses that were shared. Data collected by the researchers will be stored securely: hardcopies of

documents will be locked and secured, and computer files will be stored on a password-protected computer. No references will be made of any kind in oral or written reports that could link you or other participants to the study.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researchers, Martha Iliana Santillan-Carrillo or Dr. Nichole Huff at any time. Additionally, if you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact Deb Paxton, NC State Regulatory Compliance (dapaxton@ncsu.edu or 919-515-4514).

Consent To Participate

"I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. I also understand the sensitive nature of the study and agree to respect the confidentiality and right to privacy of all participants."

Subject's signature _____ **Date** _____

Investigator's signature _____ **Date** _____