Education is a Social Process: Repairing the P-16 Pipeline for Hispanic Youth One Relationship at a Time

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EDUCATION AS A SOCIAL PROCESS

Even as Latino college enrollment and graduation rates are at an all time high, the fact that Latino students have continued to lose ground to their non-Latino White and Black peers in four-year college enrollment and bachelor's degree attainment constitutes a critical policy issue (Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009; Tienda, 2009). Filling in the missing pieces of this Hispanic college puzzle (Alon, Domina, & Tienda, 2010; Tienda, 2011) will be essential to realize the potential "demographic dividend" embedded in the diverse youth population that will enter the U.S. workforce in the next two decades (Tienda & Alon, 2007; Tienda & Mitchell, 2006). As a predominantly White generation of baby boomers continues to settle into retirement, ensuring that the youth who replace them in the labor market and civil society—a significant proportion of whom will be Latino—have the educational credentials to do so must become a national priority. The educational success of Latino students can no longer be considered simply a Latino issue (Latino Policy Forum, 2012).

Our capacity and will to invest effectively in the educational development of Hispanic youth will be critical to ensure that the American Dream is more than just a dream for a rapidly growing proportion of the nation's population. However, to be effective, any policy efforts must be based in an understanding of—and a commitment to addressing—the network of factors that begin in early childhood and cumulatively serve to produce a tangled network of blockages instead of a seamless series of transitions along the preschool to college pipeline for many Hispanic youth. For example, despite the fact that the educational expectations held by Latino youth and their parents are comparable with other racial/ethnic groups, they have consistently been shown to have limited access to the information and guidance (and the social networks in which these resources are nested) vital to actually aligning the steps they take throughout all stages of their educational careers with their college goals (Burciaga, Huber, & Solórzano, 2009;
Contreras et al., 2011; Martinez & Cervera, 2012; Schneider et al., 2006). In fact, results from recent research suggest that social constraints on the flow of "college knowledge" to parents of Hispanic youth may impinge upon their ability to effectively transfer various advantages to their offspring during the college choice and enrollment process (Ryan, 2012).

In his first state of the union address in 2009, President Barack Obama asserted that by 2020, the United States would reclaim its position as the nation with a higher proportion of college graduates than any other. That goal is unattainable without dramatic increases in the college completion rates of Latinos, among whom degree completion rates will need to almost triple in order to reach the objective set forth by the President (Santiago & Callan, 2010). With its ultimate goal of creating a seamless system of education from preschool through college (Van de Water & Rainwater, 2001), the P-16, or preschool through college, perspective offers promise as a guiding framework for research, policy, and practice aimed at improving college access and completion among Hispanic youth. As the authors of a recent report from the College Board (Contreras et al., 2011, p. vi) assert:

Latino college completion and success begins with preschool and continues as students navigate the various stages of the educational system. Therefore, raising college completion rates among Latinos requires a coordinated effort that engages all segments of the education continuum.

However, to realize this potential, leaders at the helm of the current P-16 reform movement will need to attend explicitly to the social aspects of schooling that often make the educational pipeline especially challenging for Latino students and their families to navigate. Students and parents do not go about preparing for college as free agents. As individuals, they interact with friends, family, teachers, neighbors, and countless others throughout the process of planning for college. These personal interactions unfold across numerous and overlapping institutional and societal contexts, including but not limited to families, schools, neighborhoods,
and communities. Over a century ago, American philosopher John Dewey (1897) observed in his conception of the school as family, that education is a social process. Yet, as Mitchell and colleagues (2012) note, in recent history the pursuit of educational equality has been largely overshadowed by relentless and seemingly antisocial demands for the production of standardized adequacy. In this paper, we draw upon the growing body of research indicating that improving Latino college access and completion rates will require a greater investment in the social dynamics of education across the P-16 spectrum if the United States is to achieve both equity and excellence in educational outcomes. Perhaps because that which is social about education is so much more difficult to standardize and quantify, those who have sought to reform the system have been reluctant to engage strategies aimed at ensuring that all students and families have access to, and are able to effectively utilize, intentionally designed social support systems in their schools and communities. We suggest that the costs of not doing so are mounting for Latino students, and for the nation.

**Aligned Ambitions:**
The Overlapping Agendas of P-16 Reform and Latino College Success

**P-16, Past and Present**

While the most recent wave of efforts aimed at aligning and integrating the largely separate systems of early childhood, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education in the United States formally began in Georgia and Maryland sometime around 1995 (Davis & Hoffman, 2008; Rochford, 2007), calls for an education system that is aligned and integrated across sectors can be traced back as far as the late 1800s (VanOverbeke, 2009). Although history cannot answer the question of how best to go about promoting and implementing P-16 educational reforms, history can illuminate the complexities inherent in doing so. The different sectors or "silos" within the American education system each have different histories reflecting
unique traditions, missions, governance structures, and funding mechanisms and this makes
aligning them a challenge (Rochford, 2007; VanOverbeke, 2009; Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio,
2003).

Harnessing the capacity and the will to close gaps in educational attainment levels
between Latinos and other groups has proven perhaps equally as challenging. After decades of
policy and programmatic efforts, and despite impressive gains in educational attainment among
the U.S. population as a whole over the past 50 years, Latino students still remain decidedly
underrepresented among the ranks of college degree holders (Gándara & Contreras, 2009;
Contreras, 2011; Perna, 2000, 2006; Ream, Ryan & Espinoza, 2012). In 2011, 57% of Asians,
44% of Whites, and 30% of Blacks held an associate degree or higher; this was the case for
only 21% of Hispanics (Census Bureau, 2011).

A Shared Vision?

When Education Week released the 2008 annual report in their "Diplomas Count"
initiative, which draws attention to the need to improve high school graduation rates and
successful transitions to postsecondary education in the United States, of particular focus that
year was the extent to which each of the 50 states appeared to be making headway in these areas
through the use of P-16 or P-20 councils. Drawing on the database maintained by the Education
Commission of the States, which has been referred to as possibly the most comprehensive
clearinghouse on P-16 research and related publications (Rochford, 2007), the authors of the
report identified seven areas in which state P-16 councils had established initiatives or policies.

As we demonstrate in Table 1, these seven areas share a great deal in common with the
recommendations that the College Board (Contreras, 2011; Lee et al., 2011) has laid out for
improving college completion rates among Latino youth by strengthening the P-16 educational
pipeline. Both sets of recommendations identify the critical importance of quality early learning programs, while aligning academic standards with valid assessments is also a dual priority. Recruiting, training and retaining skilled teachers are deemed critical, as well. In both reports, making the college admissions process more transparent is also recognized as being important, as is skills preparation for work in the global economy.

Table 1. *Overlap between P-16 policy initiatives across states and recommended strategies for improving the P-16 pipeline for Latino students.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations for strengthening the P-16 educational pipeline for Latino youth</th>
<th>Initiatives and Policy Changes Endorsed by State P-16 Councils* (Education Commission of the States, 2008)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College placement and/or post-secondary remediation</td>
<td>Academic rigor and/or graduation requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify and simplify the college admission process</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase college completion rates through improved retention and transfer rates</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep college affordable</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make financial aid processes more transparent and provide more need-based grants</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement research-based dropout prevention programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve middle and high school college counseling</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Align K-12 education with international standards and college admissions</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve teacher quality and focus on recruitment and retention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide post-secondary options as an element of adult education</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide universally available preschool to children from low-income families</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* At the time of data collection in 2008, 37 of 50 states had established P-16 councils. Currently, 38 states have formal P-16 or P-20 councils. See the Education Commission of the States website for further information (www.ecs.org).

To be sure, the fact that the areas states have identified as critical to aligning education systems across the P-16 spectrum share much in common with the strategies that research has
demonstrated as key to helping Hispanic youth realize their ambitious college goals is encouraging. What is largely absent, however, from the P-16 policy agenda is any evidence of awareness of the critical importance of efforts to promote the formation of social connections that allow students and their families to experience the education system as "seamless" and familiar. Prior scholarly research has documented the fact that Latino students may rely to a greater extent than many other student groups upon relationships not only within the family (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Harrison et al., 1990; Sabogal et al., 1987; Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994) but especially with educationally resourceful non-kin adults (Espinoza, 2011; Lewis et al., 2012; Ream, 2005; Ream & Stanton-Salazar, 2007; Valenzuela, 1999) as they move through schools and go about preparing for college. Therefore, without an explicit focus on policies and initiatives aimed at promoting the development of meaningful and trustworthy relationships among Latino students, their families, and their teachers, schools, and communities, efforts to create an aligned education system in which all students experience smooth transitions from one level to the next and are prepared to enroll in and complete college seem inadequately conceptualized. We are social beings who emerge out of deeply interpenetrated relationships. This appreciation must be fundamental to any P-16 policy agenda designed to bolster Hispanic success in school.

Despite the challenges involved, we argue that both P-16 reform and improved Latino educational attainment are goals worth pursuing—simultaneously. There is a substantial amount of overlap between the goals and principles of P-16 reform and those policies and practices which a substantial body of research has suggested can help boost college access and completion rates among U.S. Hispanics. In this paper we advocate for an education system that is both less disjointed and that allows for smoother transitions from one level to the next for students and
families. At the same time, we advocate a system committed to making the investments that will be required to dramatically improve rates of degree attainment among Latino youth. In the following pages, we draw upon both scholarly and policy-oriented research demonstrating that when Hispanic students and families are situated in diverse and supportive social networks populated by caring and resourceful peers, family members, school staff, and community members, the impact on students' educational trajectories can be positive and profound. We suggest that without strategic efforts designed to foster the development of the kinds of social connections that can open up access to the critical yet difficult to obtain knowledge, information, and support necessary for successfully navigating the P-16 education system and obtaining a college degree, the latest era in the P-16 reform movement will fall far short of its potential.

The Early Educational Experiences of Hispanic Students

Building Participation and Relationships

In order to more fully comprehend and more adequately address differences, on average, in levels of educational attainment among Latino and White students, Malcom's (1990) call to return to the "headwaters" of students' schooling experiences seems as relevant to the work of practitioners, policymakers, and researchers today as it did over two decades ago (Burciaga, Huber, & Solórzano, 2009). When we think about improving postsecondary attainment among Hispanic youth, it is necessary to recall that the college "pipeline" starts many years before students reach high school. Understanding the underrepresentation of Latino students in higher education, especially at four-year institutions, also requires that attention be paid to their experiences in both preschool and elementary education, as the cumulative effects of inadequate preparation, beginning with a lack of access to quality preschool programs and continuing through high school, forcefully impact Hispanic students' ultimate rates of college enrollment
and attainment (Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995; Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). Comparatively lower outcomes among Latinos as measured by state and national standardized tests scores, high school graduation rates, and rates of transition to college all directly reflect early disparities in achievement and school readiness (Lee et al., 2011; Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

In a recent College Board report addressing college completion among Latino students, Lee et al. (2011) echoed what numerous others have concluded—that the benefits of high quality preschool education on cognitive development, achievement and other educational outcomes continue beyond the school years and can be especially impactful among Hispanic children (Bassok, 2010; Belfield, 2007; Crosnoe, 2006; Loeb et al., 2007; Ream, Ryan, & Espinoza, 2012). However, data from national surveys dating back some three decades reveal that Latino children have been and continue to be less likely than their Black and White counterparts to attend preschool (Fuller & Kim, 2007). Recent data demonstrates that while 53% of four-year-old Latino children were enrolled in preschool in 2005, this share trailed a substantial distance behind non-Latino Black (69%) and White (70%) four-year-olds (Fuller & Kim, 2011). Further, while preschool participation rates remained consistent for the latter two groups between 2005 and 2009, the Latino preschool participation rate had dropped to 48%.

Many of the reasons that a majority of young Hispanic children do not attend preschool are related to the numerous structural barriers faced by their parents. In addition to family poverty and language barriers, many Hispanic families reside in areas where there is a lack of high-quality and affordable programs. First and foremost, therefore, the most important starting point for state and federal policy interventions related to early learning is to ensure equitable
access to quality preschool programs (Wright, 2011). This should occur, at least in part, by reaching out to parents early in their children's lives.

**Family Matters: Connecting to Hispanic Families Early On**

Not only do Hispanic families need *access* to preschools, but program administrators and staff must also reach out to involve families in their child's early educational experiences. An expansive body of research has consistently demonstrated the benefits of multiple forms of family involvement at home and at school (Henderson & Mapp, 2006). Citing evidence showing that early childhood and the transition to formal schooling can be a time of risk for Latino children, the Latino Policy Forum (2012) advises that integrating Latino families into the education process is critical to improving levels of school readiness and academic achievement for young children. When families are connected to the necessary knowledge, they can engage their children in activities that promote vocabulary development, academic performance and the enjoyment of learning (Coll et al., 2002; Dombro, Jablon, & Stetson, 2010). In addition, a recent review of best practices for closing achievement gaps through community and family engagement from the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund and the National Education Association (2010) notes that quality family programming can also improve children's sense of engagement with school.

Yet, while Hispanic parents have high expectations for their children and often make personal sacrifices to promote academic success, the parenting strategies they employ to promote achievement often go unrecognized in predominant models of family-school relationships (Ibenez et al., 2004; Hill & Torres, 2010). Often, even when Latino parents do participate in activities targeted at increasing parent involvement, they are left feeling confused by school structures and unspoken expectations (Carreón, Drake, & Barton, 2005). Several scholars have
suggested that misunderstandings or incongruencies between school and home regarding respective roles, assumptions or knowledge about how U.S. schools operate, and even the meaning of the term "parent involvement" can lead to a breakdown in the family-school relationship (Carreón et al., 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Hill, 2009; Hill & Torres, 2010; Peña, 2000). While the efforts schools engage in to involve parents in their children's education vary in terms of content and focus, perhaps the most critical element of any successful family-school program is that parents feel wanted and welcome (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Based on findings from their research examining a school-level effort to involve Hispanic parents, Fann and colleagues (2009) also stressed that school actors must consider community-specific needs and parents' expressed informational needs, utilize effective marketing and delivery practices, and engage in sustained and collaborative relationships with parents instead of offering isolated opportunities for families to get involved.

Quality Counts: Competent and Caring Instruction in the Early Grades

One of the greatest challenges at the local level is often striking a balance between the construction costs associated with building facilities and the programmatic costs of providing high-quality preschool services. To address this issue, state education officials and policymakers might, for example, set aside capital subsidy funds specifically for communities with little access to early childhood programming (Lee et al., 2011). However, beyond ensuring the availability of physical structures, state and local officials also can play an important role in ensuring that the preschool programs available to Hispanic children are of high quality, which entails the provision of inputs that may be easily regulated and assessed, including well-trained staff, small student-teacher ratios, adequate instructional materials, and also linguistically and culturally
relevant provisions such as bilingual personnel and meaningful opportunities for family engagement.

Ensuring that the preschool programs Latino children attend are of high quality might occur through funding requirements and meaningful incentives, including meaningful incentives for early childhood teachers. The low wages earned by preschool educators have made it difficult to professionalize the field of early childhood education and teachers most often cite low wages as their rationale for leaving the early childhood sectors. Estimates of the annual teacher turnover rate range in U.S. preschools range from 20% to 30% to as high as 40% to 50% annually (Dowsett et al., 2008), an alarming statistic insofar as centers with low teacher turnover tend to score higher on measures of quality than centers with high teacher turnover.

However, many researchers suggest that it is the less measurable qualitative elements of the preschool curriculum, such as classroom social dynamics, that have the greatest impact on students (Phillips et al., 2000). Researchers and policymakers must develop better methods for assessing the less tangible elements of program quality (e.g., student-teacher relationships, peer interactions, or classroom social climate). How to enable teachers, for example, to distinguish a child’s “innate” dispositions from the repertoire of their more actionable social skills demands professional development partnerships with state institutions of higher education (Hamre et al., 2012).

Considering that indicators predictive of high school dropout have been identified as early as first grade, including a low sense of academic self efficacy, low reading skills, and absenteeism, falling behind during the elementary years can have lasting effects on students' educational trajectories (Alexander et al., 1997; Roderick, 1993; Rumberger, 2012). The benefits of early education for children can continue into elementary school when pre-K programs link to
the primary grades through shared structures and aligned objectives (Reynolds et al., 2001). Also required is effective instruction delivered by well-prepared teachers who understand the needs of all of their students and are predisposed to and skilled at caring across culture and language boundaries in diverse elementary school classrooms.

In their recent work on the critical value of caring relationships among teachers and students at the elementary level, Lewis and colleagues (2011) assert that meeting the needs of linguistically diverse Hispanic youth will require that teachers from all backgrounds are prepared to utilize strategies and knowledge that may not be intuitive or readily accessible in their own communities (Maxwell-Jolly, Gándara, & Shields, 2009). However, the authors noted that while 18 different types of authorizations to teach English Learners (EL) are issued or renewable in their home state of California, those requiring in-depth cultural competency and linguistic training are the rarest of those conferred (EdSource, 2007; Gándara et al., 2003). On the other hand, and in contrast to the arguably predominant manner of providing EL certification through surface level coursework as an add-on to teacher preparation programs, the Latino Policy Forum advocates that every teacher preparation program at all levels "would prepare its teacher candidates to be competent bilingual and bicultural educators" (2012, p. 6). Moreover, a growing body of research demonstrates the instrumental value in teacher cross-cultural competencies and professional development that bolsters teachers’ ability to care in ways that demonstrate a rich understanding of Hispanic students’ lived experiences (Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012; Lewis et al., 2012; Rolón-Dow, 2005; Sleeter, 2001).
Making Strong Relationships Primary at the Secondary Level

Preparing all students for college and careers

Currently, most states have moved toward the adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS), a step which would result in over 80% of U.S. students receiving instruction under the same college- and career-readiness standards (Lee et al., 2011). However, state and local policymakers must ensure that all students, especially Latino students, are able to reach these standards. The National Council of La Raza (Castillo & Lukan, 2011) has created a toolkit that Latino parent and community groups can use to advocate for CCSS implementation strategies that will actually improve the educational experiences and outcomes of Hispanic youth. The NCLR identifies several specific elements that policymakers and practitioners alike must address.

First, Hispanic students need to be able to sit in classrooms each day where they have access to well-trained teachers who can facilitate the development of academic language skills while providing access to rigorous content. In addition, student learning should be evaluated using assessments that accurately reflect students’ acquisition of content and, further, appropriate test accommodations should be used for students who are still in the process of becoming fully English proficient. Finally, the authors assert, it is critical that parents have access to academic and college readiness standards as well as information about the extent to which their child's school is effectively helping all students reach those standards. This information should be provided in clear and unambiguous language and in both Spanish and English. These elements echo research findings described in the previous section regarding the importance of providing access to high-quality, caring instruction for Hispanic students and meaningful opportunities for
their families to engage with schools in order to promote the educational success of Hispanic youth.

One initiative related to student academic preparation that is gaining momentum at the state level is the development of individual learning plans, also referred to as career maps. Nationwide, about half of all states now require students to develop these career-focused "roadmaps" during middle and high school (Rennie Center, 2011). Students typically begin their plans, ideally in conjunction with a teacher or counselor and their parents, following a career exploration unit during middle school. After identifying careers in which they are interested, and the education required for those careers, students begin mapping out the courses they will need to take during high school. This planning is usually done online using one of numerous ready-made interactive software tools or using customized programs developed at the state or district level (Rennie Center, 2011).

Results of research on the effectiveness of student learning plans indicate that these plans can improve student motivation and engagement as well as students' understanding of their postsecondary options and the necessity of making and acting upon long-range plans for meeting their college goals (Gibson & Clarke, 2000; NASSP, 2004; Solberg, Gresham, & Huang, 2010; Welsh, 2005). Further, several studies have shown that students, parents and educators all reported that student learning plans promoted the engagement of parents in their children's academic and career planning as well as more frequent and in-depth communication between students and parents, and between parents and educators (Budge et al., 2010; Clarke, DiMartino, & Wolk, 2003; Gibson & Clarke, 2000; Solberg et al., 2010).

Again demonstrating the importance of relationships among students, parents, and teachers, a critical element of effective implementation that arose across studies was the
engagement and interest of the teacher or mentor charged with facilitating the planning process. Students and parents reported that the quality of the planning experience depended on teacher/mentor engagement and on whether there were regular opportunities to check in with that person to reflect on and revise the student's plan (Solberg et al., 2011). Yet counselors and teachers already have a lot of duties, particularly in districts where there have been deep budget (and often staffing) cuts. Therefore, while individualized student learning plans seem to offer great potential, without careful attention to implementation—including the importance of supportive relationships—the practice could also become one more task among many that school staff must take on and one more thing that Hispanic students and their families have to navigate on their own.

**Counseling as catalyst**

Latino youth need better information about college in order to align their college-going actions with their college expectations, and access to information and guidance must begin early on and continue through the high school years. One of the most critical steps that must be taken in order to increase alignment between college expectations and actions among Latino students is to greatly improve college counseling at both the middle and high school levels. McDonough and Calderone (2006) describe five primary ways through which high school counselors impact the college preparation and advising process. These include structuring information and activities that promote college-going aspirations, assisting parents in understanding the college preparation process in order to support their child, assisting students in becoming academically prepared for college, supporting and influencing students' college decision-making process, and focusing the school as an institution on its "college mission" (Hossler, Schmidt, & Vesper, 1999; McDonough, 2005).
Despite the critical nature of each of these tasks, however, the duties which typically consume the majority of public school counselors' time include testing, scheduling, discipline, risk prevention, and crisis counseling. In addition, high school counselors often carry inordinately high case loads, with some statewide averages nearing 1,000:1. Such extremely high caseloads are significantly more common in schools serving large numbers of poor students of color (McDonough, 2005). In comparison, in many private schools, which are often centered around a more explicit college preparatory mission, the availability of school counselors whose sole responsibility is college advising is a regular occurrence (McDonough, 2005). While most private high schools have counselors dedicated to advising and supporting students and parents in thinking about and planning for college, this is not the case in most public U.S. high schools—particularly in the under-resourced, high-minority, and high-poverty schools attended by a substantial proportion of Latino youth.

As pertains to youth's future educational prospects, Simmons (2011) asserts that policymakers have overlooked the reform of the college counseling function in U.S. public schools as a critical mechanism via which to address the limited access to college-relevant social capital experienced by low-income, minority, and first-generation college students. Simmons (2011) suggests that policymakers ask themselves what sort of a return they can expect on investments in P-16 education, exhaustive testing schemes, and college readiness standards if students ultimately enroll in less selective institutions or simply forego higher education altogether. If policymakers do not also invest in the construction of a bridge between high school and college, they leave vulnerable students unable to convert their high expectations, and often their high achievement, into college enrollment. Given its importance as a catalyst for securing other valuable resources, as well as for converting resources already possessed into desired
outcomes, social capital can function much like the trestles of a bridge connecting students to the specialized information and support they need to meet their college goals.

One federal legislative proposal targeting low and middle-income students was the "Coaching our Adolescents to College Heights Act" (COACH Act). This proposal, introduced in 2008 by then U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, was intended to augment the counseling capacity of high schools by placing recent college graduates in under-resourced schools in order to help address knowledge gaps among high-achieving and college-eligible students about the college admissions and financial aid process. Congress did not pass the COACH Act, although the model has been implemented with some success in 14 states through the non-profit National College Advising Corps (Simmons, 2011).

Another approach to improved college counseling, and one that bridges secondary and postsecondary levels, can be found in the Texas GO Center program. These GO Centers are located on middle and high school campuses throughout the state and serve as a point of coordination between students, parents, high-school counselors, and institutions of higher education (Lee et al., 2011). The GO Centers also provide students and parents with one-on-one assistance filling out college and financial aid applications.

An additional and well-known program focused on the preparation of low-income and minority students for college, and one which capitalizes on the potential for teachers to also act, in a more formal capacity, as college counselors, is the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program. The AVID program operates in 4,000 schools nationwide, as well as in fifteen foreign countries (Haskins & Kemple, 2009). The program is facilitated primarily through a regular school elective, often during the middle school and high school years, which meets for an hour each school day. There are also “enrichment” meetings outside of
regular school hours at least once a week. Rather than the school counselor, the AVID course is taught by a classroom teacher who has gone through the AVID training. The AVID teacher helps students learn college study skills such as time-management and test-preparation strategies as well as how to read textbooks and take lecture notes.

Highlighting the need to attend to the social dynamics of intervention efforts like AVID, Ream (2005) describes the unique potential AVID offers for tapping the resources that inhere in parents' and students' social networks. The AVID program recognizes that parents of minority students often hold high expectations that their child will enroll in college but may be unsure of how to best help their offspring attain their college goals. Thus, successful AVID schools use the formal structure of the program to provide parents with access to social capital via opportunities for involvement and engagement through the development of trusting and reciprocal relations between parents and schools (Ream, 2005). These reflections underscore the fact that, while decades of social science research have demonstrated that having well-educated parents should lead to successful educational outcomes among children, it is the social capital embedded in the parent-child relationship and multiplied through time spent together, as well as the strategic promotion of activities which promote successful educational outcomes, that facilitates the transfer of human capital from parent to child (Coleman, 1988; Kao, 2004). Access to information and facts about all aspects of college via relationships with school staff, other parents, and community actors can serve as an educative source of parent support, even—or perhaps especially—when parents have little or no personal college experience.

**Charting the course(s)**

The latest evidence suggests that as many as 70% of Latino students are enrolled in classes that will not get them ready for college (Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011; Ginorio &
This is particularly the case among English Learners, the vast majority of whom are first and second generation students and 79% of whom speak Spanish (Calderón et al., 2011). Findings from survey research conducted with over 8,000 high school juniors and seniors from nine large, urban high schools in the Los Angeles area suggested that by the end of high school, many respondents found themselves ineligible for admissions to a four-year college because they had not been placed into the requisite college preparatory courses they needed in order to be admitted (De La Rosa & Tierney, 2006).

The results of recent research demonstrate that the extent to which students with expectations of obtaining a bachelor's degree prepare during high school to realize their goals by maintaining good grades, enrolling in certain courses, taking entrance exams and submitting college applications can have a marked influence on the level at which they enroll in college (Klasik, 2011; Ryan, 2012). Inasmuch as participation in a college-going curriculum not only prepares students academically but also promotes and nurtures high educational expectations, uneven access to college-preparatory courses during middle and high, particularly in the schools Latinos are most likely to attend, undoubtedly contributes to the lower levels of alignment between college-going ambitions and preparation for college enrollment observed among Latinos (Contreras, 2005; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Ryan, 2012).

Protecting the (school) environment

In contrast to research demonstrating the influence that characteristics of a student's high school may have on his or her college-going behavior, recent policy discussions around expanding college access have revolved around two main explanations for the underenrollment of low-income and minority youth in four-year institutions (Roderick et al., 2011). It is presumed that 1) the poor academic performance and preparation of low-income and minority youth as
well as 2) the combination of rising college costs with the decreasing real value of financial aid explain why more of these students are not enrolling in four-year institutions (Roderick et al., 2001; Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Roderick et al. (2011) assert that these policy conversations are based on the assumption that less-advantaged students have access to all the information and assistance they need to respond to new opportunities created via policy initiatives and that if they were only more qualified they would then be able to use these assumed resources to steer themselves through the college choice process and ultimately enroll in four-year colleges.

Yet, drawing on the social trust literature, which has demonstrated strong associations between measures of relational trust within the school community and school improvement and student learning gains (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Seashore-Louis, 2007), Schneider (2007) contends that effective college-promoting practices must be embedded in a school context in which educators, students, and parents, through a system of shared social relationships and values, establish and consistently reinforce norms for college attendance. Over time, students must develop an understanding of what college participation means, what preparing for college involves, and what specific steps must be taken in order to apply to and enroll in college—in other words, they need “college knowledge” (Conley, 2007). From the perspective of scholars such as Schneider (2007) and Conley (2007), the set of actions that schools use to encourage college attendance must be woven into the academic program and not simply assigned to the counseling department (Roderick et al., 2011). A more holistic approach to college counseling also makes sense given that many counselors serve large numbers of students, are tasked with a wide range of responsibilities, and often lack the time and even adequate training to provide
support for all students (McDonough, 1997, 2005; Perez & McDonough, 2008; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Venezia et al., 2003).

The conclusions drawn by Schneider find substantiation in the research findings of Roderick and colleagues (2011), who concluded that students were more likely to plan to attend, apply to, and enroll in four-year colleges when teachers in the schools expected students to go to college and assumed shared responsibility in preparing and supporting their students through the college choice and enrollment process. The researchers saw this as evidence that a potentially critical role of urban high schools is to bridge the college-relevant social capital gap among low-income and minority youth. It is cause for concern, then, that in their work on the detrimental effects of the disconnect between the nation's K-12 education system and its postsecondary system, Venezia and colleagues (2003) demonstrated that many students and their parents, as well as educators, are quite confused or misinformed about exactly how students should prepare for college.

While there is not a consensus in the research literature about what it means for schools to offer sufficient supports that promote college access (Roderick et al., 2011), the results of several investigations focusing on the concrete practices employed within U.S. high schools offer useful directions for practice. Hill (2008) analyzed school administrator surveys from the NELS dataset using latent class analysis and was able to characterize three types of college-promoting strategies utilized by high schools. Traditional high schools helped students fill out applications and encouraged them to make college campus visits but provided little parent outreach. Clearinghouse high schools provided an even greater level of resources and direct support to students and were more connected with college representatives, but like traditional high schools, clearinghouse schools offered limited parent outreach. Brokering schools, on the other hand,
shared all of the traits of traditional and clearinghouse schools but also engaged in considerable parent outreach. Students attending brokering schools were more likely to enroll in any college as well as to enroll in a four-year versus a two-year college. While brokering schools were less likely to serve low income and minority youth (Hill, 2008), implementing this sort of an approach, in which school agents serve as cultural brokers who help Hispanic students and parents bridge the worlds of home and school, may be especially critical for Latinos (Cooper, Denner, & Lopez, 1999). Rather than using a deficit-based logic to effectively exclude Hispanic parents because they apparently struggle to convert their resources into college knowledge, brokering schools act strategically to incorporate parents into the process. The social ties that are formed become a conduit via which schools can augment the critical and technical kinds of college information available to parents and their kids.

In their now classic work on the tools of policymaking, McDonnell and Elmore (1987) describe capacity-building policy instruments as those involving investments in the knowledge, skills, and competence of individuals that are required to produce a future value based on the assumption that the capacity to do so does not currently exist. Whether schools are actually able to infuse the school environment with widely-held expectations of student success and college-going behavior will likely depend on the ability of state policymakers, district officials, and school leaders to build the capacity and bolster the will of all school staff, not only counselors, to help all students identify their future goals and then to support students and their families as they map out the courses and other steps required to realize postsecondary goals.

Through the strategic implementation of practices that are sensitive to parents' needs and geared toward trustworthy relations, schools hold the potential to increase the availability of information, guidance, and hands-on assistance to parents of Hispanic students as they navigate
the college choice and enrollment process with their child. However, research has suggested that parent outreach around college at many high schools, which often consists primarily of college and financial-aid nights and newsletters, tends to draw parents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and parents whose students have higher than average achievement levels (Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008). While school personnel tend to have clear expectations for parent involvement in the college choice process, particularly in terms of their attendance at school functions, some parents—including many Latino parents—are unable to meet these expectations due to work obligations and time constraints, unease with school staff, language differences, and a lack of trust (Gándara, 1995; Rowan-Kenyon et al., 2008; Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

Bridging to Higher Education

**Show me (where to find) the money**

Financial aid is a significant predictor of college completion regardless of race or ethnicity (Lee et al., 2011). A sizeable body of research has suggested that perceptions about the cost of college and concerns about their ability to finance a postsecondary education play a central role in the decisions Latino students make about both enrollment and persistence in college (Dowd, 2008; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Nuñez & Kim, 2012; Bell, Rowan-Kenyon, & Perna, 2009). Perhaps at no time could the financial aspects of attending college be more relevant than in the current climate of rising tuition and declining state appropriations for higher education. In 2008, the average total financial aid award among Hispanic students was $7,900, leaving a total net price (tuition price minus aid) of $15,100 (Lee et al., 2011). Data from the National Postsecondary Aid Study (NPSAS) indicated that 80 % of Hispanic students applied for financial aid for the 2003-2004 academic year and 63 % were awarded some type of financial support (Nora & Crisp, 2009). Yet, while Hispanic youth were more likely to receive some form
of federal aid than all other racial groups combined, they received the lowest average aid of any racial-ethnic group (Nora & Crisp, 2009).

At the same time, in a study conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center (2009) the most common reason Hispanic youth gave for not continuing with their education by enrolling in college was the pressure they felt to support their family financially. Oseguera et al. (2009) suggest that the economic models and frameworks commonly used to explain the association between financial aid and Latino college-going behavior may be too simplistic to capture both the economic circumstances and relationship dynamics that characterize the realities of Latino students and their families. For example, financial considerations in the college enrollment and persistence decisions of Hispanic students are often interwoven with students’ desires to improve the circumstances of their families (Zalaquett, McHatton, & Cranston-Gringas, 2007).

Creating a functional transfer function

The decision to attend one type of institution over another may have "life-altering, long-term advantages" (Pérez & McDonough, 2008, p. 249). To be sure, debate continues over whether community colleges serve to democratize education, or to divert students (the so called “diversion effect”) who would otherwise obtain a bachelor's degree (Cohen, 1988; Brint & Karabel, 1989; Karabel, 1972; Rouse, 1995). The answer matters, particularly for Latino students. Even when Hispanic students have high postsecondary expectations and are at least minimally academically qualified to attend a four-year institution, Hispanic students often begin their postsecondary careers on a lower trajectory (Fry, 2004; Kurlaender, 2006; Swail, Cabrera, Lee, & Williams, 2005). At the same time, however, the overwhelming majority of existing evidence maintains that a student has a significantly higher likelihood of completing a four-year college degree if he or she begins at a four-year, rather than a two-year, institution (Arbona &
Nora, 2007; Goldrick-Rab, Pfeffer, & Brand, 2009; Long & Kurlaender, 2009). Yet while 45% of White students were enrolled in open-door institutions or community colleges in 2004, over 66% of Hispanic students were enrolled in these types of institutions, reflecting the fact that Hispanic youth are much more likely to attend community colleges and less selective four-year institutions than are White students (Pew Hispanic Center, 2005).

Some scholars contend that initiating the pursuit of a bachelor's degree at a two-year institution is one of the major contributing factors to the lower educational attainment rates of Latinos (Arbona & Nora, 2007; Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Nonetheless, as Thomas Bailey, Professor of Economics and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University and director of several national centers for higher education research, recently asserted (2012), while community colleges have contributed to the inequitable distribution of educational attainment in this country, they are also essential to the solution. Bailey continues by asserting that community colleges must take bold steps to raise completion and transfer rates without restricting access.

Jalomo (2001) suggests that several institutional policies must be adopted in order to increase student persistence at the community college level. He calls for summer bridge programs aimed at helping community college students transition to four-year institutions, as well as first-year seminars, ongoing mentoring programs, and expanded orientation efforts. Oseguera and colleagues (2009) posit that these policies have the potential to increase achievement, and thus persistence, by enhancing a student's sense of engagement with the campus community.

**Getting In, Staying In**

A substantial volume of work has concluded that college persistence and retention may be particularly difficult for Latino students due to a variety of reasons including linguistic
barriers, constrained financial resources, and weak academic preparation (Oseguera et al., 2009; also see Padilla, 2007 for a review of this literature). On the other hand, Lascher (2008) suggests that the limited number of comparative studies make it difficult to ascertain whether the major factors influencing student college retention operate differently for Latino youth than for other students. Addressing the need for more comparative research examining college persistence and retention across racial/ethnic groups, as well as the need for studies which examine the effects of self-beliefs and social dynamics in Latino student college success (Gloria & Castellanos, 2003; Oseguera et al., 2009), work from Ream and colleagues examines the impact of trustworthy student-mentor relations in a discipline in which Latino students remain particularly underrepresented.

The importance of interpersonal trust is largely overlooked in studies of undergraduate education, and stands in sharp contrast to the situation in K-12 education where both survey and field research document the educational benefits of trust (Adams, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2009; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Seashore-Louis, 2007). In their ongoing work investigating science education at the college level, however, Ream et al. find that science majors’ perceptions of the trustworthiness of their faculty mentors matters most particularly for Latinos and other students who are members of groups historically underrepresented in the sciences. In particular, trust in a “most helpful” mentor sparks motivation to achieve and excel in science education, with an eye toward a career as a research scientist.

On one hand, trust in faculty mentors may be less measurably consequential for non-minority students because they have fewer reasons not to trust the institution of science. On the other hand, talented minorities who find themselves at the academic vanguard may not only maintain heightened awareness of racial stigmas, stereotypes and microaggressions (Chang et al.,
2011; Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Steele, 2010), but also have identified specific reasons to perceive their interests are at odds, sometimes in major ways, with the enterprise of science. The willingness to place trust in a particular member of the science faculty may, therefore, require an especially challenging leap of faith on the part of historically underrepresented minorities. Yet this may be the very scenario that accounts for why trust in a mentor is especially critical for minorities in college sciences. The authors frame their explanation as metaphor: If you generally trust the flight record of the airline industry, it hardly matters which pilot navigates your flight. But if you do not, then either deem the pilot trustworthy or exit the plane before it takes off.

Especially historically disadvantaged groups harbor mistrust toward the science enterprise (Gamble, 1997; Gauchat, 2008). A disproportionate number of minority science majors, even upper-division students, exit science before completing their degrees (Seymour & Hewitt, 1997).

Whether these findings hold beyond the disciplinary boundaries of college science education has yet to be investigated. Yet if undergraduate programs are to increase the diversity of students successfully pursuing college degrees, then university faculty should seriously consider the relationship between the work they do and the trust they either engender or undermine when working with Latino undergraduates and other college students who are members of groups that are historically disadvantaged in the sciences.

Beyond the School Doors: Placing Efforts to Link Education Levels and Promote Latino Educational Success in Context

Family ties

Desmond and Lopez Turley (2009) describe the ways in which scholars across a number of disciplines have recognized familism, which they define as "a social pattern whereby individual interests, decisions, and actions are conditioned by a network of relatives thought in many ways to take priority over the individual" (p. 314), as an important element of Hispanic
culture. A number of researchers have specifically explored how familism is related to educational outcomes, and many have encountered positive associations. The evidence of the beneficial effects of familism has ranged from positive psychological effects (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995) to buffering many of the challenges associated with minority status (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Scholars employing social capital theory have also found that Mexican American students who perform at higher levels benefit from the social capital that is available to them via family and peer networks (Ream, 2005; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Valenzuela and Dornbusch found evidence that the relationship between familism and achievement may be contingent upon the number of years of education completed by the parent.

Still, some research has pointed to some of the potential pitfalls associated with deeply felt familial ties and obligations among Hispanic youth (see for example Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Portes & Landolt, 1996). Portes (1998) points out that dense family networks can be populated by relatives who place heavy demands upon each other, and particularly upon more talented and resourced members of the family, potentially dampening or deterring the educational goals of talented youth or placing unique constraints on their educational trajectories.

In a recent study using students' reported preferences to remain at home while attending college as a proxy for his or her sense of familism, Hispanic students were the most likely to state that living at home during college was important, even after accounting for their parents' level of education and other sociodemographic factors (Desmond and Lopez Turley, 2009). The authors suggested that the deep family ties of many Hispanic youth may make them reluctant to physically separate from such networks in order to attend college. Therefore, while it is not yet clear exactly how and under what conditions an individual's sense of familism affects the
educational performance and attainment of Hispanic youth, there is a clear need for further research addressing these questions.

Community ties

To the extent that one's position in the social hierarchy is not a function of education or income alone but instead reflects the interplay of the various "capitals" that individuals may possess, the fact that Kasinitz and his fellow authors (2008) were able to trace many of the divergent outcomes observed among immigrant youth in New York City during and after high school back to cumulative patterns of advantage and disadvantage is informative. In addition to varying levels of parent education and income both within and across immigrant groups, immigrant families also varied widely in their access to information about how to navigate the U.S. system of education. The authors suggested that differential access to information reflected the levels and content of media information as well as co-ethnic family and community connections with individuals who could share personal experiences with educational institutions.

Perhaps most importantly, "[b]eing part of an ethnic community whose networks spanned class boundaries, rather than one that was homogenously poor, clearly constituted a group advantage" (Kasinitz et al., 2008, p. 169). When this finding is juxtaposed with evidence from recent research showing that the highest levels of segregation among Hispanics are often due to income differences (Lukinbeal, Price, & Buell, 2012), the implication is that Latino parents may find it especially difficult to access socioeconomically diverse co-ethnic networks.\textsuperscript{vi}

One potential policy intervention might capitalize on Zhou and Kim's (2006) suggestion that a wider range of afterschool services in low-income urban areas could help connect students and parents to information and other resources critical to educational success. Zhou and Kim (2006) proposed that one step might include strengthening community-based nonprofit
organizations and churches in underresourced neighborhoods through funding and other forms of support so that these institutions could provide afterschool and enrichment programs, including SAT preparation, tutoring, and recreational offerings (Zhou & Kim, 2006). While providing academic and informational support to Latino students, community-based after-school centers could also partner with schools at all levels in order to bring college information to students' parents where they are instead of expecting parents to surmount the often substantial cultural, linguistic, and logistical barriers required to attend college and financial aid informational events at their child's school (Rowan-Kenyon, Bell, & Perna, 2008). Precisely where funding for such initiatives and practices would come from is difficult to pinpoint, however. Aside from philanthropic and other private funding sources, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Program is the only federal funding stream exclusively dedicated to providing academic support and enrichment programming during out-of-school hours. While President Obama pledged to double funding to this federal program during his 2008 campaign, since elected his budget proposals have included only marginal increases or, more recently, frozen funding levels for the 21st CCLC program.

Concluding Thoughts

Anthropologist Leo Chavez (2008) describes a Latino Threat Narrative that depicts Latinos as unlike previous immigrant groups who ultimately became part of the nation. The assumptions, both explicit and implicit, behind this narrative suppose that Latinos are unwilling or incapable of becoming a part of the national community. Chavez contends that by representing Latinos as a threat, this narrative harbors divisiveness across society and serves to undermine the integration of Latinos into U.S. society. More specifically, the narrative suggests that U.S. Hispanics deserve the obstacles they encounter and also rationalizes public policies
targeting Latinos and their children which make it all the more difficult to access prenatal care, quality schools, jobs providing economic mobility, and a path to citizenship for unauthorized residents living and working in the U.S.—particularly the 1.5 generation of immigrant youth who have grown up and completed all of their schooling in the United States. This narrative is destructive, for Latinos and for the nation. Latino immigrants and their descendants, like other immigrant groups, are not only America’s history (Handlin, 1973), but also its destiny (Suárez-Orozco, 2000).

If, as a nation, we fail to address the gap in bachelor's degree attainment between Latino and White young adults, a gap which constitutes the largest disparity in educational outcomes between the (shrinking) White majority and the nation’s largest (and fastest-growing) minority group, this future seems uncertain. Whether P-16 educational reforms lead to higher and more equitable rates of postsecondary attainment for Latino youth is no longer a "Latino issue," but a societal issue that will bear importantly on the future of this nation.

We have argued here that aligning all levels of the U.S. education system, from preschool through college, will require aligning our educational goals with the needs of the nation's fastest growing population. Indeed, as a group, Latinos will comprise over half the growth in the college-age population in the coming decades (Nuñez & Kim, 2012). We have also drawn upon evidence from research to suggest that ensuring educational success, and in particular the completion of a college degree, for Hispanic students will likely require greater attention to the social aspects of education. Society determines its own future by ensuring that of its youth (Dewey, 1916), and it is our final contention that the actions which most urgently need to be undertaken to ensure the futures of Hispanic youth are actions which involve one’s relationships with others.
References


Notes

i On the west coast the meta-categorical term Latina/o is often preferred to Hispanic (Bean and Tienda, 1987). Yet when U.S. Latinos/Hispanics are asked to choose between the panethnic terms, Hispanic is preferred over Latino by a 3 to 1 margin (National Research Council, 2006). Here, both terms are used interchangeably, but it is recognized that neither of these labels comes close to capturing the vast ethnic and cultural heritage of the populations of interest. This population represents various national, racial, social, and class backgrounds and also differ according to immigration and citizenship statuses, languages spoken, period of arrival in the U.S., and region of residence (Oboler, 1995). We do not claim to address the diverse range of experiences and needs within the U.S. Latino population in this paper and encourage researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to continue working toward a more complete understanding of the needs and attributes of specific populations subsumed under the Latino or Hispanic designation.

ii Latino individuals already account for half the growth in the U.S. population since 2000, and with a median age that is twelve years younger than their non-Latino White counterparts and a higher average fertility rate, regardless of immigration trends Hispanics will continue to constitute much of the population growth in the United States well into the 21st century, if not beyond (Myers, 2007).

iii We use P-16 given that we are specifically interested in policies and practices that appear to hold the greatest promise for improving college access and completion at the bachelor's level among Hispanic youth. While others may refer to P-20, K-12, or K-20 systems, the essential idea is the same (Rochford, 2007). That is to say, a system of education that is guided by a comprehensive and integrated framework that spans a child's years of schooling in which actors across the numerous levels and sectors involved in education in the United States are committed to collaborating with each other will produce better outcomes for individual students and for society as a whole.

iv In this investigation, social capital refers to individuals’ capacity to gain access to scarce resources—including economic capital and employment or educational opportunities (Granovetter, 1982), as well as knowledge and information (Becker, 1964)—by virtue of their membership in groups and participation in broader structures of society (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988). This definition attempts to capture elements of both Coleman's as well as Bourdieu's work on social capital. Coleman views parents' roles as predominant in promoting their children's status attainment, while Bourdieu's approach describes the restrictions imposed by structural barriers (Dika and Singh, 2002).

v Research on AVID's impact on high school students and graduates has demonstrated that the skills and strategies learned in AVID help improve student transitions to college (Lozano, Watt, & Huerta, 2009; Watt, Johnston, Huerta, Mendiola, & Alkan, 2008). Although a two-year evaluation of selected AVID schools offered mixed results about middle school implementation, the findings did reveal that AVID students spent more time on homework, enrolled in eighth grade algebra at higher rates, and had more concrete college plans relative to the comparison groups (Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell, & Siegle, 2008). Further, the results of a recent study also found that AVID appears to be of benefit for Hispanic students who do enroll in college (Mendiola, Watt, & Huerta, 2010).

vi Residential segregation across the United States since at least the early 1990's has been increasingly based more on socioeconomic differences than on racial characteristics (Massey, Rothwell, & Domina, 2009; Rothwell & Massey, 2010). Lukinbeal et al. (2012) used U.S. Census data to explore intra-group levels of residential segregation among Hispanics living in Chicago, Miami, and Phoenix, three U.S. cities with large Hispanic populations. The index of dissimilarity (D) score for high-income versus low-income segregation among Hispanics in these three cities exceeded the national median D-score for Hispanic versus non-Hispanic segregation. In other words, Latinos in these cities appeared to be more segregated among themselves along the axis of income than they were segregated from other groups along the axes of race or ethnicity. Massey et al. (2009) observe that while individuals make decisions about where to live largely based on income and price, the decisions that policymakers enact "allocate housing of different prices to different neighborhoods and thereby turn the market into a mechanism of both class and racial segregation" (p. 89). The authors claim that it is exclusionary zoning practices in particular that serve as a key institutional mechanism limiting the ability of many poor and minority families to move into neighborhoods that can open up access to more and better resources. It seems possible that more inclusionary residential zoning practices at the community level, which could be promoted in part through state and federal financial incentives,
might go a long way toward providing more Hispanic families with the opportunity to access social networks that bridge class boundaries.

However, the authors are rightfully cautious, noting that the viability of private (or public) programming modeled after Chinese and Korean *buxibans* or *hagwons* in economically disadvantaged communities lacking other coethnic economic and social institutions remains uncertain. This acknowledgement draws attention back to the fact that the availability and convertibility of one kind of resource condition but are also conditioned by the availability and convertibility of other types of resources.

It is also empirically falsifiable. A fairly recent longitudinal study based on data gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau reveals impressive advances over the course of the 20th century in Hispanic educational attainment from generation to generation. Mexican immigrants born during 1905–1909 averaged but 4.3 years of schooling. Their American-born sons, averaging 9.3 years, doubled the years of schooling. And their grandsons were high school graduates, averaging 12.2 years of schooling (Smith 2003).