

The Community-Based Organization as Cultural Broker:
Building Bridges Between Recent Immigrant Families and Schools
in Low-Income Communities

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Abstract

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This qualitative case study delves into the work that community-based organizations do with recent immigrant families and schools in low-income communities by examining the cultural brokering process of one particular CBO. Understanding how an organization approaches working with families and their schools; how organization staff attempt to build understanding, trust, communication, and ultimately relationships between families and schools they work with; and how they attempt to develop the community's capacity for mutually beneficial engagement—in particular, its *sociocultural capital*—as well as the schools' cultural competence, sheds light on the brokering process and demonstrates the critical role that community-based organizations can play in bridging existing gaps between schools and recent immigrant families in low-income communities.

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Chapter 1

Bridging Existing Gaps Between

Recent Immigrant Families and Schools

Noguera (2004) argues, “There is perhaps no other sector that reflects the fractured nature of civil society in the United States more than public education” (p. 2146). Schools remain largely segregated with respect to race and socioeconomic status, impacting the quality of schools children attend (Noguera, 2004). Too many children from low-income and minority families are consigned to lower quality education, and ultimately to lower quality futures, as a result of school practices based on a *sorting paradigm* (Sanders & Epstein, 1998). When public institutions and services fail to meet the needs of constituents, and few constructive supports exist for good development, the quality of life in a community is diminished, the social well-being eroded, and problems among students, school staff, and families persist (Comer, 2001; Noguera, 2004). However, while the power of schools and educators to influence individual students should never be underestimated, out-of-school factors, particularly those associated with poverty, are three-times more powerful in affecting students and determining outcomes than in-school factors (Berliner, 2009). Therefore, focusing efforts to help students in low-income environments solely in classrooms and schools does not make sense (Berliner, 2006).

School-community relations have long been a topic of interest and concern to educators, as well as community activists and others who take an interest in the ways that schools serve and don't serve society. These concerns have been especially acute in the case of low-income disenfranchised communities, such as recent immigrant communities, where relations with the school, and vice versa, can be strained and/or problematic. The strains reflect, in part, substantial cultural gaps that can exist between families and the educators who serve them, which raises important questions about how these gaps can be bridged. Community-based organizations may be one such possibility. The aim of this study is to understand the cultural brokering role that a community-based organization plays between recent immigrant families and the schools their

children attend, and explore what the organization is able to accomplish in this context and the implications for families and schools.

The Research Problem: Investigating Ways to Realize the Unfulfilled Promise of Schools and Schooling to Recent Immigrant Families

Enabled by their access to resources and social networks, many middle class parents develop a good understanding of school and staff and a belief in the work and people at the school, which allows them to trust the educators there. Therefore, they often feel confident in educators and can work with them to provide a high quality environment and education for the children at the school. In contrast, research indicates parents in low-income situations do not tend to participate in school selection processes, but instead send their children to the local neighborhood school (Diamond & Gomez, 2004). Their schools tend to lack resources, making it difficult to provide equitable educational experiences for the students. Further, although state and federal policy makers collect data on the needs of children living in poverty, they nonetheless do little to ensure that districts serving these children have the additional resources required to meet needs. Furthermore, for a variety of reasons, stakeholders in these environments often lack understanding of one another, and as a result feel a lack of trust for one another.

Beyond Schools' Efforts to Engage Low-Income Communities

In educational research and practice literature we find a lot of rhetoric around the *promise* of parent involvement as a transformative agent for schools, particularly for schools serving diverse communities in low income neighborhoods, which has prompted educators and researchers to focus on parent involvement as both a problem and a solution (De Carvalho, 2001). Rogers and Oakes (2005) assert, however, that the brunt of addressing social inequalities in education is left to schools and educators alone. Many of these school-centric reforms, however, such as NCLB and the Common Core State Standards, have failed to make a real impact in terms of improving the quality of education and outcomes for students living in low-income neighborhoods (Berliner, 2014; Mitchell, 2008). Further, several critics of education

policy in the U.S. point out that frequently reforms are developed and implemented from the top-down, without the necessary understanding of how it will impact schools and students (Fullan, 2007; Morrell & Noguera, 2011; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Unfortunately, policymakers often develop and legislate new education policy based on what may be politically popular, without talking to educators or having a clear sense of how the policies will impact classrooms and schools (Morrell & Noguera, 2011). In other words, many reforms have failed because the theory of change driving them has not taken into account all that needs to be considered in effective implementation and positive outcomes (Elmore, 2004; Morrell & Noguera, 2011; Noguera, 2005). For instance, many school reform efforts neglect to include family engagement as an important component, and they gloss over leadership qualities and strategies that relate to building and maintaining positive and mutually beneficial school-family relationships (Berliner, 2014; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). A variety of studies, however, have called for a more integrated approach to school improvement and student development, whereby families are seen as an integral part of the equation when educating children and youth (Bronfenbrenner, 1975; Comer, 1988; Kirp, 2011; Morrell & Noguera, 2011).

How schools often fail to engage immigrant families and communities. Although typical reform efforts might allude to the importance of parent involvement, more often than not, it is in traditional ways, such as volunteering at the school or helping students with their homework. Approaching school reform with this notion of parent involvement does not address the variety of struggles children and families living in low-income situations face, particularly recent immigrant families. Nor does it consider the role that relationships and social networks play in contributing to or detracting from children's academic success, and the extent to which these relationships and networks are found in such communities. As a result, reform efforts continue to address symptoms, such as poor academic achievement, rather than underlying causes, creating a never-ending uphill battle for educators, families, and communities.

Although education researchers have devoted significant efforts to the study of minority students living in low-income situations, rarely do they provide the type of information that will help solve the host of problems these students, their families, and communities face (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The same can be said of many reform efforts dominating the field (Berliner, 2014; Morrell & Noguera, 2011). White and Wehlage (1994) explain how a major weakness of

social services is the focus on individuals rather than on social conditions and the community. This same weakness can be said to reside in education reform efforts. As Lewis and Forman (2002) assert, “many urban schools have taken the posture of educating students in spite of their families rather than in concert with them” (p. 82).

Not all schools view immigrant parents living in low-income situations this way, however, and a number have explored methods for engaging families and communities more fully and meaningfully. In fact, school efforts focused on family engagement that identifies and taps community assets and resources, helps address family needs and concerns, and modifies traditional structures and procedures to accommodate families, has the potential to bridge existing gaps, improve relationships and ultimately impact students’ ability to be successful in school (Leistyna, 2002; Lopez, 2003; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Miretsky, 2004; Weiss, Lopez & Rosenberg, 2010).

Some schools attempt to do this work themselves by creating parent centers that offer welcoming spaces for parents and/or hiring site-based parent coordinators (Davis, 1999; Ferguson & Blumberg, 2001; Fingon, 1990; Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007; Samuelson, 2010; Sanders, 2008). In a pilot study prior to this research project, I looked at cultural brokering from this angle. The focus of the study was parent coordinators, who were employed by school districts, working at schools, and functioning as cultural brokers to try and engage families in their children’s schools and education (Samuelson, 2010). While the Parent Coordinators were able to develop relationships and help engage parents to a certain extent, a lack of resources created barriers to fully realizing the potential of their positions and work (Samuelson, 2010).

Various forces and conditions hold other schools serving recent immigrants in low-income communities back, and are likely to hold many such schools back, from approaching family engagement in mutually beneficial ways. For one thing, school staff members are likely to lack the cultural competence and linguistic resources to comfortably engage a recent immigrant community. For another, there are likely to be few, if any, dedicated staff in the school (e.g., community liaisons, parent coordinators, translators) and, more to the point, insufficient time for all staff to interact with the community in culturally appropriate ways. The vicious cycle of limited understanding and limited time to gain understanding of the community, compounded by the position of power that schools occupy, is likely to reinforce the deficit views of the

community noted above. On their part, families are also likely to contribute to and reinforce the pattern. Their lack of understanding of the school and the culture it represents, along with limited English language proficiency, can predispose them to engage relatively little if at all. Add to that the pressures of daily living in the circumstances of poverty. Finally their lack of social power—and perhaps lack of legitimized status in the host country—can further reinforce the reluctance of families to engage schools on behalf of their children. Their absence, reluctance, or lack of skills in this domain can further solidify deficit views that school staff may hold.

The aforementioned challenges raise the question of whether schools can and should attempt to do the work of engaging families alone, and even whether they are best positioned to take the lead on this work. Given the circumstances, their attempts to do so are just as likely to *reproduce* existing disconnections and inequities as to ameliorate them. Social reproduction theories contend, for example, that educators may come to believe familial qualities deemed deficits are inescapable and will be reproduced for generations to come (Lawson, 2003).

Possibilities for brokering the school-family relationship. Given this state of affairs, important questions arise about the possibilities and vehicles for *brokering* the relationship between schools and recent immigrant families in low-income communities. Who or what might be in a position to enable the two parties to understand each other better and to interact in more mutually beneficial ways on behalf of children’s educational needs and interests? Who or what can increase the cultural competence of the school staff, while improving the capacity of community members to navigate the public education system? Who or what can constructively address, or at least negotiate the power imbalances that make the school-family relationship so problematic? What does the brokering work involve, and how much headway is it likely to make in bridging the divide between a school and this important group it serves?

Several types of organizations, occupying intermediary positions between families and schools, may be well situated to engage in this brokering work and, thereby, stimulate greater school-family engagement. One type of entity that holds great potential for contributing to more symbiotic engagement, particularly between immigrant families and schools, is the service-oriented “community-based organization” (CBO). A CBO can be defined as an organization committed to helping people obtain health, education, and other basic human services (Adger, 2001). Lopez, Kreider and Coffman (2005) define an intermediary organization as “a nonprofit

entity that operates in a position between families or organizations serving families and a body of knowledge, skills, and resources in the field of family involvement” (p.79).

Because of their existing work and relationships with recent immigrant families and schools in low-income communities, CBOs are well positioned to play an intermediary role in improving connections, engagement, and relationships between the two, as well as in building community capacity and giving families increased opportunities to have a voice in their children’s education. Their work with families and schools may focus on support, empowerment, advocacy, representation, and/or political access and change. Therefore, they have the potential to offer families improved access to schools; to provide schools with better understanding of families and community members; to contribute to the building of trust between school staff and community members; to provide additional educational opportunities for young people and adults; and to build community capacity and empower families in such a way that they have the knowledge, skills and tools to improve their own situations, neighborhoods, and schools (Adger, 2001; Dryfoos, 2003; Keith, 1999; Lawson, 2003; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012; Lopez et al., 2005; Sanders, 2009; Shirley, 2001; Warren, 2005). They can also put pressure on schools and conceive of their role as one that does not assume a harmonious relationship with schools. While CBOs have the knowledge, understanding and relationships to help address problems impacting recent immigrant families living in low-income communities and their schools, particularly in urban or first ring suburban settings, many factors, such as those previously mentioned, influence the extent to which they can address these problems and contribute to solutions.

While the literature helps us understand what makes the relationships between schools and immigrant families in low-income communities likely to be problematic and offers a few images of a more engaged and symbiotic relationship, it does not yet help to pinpoint how the relationships can be brokered effectively. Most specifically, it does not yield a detailed picture of the broker’s work, nor of the nature of the partnerships that brokering involves – and in particular, it does not shed good light on the *cultural* dimensions of brokering relationships. Finally, it does not yet help us to identify the ways in which the brokering work can develop, activate and extend sociocultural capital within the community and into the schools, such that connections can be developed and strengthened, boundaries can be crossed, schools and

communities can engage from a place of mutual respect, and ultimately community construction and development can be shared.

Social and cultural capital in the brokering process. Various forms of capital operate in school and other settings to mediate the social reproduction of inequality, including economic, physical, technological, informational, human, social and cultural (Bourdieu, 1977a/1977b; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Coleman, 1988; Edwards & Foley, 1998; Fernández Kelly, 1995; Granovetter, 1982/1985; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Lareau, 1987, 2000; Portes, 1998/2000; Reay, 1999; Stanton-Salazar, 1997/2001/2010; Teachman, Paasch & Carver, 1997; White & Glick, 2000). While many of these might be at work in school-community engagement efforts, the social and cultural dimensions of school-family disengagement are likely to figure prominently in the brokering work that CBOs and others might do. Therefore, the sociological constructs of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Coleman, 1988; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Martinez-Cosio, 2010; Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 1993; Woolcock, 1998; Yosso, 2005) are especially likely to capture key influences in the relationship between immigrant families and host institutions, like schools. In fact, educational researchers are increasingly tapping these concepts in their attempts to understand why and how social inequities persist in education.

While I discuss these central concepts more fully in Chapter 2, a brief summary of their meanings and role in this study helps to locate the research problem. Although the literature offers varying definitions of *social capital*, the following is particularly useful for this study's purposes: social capital of community members is the actual or potential collective resources available to them as a result of their membership in a group, or network, based on trusting and cooperative relationships both within and beyond the community (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993; Woolcock, 1998). The extent to which a community has social capital, as well as the nature of that social capital, can rest on and result in varying degrees of: 1) collective backing, coordination, stability and productivity in the community; 2) access to opportunities and resources within the community and beyond; and 3) beneficial relationships with those outside the community (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 1993; Woolcock, 1998).

Further, although recent immigrant families living in low-income communities are likely to participate in social networks, unlike mainstream families living in middle class communities, their networks may not offer the social resources needed to engage with and navigate schools and school systems in the U.S. (Lareau, 1987; Ream & Palardy, 2008; Wilson, 1987). This can create incongruence between home and school, whereby parents are less knowledgeable about school expectations and operations, reducing their ability to advocate for children and involve themselves in traditional ways that may support and contribute to their children's success.

The related concept of *cultural capital* also has usefulness: this notion refers to accumulated cultural knowledge, values, attitudes, and behaviors, typically transmitted by families or formal schooling (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Martinez-Cosio, 2010; Yosso, 2005). Immigrant parents often lack the cultural capital that schools value, or that is more widely valued in their new host society, and conversely, schools often do not value the cultural capital that these parents, families, and communities have accumulated, resulting in cultural discontinuities between school and home, and further alienating marginalized parents (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Martinez-Cosio, 2010; Yosso, 2005). In a parallel way, the schools lack the social connections and cultural understandings, or cultural competence, that would help them both appreciate and navigate recent immigrant communities—what Yosso (2005) calls *community cultural wealth*. Building the capital of those in the most vulnerable positions, like recent immigrant families living in low-income communities, while contributing to the cultural competence of school staff, plays a central role in the brokering work that CBOs and others might do.

Social ties provide the avenue through which individuals gain access to cultural resources and knowledge; therefore, it is helpful to look at social and cultural capital development as an interdependent process (Granovetter, 1985; Modood, 2012; Monkman, Ronald & Theramene, 2005). Bourdieu's (1986) conception of cultural capital recognized the integrated nature of cultural and social capital in that social capital is never completely independent of cultural capital. In other words, cultural capital can be thought of as the substance that gets transmitted via social ties enacted as social capital (Monkman et al., 2005).

While cultural capital plays a crucial role in the reproduction, of dominant social relations and structures (Bourdieu, 1973; Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002), the interaction of social and

cultural capital – what we may term “sociocultural capital” – offers a way of understanding the transmission of cultural capital as a two-way process, whereby the idea of cultural capital as valued by institutions expands through this social exchange of cultural knowledge and information. Because social reproduction is an uneven process continually negotiated by the individuals involved, possibilities remain for disrupting the reproduction processes to a certain degree by making it possible to change definitions of what counts as capital and enabling more inclusiveness (Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Monkman, et al., 2005; Olneck, 2000). In this way, sociocultural capital becomes a lever to help create a broader view of what is culturally relevant and valuable. Given the highly interrelated nature of social and cultural capital, and the usefulness of understanding efforts to broaden the scope of cultural capital (particularly that which is valued by schools) through social means, sociocultural capital development as a lens within the realm of school-family relations offers a lot.

We find the term “sociocultural’ applied in various ways across social sciences research. For the purposes of this study, I am distinguishing it from several other common meanings found in the research. For example Salazar-Stanton (1997/2010) and others use the term to describe the character of the larger social context in which people and groups live – the “sociocultural worlds” – when examining questions focused on individual-societal relations. Others use sociocultural theory, drawing on the work of Vygotsky (1978) and others, to capture the nature of learning and development as socially distributed phenomena, distinct from earlier purely cognitive views of learning (e.g., Rogoff, 1990). I, on the other hand, use the term to refer quite specifically to the merger of two kinds of *capital* that play a central role in school-family relations. While some education research uses this integrative term to describe capital, versus referring only to social and cultural capital as distinct concepts (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2005; Dumay & Dupriez, 2007), the construct of sociocultural capital generally remains underutilized.

The bodies of literature that deal with social and cultural capital, either explicitly or implicitly about recent immigrant families in low-income communities, help us better understand the concepts and take a critical look at the use of the concepts with regard to people of color. These literatures also stress the importance and potential long-term payoff of particular types of capital in people’s lives and allude to various efforts that have been made to activate and extend the social and cultural capital that exists within families and communities. However, the

literature tends to be less specific about the process of developing both social and cultural capital, or sociocultural capital, and what influence institutions and organizations might have in doing this work in ways that can improve relationships, change conceptions of what counts as capital, and enable more inclusiveness to ultimately improve schools and the communities they serve. It also pays little attention to the integrated nature of social and cultural capital, how embedded one is in the other, and how interdependent they are. Research is needed that focuses on examining and understanding this process of capacity building more deeply and how, if at all, these efforts may or may not influence and impact schools and the greater community.

Research related to these matters, to date, remains relatively school-centric. The literature indicates that various engagement efforts have been undertaken where the community is viewed as a resource and/or as having assets, albeit in varying degrees and somewhat different ways. However, many efforts are school-based, and therefore tend to privilege the viewpoints of educators and emphasize bringing families into schools. In other words, they tend to promote school interests and school visions of who parents are and what they can do, often without actually understanding who the parents are and what is going on in their lives. A variety of limitations present themselves when these school-centric approaches to engagement are enlisted. The literature suggests that some of these limitations are inherently there, and that not a lot can be done from the school's vantage point alone (Comer, 2005; Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Dryfoos, 2002/2003; Lawson, 2003; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Noguera, 2004; Schutz, 2006; Shirley, 2001; Warren, 1998/2005; Warren & Mapp, 2011).

A growing body of work, however, focuses on CBO and community-based school-community engagement efforts (Comer, 2005; Dobbie & Fryer, 2009; Dryfoos, 2003; Hong, 2011; Keith, 1999; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Oakes & Rogers, 2006; Olivos, 2006; Sanders, 2009; Shirley, 2001; Smith & Thomases, 2001; Warren, 1998/2005; Warren & Mapp, 2011). Charter schools and community schools offer two examples where community-based organizations involve themselves in school operations. In the case of charter schools, community organizations start, sponsor or run schools. Community schools involve organizations partnering with and providing services at schools, which may include supplemental education programs, healthcare, adult education classes, and/or childcare. Generally, both charter and community schools attempt to engage parents in ways that are more tailored to their situations and needs

(Aronson, 1996; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2008; Comer, 2005; Dryfoos, 2003; Keith, 1999; Lawson, 2003; Leistyna, 2002; O'Donnell, Kirkner & Meyer-Adams, 2008; Smith & Thomases, 2001). While schools operating in these ways seem to be making headway with regard to engaging parents and families, they tend to be in the minority.

Other research focuses on community-based efforts outside of the school, such as school-community organizing (Hong, 2011; Mediratta, 2007; Mediratta & Fruchter, 2001/2002; Mediratta, Shah, McAlister, Fruchter, Mokhtar & Lockwood, 2008; Oakes & Rogers, 2006; Shirley, 2001; Warren, 1998/2005; Warren & Mapp, 2011). While offering important insights into what is possible with regard to addressing inequality and power dynamics between families and schools, building school-community collaborations, increasing equity in resources and policy and improving student achievement, community organizing research tends to focus on organizations that drive these efforts from a distinctively political stance (Hong, 2011; Mediratta, 2007; Mediratta & Fruchter, 2001/2002; Mediratta, et al., 2008; Oakes & Rogers, 2006; Shirley, 2001; Warren, 1998/2005; Warren & Mapp, 2011). Less research focuses on community-based organizations that may not be inclined, nor designed, to engage in politically oriented school-community engagement work, given their mission, areas of expertise and available resources. While these organizations may not operate as transformational agents per se, they can function as brokers, who through sociocultural capital development, can help lay the groundwork for transformation.

Moving into the realm of community-based efforts that take a service, development and advocacy approach to working with families and schools as a means for building community capacity and improving school-community relations can illuminate the brokering work, as exercised from a vantage point outside the school that does not share the constraints, presumptions, and history of the school. Research of this sort will bring CBOs operating in these ways into the foreground and will examine in detail their brokering practice. While the literature exploring CBOs' work with schools touches on how they can provide marginalized families with improved access to schools, provide schools with better understanding of families and community members, contribute to the building of trust between school staff and community members, provide additional services, such as after school programs, family healthcare and adult education classes, and address various policy issues (Dryfoos, 2003; Keith, 1999; Mediratta,

2007; Mediratta & Fruchter, 2001/2002; Mediratta, et al., 2008; Shirley, 2001; Warren, 2005; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Sanders, 2009), none of the literature delves specifically into the work of CBOs as a means for understanding how they might operate as *cultural brokers* between schools and recent immigrant families in low-income communities to build capacity and improve relationships. Nor does the literature regarding CBOs use both social and cultural capital as a lens for understanding the work; instead the focus resides primarily on social capital development. This neglects to consider the key role that cultural capital development plays in social capital development efforts.

Focus of Inquiry: The Cultural Brokering Work of CBOs in School-Family Relationships

This qualitative case study goes deeper into the work that community-based organizations do with recent immigrant families and schools in low-income communities by examining the work of one particular CBO engaged in these efforts. Understanding how an organization approaches working with families and their schools; how organization staff attempt to build understanding, trust, communication, and ultimately relationships between families and schools they work with; and how they attempt to develop the community's capacity for mutually beneficial engagement—in particular, its *sociocultural capital*—as well as the schools' cultural competence, can shed light on the brokering process, and ultimately enhance efforts to bridge existing gaps between schools and recent immigrant families in low-income communities. The focus of inquiry for this study resides in the following questions:

1. How, if at all, does the CBO try to help recent immigrant families in low-income communities engage in mutually beneficial ways with the schools their children attend? In what ways do these efforts develop families' sociocultural capital?
2. How, if at all, does the CBO try to help schools engage in mutually beneficial ways with recent immigrant families living in low-income communities? In what ways do these efforts develop the school's cultural competence?

3. How, if at all, does the CBO's cultural brokering efforts facilitate positive and mutually beneficial relationships between the families and schools?
 - a. How, if at all, do they facilitate mutual understanding and trust?
 - b. How, if at all, do they facilitate positive and mutually beneficial two-way communication?
 - c. In what ways do these relationships display sociocultural capital at work?
4. What accounts for the CBO's (in)ability to broker relationships between the families and schools?
 - a. What supports their work?
 - b. What challenges do they face?

Rationale For Undertaking This Research

Dewey (1944) explained how the aims of education should be directed towards the continual improvement of society. He asserted, "The school cannot immediately escape from the ideals set by prior social conditions. But it should contribute through the type of intellectual and emotional disposition which it forms to the improvement of those conditions" (p. 136). Further, educational aims should be determined by and interactive with societal aims, whereby societal lessons inform educational aims and societal improvements are fed by education reforms. He goes on to explain how "progressive communities...endeavor to shape the experiences of the young so that instead of reproducing current habits, better habits shall be formed, and thus the future adult society be an improvement on their own" (p.79). To do this requires looking at society realistically, not ideally, as a means for critical analysis in the name of growth and improvement. Because education needs to be responsive to changes and developments in society, educational aims must be flexible enough to respond to societal improvements, constantly adapting to what's appropriate to the current social context.

Leistyna (2002) calls for reinterpreting the political life of schools from a preordained process towards the process of critical inclusive participation. Further, when participants clarify their differences and agreements, they can work towards coalition building and caring, equitable relationships with one another. In this way, school-family relationships can move closer to interdependence as opposed to further isolation (Lareau, 1987; Miretsky, 2004). The work begins with school staff reaching out to communities, bringing student and community experiences and voice into the schools (Aronson, 1996; Ascher, 1988; Brice Heath, 1983; Leistyna, 2002). Not only can teachers and school staff begin to understand the students and communities they serve better, but this process also holds promise for bringing community assets to the awareness of the school, working to change any deficit models held by school staff to assets-based models. (Brice Heath, 1983; Leistyna, 2002; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992; Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt & Moll, 2011). When various members of the school community engage in democratic processes, such as those mentioned, school-family relationships have the potential to shift from one of hierarchical power to shared power and empowerment (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).

Typically the onus of addressing social inequalities in education is left to schools and educators. As a result, many school reform efforts fail to include family engagement as an important component, and instead focus solely on what districts, schools, and their staffs can do to improve education. These reform efforts might touch on the importance of parent involvement, however they typically do not address the myriad struggles children and families living in disadvantaged communities are facing. Nor do they take into account the instrumental role relationships and social networks play in children's academic success, and the extent to which these relationships and networks exist in families' communities. As a result, these reform efforts neglect to address underlying causes that may be impacting students' abilities to succeed, and ultimately they perpetuate the uphill battle for educators, families and communities.

The research literature to date has established that parent involvement of various kinds can benefit students and families in a variety of ways. Family engagement in school reform can create opportunities for parents and other family members to develop a variety of skills and tools; build relationships within the community, with school staff and beyond; and ultimately become empowered to the point that they can contribute to the improvement of their children's schools, as well as the improvement of their communities (Comer, 2001; Lawson & Alameda-

Lawson, 2011; Mediratta, 2007; Mediratta & Fruchter, 2001/2002; Mediratta, et al., 2008; Shirley, 2001; Warren, 2005; Warren & Mapp, 2011). However, parent engagement is often hard to secure in diverse low-income urban communities. In such settings, we need to know more about how to facilitate that engagement. This study makes an important contribution to that need by exploring and examining the role that a community-based organization can play in facilitating and improving relationships between recent immigrant families and the schools their children attend.

This study provides a better understanding of the role that CBOs can play in building community capacity and relationships between recent immigrant families and schools in low-income environments, so that schools can better support and serve their students; and families can better support their children and potentially help improve the quality of their schools. In addition, the study provides a means for directing additional funding to CBOs and schools participating in this work together. Finally, the study has the potential to benefit recent immigrant students, families, communities, their schools and the CBOs working with them.

Organization of Report

In the following chapter, I discuss the informing literature and conceptual framework guiding the study. Chapter Three describes the study design and research methods enlisted to complete the study. Chapter Four offers the first set of findings from the study, focusing on how the CBO's brokering work builds the sociocultural capital within the community, creating a kind of "infrastructure" for success that enables students and families to have the capacity to get on a pathway towards success. Chapter Five examines how the CBO works to help families both extend and apply this sociocultural capital in external contexts, specifically in schools and school-related contexts. Chapter six delves deeper into the brokering the organization does, examining what enables them to do this work in this particular setting, with this particular community and with these particular schools. Finally, Chapter Seven provides concluding thoughts and reflections, as well as implications of this study.

Chapter 2

Informing Literature and Framing Ideas

This research is grounded in various bodies of literature; therefore, I frame the study by first reviewing the forces and conditions that shape how recent immigrant families living in low-income communities participate in education, drawing on the theories and findings from research on the immigrant experience and cultural discontinuities in education. The situation produces profound family-school discontinuities—manifest in cultural and linguistic differences, as well as perceptions and interactions between these families and the schools serving their children. This characteristic relationship and the possibilities for more mutually beneficial relationships can be understood with a second set of ideas, this time from sociological literatures that deal with the development of social and cultural capital, or sociocultural capital, and the possibility of cultural brokering by organizations such as CBOs. Here, I suggest a deeper conceptualization of the problem that highlights how the CBO can play a potentially productive role in the development of families' sociocultural capital and schools' cultural competence. Below I review key ideas and findings from these bodies of research as groundwork for the design of my study of CBOs as cultural brokers in the relationship between schools and immigrant families.

Forces and Conditions Shaping How Recent Immigrant Families in Low-Income Communities Participate in Education

A variety of factors influence and impact recent immigrant families' participation in education on behalf of their children, particularly when they live in low-income environments. First, recent immigrant families face a number of issues associated with migration to the United States, which can have huge impacts on the family's ability to participate in education, as can residing in areas of concentrated poverty, which often is the case. Further impacting participation are the many discontinuities that can exist between families and their schools, stemming from socioeconomic, cultural, and language differences. In addition, recent immigrant families and school staff often perceive education, schooling, and the roles that each is meant to

play differently. These differences are exacerbated by, and also can contribute to, power imbalances between school staff and parents. The result is often a set of fruitless relationships, or even a lack of relationships, between families and schools, despite reform rhetoric valuing family involvement.

Issues Associated with Immigration

Immigrants to the United States, particularly those who are parents, face a number of challenges. They must find work, create a new home, enroll their children in new and often unfamiliar schools, understand and live under a new set of cultural rules, all while learning English and attempting to establish new social connections (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2008). In addition to the resources and relationships they have upon arrival to the United States, *modes of incorporation* determine the occupational and economic opportunities offered to different immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Portes and Rumbaut (2006) assert, “It stands to reason that their offspring will be similarly affected, so that their educational performance in school and their career prospects, and even their linguistic habits and self-identities, will reflect the course of adaptation and relative socioeconomic success experienced by their parents” (p. 248).

Home country characteristics also play a significant role in shaping the experiences of new immigrants to the United States in various ways, especially political ideas and the timing of their shift to American-based interests. Immigrants may come from 1) stateless nations—war-torn nations or those occupied by a foreign power; 2) hostile states—dictatorships with oppressed populations, group persecution and even genocide; 3) consolidated but indifferent nation-states—neither promoting nor acknowledging migrant departures; or 4) states supporting and supervising emigration—viewing their nationals abroad as serving the country’s interests (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Diverse origins such as these interact with *contexts of reception* to create a complex array of political concerns among immigrants that influence later generations (Fix & Zimmerman, 2000; Jaworsky, Levitt, Cadge, Hejtmanek & Curran, 2012; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Reitz, 2002; Waldinger, 2001). Eventually, *contexts of reception* supersede *contexts of exit* (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

U.S. Contexts of reception. The contexts of reception most relevant to immigrants include: 1) governmental policies, which influence the probability of successful immigration, economic opportunities and legal options available to new arrivals; 2) labor market conditions; and 3) their own ethnic communities, which represent the most immediate component (Fix & Zimmerman, 2000; Jaworsky et al., 2012; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Reitz, 2002; Waldinger, 2001). Governmental support can offer access to a variety of resources for some immigrants, but not others, and how this contextual dimension interacts with individual characteristics can lead to very different outcomes (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Labor markets also play a key role in determining the experiences of immigrants (Fix & Zimmerman, 2000; Jaworsky et al., 2012; Reitz, 2002). Foreign workers in search of menial and typically low-paying employment have represented the majority of legal and undocumented immigration in recent years (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Furthermore, recent immigrants, regardless of qualifications and experience, typically enter the workforce at the bottom of the occupational ladder and seldom are offered channels for upward mobility (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

The characteristics of new arrivals' ethnic communities heavily influence the choices immigrants and refugees make and the opportunities they seize (Fix & Zimmerman, 2000; Jaworsky et al., 2012; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Reitz, 2002; Waldinger, 2001). They typically leave their home country because others before them have left and paved the way, and when they arrive, they enter social networks that have their own logic and momentum (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2008). When no such community exists, they must confront resettlement and the labor market, among other things, directly; however, they tend to settle in areas where their ethnic community already exists (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Social networks contribute greatly to lowered costs and easier transitions for immigrants, including help with finding work, establishing residence, locating schools and settling in a foreign country. They can also be a source of companionship and social support, helping newcomers adjust to the new environment (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2008). "Even children of families with no money and little or no human capital can move forward, riding on their own determination and the support of their families or communities" (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006, p.282). The varying contexts of reception that immigrants face speak to the role that CBOs can play in helping recent immigrant families access the opportunities and supports that can help them be successful in their new host country.

Greater social context. When looking at the greater social context facing new immigrants and refugees, it becomes clear that they face a whole host of challenges stemming from language differences, discrimination, poverty and family strife. The principle barrier that recent immigrants face is language, regardless of socioeconomic status or profession (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2008). Portes and Rumbaut (2006) explain,

Throughout the history of the United States, immigrants have seldom felt *as American as everyone else* because differences of language and culture separated them from the majority and because they were made painfully aware of that fact. Being *in America but not of it* even if they wished to, represents an important aspect of the experience of most foreign groups and a major force promoting ethnic identity in subsequent generations. (p. 166)

Differences beget prejudice, which can throw barriers into the path of occupational mobility and acceptance. Further, immigrant children's ethnic identities, aspirations and academic performance are all affected accordingly (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Given the high rates of poverty of various immigrant populations, these groups tend to land in areas of concentrated poverty, leaving them to face the myriad challenges often existing in these communities, including high rates of joblessness, drug and alcohol abuse, violence, lack of child supervision, and under-nourishment/hunger, to name a few (Ascher, 1988; Berliner, 2014; Hernandez, Denton & Macartney, 2008; Lareau, 1987; Lopez, 2003; Wilson, 1987). Sadly, increasing rates of teenage pregnancy, high youth involvement in crime, and continually decreasing work habits and discipline tend to become common traits in areas of concentrated poverty (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

Various aspects of the immigration experience can contribute to family strife or cultural dissonance in households. As Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2008) explain, "While parents focus most of their energies on making ends meet in the new society, forging ties first and foremost with people of similar ethnic backgrounds or immigrant status, immigrant youth are out and about in the new culture, attending American schools, interacting with American teachers and peers, and watching American television" (p. 70). This frequently results in immigrant children learning cultural expectations more quickly than their parents, contributing to increasing

gulf between parents and children. These and other family problems have been correlated with reports of lower levels of well-being and academic performance (Hernandez et al., 2008). In other words, a number of immigrant families do not possess the means to promote educational success and stave off threats posed by discrimination, poverty, poor labor market conditions, gangs and drugs. They need resources to be able to support their children successfully throughout their education, including those that provide access to economic goods and job opportunities, and those that reinforce parental normative controls (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2008).

Discontinuities Between Immigrant Families and the Schools

In addition to, and often because of, the various issues recent immigrant families face as a result of resettling in a new country, a number of discontinuities can develop between them and the schools meant to serve them. In particular, many of the issues described above become apparent and play out in the relationships (or lack thereof) between recent immigrant families and school staff. At the root of these discontinuities lie the raw facts of poverty, culture, and language differences. But they take more concrete form in the way families and school staff members perceive each other, and ultimately interact with one another.

Poverty, culture, and language as sources of family-school discontinuities. To start, socioeconomic differences between school staff and parents can impact how parents and teachers understand one another, and the roles and responsibilities of each, thereby influencing the level of openness, styles of engagement, and mutual expectations found in these relationships (Lewis & Forman, 2002). As Lewis and Forman (2002) assert, “Issues of social class and school culture interact to shape the possibilities open to both parents and teachers in forming strong and meaningful relationships” (p. 60). Further, low levels of income and socioeconomic status of parents often limit their access to transportation, childcare or literacy resources, which could enable them to participate in traditional forms of involvement (Allegra-Snyder, 1992; Lareau, 1987; Leistyna, 2002; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Lopez, 2001; Ritblatt, Beatty, Cronan & Ochoa, 2002). In addition, work factors, such as parents holding multiple jobs, working long hours, and working far from home can further limit their ability to be in schools on a regular

basis, let alone at all (Alleksaht-Snider, 1992; Leistyna, 2002; Lopez, 2001; Quioco & Daoud, 2006; Valdés, 1998). These poverty-related issues often impact immigrant parents' ability to engage with schools in traditional ways (Ascher, 1988).

Apart from differences that are strictly attributable to poverty, when staff ethnicities and cultures do not reflect or represent those of the community, teachers can lack understanding of student and family lives, and different interpretational frameworks can create a mismatch between parent and school expectations (Alleksaht-Snider, 1992; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Ream & Palardy, 2008; Valdés, 1998). As Martinez-Cosio and Iannacone (2007) assert, "Teachers and school administrators may assume that their school governance structure is open and participatory processes are democratic and inclusive, when in practice they are not open and available to everyone who does not understand the implicit rules and possess culturally appropriate knowledge" (p. 355). In other words, often teachers and schools do not communicate with parents to the extent they should, resulting in a lack of clear school expectations, and further, parents may lack an understanding of school, district and/or classroom norms, procedures, and expectations (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; McClelland & Chen, 1997; Quioco & Daoud, 2006). In addition, parents may lack an understanding of the relationship between children's academic achievement and their future success (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Valdés, 1998).

Further, rarely do staff members of schools serving recent immigrant communities mirror these communities, leaving families with little to no cultural representation on school faculties (Leistyna, 2002). This dearth can lead to misconceptions, stereotyping, essentializing, and blaming, whereby the school community becomes a normalizing community in which certain individuals, ideas, and actions are privileged and represented as normal, while others are disempowered and represented as deviant, lazy, not knowing any better, and abnormal (Ascher, 1988; Leistyna, 2002; Lopez, 2003). This all too common lens on marginalized communities reflects a deficit model: the perception that these communities are deficient or lacking (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Lawson, 2003; Lopez, 2003; Ritblatt et al., 2002; Valdés, 1998).

Compounding the cultural differences between school staff and immigrant families are language differences. In this respect, both parties lack the tools and mechanisms that would facilitate their bridging the discontinuities that naturally arise. Because immigrant families often

speak little English and school staff members do not typically speak the parents' language, it can create a number of challenges (Alleksaht-Snider, 1992; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; McClelland & Chen, 1997; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2008; Turney & Kao, 2009; Valdés, 1998). Communication from the school, whether written, by phone, or in person, could be limited to English, excluding non-English speaking parents (McClelland & Chen, 1997). As McClelland and Chen (1997) assert, "Being stripped of the ability to communicate diminishes a person in trying to support his or her child inside the school" (p. 294). Parents often rely on others to interpret for them, such as their children, which can also create problems (Alleksaht-Snider, 1992; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; McClelland & Chen, 1997). Additionally, language differences can make it difficult to help with assignments and understand teacher comments and correction marks (Alleksaht-Snider, 1992).

Discontinuities in how immigrant families and school staff perceive each other. Many immigrant parents living in low-income communities have high expectations for their children's education and want it to be equitable and socially just (Quiocho & Daoud 2006). They want to support and participate in their children's education and moral development, and they express genuine interest in their children's education (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). They tend to base their ideas about education on their prior experiences with schools, their own or their children's, and those with limited education and/or negative past experiences with schools can associate schools with fear, anger, and/or intimidation (Alleksaht-Snider 1992). Negative experiences and feelings may also stem from parents having different backgrounds than the majority of school staff (Ritblatt et al., 2002). Some parents may hope for better opportunities and a better future for their children, yet many do not presume or trust that their children will be treated fairly in school (Chrispeels & Rivero 2001; Comer, 2005).

Various studies describe how immigrant and other minority parents living in low-income communities feel that teachers and administrators lack sensitivity to their issues and concerns (Comer, 2005; Lewis & Forman, 2002). Further, they may feel incompetent or embarrassed to deal with school staff because they are intimidated by their educational and social status, and they may feel that they lack the strategies and knowledge to discuss academic issues with them (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Lewis & Forman, 2002). When families and communities do not view schools as caring about them, acting on their behalf, or being responsive to their needs, not

only does it discourage them from engaging with staff or in school affairs, it can also result in the perception that public schools are not truly theirs, and a lack of trust can ensue between parents and educators (Aronson, 1996; Comer, 2005; Mathews, 1997; Ritblatt et al., 2002).

Immigrant parents tend to believe in the value of schooling and often have community-centric or communitarian notions of involvement in education (Lawson, 2003; Miretsky, 2004). They generally perceive school as a safe place for children, especially while they are at work. Many, in fact, view the school as the main force responsible for children's education and academic development, while they, on the other hand, focus, by necessity, on survival issues – food, clothing, keeping their kids out of danger, and ensuring their children get to school each day (Lareau, 1987). Although some parents express an interest in collaborating with schools, others believe they have little influence over what happens at school and leave decisions in the hands of teachers, or even children (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Quijoch & Daoud, 2006). For example, they may not question teacher decisions or advocate for children, even when they feel a teacher has treated their child unfairly; they may expect students to take responsibility for completing and turning in work; and they may expect after school programs to assist with homework.

In contrast, school staff, particularly teachers, tend to have more school-centric notions regarding parent involvement and favor parents who come to school (Lawson 2003; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Turney & Kao, 2009). As such, parents are often considered uninvolved if they are not involved in traditional ways (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Lopez, 2001; Quijoch & Daoud, 2006; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2008; Turney & Kao, 2009). Further, when parents do not participate in traditional forms of involvement, deficit thinking by school staff, or perceptions that parents are lacking or deficient can result (Auerbach 2007). Assumptions are often made by school staff and others working in urban, low-income, minority communities that the lack of parent involvement in schools is due to parents' disinterest in their children's education (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Lopez, 2001; Noguera, 2004; Turney & Kao, 2009). Lopez (2001) contends, "the vast majority of marginalized families fall in the uninvolved category...[and] many have been judged to be unconcerned and perhaps uncaring, when in fact all that these parents have failed to do was become involved in normative ways" (p. 416).

Educators, however, can be unclear on how best to involve parents, and as a result, can unintentionally resist parent involvement or be ambivalent about wanting parents involved (Comer, 2005; Lewis & Forman, 2002). Much like parents, some educators have fears based on past negative experiences, which can prohibit them from inviting or welcoming parents into schools and classrooms (Ascher, 1988). Sometimes these negative experiences result from conflicting agendas, such as parent concerns for their children conflicting with school staff concerns for all children in the school or classroom (Lewis & Forman, 2002).

Asymmetrical power in family-school discontinuities. Given these commonly held perceptions of immigrant families, particularly those living in low-income communities, Waller's notion (as cited by Miretsky, 2004) of parents and teachers as natural enemies seems sadly to fit more often than it should in schools serving recent immigrant communities. In this sense,

Individuals of good will are not aware that they have become instruments of dominant interests. They are seldom conscious of the fact that power is exercised both through coercion and through consent and that, in many cases, people consent to the status quo and to maintaining existing power relationships simply by accepting established practices without question. (Valdés, 1998, p.15)

The relationship between parents and schools remains vertical rather than horizontal, whereby school staff maintain power and control, while parents tend to become disempowered. Parents are excluded from both the process of creating school environments that encourage democratic communication and from participating in a democratic community. These institutional inequalities and limitations impact children as well, working to further discourage parents from traditional involvement in schools (Ritblatt et al., 2002).

Conceptualizing the Challenge:

Developing Sociocultural Capital and Brokering Cultural Resources

As noted in Chapter 1, various forms of capital operate in school and other settings to mediate the social reproduction of inequality, including economic, physical, technological, informational, human, social and cultural (Bourdieu, 1977a/1977b; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Coleman, 1988; Edwards & Foley, 1998; Fernández Kelly, 1995; Granovetter, 1982/1985; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Lareau, 1987/2000; Portes, 1998/2000; Reay, 1999; Stanton-Salazar, 1997/2001; Teachman et al., 1997; White & Glick, 2000). Although many forms of capital may be relevant to school-community engagement efforts, social and cultural facets of school-family engagement (and disengagement) likely play salient roles in the brokering work that CBOs and others might do. Thus, enlisting the sociological constructs of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Coleman, 1988; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Martinez-Cosio, 2010; Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 1993; Woolcock, 1998; Yosso, 2005) can capture critical influences in relationships between immigrant families and schools, as well as in families' abilities to navigate and experience success in such institutions. Therefore, the following sections provide conceptual understanding of the constructs, how they develop, and more specifically, their role in school-family relationships, particularly when school staff members do not reflect or represent the cultural backgrounds of the families.

Developing Social Capital

As mentioned previously, immigrants' ethnic communities represent the most immediate component of their context of reception. Social capital, based in families and community networks, can act as a key resource for new arrivals to the U.S., helping them confront various obstacles to successful adaptation. In fact, in one survey-based study, Portes and Rumbaut (2006) "witnessed...a number of success stories grounded far more in social capital than in the education and economic resources of parents" (p. 282).

The quality of social capital existing within immigrant communities—the extent to which community members can develop durable networks, based on trusting relationships, that result in collective backing, stability and productivity in the community, access to resources within the community and beyond, and the development of potentially beneficial relationships with those outside the community—also greatly influences community members’ ability to become actively engaged and involved in their children’s education. However, the term social capital is used and applied in a variety of different ways. In the sections that follow, I offer an interpretation of social capital that guides this study based on both theoretical and empirical work on the topic. Because I will analyze the extent to which a community-based organization is able to develop social capital within communities, the literature that informs this study addresses how social capital has been defined, the different types and dimensions of social capital, as well as how it can be developed and optimized. Establishing a deeper understanding of social capital and its role in school-family relations is an important underpinning of this study.

What exactly is social capital? The term social capital has been defined and applied in myriad ways, yet theorists do agree on certain aspects. First, social capital is considered a resource or combined resources, although not necessarily tangible, in that it can be actual or potential (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988). Second, social capital exists in social structures or networks and is based on relationships within or between those structures and/or networks (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993). Social capital theorists also agree on the fact that it provides members or actors with the ability to achieve something that would not otherwise be possible through what Bourdieu (1986) describes as “the backing of the collectivity” (p. 248). Some theorists posit that trust plays an essential role in facilitating the coordination and cooperation that results in mutual benefits (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993). Bourdieu (1986), on the other hand, views the extent to which an individual possesses social capital to be based on the size of the network and the type and volume of cultural and economic capital it offers.

Because of the variety of interpretations and applications of the same term, it becomes important to examine some of the confusions and weaknesses in order to determine how best to use the term. Many people assume social capital connotes something positive, and that more is better. Jim Diers (2004) illustrates this confusion in his critique of Putnam’s work: “Putnam counts all participation the same and does little to distinguish the different roles or to weigh the

relative value of the many forms that participation takes” (p. 6). Social capital does not always result in positive outcomes, and can sometimes result in exclusion, or inhibit growth beyond a particular group or community (Warren, Thompson & Saegert, 2001). It may or may not be specific to certain activities, facilitating actions in some cases or hindering them in others (Coleman, 1988). As such, social capital holds both benefits and costs, in that groups can possess too much or too little in terms of efficient economic exchange, and sources of social capital may shift as transactions become more or less complex; therefore, social capital should be viewed as something to be optimized rather than maximized (Woolcock, 1998). Varying uses of the same term signifies that a single term is inadequate to explain the range of situations to which it is applied. Therefore, a more dynamic, rather than static, understanding of social capital is required.

Different types and dimensions of social capital. The myriad interpretations and applications of social capital suggest that there are both different types and dimensions. Coleman (1988) classified social capital into three different forms. Development of the first form—obligations, expectations, and trustworthiness of structures—depends on the trustability of the social environment, which translates into obligations being repaid and the actual extent of obligations held. Different social structures may arise and exist for a variety of reasons, such as different needs for help, the existence of other sources of support, the degree of affluence, cultural differences, the closure of networks, and the logistics of social contracts. The second form, information channels, refers to information flowing between and among people through social relations, which can provide a powerful basis for action. The third and final form of social capital, norms and effective sanctions, contributes to the stability, durability, and level of trust found in the social structure or network. While Coleman offers some interesting ways to think about social capital at the meso-level (Berry, 2008), his application of these ideas can indicate a deficit-based approach to families not considered to be high status. However, versions of these ideas can be applied in modified ways that take a more assets-based perspective.

Woolcock’s (1988) framework takes us beyond general typology by presenting social capital in terms of different applications and means for developing it -- what he refers to as dimensions. Each dimension incorporates any or all three forms of social capital as outlined by Coleman. One dimension, *integration*, refers to intra-community ties, focusing on the social

structures and relationships within a community. When integration is found within a community, trusting relationships between individuals have been formed in such a way that it promotes the development of norms, which contribute to both structural solidarity and solidarity among the individuals living in that community. A second dimension, *linkage*, refers to extra-community networks, or social capital developing between members of a community and those outside of the community. The idea of linkage recognizes the need to generate social ties extending beyond the immediate community to achieve long-term growth; however, the nature of the transition from integration to linkage can at times be problematic. Another way of looking at integration and linkage is to view them as *bonding* and *bridging* relationships, whereby bonding relationships are mutually supportive interactive exchanges with others in the immediate community; and bridging relationships are social connections to those outside of social communities, particularly those that offer access to formal educational, social, health, occupational and financial resources (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Warren, Soo, Rubin & Uy, 2009). Understandably, issues of integration (or bonding) and linkage (or bridging) may be especially problematic in the case of recent immigrant urban or first-ring suburban communities.

How social capital is built. Social networks that can help secure material or symbolic benefits require more than just participation in a group (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998). Typically building social capital requires investment strategies, both individual and collective, whereby relationships are transformed from contingent relationships, such as those of neighborhood or workplace, into lasting and useful relationships (Bourdieu, 1986). With intentional investments of both economic and cultural resources comes a greater likelihood of social capital acquisition (Bourdieu, 1986; Portes, 1998). Reproduction of social capital presupposes a continuous series of exchanges, whereby recognition is continually affirmed and reaffirmed; therefore, to participate in this exchange requires a specific competence, as well as an acquired disposition to pursue and maintain this competence, both of which act as integral parts of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Further, having a privileged status, a form of institutionalized social capital, can result in the endurance, and possibly even the guarantee of particular social relationships (Bourdieu, 1986). The development and optimization of social capital and its dimensions within, and extending beyond, recent immigrant communities can greatly influence the extent to which the families are able to participate and have a voice in their children's education.

A variety of conditions can facilitate the development of social capital, but particularly relevant with regard to family-school relations and student success are those found within the family, the immediate community (among peers, parents, etc.), and the greater community. In terms of family conditions required for optimal social capital development, Coleman (1988) argues that a child can only access adults' human capital – their skills, knowledge, and experience – when adults are both present and attentive to a child's needs. Moving outward beyond the family, Coleman (1988) asserts that the combination of links among peers, parents, children, and parents of different children creates *intergenerational closure*. While this concept of closure has usefulness, the perspective offered by Coleman predominantly reflects Anglo, middle-class norms, and therefore offers a somewhat limited view of student social support networks. Student support networks, particularly those of the population studied in this project, more likely would be a broader, more integrated, and more fluid version of what Coleman describes, including family members, peers, adults within the community (i.e., other parents, CBO staff, etc.), and school staff (i.e., teachers, counselors, etc.). To better capture this broader interpretation of social networks, for the purposes of this paper, I will use the term *Social Network Closure*, and when referring to social networks, it will be to this more encompassing version that better reflects the networks studied in this project.

Social networks characterized by closure can more easily generate social capital, (Coleman, 1988; Carbonaro, 1998). Closure occurs when individuals are in contact with others, so information can be shared, and common expectations and norms can be enforced (Coleman, 1988; Carbonaro, 1998). When closure exists, parents and other significant adults in children's lives can set norms and standards for them, provide support, and/or can serve as a bridge for communication when needed (Carbonaro, 1998; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). This closure of social networks provides a context whereby effective norms and trustworthiness of social structures allows for the existence and growth of obligations and expectations, one of the forms of social capital described above. In other words, a high degree of closure allows for commonly held norms to be enforced through shared information, which results from frequent social contact (Carbonaro, 1998). When there is a lack of *social network closure*, parents may lose an important resource for supporting their children

Moving further beyond the family and into the greater community, sometimes an organization, such as a CBO, can facilitate social capital development. When people are linked in more than one context, or *multiplex relations*, this allows for social organizations that can be tapped for more than one purpose (Coleman, 1988; Stanton-Salazar, 2010). For example, a CBO could facilitate the development of positive and more symbiotic relationships, both within a community and between families and schools.

While some conditions can contribute to the development of social capital, others can create fundamental barriers to such development. Woolcock (1998) outlines a number of these hindering circumstances which include: poverty, widespread inequalities among different socioeconomic groups, genders and ethnicities, lack of a shared stake in common outcomes between dominant and subordinate groups, chronic underemployment that undermines a basic sense of order and predictability, “weak, unjust...or indiscriminately enforced laws,” (p. 182) and overt or covert discrimination against minorities. Often disadvantaged urban and first-ring suburban communities fall prey to many of these conditions, raising questions about the possibility of interweaving actions, such as those undertaken by a CBO.

Developing Cultural Capital

Cultural capital, a related concept focused explicitly on cultural ideas, refers to distinctive cultural knowledge transmitted by families or formal schooling, such as attitudes, preferences, and behaviors (Bourdieu, 1986; Martinez-Cosio, 2010). When value is placed on particular forms of cultural capital, these act as resources that can be activated to provide advantages within school contexts (Bourdieu, 1986; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Martinez-Cosio, 2010).

Bourdieu (1986) described three types of cultural capital. *Embodied* cultural capital signifies styles, manners, cultural preferences and affinities, and valued cultural knowledge (Bourdieu, 1986; Monkman, et al., 2005; Tramonte & Willms, 2010). *Objectified* cultural capital refers to artifacts and goods generally thought of as cultural, such as literature, music, art, historical sites, museums and school syllabi and texts (Bourdieu, 1986; Monkman et al., 2005; Olneck, 2000). *Institutionalized* cultural capital includes things that come from institutions and

signify cultural distinction, such as academic credentials and educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986; Monkman et al., 2005).

In many cases, immigrant families do not possess the cultural capital valued by U.S. schools. Further, schools do not tend to view the cultural capital that these families offer as valuable, which often results in cultural discontinuities between schools and families (Bourdieu, 1986; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Martinez-Cosio, 2010).

The role of cultural capital in school-family relationships and school success. While social capital essentially focuses on the quality of social networks, cultural capital focuses on cultural resources and how they are activated through relations between actors to produce and reproduce particular social systems, in other words via those social networks (Bourdieu, 1986; Martinez-Cosio, 2010). Within the school context, the validation or dismissal of families' cultural resources, or capital, mediates their ability to engage and participate in their children's education and school (Martinez-Cosio, 2010). As Bourdieu (1986) explains, "The notion of cultural capital...made it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes by relating academic success, i.e. the specific profits which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, to the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions" (p. 243). This highlights the importance of recognizing cultural capital as a key component of academic success or failure, as opposed to viewing success as an effect of natural aptitude. Lareau and Horvat (1999) point out, "One of Bourdieu's major insights on educational inequality is that students with more valuable social and cultural capital fare better in school than do their otherwise-comparable peers with less valuable social and cultural capital" (p. 37).

How cultural capital is valued. To understand how different types of cultural capital are valued, "one needs to look at the context in which the capital is situated, the efforts by individuals to activate their capital, the skill with which individuals activate their capital, and the institutional response to the activation" (Lareau & Horvat, 1999, p. 38). As a result, various forces, such as the rules governing the school, shape the values attributed to particular forms of cultural capital, and as such, different forms of capital can be valued differently (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). For any form of cultural capital to be of value in a particular setting, or *field*, it must be activated; and how it is activated influences its value in that field (Lareau & Horvat,

1999). Lareau and Horvat's (1999) card game analogy provides an excellent illustration of this concept:

In a card game (the field of interaction), the players (individuals) are all dealt cards (capital). However, each card and each hand have different values. Moreover, the value of each hand shifts according to the explicit rules of the game (the field of interaction) that is being played (as well as the way the game is being enacted). In other words, a good hand for blackjack may be a less valuable hand for gin rummy. In addition to having a different set of cards (capital), each player relies on a different set of skills (*habitus*) to play the cards (activate the capital). By folding the hand, a player may not activate his or her capital or may play the cards (activate the capital) expertly according to the rules of the given game. In another game, the same player may be dealt the same hand, yet because of a lack of knowledge of the rules of the game play the hand poorly. Thus, in analyzing social settings, researchers must attend to the capital that each individual in a given field has, as well as each individual's ability and skill in activating the capital. (p. 39)

Typically, family cultural capital is valued when it facilitates compliance with the dominant standards in school interactions (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Schools promote particular linguistic structures, authority patterns, and types of curricula, and higher SES families tend to be familiar with these social arrangements (Tramonte & Willms, 2010). Valued cultural capital often includes parents' extensive English vocabularies, their sense of entitlement to interact with teachers as equals, along with access to time, transportation, and child care, so they can attend various school events, especially those taking place during the school day (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). These forms of cultural capital can provide many advantages to children whose families possess them, including but not limited to placement in gifted programs or high academic tracks, enrollment in schools known to provide high quality educational opportunities, and college preparation. Further, students' ongoing experiences at home can help them adapt to school and can contribute to their academic achievement (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Families invest cultural resources to align students' expectations with school norms and help solve problems relating to social acceptance (Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Lareau, 2000). Consequently, a lack of such capital

and investment can result in various negative outcomes, like placement in lower track classes or remedial courses, retention, a lack of social acceptance and failure to understand and complete college-preparation requirements (Lareau, 2000; Lareau & Horvat, 1999).

The aforementioned advantages and disadvantages, which can result from possessing valued forms of cultural capital in schools, indicate the necessity to pay heed to issues relating to cultural capital, and the social differentiation they perpetuate (Grenfell & James, 1998). As Lareau and Horvat (1999) point out, “[I]ndividuals must activate capital in social environments, and they vary in the level of skills they have to do so” (p. 50). Therefore, when families, such as those who have recently arrived in the U.S., do not possess traditionally valued forms of cultural capital, rather than perpetuating the disadvantages that the children of these families often experience, families and schools would benefit from additional support. Effective support would not only help families learn about and adapt to school cultures and norms, it would also help schools learn about and adapt to the families they are meant to serve. Different educational establishments have different institutional habitus, which influences the way difference is dealt with, such as institutional flexibility, willingness to change, and the extent to which it embraces or suppresses diversity (Reay, David & Ball 2001; Thomas, 2002). The habitus involves a set of complex and diverse predispositions, and although it is a dynamic concept, in which the past and the present, and the individual and the collective interact, change can be slow; as such, widening participation requires a strategic or holistic approach, such that it becomes central to institutional operations and is integrated throughout the institution’s activities. This speaks to the possible role that cultural brokering may play for a number of reasons.

An Integrative Concept: Sociocultural Capital

Merriam-Webster¹ defines sociocultural as “of, relating to, or involving a combination of social and cultural factors,” and because of the prevalence of social and cultural factors in many aspects of education, we find the term applied in various ways across social sciences research. As noted in Chapter 1, Salazar-Stanton (1997/2010) and others use the term to describe aspects of the different social contexts that individuals have to learn to navigate. These “sociocultural

¹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sociocultural>

worlds” include the cultural knowledge and behavior found within the boundaries of students’ families, peer groups, and schools. Means of entry into different sociocultural worlds and settings entail crossing boundaries, or *borders*, which can be real or perceived lines that delineate one world from others (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Borders work to inform people of the rules and requirements for effective participation within respective worlds, such as acquiring and employing the sociocultural discourse that enables participation (Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

On the other hand, many researchers, drawing heavily on the work of Vygotsky (1978) and others, use sociocultural theory as a lens on learning. Vygotsky (1978) asserts that learning is embedded within social events, and social interaction plays a fundamental role in the improvement of learning. Thus, sociocultural theory highlights the important roles that social relations, community, and culture play in cognition and learning (Lave, 1988; Lemke, 1990; Rogoff, 1990; Wertsch, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, “learning, thinking, and knowing are relations among people in activity in, with, and arising from the socially and culturally structured world” (Lave, 1991, p.67). Further, when applying sociocultural theory to the real world, it becomes easier to understand that learning is embedded in both a social and cultural context (Wang, 2007).

Education research utilizing social and cultural capital to understand particular phenomena more often than not refer to the two concepts as distinct from one another. However, Bourdieu’s (1986) conception of cultural capital recognized the integrated nature of cultural and social capital, in that social capital is never completely independent of cultural capital. He, nonetheless, kept them separate for analytical purposes. Thus far, I have explored social and cultural capital and their development separately. However, the more integrative concept of *sociocultural capital* would better help us move forward into the space of school-community relations and the cultural brokering work of CBOs.

Examining how sociocultural capital can be developed, extended, and activated can help us understand how the two concepts are in fact intertwined, as well as how, when understood as an integrated concept, it can function bi-directionally. Further, understanding the cultural brokering work through this integrative lens creates a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon – how the two concepts work together to generate resources that can be applied to gain access to necessities as well as opportunities, and how their

embeddedness can result in two-way transmission of cultural knowledge that works to both expand and improve the potential benefits of social networks for individuals and collectively.

Social and cultural capital refer to social relationships, cultural practices, and knowledge used to gain both social and economic benefits (Monkman et al., 2005). While each is recognized and defined differently, depending on the context (Lareau, 2000; Monkman et al., 2005; Portes, 1998), they are affected by one another and by the resources of economic, physical, technological or informational, and human capital (Bourdieu & Coleman, 1991; Granovetter, 1985; Portes, 1998). In other words, cultural capital can be thought of as the substance that gets transmitted via social ties enacted as social capital (Monkman et al., 2005). One acquires cultural capital through social networks when he or she invests his or her social capital; at the same time, to acquire social capital one needs to invest cultural capital (Portes, 1998). In other words, cultural capital is never completely independent of social capital and vice versa (Bourdieu, 1986), in that cultural capital is “indistinguishably incorporated within” social capital (Modood, 2012, p. 34). As Monkman et al. (2005) contend, “Cultural capital can be thought of as the substance that is transmitted via the social ties that are enacted as social capital” (p. 26). Social relationships and networks provide the channels for which to transfer and/or accumulate other forms of capital (Granovetter, 1985; Monkman et al., 2005). Further, social norms of obligation and reciprocity guide relations and interactions that lead to the acquisition and transfer of resources (Monkman et al., 2005).

Conceptualizing the embedded notions of social and cultural capital as one intertwined and interlinked concept – sociocultural capital – helps us understand first, how the development process can be more fluid and cyclical. The idea of sociocultural capital is particularly salient when exploring its development across multiple contexts, such as communities and schools, because the development of linking or bridging social capital, in particular, can play an important role in enhancing cultural capital development in both contexts (Monkman et al., 2005; Woolcock, 1998). On the one hand, through social capital, people can increase their cultural capital through contacts with experts (i.e., embodied cultural capital), and they can affiliate with institutions that confer valued credentials (i.e., institutionalized cultural capital) (Portes, 1998). On the other hand, social networks can provide channels for two-way transmission of cultural knowledge, such that those individuals residing in institutions have increased access to cultural

knowledge and information coming from the community. In this way, they may come to recognize this cultural knowledge and information as valuable, thus expanding their embodied notions of cultural capital and integrating them into institutional practices. Moreover, through increased cultural understanding, comes the potential for improved and enhanced relationships that can further solidify and build understanding, which can continue to deepen connections. Understanding this as a conceptually integrated process helps illustrate how it offers the potential for mutual benefits, as well as how the fluid and cyclical nature of the process allows for cultural understanding and relationships to evolve and grow.

Further, understanding the bi-directional transmission of cultural knowledge via social exchange through broadening networks based on trust to be a process of *sociocultural capital development* helps illuminate how the process has the potential to interrupt the reproduction of dominant social relations and structures that often prohibit the advancement of particular groups (Bourdieu, 1973; Webb et al., 2002). Through sociocultural capital development, social relations can be expanded in such a way that subsequent benefits include more inclusive and representative institutions. In other words, the extent to which sociocultural capital is both found within a community, as well as the extent to which the community is linked to individuals, networks and institutions external to the community, can play a critical role in breaking down social reproductive processes that benefit dominant groups (Bourdieu, 1973/1986).

Brokering Cultural Resources: The Work of Community-Based Organizations

The literatures just reviewed offer two basic ideas for capturing both the situation at hand and how it may be addressed. On the one hand, immigrant families and schools in low-income environments often lack the sociocultural capital that would enable them to build strong and mutually beneficial relationships. What is more, the circumstances, no less the surrounding environment, do not make it easy for them to build that capital, and districts and preparation programs rarely provide the training, resources and support needed to work with families in this way. Therefore, to navigate the processes outlined above, schools and families would benefit from cultural brokering support by third parties. This could help address the various discontinuities and disconnects described above by bringing school and family interests in

alignment with one another to better support students, schools, families and communities through the development of understanding, trust and positive, two-way communication. CBOs, in particular, are well positioned to do this work. In effect, they become a catalyst, as well as a viable means, for immigrant families to increase their sociocultural capital, and for schools to build their cultural competence.

CBO and other community-based school engagement efforts. CBOs can focus on a variety of issues and/or services, including, but not limited to, community development, health, youth development, early learning, afterschool programs, personal growth, family services, social action, advocacy, and social services. While some have a singular focus, others take a multi-faceted approach to address multiple, interrelated needs. For example, multi-service organizations focus on a wide range of issues and services, albeit generally with or within a particular population. An exhaustive review of the broad range of CBOs that exist, along with an examination of the issues they address and the services they provide, is beyond the scope of this paper. Further, while many CBOs work with schools in some way, not all involve themselves in school-community engagement efforts. Given, the focus of this study, what follows is a review of existing research focused on CBO and community-based school engagement efforts.

CBOs and other organized groups have undertaken various community-based efforts to address school-community engagement and other school reform issues. These efforts can function to replace existing schools or to put schools in place where they do not exist, such as with charter schools.² They can also reside within existing schools, such as community schools, where CBOs provide supplemental services within the building. In other cases, these efforts operate external to schools (or districts) and aim to reform them to better meet community interests and needs through parent empowerment, such as with community organizing efforts. Other community-based efforts through CBOs may mirror various aspects of those just described without necessarily falling specifically within one of the categories mentioned. In fact, overlap across various kinds of efforts exists in a number of examples.

Charter schools and other semi-autonomous schools incorporated into a school district frequently aim to address unmet community needs and/or interests (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009;

² This refers only to community-based charter schools, those started and/or run by locally initiated CBOs. It does not refer to more market-based charter schools, such as KIPP schools, etc.

Warren, 2005). In some cases, a community-based organization sponsors, starts, or operates one or more charter schools, as means for creating community-based schools that focus on a set of values important to the organization and the community it serves. These schools typically endeavor to address community needs, issues and/or interests that existing schools do not. For example, in one case a local minister and his community-based organization founded a cluster of schools in response to the predominantly Latino immigrant community's interest in a neighborhood middle and high school that would prepare students for college. Smith and Thomases (2001) profiled eleven youth-serving *CBO schools* with reputations for helping young people, particularly those who have not found success at mainstream schools, to become engaged, challenged, and supported to find ways to succeed educationally, and hopefully change their life paths and their communities. Each of the CBOs running the schools have long histories of commitment and service to the young people in the communities they serve. While most of the schools are operated by independent, locally initiated CBOs, others are affiliated with national parent organizations.

CBO-operated charter schools have the potential benefits, as well as challenges, associated with starting from scratch, developing their own mission and hiring staff who share similar goals (Warren, 2005). Finding the right leadership and staff with the expertise to run schools effectively can present challenges (Warren, 2005), as can academic achievement and funding (Smith & Thomases, 2001; Warren, 2005). In the case studied by Warren (2005), parent engagement and parent leadership opportunities seemed to be lacking, and it was unclear how the schools were faring academically. Smith and Thomases' (2001) study of CBO schools indicated that the schools were making progress with regard to graduating some students, but it was difficult to ascertain the extent of progress based on the data offered.

An example of a community-based charter school that has received widespread attention, as well as efforts to replicate the effort across the country, is Geoffrey Canada's Harlem Children's Zone. This example combines schools and services, like the first example mentioned, yet on a larger scale. Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) is a 97-block area that combines charter schools with community services designed to ensure a positive and supportive social environment outside of school from birth to graduation (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009). The charter schools are described as "No Excuses" schools, whereby the principal has considerable

administrative freedom, measurable goals are set and regularly tested using interim assessments, parent participation in the educational process is emphasized, and a culture of universal achievement that makes no excuses based on the students' background is created (Carter, 2000). HCZ has more than twenty programs, which they consider to be broad investments in community development, including early childhood programs, public elementary-, middle- and high-school programs (i.e., karate, dance, after-school tutoring), a college-success office, family, community and health programs, foster-care prevention services, tax help, and guidance, to name a few (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009).

Evidence from various analyses completed by Dobbie and Fryer (2009) around academic achievement suggest that the quality of the schools mattered more for these kinds of student outcomes than did the community services. Those students who lived within the zone, yet did not attend one of the schools, fared worse than those students in the zone who attended the schools. Further, students outside the zone who attended one of the schools fared similarly to those who attended and lived in the zone, again indicating that in terms of student achievement, high quality schools mattered more than the web of community services. Unfortunately, the study did not look beyond student achievement as an indicator of success, which limits the extent to which we can understand the impacts of such an effort.

The community school approach to engagement bases the work in public full-service schools, which provide education services and beyond to both children and families living in a community (Blank, Melaville & Shah, 2003; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2008; Dryfoos, 2002; Keith, 1999; Warren, 2005.) Schools serve as somewhat of a hub for a variety of services for children and families through partnerships with community-based organizations (Melaville, Berg & Blank, 2006; Warren, 2005). The idea of community schools integrates a different understanding of social services and the recipients of these services, whereby the school is considered a community center (Keith, 1999). Community schools often stay open after school hours, offering health care, after-school programs, and family support services, as well as adult education and other programs for the community (Warren, 2005), although the services they offer varies based on the community and its needs (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2008). Partnerships with community-based organizations provide community schools with essential

resources such as funding for facilities, equipment, staffing, professional development, and technical assistance (Dryfoos, 2003; Keith, 1999; Warren, 2005).

Research focused on community schools indicates a number of potential benefits, such as improvements in student academic achievement, attendance, motivation, connections, behavior and independence; teacher attitudes; family engagement with children and schools; and surrounding communities (Blank, Berg, & Melaville, 2006; Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2004; Dryfoos, 2003). Key elements required to build a successful full-service community school include “committed people; strong support from the principal; open communication; careful planning; access to technical assistance; on-site, full-time coordinator; integration of educational and support components; and strong initial financial support” (Dryfoos, 2003, p. 205). In addition to these requirements, the funding necessary to operate a full-service community school exceeds that required of a traditional school. Clearly this work has its challenges.

Schools previously operating in traditional ways can experience resistance from teachers when undergoing the cultural shift required to function as a community school, or resistance can come from the community, particularly if they have had negative past experiences with organizations or people from outside the community (Warren, 2005). Further, although community schools are intended to reduce fragmentation and enhance outcomes, fragmentation is often compounded when community organizations co-locate employees in schools because little attention is paid to developing effective mechanisms for coordinating complementary activity or integrating efforts (Adelman & Taylor 1997/2005/2006a/b) Also, although parent involvement may increase in full-service community schools, the development of parent leadership can be a challenge due to parents’ need to focus on basic survival, long working hours, non-citizenship or low levels of education (Warren, 2005).

School-community organizing offers another community-based approach to engagement that often involves community-based organizations. In the school-community organizing approach, community organizations focused on political change and empowerment through relationship building, leadership development and public action, collaborate with schools, which also act as institutional sites for organizing (Warren, 2005). In some cases, the organizations involved in this approach are local grassroots organizations experienced in community organizing and made up of community members. In other cases, they have an affiliation with

and are supported by a national network of community organizations (Mediratta, Fruchter, Gross, Keller & Bonilla, 2001; Shirley, 2001; Warren, 2005). In yet other cases, these efforts take the form of partnerships among university researchers, community members and K-12 school staff (Oakes & Rogers, 2006), or partnerships involving school staff and parents (Olivos, 2006).

The range of forms that school-community organizing takes reflects the diversity of communities involved in such efforts and their varying needs and interests, which also explains the variety of reform goals they attempt to realize (Warren & Mapp, 2011). However, in general, these efforts seek to build active participation and leadership at the grassroots level, with the emphasis on developing community capacity to create institutional and policy change on the community's behalf (Warren, 2005; Warren & Mapp, 2011). In other words, school-community organizing takes a transformational approach aimed at school reform, seeking to address issues of inequality and asymmetrical power dynamics in the name of social justice (Oakes & Rogers, 2006; Warren & Mapp, 2011).

Research indicates that through many of these efforts, parents not only build trusting relationships with one another, but those relationships often lead to the development of stable solid networks, resulting in increased capacity (Shirley, 2001; Wallace, 2005). Parents are provided with opportunities to build productive and trusting relationships with teachers, principals and other school staff, which perhaps were non-existent prior to organizing efforts, as well as with organization and civic leaders, providing them with the means to access various resources geared toward both individual and community improvement (Mediratta et al., 2001; Shirley, 2001; Warren, 2005). Additionally, in some cases, parents are able to develop relationships with parents outside their own communities, sharing ideas and encouraging extended development beyond a single community, as evidenced in the case described by Warren (2005).

Much like other engagement approaches, these efforts face a number of challenges. Initial challenges may take the form of teacher, administrator, or parent-teacher organization resistance to these efforts for one reason or another (Shirley, 2001). School-community organizing efforts also require funding beyond what schools currently receive through state and federal sources, and acquiring additional funding takes a great deal of time, energy and know-

how (Shirley, 2001; Warren, 2005). Given the time, energy and resources required for this approach to be successful, educators' attention and focus can be deterred from teaching and learning, and sustainability can present a great challenge (Shirley, 2001; Warren & Mapp, 2011). For members to remain motivated and engaged, participants need to find ways to win enough successes, maintain enough funding and keep moving forward (Mediratta, et al., 2001).

Literature focused on school-community organizing offers important insights into what is possible with regard to addressing inequality and power dynamics between families and schools, building school-community collaborations, increasing equity in resources and policy, and improving student achievement (Oakes & Rogers, 2006; Shirley, 2001; Warren, 1998/2005; Warren & Mapp, 2011). It also makes clear sustainability issues, and other challenges, as well as the fact that the work is distinctly political in nature, and the organizations involved take a political stance to their work with schools. Other community-based organizations may not be inclined or designed to participate in school-community engagement from a political stance, given their mission, areas of expertise and available resources. Therefore, these organizations function as more of a broker between schools and families (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011).

CBOs that work with schools and address school-community engagement, but with the ultimate goal of addressing academic achievement, often serve multiple functions (Adger, 2001). These can include preparing parents for their child's schooling or increasing parental involvement in school, reducing behaviors that may interfere with school, such as substance abuse or truancy, preparing students for work, involving the community in public education, supporting students' preparation for higher education, improving students' English proficiency, improving instruction, and improving intergroup relations (Adger, 2001). Lawson and Alameda-Lawson (2011) describe CBOs as "[s]ites for social capital development," and describe a community-based, school-linked parent engagement program that involved relationships among a local CBO, a university social work department, and a local school district. Findings indicated that the program served as a proxy for multiple and complex social processes, and that parents' engagement in the program helped reduce several barriers and resource constraints, including parent and child isolation, family stress, and cultural and linguistic differences, that otherwise limited their ability to engage in schools and other institutional settings (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011). Additionally, participation in the program also fostered the development of

several parent competencies and resources, including a psychological sense of community, social capital and collective efficacy (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011). While these findings indicate promising outcomes for families and communities, institutional processes and structures remained unaltered (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011).

Existing research focused on community-based approaches to school-community engagement offers a range of promising practices for addressing school-community engagement, and in some cases, school reform. While some efforts reside within the school, seeking to ensure that schools help engage and meet the needs of communities, such as charter schools and community schools, others seek to enact more transformational change from outside the school, such as school-community organizing. Yet other efforts external to the school take more of a service approach and focus on capacity building. Although some research focused on community-based efforts, such as community organizing, uses a social capital development lens, a lack of research focuses on understanding community-based school-community engagement efforts using both social and cultural capital, or sociocultural capital development, as a lens. While the research alludes to cultural aspects of the work, it generally neglects to consider the integrated and interdependent nature of these two concepts and how a service-oriented CBO and its cultural brokering efforts between schools and families can actually serve to develop sociocultural capital within the community and beyond, in the school context, offering the potential to move toward improved trust, understanding, communication, and ideally, change.

The idea of cultural brokering. By maintaining linking functions, *cultural brokers*, or bicultural actors acculturated in mainstream and ethnic cultures, aim to bridge gaps between the two (Gentemann & Whitehead, 1983). Brokers need to have the ability to span both cultures. They need to take mainstream values in a pluralistic society and communicate them to ethnic cultures, while also communicating ethnic cultures and values to the mainstream (Gentemann & Whitehead, 1983).

Some research indicates that the main objective of cultural brokers is to provide mechanisms from those cultures *to* mainstream culture (Gentemann & Whitehead, 1983; Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007). Stanton-Salazar (2010) offers a somewhat different version of cultural brokers in the form of *institutional agents* who mobilize or provide resources to support students in navigating the institutions and environments in which they are situated. This

process also reflects one-way transmission of cultural resources, whereby the agents are positioned to provide important social and institutional support for students and youth in ways that socialize them, such that they can integrate into the school system and beyond. Stanton-Salazar (2010) also provides a picture of a different kind of institutional agent, an *empowering agent*, who embraces the challenge of devising individual and collective strategies that run counter to exclusionary forces inherent in societal structures. Lawson and Alameda-Lawson (2011) provide yet another definition of cultural brokering. They do so by highlighting elements of the aforementioned definitions that help capture the culturally rooted work of the CBO of focus in this study. Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, cultural brokers are defined as agents, who provide needed linkages between families, communities, and formal institutions, by providing a range of essential services (Lawson and Alameda-Lawson, 2011).

First, cultural brokers translate language, schools, and U.S. culture into terms that immigrant families can more easily grasp. As Martinez-Cosio and Iannacone (2007) explain, they “can assist parents from underserved communities to understand the workings of the school bureaucracy, practice the effective use of language to obtain educational concessions, [and educate] parents about their rights” (p. 351). They can also act as intermediaries between families and schools, educating and helping each social system adapt to the other, and trying to make interactions between families and schools more effective (Gentemann & Whitehead, 1983; Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007). In addition, cultural brokers can advocate for families, extending their knowledge of the dominant cultural norms, values, and beliefs to families (Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007). In terms of helping schools adapt to families, they can attend to parent needs, such as childcare, when planning workshops or other events. They can also contribute to school faculty and staff understanding of family cultures, issues, and concerns.

How CBOs, as cultural brokers, can bridge gaps between immigrant families and schools. Community-based organizations have the knowledge, understanding and relationships with communities and schools that can make them excellent cultural brokers. Not only do they have staff members who speak languages found in the community, they also understand various cultures found in the community, as well as socioeconomic challenges community members face. Additionally, they often have good knowledge of and relationships with schools. Therefore, they can provide a range of essential services, such as translation at schools for

families who do not speak English, and technical help for families who need assistance completing paperwork for various institutions and agencies, including schools (Alameda, 1996; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). They can also help families better understand institutional practices and policies and help professionals learn how to better respond to the strengths and needs of families (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Warren et al., 2009). Further, they can contribute to trust building between schools and families.

Put another way, CBOs possess a wealth of sociocultural capital and take a culturally competent approach to their work. And as such, they are well positioned to help families and schools build the requisite capital and competence to engage each other in more mutually beneficial ways. They have the flexibility to perform unique community roles, such as the design and development of activities, supports, and programs tailored to the particular strengths, needs and challenges of their communities (Keith, 1996; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Shirley, 2001; Warren, 2005). Because CBO activities have the potential to tap and develop parents' strengths and interests, parents may be more drawn to them initially, which can result in parents deriving various benefits, including sociocultural capital development (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Warren et al., 2009). Further, they have the potential to address the asymmetry in power relations between families and schools, by helping families and community members develop knowledge, skills and opportunities that can help empower them to be able to address power differentials, improve school quality, and improve their communities. CBOs with demonstrated capacity as sociocultural capital builders represent critical resources for schools in low-income communities serving populations of recent immigrant families (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Schutz, 2006; Warren, 2005; Warren et al., 2009).

CBOs can create opportunities for parents to better understand connections between their experiences, worldviews, and circumstances and others in their community (Carreón, Drake & Barton, 2005; Shirley, 1997). They can also foster opportunities for parents to act on shared goals, needs, and interests (Keith, 1996; Shirley, 1997; Warren et al., 2009). Both of these conditions can potentially lead to parents developing important social ties, which when activated, can result in reciprocal exchanges of childcare, child monitoring, and subsistence supports (Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2002; Horvat, Weininger & Lareau, 2003; Warren et al., 2009). Research indicates that these kinds of bonding relationships among parents can lead to various

community-level enhancements, including improved neighborhood organization and monitoring, and increased civic engagement in schools and other community-serving institutions (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Shirley, 1997; Warren 2005).

Schools serving ethnically and linguistically diverse populations in low-income communities have much to gain from having people who can operate on the boundary between schools and the communities they serve, bridging cultural and linguistic gaps, building trust and relationships, and connecting families with needed resources and services. However, the cultural brokering work needs to be bi-directional, whereby schools are investing time, effort, and resources into understanding and adapting to the needs of the families they are serving, rather than solely trying to get families to understand and adapt to the school's cultural norms. Given the various challenges to, and supports for, low-income family engagement and involvement, the need for cultural brokers is a great one. Lopez and Stack (2001) explain that cultural brokers can “[create] a safe space in which to decode and translate the culture of power; [enable] members of marginalized communities to rehearse the unfamiliar codes of the culture of power; [serve] as a means to deploy personal and collective social capital to gain access to networks of targeted mainstream-dominant institutions; and [integrate] and [affirm] community cultural values, resources and rights” (p. 48).

Empowering community settings. Empowerment has various dimensions, including economic, cultural, political, human and social (Luttrell, Quiroz, Scrutton & Bird, 2009; Page & Czuba, 1999; Piron & Watkins, 2004; Stromquist, 1993), and psychological (Maton & Salem, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000). Economic empowerment aims to ensure people have the skills, capabilities and resources needed to access secure and sustainable means of support (Luttrell et al., 2009). Cultural empowerment seeks to redefine rules and norms and recreate cultural and symbolic practices (Stromquist, 1993). Political empowerment often takes a rights-based approach and aims to build the capacity to analyze, organize and mobilize for collective action that results in collective change (Piron & Watkins, 2004). Human and social empowerment offers a similar conception of empowerment as psychological empowerment, although it takes things further. While psychological empowerment functions as an active participatory process of gaining resources or competencies needed to increase control over one's life and accomplish important life goals (Maton & Salem, 1995; Mechanic, 1991; Zimmerman, 2000); the concept of

human and social empowerment elaborates on this idea, and is described as a multidimensional social process that seeks to help people act on issues that they define as important by building the capacity to gain control over their own lives, their communities and their society (Luttrell et al., 2009; Page & Czuba, 1999).

Empowerment in community settings, can take a variety of forms, which may reflect differences in organization types and populations studied, as well as in how empowerment is approached (Maton & Salem, 1995). For example, social action organizations engaging in community organizing efforts could be focused on political empowerment, cultural empowerment, human and social empowerment, or all of the above. Other community-based school engagement efforts, such as community schools, or CBOs engaging in cultural brokering efforts between families and schools, might enlist more of a psychological and/or human and social empowerment approach. To understand how empowerment comes into play within the work of a CBO's cultural brokering efforts, we need to unpack the characteristics of empowering settings, or those that help create a foundation for the empowerment process.

CBOs offer local community settings where individuals can gain the power and resources to achieve important personal goals through active participation with others (Maton & Salem, 1995; Rappaport, 1981; Zimmerman, 2000). Maton & Salem (1995) outline a set of four broad and multi-faceted organizational characteristics that create the foundation for empowerment, particularly psychological empowerment: 1) belief system, 2) opportunity role structure, 3) support system and 4) leadership.

A belief system, or an organization's ideology, values and culture, help specify patterns of behavior intended to produce desired outcomes (Maton & Salem, 1995). It includes how the organization views the people with whom staff work, such as their needs, problems, potential, and how they can work within the setting to achieve personal goals (Maton & Salem, 1995). The belief system shapes organizational structures and practices meant to provide opportunities for member growth and development, and provide goals and norms to motivate, guide and sustain change efforts (Maton & Salem, 1995). A growth-inspiring, strengths-based belief system that focuses individuals beyond themselves, has the potential to motivate and direct them via effective, consistent and powerful activities that facilitate the achievement of their primary goals (Maton & Salem, 1995).

Opportunity role structure refers to the availability and configuration of roles within an organization that provide meaningful opportunities for individuals to develop, grow, and participate (Maton & Salem, 1995). A pervasive, accessible, and multifunctional opportunity role structure offers the potential to consistently and incrementally facilitate exposure to the kind of learning and mastery experiences that can contribute to skill and resource development conducive to goal achievement (Maton & Salem, 1995).

An organization's support system includes social support resources that contribute to the quality of life and individuals' ability to manage stressful situations (Maton & Salem, 1995). An encompassing, peer-based support system that creates a viable sense of community can contribute to openness to change and persistence in the pursuit of personal goals, even in the face of inevitable difficulties inherent to the empowering process (Maton & Salem, 1995).

Organizational leadership, or the qualities of key individuals with formal and/or informal responsibility, can contribute to empowerment through direct influence on individuals in the community and/or indirect influence through motivation and influence of those who interact most regularly with community members (Maton & Salem, 1995). Inspirational, talented, shared, and committed leadership can support individuals' commitment to the organizational belief system, the extent to which they participate in learning and mastery activities, and their sense of support and community (Evans & Boyte, 1986; Maton & Salem, 1995). Further, leadership that helps create a context for empowerment generates needed organizational resources, maintains stability, and responds to dynamic environmental conditions, contributing to the organizational effectiveness and viability over time (Maton & Salem, 1995).

While some view empowerment as a process, others question how participation in an empowerment process alone could be empowering without the outcomes (Luttrell et al., 2009). The idea of empowerment as an outcome will be further discussed in the next section, which unpacks potential outcomes of cultural brokering.

Potential outcomes of cultural brokering work. Relationships between recent immigrant families and school staff play a critical role in families' decisions and abilities to participate in their children's education. Positive and mutually beneficial relationships are based on understanding, communication, and trust. Additionally, taking an assets-based approach to

school-community relations, as opposed to perpetuating deficit model thinking, can help address issues of asymmetrical power. In effect, these outcomes give operational meaning to the development of sociocultural capital among all parties involved in school-family relationships.

- *Trust.* Trust plays an essential role in the development of positive and mutually beneficial family-school relationships (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Coleman, 1988). As discussed above, cultural differences between teachers and parents can create conditions ripe for misunderstanding and distrust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Further, little to no contact between parents and teachers potentially leads to a reliance on general reputations and “commonalities of race, gender, age, religion or upbringing” (Bryk & Schneider, 2003, p. 41-42). In addition, in the current context of high accountability, schools serving low-income and working-class families often find themselves under great scrutiny and pressure to improve student performance without the needed resources or support, which can exacerbate existing problems and result in a culture of blame. As Lewis and Forman (2002) assert, “[I]t is not merely parents’ presence in the school that is needed, but a type of collaborative relationship between parents and teachers that will encourage mutual respect and inspire dialogue” (p. 83).

When all partners remain dependent on each other to achieve desired outcomes, regardless of the formal power any given role has in the school community, the interdependence creates a sense of mutual vulnerability for all involved. Therefore, when deliberate action is taken to reduce this sense of vulnerability, trust is built in the community (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Increasing trust and deepening organizational change go hand-in-hand and support one another (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). “[I]t is in the daily process of school community members interacting – compromising, misunderstanding, accommodating, and butting heads – that relationships are built and school communities shaped” (Lewis & Forman, 2002, p. 83). Through their work with both families and schools, CBOs can contribute to building a climate of trust and openness to ideas at schools, which are basic to any attempt to involve families and work with them as partners, especially those least affluent and least educated (Haynes & Comer, 1996). CBO brokering can help educators and families build relationships gradually and establish trust over time (Comer, 2005). They can encourage and support school staff members in reaching out to parents in their communities, regular and positive communication, and networking through the CBO or other community institutions, groups and support service agencies.

- *Understanding.* Undertaking efforts to help schools understand family cultures and needs provides additional grounding for improving relationships. When CBOs contribute to schools’ understanding of immigrant family cultures and issues, schools have more knowledge to

help them tailor operations and supports to the needs and interests of families. For example, they can plan, organize and structure events, meetings and other activities that appeal to parents' interests, address concerns and meet needs. Further, they can ensure that families are either able to attend or have means for accessing the information, as well as understanding the content by providing childcare, transportation and interpreters/translation according to family needs (Aronson, 1996). Depending on the relationship with the CBO, these services could even be coordinated by or involve the CBO. In addition, CBOs orienting families to schools and districts, making information available and accessible to them, can provide families with some of the cultural capital needed to successfully navigate U.S school systems (Alleksaht-Snider 1992; Auerbach 2007).

- *Communication.* If the school intends to address parents interests, concerns and needs, then improving communication with parents and families needs to be a priority. Lewis and Forman (2002) explain how school culture sets the “context for relationship building” (p. 61). This refers not only to the immediate school culture, but also to the district and/or policy context in which the school sits because it inevitably influences and impacts the school culture as well. CBOs could contribute to a positive relationship-building context by working with families and schools to encourage positive and mutually beneficial interactions, such as creating opportunities and a climate for parents to ask questions and provide input (Alleksaht-Snider 1992). CBOs could also provide professional development for school staff focused on working with parents in diverse low-income urban communities (Aronson, 1996).
- *Empowerment.* Power can be understood as a deeply structured element of each neighborhood, which exists in a reciprocal relationship with each community's cultural and overall ecology, such as its way of life, social institutions, local history, values, norms, expectations and market forces (Crowson, 2003). Cultural brokering offers a means for establishing bridges between a community's way of life and that of the institutions, such as schools, that serve the community (Crowson, 2003). Ramsay (1996) asserts that empowerment is embedded in each community's sense of social cohesion and commitment to uniqueness of character and/or special nature of its culture or way of life. The construct of a sense of place helps illuminate how returning public schools to their communities, or neighborhoods, can contribute to a community's empowerment (Driscoll, 2001; Driscoll & Kerchner, 1999; Philo & Kearns, 1993). In other words, through cultural brokering, connections can be developed and strengthened, whereby boundaries are crossed, schools and communities engage from a place of mutual respect, and community construction and development is shared (Driscoll, 2001). All of these point to the work of cultural brokering in the form of sociocultural capital development that

leads to empowerment based on mutual respect of values, community engagement, crossing boundaries and shared community construction (Crowson, 2003). In other words, a CBO's cultural brokering efforts can contribute to schools and communities recognizing a shared or common sense of place, whereby schools and other community institutions are part of a sustaining habitat in which a continuation of culture and a regeneration of community are simultaneously of value (Duneier, 1999; Crowson, 2003). While this sense of place can provide a sense of empowerment, it can also act as a building block for the development of other dimensions of empowerment, in that an agency relationship can develop between schools and communities such that schools display a sense of centeredness around the ideas, values, culture, actions, psychology, and social systems of their communities (Asante, 1987; Crowson, 2003; Morris, 1994/2001).

This study examines how a community-based organization's cultural brokering work may lead to improved trust, understanding, and communication between recent immigrant families living in low-income communities and the schools meant to serve them, as well as the extent to which this work leads to community empowerment.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methods

While the notion of schools and families working with community-based organizations holds great potential for addressing problems impacting schools and families, particularly in low-income, racially diverse, urban and first ring suburban settings, this can be extremely challenging work, and more needs to be understood about how these efforts work to bridge existing gaps. Therefore, this qualitative study examined the work that a CBO does with recent immigrant families living in low-income apartment complexes and the schools their children attend. The goal was to develop an understanding of how the CBO works to help connect the families and schools it works with, what the organization is able to achieve in this regard, and what accounts for their ability to do this.

Given the discontinuities that can exist between schools and recent immigrant families in low-income environments, the work requires a focus on building the capacity of each to be able to engage and connect. Therefore, I focused on how the organization works to build the capacity of the community to engage, both in their children's education and with the schools their children attend. Just as important to understand is how the CBO works with schools to develop the cultural competence necessary to engage with the families they are meant to serve in mutually beneficial ways. Both social and cultural capital play key roles in families' capacity to engage in their children's education and schooling; therefore, I examined how the organization works to develop *sociocultural capital* within the communities in which they're working. I also explored the extent to which the CBO works with schools to develop their understanding of and ability to work in mutually beneficial ways with the community. Finally, I sought to understand what contributes to and detracts from the CBO's ability to develop sociocultural capital with the community, cultural competence within the school, and to help families and schools engage in mutually beneficial ways. Ultimately, the larger goal of this study is to contribute to the understanding of how CBOs can help recent immigrant families and schools in low-income environments successfully raise and educate children and youth and contribute to the improvement of both schools and the community, given the myriad challenges they face.

The purpose of this chapter is to elucidate how the research questions, theoretical perspectives, and research methods used to conduct the study all connect. I begin by describing the research tradition used to carry out the study and why it is appropriate to answer my research questions. I then lay out in detail the research design, including the organizational and community setting, the program sites within this setting, participant selection and information, data collection strategies, approach to analysis, and limitations in the research design.

The Research Tradition

Because the research questions aim to explain what is going on in work involving a community-based organization, schools and families, the interpretive research family best suits the goals of the study, specifically the implementation of a qualitative case study. In keeping with the ontological belief generally associated with qualitative research, I view reality as socially constructed, complex and dynamic, whereby what is real is relative to the specific context and people involved (Glesne, 2006). My epistemological orientation also aligns with qualitative approaches, which hold that one comes to understand particular realities through interactions and explorations with participants about their perceptions (Glesne, 2006). Through this study I sought to understand the meaning people constructed and how they made sense of their world and experiences, and I was interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation as opposed to hypothesis testing (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 1998). The goal was to gain a systematic, encompassing and integrated overview of the context being studied, while capturing data on the perceptions of participants through a process of deep attentiveness, empathetic understanding and suspension of preconceptions (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Research focused on community-based organizations and schools generally uses case study design (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Sanders, 2008/2009; Warren et al., 2009; Warren & Mapp, 2011), particularly because it offers an appropriate strategy for building new knowledge and theory in a field that lacks a long tradition of research and testable hypotheses (Warren & Mapp, 2011). Given that this study focuses on understanding how a CBO works with families and schools to achieve particular goals, the qualitative case study method offered a good fit. Case studies provide a distinct advantage for

answering *how* and *why* questions, and for understanding processes to discover context characteristics that shed light on an issue or object (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Warren & Mapp, 2011; Yin, 2006). Further, the overall intent of this study is to be interpretive, using thick description to develop, illustrate, support and challenge theoretical assumptions compiled from prior literature (Merriam, 1998); and case studies provide the perfect opportunity to develop contextually grounded and richly detailed analyses (Warren & Mapp, 2011).

This research design, focused on a bounded integrated system with working parts, provided the opportunity to gain in-depth understanding of the work a community-based organization does with schools and families in context, and what it means for all involved (Merriam, 1998; Smith & Thomases, 2001; Stake, 1978). An important strength of the case study method is the ability to examine a case in-depth and within context (Yin, 2006). By concentrating on a single case, I was able to uncover the interaction of significant factors that were characteristic of this particular case (Merriam, 1998). Ultimately, my purpose was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the people studied and generate theoretical statements about themes found in social structures and processes (Merriam, 1998).

Given the study's theoretical framework, and its focus on particular constructs of society and socialization, it can be classified as a sociological case study (Merriam, 1998). Sociological case studies generally attend to demographics, social life and people's roles, the community, social institutions, socioeconomic and ethnic/racial groups, and social problems, all of which come into play in this study (Merriam, 1998). In particular, this study highlights attributes of social life in the form of interactions, behavior patterns, and structures (Hamel, Dufour & Fortin, 1993; Merriam, 1998). The qualitative case study that I conducted can also be characterized as instrumental and heuristic in that it provides insight into and illuminates understanding of a specific issue and works to redraw generalizations, confirming what is known, while shedding light on new understandings and meanings (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Smith & Thomases, 2001). Another heuristic quality of this case study can be seen in its explanations of a problem, along with background information regarding what occurred and why (Merriam, 1998).

The Research Design

To demonstrate how the case study was conducted, following is a detailed account of the research design. I begin with the study context – the organizational and community setting – where I discuss how I gained site entry; the CBO’s history, mission, goals, vision, and programs; the community where the CBO sites are located; and CBO funding. Next I describe the CBO’s four sites, also known as learning centers, followed by information about participants, including how they were selected. Data collection strategies, including semi-structured interviews, observations, and the gathering of documents, are then delineated. Concluding the chapter are my approach to data analysis and limitations in the research design.

Organizational and Community Setting

The setting for this study, the CBO, is a well-established community-based organization with a long history of working with disadvantaged communities and schools. Located in the southern region of a Pacific Northwest county, this organization bases its work in four different sites located in low-income apartment complexes. Staff members at each site work closely with recent immigrant families living in each community and the schools that serve them. They offer various culturally relevant programs for children, youth and families that build skills, foster connectedness, and promote strengths. They also work with school staff to support students and families and inform their own programs. Using purposeful sampling, I strategically chose this CBO to be my study site, as it provided me with a representative case that was information-rich and allowed for in-depth study and understanding of the issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1999; Yin, 2003).

The CBO offers an excellent example of an organization engaged in cultural brokering as means for contributing to student success and improved school-family connections, and it embodies a lot of the dynamics that are the focus of this study. This CBO provided an especially good opportunity for examining the research questions because staff work directly with recent immigrant families living in low-income communities and the schools their children attend in support of the families and the schools. Furthermore, because the organization sites are located in low-income apartment complexes, they are part of the immediate community of families,

providing them with direct insight into the lives of the families and the issues they face. Finally, the organization mission is to support families and students, which involves doing a great deal of work with both families and schools. These characteristics allowed me to develop an understanding of the work that the CBO does with families and schools, how they attempt to connect and build relationships, build community capacity, and develop understanding among school staff about the families they serve.

Site entry. I first learned about the CBO as part of an Urban Affairs course in 2008, in which we took a field trip to a small city in the area to learn about the diverse range of issues it faced and how it was attempting to address them. At the time, the city was rapidly becoming ethnically and racially diverse and had high poverty rates. One of the CBO's four sites, housed in some apartments within a low-income apartment complex in the city, was a destination on our field trip. As I grew more interested in learning about the work that community-based organizations do with families and schools in low-income environments, and understanding their potential to help address some of the problems these communities and their schools face, I started to look for organizations specifically focused on this kind of work as potential research sites. This CBO seemed like an excellent candidate.

In order to start developing a deeper understanding of the organization and its work, and to establish relationships with staff and community members at the organization, I began volunteering at one of the sites as a Teaching Assistant (TA) in their adult English Language Learners (ELL) class. Shortly after I started volunteering as a TA, I did an internship with their Family Advocacy program at the same site, which lasted one academic quarter. Because the ELL class was not offered in the summer, and because community members expressed an interest, I offered to lead a computer lab for adults during the ELL class time slot over the summer. Through my work as a volunteer, I developed a general understanding of the community the CBO served and the kind of work staff were doing with families and schools. Therefore, after about a year of volunteering for the organization, I proposed focusing my dissertation project on the CBO, first to the site manager, and then to the interim Executive Director leading the organization at that time. When a new Executive Director was appointed about six months later, I had an initial conversation with him about my study, and he expressed great interest in and enthusiasm about the study. As a result, he wrote a letter of cooperation on behalf of the

organization, indicating a belief in the merits of the study, along with willingness to participate. He was my primary source for gaining access to the organization, families served by the organization, and schools working with the organization for the majority of the study's duration.

CBO history. In 1993, the CBO was founded by a group of teachers at an elementary school, who realized that many students from one particular low-income apartment complex in the district were struggling in school. They decided to rent an apartment within the complex and start an after school program for students in that community. While the teachers found that the students' schoolwork and behavior improved, they soon came to understand that the needs of these students reached beyond what they could offer through academic support. Although students needed help with homework, many of their families were struggling to survive and meet basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter and safety. They also needed help finding employment and higher paying jobs. Without these needs being met, students and families would find it difficult to be able to focus on school and education. In other words, the teachers realized that in order to succeed, children required strong and resilient families, as well as cohesive, safe neighborhoods. As a result, the CBO now combines educational programs for children, youth and adults, support services for families, and community-building programs.

CBO mission, goals and vision. Up until January 2010, the CBO's mission read: *[the CBO] partners with families to create communities where children thrive.* After the organization realized there was a divide between management and the board regarding the focus of the organization's work, the CBO went through a strategic planning process and ended up changing the mission to: *[the CBO]' mission is to partner with families in their communities and with educators to ensure that children succeed in school and life.*

They locate their sites where they see the greatest need—low-income apartment complexes in an area that has the highest poverty rates and school failure in the Pacific Northwest county in which they are based. They work one-on-one with individual children and their parents, as well as with groups of children and adults, and in the past, they have worked to promote systemic change in efforts to allow minority students in low-income environments to achieve academic success.

According to the CBO's website, the organization's vision focuses on four goals. First, they seek to develop children's capacity to thrive and reach their full potential. They also seek to support communities in being safe, nurturing environments, where learning is fostered and families have the resources to best support their children's growth and success. Further, they aim to help schools provide high quality education to all children in a culturally relevant way. Finally, they want to contribute to the creation of a just and equitable society where all people are valued and accepted.

CBO programs. At the time this study was being conducted, the CBO had four sites, or *learning centers*, in four low-income apartment complexes in a Pacific Northwest county, which were either managed or owned by the county housing authority. At each location they provide what they refer to as “[on-site] integrated, culturally relevant programs [that] build skills, foster connectedness, and promote strengths.”³ They provide educational programs for children and youth to help them succeed in school; they provide support services to help families meet urgent and basic needs; and they provide community-building programs to help residents create informal support networks. Within their programs they attempt to take a strengths-based approach and integrate individual level, family level, community level, and, at one time, system transformation interventions. For children and youth, the CBO offers early learning programs, focused on kindergarten-readiness, after school programs for students in first through sixth grades, youth programs for students in grades seven to twelve, and summer programs. In addition, the CBO offers the family advocacy program, which helps families access needed resources and services and participate in their children's education, the community development program to strengthen the community, and ELL classes for adults in the community. Beyond the apartment complex communities, the CBO also ran a program out of their administrative office that worked with educators, and social service and municipal employees in the area, providing cultural competency training.⁴

The community. The organization serves a diverse population of families. During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, seventy-six percent of families served were Latino, eleven percent were African or African American, five percent were Asian or Pacific Islander, three percent were

³ Quote from the CBO's website.

⁴ The CBO is no longer running this program – it ceased operation towards the end of data collection.

multi-ethnic, two percent were Caucasian, and three percent were classified as *other*. They also serve a high poverty population. That same fiscal year, ninety-eight percent of the families they served were *very low* income, ninety-three percent were immigrants or refugees, and forty-nine percent had limited English speaking skills.

CBO funding. The CBO receives funding from various sources. Approximately one-third of their funding comes from governmental or public sources, and another third comes from individual donors. A combination of corporate (just under 12%), foundation (16.5%) and earned income (just over 5%) dollars provide the remaining third of funding for the organization.

Program Sites within this Setting

At the time of data collection, the CBO was operating four sites, or learning centers, each located in a different low-income apartment complex served by a different set of schools. Each site functions as a community center housing the different programs offered by the CBO.

Site 1. Located minutes from the airport, Site 1 opened in 1999, and is housed in a relatively new community center building in a 326-unit apartment complex, that is managed by the county housing authority. The building is nestled in the middle of one set of buildings, surrounded by green lawn on two sides, with a fairly new playground structure atop child-safe material just outside the entrance to the building. Among the signs on the entrance to the building is one that says “All are welcome here” in multiple languages, along with ELL class information. Other than the welcome sign, signage changes regularly, depending on what programs and activities the site is trying to publicize.

When you walk into the building, you enter the reception area, where the Site Manager’s desk is centrally located, and surrounding the desk is a copy machine, a fax machine, a table with various brochures and flyers offering information about site programs and activities, along with various services and resources in the community, such as healthcare, domestic violence support, and education and training programs. Along one wall in the reception area are two computers for community members to use. Another wall is essentially a large bulletin board with monthly program and activity schedules, along with various flyers providing information about specific

programs or activities at the site, programs and activities of interest in the community, and agencies, services and resources in the community. There is also an entrance along this wall to a small kitchen. Each of two other walls are made up primarily of large windows that look into each of the rooms where programs take place—a larger room where the early learning, after school and ELL programs happen, and a smaller room for the youth program.

The larger program room is a well-lit, spacious area painted in a soft yellow color, with sliding glass doors and large windows that look out on one of the grassy areas and apartments making up one wall; a white board and bulletin board covering part of another wall; and student work on the remaining walls and bulletin board. Depending on the set up for that particular day, a number of tables and chairs fill the central part of the room, along with the Academic Coordinator's desk in one corner, a couple of computers, a piano, television set, bookshelves filled with fiction and nonfiction books at various reading levels, and a children's play area with a small carpet, kitchenette, small table and chairs, and various educational toys, such as puzzles, items for building things and imaginary play items. Near the children's play area are shelves with a variety of school supplies, including paper, pencils, pens, markers, crayons and others. Off this main room are two separate bathrooms for children and adults to use, although one includes accommodations for young children, such as a step stool.

The smaller program room is also painted yellow, but a brighter yellow, and it has one wall of windows that look out onto another grassy area and apartments, and a large white board and bulletin board covering another wall. Although this room has less actual wall space, it also is covered with student work, along with program information for students, and program and site rules and norms. This room has a few tables in the center with chairs, and along the walls are computers and the Youth Coordinator's desk.

The two remaining rooms in the building are the kitchen and the Family Advocate's office. The kitchen has a refrigerator, microwave and dishwasher, along with cupboards full of cups and dishes, and shelves stocked full of snack foods for the children and youth programs. The office is painted a powder blue and has the Family Advocate's desk, file cabinets filled with information about program participants and their families, two comfortable chairs that face one another, and a small children's play area with a little carpet and some toys. Much like the other

rooms in the building, one wall in the office is made up of a large window that looks out onto a grassy area and apartments.

On the back side of the building, with a separate entrance, is a laundry facility for residents. In addition, there is a clothing bank on the premises, housed in a separate building from the CBO site, but CBO site staff have access to the bank and can open it and make it available to residents as needed. Because the apartment complex is located very close to the airport, on one side you find airport parking lots and hotels, along with a light rail train station and access to various bus lines. There is also a convenience store and some other small businesses down the street. On the other side, however, is a neighborhood made up of houses and apartment buildings, and a few blocks away is the elementary school, which many students living in the complex attend.

The apartment complex where the site is located has residents representing many different nationalities and cultures, and over 50 languages are spoken. A lot of residents are Latino, but the community has become increasingly diverse over the years. For example, at the time the study was conducted, a number of residents came from various East African countries, including Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia, and others came from different parts of Asia, including Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Russia. At the time the study was conducted, this particular site employed a Site Manager (who was also managing another site), a Family Advocate/Community Developer, an Academic/Early Learning Coordinator, and a Youth Coordinator. The site also employed tutors, some of whom reside in the apartment complex, to help support students in the After School Program. Further, the site qualified for an Americorp volunteer, who also supported students in the After School Program and helped develop curriculum and teach the early learning program.

Site 2. At the time the study was conducted, Site 2, which had opened in 1993, was the organization's largest family center, housed in four apartment units in one of the largest complexes in the area, a 543-unit complex. The CBO linked these apartments, all located in one 4-unit, 2-story building, converting them into classrooms, computer labs and family meeting areas. The building is centrally located in the complex, with an adjacent garden and playground on either side. It also has grassy areas outside the facilities, but one side borders the road that runs through the complex. Posted to the outside of the building is a sign with the CBO's name.

The entrance to the building is on the first floor, as are two classrooms used for the After School Program and adult programs, like the Women’s Group and the ELL class. The entry hall is a deep red color—both the walls and the carpet—and does not have the bright new feeling that Site 1 has, but once you enter each of the four spaces, they have a warm, comfortable feel. Each space formerly had been a small apartment, so each has a larger main room, a kitchen, a bathroom and two additional smaller rooms. All rooms used for programs have student work on the walls, along with program and site rules and norms, and the main room in each of the spaces below are set up like classrooms with tables and chairs and a white board.

A stairway in the entry hall leads to the two upstairs spaces, one former apartment is used for the youth program, while the other is used as office space and a staff room. Both spaces have the same layout as those downstairs. While the main youth room on the second floor has a white board as well, it is set up more like a lounge than a classroom, with couches and a large coffee table. The spaces that house the programs for the youth and the older students in the After School program (4th-6th graders) both have a computer room with two or more computers, while the space that houses the early learning and younger afterschool students use that room as a place to read. The other smaller room in each space is used as an office for Academic and Youth Coordinators. Each kitchen is stocked with dishes, utensils, drinks and snacks for the kids to use and eat during programs, as well as for family events.

In the main office space, the larger room is the reception area, with two desks for two Family Advocates and some seating. The Site Manager/Family Advocate uses one of the smaller rooms as her office, and the Community Developer/Family Advocate uses the other. In each of these rooms, there is a desk and some seating. The kitchen functions as a staff room.

A driveway runs through the whole length of the apartment complex bordered by apartment buildings of different sizes, ending in a cul-de-sac. At the entrance are some medical facilities, a gas station, and some small businesses. The complex is near a relatively busy thoroughfare with additional businesses, other low-income apartment complexes and bus lines.

The majority of residents living in this apartment complex are Latino. In addition, there is a large population of indigenous Mexican immigrants, known as Purépecha, whose people and language date back to Aztec time. Like Site 1, however, there have been an increasing number of

immigrants from other countries, such as Iraq, Burma, and Somalia. At the time the study was conducted, this site employed a Site Manager/Family Advocate, a Community Developer/Family Advocate, two additional Family Advocates, two Academic Coordinators and a Youth Coordinator. The site also employed tutors, one of whom lived in the apartment complex herself, to help support students in the After School and Youth Programs.

Site 3. The newest CBO site, Site 3, is located in a 200-unit apartment complex, and was opened in 2008. At the time of the study, Site 3 was also housed in a building, formerly made up of three apartment units, which the CBO converted into classrooms, meeting rooms and offices. This apartment complex has multiple, large two-story buildings adjacent to different parking lots off a main driveway. Although the description of the complex makes it sound like high end living, offering amenities that include “[b]alconies/patios, swimming pool, sports court, children’s play area, sauna, hot tub, community clubhouse (with kitchen), [and] laundry facilities,”⁵ like all of the CBO sites, this is a low-income apartment complex.

A deep red-colored entry hall leads to the two spaces on the main floor, although unlike Site 2, there is no stairway. One of these two spaces is used for the Youth Program and the Academic and Youth Coordinators’ office. The main room has computers, tables and chairs, bookshelves, and student work on the walls, along with program activity calendars and information flyers. The office space has two desks and a couch, and like the other sites, the kitchen is stocked with dishes, utensils, drinks and snacks for the kids and families.⁶

The other space also has a stocked kitchen, a meeting space with a couch, a couple of chairs and a table, an office shared by the Family Advocate and Site Manager with two desks and some additional seating, and a bathroom. This space functions as the reception area, as well as a location for various programs and events, such as the Women’s Group. Although the third space is in the same building, the entrance is down some stairs and around to the side of the building. This space, used for the After School Program and early learning program, has a main room with a large table and chairs, a stocked kitchen, and a computer room with quite a few computers.

⁵ Quote from the county housing authority webpage describing the apartment complex.

⁶ This site is now in a brand new community center building, similar to site 1, which was built by the county housing authority.

Like the other site's program spaces, the main room, in particular, has a lot of student work up on the walls, along with program and site rules and norms.

This apartment complex is located off a small street that winds down from a larger main street with a fair amount of traffic, and some bus lines, but not a lot of businesses. There are some health clinics and other small businesses spread out along a stretch of the road, but it is not a high density business district – it feels more suburban and almost rural with a lot of space, some grassy and some dense with trees, between housing and small businesses.

Most of the people living in this complex, like Site 2, are Latino, but there are also Caucasian and African-American families, and a few Arabic-speaking families. At the time of the study, the site employed a Site Manager (shared with Site 1), a Family Advocate/Community Developer, an Academic Coordinator and a Youth Coordinator. Like the others, this site also employs tutors from the community to support students in the After School Program.

Site 4. At the time of the study, Site 4 was housed in a 98-unit apartment complex, located at a busy intersection, and it had been there since 2004. Prior to that, the site had been located at a different apartment complex, one that ended up being condemned. In fact, the prior site had been the original CBO site at the time of the organization's founding described above. Unlike the other sites, this complex is a series of large buildings that form a square around a playground area and parking lot, with parking along the outside of the building as well. This site is centrally located in the complex, on the second floor of one of the buildings.

The site space is made up of a large main room, a slightly smaller room, a stocked kitchen, two small rooms, and a bathroom. The large main room has small tables and chairs, books and school supplies, with various student work on the walls. It is used for the After School Program. The slightly smaller room has a large table and chairs, along with a couch, and is used for the Youth Program. The Family Advocate and Youth Coordinator share one of the offices, where they each have a desk and additional seating. The Site Manager and Academic Coordinator share the other office, which also has two desks and additional seating.

Like the other sites, a large population of Latino residents lived in the apartment complex at the time of the study, along with some Cambodian and Caucasian families, and a couple families from Iraq. The complex used to house a lot of Vietnamese families, but most, if not all

of them, moved away. During the study, the site employed a Site Manager (initially shared with Site 3, and then shared with Site 2), a Family Advocate, an Academic Coordinator and a Community Developer, who also served as a Youth Coordinator.

Participant Selection and Information

To get a variety of views and perspectives, along with a sense of the range of work that the organization does, staff members from each site were strategically and purposefully selected and asked to participate in the study (Glesne, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1999). Because I wanted to understand the perspective of people in management positions at the site level, I asked the Site Managers to participate. In addition, because the study and research questions focus on the work the CBO does with families and schools, I felt it was important to speak with people at each site who deal directly with families and schools on a regular basis, such as the Family Advocates. Therefore, I invited at least one Family Advocate, depending on the site and on each person's responsibilities, to participate. Because I was interested in how the organization was building relationships among community members, I also invited Community Developers from two of the sites to participate.

This is a single case study, as opposed to a comparative case study. Therefore, I was not concerned about gathering similar data from each site in order to compare across sites. Rather I collected different kinds of data from each of the sites, which ultimately cohered to provide the bigger picture of the work of the organization. This is why I decided to focus on one particular student program at each site. At Site 1 I focused on the After School Program and early learning program, at Site 3 I focused on the After School Program, and at Site 2 and Site 4 I focused on the Youth Programs. Therefore, I only included the Coordinator for the particular program I was studying at each site—the Academic/Early Learning Coordinator at Site 1, the Youth Coordinator at Site 2, the Academic Coordinator at Site 3 and the Youth Coordinator at Site 4.

As further means for gaining an understanding of the big picture of the work, I used a similar filter when selecting schools and school staff to invite to participate. In the process of identifying school participants, I used a snowball sampling method, whereby, I obtained potential school participant names from Academic and Youth Coordinators by asking them who

they worked with at schools and who would be able to reflect on their work and the CBO's work with schools (Glesne, 2006). I also used a similar method to identify family participants. I shared my criteria for family participants with Site Managers and Family Advocates at each site and asked them to suggest potential family participants. Primary criteria for selecting families included: high level of participation in CBO programs and use of CBO services; arrival in the U.S. within the last 10 years; and willingness to participate and share experiences.

In addition to identifying participants who had experiences relevant to the study (i.e., involvement with the CBO and its programs and engaging with schools or communities – depending on the position of participant), I also identified and selected participants who were able to articulate their experiences, either directly or through a translator, and who were willing to speak with me and be observed in the context of this work. Participation was voluntary, and all necessary permission was secured.

In sum, study participants⁷ included five adult family members from the communities served by the four sites. This group included four Latina mothers, each living near a different site. It also included one adult son who attended the interview with his mother and then agreed to a separate interview to discuss his own experiences with the CBO. Staff members from each of the four sites also participated, including the Family Advocate/Community Developer and Academic Coordinator/Early Learning Coordinator from Site 1; the Site Manager overseeing Sites 1 and 3; the Family Advocate/Site Manager, Community Developer/Family Advocate, and Youth Coordinator from Site 2; the Family Advocate and Academic Coordinator from Site 3; and the Family Advocate and Youth Coordinator from Site 4. Staff from four different schools working with the CBO also participated. This group includes the principal and an ELL teacher from an elementary school working with Site 1; the principal and a 5th grade teacher from an elementary school working with Site 3; and the principal and an ELL teacher from a middle school and two ELL teachers from a high school, all working with Site 2. (See Tables 3.1-3.4 below for additional information).

⁷ All names are pseudonyms.

Table 3.1. Family Member Participant Information

Participant	Background	Children	Family CBO Participation	CBO Site(s)	School Engagement
Carolina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latina mother originally from Mexico • Resident for 3 yrs • Moved to complex w/prior neighbors - cheaper & had programs for children • Learned about CBO from friends • Had to move to other complex temporarily due to apt fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Son (13 yrs) has participated, but not at time of interview • Son (8 yrs) in ASP • Son (7 yrs) waiting list ASP program • Daughter (5 yrs) in ASP • Daughter (3 yrs) waiting list Early Learning Prog (ELP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Advocacy • After School Program (ASP) • Women’s Group • Strengthening Families • Use of amenities, i.e. fax & copy machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site 1 • Site 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers at Washington ES and children’s elementary school • Attends PTA meetings at children’s elementary school • Attends events at child’s middle school • Participated in children’s elementary school summer family project
Alina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latina mother originally from Mexico • Moved to U.S. b/c husband got sick & mother helped them get care • Moved to apt complex 10 yrs ago b/c sister lived there • Mother had lived there for 25-30 years and volunteered at CBO • Learned about CBO from sister/mother • Alina’s son 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Son (19 yrs) participated in ASP, YP and worked as tutor for ASP for 2 yrs (see below) • Son (15 yrs) participated in ASP & now in YP • Son (6 yrs) not participating- does not qualify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Advocacy • After School Program • Youth Program (YP) • English Class • Family Events 	Site 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attends conferences/ meetings with teachers at all children’s schools • Has met with son’s advisor at Kennedy HS • Volunteers at youngest child’s elementary school
José*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved to U.S. at age 9 & started school in the 4th Grade • Got a soccer scholarship to 4-yr college, but got injured • Currently attending community college 	NA	• See above	Site 2	Volunteers at brother’s elementary school
Susana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latina mother • Moved to complex 2 yrs ago b/c brother lived there • Learned about CBO b/c daughter met CBO staff member when playing outside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daughter (11 yrs) in ASP • Son (5 yrs) not participating – attached to mother • Son (3 yrs) comes to ELP w/mother 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Advocacy • After School Program • Women’s Group • Community Workshops • English Class • Early Learning Program 	Site 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attends mtgs/events at Jefferson ES • Contacted by teacher when issue w/daughter • Met w/principal at Jefferson ES to request daughter be moved to another classroom • Communicates often w/son’s Spanish-speaking teacher
Raina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latina mother • Moved to complex 8 years ago b/c brother-in-law lived there • Learned about the CBO through flyers, neighbors & open house 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Son (17 yrs) participated in ASP & now in YP • Daughter (13 yrs) participated in ASP & now in YP • Daughter (12 yrs) in ASP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Advocacy • After School Program • Youth Program • Family Events • Volunteers during events/ activities 	Site 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates with teachers-all schools • Frequently met with oldest son’s MS teachers re: problems • Attends meetings at daughter’s MS • Attends conferences at ES & MS • Used to go to family events at MS, but schedule won’t allow now

Table 3.2. CBO Site Participant Information

Participant	Role(s)	Background Information	Language(s) Spoken	CBO Program Responsibilities	Site(s)
Valerie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Advocate Community Developer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latina originally from Mexico Prior to starting at CBO (2007) worked for educ svc dist (6 yrs) as facilitator-trained parents to train other parents in early literacy (3 yrs) and connected HeadStart families w/culturally competent dentists/educated dentists/parents to improve services (3 yrs) Learned about CBO through volunteering for CBO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spanish English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help connect families to resources/meet needs Advocate/translate for families Plan/coordinate/lead Women’s Group activities Partner with ELPs in area Develop/promote/coordinate community events Support other CBO programs Complete paperwork for funding 	Site 1
Erin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Coordinator Early Learning Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to starting work at CBO site in 2008, graduated from college and worked as an Americorp volunteer for a pedestrian advocacy organization and then worked part-time for one year at Site 4 as the AC’s assistant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop/coordinate/implement ASP Hire/supervise ASP tutors Develop/coordinate/implement ELP Communicate w/families-home visits/informally Communicate/work with school staff Coordinate family events Ensure that families have school info Complete paperwork for funding 	Site 1
Kristine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earned MSW in June 2010 in Community-centered Integrated Practice with background in environmental ed/youth development, Started at CBO in September 2010 as Site Manager (SM) & Community Developer of Site 1 (PT-32 hrs) In May 2011 became SM of Site 1 & Site 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Minimal Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee & support site operations& programs Supervise & support staff Manage site budget Ensure that paperwork for funding is completed Provide general support for families & community Communicate info between admin & staff Advocate for staff Meet with community partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site 1 Site 3
Lila*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site Manager Family Advocate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latina mother orig from Mexico-lived in apt complex served by site & learned about CBO thru staff posting flyers about ELP Participated in ELP w/daughter & volunteered at CBO In 2000 asked to participate in CBO training to become Capacitadora & hired by CBO for 10 hrs/wk In 2001 husband laid off-CBO increased hrs to 30/wk - she started assisting in ASP-2 yrs later became FT FA CBO created new SM position, & asked her to do it-3rd time (2009) she agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spanish English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee/support site operations & programs Supervise/support staff Manage site budget Ensure paperwork for funding is completed Communicate info between admin & staff Work with specific group of families w/ children in ASP to help them meet needs Communicate/work with school staff Ensure that families have school info Advocate/translate for families 	Site 2

* Indicates that participant’s story is described in greater detail in a chapter vignette.

Participant	Role(s)	Background Information	Language(s) Spoken	CBO Program Responsibilities	Site(s)
Sam	• Youth Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of Japanese descent, but originally from Brazil. • Moved to Southern CA in 6th grade and then Chicago before coming to Northwest for college. • Graduated from college in 2004 and worked as an Americorp volunteer and with the Catholic Community Center, along with various jobs before starting to work at CBO in 2008. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portuguese • English • Some Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/coordinate/implement YP • Hire/supervise YP tutors • Coordinate YP volunteers • Communicate w/families • Communicate/work with school staff • Advocate for families • Coordinate family events • Complete paperwork for funding • Plan/coordinate/lead Women's Group activities 	Site 2
Natalia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Developer • Family Advocate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latina mother orig from Mexico, where worked w/her father, Director of a human rights organization • Lived in apt complex served by site • Prior to working at CBO worked for Latino-serving org facilitating Women's Group at CBO site-eventually recruited in 2005. • Kids participated in CBO programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish • English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/promote/coordinate community events • Develop/implement ELP • Connect families with resources • Help connect families to resources/meet needs • Advocate/translate for families • Complete paperwork for funding • Help connect families to resources/meet needs 	Site 2
Cassandra	• Family Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latina mother originally from... • Prior to working at the CBO worked at an elementary school for 6 yrs as an office aid and playground supervisor (part of that time Valerie-see below-was principal) before being recruited by CBO ED/Founder. • Didn't take offer at first, but eventually did in 2008. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish • English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan/coordinate/lead Women's Group activities • Develop/coordinate/implement ELP • Communicate/work with school staff • Ensure that families have school info • Complete paperwork for funding 	Site 3
Carol	• Academic Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before starting as AC, worked as an Americorp volunteer at Site 1, then substituted for AC at Site 1 for 2 months before working at a beverage distribution company briefly • After getting laid off in 2008, she approached the CBO's Program Director to inquire about jobs, and Site 3 was just about to open and in need of an AC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Minimal Spanish • Minimal Tagalog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/coordinate/implement ASP • Hire/supervise ASP tutors • Communicate w/ prog families about students • Communicate/work with school staff • Help ensure families have school info • Complete paperwork for funding 	Site 3
Letitia	• Family Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latina • Prior to CBO, worked as family support specialist in cases that had to do with Children Protection Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish • English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help connect families to resources/meet needs • Advocate/translate for families • Support other CBO programs • Complete paperwork for funding 	Site 4
Eva	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Developer • Youth Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studied to be nurse, did year of community service w/Mayor & hired by CBO site as CD (site's 1st year) • Within 1st year, CBO began providing services for teens, YP created, & she became the YC too. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/promote/coordinate family & community meetings/events • Develop/coordinate/implement YP • Communicate/work with families & school staff • Advocate for students • Complete paperwork for funding 	Site 4

Table 3.3. School Participant Information

Participant	Role(s)	Background	School	CBO Site(s)
Kathy	Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New to school in the 2010-2011 school year • Prior to being appointed to position, worked at another ES in district that faced similar issues as WES for 4 years 	Washington Elementary School	Site 1
Susan	ELL Facilitator/ Interventionist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started working at WES in 2007 • Taught ELL students from 1st-6th grades as general ed classroom teacher prior to current position, which began in the 2011-2012 school year • Started position in 2006 	Washington Elementary School	Site 1
Ray	Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started as teacher in dist, transitioned to Educ Asst (like VP) at ES (2 yrs), then at MHS, then AP in diff district (1 yr) prior to starting at JES. • Completed a MA in Teaching prior to starting position at JES in 2004. 	Jefferson Elementary School	Site 3
Chloe	5 th Grade Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Coordinator for university-school partnership-provides professional development and financial support (\$4000 used for leveled library) • Started this position in 2006 	Jefferson Elementary School	Site 3
Veronica*	Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 yrs experience as principal (2 ES before MS) & worked as teacher w/CBO founder • Started sheltered ELL prog at ES-asked to come to MS to start prog there. • Completed a degree in ESL 	Madison Middle School	Site 2
Kayla	ELL Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started at MMS in 2007 & worked as PE/Health teacher for 3 yrs • As ELL teacher, works with beginning level ELL students new to country 	Madison Middle School	Site 2
Jacquelyn	Math, ELL & AVID Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started at MHS in 2006-teaches 9th grade/math to beginning ELL students • Prior to working at MHS taught in Mexico at International School for a year, & then taught 7th & 8th grade & 8th grade French at a MS in district. 	Monroe High School	Site 2
Kara	ELL Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started working at MHS in 1997, and teaches lowest ELL groups (B1 & B2) & co-teaches U.S. History w/ELL students in classes. • Prior to KHS, taught at another HS in the district 	Monroe High School	Site 2

Table 3.4. CBO Administration Participant Information

Participant	Role(s)	Background	Responsibilities
Juliana	Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed to ED position in 2012 • Latina mother-lives in city where CBO admin office located & has children in district served by sites • Served on CBO board from 2007-2011, when appointed to be interim ED. • 20 years of management experience in the private sector and in local government, serving as city management analyst, policy advisor, legislative analyst, project manager & technology professional. • Appointed as commissioner to the state Commission on Hispanic Affairs in 2012. • Actively participates in district equity workgroup and w/various youth groups. • Previously, served on Advisory Committee to Latinos for Community Transformation and participated on the Latino Community Fund Grant Committees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseeing CBO operations • Supervising admin staff • Strategic planning • Working with board • Fundraising

Data Collection Strategies

I gathered data for this study primarily from October 2010 through February 2012, and I conducted the final interview with the Executive Director in November 2012. To avoid relying on a single source of evidence, broaden the evidentiary base, provide the opportunity to triangulate data, and contribute to the trustworthiness of the data, this case study relied on a variety of data sources and methods for data collection (Glesne, 2006; Yin, 2006). As with all qualitative research, I acted as the main research instrument, observing, asking questions and interacting with study participants, in other words, gathering data using ethnographic field methods (Glesne, 2006). The following methods were enlisted

- Semi-structured interviews with adult family members, CBO site staff, school staff, and the Executive Director of the CBO
- Informal conversations with CBO site staff
- Observations of meetings, events, workshops and programs
- Artifact analysis of school, CBO and parent/community meeting agendas/handouts, communication documents, organization information (i.e., mission, strategic planning, etc.), and program descriptions/information

These data sources yielded information about research questions and sub-questions. (See Appendix B).

Semi-structured interviews. Primary data was collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews in order to gain understanding of participants' experiences in their own words, allowing me to engage with participants in *conversations with purpose* (Merriam, 1998). Open-ended questions and probes were designed to elicit stories and reflections from participants about their experiences with and understanding of the CBO, families and/or schools (Auerbach, 2007). Additionally, these interviews allowed me to "respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). Interviews also provided clarifying information regarding issues I could not observe, and they helped me develop a better understanding of what I did observe (Glesne, 2006). In brief, the interviews helped me capture the families' experiences with the CBO and the schools, the school's

perspective on their work with families and the CBO, and how the CBO approaches their work with families and schools, including what supports they have and the challenges they face.

Individual interviews were conducted with five adult family members from four different families, each family living in one of the apartment complexes served by the CBO. Four of the family members were mothers, all of whom were Spanish-speaking; therefore, all interviews were translated in real-time by hired interpreters, audiotaped, and transcribed in English. The fifth family member was an adult son of one of the mothers, who had initially come to the interview I conducted with his mother. During that interview, I learned that he had participated in programs at the CBO programs when he was in elementary and secondary school—at the time of the interview, he was attending community college. I asked if he would be interested in being interviewed for the study, to which he responded positively. Therefore, I conducted a separate interview with him about his and his family's experiences with the CBO and schools. I conducted his interview in English without an interpreter because he was fluent in English. I also conducted one interview with each of the ten site staff member participants, and two interviews with four of them. I conducted individual interviews with the principals of three of the four participating schools—two elementary and one middle school. The high school principal had just started at the school that year and had not heard of the CBO, so he was not included as a participant, even though staff from his school participated. I also conducted interviews with one to two teachers at each school—one elementary ELL teacher, a fifth grade teacher, a middle school ELL teacher, and two high school ELL teachers. Finally, I interviewed the current Executive Director, who was appointed toward the end of the study.

Observations. Observations served as a means for gathering firsthand information about the work that the CBO does with families and schools (Merriam, 1998). I used observation guides, based on my research questions and conceptual framework. In brief, the observations offered a way to document how the CBO interacted with families and schools, how school staff members interacted with families and the CBO, aspects of school cultures, and how/how often families interacted with the CBO and the schools.

My observations ranged across the participant observation continuum from mostly observation to mostly participation (Glesne, 2006). At times I conducted observations in an *observer as participant* role, speaking only minimally to those I was observing (Glesne, 2006).

Other times, I was working as a volunteer and participating in what I was observing, operating in more of a participant as observer role (Glesne, 2006). In these situations, I had to be aware of the potential to lose the perspective of the uninvolved outsider, while capitalizing on the increased potential for learning (Glesne, 2006).

I observed programs and events at each of the four sites. In the *observer as participant* role, I observed an open house for After School Program families at the beginning of the year at Site 2; a parent focus group conducted at Site 1 by a local coalition focused on college access for all students; a parent-teacher meeting at a middle school attended by the Site 4 Family Advocate, Raina and her daughter; the After School program at Site 3; the Youth Program at Site 4; and the Youth Program at Site 2. I also observed various programs and events at Site 1 in the *observer as participant* role. As a weekly volunteer in the adult ELL class at that site, I conducted regular informal observations as I participated in the work of the organization as a volunteer TA. This was also the case when I led a weekly adult computer lab at the same site, something I did during certain school terms throughout the study's duration.

Documents. Collected artifacts provided descriptive information, helped verify emerging hypotheses, advanced new categories and hypotheses, and offered historical understanding (Merriam, 1998). Specific artifacts, collected early in the data collection process, were used to develop a picture of the working context, and to corroborate what the interviewees told me. Documents were requested and gathered throughout the data collection process to continually triangulate data acquired through interviews and observations. Artifacts also provided additional information not garnered through interviews and observations. They included CBO site program calendars, flyers and brochures with information about programs, events and activities at sites, schools and/or in the greater community; local newspaper articles; CBO, school, district, and county housing authority website information; CBO strategic process documentation, focus group, survey responses and meeting minutes; CBO annual reports, newsletters and fact sheets; CBO job postings; handouts disseminated during observed meetings, programs and workshops; and brochures and pamphlets promoting various resources and services in the community. Flyers and documents promoting or advertising CBO programs, events and activities for community members generally included information in English and Spanish.

Approach to Analysis

Data analysis occurred throughout the study, in multiple rounds of analytic work that examined *within-site* meanings of the data from each CBO site, while developing and substantiating *cross-site* claims (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The first round focused specifically on data collected from Site 1, the site with which I had the most familiarity and access due to the fact that I was a volunteer there. Using first a social capital development framework, I analyzed the site's cultural brokering work with families and schools, and how it reflected a social capital development process. In doing so, I realized the extent to which social and cultural capital development are integrated, and thus incorporated cultural capital development and application into what resulted in a sociocultural capital development framework. The next round built on this analysis, by drawing on the results of the first round and examining how the cultural brokering work at Site 2 fit into the sociocultural capital development framework. The last two rounds focused on the remaining two sites, respectively, and mirrored the second round, creating a comprehensive, cross-site picture of the sociocultural capital development process enlisted by the CBO, including common patterns and divergences between within-site patterns. Throughout the process, I treated the CBO site as the primary unit of analysis, and within that organizational entity, cultural brokering as a frequent analytic unit.

Various techniques were used during the analytic process to help interrogate, systematically explore, and make sense of the data, as well as to generate meaning. One such technique was the use of constant comparative methods—returning to the data as insights developed and constructs changed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Another strategy was the use of metaphors, which Miles and Huberman (1994) describe as data-reducing devices that “have an immense and central place in the development of theory” (p. 250), and can help clarify arguments and explain puzzles. Narrative vignettes offered another method for highlighting social action and meaning and grounding abstract analytic concepts in concrete examples (Erickson, 1986). Analytic memo writing also played an important role in 1) understanding how the data collected related and spoke to the research questions; and 2) keeping my own biases and positionality in check. Theoretical sampling—collecting additional data to clarify ideas, decide how they fit together and develop emergent theories—stemmed from memo-writing (Charmaz, 1995). I also enlisted feedback and critique from peers and my advisor throughout analysis.

The formal analysis of interviews, observations and artifacts, using NVivo 9 qualitative data analysis software, involved a combination of both open and focused coding methods (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). To condense the data into analyzable units, I generated concepts from and with my data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Research questions provided a lens for the notation of ideas and themes, as well as for code generation while reading transcripts, fieldnotes, and artifacts (Emerson et al., 1995). This led to organizing and grouping data by theme and relationship to other data, moving from general to specific themes and vice versa, in order to understand the phenomenon being studied (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Throughout the process, I looked for patterns, themes, and regularities, along with contrasts, paradoxes and irregularities. I also revised as necessary to better capture the data most conducive to answering the research questions. Data displays, such as diagrams, matrices, and maps of codes, were enlisted as means for organizing data and making it accessible for reading and exploring (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Some themes were subsumed by others, renamed or dropped entirely.

The coding process led to constructing an analytic memo of the sociocultural capital development process enlisted by the CBO sites. Portrayed in the memo were the cultural brokering activities of the CBO sites, with the primary organizer being the sociocultural capital framework, generated and adapted from the social and cultural capital literature. This was organized and refined with each ensuing round of coding, ultimately building a comprehensive picture of how the CBO's cultural brokering work reflected a sociocultural capital development process, and the different components of that process.

Having generated a framework that captures how the various inputs and cultural brokering activities of the CBO work together to develop sociocultural capital within the communities the sites serve, I then explored emerging patterns and possible hunches that spoke to how the CBO builds on the development process and works to extend and activate the community's sociocultural capital. This process resulted in an analytic outline, eventually refined into the outline for the first two findings chapters of this study, which clustered cross-site patterns around central themes relating to the research questions. The analysis then proceeded by analyzing the data through a different lens to gain understanding of underlying contextual factors that both contribute to, and create barriers to, the cultural brokering work, and ultimately to the development, extension and activation of sociocultural capital. This resulted in a separate

analytic outline, subsequently fine-tuned into the third findings chapter. Work then continued in analytic subgroups, which resulted in chapter-length analyses of the major themes in each analytical outline. These analyses drew on material from memos, originally coded data, and data coded using synthesized and targeting coding based on emerging themes. Chapters were then drafted and merged into an overall working draft, which was reviewed for accurate representation, possible disconfirming evidence, and the existence of triangulating evidence.

Limitations in the Research Design

No research design exists without some limitations. One limitation of this particular study had to do with language differences. Because the study focused on recent immigrant families working with a CBO, some participants did not speak English, which may have limited the extent of knowledge to which I had access. Even though a translator was present in these instances, some information, along with certain subtleties, may have been missed through the translation. Also participants could have felt less comfortable sharing information with me since I did not speak their language fluently, and I do not have the same cultural background.

Another potential limitation had to do with my position and perspective on the organization and its work. I volunteered for the organization for about three years; therefore, I had established relationships with staff members and families whom I interacted with over that time. As a result, I had to be highly aware of and explicit about any potential biases I may have developed, either positive or negative, regarding the organization, families and schools, as well as the work itself. While I had established relationships with staff and families at one of the organization's four sites, which had the potential to make participants, particularly family members, feel more at ease when speaking with me about their experiences, this was not the case for the other three sites.

In my original conception of the study, I had hoped to spend significantly more time with families. That turned out to be difficult for various reasons. One, given the often spontaneous nature of the cultural brokering work the CBO does with families and schools, the time it takes for me to get to the different CBO and school sites, and the fact that my time at most sites was limited to the time arranged between myself and CBO staff, I was unable to be present for a lot

of interactions that may have occurred between CBO staff and families, between CBO staff and school staff, and among all three. In turn, the actual design as it was executed went fairly light on family members' perspectives, which was primarily limited to formal interviews. Instead the resulting study primarily focused on the CBO's perspective.

The original design also called for following particular families at length to understand the details and nuances of the work with regard to four different families. This was not the way the actual design transpired, limiting the extent to which I could develop this kind of deeper understanding of the cultural brokering work, particularly with regard to specific outcomes of the work. In other words, this shift in the design made it difficult to get at the impacts of the CBO's cultural brokering work.

A final limitation that made the data collection process a bit less than optimal was the fact that the CBO was in a time of flux and change during the duration of data collection. Various forces, including extensive organizational leadership transition and the economic downturn, were at work, creating some barriers.

Chapter 4

Developing Sociocultural Capital Within the Community

The primary thrust of the CBO's work with families and schools focuses on building the necessary infrastructure for success. This involves first working to develop *sociocultural capital* within the community by investing a variety of resources and through various cultural brokering activities. This kind of work involves a process, whereby particular steps are taken.

In doing this work, the CBO seeks to lay the foundation for the work to be done, a topic I take up in the first main section of this chapter. This attempts to establish trust and build relationships with the families that live in the community. Because the sites reside in low-income apartment complexes, many of the families served by each site struggle to meet basic needs. Further, the majority of families in each apartment complex served by the CBO have recently come to the United States; therefore, they are trying to adjust to a new country and a new culture, and most are trying to learn a new language. As a result, another aspect of this step in the process involves meeting families' basic needs. While these efforts work to lay the foundation for the development of sociocultural capital, they also start the process of developing sociocultural capital.

The organization has a number of programs in place that work to further the process along. The next main section of this chapter examines how family members' participation in these programs starts to develop their sociocultural capital by helping them build relationships, academic and cultural knowledge, skills, and experience, all of which contributes to students' ability to be successful in school and life in the United States. A way to begin to understand the CBO's work is to look at the story of one staff member, Lila, who, at the time of data collection, worked as a Site Manager and Family Advocate at Site 2.

Lila's Story:

How a Latina Immigrant Mother

Came to be an Integral Part of the CBO

Lila's story begins much like the stories of the families she serves, as a recent immigrant to the U.S. without much family support and no English skills. She describes how she came to learn about the CBO.

I came to [the CBO] about 12 years ago. I live in this complex and I had my daughter who was kindergarten, and I you know, I'm immigrant, I don't have family, so I just was in my apartment by myself and I saw a lady who was putting up flyers in the doors talking about a program called [Aprendemos]. So I just came and read and this program was for a parenting class for the parents and activity for the kids. So I was not sure because I don't speak English at that time, now also, but at that time nothing. But it was in Spanish so I feel really happy about it.

She goes on to explain how she got involved with the CBO.

So I started in that program and I started to volunteer because I really liked what they do. They have a after school program, so sometimes the teacher need help if they have events with the food or anything. So I just came because I don't have just nothing to do at home, I don't work, I just have my daughter. So I start to volunteer with them. In almost 2000, I think, they start a [program]. This is a program who somebody from Miami they have there, and the program is Abriendo Puertas in Miami. So they pick people from the community and they train them to work in different places. So they bring this program to us, and the person here in [the CBO], they ask me if I want to take this training. So the people from Miami came and gave the training to...it was a group of maybe 20 [women] to take this training [to become Capacitadoras]...

The idea of the Capacitadora here is it was the bridge between the professional and the families. So we were in the middle of that. We help in the process to reach the families and talk with them...So when the families came here we speak the language. We understand the problems that they have because sometimes we have the same problems. So it was just facilitating the process of the family advocacy in the social sense. So they're called the bridge between the families and the schools or the families and the professional here...[W]e spoke only Spanish and just a little English...Actually [the CBO] they pay a teacher for I think a year - they went at the night to my home and my co-workers came to my home and he teach us some English. So it was really, really good. So we start little by little.

At that time, the CBO staff was made up predominantly of English-speaking, Caucasian women, which as Lila recounts, made it difficult for them to reach the predominantly Latino families who lived in the apartment complex. So the CBO decided that those trained through the *Abriendo Puertas* (Opening Doors) program could help the organization engage families, and Lila was hired. She elaborates on how she went from part-time Capacitadora (Trainer) to eventually becoming the full time Site Manager and Family Advocate at the site, including how some of the CBO staffing has evolved over the last 10 years.

[The CBO] know they have a hard time reaching the families because they have the professional, the schools, and the people when they came [the families] feel like a little bit - it's hard when you go to a place that you don't speak the language. You see people who maybe you don't know. So they start to

think it can be a good idea to put the Capacitadoras, us, [to work]. So they open thirty hours for [the Capacitadoras]. So two of my co-workers, who are still here, and myself, we decide instead of one, take the thirty hours, [and] we divide ten, ten and ten so the three of us can do something. So we started with ten hours just in the Capacitadora position. They hire, we start to work, work, work in 2001. I think one year [later] my husband has layoff in his work. So I spoke with one of the persons here and say I need to quit because I need more hours. You know, I have just ten hours. And my husband doesn't have work, so I was thinking to quit this even though I really liked the job, I really need more hours. So they offer me 20 hours more, [and] I start helping the after school program - I was the assistant for that program. So I have 30 hours. So I decide to stay because 30 hours was not really bad. [For] a long time, for two years I think, I was the assistant.

After that, they open a position for Family Advocate, so I say I want to be full-time Family Advocate. Yeah, they gave me the position. So I [had] 40 hours [as] Family Advocate. And it was until last year - last year they start to change. Before we don't have supervisors in each of the sites, we just have [the] supervisor of the staff. But they decide they really need a supervisor [at each] of the sites. [Two] of the sites [already had] a supervisor and here was the only site that we don't have it. They ask me twice and I say no, I don't want to be the supervisor. The last time they told me, "This is the last time, do you want to be a supervisor?" and I say okay. So it was the last year I start being a supervisor here for the site.

In addition to shedding light on how she became an integral part of the CBO, Lila also helps elucidate the role the CBO played in her life as a recent immigrant mother living in the community.

I remember when I [lived] here, like I told you, I don't have family. So I told my daughter sometimes if for any reason you came from the school and I'm not here, because you never know, I say...just go to [the After School Program] and ask somebody. They're going to take care of you. Because I don't have any relative...[Families] really need to feel that this is a safe place for them. This is a safe place for the kids. I think we saw that in the small things...So for me this was a place if I'm not home, it was a place - and I think it's the way that families see this place because we have twice kids who came in crying and say nobody is in my home...We wait here for the parents. [We] call the parent and say nobody's at home, what do you want that we do with the kid? So who else we can call? So this is a safe place for them. I feel good sending my daughter here because I know it was a safe place. I say don't stay out of the apartment, don't stay in the stores. Go to [the After School Program]. And I think it's the way the families saw. So for me that means they think this is a safe place. This is a place where you can trust to bring your kids, you can trust to be calm and see about your problems, about anything.

She also reflects on how her lack of familiarity with the U.S. school system, the unwelcoming environments, and the lack of understanding of and accommodations for Latino parents like her, challenged both her ability and desire to engage and be involved in her daughters' schools, even though she wanted to be involved.

[The relationships between the families here and their schools are] not really good...Our system is different. Like I told you, sometimes you feel you are not welcome. I remember being at one PTA meeting with my daughter, and I'm the kind of parent who [is] really involved in my kid's education. I really like. So I was in one PTA meeting. I was the only Latina. Everybody was white. And when I came to the meeting, everybody talked to me like what are you doing here? It was really bad. It was really bad. I don't understand anyway what they say. So for me it was the first and the last one. So that kind of things make it hard, even though I want to be involved it was hard.

I remember with another daughter being in the middle school, one day they have one event for kids and parents. And what they do was really hard for me because I didn't speak English. So I don't understand what they say. And it was really sad because you can see the parents inside the classroom, and in the hall it was just the Latino. Like we were outside like what are we doing here? It

was really bad. So that kind of things make you feel like why? It's hard for me to be in the school. So I think it's not really good, but it's for that reason I think. When the [schools are] more concerned about who we are working with, how we can do this work better, I think the families [are] going to feel more comfortable to do things. Because we really want to be involved in our kid's education. It's not like we don't want - it's we don't know how.

This chapter will look at how someone like Lila and other people working with her are beginning to address some of the issues she raises by helping develop sociocultural capital within the community.

Laying the Foundation for Sociocultural Capital Development

To understand how the CBO lays the foundation for sociocultural capital development, I searched my data for instances of *trust- and relationship-building efforts* by the CBO staff within the community. Trusting relationships form the basis for social capital, therefore, CBO staff first try to establish trust and then build relationships with the people they are trying to serve. Further, trusting relationships also contribute to the staff's ability to identify existing cultural wealth and develop the cultural capital among the community. If families are unable to meet basic and other essential needs, such as food, clothing and healthcare, among other things, it becomes difficult to be able to participate in the process of sociocultural capital development. Therefore, I also examined the data looking for examples of how the CBO *helps families meet their basic needs*.

Establishing Trust and Building Relationships with the Community

In their work with recent immigrant families, CBO staff try to do whatever they can to convince families that they are trustworthy. Families who are new, or relatively new, to the U.S. may have a number of reasons not to trust people they encounter, particularly in a low-income setting. Family members often do not understand or speak English, they may have experienced trauma in getting to the country and/or back in their home country, they may or may not know anyone in the area, and they may be undocumented. As a result, it is not surprising that families generally tend to feel out the CBO and what it is all about in a gradual way. This means that the

process of establishing trust and relationships within the communities in which they reside can take the CBO staff time, and generally does not happen immediately.

Knowing this, the CBO staff at each site pursues a variety of strategies to build trust with families in their respective communities. First, the CBO *employs a number of Spanish-speaking, Latina staff members* across sites, particularly in Family Advocate positions, which contributes to the CBO's ability to not only communicate with many families, but also to relate to and understand their experiences. CBO staff also work to *get the word out and welcome families* by communicating with community members about the organization and what it offers, and creating a friendly, respectful and trustworthy environment. Once the CBO staff has initiated contact with families, they try to *solidify connections through regular communication* with them, both formal (i.e., home visits, family events) and informal (i.e., phone calls, impromptu conversations). In addition to the aforementioned strategies, and beyond simply creating a welcoming environment for families, CBO staff also make efforts to *create a climate that can function as a "second home" for families*, particularly for students who may come home to empty apartments at the end of the school day, but for parents as well.

Employing Spanish-speaking Latinas as Family Advocates. The Family Advocacy program functions to support families in whatever way they may need, and the Family Advocate at each site does a great deal of work to try to build trust and develop relationships with community members to be able to provide that support. The CBO employs a number of Spanish-speaking Latina staff, like Lila, who work at the different sites, particularly in the Family Advocate positions, where this is the case across sites. This contributes to the ability of each CBO site to develop trust and build relationships with community members because Latin American immigrants make up the majority of residents at most sites. Lila explained that Latino families generally have a higher level of comfort with Spanish-speaking Latina staff than they do with White staff not fluent in Spanish—at least initially:

Well the person who was a Family Advocate, she speak some in Spanish. But you know, she was White, American people, so sometimes the people don't feel really comfortable. So it's very different because they can't tell with us, if anything, we understand very well some things that maybe for the American people it's very different because you share the same culture, you share the same problems.

--Lila (Site Manager & Family Advocate)

Not only does their language and ethnicity help them develop relationships with community members, it also helps them broker relationships between families and other staff members not fluent in Spanish. For example, the Family Advocate will go with program Coordinators on home visits at the beginning and end of each school year. Further, all of the women in this position were at one time new immigrants to the U.S. themselves, and more than one of the Family Advocates used to live in the same apartment complex where she works.

As Lila explained, she began working for the CBO as part of what is called the Capacitadora program, where the CBO hired Latina staff directly from the community to perform similar functions as the Family Advocate (See Lila's Story earlier in the chapter). These Capacitadoras potentially have the ability to connect on a deeper level with Latino families because they not only speak fluent Spanish, but they often share cultures, and have experienced similar problems, so they can genuinely understand and relate to families' experiences and the issues they face. Prior to starting the program, the CBO site found it difficult to get families to come, whereas once the program was in place, they found that they had an increase in the number of families coming to the CBO and participating in programs. The program seemed to help Latino community members feel more comfortable asking the CBO for help, as Lila explained:

[It] was a big difference. They say when the Capacitadora start, [a lot] of families came to [the CBO]. Before it was really hard to really bring the families. So they feel good to come and ask for any help. But after Capacitadora, it was like - from here it was three start when we start. And it was that time when we were here eleven staff for the amount of families that we need to serve. So it was a big, big difference. That's why I started [at the CBO].

--Lila (Site Manager & Family Advocate)

A Family Advocate at another site was a Spanish-speaking Latina immigrant mother, and much like the Capacitadoras, she could also understand and relate to the Latino families living in the community in ways that someone with a different background probably could not. As one Academic Coordinator describes, the Family Advocate she works with, Cassandra, had the language, the cultural background and the experience to empathize with families and their challenges in a very meaningful way.

I think it helps to have [Cassandra] for sure. [She] is just amazing at her job. She has a genuine heart for a person's story. Like a mom will come in here and she'll just be almost to tears, and [Cassandra] will be in tears with her. Like to have someone—not that we all don't feel that way or can't—but because [Cassandra] is fluent in Spanish and can understand a lot of these families and where they're coming from as an immigrant or a mom, she's been really, really great.

--Carol (Academic Coordinator)

Although employing Spanish-speaking Latina staff members, particularly as Family Advocates, helps the organization develop trusting relationships with Latino families in the community, this can also limit their ability to develop similar relationships with immigrants who speak other languages. In fact, it can potentially exclude families that speak a language other than English or Spanish from getting the kind of support they need and participating in the programs offered, as one school principal explained:

I think that they try to tap into all the kids, but the majority of them are Hispanic, and what I wonder about is if there are other groups there, if they feel comfortable because a large—the meetings I've been to [were] all in Spanish. So, if you're not Spanish-speaking—I think they reach out to all, but I'm not sure that they necessarily get all coming.

--Ray (ES Principal)

Speaking Spanish contributes to each CBO's ability to communicate with many families once they come to the site and/or contact site staff, but they also try to get the word out to all families and welcome them.

Getting the word out and welcoming families. Many Family Advocates talked about building trust by getting the message out to community members that the CBO and staff were there and available to help. They also talked about trying to create a welcoming and respectful environment to help families feel comfortable coming to the site and participating in programs. The first step in this process often involved informing families of the CBO's existence and inviting them to participate in programs. CBO staff talked about how they would post flyers, generally in English and Spanish, in various locations in the complex, stating that the CBO is there to help residents and advertising programs and events. These would sometimes elicit phone calls from residents, whereby staff members would describe what the CBO offers in general, or one event or program in particular that was advertised on the flyer.

Face-to-face contact and introductions help build trust and draw families into the CBO. For example, a Family Advocate at one site would walk around the apartment complex where the CBO site is located and knock on doors, introducing herself and inviting people to CBO events or to just come by and see what the organization is all about. In some cases, the cultural norms of families required taking certain steps, such as speaking with the man of the house and explaining a particular program to get his okay so that his wife and children could participate. At times, other CBO staff, not necessarily just the Family Advocate, would walk around the complex and introduce themselves and the CBO to people they encountered, explaining what kinds of services the CBO offers. Although these face-to-face introductions helped some families feel more comfortable with the idea of coming to or sending their children to the CBO to participate in programs or seek support, in some cases, continued reassurance seemed the only way to convince community members that the CBO staff were truly there to help, that they were trustworthy, and that the programs and services were free. A recent immigrant mother recalls:

They had just started [the CBO]. So my daughter went outside to play and she met one of the persons who was working here, [and] they started talking and she told her to help her look for girls, people who speak Spanish, to start, and she was one of the first girls to help her. And she started taking her to where the girls that she knew were, and then they met up here in the court. And I came to see and [Cassandra] said, "Look, this is a program, everything is, don't distrust - it's all trustworthy." [We] started to notice when they arrived, and that's how we came to know about the program... So the first day that they called me from the program, I [didn't necessarily trust them], but as Latinos we're a little bit distrusting, so at first I wasn't very trusting. But then I returned and so what I did, I left my daughter, and I came myself directly to the court, to make sure that it was really something safe. But [Cassandra] did tell me, "Don't worry. It's trustworthy. It's a program. We're not going to do anything to you. And that's how I started gaining trust by me coming to see and making sure with them to ensure with them also.

--Susana (Latina Immigrant Mother)

In addition to introducing themselves and getting the word out about the organization and its services, Family Advocates also work to build trust by making themselves readily available for families when the center is open. In particular, Family Advocates operate under an open-door policy and ensure that community members understand this. They make it clear to families that they are there to help when needed, that no appointment is necessary, and that they will put other things aside when families need their attention and help. This Family Advocate explains:

I think when somebody leave it's difficult that the community trust right away the other person just because you are there. So I think basically [my first] six or seven, six months, was about making it present that the people know I am [available]. So before they have to do kind of appointments to come here...So I say you can take any time. If the door is open, just come straight - you don't have to announce that—in this case with [Kristine], because sometimes they feel scared to say 'Is [Valerie] ...,' especially if they don't speak the language. You say you just came, and if I am with somebody you have time, wait for me. So I think it's something that I've been doing pretty well because people just came. So I think that is great. And I think that it's the thing that opened the doors for me to people really came and feel more confident with me.

--Valerie (Family Advocate & Community Developer)

To continue and sustain their work with families, CBO staff need to make efforts to solidify their connections with families. This often happens through regular communication with families.

Solidifying connections with families through regular communication. Once community members are in the door, so to speak, Family Advocates continue to work on building trust and relationships through their work with families. They have knowledge and information that can help families solve problems, and they provide or connect families with the resources they need. They also make great efforts to let families know that they care about them—taking time to speak with them, listening to them, and providing emotional support. In other words, they create a safe space for families to share personal things with them and get the support and feedback they seek and need, as this Family Advocate puts it:

With this lady I talk a lot about her personal things, I give opinion about things that maybe another professional it's inappropriate. So we have really the relation with the families we really talk about things that maybe another person has a hard time... when you take the time to talk with them, when you listen them. I think it's just building relation through all the work that we do, the normal work. It's like the teacher with the kids. They are building their relation through their program. In the beginning maybe the kids are not very engaged with the teacher, but in the time they're better. So I think it's the same with the families. We provide a service, we respect them, we respect the culture.

--Lila (Site Manager & Family Advocate)

Both program Coordinators and Family Advocates make efforts to reach out to families they have started to get to know in various ways. They call families to see how they are, especially if they have not been to the center in awhile. They also make calls to remind people about upcoming programs and see if they're planning to attend. Like Family Advocates, program

Coordinators do a fair amount of trust- and relationship-building with families. In fact, building trust with families helps optimize their work with students, families and schools. As such, they try to have ongoing communication with families through various means.

- *Informational Events and Meetings.* Families come to the learning center and get information through parent nights (aka open house) at the beginning of the school year. Coordinators and the rest of the staff also host enrollment nights, where families come and enroll their children in programs, and parent meetings to help parents understand the programs and other information they may need about the CBO. They try to keep events and meetings to a limited number so as not to burden families or intrude too much in their lives.
- *Home Visits.* Once students have enrolled in a program, and the program has started, Coordinators, along with Family Advocates, conduct home visits with families in effort to connect with families and get to know them a bit, as well as to get information about students and their home lives that can help them support students. During these visits they meet families and check-in with parents; they discuss the kid(s) and the program to see what parents think so far and how they feel their kids are doing; they share information about students, such as strengths; and they seek parent input regarding the program, how they can help their kids, and what their priorities are for their kids. Coordinators also conduct home visits at the end of each school year. During these visits, they ask parents if the program has helped make any improvements for their children, and whether anything has changed at home.⁸
- *Informal Communication.* Coordinators also communicate regularly with parents on an informal basis. This may happen through phone calls or flyers—informing parents of field trips, program info and events – or when families come to the site to pick up their kids, especially those who have younger children, providing opportunities for Coordinators to say hi, how are you, etc.

As parents get more comfortable, they may initiate conversations and ask how their kids are doing or make program suggestions. One site started a girls group based on a suggestion from a father, as the Academic Coordinator recounts:

[A] dad comes in and he's like you know what you guys should start is like a young women's group. It was his idea to start this women's group. He's like you should teach them to respect themselves and to take care of themselves. And we

⁸ Although many families are amenable to CBO staff coming and doing home visits at their homes, some families can be more difficult to schedule home visits with because their of their schedules or because they do not really want CBO staff in their homes. When this is the case, Coordinators invite families to come to the center and talk to them there. At times, staff may be concerned about home life for one reason or another, so in those cases, they push a bit to try and be able to come to the family's home, but they also know when to back off.

were like yeah, this is great. A dad comes down here and tells us what we should do. And from that we started a girls group. So they shape how we do things. At first it was hard because you were asking these personal questions, like when they fill out the forms to register for the program, we're asking them how much do you make, are you a citizen? Where were you born? Stuff like that. We had families that wouldn't put down their mother's name or their father's name because they were afraid. They wouldn't put down everyone living in the house because they were afraid that we would tell the managers that hey, there's seven people living in this two-room apartment. But because we've been around them, we've been supportive of whatever they want or need they've been more open I think. They're definitely not shy about coming in anymore and asking for help, which is really great because at first we were like gosh, we're here, people aren't coming in. But once we got out there a little more.

--Carol (Academic Coordinator)

Examples of parents feeling comfortable enough to initiate conversations—inquiring about their kids and making suggestions—reflects the effectiveness of Coordinators' efforts to show parents that they care about their kids. Some ways they try to do this is by sharing student work with parents, communicating with students' teachers, following up with parents when something seems to be going on with kids, and showing them that they value their input. One Academic Coordinator explains how she approaches parents:

[I try to establish relationships with families through] home visits, but then I think more than that—I mean you have to have that initial face-to-face contact, but then just demonstrating that you care about their kids has been the most important thing for me. So like when they see the work that the kids are doing, the communication that we're having with teachers, the fact that we follow-up if anything different is happening with the kid and talk to them, ask what's going on at home and how they deal with it. Like if the kid is having behavior issues at school, "Well, how do you deal with this at home and what would you suggest?" and stuff like that. That really helps encourage a sense of dialogue, and the fact that we value that side of things instead of just communicating to talk about problems or just communicating to give advice.

--Erin (Academic Coordinator & Early Learning Coordinator)

To further solidify relationships and support families, the CBO often functions as a second home for students and families—a place where they can feel safe and comfortable.

Creating a "second home" for families. Creating a safe space that functions like a second-home for many families, especially students, both contributes to and reflects the CBO's efforts to build trusting relationships with the community. The more time students spend at the

learning centers as a result of their participation in programs, the more they and their families view the CBO as a safe and secure place for them to go any time, even outside of programs. In fact, parents will encourage kids to go the center if they are not going to be home, as Lila did. Kids will go there on their own when no one is home even if they are not in the scheduled program at that time, and parents will call and check in with staff to see if their kids are there. This school principal recounts his observations while visiting the CBO:

[When] I've gone to [Site 3] for a couple other reasons and this and that, I always see the kids hanging out there. It's a hub for them. It's a nice place—a comfortable, safe place for them. The kids go there, they know each other, it's just—it's kind of their second little home. And so, and they're so excited—any of the staff there—so they're very proud.

--Ray (ES Principal)

This holds true for parents as well. The bonds they develop with Family Advocates, other CBO staff, as well as one another through various CBO programs contributes to not only associating a sense of safety and security with the CBO, but also a sense of trust and comfort. As a result, CBO sites offer a home-like environment for all family members. Instrumental to students and families viewing the CBO sites as “second homes” are the staff’s efforts to help families meet their myriad needs.

Meeting Families’ Basic Needs

To be able to develop the sociocultural capital of and among families, another aspect of the foundation laid by the CBO is ensuring that families have access to basic needs for survival. In helping families meet those needs, the CBO works *to connect families with the resources they need*. They also provide a lot of *translation, interpretation and advocacy services* to help families have the ability to actually access and use the resources that are available. Finally, given that families may have experienced some sort of trauma associated with their immigration to the U.S. and that many experience hardships once living in the U.S., CBO staff also provide *emotional support* to families and family members, particularly women.

Connecting families to resources. Families living in the communities served by CBO sites face many challenges, a major one being financial difficulties. Therefore, the CBO tries to

ensure that families have access to what they need by connecting them with various free resources, such as food and clothing banks. In fact, at least one center has a clothing bank on site. Another basic need that many families have limited, if any, access to is healthcare. This may be due to the fact that they are not employed, or they are employed without healthcare benefits, and many are unaware that they can still access healthcare services. The CBO provides them with the information and support they need to access healthcare. They help families navigate the DSHS system—collecting and sharing information, making phone calls and completing forms. They also make efforts to know about additional resources, such as children’s healthcare programs, medical coupons and free clinics in the area. This recent immigrant mother describes some additional resources that the CBO connects families with:

I come visit almost every day...Well, for example when I need to take care of something or where to look for help. Food banks. Clothing banks. There’s a clothing bank here. I also come for help if I need a lawyer to take care of something for me. For whatever I need taken care of... Yes, [Valerie] helps us with everything. Everyone here helps us a lot. I don’t know what I would do if [Valerie] wasn’t here. Or if [the CBO] didn’t exist...So many people have helped us out a lot here.

--Carolina (Latina Immigrant Mother)

The CBO also provides access to other important resources that help families meet their basic needs. For example, each site has technology and equipment that can be used free of charge by families, including computers and the Internet, fax machines, copy machines and telephones. In addition to providing access to this equipment, staff also help families use the equipment when they are unfamiliar with the technology. Site staff and volunteers help parents navigate the Internet, find job listings and training opportunities, and help with job applications and resumes.

The CBO also provides some transportation for families. Generally, this is on an emergency basis, when family members need to go to a clinic or doctor and have no other way of getting there. They limit this service because they do not have a lot of staff, and they want to ensure that staff members are on-site to greet and help families when they come to the center. However, they do provide transportation for field trips, knowing that many parents do not have cars or do not have schedules that allow them to be available to drive. Further, the CBO helps connect families with community activities and programs, as his Family Advocate explains:

I get information for [families] sometimes. I went [to] get information around here, like classes, the ballet. I went to the library sometimes when I'm free...I go get flyers, the story time in the afternoon for these parents. And I go [to] the community center to get flyers, what is this month or what is next month. That way I have everything—I posted up some outside, but some I have in my game room. That way the parents know. And I pass around to the families the resources around here.

--Cassandra (Family Advocate)

The CBO staff enlists various cultural resources, such as the Spanish-speaking staff, to help families meet their needs. They do this through translating and interpreting for families. They also use cultural resources to advocate for families when needed.

Translating, interpreting and advocating for families. Oftentimes the CBO helps families connect and get access to resources by providing translation or interpretation services. For example, they make calls for family members to insurance companies, hospitals, doctors and dentists. They also may call the police for family members in certain circumstances. They call immigration and other government agencies for families. And of course, they call schools, which will be discussed in more detail later. Families frequently come to the learning centers for help in translating documents, such as official letters from agencies and schools. In addition, CBO staff may go with family members to various places and interpret on site for them. This recent immigrant mother explains how staff have helped her with various translations:

Well, when I send a fax, sometimes far away, and I don't know how to send it. I would come here to send the fax. I can make copies – they read us letters. We've come a few times to have them translate the letters because they were in English. To make phone calls with someone here who knows how to talk to certain people about a problem. They've also helped me with...[Valerie] helped me when there were problems with my move. And now with me returning. There were also problems [with me returning] but she and her husband helped us... arrange certain things with the personnel here at the apartments.

--Carolina (Latina Immigrant Mother)

CBO staff, more often than not the Family Advocates, try to make sure that families' rights are recognized and that they are getting what they need. This can require additional support in the form of advocacy. For example, the Family Advocate may go with family members to the hospital to be sure that they understand the situation and what the hospital staff are telling them, and that they are getting everything they need. Family Advocates may also

provide similar services in a variety of other contexts, such as with the apartment manager or the police. In some cases, the CBO staff member needs to advocate for a particular family or student when there is a situation or issue with another family or student. Advocacy also happens at schools and with school staff, which will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. In addition to supporting families through translating, interpreting and advocacy, CBO staff also provide emotional support to family members.

Providing emotional support. A number of families have experienced and often continue to experience great challenges that may stem from incidents in their home country or refugee camps, things that happened while immigrating to the U.S., and/or current living situations. The CBO does not have counselors on staff, and therefore, does not operate as a counseling service. Nonetheless, they do provide emotional support, particularly the Family Advocates. This seems to be particularly important for women living in the community, as they oftentimes live in isolation and try to deal with all the challenges that come with poverty, a lack of cultural and linguistic understanding, and possibly undocumented status. Family Advocates spoke frequently about being there for the women in the community—to listen and to share opinions or offer feedback when asked. The organization also provides access to emotional support for women through their Women’s Group. Unlike the one-on-one support provided through the Family Advocacy program, support from the Women’s Group comes from the women, including the staff member. More details about the Women’s Group will follow later in the chapter.

Starting to Develop Sociocultural Capital

Building on the foundation of trusting relationships between families and CBO staff, along with families having basic needs met, the organization aims to develop the sociocultural capital within each community. A big goal for this work is empowering students and families so they can grow to depend more on one another and less on the organization. To understand how the CBO attempts to do this work, I combed through my data looking for evidence of how the CBO is *strengthening families and building relationships among community members*, which would indicate CBO efforts to build on and develop social capital within the community. I also searched for examples of how CBO staff is *developing family members’ academic and cultural*

knowledge and skills, which would indicate efforts to build on and extend families' cultural capital. The process of developing sociocultural capital generally occurs through the programs offered at each CBO site, which include early learning programs, elementary and secondary student programs, adult programs and family programs. (Summarized in Table 4.1). Programs provide opportunities for students, parents and other community members to build relationships with one another and strengthen social supports existing in each community.

Strengthening Families and Building Relationships Among Community

Because the CBO hopes to move families toward independence and interdependence, they focus a lot of their work on building relationships within the community and strengthening relations within families. By *educating parents* and *developing family communication and relationship skills* the CBO helps parents develop an understanding of where their children are developmentally and how they can best support them, while providing tools that can help students and parents develop healthy relationships. In addition to the aforementioned strategies, the CBO also tries to move families and communities toward self-sufficiency by *providing opportunities for and encouraging connections among community members*.

Educating parents and developing family communication and relationship skills. One of the aims of the early learning programs that involve parents during program time is to have parents and children spend time together doing educational activities. These programs also try to make connections between the activities in the program and home life, whereby program activities are meant to give parents ideas for things to do with children at home and in other contexts as this Family Advocate explains:

Because it's time for the moms and the kids be together. Because sometimes a few moms told me, [Cassandra], it's good that you have this program, because at home I don't do nothing with my kids—only looking TV or I always washing dishes and busy, busy. And this time is for my kids and I, and this is good, the purpose for this is the moms and kids be together. I prepare everything for them, I do the circle time, but the mommies do the same thing, like make children necklace, that way when I explain that this is very good idea when go to the clinic...

--Cassandra (Family Advocate)

Table 4.1. CBO Program Information⁹

Type	Program	Purpose/Focus	Participants	Enrollment	Activities	Frequency	Sites
Early Learning	World of Colors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten readiness • Relationship- building (children, parents) 	Children (4-5 yrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent referrals • CBO staff referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy • Home Visits 	Twice a week	Site 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Learning • Family 	Aprendemos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building (families, children, parents) • Preschool & Kindergarten readiness • Home-school connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children (3-5 yrs) • Parents 	Students not eligible for Head Start or ECEAP programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent-child projects • Literacy • Social skills • Motor skills • Nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children – twice a week • Parents – twice a month 	Site 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Learning • Family 	Knowledge is Fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship building (families, children, parents) • Preschool & Kindergarten readiness • Home-school connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children (2-5 yrs) • Parents 	Open enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent-child projects • Hygiene • Cultural celebrations • Circle Time 	Parents & children – 1 day/wk	Site 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Student • Family 	Strengthening Families*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • How to work together as a family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children (12-14 yrs) • Parents • 	CBO staff identified families who could benefit from prog & invited to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art projects • Youth development information & strategies 	Once a week for 8 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site 1 • Site 2 • Site 3
Elementary Student	After School Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic support and enrichment • Social skill development • Relationship-building (students, families) • Parent engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children (1st – 3rd grades) • Children (4th – 6th grades) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher/Parent referrals • CBO staff referrals • Open enrollment at one site (prog not full) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework support • Community-building/group work • Art projects • Science Activities • Journal writing • Research skills • Vocabulary development • Field trips 	Each age group meets twice a week.	All
Secondary Student	Youth Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic support and enrichment • Leadership development • Relationship-building (students) • Parent engagement • 	Youth (7 th – 12 th grades)	Self-referral and Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework support • Community-building • Art Projects • Discussions • Athletics • Movies • Field trips 	Four days/wk	All
Adult	ELL Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic English Education 	Adults	Drop-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELL lessons and activities • Field trips • Guest lectures 	Twice/wk	All
Adult	Women’s Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship-building • Physical and Mental 	Women	Drop-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art projects • Cooking projects 	Twice/wk	All

⁹ All CBO program names have been changed.

*Strengthening Families is not exclusively a CBO program – see footnote on subsequent page.

Type	Program	Purpose/Focus	Participants	Enrollment	Activities	Frequency	Sites
Family	Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health education Connections with Resources Relationship-building School & Health education Connections with Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families Parents 	Drop-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational workshops Conversations Field trips Diversity nights Family Potlucks Open House Parent nights Cultural celebrations Workshops Health fairs 	Twice/wk	All
Family	Family Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to information & resources Translation & interpretation Advocacy Moral Support 	Families	Drop-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting families to resources Support with issues or problems Translating/Help with forms, calls, appointments, etc. Family outreach – check-ins, event/class reminders, etc. Transportation to and/or attending appointments, conferences, meetings, etc. with families. 	Ongoing	All

While most CBO programs involving students and parents in educational activities focus on early learning and parenting of young children, the CBO also offered a program targeting teens and their parents, called the Strengthening Families Program.¹⁰ This was a one-time program focused on developing communication skills between parents and teens, identifying and sharing family values and working together as a family. In addition, parents learned about the developmental stage that teens were in and what they could expect, as well as how to help students during this stage of their lives, being able to identify student needs, and where to find help if needed. Students and parents worked separately during the first part of each session and then came together at the end. This Latina mother describes her experience in the program:

I did a program about five months ago here. It...was for 12 to 14 year old children...about their behavior...it was called "Strengthening Families." For example, I saw how to help [the children], how they are at this stage. How to help them with certain limits—to set limits...And it was very important because...well, I was learning new things that I didn't know about having a 13 year-old [son]. We were ten families...There were three classes here. Four there in another [site]...There were five families from here. Five from the other place. But it was very important because it really helped...it was really great.

--Carolina (Latina Immigrant Mother)

In some cases, through the program, students got connected with resources, such as a therapist. They gained knowledge and practiced skills through various activities, such as working on art projects together where they incorporated their family's values. Another Latina mother describes how she and her family benefitted from the program:

So my daughter and I were in that program and then the program helped us because we were able to better understand our daughter and to help her out. My daughter felt she was getting attacked at school. So that whole program also helped her. And so they gave her some options of one of them being that [she] could go see a therapist. And that helped because before I didn't know that such people existed and a therapist that could help my daughter out like that. [It was a therapist] outside school...the teacher was not involved. I knew that about that type of help through [the CBO], otherwise I would have never known.

--Susana (Latina Immigrant Mother)

¹⁰ This is an evidence-based family skills training program developed by Karol Kumpfer, Ph.D., Psychologist, Program Developer and Professor that aims to reduce problem behaviors, delinquency, and alcohol and drug abuse in children and to improve social competencies and school performance. It also attempts to strengthen bonds between parents and children and teach effective parenting skills- <http://www.strengtheningfamiliesprogram.org/>

In addition to educating parents about child and youth development and improving family communication and relationship skills, the CBO also attempts to provide opportunities that help encourage connections among community members.

Providing opportunities for and encouraging connection among community members.

The early learning programs that involve parents during program time focus on building relationships among parents. One Family Advocate helps illustrate this point:

When I do my [Knowledge is Fun], the moms come in to do projects with the kids, [like] last week I make the fruit salad. And the little kids cutting the fruit and the mom is helping them. But it's time for them to talk each other, the same thing. Get ideas or talking each other. And now I'm feeling very happy because before one of the parents say the other day, oh, before [Cassandra] everybody see each other and not say anything. Like no says hi or anything. And now I know the name almost everybody around in my building, she says, because the kids play together outside, the moms coming over there in the court in the afternoon and talk together.

--Cassandra (Family Advocate)

Although not all early learning programs focus directly on building relationships among parents, a Site Manager explained how this often happens naturally as a result of the relationships that develop between the children.

I think having programs where we are really intentional about mixing kids up and making sure that they're reflective of the community, has helped a lot, especially with the [World of Colors] kids. They'll go out and play together on the playground and their parents are just there, so they're sort of forced into proximity with one another, so I think there are some really nice connections that have been made along those lines.

--Kristine (Site Manager)

The After School Program also contributes to relationship building among parents because it brings families together for different activities, such as field trips. It also provides common ground for families to connect outside of program activities. Families may recognize one another around the apartment complex where the CBO site resides, or in the greater community, and say hello or stop to chat. They also potentially have something to talk about because their children are in the same program. In addition, some parents may reach out to new parents in the community, as this Family Advocate explains:

One of [the people from a new family] said that she was walking and [a] neighbor says "How many kids you have?" And she says, "Two." And [the neighbor] says, "They're school age?" And she says "Yes, why?" And she said, "Oh, here is [a CBO] and it's helping the kids to do the homework and activities." And she said, "No, I don't know that." And then she came here and knocked on the door and I said, "Come in." And she said, "Oh, I move in like October or November," and she said somebody told her [about the CBO].

--Cassandra (Family Advocate)

In addition, a primary component of both the After School and Youth Programs is community building among students, whereby they have opportunities and are encouraged to get to know one another and build relationships. One Academic Coordinator elaborates:

I wanted them to learn the skills like trust and supporting each other. And I wanted them to understand that they could be a community for each other when a lot of things in their lives aren't supporting them. Like they can be supports for each other when the school system isn't really supporting them, when there might be a lot of hard things in their life at home, or maybe they're getting a lot of support at home. But [this] group of kids are all going through a similar process, regardless of where they come from; that they're dealing with a lot of the same struggles. And that if they have that in common and [they] know that this group is going to be a place where they're supported and appreciated for who they are, then I felt like the other circles that they have, like academics, would be a lot more possible from that kind of a basis.

--Erin (Academic Coordinator & Early Learning Coordinator)

A Youth Coordinator also alluded to this goal when explaining how he tried to teach students about social awareness and helping others, whether in the program or not, while at school.

Through the Women's Group, women have opportunities to connect with one another, build relationships, and support one another. The activities that help the women get to know each other may be ice breakers, or oftentimes, they involve being creative in some way, such as arts and crafts projects, like making jewelry or sewing, dancing for exercise and in preparation for a performance, and cooking projects. Sometimes they may just watch a movie together because the group also functions as a place for women to relax, de-stress and have time for themselves. A Latina mother describes her experience in the Women's Group:

Yesterday we had our women's meeting [and] we made necklaces and that really helped our creativity. It was something enjoyable because we learned what we like and we got to do something we normally don't do. Or else it's something

great and new because we get to talk and chat. We compliment each other about the work we're doing. So what [Cassandra] tells us is to get to know each other in case we ever need help, we have each other for support. [For] us it's wonderful because it's a time for us. They provide childcare, so it's all mothers, and we have this opportunity to think of ourselves, and for a minute, forget about the children and the husband and the housework. So this program is great because many times as Latinos we don't have the time to step outside, and this program provides that—meeting other people and whatnot.

--Susana (Latina Immigrant Mother)

As the women meet and get to know one another, they talk to each other about their lives – their husbands, their children – at times seeking support or advice or sharing ideas and information, such as job openings, as this Family Advocate/Community Developer describes:

[Most] of the women they are fighting with the isolate issue. And this is the place that they have a time to talk and talk about something about husbands, and something happened at home with one child and... "What are you doing to get that kind of child? It's driving me crazy." And everybody start talking, "Well, one time I did this," and they are sharing ideas. But yeah, and they help each other. They talk each other. And you can see that we are done and they look happy. You can see the difference of the faces when they are coming and when they are leaving - well this is good.

--Natalia (Community Developer & Family Advocate)

During their time together in the group, they have a chance to connect with each other and realize that they are not alone—that other women in the community have similar issues or struggles—and they come to see one another as a source of support. This often results in extending help to one another, such as offering to help with childcare, providing a place to stay or food, driving someone somewhere. For example, at one site, the women have developed relationships whereby they will plan to attend school meetings together and share childcare to make it easier for both to go.

CBO community events give families a chance to connect with one another socially and develop relationships with one another. Most events have a food component, where families and CBO staff share a meal together, such as potlucks. Some events focus on cultural celebrations and diversity, such as a Mother's Day event at one site and diversity nights at another. Family events may also focus on playing games and having fun together, such as a family soccer night. This Family Advocate describes one such event, which was also attended by some teachers:

[Once a month] is a community event [for] everybody...It's a night for the families [to have a] good time and the parents go play soccer with the kids in the playing field...And then in the room where is the food, I play lotto, a Spanish lotto like Bingo, and then the teachers play with the kids too, the other staff, and can be like a small place for the little kids or for the parent...and the parents have a very good time. It's a family time. Every month is different event.

--Cassandra (Family Advocate)

The CBO's relationship-building efforts often happen during activities that work to support and encourage students and families' academic and cultural development.

Supporting Students' and Families' Academic and Cultural Development

Supporting students' academic and cultural development plays a key role in the CBO's work to build sociocultural capital. The CBO recognizes the importance of early learning and preschool and kindergarten readiness, particularly for students who are new to the English language. While they offer early learning programs at most sites, they also recognize that parents are not only new to the U.S. culture, but to U.S. schooling as well. Therefore, they incorporate parent education into early learning programs, either during program time and/or through home visits and other communication with parents outside of program time. In essence, they are *opening a window on U.S. schools and culture* for students and parents. Once this window is open, the CBO tries to help students get on track to succeed by *providing a road map to success and supporting students' academic and cultural development*. Further, by *expanding community capacity*, the CBO helps students visualize a successful future by seeing other community members on a positive trajectory, helping strengthen the community and make it more resilient.

Opening a window on U.S. schools and culture. The parent education component of each program focuses on helping parents understand how to be involved in their children's education. By coming to early learning programs with their children twice a month, parents have the opportunity to see what children are doing and learning in class and observe children's routines and behavior in class. The programs aim to help parents get comfortable with school and in school settings by helping them understand what goes on there – either through direct

observation and/or participation, or through conversations between CBO staff and parents. In at least one program, parents also have opportunities to participate as volunteers, which again acclimates them to the school setting and sheds light on U.S. school expectations for parent involvement. This Community Developer/Family Advocate describes the Aprendemos program:

[In Aprendemos], I [involve] the parents. It's in different ways. Educational and also to create good relationship with parents and kids... And my responsibility is to involve parents at the school and kids can be ready for the regular school. This is my responsibility, they can be ready ...we have a routine. We say welcome. We have a community circle— [it's] a time that the kids can share what they did on the weekend or what is happening. Maybe we make the review for the letters that we did last week. And we have always plenty variation. We are still learning alphabet, vowels, we are singing a vowel and working with motor skills, fine motor skill and development... We make one activity with the parents, like a class with the parents and kids together because they need to know what is happening in the school, and sometimes they feel scared to be at the school because one, the language... They need to know what is really happening while in the classroom. And sometime they didn't know... They can learn also their routine and see the reaction. Their one children, how they acting, how they are working. And also, for the breakfast time, if they eat well, if they don't eating well.

--Natalia (Community Developer & Family Advocate)

Parents can also learn about U.S. education and schooling from the elementary and secondary programs in various ways. Program staff communicate regularly with parents, which helps parents develop more understanding for how their children are doing, what kinds of things their children are doing, both in the program and in school, and how to be involved in their children's education. Further, at the time of data collection, one site was working on developing a Cultural Sharing Module for the After School Program. This was meant in great part to help parents who lack the ability to support their students academically have an opportunity to feel involved and valued by sharing some of their cultural knowledge with students. In addition, the hope was that both students and parents could feel empowered through this cultural sharing, learn more about one another, and develop stronger bonds, particularly between students and families with different cultural backgrounds. The Site Manager explains:

[I]t's hard because you're trying to stress the importance of literacy for people, some of whom are not literate in their own languages, so of course they feel disempowered in helping their kids. [They] feel like they totally can't do it, so providing other opportunities for them to be involved. Like, we've been trying to organize a cultural sharing [module] for the After School Program, which would

be [a] structured way for kids to hear their parents talk about where they're from and [take] some pride in that and recognize that that is [what] makes us great. Because [there] are a lot of kids who have some internalized stuff about being different and brown, so I think there are ways that parents can be involved besides just the academics that [are] important to tap into as well.

--Kristine (Site Manager)

Parents of Youth Program students come to various informational events, such as Open House, where they have a chance to meet teachers, learn about their child's school and about specific requirements, like what a student needs to be able to go to college. Further, they also learn information that can help them help their kids, as this parent describes:

[The CBO gives] us information—providing us with information so that [our children] can continue in their studies. For us in our culture there's a lot of people who want to continue, but there are some who don't want to continue and sometimes they are not pushed to continue studying. In reality, yes, they've helped me in that and to get me to motivate them so that they can continue. Giving talks, inviting people, such as teachers to come and to come talk about what high school means, what college means.

--Alina (Latina Immigrant Mother)

Once the window on U.S. schools and culture has been opened, CBO staff build on families' understanding and capacity by providing a road map to success and supporting students' academic and cultural development.

Providing a road map to success and supporting students' academic and cultural development. The CBO works to get students and families on track to succeed in life. This involves filling gaps that they see in the educational system, as well as gaps that may exist in students' home lives with regard to educational and social support and opportunities. Therefore, both the after school and youth programs focus on providing academic support and enrichment for students, as well as opportunities to improve and develop social skills and leadership.

- *Interdisciplinary and Integrated Skill-building Activities.* After school and youth programs offer various activities focused on making interdisciplinary connections for students, such as how making mobiles involves art and physics. Other activities aim to integrate and build important skills, such as research skills and vocabulary development.
- *Field Trips and Family Outings.* Students have opportunities to go on field trips with the programs, such as the art museum and a sports complex where

they can play soccer. Coordinators also work with various external organizations to provide students with opportunities to participate in a variety of outdoor and athletic activities in addition to soccer, such as water rafting, rock climbing and hiking.

- *College- and Career-Related Activities.* Youth, in particular, have access to college- and career-related activities and events, such as a Society for Hispanic Puget Sound Engineers competition.
- *Community Building and Social Skill Development.* The After School Programs focus on developing group norms and learning how to work in groups, skills that are transferable to other educational settings. Students in the After School Program also have opportunities to reflect on their behavior and performance during each session and rate themselves. In the Youth Program, students focus more on developing empathy and a disposition towards supporting peers and others while at school or in the community. All sites also offer some sort of girls group – at the elementary and/or secondary level – to provide girls with time to engage in conversations about the issues they face and get information and support that could potentially help them.
- *Homework Time.* Academic support generally occurs during homework time, where students not only have time to work on their homework, but they also have people, like the Academic or Youth Coordinator, tutors, one another, and in some cases volunteers from the community and/or Americorp volunteers to support them. Many of the youth are in the ELL program at their middle and high schools, and they tend to require additional support when completing their homework. It also helps give them a sense of empowerment, as this ELL teacher explains:

I teach reading. So my kids have something they take, and they go, can I take this? And I know where they are going to take it—to [the CBO]. Or to [the volunteer who] is there. And so, you know, they will work on it and the next day they will say, I am ready. And that's ready for a conference. So it is like they really feel invested with an empowering that they can do it and—so that's made a big difference, I think, in their confidence of learning the language and trying it. So that's—I mean, I could give numerous examples of that.

--Kara (HS ELL Teacher)

The support is key for students who do not have access to homework assistance at home due to the fact that their parents do not speak fluent English, are unfamiliar with the curriculum and how to help, are not at home because of work schedules, and/or are not literate even in their own language, as this quote from a Latina mother illustrates:

In my case, my personal case [the CBO] is helping me with my children as far as their homework, and given that I'm not able to

...speak their language well...And the people that work here help me with the programs that my children are in. And they've consistently offered help that I need and that a person needs to be able to understand.

--Alina (Latina Immigrant Mother)

- *Building Confidence and Leadership Development.* Program coordinators try to tap into and build student self-confidence. They also recognize and encourage leadership skills in students. For example, youth have opportunities to be involved in activities with younger students and play more of a leadership role. The program also provides paid job opportunities for older students in the community, giving them a chance to have responsibility and get paid, while also playing a leadership, mentoring, and/or supportive role for the younger kids in the community.

While the CBO does much work to support students and help them develop their academic and cultural knowledge, it also contributes to developing community capacity in these areas as well.

Expanding community capacity. In addition to focusing on the academic and cultural development of students, the CBO also makes efforts to expand the greater community's capacity to both support students and to succeed in general. In keeping with the goals of various programs and staff to empower families and move them toward greater independence and success in the U.S., each site offers ELL classes to adults in the community. To help ensure that parents, particularly of small children, can come, the CBO provides on-site childcare. In addition to learning English, parents have a chance to get to know one another and learn additional skills beyond Basic English. Some ELL classes have guest instructors come and teach important skills and information, such as CPR and how to read household product labels and recognize toxic ingredients. Some ELL instructors take field trips to the community college library to teach adults skills they may not have. Also, adults in the class often learn about other learning opportunities and resources, such as various programs offered through the public library, like citizenship classes, English conversation classes, and story time for children.

Although the Women's Groups place a lot of emphasis on building relationships, much of what the women do together is educational and enriching. Some Women's Group sessions function as educational workshops, either led by the CBO staff member who runs the program or by outside professionals. These workshops focus on a range of topics, and the CBO staff member determines the content based on what she observes as needs among the women or on input from the women regarding things they are interested in learning. Some topics are health-related, such

as first aid, mental health, asthma, HIV, healthcare access and women's health topics, like breast cancer, mammograms and pap tests. Other workshops focus on emergency preparedness, domestic violence and U.S. laws regarding parents and children. This Latina mother describes some of the things she has learned through the Women's Group:

[There's] a class for women... We do things together. We've made things to give at the meetings. We've also seen guest speakers who've come to certain classes...we learned how to treat a friend who's been in an accident. They also showed us exactly what to do in the case of a [disaster] —what to do in an emergency. We've also seen how to deal with domestic violence. Also how different sicknesses work in the body. For me, the class is important because each month, I learn more new things that I didn't know before.

--Carolina (Latina Immigrant Mother)

Some sessions focus on parenting-related topics, such as school ELL programs and talking to kids about puberty and sex, while others focus on topics like financial education and getting a driver's license.

At times they take field trips together to get to know the area and to take advantage of resources in the community, such as health fairs. The intention is often to help women become familiar with the places, resources, and things to do in their community, so they can go out and take advantage of what is there on their own, as opposed to being isolated in their apartment or apartment complex. The Community Developer/Family Advocate explains how simply taking women to the mall can have impacts on women's confidence and sense of security:

Sometime they don't know the mall – a simple thing. People say oh, that's on my bus. For other people it's really important. And for other people, I asked them, "Oh did you go to the mall?" "No. I didn't know." How long have you [been] living here? Almost ten years. And they don't know the mall. And when you take them, you know, and you're walking around, they feel confident and to do by themselves and they start walking and take the children to the mall and take the children to the movie theatre.

--Natalia (Community Developer & Family Advocate)

Community workshops resemble the Women's Group workshops described above; however, they are open to everyone. While there can be some overlap in topics, such as emergency-preparedness, health-related issues and school programs, other workshops focus on providing various forms of training not covered in Women's Group workshops, such as basic

computer skills, OSHA training and how to help students with a particular math curriculum. By expanding the community capacity, the CBO attempts to contribute to the community's strength and resilience to challenges they may face. This is a primary aim of the CBO's work with families.

Conclusion

The CBO's cultural brokering work focuses primarily on building the infrastructure, for success. This involves identifying and building on pre-existing social and cultural capital within each community, and working to develop each community's *sociocultural capital*. In doing this kind of cultural brokering, the CBO goes through a process, and particular steps are taken to move through the process.

Summary

Because the CBO learning centers reside in low-income apartment complexes in a highly diverse area near the airport, they serve primarily recent immigrant families. Therefore CBO staff start by laying the foundation for developing sociocultural capital and taking steps to establish trust and build relationships with families in the community. Given their socioeconomic status and recent arrival in the country, many of these families struggle to survive and navigate their new environments; therefore, CBO staff also attend to meeting families' needs as a preliminary step in developing sociocultural capital. While these efforts work to lay the foundation for the development of sociocultural capital, they also start the process of developing sociocultural capital.

The organization has a variety of student, parent, family and community programs in place that help further the sociocultural capital development process along. Through these programs, the CBO attempts to empower families in various ways. They focus on helping students and families build and strengthen relationships with one another to create support

networks among them. They also focus on developing student and family academic and cultural knowledge, both of which contribute to students' likelihood of success in U.S. schools and life.

With regard to social capital development, the CBO staff first focus on *integration*, or building social capital within the community. This occurs through various activities, such as trying to develop trusting relationships with students and families; ensuring that adults are present and attentive to the needs of children in the community; and connecting and creating links among parents, students and other community members. These *bonding activities* contribute to the construction of three forms of social capital within the community: 1) norms and effective sanctions; 2) information channels; and 3) obligations, expectations and trustworthiness. When norms and effective sanctions exist, it contributes to the stability, durability, and level of trust found within the community, particular the CBO community, or those who participate in CBO activities. This can help open information channels, or the information flowing between and among people through social relations, which can provide a powerful basis for action. The two aforementioned forms of social capital can help contribute to the development of a trustworthy social environment, whereby expectations are clear and obligations are held and repaid. When all three forms of social capital exist in a community, this supports the development of a community, where children and families have the opportunity to succeed and thrive. Further enhancing these prospects, are the CBO's efforts to tap and build the community's existing cultural capital, or cultural wealth.

The CBO works to develop the cultural capital within communities by tapping into existing cultural knowledge and bringing awareness to the diversity of cultures represented in the community. They also focus on building upon that by providing academic and cultural information, skills and experiences for students and families. These cultural tools offer students and families the kinds of resources that can help them get the support they need, have enriching experiences, have access to opportunities that can contribute to their success, and empower them to succeed and thrive. To do this, the CBO integrates cultural capital development into all of their programs, for both students and adults.

When students and families have not only *integration*, or intra-community ties, but also *linkage*, or extra-community networks, they improve their chances for success (Woolcock, 1998). The CBO attempts to do this through various *bridging* activities. Further, accumulating

cultural capital does little to enhance students and families' chances for success unless the it is activated (Bourdieu, 1986; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Martinez-Cosio, 2010). Therefore, beyond linking families and schools through their brokering efforts, the CBO staff also encourage and support the extension and activation of the community's sociocultural capital, particularly with regard to schools and their children's education and well-being. I will take up these topics in Chapter 5.

Discussion

Beyond developing an understanding for what the CBO's cultural brokering process looks like and what it aims to accomplish, we also need to understand the extent to which the CBO is realizing the goals of contributing to improved relationships between families and schools and building the community's capacity in such a way that it empowers them to have a voice in their children's schools. Because trust, understanding, communication, and empowerment function as building blocks for intended outcomes, we can use these as a framework for analyzing the degree to which the CBO is achieving these goals.

Through the first layer of the CBO's cultural brokering process, staff members aim to lay the foundation for and start to develop sociocultural capital within the community. In order for families to engage with the CBO at all, they need to trust that the organization and staff are genuinely trying to help them. The CBO seems to be enlisting effective strategies for reassuring families that it is trustworthy and genuinely interested in helping them. Family Advocates play a critical role in this work and are well suited for the task, given that they have been in similar positions as recent immigrants to the U.S. and the region. The fact that they speak the language of many community members provides them with the ability to communicate with many families. As such, communication contributes further to their ability to engender trust and build understanding of families, while also conveying that sense of understanding to families.

While this is particularly true for Latino families in the community, less is known about how much the CBO and its Family Advocates are able to communicate with families representing other cultures and speaking other languages. While they do have access to some interpretation, often through family members with some English skills, this seems relatively

limited. As a result, the CBO lacks the means to have the same level of communication with non-Spanish-speaking families, which likely limits their ability to build trust, understanding and communication with these families. Given that family participants were limited to Latinos, understanding the CBO's work in relation to other families is beyond the scope of this study.

The different CBO programs, which build upon and develop sociocultural capital, aim to contribute to family member empowerment, while focusing on continual building of trust, understanding and communication within the community as part of the process. Given that the concepts of psychological and human and social empowerment best capture the dimensions of empowerment on which the CBO's work focuses, it is important to understand the extent to which the CBO's cultural brokering process functions as empowerment. The range of programs offered by the CBO provides family members with opportunities to actively engage in a social and participatory process. They design programs based on student and parent interests and needs, while also providing opportunities for family members to engage and build relationships with one another. While the different programs could be viewed as multidimensional, in that they focus on different things both within and across programs, one dimension which could contribute greatly to the empowerment process, but seems to be missing, is that of opportunities for parent leadership development and enactment (Maton & Salem, 1995). Further, there is evidence that the CBO seeks to help families act on issues that they themselves define as important (Luttrell et al., 2009; Maton & Salem, 1995; Mechanic, 1991; Page & Czuba, 1999; Zimmerman, 2000). CBO site staff frequently talked about the importance of helping the families they work with meet *their own* goals, as opposed to imposing goals on them.

Through their active participation in these programs with others—CBO staff, students, and parents—family members have opportunities to gain resources, as well as the confidence or power to achieve personal goals (Rappaport, 1981; Zimmerman, 2000). The relationships that families can develop with one another through these programs, along with the academic and cultural knowledge to be able to effectively navigate U.S. schools and life, provide resources and competencies that can contribute to families' capacity to gain control over their lives (Luttrell et al., 2009; Maton & Salem, 1995; Mechanic, 1991; Page & Czuba, 1999; Zimmerman, 2000). While family participation in CBO programs, and the ensuing sociocultural capital they develop within the community, hold potential for contributing to their capacity to make changes to and

improve their communities, the data offers limited evidence that families are actually enlisting sociocultural capital to take control over their communities (Page & Czuba, 1999).

In terms of gaining control over society, given the focus of this study, we can think of schools as societal institutions of interest, whereby certain kinds of empowerment could result in families gaining control over these institutions. However, the nature of this service-oriented CBO's work with families does not focus on institutional change on this level. Its work with families differs from that of social action organizations engaging in community organizing. As a result, the cultural brokering does not focus on transformational efforts involving the kind of parent training and leadership development needed to participate in school reform (Warren & Mapp, 2011). Rather, the CBO focuses on the kind of empowerment that serves to help families engage in improving their lives on more of an individual and community-basis, as opposed to a societal basis. This results in limited opportunities and limited impact on societal inequities, yet it does provide valuable tools and supports for strengthening communities and improving individual outcomes within existing structures.

Chapter 5

Extending and Activating Sociocultural Capital

Beyond the Community

The combination of *integration* and *linkage* help improve student and family access to the resources and opportunities that enable success (Woolcock, 1998). In a parallel way, schools benefit from the social connections and cultural understandings that would help them both appreciate and navigate recent immigrant communities (Yosso, 2005). Therefore, the CBO staff support and encourage families in extending and activating their sociocultural capital beyond the community, particularly with regard to their children's schools and education. In other words, as the CBO tries to develop sociocultural capital within the community, they concurrently try to develop schools' cultural understanding of families. They then encourage and support the extension and activation of the community's sociocultural capital within school settings.

As with the development of sociocultural capital within the community, the CBO takes certain steps in effort to extend and activate sociocultural capital beyond the community. When these steps are taken up and well-received by school staff and community members, they have the potential to result in positive outcomes with regard to school-family relationships. To help extend families' social capital and contribute to school staff members' and families' ability to develop relationships with one another, CBO staff start by opening lines of communication between families and schools, the focus of the first main section in this chapter. Much like with laying the foundation for sociocultural development described in the previous chapter, this part of the process also involves establishing trust, and in this case, developing relationships with school staff. Once CBO staff establish relationships with school staff, this opens the door to making connections between families and schools, which involves CBO staff and school staff in sharing information to help support students, helping school staff and families connect and communicate, either directly or indirectly, and advocating for students and families at schools.

By opening lines of communication between families and schools and making connections between the two, the CBO attempts to lay the groundwork needed to support and encourage families to extend and activate sociocultural capital in the school context, the focus of

the next main section in this chapter. The CBO tries to build on and deepen the connections they have helped establish between families and schools by brokering direct relationships between schools and families. This brokering, along with the sociocultural capital development work described in the previous chapter, can contribute to situations where parents are informed about and engaged in schools and schooling. The combination of all of the above contributes to parents' ability to have a voice in their children's schools and education. Let's take a look at one student's experiences with the CBO to gain some insight into how those experiences may have landed him where he is today.

José's Story: An Example of Student Success

José's story offers a glimpse into both the student's experience with the CBO and potential outcomes of the CBO's work with students and families, including the bumps that can be encountered along the way. He describes how he came to live in the apartment complex.

From what I can remember, the motive we came to live here was my whole family was living in this apartment complex. So at that time we wanted to be together and more united. So we came and lived with them too to be more equally together. So that's why we ended up living here in this community. I've been here about ten years, into eleven years already. I'm nineteen [now, and I] was going to be nine when I moved to these apartment complexes. At that time, my family together we knew no one else than just my other family. But I know my grandmother and other aunts did know people from the apartment [complex].

He explains how and why he got involved with the CBO.

I got involved in the [CBO] program and that's how we started meeting new people...My grandma used to volunteer at the programs...I knew I needed help and I wanted to do better, so I started coming to [the CBO] at...the After School Program, yeah...I had a really good experience from what I can remember. It was really good. It was a lot of cultures. It was a lot of people, new people. A lot of new families that were always together...We were really having a good time and everything that they were doing.

He goes on to describe how his participation in the After School Program and his family's participation in other CBO programs helped strengthen he and his family's skills and bonds.

They [helped] me a lot [in the After School Program] on my English as a second language and other activities that we did helped me [out]. Well one of the things was the language. My background language is Spanish. It was hard for me as a 4th grader, kind of re-enrolling to 5th, to speak English when a lot of people were just fluent English at that time. I wasn't fluent at that time. So [the CBO] really helped me a lot. Like I said, my [teacher] helped me a lot in the subject—reading, math. She made me speak, even though if I didn't know the words or the meanings of the words, she made me—she pushed me into that direction of pushing me harder into the language of English.

... They really did family-based [activities]. They helped us to be more together what kind of ways that my parents could have done or could do at that time to improve their parent skills and stuff like that. So that helped a lot. Because it's a different kind of background as us from coming from another country to coming into a new country, we have different backgrounds. So getting attached to these new ones it took time and it took a lot of work. But they helped us out, they helped them out and we're good, we're together. I do believe that they made us go through a hard path, but it was good.

[My] dad was always working. He's known as a hard worker—I really see that from him. He did have time for us, but not as much as he does now. And that was one of the things that they help us out. Make time for family. There's time for family, time for work, and time for other stuff or activities that he has to do. So that made us improve ourselves and he improved by taking time from his job into our lives. So I think that really helped me because I think every kid needs a father, needs a role model, and I see my dad as a role model. So it did help me a lot and they helped out too. [We] had what we called family nights back at that time, and they would come and do activities with me—there were so many activities together. [So] by having those kind of family nights they made my parents come together and stuff, and my dad come. So that helped me a lot and that helped him out too, seeing that part of my life is him, so I do need him. So those family nights, they really help a lot too.

Once José got to middle school, he decided to continue participating in the CBO by enrolling in the Youth Program. He talks about his experiences in the Youth Program, the role it played in his life, and how he and his friends' participation influenced others to get involved.

[It] was like a second home where I could come and stay with my friends for a little while, stay together and come out after it and feel good about it. So I just decided to keep going with it. I thought it was going to be better in my life and I thought it was going to do a good outcome out of it. I still decided to come and be part of it. Some of [my friends] were living here but they didn't really come to the [CBO] because they thought [it] was kind of foolish to come. But afterwards they [started] seeing progress, so they came by and they assisted in the program... So we all got united here and [the Youth Coordinator] helped us a lot. She helped us on any homework that we had, even [if] it wasn't something that she knew, she [would] find out and she [would] make us work for it too. So we all got together and find out the answers for those hard questions that no one knew about. So it came out good. My friends were from middle school and from the program. [Friends who weren't part of the program decided to start coming] from seeing my other friends and I coming to the program and the next day [we'd] be telling them oh, we did this, and we're going to a field trip next week, and I'm really excited to go over there. So that kind of interested [them] into it. So they started getting involved into it too.

[In] the youth program we took field trips. They [showed] us more real, like outside, the real world things. They [prepared] us to go to high school because they knew it was a big thing for someone to join high school. So they prepared us in that way. We had work—everyone has work, has homework. But every single day [the Youth Coordinator] and the tutor—because we had tutors at that time too—they would make something or an activity that was high school-wise. So when we joined high school we would [know] what was that thing about already. So those [kinds] of little activities kind of became bigger things that prepared [us] for the real thing, for high school. I [would] say there were both [academic and social things] because our tutors were high school people, so they knew what kind of things [we] were going through and what were the things that we needed to know at that time. So some were academic, some were different from academic, but at the end [both] unite, they kind of unite themselves. So that helped us a lot.

An academic social kind of thing was algebra. They say, for example, algebra. It's most known in high school, so they took let's say 15 minutes, 10 minutes and they'll put problems and they'll teach us how to do it. What are the ways to do it. And just examples, and we will slowly go through them so we can finish them together. So but the time when we're done we'd know what was y and—those kind of things...Another thing was that field trips, we knew that in high school we were going to have projects outside high school we're supposed to do. So they took us, for example, to the museum. They taught us the history about Washington and stuff like that. So by the time I went into the modern history class, I already kind of knew some of the things that we're going to go through, or that we were going to go through, especially. So those kind of things helped a lot too. We did [food] can drives. So we would meet new people, and that was one of the things that they would always tell us. In high school one of the most important things that you have to do is meet new people, have relationships with new people so you can know the world outside the bus. Because knowing a lot of people means knowing a lot of things, not just one thing. So they helped take out the shyness out of us with other people. So that helped too. Once I went into high school I was like talkative. I went and talked to everyone I didn't really [know] about, but I got friends. I stick with the friends, and they helped a lot.

José only stayed in the Youth Program through his freshman year of high school, because he started tutoring in the After School Program as a sophomore. He elaborates on his experience as a tutor for the CBO and what that meant to him.

I don't say I had a job for other people to [look] up to me, but I did kind of have in my mind that I didn't want to see my neighborhood as bad as it was. So I thought that if I improve myself they would look up to me, and they would be like I want to be better. Because I don't want people to be like me, I want them to be better than me. That's one of the things I've always looked up to...One of the things that my neighborhood had a lot of trouble with was gang members. There were a lot of gang members...And I didn't want to see that in my neighborhood. So I stayed back from that and started studying and did what I really came over here for—for my education and stuff like that. And that helped me a lot to improve myself than what I was seeing from them...

So I started tutoring 1st and 3rd graders. It was a good experience because I already knew what [I] went through. So I kind of knew what [were] the things I have to do to help the little kids out...One of the major, not problems, but hard things I had to go through was...this group was coming from gang member brothers. So they were looking up to them and stuff like that. So I wanted to do something and change things. So instead of going through the gang member kind of situation, put them into the education kind of stuff. So that was one of the things I had to go through, and I had to fix that. I tried to fix that, stuff like that...

Many of them left that gang member kind of stuff and they started playing soccer and stuff like that...I was just amazed to see all those little kids playing on the playground with the soccer ball. Or going through the path and having a soccer ball and football. So I felt good about myself on helping out in that kind of way. But I still knew I had to do other things, because it wasn't kind of pushing them into the sport kind of thing. But also having them at the house with gang members or parents like that, it was going to be a really complicated situation for them and they were going to need more help. So instead of more activities and stuff like that, I knew they were going to need responsibility, and more into a mentor kind of thing. So we helped out in that aspect and stuff like that, being involved in their situations and stuff like that. So that also helped a lot... it wasn't taking

the parents' responsibilities or any thing like that—we weren't taking anything like that. But [we were] just helping them out [with] feelings of oh, I have someone to rely [on].

José did not tutor after his junior year because he joined the soccer team and made varsity his senior year. He ended up getting offered three different soccer scholarships to four-year colleges, and chose one that offered him a full ride, but he got injured and lost the scholarship. He is now attending community college, which is not as bad as he thought it would be. He talks about his decision.

I [couldn't] get any more scholarships at that time for a community college, so my parents [would have to] start paying out of their pockets. So I was like I don't know what to do. I don't know whether to keep going with my education or look for a job and work with my high school diploma. My little brothers are behind me and the other one is a junior already, so I thought it was going to be better for them to see me in college than to see me working somewhere else. And I just wanted to do that. I thought the school was going to be better, I was going to meet new people and I was going to have the possibility again. So I decided to go to a community college.

In addition to attending community college, José also volunteers at his youngest brother's elementary school.

They were going to give tennis shoes distribution for every kid that needed a pair of shoes. So they needed volunteers. My mom was going to go but she had to do some other stuff, so she couldn't attend. So I [told] the teacher, I'm available, I could do it, taking one spot. If you need me just inform me or call me. The next day I get a call and they tell me that they do need my help. So I went and help out with those shoe boxes and stuff like that. So those kind of things. Another kind of thing is that they have reading sections after school for them and for the kids and the parents. Many of them are Hispanic. They're not fluent with the English language. So they do need interpreters and some stuff like that. So I try to help them out when I can or what I could do to help them out. So those kind of things. I volunteer and kind of help out. I am glad to help out. I like to help people because that's what I received when I needed it the most.

While José paints a predominantly rosy picture of his progression through school, at least in terms of the choices he made, Lila, who works most closely with his family, offers a slightly different perspective, which illustrates another way the CBO supported him—creating links between the school and his parents, or social network closure.

One day I received a call from the teacher, one of the kids - I told you this family has three generation with us. So the oldest, he was in high school - it was last year I think. And we receive a call from the school and saying "I'm really concerned about [José] because he's absent a lot of times at the school. And I spoke with him and he told me he need to take care of her little boy." And it was like I don't think so. I know very well this family. I know [the mom] is not the kind of person who is going to do—She need to stay at home to take care of the child for another to go to [school]. I mean you know the families. When you know the families, you know how they do. So I told this teacher I don't think so, but let me talk and find what information I can find. So after that I call the family, and I told her I receive a call from a teacher, [and] she was like no, no. Anyway, the end of the story was he was skipping class. He was doing something really no good. But he

told the teacher that he stay at home taking care of the little one. So in the end of the story we find that he was skipping class...So everybody find that he was lying. At the end he finished the high school, he graduate, he do well. He promised the mom doesn't do any, he promised the teacher don't do anyway. So for me it was a difference. How the teacher can call here and say I'm concerned about this. How I know the family and say I don't think this is true. We put together all the things.

This chapter will delve deeper into how the CBO's cultural brokering efforts attempt to extend and activate the sociocultural capital of families like José's to connect them and help them start to develop relationships with school staff.

Opening Lines of Communication

Between Families and Schools

While a lot of the relationship-building that occurs through the CBO's programs focuses on creating bonds within the community, the next level of work in the process of sociocultural capital development involves extending those bonds (i.e., social capital) beyond the community and linking to schools. It also involves supporting and encouraging the activation of knowledge, skills and experiences gained through programs (i.e., cultural capital) in the school context. To understand how the CBO tries to create this linkage and support and encourage this activation of knowledge, I first examined my data for instances in which the CBO was *developing relationships with school staff*. Much like with families, positive relationships create a foundation for CBO staff to be able to understand and work effectively with schools. This led to searching for examples of how the CBO staff works to link families and schools by *making connections between families and school staff*.

Developing Relationships with School Staff

Schools are busy places, and typically school staff do not have much, if any, time to spare, especially for people or organizations they do not know. CBO staff recognize this; and therefore, to gain access to school staff time and energy, they do what they can to develop

relationships with school staff. They generally start this process by putting a fair amount of effort into establishing connections with school staff, building trust and attempting to solidify connections and develop relationships by spending time at schools and inviting school staff to CBO events and sites.

Coordinators and Family Advocates do most of the work to establish connections with school staff, especially the Coordinators. They tend to communicate one-on-one, but occasionally they will speak with a grade level team or the whole staff. Their communication is primarily with teachers, particularly ELL teachers, counselors and office staff, and less so with principals. Generally CBO staff deal with the principal more for introductions, logistics, such as bus schedules and assignments, disciplinary issues, school initiatives and programs, like a dual language program. Depending on the principal and their relationship with him/her, they may also ask the principal to encourage teacher engagement with the CBO.

CBO staff communicate with school staff through phone calls, emails and school visits. They tend to initiate contact with school staff, and oftentimes this initial contact revolves around a problem with a specific student, whereby the CBO and school staff members will work together to try and help the student. This can lead to school staff members realizing the value of CBO staff as this Family Advocate/Community Developer explains:

[When] the school or the teachers need to communicate something [from] the teacher to the parents, if they don't find them they call us and we are sure that we follow-up and we call back if the parent doesn't call. So that's making an easy process for the school...I think everything came out of mostly the times [when there's a] big problem [with] a student, so then everybody knows after that big problem. And later we [establish] a lot of connection of how to help that particular family. But since then they find out that we can help them in general or other families in the same way and they can help us too.

--Valerie (Family Advocate & Community Developer)

In some cases, school staff initiate contact with the CBO. They may hear about the organization from students in programs and either inquire about what the CBO does or contact staff to get information about a specific student. Other times contact is initiated by the program Coordinator as a general introduction—this may happen through email or a site visit, and it may be contact with one teacher, a few teachers, counselors, the principal, or even the whole staff,

depending on the site and the school. This Youth Coordinator describes what her process for establishing relationships with school staff looks like:

At the beginning of the year with a brand new school, what I would do is I introduce myself to counselors and to the principal first. And that's because those are the people that you would be talking with the most. Teachers are very busy, and sometimes they're over worked. [Sometimes I] feel that [the high school] can have [a] lot of students in one class, and I'm like another person who's asking for information. And I don't want to put more work on a teacher. What I want to do is I want to go through a counselor first, and the principal and say this is who I am - I'm just trying to make your job easier. If you have a problem, maybe, or if you need information from a parent, I can help with that. If [you] can help a student out, or if you want to connect in an easier way or a better way, I can help with that. If you need some help in the classroom, I'd love to help with that.

--Eva (Community Developer & Youth Coordinator)

CBO staff explained that with most schools they had to be persistent and patient, as building trust and relationships often required time. Most Coordinators talked about visiting schools regularly. Some would try to there a lot, particularly when they were starting to build relationships. They would find out who they should be connecting with regarding the students in their program (i.e., specific teachers, counselors), and a number of CBO staff emphasized the importance of gaining the trust of and establishing relationships with office staff. These relationships often made it easier to communicate with and gather information from teachers, as well as to get CBO paperwork required for funding completed. At initial meetings with school staff, CBO staff would introduce themselves, share what they and the organization do, let them know they are available to help, and provide contact information. Much work that CBO staff do to develop relationships with school staff occurs at school sites. CBO staff described the importance of being specific with school staff, as this Academic Coordinator explains:

Well, when I started this position a year and a half ago I [guess], the previous Academic Coordinator had had some contact with the school. But that was something that I wanted to develop further. So I just went to the school a lot, because I think the face-to-face contact is really important and teachers are totally overloaded with faces and emails and phone calls. So I just tried to be there a lot, and I tried to have really specific asks for them. So like I would ask for specific information about a specific kid, or I would ask for their homework schedule for a certain grade, or I would ask for—I mean sometimes there are kids who I know are in the age range for after school program but I don't know what their needs are, so I'll ask for referrals for particular kids.

--Erin (Academic Coordinator & Early Learning Coordinator)

Other Coordinators talked about observing and/or spending time with students at school. They did this as a means for seeing first-hand what students needed help with and how they behaved at school. They explained that sometimes they would eat breakfast or lunch with the kids from their program or they would spend time in their classrooms. Some Coordinators not only spent time with students and observed them at school, but they also volunteered to help at the school. They talked about volunteering as a teacher's assistant in classrooms and volunteering as a chaperone on field trips. Volunteering was a way for them to build relationships with school staff and observe students, as this Academic Coordinator explains:

Definitely now that [the school staff] know that we're here to stay and not just a one-time thing, I feel like they're a little more invested and they've seen me around school. They know that when I walk into a lunchroom and kids will come up to me that I am working with these kids. So I'm more often at school just to stop by for lunch and just see how they're doing. That's just a good time for me to go because I can stay for the period and see all of the kids instead of going from classroom to classroom, which is pretty disruptive. And then I've been going on field trips with them. The teachers, they say they struggle looking for chaperones, and so I offered up to go with them and I think they've been pretty appreciative. It's cool because I get to hang out with some of my kids all day and they can see that I'm not just there for after school but in school too.

--Carol (Academic Coordinator)

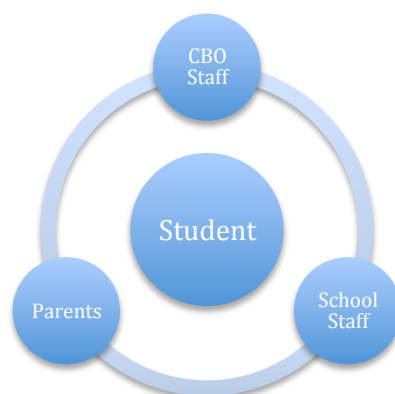
All of the CBO staff's efforts to develop relationships with school staff is in service of supporting students and families, and part of their approach to supporting students and families involves making connections between families and schools.

Making Connections Between Families and Schools

The CBO staff members make connections between families and schools in a number of ways, often providing a crucial intermediary link that contributes to the closure of social support networks for students (See Figure 5.1). One way in which these connections are made is by *CBO and school staff sharing information about students and families*, so that each can better support the students with whom they are working. In addition to sharing potentially helpful information with one another, the CBO tries to attend to other existing gaps between families and schools by

helping school staff and families connect and communicate with one another and advocating for students and families at schools.

Figure 5.1. CBO Staff Linking Parents and School Staff to Create Social Network Closure



CBO and school staff sharing information about students and families. By sharing information about particular students with each other, CBO and school staff help one another better position themselves to support students. For example, teachers and CBO staff communicate back and forth regarding how to support individuals and groups of students. Teachers share curriculum information regarding what students need to work on; CBO staff share what student(s) worked on in CBO programs, how it went and what they noticed; and both talk about student behavior issues, strategies and progress in their respective contexts. This elementary school principal shares her perspective on how this works at her school:

So teachers are well connected with [the CBO]. And they communicate back and forth—if [the CBO] is aware of something going on, they will come and say, I have concerns, as well as teachers will do the same back. And then we try to talk about what we are doing with our reading or math or whatever so that homework help can be supported, you know, back and forth.

--Kathy (ES Principal)

Teachers also encourage students to get help with particular assignments at CBO programs, especially when they know that the student will get the needed support. This ELL teacher describes how she works with the CBO staff to support students:

I have been working with some second graders I know are part of the program, so I am [telling the Academic Coordinator] if you could work on money with these kids—we are working on reading these books—they are going to bring these

books to program today, could you just listen to them read these books. Just so that she [has] an idea of what is going on...I have noticed there is one boy in my class who is a little bit confused about what exactly he is supposed to do for his homework. So it helps when I am telling him take your book to [the CBO] and you can read it with [the Academic Coordinator]. And he is not really understanding, but then [she] is saying, where is your book? Are you going to read it? [So] I think that it's helping build that, "Oh, okay, this is a place I can go to get help with my homework." ...

--Susan (ELL Facilitator & Interventionist)

This Latina mother describes how she views the role of the Academic Coordinator and Family Advocate with regard to communicating with the school and with her about her child:

[The Academic Coordinator] talks with the children's teachers at their school...Or she invites a child's teacher. They share information about how the child is doing in school. What a child might need for their learning in school. The teacher tells [the Academic Coordinator] what the child needs to be in school, and she helps the child with whatever that need is...And [the Family Advocate] translates it for me...

--Carolina (Latina Immigrant Mother)

School staff also contact the CBO when problems occur with students, seeking CBO advice on how to proceed or information about what might be going on in the student's home life, or to request that they do a bit of information gathering to get to the bottom of an issue, as was the case with José. CBO's also may call the school when there is a problem to see what, if anything, has been going on at school with a particular student; or they contact school staff to see how they can prepare students for standardized tests. This Latina mother explains how the Site Manager/Family Advocate helped her get information when her child had a problem at school:

When I contact [Lila] is when I need help in communicating with the school...At the school she's helped me about three years back when somebody hit my son and she helped me to find out what the reason for that was. She was interpreting for me to allow me to know exactly what had happened...She's communicated with teachers, as well as the principal of the school, and she's helped me with that.

--Alina (Latina Immigrant Mother)

The school and CBO staff members sometimes work together or create agreements to address student issues in certain circumstances. For example, school staff, CBO staff and family members worked together to help a student with behavior/anger management issues get the structure he needed in place both in and outside of school, and they secured a counselor for him

when he was struggling through the transition to fourth grade, primarily because both his teacher changed, and a CBO staff member, with whom he had a relationship, left the organization. This high school ELL teacher describes the role that the CBO plays in ensuring student needs are met:

[There] was one of our students who had some psychological issues at home. So we immediately [emailed] the [the CBO] person— they knew exactly. They were already getting her help. So it is that kind of relationship that is so invaluable for us because they are providing that for our kids. Whereas normally [their] needs wouldn't be met...So those are the kinds of things you say, yeah, great. Somebody else is aware. They are acting on it. Getting a counselor. Getting her therapy...it's [a] place that's not school that's also involved in the lives of these kids and they need that, [or] else I think they would drown because there's so many issues.

--Kara (HS ELL Teacher)

In another situation, the Family Advocate at one site and the staff at one of the schools created an agreement that the school would call her when a particular high-risk teen was not in school. Interestingly, one CBO staff member explained that if students leave the CBO program she runs, communication between her and school staff about students tends to decrease or even cease. In addition to sharing information about specific students, school staff and CBO staff also share other kinds of information with one another when attempting to support students.

School staff members also seek family information from the CBO—regarding specific families and in general. This Family Advocate explains how schools may seek the CBO's perspective about an issue:

I think definitely, when the school knows it is a family that came to us, they try to contact us and they try to know from our perspective what we think and they really – [sometimes] they call me before they're going to punish somebody in some way - what do you think, what is the better approach?

--Valerie (Family Advocate & Community Developer)

School staff soliciting information about specific families often corresponds to problems, such as students having issues at school or parents not coming to conferences, as this elementary ELL teacher explains:

I remember last year when I was having problems with a few students—I would just ask questions to the staff at [the CBO] about if they had experienced anything with this family, or if they had seen this parent or talked to this parent—just to

kind of get a better understanding of—if they had seen things I had seen. It was kind of what I was experiencing, too. It was the mom—[she] didn't come to the conference and it seemed like she was not maybe around a whole lot...I had talked to the kids—they were sixth graders so they were able to tell me. But [I] was just wondering [if] the mother or the father came in very often or if [it] seemed like she just trusted me to do my job...I think that it's a wonderful thing they have there at [the CBO]...I can take advantage of their knowledge of families.

--Susan (ELL Facilitator & Interventionist)

Other times, schools will gather information from the CBO about families when they have a program or resource available. For example, one school had a food program where they would send home bags of food monthly to families in need, and they asked CBO staff to recommend specific families. A school that was giving away Christmas trees to families who could not afford one made a similar request. CBO staff may also inform the school of things they were unaware of, such as when a family moves from the apartment complex. In effort to get information to parents, school staff frequently convey information about the school to CBO staff. For example, they tell them about upcoming events and activities, curriculum and homework, initiatives and programs, systems and policies, and expectations they have for parents. This information often comes through CBO staff communication with the school office manager. One school even provided a summer curriculum to use with students during the CBO's summer program. José explains how the Family Advocate shared information with his family and others:

[If] anything new at the school would come out, or any news or any new things that they were going to do, Miss [Lila] was informed. Now Miss [Lila] would talk to my mom, and...say these are new perspectives and new activities and new things. Or this is a new system or absence system. So [she] would talk about it with my mom and stuff and she would get the idea of the new things that they were going to go through, and what [was expected at] school. So those kinds of things helped out.

--José (Latino Immigrant Son)

Beyond information with schools and families, CBO staff also help families connect and communicate with school staff and vice versa.

Helping school staff and families connect and communicate. CBO staff help school staff and parents communicate with one another by translating and interpreting for them – either directly or indirectly. They relay parents' questions to teachers, or information about students to

parents. They also help parents find out what happened if an issue or problem occurs. For example, the CBO staff may call the school to see if a child has been attending, to let them know a student is sick, to check-in about a student who has had problems, or to ask school staff about classes or programs. Teachers and other school staff also reach out and communicate with CBO staff when they need to speak to parents but have trouble reaching them. Communication connections, in the form of interpreting and translating, may happen via phone, in person during an informal visit, at conferences or meetings with school staff at the school, or at school events.

While a CBO staff member, like a Coordinator, Family Advocate or both, may attend school conferences, meetings, and events with family members to translate, they also may attend to provide moral support, or to do both—translate and provide moral support. This Youth Coordinator describes a time she and other staff attended a school event to support students:

Well, it was like two weeks ago, it was a [culture festival] or something. We had three youth at the middle school who had been planning for about a month [and] two of them were dancing and one was helping to prepare foods from her culture. So it was a school-wide event. And while it just had three teens that were involved, all of us went as a program to support and cheer them on and to be part of it. That's the kind of thing that we do.

--Eva (Community Developer & Youth Coordinator)

In many cases, CBO staff provide information, encouragement and transportation to get families to school events, as this middle school ELL teacher describes.

[The Youth Coordinator] brings people to ELL night. He brings people to conferences. Parents and kids, yeah. Yeah. He brings them down. I get to talk with their parents and then he takes them back. So it's—he's really—when the MSP [test] was around, he said, hey, how can I help them on the MSP? I email him a bunch of information. So, [it's] great, the communication.

--Kayla (MS ELL Teacher)

Sometimes parents ask CBO staff to accompany them to a scheduled conference, meeting or event to help them feel more comfortable, or they may ask them to both set up a meeting with school staff and attend with them, as this Academic Coordinator explains:

I think communication between families and schools is huge, I think it's one thing that we really try to stress upon...having a translator at the school event just to explain what's going on maybe. Even just providing support, even if the meeting's not between me, the teacher and the parent, but maybe the teacher and the parent,

just being there to sit with the parent to know that I understand that they might be nervous or need some support.

--Carol (Academic Coordinator)

At times teachers ask CBO staff to bring parents to conferences, meetings or events because they know that the CBO will help ensure parents get there. At other times, CBO staff know about different meetings and events and encourage families to go, often bringing them to the school. Events and meetings include PTA meetings, family nights, diversity night, Open House, college information nights and ELL nights. This Latina mother summarizes this aspect of the CBO's work:

They help us to get involved in our children's school. They send flyer to us and they remind us if there's going to be a meeting at school. They provide rides—if they tell [us] there's going to be a meeting at school, someone from the program is going to go and if you want to go with them, get a ride from them,[we] have the option to do that. Many times many parents, they don't speak English, and so they have a question or a concern, so many times [Cassandra] has gone to interpret for us or [Carol]. So they're able to go to school and bring back information to us, the parents. So what [the CBO] does is that they help us get involved in our children's education.

--Susana (Latina Immigrant Mother)

By going to schools to observe students or volunteer there, CBO staff get to know students in the school context and are better equipped to help them. They see how students behave in school, and their observations confirm student stories and perspectives for the CBO staff, which helps them see how they can help improve situation(s) for students in school.

Inviting school staff to CBO sites and events for various reasons also helps connect families and schools. On some occasions, the CBO hosts events with school staff, such as a Principal's Coffee, where the principal shares information with and answers questions from parents, or an Open House, where school staff come and talk to parents, students and CBO staff about things they should know for the upcoming year, such as college requirements, or how an ELL program at a particular school works. This middle school ELL teacher recounts attending Open House at one of the sites:

[The CBO] had an open house night [at the beginning of the school year], and I went down there and I gave a talk about [Madison] and how we grade and activities we have at [Madison]. So that was great. Because the parents got to see

me, I got to see some of their families—even kids I don't have in this class—I met some of their families. It was funny, I met the families first and then I met the kids, here in the hallway. So that was great.

--Kayla (MS ELL Teacher)

A high school ELL teacher describes her experience at the same event:

[M]y plan was to talk about the ELL program here and then what students need to take to graduate and the difference between what you need to graduate high school and what you need to get into college, in a short amount of time, and I didn't really anticipate how foreign [all] of this was to them. So we talked about the ELL program and then spent the rest of my chunk of time really trying to explain what a credit is and how you get a credit or don't get a credit for a class and how you can look at a grade report and know if your kid is going to get a credit in that class or not get a credit in that...a lot of their parents haven't had much schooling at all. And if they have, none of it has been in the U.S.

--Jacquelyn (HS ELL Teacher)

CBO staff also invite school staff to attend general parent meetings that they host at sites. This elementary school principal explains how such a meeting led to helping parents act on their interest in volunteering at the school:

I went to a parent meeting and they were concerned with [volunteering], and so [Cassandra], came and I handed out a whole thing of volunteer forms for her, and [explained] how to fill them out, what pieces you need to have in there to be able to do that. So that is a specific example of how from a conversation I am supporting them. Come to the school, we will help you fill [them] out so you can be able to do that.

--Ray (ES Principal)

These events can also be more social in nature, like the teacher-student soccer tournament the CBO hosted. In addition, students have the opportunity to share their CBO program work, projects and pictures from field trips with school staff. These kinds of events also happen with school district staff, which was the case when the CBO hosted district community meetings at sites to seek community input in the hiring of a new superintendent. While the meeting targeted parents, the CBO encouraged youth on site at the time to attend and offer their input. The district appreciated this so much, they invited both youth and parents to attend subsequent meetings.

While some CBO staff volunteer in schools, they also invite school staff to volunteer in CBO programs, especially the summer program. This allows students to interact with teachers in

a different context and see them in a different way and vice versa. Additionally, some teachers use the CBO as a space to come and work with students, such as a Kindergarten teacher who decided to teach a group of Latino students to read and write in Spanish after school using the school's reading program. The ELL program staff from one of the high schools also used the CBO as a space to provide information about the program for families, and to offer extra support to their students over the summer, as this Family Advocate describes:

We have a lot of teachers from high school from the ELL who came and give volunteer time, just free time, to the ELL classes for the kids here...Because they say sometimes the kids in summer they forgot what they are learning. For most of these kids they are kids who just arrived. So they say we really need to continue to work in the ELL.

--Lila (Site Manager & Family Advocate)

One ELL teacher even talked about stopping by a site to bring donations, such as computers or TVs. Although only a few teachers and principals seem to spend time at CBO sites and events, those who do explain that they not only get to know the CBO and staff, they also get to know the families outside of the school context, both of which help them feel more comfortable with families and at CBO sites. Instances do occur when CBO staff see a need to go beyond connecting families and school staff, and advocate for students or families as well.

Advocating for students and families at schools. At times CBO staff advocate for students and help them get what they need at and from school. One Family Advocate explained how she spoke with a student's counselor to ensure that the student would not miss recess as a result of meeting with her. In another instance, a student decided not to apply to a specialized high school because he thought it would be too hard. In this case, the advocacy took a different form, whereby the Family Advocate spoke with the student and encouraged him to challenge himself and try the school. The student followed her advice, ended up at the school, and was happy about it. While these examples do not reflect connections between parents and school staff, they do reflect creating connections to students' education that would not otherwise be there. In this sense, the CBO staff sometimes advocates for students in situations where their parents are not able to, thereby connecting students to more favorable educational outcome.

In some cases, CBO staff advocate for families who are unfamiliar with how the school system works—explaining to both parents and school staff and speaking for parents when they do not have the words. This Youth Coordinator offers an example:

I feel like sometimes we become part of their family because they do discuss with us afterwards what happened in a meeting and what do we think. They ask, what do you think about this. They want our opinion. It seems like I'm a older brother, an uncle or something sometimes. One example is I had a student, she was misbehaving a lot in class and in general, and with parents too. So the school counselor, she wanted to meet with the student and with her parents...We went with the mother to the school...and it didn't seem like things clicked. She understood that her daughter was misbehaving, but there's no connection to, okay, I need to do something, or I need to be aware of this and change something. So we had to step up and say something [more] to the student than to the parents. So kind of being the parent at that moment and saying "You're doing this and this and this. So there needs to be changes, so what are you going to do?"...So those are times where sometimes we have to be the advocates and do that.

--Sam (Youth Coordinator)

By developing relationships with school staff and making connections between families and schools, the CBO provides a basis for which to support and encourage families to extend and activate the sociocultural capital they have developed, a topic I take up in the next section.

Supporting and Encouraging Families to Extend and Activate Sociocultural Capital

To continue the process of moving families and schools towards positive and mutually beneficial relationships, the CBO attempts to help families extend and activate their sociocultural capital, both in school and school-related contexts. Because the process begins through solidifying and deepening connections between families and schools, I examined my data for instances of *CBO staff brokering direct relationships between families and schools*. I also searched the data for evidence of outcomes that would indicate positive and mutually beneficial relationships between school staff and families, such as examples of *parents informed about and engaged in schools and schooling*.

Brokering Direct Relationships Between Schools and Families

While making connections between families and schools plays an important role in the cultural brokering work of the organization, brokering direct relationships between the two helps provide a basis for meaningful and productive engagement. Deepening and solidifying connections between families and schools, such that trust and understanding develops, or at least starts to develop, can potentially help the two communicate more directly and work together, without the need for an intermediary or advocate. CBO staff attempt to broker relationships between schools and families by working together with both school staff and families to address student issues. When all three parties—CBO staff, school staff and families—work together directly, this can help parents feel more comfortable and confident in school settings.

When CBO staff, school staff and families all work together, as opposed to CBO staff playing more of an intermediary role between the two, this allows for trust, understanding and comfort to develop between school staff and families. With direct contact and interaction, parents can see that many teachers and other school staff care about their children and in fact, want to help them. This can contribute to parents feeling more at ease engaging with school staff, and increase the likelihood that they will reach out and do this on their own, without the need for a broker. This Academic Coordinator offers an example:

Last year one of the girls in program was having problems with being bullied and never wanted to go out to recess and always stayed in to do her homework during recess. So over the course of a few months, we communicated with the school and family, and [Valerie] met with the teacher and the parent and the student, [and] they finally found out what was actually going on...The teacher responded in a really positive way of really wanting to make this a safe space for the child and referring her to the counseling center. We tried to figure out ways that we could reinforce her self-esteem and ability to deal with whatever she was receiving from the other kids. The teacher followed up with the family of the main kid who was doing the bullying and had conversations with them about it. Things definitely improved after that. And then the ice had been broken between the parent and the teacher, so they were able to have more open communication about what was going on at school. [The parent speaks] mostly Spanish. So I think having Valerie there made it a much safer space to communicate and feel understood.

--Erin (Academic Coordinator & Early Learning Coordinator)

CBO staff enlist other strategies to help broker relationships between schools and families. For example, various participating parents alluded to the fact that the CBO staff help provide them with the reassurance that it is okay for them to ask questions at school, regardless of whether they speak English proficiently or not, as this Latina mother explains:

As I mentioned, before I wouldn't ask because of embarrassment. And now the people from [the CBO] have given me the security to be able to or the assuredness to be able to ask, and in that way, not remain with certain doubts, and instead being able to ask. What they did was to help me be able to ask those things that I might need to.

--Alina (Latina Immigrant Mother)

This Family Advocate elaborates on how the CBO's work relates to these changes:

[W]hat I see is [Alina is] more secure when she goes to the school. [I] saw in her a power when she went to a school and ask for whatever she need, I think she's confident [in that]...I think what you do with the parents is show the way kind of. So when they say okay, it's safe to walk here, they can do. I think in the beginning she ask for more help [from] us—more help to go with the teacher, call the school. In the beginning you can see they ask for more help. So the [more] that they're involved and doing things I think she feel like it's safe and she can do it.

--Lila (Site Manager & Family Advocate)

While inviting school staff to attend CBO meetings and events helps connect them with families, the nature of these meetings and events often creates opportunities for school staff and families to engage in ways that help families feel more comfortable with school staff and ask them questions. Frequently, this occurs during events where school staff are asked to come and provide information and/or answer questions. This elementary school principal illustrates:

I would say that, although there's so much out there, [I] feel like [the CBO is] the most comfortable place for parents to start. So [I've] met like maybe six or seven, eight families there, so it's not like huge, huge group, but then they can ask me questions. They recognize me. I came to them, so they know that I'm there. They know my name. Yo hablo Español—that helps a lot. But it has given them a voice, so what I'd love to see it do is continue to build, you know, so that we have twenty, twenty-five families there that would feel that they had a voice enough to make that connection with me, either through [Carol] or the new person, whoever, so that they could come and, or they could just say could you ask [the principal] about this?

--Ray (ES Principal)

Although the elementary school principal has found CBO events to be effective in helping families feel comfortable getting to know him and engaging with him, this high school ELL teacher offers a slightly different perspective on similar kinds of events:

I don't know that these events are enough to actually change [parents'] understanding of the school and district hugely. I do think they understand at least a little bit more about what to look for to see if their kid is doing okay or not. I don't know that any of this has helped them figure out how to navigate it more—figure out what to do to help them do better if they are not, or things like that. I think any time we go and meet them especially where they live, then they are more comfortable coming in here and talking with us, for sure. And we don't hear from them a lot. Well, and I guess—[I] feel like after we do whatever it is—that is the reach out activity—then we are more likely to hear from them.

--Jacquelyn (HS ELL Teacher)

This quote illustrates the distinctions that may exist between event efficacy at the elementary versus the secondary level. It also sheds light on the challenges the organization and families may face in their efforts to engage and work with secondary schools, as well as the difficulties that parents may face in understanding the school system and how to navigate it. The organization's attempts to increase parent comfort and confidence in school-related contexts, however, does seem to contribute to some parents starting to demonstrate that they understand the system, as well as to their involvement in their children's schools and education.

Parents Informed About and Engaged in Schools and Schooling

In addition to making efforts to deepen and solidify connections between families and school staff by facilitating and brokering relationships between the two, CBO staff also try to support and encourage parents to activate their knowledge about schools and schooling to support their children and help them be successful. In fact, evidence indicates that parents employ the sociocultural capital developed through CBO programs and start to extend and activate it in school and school-related contexts. Parents are *demonstrating understanding of the school system and activating their rights*. Parents are also *actively seeking information to support their children* and help them be involved in their education. Further, parents are increasingly

spending time in schools, such as attending school meetings and events on their own and volunteering in various capacities, particularly at the elementary level. Finally, many parents are starting to *have a voice in their children's schools and education*.

Demonstrating understanding of the school system and activating their rights. As parents come to trust school staff and become comfortable with them and in school settings, they are better prepared to engage more with schools and the school system. Through the programs described in the last chapter, we saw how the CBO staff works with students and parents to help them develop an understanding of how the school system works and their rights as students and parents. The combination of knowledge and developing relationships with school staff contribute to parents' ability to demonstrate their understanding of the school system and activate their rights. This is evidenced through various activities, such as parents finding ways to overcome the barriers they face in connecting with and being involved in their children's education by enacting their right to have an interpreter present during school meetings. This Family Advocate explains:

I think the big barrier is the language and the system is very different...when [a mother feels] okay calling the school and say I need an interpreter, I need somebody to call me in my language. When you can do that, it's because you understand that you have the right to do that. I think that's a big difference...I think knowing more the system, knowing how the school works, knowing that she has the rights, knowing that the principal sometimes, the majority of the time, they really want to work with them. I think it's like when we understand that the school want to work with us, and the school understand that we want to work with them is the connection. Because maybe they want to work with us and maybe we want to work with the school, but it's a disconnection. We think they don't care about us, they think we don't care about them. So I think when you see that both parts is when you start to do the things. And I think is what happened with [Alina]—be in the schools, be involved and see that teachers care, principal care, the staff care, I think she understand that she can ask for things...when you start to go to the school and...start the relation with the school [it makes] you feel okay, more secure to ask for things.

--Lila (Site Manager & Family Advocate)

This quote also illustrates how as understanding develops between families and school staff, such as parents realizing that school staff generally care about and want to work with them, it contributes to parents' comfort level in engaging with school staff and enacting their rights. This Family Advocate describes how a parent activated her right to advocate for her child when the school changed her classroom without any notification, let alone getting the parent's permission:

Last year she not was happy because [of] moving [her daughter] to another classroom. And she says she not like it. And she talk to the principal [about] moving her back. It was good because she go talk to them. I said you wants to I go with you? And she said no, wait. Later I [will tell you if I need you to go], but later she call and say no, [Cassandra], thank you. I talk to the principal...it was very good because she try by herself.

--Cassandra (Family Advocate)

This Academic Coordinator reflects on the same incident and the changes she has observed with regard to this parent and her level of comfort engaging with school staff:

I think [Susana] is actually somebody who is a pretty private person. And for her to go up there and go herself to go advocate for [her daughter], that's pretty cool. [I] mean, for her to do that shows that she is pretty comfortable. I think once she found out the principal spoke Spanish she felt like, oh, well, okay— someone that can understand me and feel supported. [She learned that he speaks Spanish] when he came here.

--Carol (Academic Coordinator)

Evidence also indicates that many parents spend time seeking information to help their children.

Actively seeking information to support their children. The data indicates that some parents are seeking more information about how to help their children succeed in school and life. CBO staff talked about parents reading school newsletters to get information and asking for college information from school and CBO events. This Family Advocate describes how a parent sought school information from various sources in trying to find the best fit for her daughter:

I think [the mother knows more about the school and the district than she did before], yes, a lot because now she ask questions. She come in and talk to me or [Carol] about things that she's thinking in the school and then I explain or [Carol] explain. [She] go more to talk to the teacher. And she started asking how was [one middle school], how was the other schools because [her daughter] next year [will] be in [middle] school...Before I told you she was so quiet, but no more. No more. It's good...She asking for information, she go to the schools, she wants to know how [they are]. She ask one of the teens because one of the teens here [is the] daughter [of her] friend—they meet here in the Women's Group. And she ask how is the school, how is the teachers, and [the teen] explain to her.

--Cassandra (Family Advocate)

This quote demonstrates how this particular parent tapped into relationships she has developed with people as a result of her and her families' participation in CBO programs (i.e., social

capital) to seek information to help her daughter (i.e., cultural capital). Some parents also seek information from school staff, such as schedules, volunteering and supports for students. Although parent involvement can take many forms, U.S. school culture continues to place value on having parents spend time in schools, and this is something that parents in these communities are starting to do more.

Spending time in schools. A number of parents are increasingly spending time at schools on their own. This Family Advocate explains how she perceives the organization to be contributing to this phenomenon:

It's very important for [the CBO] to be in partner with the schools because now the parents go more to the schools, feeling something happen with the kids because more confidence to go and talk to the supervisor, to the director. To the teachers too because before no. And here I remember some of my parents said, "Well I not go because I afraid—afraid to—no, help me. [I'm] afraid [they won't] understand me for my English." And now I offering to go with them when needed. But also encourage them to go more to the school, like helping the teacher sometimes, like reading a book, helping outside on the playground.

--Cassandra (Family Advocate)

Parents are spending time in schools for various reasons. They may be seeking information from teachers or other school staff, they may be attending various events or meetings, such as Open House or PTA meetings, or they may be volunteering at schools. This Latina mother describes various volunteering activities and projects she participates in at two elementary schools:

We make things for example...I've made food like quesadillas for sales and to fundraise for the school...what I do is voluntary. Whatever we make through the fundraiser goes to field trips for the children, outings, materials or emergency things...[Also] four months ago, they gave me a flag and I helped the children cross the street in the mornings...I also went to Washington. I helped the teacher there. I took materials home and I could help her from home...We also had a project that we did in the summer...We came up with the things we wanted to do. [It was parent-led and] we were all together, parents and children in the same place working together on the project. We did this project with a person from the university...And we have another one next summer. Yes, we are already organizing another one.

--Carolina (Latina Immigrant Mother)

This same mother also explained that while she spends a fair amount of time volunteering in the two elementary schools, she has found it more difficult to be able to volunteer at her child's

middle school. This speaks to differences that exist across schools, as well as school levels, a topic I will address in the next chapter.

Some parents have developed a level of sociocultural capital, much of it through classes and experiences with CBO staff and school staff, that empowers them to participate in a variety of school-related and school-based activities and events, as this Family Advocate explains:

[Susana] told me she go more to the events now. She received the letters for [Jefferson Elementary]—the daughter give it to her. She go more often. She sign right away the paper for the uniforms. I ask her “[Susana], you need one? You need one, I have here for the little—She said, “No [Cassandra], I send it right away.” And she meet the principal here with us. And always when I go [to school] I see her or when [Carol] go over there, she always say [Susana] was over there [in] the school in the afternoon. She always go to the things, the events at the school. She tried to call, and she involve in the school a little bit more. And she says after she learn more English, she try to go to helping sometimes...to volunteer...Now she's always when there's PTA meeting...she always go over there more and more, more often...now she meet every teacher.

--Cassandra (Family Advocate)

Another thing that provides a sense of empowerment to parents is having a say in their children's schools and education and feeling heard.

Having a voice in their children's schools and education. Some parents have developed levels of sociocultural capital that contribute to the kind of school access whereby they actually feel heard and have a say in their children's education. For example, a number of parents participated in meetings to discuss whether to put in place a uniform policy at their elementary schools, and then they had the opportunity to vote on the decision. This principal describes how his attending parent meetings contributes to giving parents not only a voice in matters that impact their children and their children's schools, but also potentially a role in resolving issues:

And those parent meetings that happen, and those happen more often than I could ever make them, but I have gone to a couple. And I have brought other staff with me, too, like my ELL facilitator, to just go and listen— you know? What's going on? We are really concerned about...a very high volume road—thoroughfare— [near the school] that we don't have the staffing for having a guard out there— a crossing guard. And so they are like, what can we do? What can we own? Can we put a volunteer out there? What would that be and what would that look like? So engaging the conversations with them in that nature— the safety for their kids and what's going on. I mean, the reality is that this area has a tendency to be prone to

some of the inner-city challenges like gangs. And so you know, we see that physically, often in our building, but they see that there, too. And they are concerned about it and what can they do? And what can they own? And the awareness they need to give their kids and be looking for triggers with their students. [I] have students that are on gang contracts and have bandanas. It's all there. I mean, it's the real world for us. And so— but I appreciate that we have a connection with somebody on site. That's probably the biggest thing. And like I said, I would like to continue to build that.

--Ray (ES Principal)

Parents having a voice in schools plays a key role in starting to address power differentials that may exist between schools and families. This can help pave the way towards more of a partnership between parents and school staff, which offers the potential to make these schools more equitable learning environments and improve the quality of schools serving culturally and linguistically diverse families in low-income communities.

Conclusion

The CBO staff attempt to facilitate linkage between communities and schools through *bridging* activities, such as bringing parents and teachers together to address student issues. Beyond linking families and schools through their brokering efforts, the CBO works to develop the schools' cultural understanding, and encourage and support the activation of the community's sociocultural capital, particularly with regard to schools and their children's education and well-being. When families extend and activate their sociocultural capital beyond the community, particularly in school and school-related contexts, it helps them gain access to additional information, supports and opportunities, all of which can help them support their children in being successful. Further, given that part of the work involves broadening schools' cultural understanding, this extension and activation of sociocultural capital can also result in enhanced notions of what counts as capital in school contexts (Olneck, 2000).

Summary

To help families employ their sociocultural capital outside of the community, particularly in schools, the CBO staff first helps open communication lines between families and schools. They start by developing relationships with school staff, which provides the resources they need to make connections between families and schools. In essence, they act as a link between the two, sharing, gathering, and conveying information, and trying to ensure that kids are getting the supports they need. Information coming from the school may focus on particular student needs or issues, or it may be more general and focus on school events, activities or meetings. Information coming to schools about families may be cultural or situational in nature, but typically the CBO provides information to help school staff understand the best way to proceed or support students in particular situations, given family cultures and issues.

The CBO attempts to help deepen and solidify connections by brokering direct relationships between families and schools. This, in combination with the CBO's efforts to develop sociocultural capital within the community and broaden the scope of cultural understanding in schools, helps families start to extend and activate their capital in school and school-related contexts. As a result, we see evidence of those parents who are involved in CBO programs being informed about and engaged in schools and schooling. We also see schools basing some of their work with families on cultural information attained through the CBO. The data also shows that parents working with the CBO start to engage in traditional forms of parent involvement—spending time at schools to attend meetings and events and volunteering. Further, we see parents having a voice and being heard by school staff. These outcomes do not exist across communities served by the CBO; however, the CBO is clearly making progress in connecting and building relationships between families and schools.

Discussion

The second phase, or layer, of the cultural brokering process, focused on extending and activating the community's sociocultural capital in school settings, attempts to build upon the first layer of the process and contribute further to the CBO's realization of goals focused on school-family relationships and community empowerment in school contexts. Much like the first

phase of the work, their ability to achieve these goals hinges on the extent to which they are able to build trust, understanding, and communication between families and schools, while empowering families to have a voice in their schools.

By first establishing relationships with schools in this phase of the work, the CBO is able to position themselves as a trustworthy resource for schools, which can contribute to both school and family understanding of one another. Through these relationships, CBO staff have access to various school information that they can share with families, as well as student information they can use to help support students. It also allows CBO staff to share important family and cultural information with school staff to help schools better understand, engage, and work with families. The data indicates that in many cases, what is shared between school staff and CBO staff tends to inform parents and CBO staff to help them engage in school activities and meetings and support students. However, instances also exist where school staff seek advice from, or are advised by, CBO staff regarding particular cultural differences and how to proceed in particular situations involving students. To move closer to parent empowerment, such that they have a voice in their children's schools, would require a more two-way flow of information.

The relationships that CBO staff members develop with families and school staff form the basis for first linking schools and families in more of an intermediary role, whereby families and schools tend to communicate through the CBO. This often works to open communication lines between the two, albeit indirectly. However, the trust and understanding that CBO staff develop with schools and families as they link them contributes to their ability to improve trust and understanding between the two and connect them more directly. This brokering of direct relationships between the two partners contributes to improved communication between, whereby in many cases they require the support of the CBO less and less. In this way, the CBO takes a scaffolding approach, whereby they begin the process heavily involved, and gradually step back, allowing the two partners to eventually engage directly in the work.

Evidence indicates that families who participate in various CBO programs seem to develop the trust, understanding and confidence to move through this process in such a way that they feel comfortable enacting their rights as parents – asking questions, advocating for the children, and spending more time in schools as volunteers to support their children's education. This reflects a level of individual empowerment, whereby some parents, those able to engage in

a variety of CBO programs, gain resources and competencies to increase control over their children's lives via their ability to engage with school staff (Maton & Salem, 1995). This engagement offers one way to support their children's education, which could be considered an important life goal (Maton & Salem, 1995). Further, this also reflects empowerment whereby parents actively participate in a process with others that helps them develop closer correspondence between goals, efforts, and life outcomes, again specifically with regard to their children (Mechanic, 1991; Rappaport, 1981; Zimmerman, 2000). It does not, however, reflect the kind of empowerment that typically leads to control over one's community, let alone one's society. Both would require more focus on parent training and the development of leadership that would enable them to participate in changing their schools (Warren & Mapp, 2011).

Chapter 6

Cultural Brokering:

What's Inside the Development, Activation, and Extension of Sociocultural Capital

Cultural brokers are agents who provide needed linkages between families, communities, and formal institutions by providing a range of essential services (Lawson and Alameda-Lawson, 2001). Existing literature also describes *cultural brokering* as bridging gaps between mainstream culture in a pluralistic society and other cultures, with the primary objective being to provide mechanisms for continuity from those cultures to mainstream culture (Gentemann & Whitehead, 1983; Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007). This study illuminates how the cultural brokering process has the potential to provide mechanisms to help strengthen connections between family cultures and mainstream culture. In other words, the cultural brokering process can engender continuity that is not subtractive, but potentially additive, and at the very least respectful of differences, while showing that differences do not disallow connections. As the last two chapters have illustrated, the CBO staff engages in cultural brokering between recent immigrant families and mainstream culture entities, such as schools, by participating in a variety of *bridging* activities. What we have yet to understand is what about the nature of the CBO's work gets inside existing cultural gaps, and how the organization uses cultural means to do so. To that end, this chapter delves deeper into the CBO's culturally-rooted work with families and schools to illuminate what lies inside their efforts to develop, activate and extend the community's sociocultural capital through cultural brokering.

To understand what contributes to and hinders the CBO's ability to provide effective cultural brokering, particularly with regard to relationships between families and schools, I start by unpacking various contextual factors that frame both the cultural divide, to begin with, and the CBO's work to bridge it. Therefore, the first main section of this chapter focuses on how context shapes the CBO's work, exploring how the conditions in key contexts, such as the community and the schools, influence both the nature of the work and the extent to which the CBO is positioned to achieve desired outcomes. In addition to examining school and community

contexts, this section also examines the CBO's own organizational context, and how aspects of the CBO shape the work the organization is able to accomplish.

While a number of contextual factors shape the work of the CBO, also important to understand is how the CBO takes a culturally-rooted approach to working with immigrant families and schools. In other words what makes the CBO's work *cultural* brokering. To shed light on this phenomenon, I examine the layered approach that the CBO takes to the cultural brokering process, and the specific processes and techniques the CBO enlists to help move towards the goal of solid connections between families and schools and the elimination of gaps that may otherwise exist.

How Context Shapes the Brokering Work

The CBO's brokering process focuses in great part on relationships – those between recent immigrant families on one end and school staff on the other end. Of course the mediating agent brokering the relationships, the CBO, plays an integral role, resulting in a relationship that involves three partners, each of whom resides in a specific context. This context matters, in that various aspects can create barriers to the work the CBO is attempting to accomplish—in fact, create or exacerbate the cultural gaps the CBO seeks to address—and at the same time support its work. In other words, the contextual conditions within which the CBO operates greatly influence their cultural brokering efforts.

To understand more deeply how context might matter, I searched my data for evidence that would help clarify the contextual conditions surrounding and permeating each of the partners in the brokering relationship—the immigrant community (particularly immigrant families) and the school community—as well as the CBO, itself, as the mediating agent in the relations. By *conditions* I am referring to the most salient and immediate characteristics and circumstances associated with each of the partners; for now I leave aside the larger societal and historical contexts surrounding the relationships, those that relate to immigration, immigrants, and their place in a pluralistic capitalistic society. Of particular concern here is how the immediate characteristics and circumstances of the three partners in the brokering relation 1)

create the CBO's work to begin with; 2) shape how it is and can be done, with special attention to its cultural dimensions; and 3) surface the kinds of impacts it can and does have. To understand how context comes into play in the cultural brokering process, let's look at each context one at a time, beginning with *how community conditions shape the work*, followed by an examination of *how school conditions shape the work*, and lastly exploring *how CBO conditions shape the work*.

How Community Conditions Shape the Work

At one end of the cultural brokering relationship are community members and the community itself. Various aspects of the community, both positive and challenging, influence how the CBO goes about its work, and the extent to which the CBO's cultural brokering efforts can have an impact on the students and families with whom they work. As part of the CBO's process for developing sociocultural capital within the community, the staff attempt to identify and tap into the social and cultural capital that already exists in the community, or the *pre-existing sociocultural capital*. Before starting to develop sociocultural capital, however, CBO staff try to lay the foundation for the work, and part of that involves understanding the various *challenges faced by the community*. Understanding the whole picture within a community—both supportive aspects as well as barriers—enable the CBO to take a more holistic, strengths-based approach to the cultural brokering process.

Pre-existing sociocultural capital in the community. The populations served by the CBO are extremely diverse and predominantly made up of recent immigrant families from all over the world, representing a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds and speaking a range of languages. For example, every site serves a large Latino population from various Latin American Countries, such as Mexico and El Salvador, and not all of these people speak Spanish—an increasing number are part of indigenous groups who speak a completely different dialect. This is the case for Burmese populations as well. Families have come from other Asian countries too, including Nepal, Iraq, China, and India. A number of families have emigrated from various African countries, such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and Eritrea. While English is not widespread, some people have relatives who are fluent, or at least proficient, in English, and

other community members seem to pick up the language quickly, which can be extremely helpful to those in the community with no English skills.

CBO staff described many community members as hard working and having a sense of empowerment to be able to provide for their families—opportunities they may have lacked in their home countries due to high unemployment and low wages. They also described some community members as determined people who are proactive about taking advantage of the CBO’s services and programs, like classes, and who go to school and volunteer regardless of whether they are able to speak English. A few families were described as having the capacity to navigate the school system and be involved as a result of having time, English language skills, and understanding enough of how the system works to get involved in things like the PTA and organizing parents to vote on whether or not to have a school uniform policy.

Some families have social support networks—friends, family or both—in the apartment complex or nearby. In fact, some participants explained that they came to live in that particular apartment complex because family or friends lived there. Certain connections had occurred as a result of coming from the same country, but not necessarily knowing one another in the home country. These connections and networks have the potential to contribute to a sense of cohesion, stability, and support, as this Site Manager explains:

Some folks actually have some support networks in the area, so they'll have family members or friends who either live in the complex or surrounding the complex, and that is a great resiliency factor, you know, child care can be provided, or cooking for each other, or you know, sort of having that network of help in case of emergency or, you know. So, not everyone is completely isolated and alone, which is important to remember.

--Kristine (Site Manager)

Oftentimes, these connections result in newer families to the community learning about the CBO’s programs and services, typically from families who are knowledgeable about the CBO because they have worked with them.

Some CBO sites have a better sense of security, safety, and health and seem to have fewer problems than others, according to staff members. Interestingly, some families living in apartment complexes with management or safety have decided to stay even when they had the opportunity to leave, as this Academic Coordinator explains:

We've had families say we want to move away from these apartments but we don't want to lose [the CBO]. So they'll stay, which is a huge sacrifice I think because they've had problems [with] the managers in the office. [We've] just had some manager/tenant problems I think, and so they come to us and they're like we want to move because we don't like living here, but the kids really like being at after school program. So we don't want to move...I wouldn't say it's about the neighborhood. I mean there have been a couple instances of burglary and break-ins and stuff, but usually the reason people move is because they can't handle management and how they're handling their requests.

--Carol (Academic Coordinator)

This quote begins to illuminate some of the challenges faced by the recent immigrant families living in these communities.

Distinct challenges faced by recent immigrant families. While some immigrants new to the U.S. may come for well-paying jobs, many, if not most, come without jobs, and for a variety of reasons, may be in a low-income situation. The families living in the apartment complexes where the CBO sites reside tend to be in that kind of a situation. As a result, they have challenges meeting basic needs, and they deal with hunger and other health issues, such as asthma. They generally do not have transportation, and some do not have the money to pay for utility bills or rent, let alone school supplies. Many struggle to find employment, and many of those who do work have to hold multiple jobs and work odd hours. Further, as a result of living in low-income communities, many families face dangerous situations involving drugs and/or guns.

While many families have immigrated to the U.S., they do not have the same immigrant status—some are refugees and some are undocumented—which can result in various challenges, such as trauma and family strife resulting from separation (and possibly reunification). Employment can be an issue, particularly for undocumented people. In addition, undocumented families, and those who need to share accommodations with more people than allowed, often have to deal with unresponsive management in exchange for having a roof over their heads.

Obviously lack of English proficiency presents challenges for many people, making it difficult for them to communicate and find employment. It also can present challenges for students to be able to demonstrate their skills and knowledge, let alone do well. A lack of English skills can impede families' ability to learn how things work in the U.S., and the process of figuring it out can take more time than it would otherwise, and make life difficult.

Additionally challenging is navigating the complicated systems that can help meet basic needs when living in low-income situations, such as how to get food stamps and healthcare. This tends to hold true for school systems as well. Not understanding how schools work can result in a lack of compliance with policies, such as vaccinations, and being confused about what to do in different situations, such as with disciplinary issues, or how to help with homework. All of this can lead to parents feeling shy about seeking the information they need from schools, not knowing how to get involved, and ultimately feeling helpless when it comes to school and their children's education.

In sum, before the CBO can begin to work with families to develop sociocultural capital within the community and broker relationships between families and schools, CBO staff need to understand the community context within which they are working. By developing an understanding of pre-existing sociocultural capital in the community, the CBO staff can start to determine both the scope and nuances of their work. By being aware of the networks and assets that can be tapped and developed among community members, as well as how different cultures, languages, and values may come into play with regard to various aspects of the process, the CBO can tailor their work to a particular community, taking a holistic, culturally-rooted, respectful, and strengths-based approach to building upon what already exists in the community. Further, by understanding the distinct challenges faced by community members, the CBO can also ensure that they are supporting families in the ways that they need to be supported, connecting them with the resources they need and want, both within and beyond the community. With greater understanding of how community conditions both create and shape the cultural brokering work of the CBO, we can now look to how the different school contextual factors come into play.

How School Conditions Shape the Work

At the other end of the brokering relationship are schools, whose features as organizations and collections of professional staff greatly affect what the CBO is able to do, as well as how and what it actually does. Various aspects of the schools influence and shape the CBO's work with schools and families. *A common set of challenges across schools* impacts school staff and families, and as a result influences both the nature and extent of the CBO's work

with schools and families. Also, both *how school staff perceive and approach families*, as well as *how families perceive schools and school staff*, play important roles in shaping the CBO's cultural brokering work with the two partners. Not only are *school staff perceptions of and relationships with the CBO* influenced by the aforementioned factors, they also greatly determine the extent to which schools staff are willing to engage and work with CBO staff.

Common challenges across schools. While each school has its own specific hurdles, most, if not all, the schools face a common set of challenges. One common challenge expressed by most school staff was the struggle to know how to engage parents. This included how to: make parents feel welcome, get parents to feel comfortable coming to the school, get parents to school when they lack transportation, and address parents' lack of understanding of how to engage with schools. Many school staff also alluded to the difficulties of being able to understand, navigate, and accommodate the diversity of family cultures and languages.

Exacerbating this particular challenge is the limited support for non-English speakers, particularly those who do not speak Spanish, as schools generally do not have access to the resources needed to provide translation and interpretation in all the languages needed. An exception tends to be parent-teacher conferences, where interpreters that speak a range of languages are available through the district. The day-to-day language and interpretation needs, however, are harder to meet. In addition to difficulties around languages, many schools serving immigrant students also face the various emotional issues students may be dealing with, such as trauma related to their experiences in their home country, or in getting to the U.S., or family reunification issues that impact students.

As is often the case, another common challenge across schools is the lack of time and resources needed to help students with everything they need, and help them succeed in school and life. Due to many of the challenges already described, schools also have to deal with low academic performance at their schools, which puts additional stress on these schools. Unfortunately, some schools also experience leadership challenges, whereby principals and other administrators do not recognize the importance of understanding and accommodating the different cultures represented, and are thus unwilling to learn more about them and do what is necessary to engage and work with them to support students.

Table 6.1. School Conditions That May Affect Cultural Brokering Work

School	Leadership	Priorities	Staffing with Regard to School-Family Relations	Staff Working with CBO Regularly	Programs, Activities, Events & Resources	Location relative to CBO Site(s) Served
Washington Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few years of principal turnover New principal – internal hire History of success in similar situations Had previous district-level cultural competency training through CBOs program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic improvement Parent engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several bilingual staff – a lot of Spanish speakers, Somali bilingual tutor Teaching staff not very diverse East Indian district employee in building who serves parents and needs across district Social worker School staff had cultural competency training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELL Facilitator/ Interventionist Social worker Principal (not as much as others) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family meetings to discuss different issues – 3 language-based meetings: English, Spanish and Somali Math Night – families can learn ways to support students at home Mother’s Day Event Field Day with Volunteers Community and family engagement team Welcome Center Hosting local food bank’s summer feeding program 	Within walking distance of Site 1
Jefferson Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilingual Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student improvement and academic improvement Focus on math, literacy & positive behavior Specific, targeted plans for kids below grade level with multiple opportunities to receive instruction & intervention Supporting ELL students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not generally reflect community, except DL program teachers - older group of Caucasian teachers, one African American teacher and a Latino male teacher who does not speak Spanish 4 Spanish-speaking teachers (dual language program) Had cultural competency training through CBOs program Bilingual tutors – N African dialect/Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office manager Principal 5th grade teacher – a little bit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dual Language Program – English and Spanish Family nights Open House Literacy nights Books for Breakfast Parent nights at CBO Science fair Math nights Para Lost Niños Parent leadership group 	Within walking distance of Site 3
Madison Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasoned principal Former elementary school teacher and principal Worked as a teacher with CBO founder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS) Non-standards based grading Support for ELL students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal started ELL program at an ES ELL trained teacher Bilingual Somali tutor Spanish-speaking tutor Had cultural competency training through CBOs program 2 MALDEF trained staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal ELL teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELL Program Home visits Family nights ELL nights Spanish and Vietnamese translators College information Newcomer Center Spanish tutor helps connect families with resources in the community 	Serves Site 2 but is not within walking distance of the site
Monroe High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal, Vice Principals (2) and Dean of Students all new to the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning for all students How to help struggling students District priorities – career, college & citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELL Department Some bilingual staff Counselors Mix of new and veteran teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELL teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELL Program Student-led conferences ELL information nights at CBO Volunteers who also volunteer at the CBO Sports clubs 	Serves Site 2 but is not within walking distance of the site

School perceptions of and approach to families. School staff's perceptions of and approach to working with families also influence the CBO's brokering work between the two (See Table 6.1 for staffing and program information). Because the schools do not generally reflect the diversity of the community, a number of teachers lack understanding of the cultural differences that can impact their relationships with students and families. However, all schools, with the exception of the high school, had gone through cultural competency training at some point. Given that this occurred in the past, not all teachers currently working at each school had the training. Regardless, most schools employ a small group of staff members—typically 2-5 people and generally ELL teachers—with more in depth knowledge of cultural differences.

All schools have at least one program, committee and/or welcome center in place that focuses on family engagement (Summarized in Table 6.1). Washington Elementary School focuses on family relations through a Community and Family Engagement committee and a Welcome Center. Although the committee had been in place for a few years, the work seemed to change over time, reflecting current administrative priorities, as this ELL Facilitator and Interventionist explains:

[When] I first arrived here it seemed like I heard from people that a lot of families didn't feel safe coming into our school and didn't feel comfortable or respected. And I think that that has changed over the years. I think we have been trying—I work with a team—the Community and Family Engagement Team at the school. And we have been trying to change that. We don't really want parents to feel that way. We want them to feel like they could come into school. [The committee] has been [around] for awhile, but I think the last maybe three years it has kind of changed a little bit – [we] have a plan written out, so it is a little bit more focused. I think it was just something that we became aware of and wanted to change. [Since] I have been here, this is the third principal I have had. So there is a lot of turnover. And we had kind of an interim principal and I would say he is [the] one that got it started. And our current administrator [is] very outgoing and I think it is definitely a goal of hers too. I think that it was maybe not so much [of a priority for the first principal I worked under.]

--Susan (ELL Facilitator & Interventionist)

Jefferson Elementary School has a dual language program (English and Spanish) that tends to do more of their family engagement work. At the time of data collection, the school offered the program for a portion of students in kindergarten and first grade, with a plan to expand the program by one grade level each year. Beyond the program, there did not seem to be much else

in place to focus on family engagement. The fifth grade teacher thought families might not feel particularly welcome at the school, given how few of them she has seen come to the school, beyond attending events, and she does not see a lot of effort by the school to target parents. The principal described school-family relations as not where he wanted them to be, but he went on to say that they had pretty good conference turnout, particularly in the dual language program.

Both secondary schools seemed to depend on the ELL department to focus on engaging families from different cultures. While parents generally described secondary schools as less inviting and accessible to them, the CBO nonetheless described Madison Middle School as one with a “culture of community” and a welcoming place for families. In addition to having a principal who prioritizes cultural competency and family engagement, the school has a bilingual parent liaison/tutor from the community who speaks Spanish. He seems to function as an on-site cultural broker, using his role as a community member, along with his knowledge and skills, to interpret and advocate for families, and connect them with resources. The ELL teachers at Monroe described the high school as not great at partnering with families, and not really accommodating families and their cultures. However, this ELL teacher’s description of her dismay at the lack of academic emphasis at the school seems to blame the families, not the school, reflecting a deficit-based orientation towards students and families:

The climate here, I would say, is not as academic as I would like, but it is what it is. I think the population has changed tremendously. We are getting a lot more poorer families. We are getting families that work a lot and they don't spend a lot of time with their kids, so academics is not high. Although, I think with ELL students they are so hungry to learn the language that we've got strong motivation there. Whereas, I don't think they find that in their other academic classes. Which is a real conflict. Because we really—not to say we push them, but we really encourage kids to excel. And then when they go to mainstream classes, they see there is this kind of laid-back attitude towards learning, and learning is not as important to American kids.

--Kara (HS ELL Teacher)

All schools offered events for families, the number and focus of which varied across schools (Summarized in Table 6.1). For example, Washington Elementary offers regular family meetings, meant to empower families, help them feel welcome, and let them know the school is a place for them to volunteer if they’re interested. Jefferson’s principal acknowledged low PTA attendance rates, but talked about some events that had decent parent attendance, including

parent nights, a monthly book breakfast, open house, literacy nights, and a science fair. The Academic Coordinator at Site 3 offers her perspective on meetings and events at Jefferson:

[I've] been to PTA meetings and there's like maybe five parents there. I mean I know that they serve so many other kids, and families of five people don't really represent the whole school. So getting interest up [and] getting news out there...I think that's one of the struggles they have up there...They have interpreters that come to meetings. They have nights that are dedicated for families and stuff like that. But because [their] attendance is so low, our families don't really feel like going because they have to walk, and they don't want to go. I think [Jefferson] tries to do things for their families, but they know over there that they still need help developing those programs.

--Carol (Academic Coordinator)

Although Madison staff did not speak in detail about events and meetings, they did mention having family nights and specifically, ELL information nights. Unlike other schools, the ELL teacher talked about doing regular home visits—formal and informal—to get to know her students and families better. While the high school does not see a lot of parent involvement, the mandatory student-led conferences offered the prior year resulted in good parent turnout. Due to administrative turnover and a union dispute, the school did not have the conferences this particular year, but one ELL teacher was hopeful that they would return the following year.

All school staff talked about having interpreters available for parent-teacher conferences, but beyond that, having interpreters available for other events and meetings that represent the different languages spoken by families could be difficult. In this regard, Spanish-speaking families generally have a slight advantage as many schools have Spanish-speaking staff on site (See Table 6.1). While both elementary schools are within walking distance of the communities they serve, both secondary schools are not, and neither offers transportation services, impeding many parents' ability to get to the schools.

The range of family engagement efforts, the extent to which this is prioritized at schools, as well as staff perceptions of students and families, all influence both the nature of the CBO's work with each school, as well as the extent to which they work with them. Understandably, these school qualities also can have great impacts on how families perceive the schools.

Family perceptions of schools. As would be expected, those schools making efforts to understand families, creating a welcoming environment, and employing staff who speak

families' first languages, tend to be viewed by families as more friendly and supportive—places where they see staff doing a lot for students, and where parents can be involved. When families are unaware of these efforts, or when schools are not making these efforts, parents often feel that the opposite is true—that staff do not care about students or parents, and they do not feel welcome, respected, or comfortable going there, let alone getting involved. In addition, parents expressed that even when they wanted to or could be involved at the secondary level, they found it harder to engage and volunteer in middle and high schools. Even when parents were not engaged much with schools, parents who participated in this study generally spoke well of schools. One program, in particular, that was viewed favorably was the dual language program at Jefferson. The parent with a child in this program expressed feeling very comfortable communicating with her son's Spanish-speaking teachers.

Schools' perceptions of and relationships with the CBO. Some significant themes arose across schools with regard to their relationships with the CBO and staff. To begin with, at all schools, some staff members are more involved with the CBO than others. In fact, CBO staff typically have relationships with a small core group of school staff rather than a deep working relationship across schools. This seemed to stem from multiple factors. First, individual participation of teachers in developing relationships and working with CBO staff often related to personality, effort, and motivation of the teacher. Teachers and school staff more willing to reach out, and more motivated to work with the CBO, are often those with more ongoing relationships with CBO staff. School staff understanding and perceptions of the CBO's goals and work also come into play and influence the extent to which they prioritize and work with CBO staff.

Similarly, more proactive CBO staff, those who reach out to school staff and, possibly more importantly, spend significant time at schools, generally have deeper working relationships with school staff. An elementary ELL teacher indicated that this played a critical role in her relationship and her work with one Academic Coordinator. With a more proactive approach, the teacher had the opportunity to speak with the Academic Coordinator more regularly, which built trust and an ongoing working relationship between the two, and ultimately helped the teacher feel more connected to the CBO, whereby she started turning to the organization more for support with her students. This contrasted greatly with her prior experiences, where she had minimal contact with the previous Academic Coordinator, who did not take a proactive

approach. Further, this teacher's ongoing work with the Academic Coordinator also deepened her understanding and perceptions of the CBO, which helped her see how the CBO could be a resource to her and her work with students.

Various factors seem to influence the extent to which school leaders view the CBO as a resource and prioritize working with them. These include principal priorities for the schools they lead, the degree to which they are aware of and understand the CBO's goals and work, and whether they feel they need the services of the CBO. For example, one elementary principal views the CBO's goals as providing wrap-around services to help break the poverty cycle, including opportunities for exploring the world and receiving homework help. While she recognizes that there is value to the CBO's work, she does not seem to understand the extent of their work, and in turn does not necessarily see the added value the CBO could bring to her staff's work with students. She expressed a desire to work with the organization more at some point, but in her first few years as principal of this school, developing a relationship with the CBO was not a top priority, as she explains:

So I know that the relationship [with the CBO] is good. Again, with me coming in new this year, I just haven't explored the potential of it yet. I know it's there. I get excited about it, but it just hasn't been—as I go through priorities, it just doesn't hit the first priority. But the relationship is good...what we know is it's an apartment in which high poverty, high needs families are identified—[the CBO] is supporting that. And it's one more piece, because what happens is schools take a lot of responsibility for that. And [knowing] that a family is getting access to the food they need or the clothing they need or all the resources—it's that piece that [the CBO] offers that is just such additional help. [And] without them, it does fall on the schools, or families kind of flounder.

--Kathy (ES Principal)

Another elementary principal views the CBO goals as building community structure, building relationships with schools, and targeting the needs of students in support of what is going on in school for families. He also talked about seeing the CBO as creating ties between school staff and families when communication is not really happening and supporting students with their academic future, their social and emotional development and well-being, and with relationship-building. In other words, he has a relatively comprehensive understanding of the CBO and its work. He offers his perspective on the CBO's work and his hopes for the future:

I think [the CBO has] helped me and others understand the concerns that [families] have. And they're not always concerns, I mean, concerns, comments, praise, all of that. So, I think that the communication lines are stronger. That's really it. Understanding the family structure, challenges they may have...I think [the] communication piece is the biggest thing...if we can set up some monthly meetings with [the CBO] to come into our school and have a conversation with me and our other administrative staff or support staff, to be able to help us stay on top of what's going on...that often helps. If they say [we] have students and they're really struggling with the fact that there's this gang stuff going on around the complex, well we can facilitate meetings here about gang prevention, and we have. Or if there's a homework thing and they're really challenged with that, we have intervention programs, we have after school programs. There's a way to make connections, but I think the more we can set up a regularly routined structure to meet with them, then the other pieces fall into place.

--Ray (ES Principal)

School level can also influence the extent to which principals understand and work with the CBO. While the middle school principal, who formerly worked as an elementary school principal, understands to a great extent what the CBO is all about, and she believes in their work and their ability to support schools, she described working more regularly and closely with the organization as an elementary school principal. Further, in her role as a middle school principal, she seemed to know a bit less than she used to in terms of the work the CBO is doing with students and families. The principal of the high school lies on the far end of this spectrum in that he had no knowledge of the CBO, or the fact that CBO staff were working with the ELL department at his school. Important to note is that he and his administration were new to the school that year; however, data was collected at the end of the school year.

Secondary teachers tend to work less with the CBO than elementary school teachers, although they generally view the CBO as a resource. For example, the ELL teacher at the middle school, who is the primary contact for the CBO, does a lot of the legwork (that CBO staff do) on her own, such as home visits and communicating and developing relationships with families. However, the CBO helps her connect with families, and connect families with resources, like food or school supplies. She visits the CBO site much like she would visit a family home, in that she views the CBO as part of the community where she can go to spend time with and get to know students and families outside of the classroom, as she explains:

I do a lot of home visits. [I] kind of do that myself because all the contact information I have—and I see them every day. So, I mean, it is kind of funny—I don't even look at the contact information—I say, hey, what's your building number? What's your number? And I just kind of show up. And they all invite me. So if they invite me, I try and go...[The Youth Coordinator] is completely and totally helpful—don't get me wrong—but I have just kind of made my own way...if I am [there] and I want to pop into [the CBO] and help or say hi, I mean, I know he would be more than welcoming for that.

--Kayla (MS ELL Teacher)

High school teacher engagement with the CBO offered a slightly different picture. For example, the Youth Coordinator described the high school as having a lot of bureaucracy in place and a strong internal community, both of which make it hard to break in as “an outsider”. This ELL teacher helps illustrate:

And [Lila], at that point had said, they've built a relationship with the elementary schools and a little bit with the middle school but were just having a really hard time building any sort of relationship with the high school. Which is true. And I, myself, am guilty of not responding to the emails or not getting back to them just because it slips out of mind and there is so much going on. How else would I describe the relationship? They don't really have one, other than that, with the school. I definitely have been there a couple times this year. I am trying to remember if last year I did anything with them or not. I feel like I did something last year and I can't remember, but it wouldn't have been longer than that.

--Jacquelyn (HS ELL Teacher)

Another ELL teacher talked about valuing the CBO's work and seeing potential in working together with CBO staff, yet something was preventing her from engaging more and working regularly with the CBO—something she struggled to explain. Secondary teachers' work with the CBO tends to be more intermittent, revolving around a problem or a specific need, as opposed to functioning as an ongoing relationship. One could surmise that some teachers feel so stretched thin, that the idea of reaching out and engaging with an organization in this way may seem like just one more thing they do not have the time or energy to do. Important to note is that this can be the case at elementary schools too, depending greatly on various factors already mentioned.

Even in cases where CBO staff are able to build relationships with school staff that lead to regular communication and ongoing work together, school staff turnover can throw a wrench in the process. On the one hand, CBO staff can invest a lot of time and effort into building

relationships with teachers or principals, only to have to start over if and when they leave the school. This can create barriers to working together, especially when turnover rates are high, which they can be in high needs districts. With principal turnover in particular, CBO staff can go from working with someone who prioritizes family engagement, cultural competence, and the CBO's work, to a principal who holds different views, and therefore, has no interest in working with the CBO. On the positive side, a school could go from the latter to the former, as well, which would create an opportunity from a challenge. Also feasible is a principal who prioritizes family engagement and cultural competence, but has the knowledge and skills to do the work of engaging families without the CBO, or at least, that may be the principal's perception.

While relationships with teachers and principals are important to the CBO's work with schools, relationships with office staff can play an essential role in both helping CBO staff feel welcome in the school, as well as connecting them with teachers. This may simply be a connection that results in completed paperwork for CBO funding purposes, or it can go beyond that. The principal can also play an important role in connecting CBO staff with teachers and encouraging teachers to work with the CBO.

Understanding the challenges faced across schools helps illuminate the need for the CBO's cultural brokering services. The struggles schools have with understanding how to navigate the diversity of family cultures and languages, knowing how to engage families, the lack of resources available to support non-English speakers, and the lack of time and resources needed to support all students in being successful, all speak to the role that the CBO can, and in some cases, does play for schools. Different school perceptions of and approaches to families sheds further light on how the CBO can work with schools to help them better understand and engage families. However, school challenges, perceptions of, and approaches to families all demonstrate the barriers that the CBO may encounter when trying to establish relationships and work with schools in the first place.

The same holds true with regard to family perceptions of schools, in that the work required to broker relationships between families and schools will look different, given differences in the way families view schools. In some instances, the CBO may have to put more time and energy into convincing families that schools actually do care about them and their children if they are going to help them engage with school staff. Whereas, in other instances,

families may feel positively about the schools and school staff, but they may not know how to engage with either. All of these factors can contribute to school perceptions of the CBO and its work, and the relationships that may or may not develop as a result. How school staff perceive the CBO and its work influences the extent to which they may view the CBO as a resource and what kind of resource. This ultimately impacts and determines the nature of the CBO's work with schools, as does the manner in which relationships are established, built, and maintained. Community and school conditions and circumstances do not provide the only contexts for the CBO's work. The CBO itself comes with its own set of contextual circumstances and conditions, all of which contribute to shaping the work of the organization.

How CBO Conditions Shape the Work

Given conditions at both ends of the relationship between schools and families, organizational structure, leadership, and other attributes of the CBO itself create conditions influencing the way it does, or can, act as a cultural broker. For one, the *organizational structure* of the CBO, both within and across sites, impacts the staff's capacity to, and extent to which they are able to, work effectively with families. The CBO also faces a number of *challenges that influence their work with families and schools*, including those confronted by many nonprofit organizations, as well as those specific to this particular organization. Although the CBO faces substantial challenges, it also has access to a number of *resources and partnerships that support its work with families and schools*.

How sites are organized to work with families and schools. At the time of data collection, CBO sites were only somewhat connected, although they were starting to move toward increased connection and more standardization. While sites generally have similar programs, they have had the flexibility and autonomy to do things differently. For example, three sites offer early learning programs, but each program is distinct, with varying goals and different program names. In addition to program distinctions, the sites generally do not work very closely with one another. Interactions among different site staff tend to be more situational, such as implementing a collaborative program, like the Strengthening Families program. People in Coordinator positions interact more often than other staff. Youth Coordinators will plan various

student activities for two sites to do together, and Academic Coordinators are starting to share lesson plans, snack ideas, field trips, and other activities on a common webpage. Other staff seem to interact more through occasional emails.

Although the CBO does not necessarily view themselves as a cohesive team working together across sites, each site functions as a very tight and cohesive team, with a great deal of communication and collaboration focused on integrating the work and keeping informed to support one another. Site managers and staff also referred to strategic organization of roles, responsibilities, and communication in effort to ensure they provide the best integrated services they can, given their resources. For example, at a larger site, the Site Manager explained how the Family Advocates are assigned to work with the families of students in a particular program, so that they can work together with one Coordinator to support that group of students and families.

Each program has a budget for food, instruction, supplies, and field trips. Most After School Programs and early learning programs are filled to capacity, except the newest site, Site 3, which has open enrollment for both programs. While the staff at Site 3 would like to serve more people in the community, the smaller number of students in their programs does offer the benefit of more in-depth relationships. For example, having a small number of youth in the program allows the Youth Coordinator to function more like a case manager and be deeply involved in supporting each student with whom she works.

Challenges influencing the CBO's work with families and schools. The CBO has been dealing with a variety of challenges since the beginning of the recession, including, but not limited to, funding issues associated with the economy. While the economic downturn certainly has impacted the amount of money they have been able to generate, the CBO's leadership turnover and transition has hit the organization's fundraising capacity hard. Since 2008, the CBO has had four different Executive Directors, one Interim Director, and the complete turnover of an administrative staff, which essentially "grew up" with the organization. With all the leadership transition, came a lack of clarity for site staff regarding organizational goals. An Academic Coordinator reflects on these challenges:

I would say it is tough not knowing exactly what to do or what my requirements are. Because as Academic Coordinator I was never given a list of [this] is how many times you should talk to an individual teacher or you should check up on

this, or all your curriculum should include this, this and this. I love the fact I can do whatever I want and teach whatever I am passionate about. But it would also be nice to know what specifically the organization wants me to do and focus [on]...if I don't know what [the CBO] wants me to focus on, I might forget it or stray and do something else that is more fun or not as academically based. Because we talk about being a strength-based program and how we are not just focused on doing homework or gaining a grade level or whatever. So I get kind of mixed signals sometimes.

--Carol (Academic Coordinator)

Some issues specific to the last Executive Director, who led the organization during the majority of the data collection process, included a lack of transparency and communication, both of which further contributed to a lack of clarity around goals. Staff also spoke about the unexpected culture of fear that resulted from this Director's approach to leadership, whereby people were worried they would get fired for speaking up about things, essentially what happened to the longstanding administrative staff who all left the organization. A number of site staff expressed frustration and concern about the disconnection they felt between themselves and the administration, which was a far cry from how the organization had operated under previous Executive Directors prior to 2008. Staff also talked about feeling disconnected from the Board.

Site staff turnover also presents challenges at most sites. This seems to be particularly true with regard to younger, and often Caucasian staff, who function as Coordinators for the organization. While the positions are demanding and ideally require a number of qualifications, the people who end up in the positions typically are under-qualified, even though they tend to be motivated and passionate, which can contribute greatly to their ability to do the work. However, given the typical age and stage in life of the people hired for these positions, it seems to be more of a stepping stone toward on their career path, as opposed to being viewed as a long-term position. In addition, because most of the Coordinators come in relatively inexperienced, they can require a fair amount of training and support, taking other staff members away from their work with families and schools. Further, the lack of organizational and programmatic documentation results in each new person having to start over to a certain extent. If this were a long-term investment of resources, it would certainly be cost effective, but given that these positions tend to have relatively high turnover, any time and effort to train individuals hired becomes less cost effective, and detracts from the stability of the CBO, as well as the relationships that former staff had developed.

The fact that most CBO site staff play multiple roles and do more than one job for the organization exacerbates the aforementioned issues. For example, two Family Advocates also function as Community Developers at their respective sites, and during the course of the study, both Site Managers shifted from managing one site to managing two, which presented various challenges, as this Site Manager explains:

[W]hen I was just at one site I was really able to observe programs all the time and I was really able to interact with staff one on one all the time in a really, I felt, productive way. So I felt like the kind of program support and support of supervisory role was really emphasized for me and that's what I felt was really important—to make sure that our programs were going smoothly and progressing and that people felt taken care of...So now, in terms of site managing, it's been difficult to adapt to that kind of new definition of what I'm doing. I feel like the staff really has to be more sort of self-starting and independent, which is great. I think that's really important for everyone to be, but especially with so much turnover and young people making up such a huge part of our staff, it's difficult for me because it's not like a classroom, where you get a teacher who's been trained to be a professional teacher, who supposedly knows the ins and outs of how to be a teacher, coming in and doing it. There's a lot of sort of hand holding that has to happen [because] the people that you're getting are young at the beginning of their careers...So there's just a lot of direction that I feel people need, that I don't feel really equipped to give them anymore.

--Kristine (Site Manager)

Due to a lack of resources, some sites cannot serve all the community members who would like to participate in programs. On the other hand, some families with children in one or more programs limit their participation in other activities and events. Some site staff find this particularly troubling, especially when parents miss out on information that can enable them to support their kids, as opposed to depending on the organization to support them. This Site Manager/Family Advocate expressed some frustration with this and other behaviors:

[I would like to see the CBO] make the things mandatory. Really. In some ways. Some things. We need to force the families in some ways to do something for them. I really believe that. Because always the kids who need more are the parents who are less involved in everything – that's the reality. The kids who are doing well or at least better are parent[s] who are willing to come to classes, to meetings, to the school.

--Lila (Site Manager & Family Advocate)

There are also families who choose not to engage with and participate in CBO programs for other reasons, such as privacy concerns or cultural norms that make it difficult to be involved. The lack of resources, including key people, as well as money and the capacity to conduct strategic planning, all contribute to an organizational shift from one that worked at both the individual and system levels to a more individualized approach. An example is the CBO's former cultural competency training program, which targeted schools, districts, and organizations, providing professional training for educators, administrators, and other social service providers, with the goal of helping them effectively serve culturally diverse children and families. The CBO has not been able to sustain this, or any other program at a systems-level (i.e., school, district, organization), which could contribute to their work with families and schools. Therefore, their work focuses on individuals and communities, as a Site Manager explains:

[From] our beginnings, the idea was to tutor kids so that they would be better prepared for their in-class experience, and to get better grades, which I think is still definitely a major effort and a major goal is to really give that academic support. But I think with the creation of [the cultural competency training program], and this sort of, a deeper understanding of what our families were up against, and who they actually are as people and where they're coming from, I do think that goal shifted slightly to be less about conforming to the system and more about figuring out ways to make the system more responsive to the people who are actually in the schools. So, now it seems to have kind of taken a step—I mean individual program Coordinators attempt to do that kind of cultural competency work in a small, individualized way, but it's not the same kind of like, "This is what our organization stands for" kind of idea. I think everyone feels that that's what we stand for, but we don't have the capacity to really make it happen.

--Kristine (Site Manager)

How resources and partnerships support the CBO's work with families and schools.

Although the CBO does not have access to all the resources it needs to fully realize their goals, the organization does have various partnerships and resources it can and does tap to support the work (See Table 6.2). These resources and partnerships help the CBO with such things as establishing site locations within the community, connecting families to inexpensive and free resources to help meet basic needs and develop skills, connecting families with enrichment opportunities, connecting families with opportunities to engage in school and district decisions, and providing additional supports for students.

The CBO works pretty closely with various governmental agencies, including the county housing authority, the State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), utilities, and city governments. The partnership with the housing authority has allowed the CBO to locate sites in public housing apartment complexes, where services are in demand and overhead (i.e., rent) costs are little to none. While some CBO sites operate out of two or more apartments, others do so out of community centers built by the housing authority. City governments generally provide marketing and financial support to the CBO, recognizing that they are part of the community and trying to improve community members' situations and lives. DSHS offers various supports for low-income individuals and families, and the CBO helps connect community members with these supports, such as free healthcare plans, counseling, and other health and social services. The CBO staff also help community members get access to discounted utility rates. Additionally, DSHS and other organizations refer people they work with to the CBO.

Through the CBO's relationships with local health-related organizations, they help families get access to free or inexpensive healthcare at or from nearby clinics. These organizations also hold health fairs, where they will provide various free health screenings, including dental and vision, along with information. Through their relationships with these organizations, the CBO has access to information about these services, which they share with the community. CBO staff also have connections with a number of other resources in the area that help them meet families' basic needs, such as food and clothing banks.

Although many staff speak Spanish, the CBO has limited access to interpretation and translation services for other languages from places like the Red Cross. Because access to these services is limited, CBO staff may rely on children and youth to help interpret and translate; however, this is not optimal for various reasons. CBO staff may tap other service-providing organizations in the area as well, and either connect community members with the organization, or invite the organization to come and conduct workshops on topics like domestic violence.

Similarly, CBO staff will work with education-related organizations, some education institutions and others nonprofit organizations, as means for connecting families with services.

Table 6.2. CBO Resources and Partnerships

Type of Resource	Organization(s)	Nature of Relationship or Resource	Resources
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Authority City government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Space/Building Financial support
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSHS Local healthcare organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Information-based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health fair Free/Inexpensive Clinics Free/Inexpensive insurance
Basic Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food bank Clothing bank Red Cross 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources of resources to help meet families' basic needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Clothing Translation
Education-Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Consortium Community College Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships Service Donators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups to get parent input on schools English classes
Arts & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports complex Recreational organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free/Inexpensive access to soccer fields and rest of facilities
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nonprofit technology organizations Mobile computer lab 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic computer classes Computer access Computers
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Americorp Tutoring Administrative Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic support during CBO programs
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening Families Program Various 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fee-based Curriculum/Program Free workshops in area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training to implement program Informative workshops to help support families

An Academic Coordinator describes how, when possible, she helps families access early learning opportunities that better suit their needs than the programs offered at the CBO site:

[Parents] usually prefer for their kids to be ECEAP because it's a four day all-day program. So it's way more convenient for them if it works out for their kid. And that's basically it. Also, it frees up our enrollment for the other people who live here and can't get into ECEAP. But ECEAP financial cut-off has gotten a lot more strict this year from what I understand, and families who would have qualified before haven't been qualified. So we have a lot of young kids on the waiting list who haven't been able to get into ECEAP. So whoever can get into ECEAP it's really good for everyone because their kid gets more attention and [more] preparation for kindergarten, and we get to get more kids in here.

--Erin (Academic Coordinator & Early Learning Coordinator)

The CBO also provides a space for various education-related organizations to come and work with the community, through classes (i.e., English and computer), workshops, and in one case, focus groups meant to get family input and inform schools in the area. The CBO has an ongoing relationship with local libraries, whose staff come to sites to offer information for families, bring the mobile library bus to the community, and offer workshops and programs at the library.

CBO staff, particularly the Academic and Youth Coordinators, have a lot of connections and relationships with organizations that offer arts and recreation programs for free or at

discounted rates. They may simply provide families with information about the organizations, or Coordinators may work with the organizations to plan a field trip, or an event for students or families. The CBO also connects students with career-related organizations, such as the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE).

Another resource enabling CBO staff to support and serve the community is volunteers. All sites have an Americorp volunteer, who provides assistance during student programs, and some sites are fortunate to have other volunteers who work with students, such as retired people from the community and community college students. At least one retired volunteer at Site 2 also volunteers with the ELL program at the high school, which creates an additional bridge between the high school and the CBO. Also, some of the community college volunteers live in the community where they volunteer, which has the potential to provide positive role models for younger kids.

Finally, some of the CBO staff seek out information and training to support their work. However, professional development seems like a rarity among those CBO staff who participated in the study. The only other mention of training or education was Strengthening Families Program training that staff participated in to prepare for implementation of the curriculum themselves. The lack of training for staff seemed to be related to funding and budget issues within the organization.

CBO conditions not only provide a backdrop for the work of the organization, they have a lot to do with shaping what the CBO is able to do, and the possible impacts of the CBO's work. While the decentralized organizational structure allows each site to differentiate their work with families and schools, and shape what they do based on the people, the institutions, and the aforementioned community and school conditions, it can also result in some site staff working in isolation to a certain extent, having limited opportunities to collaborate and learn from others in similar positions. On the other hand, the collaboration and communication within site teams helps contribute to the relatively seamless nature of the staff's work with families and schools, whereby multiple staff members stay informed about the families they are serving. The myriad challenges facing the organization generally limit the extent to which the CBO can realize its goals and positively impact the relationships between families and schools. Underlying many of these challenge is a lack of funding, which results in limited resources available to do the work to

the extent that it can have the desired outcomes. Fortunately, the CBO does have access to various resources and has developed a number of partnerships external to the organization, which enable them to better support families and schools than they otherwise would have. While many of these resources and partnerships allow the CBO to help families meet basic needs, others help CBO staff provide access to enrichment and education-related opportunities, such as arts and recreation, input in school reform, college information, and one-on-one academic support.

What Makes the Work Cultural Brokering

As the last two chapters have demonstrated, the CBO staff engages in what I have described as *cultural brokering* between recent immigrant families and mainstream culture entities, such as schools. They do so by participating in a variety of bridging activities, including: translating language, school culture and U.S. culture; playing an intermediary role to educate and help families adapt to U.S. social systems and school social systems, help schools understand and adapt to families, and help make interactions more effective; and advocating for families in school and other contexts. The CBO approaches their work in an incremental manner, in essence *layering the brokering process*, whereby the different strands of work create outcomes that build upon one another to help move families and host society institutions toward stronger cultural connections. As part of this process, CBO site staff members operate as a team, whereby different staff play both distinct and overlapping roles as they *enlist mechanisms that contribute to continuity between family cultures and mainstream culture*.

Layering the Brokering Process

The cultural brokering process enlisted by the CBO is not linear or simple. Rather, the staff take a multi-faceted approach to this work. *Employing bicultural actors* equips the organization to lay the foundation for sociocultural capital development, the first layer of the brokering work. They then *design student- and family-centered programs that acknowledge and respect cultural roots* as means for developing sociocultural capital within the community. *Encouraging self-sufficiency and interdependence within a “foreign” cultural context* not only

helps solidify the sociocultural capital within the community, but it also helps with the next layer of the brokering work, extending and activating sociocultural capital beyond the community, and particularly in schools and school-related contexts.

Employing bicultural actors. Staffing Family Advocate positions with Spanish-speaking Latina women, who were once recent immigrants themselves, provides bicultural actors to attend to the first layer of the CBO's brokering work, laying the foundation for sociocultural capital development. This can be viewed as part of the brokering process in that it helps families move in directions that can enable them to connect with mainstream culture, particularly that of U.S. schools. The Family Advocates have the ability to span immigrant and mainstream cultures, communicating mainstream values to immigrant families and vice versa (Gentemann & Whitehead, 1983). Given that they were once recent immigrants themselves, they have a level of understanding that can help them relate to families and their situations. They potentially share a common set of experiences and ways of construing who they are in a new culture. While not universally true for all possible cultural pairings, for many families, the Family Advocate speaks their language and shares ethnic and/or cultural roots—making it much easier to communicate. Further, Family Advocates offer role models for family members because they represent people who have been in similar shoes, figured out this new terrain, navigated it successfully to the extent that they now play a role whereby they help others (Gentemann & Whitehead, 1983).

Designing student- and family-centered programs that acknowledge and respect cultural roots. The next layer of brokering, the development of sociocultural capital within the community, occurs in great part through programs that have been designed to center on the needs, interests, values, and input of students and families. Program Coordinators and Community Developers play the primary roles in fulfilling this aspect of the brokering process. While the CBO prioritizes children and youth, they recognize that they typically are members of a family, and that families are members of a community. As a result, they focus their work on students, families, and the community, as well as on schools, where students spend a lot of time. The CBO's work reflects the notion that place matters; therefore, the organization strives to create a place where kids can go and feel safe after school, where their interests matter, and where they have a voice. The CBO also offers a place where parents can access resources and tools to help meet their families' needs without feeling deficient. This Site Manager illustrates:

[W]e really try to design our programs to be family friendly, and by that I mean, work with families' schedules and allow them to feel welcome to be involved in whatever way, and responsive to the fact that a lot of the families maybe don't have the resources to provide academic support as well as the sort of extracurricular support to their kids. There's sort of a delicacy about that because the point is not to make them feel deficient, but rather to [help] give them the tools to be able to meet their kids' needs.

--Kristine (Site Manager)

While CBO staff view their work with schools as central to their work with students and families, they do not view student programs as an extension of the school day. Generally they have broader, more holistic goals for students that tend to align more with the CBO's overarching goals of healthy and safe families and communities. At times these can conflict or create tension with school goals. A Site Manager explains:

[S]ometimes it can get tense and it's sort of like, we think that our interests are the same—we think that our goals are the same—but we're probably going about them in different ways a lot of the time. Because [if] we take the role of the advocate, we sort of end up at odds with an institution that ultimately is a bureaucracy that doesn't necessarily [have] the ability [to] deal in such a nuanced way with each individual issue, [so] yeah, there are challenges for sure.

--Kristine (Site Manager)

The CBO centers a lot of work on providing supports to enable parents to improve their families' situations, generally through education and socialization, ensuring that families have both a choice and a voice in the process. CBO staff view parents as able adults who can choose what they want and do not want to participate in, as well as how far they want to go with various endeavors, and the level of involvement they want to have. CBO staff talked about trying to equip parents to support their kids' success based on parents and families' own version of what success is, helping families meet their goals versus imposing goals on them. This Family Advocate/Community Developer helps illustrate:

I think [our relationships with families are] based about respect and validate where the family come from and know the stage where the family is. And what I say where they come from is not about precisely a country or a culture, it's more than that, it's their own individual thinking and their own individual perspective. I think that is the thing that I think we do that, that we really validate the family in their own perspective.

--Valerie (Family Advocate & Community Developer)

In keeping with the emphasis on helping families meet their needs and goals, the staff views their approach to this work as differentiated, or highly dependent on what families need and want.

For many of the organization's student programs, enrollment is needs-based. For example, students are enrolled in the early learning program and After School Program at most sites based on referrals, which can come from teachers, parents, or even CBO staff members, and referrals can be based on academic and/or social needs. The CBO also differentiates support services through the different workshops they offer for adults, as these generally are based on input from community members or staff perceptions of needs they see within the community. Differentiated support occurs through individualized work with students and families outside of programs, as well as within them. Not only is the work differentiated within each site, but each site provides supports and services specific to the community served. For example, in addition to programs and supports for students and parents, one CBO site offers supports and services for elder community members because of their representation in the community.

By developing a deeper understanding of families' cultures, perspectives and experiences, the CBO is better able to demonstrate respect for and validate cultures and experiences, which can contribute to both a sense of trust between parents and CBO staff members, as well as to parents' sense of empowerment, given that their culture and perspective is being validated as meaningful and worthy of respect. Further, the more CBO staff understand about families, the better they can accommodate them, given their particular situations. For example, when scheduling programs, many CBO staff take family schedules and needs into consideration, making efforts to accommodate them, as this Family Advocate explains:

I tend to do my Women's Group [once] a month. In the afternoon, 6 o'clock. That [the] moms came and has already like giving dinner to the family and that's a time that everybody ask me. Because I asked them what time is good for you? ...I have a child care for them because I notice that when I not have a child care for any reason...no everybody came. Because it's hard...And I try to do different days. Like some days it's Tuesdays, some days it's Wednesday, some days it's Thursday. Because some moms work Tuesdays in the afternoon. And some moms Wednesdays and says, "[Could] you try to do different days every month?" And I try to do different days...I rotate it for them.

--Cassandra (Family Advocate)

As she describes, the CBO often accommodates families by providing childcare during adult programs. This not only allows parents to attend CBO programs, events and activities, it also provides the children with the potential to engage and connect with other children, and learn strategies for coping without parents, which can be a challenge, particularly if the family culture tends to align more closely with attachment parenting.

In addition to CBO staff learning about the cultures represented in the community, the organization also creates opportunities for community members to learn about one another's cultures and perspectives, often through events, but also through programs and activities. The extent to which this contributes to integration and interdependence across different cultures, particularly when there are language differences, however, seems to be relatively limited and an area for improvement. Nonetheless, the community-based approach that the CBO takes to their work still helps contribute to community empowerment, interdependence and independence.

Encouraging self-sufficiency and interdependence within a “foreign” cultural context. Moving students and families towards self-sufficiency and interdependence occurs through the next layer of brokering, the extension and activation of sociocultural capital beyond the community, particularly in schools. Through this work, the CBO seeks to enable people to operate individually and collectively within a host culture with confidence and without sacrificing their own cultural roots. This layer of the cultural brokering work is fundamentally cultural in two ways. First, focusing on self-sufficiency helps families take on U.S. attributes, which can enable them to function in a country that prizes those things. At the same time, promoting and supporting interdependence reflects an understanding that families have a community of interest among each other—not only cultural, but also economic, and political. This is a strand of the brokering work in which all staff members contribute and play a role.

The CBO's work reflects the sentiment that self-sufficiency stems from personal responsibility and independence. The staff encourage students to take ownership of and responsibility for their learning, their lives, and their future through various means. For example, the CBO assumes that providing a structured time and space for students to complete their homework helps send a message to kids that this matters, and can help instill in them the habit of taking responsibility for one's learning by making time to complete homework in a conducive space. The CBO also tries to tap and encourage leadership qualities within their student

communities at all levels—preschool, elementary and secondary. At the secondary level, they emphasize these values through their Youth Program enrollment process, which requires students to demonstrate responsibility by having them apply to participate in the program. Program content also reflects the CBO’s efforts to encourage responsibility in that it focuses on such things as student and group projects, discussions of community service and what it means to be civic-minded, and connections between education and life.

The CBO does not limit its emphasis and work around responsibility and self-sufficiency to children and youth. The staff approaches their work with parents similarly, albeit through different means. For example, by connecting parents with a wider network of resources, information, and connections, they attempt to provide them with the autonomy and ability to choose what is right for their own families. This process tends to involve scaffolding, whereby CBO staff typically start by stepping in for parents—making calls, translating documents, going places and talking to school staff or institutional representatives *for* them. The hope, and in many cases the outcome, is that through information, encouragement, and reassurance, parents gradually come to do these things for themselves.

Scaffolding occurs with students as well. The CBO staff does not simply expect students to take responsibility and be independent, they provide many supports to help with the process. By helping students develop themselves both academically and socially, providing the supports they need along the way, the CBO staff help contribute to students’ responsibility and independence. Hand in hand with supporting students in this way, is educating and supporting parents—helping to connect them with employment, the tools to be able to support their kids and families, and what is needed to improve their situations. This includes English, computer, and parenting education classes. It also includes information about the K-12 schools and schooling in the U.S., as well as college requirement and preparation information. Further, it includes access to resources, such as computers, fax machines, copy machines, along with employment opportunities, healthcare coverage, and various discounts.

While these resources and supports contribute to parents’ ability to be independent, CBO staff also help parents understand U.S. cultural expectations with regard to schooling, which oftentimes differs substantially from their home countries. For example, in many countries parents are expected to take a hands-off approach when it comes to education and schooling,

which contrasts with U.S. schooling expectations, or some families may have come from a place where they did not have access to any education. In addition to information regarding K-12 schools and education, the CBO also makes efforts to ensure that families have access to information about college and career preparation and readiness. Interestingly, in one particular instance, this information came from school staff, but it occurred at a CBO event, and was in response to parent questions, as opposed to school staff planning to talk about it. As the CBO works to encourage students and families within the community to be independent, ultimately, their aim is to contribute to the health and safety of the community. Therefore, they also work to foster relationships and interdependence within families and among the community.

Intertwined in the work described above, the CBO constantly tries to connect community members with each other, develop their mutual understanding, and build relationships among them through their programs, activities, and events. They focus specifically on community building with students in the different student programs, explicitly emphasizing the supportive role these relationships can play in their lives, particularly when they do not find the support elsewhere. They do the same with parents, especially mothers, who otherwise may be prone to isolation and a lack of support. In addition to engaging parents in community-building activities through their programs, when they observe parents (usually mothers) demonstrating interdependence, such as sharing childcare to be able to attend a school meeting together, or offering to share extra food with someone who is struggling to put food on the table, CBO staff make sure they acknowledge and encourage such efforts.

Enlisting Mechanisms that Contribute to Continuity

Between Family Cultures and Mainstream Culture

To help create continuity between family cultures and mainstream culture that contributes to strengthening connections, particularly with schools, the CBO staff enlist three primary techniques. The first is *cultivating insider status within the community contexts*. The second is *positioning themselves as a resource for schools*. Both of these mechanisms enable the CBO to go through the process of *empowering families and equipping schools with the tools to engage productively and contribute to school improvement*.

Cultivating insider status within community contexts. Part of the multi-faceted work with immigrant families and schools that moves toward continuity between family and school cultures involves practicing the technique of cultivating insider status within the community context. The CBO does this first by positioning themselves as an integral part of the community. Although many organizations would describe themselves as community-based, and accurately so, this CBO takes that descriptor one step further by locating their sites directly within the apartment complexes where families live. For various reasons, such as those described in previous chapters, this seems to contribute to the CBO's ability to function as part of the community, and in some instances, as somewhat of an extended family member.

By basing their work directly in the community, they are able to build trust with and among students and families, which contributes to their ability to function as part of the community, as this Academic Coordinator/Early Learning Coordinator explains:

So I wanted my program to be about creating a safe space for the kids who live here. And to me that means a space where they can come here and they don't feel like they're going to be left out or pushed out of a social dynamic or an activity. I wanted them to have adults they can trust here. I wanted them to feel like the things that they were interested in mattered and that they had a voice in how we developed the program...I wanted the overall structure to be something that supported [community] ideals.

--Erin (Academic Coordinator & Early Learning Coordinator)

Developing an understanding of family experiences, cultures and values helps the CBO staff contribute to a sense of safety and support in the community, not only for children, but for parents as well, especially mothers. This Family Advocate/Community Developer, herself an immigrant Latina mother who used to live in the community, illustrates:

[The Women's Group] is a support group...I provide resources that women can learn how [to care for] themselves...Yeah, it's different stuff. It depend on what they need...It depend what the women ask, that they want to do...I think we are learning together [because] most of the women they are fighting with the isolate issue...If they are okay emotionally they are going to be okay and they're going to feel confident to do anything... Sometimes it's really hard. It's really hard to see women crying. It's really hard to hear bad issues. It's really hard to see a lot of problems around them in how much they are struggling and a lot of difficulties. Children, husband, economy.

--Natalia (Community Developer & Family Advocate)

Working to ensure that programs are representative of the community by making this a consideration for program enrollment offers an example of how the CBO attempts to encourage respect for, and illustrate the benefits of the community's diversity, by reflecting this diversity in their programs. The CBO also functions as a community member, or even an extended family member, through their advocacy work, trying to ensure that students and families get what they need from school, be it information or fair treatment.

Developing and demonstrating this level of understanding of, in addition to respect for, families enables the CBO to build trusting relationships with families, an essential component of having insider status. They also take a grassroots approach to their work, seeking and valuing parent and student input, respecting parent and family autonomy, and implementing programs based on the information gathered. Further, many CBO staff see themselves as learning a lot from the community, which helps create a more symbiotic relationship between the CBO and community, as opposed to one where the CBO operates as more of an authority figure. This Family Advocate offers her perspective:

Well this site is so amazing in many ways, and in the same time very challenged. First because it's very diverse and we serve people from many parts of Latin America, many parts of the middle east, many parts of Europe and Russia. So it's really a lot of different cultures. So that, it's very, very nice for me because my job and my learning process is really bigger and bigger every time. So I feel that I am learning more than that sometimes that I am serving. I think it's lovely but at the same time it's challenge because you have to try to accommodate many things.

--Valerie (Family Advocate & Community Developer)

In essence, by cultivating insider status in the community, the CBO is building the kinds of relationships with families that teachers aim to build with students, whereby they become an integral part of families' lives and source of support, albeit typically for a limited amount of time. The depth of these relationships allows for families to feel a level of trust, whereby they feel comfortable taking advantage of the organization's programs and services.

Positioning themselves as a resource for schools. Because the CBO's efforts focus on families and schools, and building bridges between the two, they make efforts to position themselves as a resource for schools. One strategy CBO staff enlist, that seems to be particularly effective, is becoming a presence in schools. In doing this, they benefit from walking the fine

line of spending significant time at schools, yet not being seen as a burden to teachers and other school staff. Instead, they position themselves as a resource and source of support for teachers and families. Through these strategies, as well as reaching out to school staff and making themselves available via phone and email, CBO staff attempt to not only build, but also maintain relationships with school staff. Interestingly, while the CBO does not officially provide cultural competency training at this time, staff members do act somewhat as cultural competency consultants, in that teachers will seek advice for working with particular families, given the CBO's deeper knowledge and understanding of those families.

Empowering families and equipping schools with the tools to engage productively and contribute to school improvement. Another aspect of the multi-layered work the CBO does with immigrant families and schools to help move each toward cultural continuity involves furnishing families and schools with the tools to engage productively with one another, with the ultimate goal of contributing to the improvement of schools and the quality of education offered. Information plays a key role in achieving this outcome. The CBO shares information with parents regarding their rights, child and youth development, and school and district information. With school staff they share information regarding families that can aid in supporting students.

The CBO's scaffolding of interactions between families and schools goes hand in hand with the sharing of information and plays an instrumental role in the brokering process. For example, in many instances, the CBO provides the link between schools and parents, often in the form of information, that creates social network closure around students, whereby crucial information in service of supporting students does not fall through the cracks, but instead reaches parents and/or school staff members. The CBO also helps support school-family connections by advising school staff regarding the best course of action to take with particular families, given their culture and/or situation. Another way in which the CBO scaffolds interactions between families and schools is by accompanying families to conferences and meetings, and by encouraging families to go, and/or bringing families to school activities and events.

Finally, the work the CBO does to strengthen communities provides a key aspect of the work that can contribute to a sense of family empowerment and help families not only engage productively with schools, but help improve schools. The CBO attempts to do this through sociocultural capital development, extension and activation, which increases families' capacity to

support one another, increase their voice in schools, get schools to be more responsive to their needs, access accommodations and opportunities, help their children be successful, and improve the quality of schools and education in their communities.

Conclusion

This chapter has delved into the CBO's cultural brokering work to provide a deeper understanding of factors that create and shape the work within community and school contexts, as well as within the CBO. It has also examined what makes the work *cultural* brokering.

Summary

Different aspects of the community context come into play with regard to the CBO's cultural brokering work. Understanding the whole picture of a community—both supportive aspects as well as barriers—enables the CBO to take a more holistic, strengths-based approach to their cultural brokering work. The CBO staff's efforts to develop sociocultural capital within communities are predicated on the notion that sociocultural capital already exists in the community to some extent. In other words, as part of the CBO's strengths-based approach to this work, staff begin by identifying and tapping into pre-existing sociocultural capital in the community. This can take the form of relationships and social networks that exist in the community, which often help the CBO bring more people into their sites to take advantage of programs and services as a result of referrals, and it provides a foundation for building wider social support networks within the community. CBO staff also try to identify cultural resources within the community, which can help them make connections between people, as well as incorporate what they learn into their practices, taking an informed and culturally competent approach to their work and demonstrating respect for the different cultures found in the community. Additionally, the CBO tries to determine various challenges that exist within the community, which helps them support families in addressing and overcoming these challenges.

A number of school conditions also influence and shape the CBO's cultural brokering work. The four schools included in this study help shed light on the opportunities and challenges that exist in schools and how these influence the CBO's cultural brokering work. For example, one common challenge expressed by school staff was the difficulty of knowing how to engage parents and help them feel welcome and comfortable at the school. Part of this stems from the challenge of being able to understand, navigate, and accommodate the diversity of family cultures and languages, as well as the various challenges families might be facing as a result of their experiences getting to and settling in the U.S. This is exacerbated by the lack of resources within schools and the district. In addition to lacking needed resources, all school staff also referred to a lack of time to be able to meet all students' needs. These examples speak to both the need for the CBO's cultural brokering and potential barriers to such work. Further, school perceptions of and approaches to families can play a critical role in determining the extent to which schools work with the CBO and what that work looks like. School conditions can also shape family perceptions, which ultimately influence family engagement and involvement with the schools, and thus impact both the nature and extent of the work the CBO does with families and schools. Finally, how school staff perceive the CBO and its work can greatly influence if, how, and to what extent school staff are willing to get involved and work with the CBO.

Conditions within the CBO also help shape the cultural brokering work. The organizational structure of the CBO, within and across sites, influences the staff's capacity to work effectively with families and the extent to which they can do this. For example, the fact that each site has a relatively small team of staff who work closely together to integrate and streamline their work with families seems to contribute greatly to their ability to work with and support families. On the other hand, the lack of communication and integration across sites, could be viewed as somewhat limiting the potential of the CBO's work. As a nonprofit multi-service organization dependent on external funding, the CBO faces a number of challenges that impact its ability to achieve its goals in working with families and schools. Cutting across all these challenges is a lack of the resources needed to meet all of its goals, which impacts the work they are able to do. Although the CBO faces a number of challenges, they also have many resources that support their work. These supports come primarily from various governmental agencies, other local nonprofit organizations, and volunteers.

The CBO takes a multi-faceted and culturally-rooted approach to engaging in a layered brokering process with families and schools. By employing bicultural actors in Family Advocate positions, the CBO helps lay the foundation for sociocultural development, the first layer of the brokering work. Staffing these positions with Spanish-speaking Latina women, who once were recent immigrants themselves, offers people who can span both the immigrant and mainstream cultures, communicating values of each partner on either end of the brokering relationship. It also provides a role model—someone who has been in a similar position and navigated the terrain successfully. Designing student- and family-centered programs that acknowledge and respect cultural roots helps provide the next layer of brokering, the development of sociocultural capital within the community. The CBO takes a holistic approach to working with students, families, communities, and schools, focusing their work on helping families achieve their goals, versus focusing on school goals. Through their community-based programs, they strive to create safe places for students and families, where their needs, interests and input matter, and they make efforts to enable parents to improve the situation for their families, using educational and social means to do so. Further, by focusing their programs on self-sufficiency and interdependence, the CBO essentially tries to decrease the demand and need for cultural brokering. This acts as the next layer of brokering, the extension and activation of sociocultural capital beyond the community, particularly in schools and school-related contexts. Through this work, the CBO seeks to enable people to operate both individually and collectively within their new host culture with confidence, while not requiring them to sacrifice their own cultural roots.

To contribute to continuity between family cultures and mainstream culture that helps to strengthen connections, particularly between families and schools, the CBO staff enlist three different, yet related mechanisms. Cultivating insider status within community contexts equips the CBO to help bridge gaps and strengthen connections between families and schools. They do this by positioning themselves as a fundamental part of the community, which helps build trusting relationships with families and develop an understanding of both situational and cultural dimensions of the community as means for supporting them as best they can. At the same time, the CBO positions themselves as a resource for schools by becoming a presence in schools, while ensuring that they do not burden teachers. The relationships they develop with school staff help them establish their role as a knowledgeable and useful community-based resource. Empowering families and equipping schools with the tools to engage productively and

contribute to school improvement, another aspect of the multi-layered work the CBO does with immigrant families and schools, acts as another mechanism to contribute to cultural continuity. CBO staff share school and school-related information with families and student and family information with schools, both of which help minimize and bridge gaps between the two partners on either end of the brokering relation. Scaffolding interactions between families and schools provides another means for bridging gaps and strengthening connections between the two. The CBO's efforts to strengthen communities demonstrate how the organization attempts to empower families to engage productively with schools by extending and activating their sociocultural capital as means for getting their needs met and having access to more opportunities.

Discussion

Just as it was important to examine the different layers or phases of the CBO's cultural brokering process, it is also critical to get a sense of how, and to what extent, the CBO's approach to cultural brokering contributes to the goals of improved family-school relationships and community capacity, resulting in parents having a voice in schools. Trust, understanding, communication, and empowerment offer useful lenses for looking inside the development, extension, and activation of sociocultural capital.

Enlisting a strengths-based approach to working with the community, while also learning about the various challenges that they face, contributes to the CBO's deep knowledge and understanding of the community. This understanding helps them design student- and family-centered programs, which also contributes to the CBO's ability to effectively serve and support the community. Adding to their deep community knowledge is the team-based approach sites take to the work, whereby they are organized in such a way that communication occurs regularly across different programs, such that the whole site team has a more complete picture of what is going on with students and families as a result. Not only does this enable site staff to work more effectively with students and families, it also provides the organization with tools to connect families and schools based on that understanding. Further, through their incremental process of sociocultural capital development, extension, and activation, the CBO helps educators and families gradually build relationships over time (Comer 2005).

Additionally, the CBO's understanding of the different school contexts influences and shapes their work as cultural brokers. In some cases, the CBO's understanding of a school provides it with tools to be able to work more effectively with that school. In other cases, the CBO might be working less with a school than would be optimal as a result of various contextual conditions, such as schools not prioritizing family engagement, administrators not valuing the CBO's work, a lack of CBO resources, like necessary staffing and/or staff time to be able to engage a school in the work, or more than likely, a combination of the three. The fact that the organization lacks the level of staffing needed to engage in the work in a way that would help them realize goals more fully comes into play in various contexts.

Much like low staffing levels can impinge the CBO's ability to fully engage schools, it also can limit their capacity to fully serve and meet the needs of all community members, particularly in more diverse contexts where they are serving families representing a variety of cultures and languages. Additionally, the organization's limited resources also restricts the CBO's ability to move the work from an individual level to both an individual and systemic (i.e., school-wide or district-wide) level. As a result, the cultural brokering tends to occur between individuals, making it difficult to result in any sort of school-wide, let alone district-wide, changes that would better meet the needs of and serve families.

The CBO has a belief system that is growth-inspiring, strengths-based, and to a certain extent focused beyond the self, particularly in the case of students. As such, it offers a pathway of activities with the potential to motivate and direct families toward achieving goals important to them (Maton & Salem, 1995). While the CBO's opportunity role structure contains a variety of opportunities for skill development and learning, skill utilization, and the exercise of responsibility, making it multifunctional, it lacks pervasiveness, such that not a lot of roles exist at multiple levels of the organization. In terms of being highly accessible, family members are encouraged to take on new roles and responsibilities that can involve varying levels of skill, responsibility, and self-confidence. As such, the CBO facilitates graduated exposure to learning and mastery experiences needed for skill and resource development linked to goal achievement, yet to a somewhat limited extent. For example, without opportunities for leadership roles and responsibilities, the degree to which parents can have impacts beyond their families, on their communities and society, remain limited. The CBO provides an encompassing, peer-based

support system that engenders a viable sense of community, and helps create a safe space for families' pursuits of personal goals. Finally, the CBO has experienced a great deal of leadership transition over the last few years, which has resulted in a dearth of inspirational, talented, shared, and committed leadership. As such, this has limited the extent to which families have opportunities for learning and mastery, a sense of support and community, and an ability to commit to the CBO's belief system. While this was particularly salient for site staff, whose work was greatly impacted by the lack of empowering leadership, it ultimately impacted the work they were able to do with families.

Chapter 7

Conclusions: Working from the Inside Out to Build

Collective Sociocultural Capital for Success

While the CBO's work with families and schools focuses heavily on building the community's capacity to thrive in the face of adversity, it also plays an intermediary role in the transmission of cultural knowledge and information that flows back and forth between schools and families, which helps broker relationships between the two. In other words, the CBO engages in cultural brokering between schools and families that works to develop sociocultural capital within and beyond the community. In essence, the CBO is working to create an infrastructure for success within the community that can contribute to improved trust, understanding and communication between schools and families, as well as community members feeling empowered to engage and have a voice in their children's schools.

In this chapter I will first revisit the findings and briefly summarize them. Next, I will take a critical look at the CBO's theory of action. I will then delve deeper into how the CBO's cultural brokering creates bridges between immigrant families and schools, including why sociocultural capital matters as a construct for understanding this work, and how sociocultural capital development contributes to empowerment. Next, I will discuss the implications of this study, and what it means for school and CBO practice. Alternative interpretations will then be discussed, followed by unanswered questions and areas for further research.

A Review of Findings

Study findings indicate that the CBO takes an incremental approach to their work with families and schools, investing various resources and engaging in different cultural brokering activities. The layered process begins with the CBO laying the necessary foundation for sociocultural capital development, which involves establishing trust and building relationships with the community. Trusting relationships form the basis for sociocultural capital development;

therefore, CBO staff try to establish first trust and then relationships with the people they are trying to serve. The CBO pursues a variety of strategies to build trust with families in their respective communities including:

- Employing Spanish-speaking, Latina staff across sites to communicate with more families and relate to and understand their experiences.
- Getting the word out and welcoming families by communicating what the CBO is and offers, and by creating a friendly, respectful and trustworthy environment.
- Solidifying connections through regular communication with community members, both formal and informal
- Creating a climate that can function as a “second home” for families for both students and parents

Given their socioeconomic status and recent arrival in the country, many families struggle to survive and navigate their new environment; therefore, CBO staff prioritize meeting family needs. If families are unable to meet basic needs, such as food, clothing and healthcare, among other things, it becomes difficult to be able to participate in the process of sociocultural capital development. In helping families meet those needs, the CBO:

- Connects families with needed resources
- Provides translation, interpretation and advocacy services
- Provides emotional support to families

Working to Build Sociocultural Capital

Building on the foundation of trusting relationships between families and CBO staff, and the relative assurance that families’ basic needs are being met, the organization aims to develop the sociocultural capital within each community. A primary goal for this work is empowering students and families so they can grow to depend more on themselves and one another and less on the organization. Because the CBO seeks to move families toward independence and interdependence, they focus much of their work on building relationships within the community,

as well as on strengthening relations within families. By educating parents and developing family communication and relationship skills, the CBO helps parents develop an understanding of where their children are developmentally, and how they can best support them, while providing tools that can help students and parents develop healthy relationships. In addition, the CBO also provides opportunities for and encourages connections among community members.

Supporting students' academic and cultural development plays a key role in the CBO's work to build sociocultural capital, and this generally occurs through the CBO's programs, which include early learning programs, elementary and secondary student programs, adult programs and family programs. The CBO recognizes the importance of early learning and preschool and kindergarten readiness, particularly for students new to the English language. They also recognize that parents are not only new to the U.S. culture, but to U.S. schooling as well. Therefore, they incorporate parent education into early learning programs, either during program time and/or through home visits and other communication with parents outside of program time. The CBO tries to help students get on track to succeed by providing a road map to success and supporting students' academic and cultural development. Further, by expanding community capacity, the CBO helps students visualize a successful future by seeing other community members on a positive trajectory, which ultimately helps to strengthen the community and make it more resilient to adversity.

Making Connections Between Families and Schools

While a lot of the relationship-building that occurs through the CBO's programs focuses on creating bonds within the community, the next level of work in the process of sociocultural capital development involves extending those bonds beyond the community and linking to schools. It also involves supporting and encouraging the activation of knowledge, skills, and experiences gained through programs in the school context.

Much like with families, positive relationships create a foundation for CBO staff to understand and work effectively with schools. They generally start this process by putting a fair amount of effort into establishing connections with school staff, building trust and attempting to solidify connections and develop relationships by spending time at schools and inviting school

staff to CBO sites and events. CBO staff explained that with most schools, they had to be persistent and patient, as building trust and relationships with school staff often required time. Given that these efforts are in service of supporting students and families, part of their approach to supporting students and families involves making connections between families and schools.

The CBO staff members make connections between families and schools in a number of ways, often providing a crucial intermediary link that contributes to the closure of social support networks for students. CBO and school staff share information about students and families so that each can better support the students with whom they are working. The CBO also tries to attend to various gaps between families and schools by helping school staff and families connect and communicate with one another and by advocating for students and families at schools.

To continue the process of moving families and schools toward positive and mutually beneficial relationships, the CBO attempts to help families extend and activate their sociocultural capital, both in school and school-related contexts. Brokering direct relationships between schools and families helps provide a basis for the two to engage in ways that have the potential for mutual benefits. Deepening and solidifying connections between families and schools, such that trust and understanding develops, or at least starts to develop, can potentially help the two communicate more directly and work together, without the need for an intermediary or advocate. The organization attempts to broker relationships between schools and families through CBO staff, school staff, and families working together to address student issues. When all three parties work together directly, this allows for trust, understanding, and comfort to develop between school staff and families.

CBO staff also try to support and encourage parents to activate their knowledge about schools and schooling to support their children and help them be successful. When successful, parents employ the sociocultural capital developed through CBO programs and start to extend and activate it in school and school-related contexts in the following ways:

- Parents demonstrate understanding of the school system and activate their rights.
- Parents actively seek information to enable them be involved in their children's education and support their children.

- Parents spend more time in schools, particularly at the elementary level.
- Parents start to have a voice in their children’s schools and education.

The “Cultural Brokering” Relationship

This study illuminates how the cultural brokering process can provide mechanisms to help strengthen connections between other cultures and mainstream culture, engendering continuity that is not subtractive, but potentially additive, whereby differences are respected and hopefully seen for their value, while showing that differences do not disallow connections. The CBO’s brokering process focuses in great part on relationships—those between recent immigrant families on one end and school staff on the other end. The CBO plays an integral role as a mediating agent brokering relations, which results in a three-way relationship with each partner residing in a specific context. The contextual conditions within which the CBO operates greatly influence the cultural brokering efforts.

At one end of the cultural brokering relationship are community members and the community itself. Various aspects of the community, both positive and challenging, influence how the CBO goes about its work, and the extent to which the CBO’s cultural brokering efforts can have an impact on the students and families with whom staff work. As part of the CBO’s process for developing sociocultural capital within the community, the staff attempt to identify and tap into existing assets within the community, while understanding the various challenges they face. Understanding the whole picture within a community enables the CBO to take a more holistic, strengths-based approach to the cultural brokering process.

At the other end of the brokering relationship are schools. Various aspects of the schools influence and shape the CBO’s work with schools and families including:

- Common challenges across schools that impact school staff and families
- School staff perceptions of and approach to families
- Family perceptions of schools and school staff
- School staff perceptions of and relationships with the CBO

Given conditions at both ends of the relationship between schools and families, organizational structure, leadership, and other attributes of the CBO itself create conditions influencing the way it does, or can, act as a cultural broker, including:

- Organizational structure of the CBO (within and across sites)
- Organizational and industry-related challenges
- Resources and partnerships that support its work with families and schools.

The CBO staff engages in what I have described as cultural brokering between recent immigrant families and mainstream culture entities, such as schools. They do so by participating in a variety of bridging activities, including: translating language, school culture and U.S. culture; playing an intermediary role to educate and help families adapt to U.S. social systems and school social systems, help schools understand and adapt to families, and help make interactions more effective; and advocating for families in school and other contexts. The CBO approaches their work in an incremental manner, in essence layering the brokering process, whereby the different strands of work create outcomes that build upon one another to help move families and host society institutions towards stronger cultural connections. The CBO's multi-faceted approach to this work involves:

- Employing bicultural actors to equip the organization to lay the foundation for sociocultural capital development, the first layer of the brokering work
- Designing student- and family-centered programs that acknowledge and respect cultural roots as means for developing sociocultural capital within the community
- Encouraging self-sufficiency and interdependence to help solidify the sociocultural capital within the community, and help with the next layer of the brokering work
- Extending and activating sociocultural capital beyond the community, particularly in schools and school-related contexts.

As part of this process, CBO site staff members operate as a team, whereby different staff play both distinct and overlapping roles as they enlist mechanisms that contribute to continuity

between family cultures and mainstream culture. To do this the CBO staff enlist three primary techniques:

- Cultivating insider status within the community contexts
- Positioning themselves as a resource for schools
- Empowering families and equipping schools with the tools to engage productively and contribute to school improvement

The CBO's Theory of Action

When I first learned about the CBO in 2008, the organization's mission was to *partner with families to create communities where children thrive*, with the subtext *Our integrated, culturally relevant programs in low-income apartment complexes build skills, foster connectedness, and promote strengths*.¹¹ The current mission reads: *[The CBO] partners with families in their communities and with educators to ensure that children succeed in school and in life*, and has the same subtext regarding the organization's integrated culturally relevant programs. As such, the organization has continued to articulate a strengths-based and culturally competent approach to working with families as partners, whereby they focus on capacity building through sociocultural capital development within and beyond the community. However, the changes to the mission reflect a shift in focus from helping students thrive in general to helping students do well in school and life. The Executive Director seemed to imply that this change stemmed from funding requirements for data when she articulated, “[S]ometimes I think [with] all the kind of madness around data gathering, [the mission] focuses on the school, but so much of what we do is around life success as well.”

Interestingly, there seems to be somewhat of a disconnect between leadership and the site staff with regard to the CBO's theory of action. For example, the current Executive Director described the CBO's work as helping students be successful in school through homework help and through developing connections with schools and teachers, such that the CBO “can mirror or enhance the curriculum that's going on in school, so that we can be an extension of that and help

¹¹ CBO Newsletter (Spring 2008)

kids really get through that piece of it.” She added that the CBO focuses on more experiential learning as well, which aims to get students out of their environment and expose them to something different. More than one site staff member, on the other hand, expressed that the goal was *not* to be an extension of the school day, but rather an opportunity to experience things they were not getting in school as this Academic Coordinator explains:

I felt like it was more important for me to fill gaps that I saw in the education system than to continue whatever they were doing during the school day.

-- Erin (Academic Coordinator & Early Learning Coordinator)

In other regards, there seems to be more cohesion around the CBO’s work, such that CBO staff at both the administrative and site levels view parents as their primary partners in the work of ensuring student success, while also viewing schools and other institutions as partners in the work. The CBO’s leadership does not necessarily acknowledge the fact that schools continue to reflect and perpetuate societal inequities, nor explicitly address the underlying racism that confronts many immigrant families. Rather, the approach to both partners is such that the CBO aims to develop more understanding and connections between the two, without necessarily viewing their work as enabling families to change these institutions. In fact, site staff generally seemed to approach inequities as something for them to address as advocates for the families, such that it was their job to ensure that schools were understanding family cultures, recognizing students’ and parents’ rights, and responding accordingly, as this Family Advocate explains:

[F]rom the perspective of the family, in general they really feel that their children are not treated in the same way as other children. In the way that they help their children or the teachers treat other children or the system treat the children...like if you are Hispanic it's more likely that you behave more bad...I think [relationships between the families and schools have] not [changed as a result of our work in] the way that we would love, but I think definitely, when the school knows it is a family that came to us, they try to contact us and they try to know from our perspective what we think and they really—even though sometimes [they] call me before they're going to punish somebody in some way—what do you think, what is the better approach? So they really work very hard when it's some issues and our families that we are here...I mean I think it's great because we see the outcomes when the school and we and the family are together. Definitely you notice that it's better outcomes in many ways. And too, to give more information to the teacher...So I think when the three of us are working together, I finally see a change.

--Valerie (Family Advocate & Community Developer)

In sum, the cultural brokering that the CBO does between immigrant families and schools is a process that aims at developing sociocultural capital within the community on both a collective and an individual basis (see Conceptual Relationship Figure, in Appendix A). The sociocultural capital enhances the capacity of the community and strengthens them to be able to realize their goals, especially for children. It also allows them to experience voice in their children's schools, and to a limited extent, advocate for their children, all of which enhances kids' prospects for success. The process is empowering in that families gain resources and competencies to increase control over their lives and accomplish important life goals, specifically academic and life success for their children. If the process is continued such that it realizes the ideal, it would be such that institutions, like schools, eventually become embedded within the community, whereby families and communities are less disenfranchised, and schools are more able to be responsive to their needs and interests. As the discussion that follows reveals, this espoused theory—relating cultural brokering work, sociocultural capital development, and empowerment—is largely enacted in the CBO's work, though with clear limitations on the extent to which the CBO “empowers” the community in a collective sense, and with less demonstrated influence on the nature of the school as host institution than the theory presupposes.

How the CBO's Cultural Brokering Creates Bridges

Between Immigrant Families and Schools

All community engagement efforts seem to face some similar challenges, such as marginalization, a lack of resources to fully realize goals, and difficulties trying to change relatively static, inflexible educational institutions rooted in dominant culture ideals, to name a few. While service-oriented CBOs do not have the magic bullet to overcome all these challenges, they do offer a valuable option for school-community engagement that contributes to sociocultural capital development that can help bridge gaps between recent immigrant families living in low-income communities and the schools their children attend. The fact that the CBO in this study resides directly within the community affords it some benefits that school-based efforts, like Parent Coordinator positions and community schools, do not. Basing operations firmly in the community, and establishing the CBO as an integral member of the community,

allows CBO staff members to build a foundation of trust with community members. They also establish connections with and situate themselves as a resource for school staff. In this way, CBOs like this position themselves to have the knowledge, understanding and relationships with communities and schools that can make them excellent cultural brokers. Brokers working from inside schools generally do not have the same depth of community knowledge, nor do they necessarily have the latitude to advocate for families and represent their interests in the same way, given their affiliation with and status as school district employees (Samuelson, 2010).

Part of the CBO's ability to build the kinds of relationships with families that can benefit both families and schools results from having bicultural staff members who speak languages found in the community. They also understand various cultures found in the community, as well as socioeconomic challenges community members face. The fact that they generally have good knowledge of and working relationships with schools, as well as other institutions and agencies, further helps them provide a range of essential services, such as translation at schools for families who do not speak English, and technical help for families who need assistance completing paperwork for various institutions and agencies, including schools (Alameda, 1996; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). They contribute to families' understanding of institutional practices and policies, as they help educators and other professionals learn how to better respond to the strengths and needs of families (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Warren et al., 2009). While the data offers examples of the CBO transmitting cultural information in both directions—from schools to communities and vice versa—the process tends to be somewhat unidirectional, whereby the CBO provides families with a great deal of school-based information. However, because they strive to create relationships with families based on trust, and establish themselves as a reliable resource for schools, they position themselves as a resource for trust-building between schools and families, which ultimately can serve to improve understanding between the two through more direct relationships.

CBOs, such as this one, with demonstrated capacity as sociocultural capital builders, can represent critical resources for schools in low-income communities serving populations of recent immigrant families (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Schutz, 2006; Warren, 2005; Warren et al., 2009). Their wealth of sociocultural capital and culturally competent approach situates them nicely to help families and schools build the requisite capital and competence to engage one

another in more mutually beneficial ways. They have the flexibility to perform unique community roles, such as the design and development of activities, supports, and programs tailored to the particular strengths, needs and challenges of their communities (Keith, 1996; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Shirley, 2001; Warren, 2005). Because CBO activities aim to tap and develop parents' strengths and interests, parents are generally more drawn to them, at least initially, which can contribute to parents' sociocultural capital development (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Warren et al., 2009). Organizations such as these have the potential to address the asymmetry in power relations between families and school by helping families and community members develop knowledge, skills and opportunities that can help them build the confidence to be able to address power differentials, improve school quality, and improve their communities. However, the extent to which the CBO currently realizes this goal remains limited.

Unlike community organizing efforts, where social action organizations take a more direct and political approach, and specifically target school reform, service-oriented CBOs involved in school-community engagement, like this one, take a more gradual and layered approach, specifically focused on community capacity building as means for developing the kind of understanding and relationships between schools and families that have the potential to lead to school improvement. However, the CBO's work does not focus explicitly on school change. Rather, it focuses on supporting student and family success with regard to schools, such that they try to inform schools and help them better support students and work with families. Therefore, the CBO does not necessarily address greater inequities reflected in and perpetuated by these institutions. Part of this results from the fact that the organization's work resides at the individual level, as opposed to the system (i.e., school or district) level. This seems to be primarily due to limited resources, such that the CBO does not have the level of staffing that could enable more system-level work. In the past, the CBO made efforts to do some system-level work through a cultural competency training program, which they offered as a paid service for schools, districts and various agencies and institutions. However, they were unable to sustain this program, and thus far have not found a way to revive it.

Because service-oriented CBOs such as this one have a focus on building the community's capacity to overcome adversity and realize the American dream or have access to more and better opportunities, they seek to strengthen community ties and interdependence. As

such, this CBO creates opportunities for parents to better understand connections between their experiences, worldviews, and circumstances and others in their community (Carreón, Drake & Barton, 2005; Shirley, 1997). They also foster opportunities for parents to act on shared goals, needs and interests (Keith, 1996; Shirley, 1997; Warren et al., 2009). These conditions contribute to parents developing important social ties, which when activated, can result in reciprocal exchanges of childcare, child monitoring, and subsistence supports (Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2002; Horvat et al., 2003; Warren et al., 2009). Recall an example offered by the Community Developer who ran the Women's Group at Site 2. She described this type of exchange occurring as a result of the relationships that women were forming with one another through their participation in the program. These kinds of bonding relationships within the community (in other words, "integration" as social capital theorists would put it) have the potential to lead to various community-level enhancements, including improved neighborhood organization and monitoring, and increased civic engagement in schools and other community-serving institutions (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Shirley, 1997; Warren 2005). An elementary school principal shared such an example, explaining how parents participating in various programs at Site 3 expressed an interest in volunteering at the school, as well as addressing safety issues related to a busy thoroughfare located near the school.

Given the various challenges to, and supports for, low-income family engagement and involvement, the need for cultural brokers is a great one. Schools serving ethnically and linguistically diverse populations in low-income communities have much to gain from having people who can operate between schools and the communities they serve, bridging cultural and linguistic gaps, building trust and relationships, and connecting families with needed resources and services. CBOs as cultural brokers can create a safe space in which to help decode and translate dominant cultural knowledge, enable families to rehearse activating these unfamiliar cultural codes, serve to support families in deploying personal and collective social capital to gain access to school networks, and affirm and integrate community cultural values, resources and rights (Lopez & Stack, 2001). The more bi-directional the cultural brokering process, the more it can contribute to schools understanding, adapting to, and meeting the needs of the families they are serving, while also helping families understand and navigate school systems and beyond, resulting in more inclusive and democratic operations. As such, the CBO could better address asymmetrical power dynamics and disrupt the social reproduction that perpetuates

societal inequities if it were better equipped to engage in more bi-directional and system-level work. The integrated nature of the work, whereby social and cultural aspects function interdependently, speaks to the importance of using a more integrated conceptual lens to understand the CBOs cultural brokering work with families and schools.

Why Sociocultural Capital Matters as a Construct

for Understanding Cultural Brokering

As the social and cultural dimensions of school-family engagement figure prominently in the brokering work that this CBO does, the sociological constructs of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Coleman, 1988; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007; Martinez-Cosio, 2010; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 1993; Woolcock, 1998; Yosso, 2005) provide a window on the problem at hand; however, viewing the two forms of capital as distinct and separate limits the usefulness of these concepts when applied to the cultural brokering efforts of this CBO and others like it. To develop a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the value that cultural brokering can have with regard to school-community engagement efforts, the integrated construct of sociocultural capital offers a better lens for capturing the key influences in and aspects of the work, and how it seeks to address social inequities persistent in education.

Stanton-Salazar (2010) hints at the relevance of this construct when he refers to how adolescents participate in multiple sociocultural worlds. The same can be said for recent immigrant families and school staff. Recent immigrant families reside in their own sociocultural context, while also having to navigate the various sociocultural contexts within which they are situated (i.e., U.S., King County, town/city, apartment complex, etc.), as well as that of schools and other institutions and agencies with which they interact and engage. Recognizing these different contexts, or worlds, as sociocultural acknowledges the interdependence of social and cultural aspects of each, and how they work together to generate resources that can be extended and applied to gain access to both necessities and opportunities. In other words, social networks function as resources within themselves, while also providing the channels for the accumulation of cultural resources. Cultural resources contribute to the development of social networks,

providing means for connection in addition to outcomes of connections. Understanding the embedded nature of the two concepts sheds light on the two-way transmission of cultural knowledge that occurs through social exchanges in the cultural brokering process, and how this works to expand and improve the potential benefits of social networks on both an individual and collective level. The following examples can help elucidate how the concept of sociocultural capital and its development can help us gain deeper understanding for the relationships between cultural brokering and both school-community engagement and school improvement efforts.

A student's sociocultural capital development process. José's story offers one example of how the CBO's cultural brokering reflects sociocultural capital development at work, and how its fluid and cyclical nature, contribute to broadening the base of sociocultural capital available along the way. Through José and his family's participation in CBO programs, they became part of a social network that included students, CBO staff, teachers, and most likely other parents.¹² His engagement with these programs resulted in him not only developing new relationships with people in the network, but it also contributed to strengthening both new and existing relationships, and contributing to a sense of collective backing (Bourdieu, 1986). These relationships provided the channels by which José acquired various cultural knowledge and skills that both increased his confidence and helped him access additional knowledge and skills in the school context (Bourdieu, 1986; Granovetter, 1985; Modood, 2012; Monkman et al., 2005). The quality of these relationships, and the social and cultural resources they offered (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988), contributed to José experiencing a level of confidence in his own sociocultural capital such that he had the desire and capacity to extend and activate it in service of others in his community, namely as a tutor for younger students in the CBO's After School Program (Bourdieu, 1986; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Martinez-Cosio, 2010).

José's story is not without its bumps, however. In fact, for reasons that were not made clear, at times during high school he seemed to be making choices that were not necessarily in his best interest, such as skipping class and lying to his teacher about it. His membership in the aforementioned social network sheds light on how the CBO's cultural brokering can provide social network closure around a student, such that links exist among the adults in his life that care about him and his well-being, including parents, teachers, and CBO staff (Coleman, 1988).

¹² Unclear from the data whether this was the case or not.

In this way, José does not fall through the cracks, but rather is held to account for his actions as a result of both the social network he is a part of and the information, knowledge, and expectations transmitted via that network (Coleman, 1988).

A parent's sociocultural capital development process. Susana's experiences provide another window into the key role that sociocultural capital development plays in the CBOs brokering process. Susana, a Latina mother who lives with her husband and three children in the apartment complex served by Site 3, originally came from a place of distrust with regard to the CBO and others in the community. While at first, she essentially kept to herself, and lived in relative isolation with her family, she gradually came to trust the CBO as a result of her interactions with Cassandra, the Family Advocate, and the reassurance and support she offered. Once she felt a level of comfort, whereby she felt she could trust the organization, she and her family began participating in a variety of programs (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993).

Through her family's participation in CBO programs, they became part of a social network that included other students and parents from the community, CBO staff, and school staff, particularly the principal. Much like with José, this social network acted as both a social resource and a way to access various cultural resources (Granovetter, 1985; Modood, 2012; Monkman et al., 2005). Through this network, she developed bonding relationships with the Family Advocate and other Latina parents in the community, which provided her with friendships that offered both an outlet and a sense of support, neither of which she had before (Putnam, 1993). Through her relationship with Cassandra, she learned about and signed up for a program offered by the CBO to improve understanding and relationships between parents and teens. This offered yet another example of how her participation in this social network provided her with access to cultural knowledge and tools, such as information about youth development, strategies to support youth, and available resources in the greater community (i.e., counseling) (Monkman et al., 2005). It also enhanced her existing social network by providing a space to develop deeper relationships with other parents and students in the community.

These relationships provide a form of *social network closure* for Susana and her children (Coleman, 1988; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Carbonaro, 1998). Getting to know students and parents in the community helped Susana feel comfortable allowing her children to play with other children in the community. Because Susana knows the children and parents through

participation in CBO programs, she has a sense of security that her children will be okay at one of their homes without her there. This helps contribute to a sense of community safety and cohesion that may not otherwise exist (Coleman, 1988; Carbonaro, 1998).

Through her membership in the social network resulting from CBO program participation, Susana gained the confidence to participate in English classes, which she had been hesitant to do early on. She also gained access to cultural information that helped her understand more about health issues, disaster preparedness, and the school system. She also developed a relationship with the principal through his attendance at CBO events, where she and other parents learned that he spoke Spanish. The sociocultural capital she developed through participation in CBO programs contributed to her increased confidence, which resulted in her going to the school more often on her own; whereas before she felt more comfortable going with CBO staff. She also had a better understanding of her rights to an interpreter and to speak directly to the principal when she needed something addressed. This became evident when her daughter had some problems with peers and got moved to a new classroom without the parents' knowledge or permission. Susana took it upon herself to speak with the principal directly to advocate for her daughter and resolve the issue, which according to staff, was a notable change given her initial reticence to engage with anyone.

A principal's sociocultural capital development process. Veronica, a middle school principal who has worked with the CBO for many years, and was actually involved with the organization at the time of its founding, provides one more example that helps illustrate the importance of sociocultural capital in understanding the cultural brokering work of the CBO. Veronica has developed what she referred to as a “pretty tight relationship” with the CBO and a number of staff members. Over time, these relationships have helped connect her with different social networks, like those described above, which include students, parents, and CBO staff.

Her membership in these networks has provided her with access to information that has helped her support students and to means by which to better connect with families (Granovetter, 1985; Modood, 2012; Monkman et al., 2005). In addition to attending monthly *coffees* (parent meetings at the CBO site), Veronica has sought information and support regarding particular students from the CBO. She has also had experiences where the CBO has eased tension and helped establish positive relationships between families and school staff, and where CBO staff

have requested that she intervene and help them work with teachers when they were having a hard time. Further, she had access to and benefitted from what she described as “powerful” cultural competency training provided by the CBO.

Veronica described one situation in particular that captures the intertwined nature of the social and cultural aspects of the brokering work the CBO does with families and schools.

[Lila] gave me a phone call and said they were very concerned about this girl and wanted me to see if she had been coming to school. I checked the attendance and found out her mother had withdrawn her and said she was going to go live with the grandma in Mexico. [Lila] let me know the information they were getting is that she is still around, and here she is 12 years old and there is this 21 year old who is also from their community. [It's] been so fascinating to learn about this and only because of [the CBO] do I understand this community. [Lila] explained to me in [the Purépechan] culture [in] Mexico...very few girls really went to school and if you went beyond the sixth grade, you were probably the head of your [village] in terms of being an educated woman. So it wasn't at all uncommon for girls to go off and get married at a very young age.

[What] ended up happening was somebody saw her with this older guy, so then the police had to get involved. Then, of course, it's statutory rape...So the guy disappears completely, because, [he] doesn't want to get caught. So at that point I go over to talk to the mom because I want to get her back in school. But we also find out [from the mom] that she is pregnant...I knew her when she was with me [in elementary school]—passed all of her [exams] as a fourth grader. Really smart, successful—you know, college material. Right? But I go over and I visit with the family. I am trying to get them to have her come back. And the mom explains to me—through an interpreter of course—[how] this is normal for their culture...They are considered married. So then she moves in with him and his family. And that's what happened. But [the] guy left, because of U.S. customs, [so] this seventh grade girl...She is pregnant without a man and she is of no use to them...

I was constantly in touch with [the CBO] and they were still helping me...And eventually I got the girl to come back to school and [the CBO] was just feeding me all of these ways in which I could support this young girl. And we got tutoring set up...[W]hat ended up happening at the end of that whole thing was really sad...the mom had gotten deported because they had done a walk-through and she had been deported once before. And then, here again, [the CBO] was doing everything they could to make it so that the mom could get back here so she could be with her daughter when she had the baby. And they were successful [but] then they only gave her two weeks...and then she had to leave again. And there wasn't a way to keep the daughter here. And [her brother and sister were both in elementary school], but they didn't have the family that could take care of them

here. So [they] have all been down there. [Still] I am going back to [the CBO] saying, can you help me wire money? Can you help me do this? Can you help me do that? And without them, there is no way that I would be able to do any of the support.

--Veronica (MS Principal)

These examples help illustrate how social capital is never completely independent of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), and while each is recognized and defined differently, depending on the context (Lareau, 2000; Monkman, et al., 2005; Portes, 1998), they are affected by each other and by the resources of economic, physical, technological or informational, and human capital (Bourdieu & Coleman, 1991; Granovetter, 1985; Portes, 1998). José, Susana and Veronica's experiences shed light on how they acquired cultural capital through social networks when they invested social capital; while at the same time, they acquired the social capital needed to invest cultural capital (Portes, 1998).

The idea of sociocultural capital development across multiple contexts, such as communities and schools, can play an important role in enhancing cultural capital development in both contexts (Monkman et al., 2005; Woolcock, 1998). On the one hand, through social capital, Susana and José increased their cultural capital through contact with experts (i.e., embodied cultural capital) and engaged with schools, which award valued credentials (i.e., institutionalized cultural capital) (Portes, 1998). On the other hand, social networks provided channels for two-way transmission of cultural knowledge, such that Veronica increased access to cultural knowledge and information coming from the community. In this way, schools can come to recognize community cultural knowledge and information as valuable, thus expanding their embodied notions of cultural capital, and ideally integrating them into institutional practices. Moreover, through increased cultural awareness, comes the potential for improved and enhanced relationships that can further solidify and build understanding, which can continue to deepen connections. Recognizing cultural brokering as a socially and culturally integrated process helps illustrate how it offers the potential for mutual benefits, as well as how the fluid and cyclical nature of the process allows for cultural understanding and relationships to evolve and grow.

As such, understanding how the CBO's brokering results in sociocultural capital makes more sense than trying to understand the development of social and cultural capital in isolation.

Further, understanding how sociocultural capital is extended and activated also demonstrates the exponential possibilities of said capital, as well as how it can function in two-way transmission of sociocultural resources between families and schools. By using this integrated lens to understand how the CBO's cultural brokering works to both build community capacity and contribute to mutually beneficial engagement of schools and families with one another, we can then build on that understanding to elucidate how it can contribute to empowerment.

How Sociocultural Capital Development

Contributes to Empowerment

The bi-directional transmission of cultural knowledge via social exchange through broadening networks based on trust, which I have termed *sociocultural capital development*, helps illuminate how the process has the potential to interrupt the reproduction of dominant social relations and structures that often prohibit the advancement of particular groups (Bourdieu, 1973; Webb et al., 2002). Through sociocultural capital development, social relations can be expanded in such a way that subsequent benefits include more inclusive and representative institutions. In other words, the extent to which sociocultural capital is both found within a community, as well as the extent to which the community is linked to individuals, networks, and institutions external to the community, can play a critical role in breaking down social reproductive processes that benefit dominant groups (Bourdieu, 1973/1986). As such, sociocultural capital development has great potential to contribute to the level of empowerment that can exist in a community setting.

Interrupting the asymmetrical power relations that can exist between schools and recent immigrant groups presents great challenges, and the analysis presented here does not offer clear evidence that substantial changes in this social order have been achieved, or are even possible, through the CBO's cultural brokering work. However, the idea of *empowerment* can be understood in several ways, and as such, so can the CBO's contribution to it.

First, at an individual level, recent immigrant families can feel disempowered in many respects as they try to figure out how to navigate and fit into their new environments. Engaging in CBO programs may increase their sense of independence, self-confidence, and competence in negotiating new surroundings, and as a result, they can achieve a newly “empowered” stance in dealing with the world around them.

Second, on a more collective level, recent immigrant families often arrive with little sense of connection to others in their respective communities, which can also be fundamentally disempowering. The CBO’s efforts to connect them to other community members can increase their sense of collective efficacy and *interdependence*, in ways that contribute to and strengthen control over their circumstances.

Third, at a larger structural level, immigrant families tend to systematically reside in disempowered relationships with institutions, such as schools, as well as in disempowered positions in societal structures. In this regard, they enter the host society with little or no voice, nor significant political resources to exert leverage over institutions and prompt changes that would serve their needs better. As a service-oriented entity that works primarily at the individual level, the CBO has less to offer here, and its contribution to encouraging fundamental changes in power relations between immigrant families and schools is unlikely to be substantial. That said, the CBO has various ways of creating an “empowering community setting,” and the evidence suggests it not only does this in some respects, it has the ability to do more. A more careful look at the dimensions of empowering community settings can help pinpoint both progress to date and potential for contributing to greater community empowerment.

Sociocultural capital development as an empowerment process. The CBO’s cultural brokering work with families and schools acts as a multidimensional social process that seeks to help families gain resources and competencies to act on issues that they define as important by building the capacity to gain control over their own lives, their communities and their society (Luttrell et al., 2009; Maton & Salem, 1995; Mechanic, 1991; Page & Czuba, 1999; Zimmerman, 2000). Service-oriented CBOs, such as the one described in this study, provide local community settings in which families can gain the resources and confidence to achieve important goals through their active participation with others in the various programs offered (Rappaport, 1981; Maton & Salem, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000).

Maton & Salem's (1995) four organizational characteristics of empowering community settings provide an excellent framework for understanding how the CBO's cultural brokering in service of sociocultural capital development functions as a process of empowerment. By examining the CBO's 1) belief system, 2) opportunity role structure, 3) support system, and 4) leadership, we can determine the extent to which the CBO's setting and work contribute to individual and community empowerment, while noting where this CBO's efforts may fall short and could do more.

First, Maton and Salem (1995) argue that a growth inspiring, strengths-based belief system that focuses individuals beyond themselves, has the potential to motivate and direct them via effective, consistent, and powerful activities that facilitate the achievement of their primary goals. The CBO's belief system seems to inspire growth through clear overarching goals focused on student success and community well-being, and the incorporation of families' articulated goals into their programs, the means for reaching said goals. However, there also seems to be some ambiguity around the CBO's organizational goals, whereby some staff indicated that the organization lacks clearly articulated guidelines for the work that sites are meant to do. The CBO does have a strengths-based belief system, in that they view the families they work with as valuable resources who have the capacity to achieve organizational and individual goals. Further, the CBO definitely encourages family members, especially students, as a couple of the Coordinators articulated, to look beyond themselves and view themselves as part of a larger community and something greater than themselves. In individual cases, these messages have been heard and acted on by families, and there is even evidence of immigrant community members responding to these messages in more collective ways. There is also evidence that school staff notice and pick up on the strengths-based belief system that the CBO embodies.

Second, a pervasive, accessible, and multifunctional opportunity role structure facilitates exposure to learning and mastery experiences that can contribute to skill and resource development conducive to goal achievement (Maton & Salem, 1995). The CBO does this to a certain extent, in that sites provide different groups in which family members can participate where they have the opportunity to play different roles. For example, women participating in the Women's Group function differently and play different roles than they do when participating in a program like Strengthening Families. In the former, they would likely enact the role of a peer or

a friend; whereas in the latter, they would potentially enact the roles of parent, peer, and student. Youth also have the opportunity to play different roles in the organization. For example, they can be members of the Youth Program, and they can act as mentors or supports for younger children in various capacities, such as event volunteers or tutors. While the CBO's role structure does offer availability and configuration of roles that provides opportunities for individuals to develop, grow, and participate, the variation of roles is not extensive. In fact, while students have opportunities to play leadership roles, the data did not indicate that adults in the community have many opportunities to play leadership roles, outside of those they may assume in relation to children and youth, or that are more logistical, involving planning and implementation of community events. More opportunities for parent leadership development could enhance the empowerment process and contribute to more empowering outcomes.

Third, an encompassing, peer-based support system that creates a viable sense of community can contribute to openness to change and persistence in the pursuit of personal goals, even in the face of inevitable difficulties inherent to the empowering process (Maton & Salem, 1995). The CBO offers such a system through various types and sources of support in different programs, and most of these supports are peer-based, other than possibly those available through the Family Advocacy program. The different group-based programs, such as the Women's Group, the After School and the Youth Programs, provide individuals with opportunities to give and receive support to one another. The CBO also works hard to instill and provide a sense of community among families, and to the extent they can, between families and schools, and between the immediate and greater communities. That said, currently this system of supports tends to operate most strongly in the networks among immigrant families, and less strongly through broader networks involving school staff or others in the larger community environment.

Fourth, inspirational, talented, shared, and committed leadership, among key individuals with formal and/or informal responsibility, has the potential to contribute to the community's adoption of and commitment to a belief system, the level of learning and mastery found within the community, and a sense of support and cohesion (Maton & Salem, 1995). With regard to organizational leadership, the CBO has struggled over the last few years due to frequent leadership transitions that occurred between 2008 and 2010. Further, the leadership in place from

2010-2011¹³ did not align well with the characteristics associated with an empowering community setting. In fact, data indicates that leadership at that time may have been functioning in a way that was actually disempowering, both to site staff and families. Staff talked about working in a culture of fear during this Executive Director's tenor. Both the leadership transitions, and the nature of leadership from 2010-2011, not only compromised the organization's potential to act in empowering ways, it also had negative impacts on the CBO's financial situation, which limited the ability to generate needed organizational resources, maintain stability, and respond to dynamic environmental conditions, especially the economic downturn that began in 2008 (Maton & Salem, 1995). Fortunately, new CBO leadership now in place seems to reflect the qualities associated with an empowering community setting, as well as its potential for enhancing individual and collective capacity to meet needs and make changes.

Based on the analysis above, the CBO appears to offer the kind of setting that can result in particular, albeit limited, forms of empowerment. The belief system, opportunity role structure, support system, and current leadership are such that they offer a context conducive to individual, and to a certain extent, collective empowerment. Both of these forms of empowerment have the potential to result in the attainment of particular goals, such as academic success for children. However, the CBO does not currently provide the kind of setting that can contribute to empowering families to address aspects of power imbalances existing between themselves and schools. This only contributes to the persistence of inequitable school experiences for many children in these communities.

To engage families in a more empowering process, the CBO could focus energy on improving the opportunity role structure, such that it offered a greater diversity of roles available, especially active leadership roles for parents. Further, while the belief system has strengths, the CBO might find it more conducive to empowerment if it had clearly defined salient goals and means for reaching those goals. Given the CBO's student- and family-centered approach to working with families and their articulated desire to empower families, the organization could consider enlisting a more transformational process, oriented toward both parent leadership and goal development, such as participatory social inquiry, to empower families in new ways that could potentially start to address power imbalances (Oakes & Rogers, 2006). This would

¹³ The period when most of the data collection for this study occurred.

involve engaging parents in a process that ensured access to knowledge and its construction, while adopting a critical stance, and developing a transformative goal (Oakes & Rogers, 2006). Although this would be new territory for this service-oriented CBO, it could be an area that moves the organization closer to realizing goals for families and schools. In addition to understanding the extent to which the CBO's cultural brokering process in service of sociocultural capital development functions as one of empowerment, understanding the outcomes and the extent to which they reflect empowerment is also important.

How trust, understanding, and communication can move toward a shared sense of place. Relationships between recent immigrant families and school staff play a critical role in family decisions and abilities to participate in their children's education, and positive, mutually beneficial relationships are based on understanding, communication, and trust. Additionally, an assets-based approach to school-community relations, versus perpetuating deficit model thinking, can help address asymmetrical power issues. In effect, these outcomes give operational meaning to the development of sociocultural capital among all parties involved in school-family relationships. To understand how sociocultural capital is operationalized, we need to examine the extent to which the CBO's work results in these outcomes and what that means.

Trust plays an essential role in the development of positive and mutually beneficial family-school relationships (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Coleman, 1988), as it can dispel the misunderstanding that may ensue from cultural differences between teachers and parents (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). While it cannot be said that the CBO's work does away completely with any distrust between families and school staff with whom they work, the data definitely indicates that their cultural brokering efforts work to increase levels of trust between the two. Recognizing that little to no contact between parents and teachers can lead to a reliance on generalizations and stereotypes (Bryk & Schneider, 2003), the CBO encourages and provides supports for connecting families and schools. While not true for all families, in a number of cases, the CBO has helped parents and teachers move toward more collaborative relationships. School staff, particularly the principal at Jefferson Elementary School, has expressed an interest in working with the CBO more regularly and consistently. This could provide a forum for encouraging more collaborative relationships between parents and teachers that could engender mutual respect and inspire dialogue (Lewis and Forman, 2002).

Increasing trust and deepening organizational change go hand in hand and support one another (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). The CBO's brokering efforts show evidence of helping educators and families establish trust over time and build relationships gradually (Comer, 2005). Through their work with families and schools, the CBO is also making efforts to build a climate of trust and openness to ideas at schools, which are basic to any attempt to involve families and work with them as partners, especially those least affluent and least educated (Haynes & Comer, 1996). However, because a lot of the work happens on an individual level, it has more impacts on individuals than it does on the school climate. Again, tapping into interest to develop more ongoing and regular communication, particularly at the administrative level, could contribute to climate improvements and opportunities to work with more teachers, and even across schools.

Undertaking efforts to understand and meet parent needs provides additional grounding for improving relationships. The CBO contributes a fair amount to school understanding of immigrant family cultures and issues, which creates the opportunity for schools to tailor supports to the needs and interests of families. For example, they can plan, organize, and structure events, meetings, and other activities that appeal to parent interests, concerns, and needs, and accommodate families so that they are able to attend and understand the content, by providing childcare, transportation, and translators according to family needs (Aronson, 1996). The CBO, could even coordinate or provide these services.

The CBO invests a lot of energy into orienting families to schools and schooling by making information available and accessible to them such that they have the tools to navigate the school system (Alleksaht-Snyder 1992; Auerbach 2007). They also offer a great deal of cultural information to teachers and other school staff, which help them better support and serve students. However, the efforts once again are generally limited to individuals, and therefore, do not seem to have as much impact on the school climate and operations as they could if they were working on a school-wide basis, or at the very least at the administrative level. If the CBO could find a way to provide professional development for school staff focused on working with parents in diverse low-income urban communities, much like the cultural competency training they used to offer, this could help enhance the kind of understanding that could lead to improved communication and relationships between families and schools (Aronson, 1996).

If the school intends to address parents' interests, concerns and needs, then improving communication with parents and families needs to be a priority. Although the CBO contributes a lot to the level of communication occurring between families and schools, data indicates that a fair amount of this communication happens indirectly, whereby the CBO plays an intermediary role, communicating information between families and schools, as opposed to families and schools communicating directly. While not always the case, it seemed to be a common type of exchange. However, CBO staff and parents did allude to parents increasingly feeling more comfortable going to schools and asking questions, which indicates improved relations and parents understanding their rights and advocating for their children (Alleksaht-Snyder 1992).

Power can be understood as a deeply structured element of each neighborhood which exists in a reciprocal relationship with each community's cultural and overall ecology, such as its way of life, social institutions, local history, values, norms, expectations, and market forces (Crowson, 2003). The CBO's cultural brokering helps establish bridges between the community's way of life and that of the schools that serve the community (Crowson, 2003). Cultural brokering in the form of sociocultural capital development has the potential to lead to empowerment based on mutual respect of values, community engagement, crossing boundaries, and shared community construction (Crowson, 2003).

The construct of a sense of place helps illuminate how returning public schools to their communities, or neighborhoods, can contribute to a community's empowerment (Driscoll, 2001; Driscoll & Kerchner, 1999; Philo & Kearns, 1993). In other words, the CBO's cultural brokering efforts can contribute to schools and communities recognizing a shared or common sense of place, whereby schools and other community institutions are part of a sustaining habitat in which a continuation of culture and a regeneration of community are simultaneously of value (Crowson, 2003; Duneier, 1999). While this sense of place can provide a sense of empowerment, it can also act as a building block for the development of other dimensions of empowerment, in that an agency relationship can develop between schools and communities, such that schools display a sense of centeredness around the ideas, values, culture, actions, psychology, and social systems of their communities (Asante, 1987; Crowson, 2003; Morris, 1994/2001)

Through cultural brokering, the CBO could be developing and strengthening connections between families and schools, whereby boundaries are crossed, schools and communities engage

from a place of mutual respect, and community construction and development is shared (Driscoll, 2001). While the current efforts of the CBO seem to be moving in this direction, the efforts at this point are not broad enough in scope. Once again, the individual nature of the work detracts from the broader impacts cultural brokering could offer.

Speaking Practically to Schools and CBOs

Serving Similar Populations

Many school reform efforts neglect to include family engagement as an important component and gloss over leadership qualities and strategies that relate to building and maintaining positive and mutually beneficial school-family relationships (Berliner, 2014; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). A variety of studies have called for a more integrated approach to school improvement and student development, whereby families are seen as an integral part of the equation when educating children and youth (Brofenbrenner, 1975; Comer, 1988; Kirp, 2011; Morrell & Noguera, 2011). Service-oriented CBOs engaging in cultural brokering with families and schools take such an approach, whereby they help families develop sociocultural capital that has the potential to build community capacity and improve school-community engagement. While this study indicates that service-oriented CBOs have the potential to have excellent results, and the CBO studied here is making gradual progress, both schools and CBOs interested in this work could benefit from thinking deeply about the following considerations.

A Way for Schools to Get the Support They're Looking For

In the current context of high accountability, schools serving families in low-income communities, particularly when they represent a variety of cultures and languages, often find themselves under great scrutiny and pressure to improve student performance without the needed resources, which can exacerbate existing problems and result in a culture of blame. On the other hand, working with a service-oriented CBO—particularly when barriers are addressed and the CBO has needed resources—can provide much of the support these schools need.

Through their brokering work with both families and schools, CBOs can contribute to building a trusting and open school climate (Haynes & Comer, 1996), help educators and families build trusting relationships over time (Comer, 2005), and encourage and support school staff members in reaching out to parents in their communities. Undertaking efforts to understand and respond accordingly to parent cultures, needs, and interests can provide additional grounding for improving relationships. Moreover, improved relationships based on trust and understanding can engender communication between schools and families that can lead to schools being more inclusive and democratic.

When CBOs contribute to schools' understanding of immigrant family cultures and issues, schools have more knowledge, which can equip them to better support families and be more responsive to their needs and interests (Aronson, 1996). Further, schools could also anticipate that some family situations are such that they may not be able to attend many, if any, events or meetings; and therefore provide means for parents to access the same content and have the same input as those who attended. Given the proper resources, some if not all of these services could be provided and coordinated by the CBO. The cultural brokering works both ways. While schools can gain access to information and better understanding of the families they serve, so too can families gain access to information and better understanding of their children's schools and schooling in the U.S., which can help them better navigate the system.

While the CBO's intermediary role is pivotal to the development of trust and understanding between families and schools, the CBO's ultimate goal is to create direct connections and communication between schools and families, decreasing, if not eradicating the need for an intermediary. In other words, the CBO's brokering aims to build positive relationships based on trust and understanding, such that opportunities and a climate for parents to ask questions and provide input are in place (Alleksaht-Snider 1992).

On the one hand, immigrant families often lack the sociocultural capital that would enable them to build strong and productive relationships with the schools serving their children, and the circumstances of their lives, no less the surrounding environment, do not make it easy for them to build that capital. On the other hand, schools in low-income environments typically do not have the expertise or resources to truly engage recent immigrant families, and districts and preparation programs rarely provide the training, resources and support needed to engage these

families. Therefore, to navigate the processes outlined above, schools and families would benefit from cultural brokering support of CBOs, who are well positioned to do this work. This could help bring school and family interests in alignment with one another to better support students, schools, families, and communities through the development of understanding, trust, and positive and productive communication. In effect, CBOs can become a catalyst, as well as a viable means, for immigrant families to increase sociocultural capital, whereby schools get integrated into family and community networks, and as such become embedded within the community.

Although the lack of time remains a persistent challenge faced by educators, important to understand is that investing time in engaging and working regularly with CBOs like this one can ultimately pay off. More positive and productive outcomes will likely come with more consistency in relationships between schools and CBOs, such as setting up regular meetings between school staff and CBO staff, in order to keep the flow of information between the two constant and current. Further, school leaders that recognize the benefits of working with such organizations would be wise to prioritize these relationships and encourage school-wide efforts to engage and work with these kinds of CBOs. In fact, the more system-wide the understanding of how these CBOs can help support schools in their work to educate culturally and linguistically diverse populations in low-income settings, the better the chances of positive long-term results. In other words, system-wide buy-in to working closely with CBOs can help schools in increasingly diverse contexts move forward and operate more dynamically to meet the needs of communities, rather than continuing to operate in a static manner that ultimately serves few.

To summarize, this study makes clear how working with the CBO can help schools build trust with families that produces more open, welcoming, and accommodating climates. It can also increase schools' understanding of families, equipping them to better support their students. Both increased trust and understanding between schools and families can help both partners communicate more effectively and navigate the unknown terrain between them more readily, all of which can lead to mutually beneficial relationships. Making it a priority to invest consistent time and energy into working with a CBO can help schools engage families in the work of supporting students and helping them have a chance at success in the U.S.

What CBOs Need to Know

Service-oriented community-based organizations have the potential to provide an array of supports that schools lack, and that would ultimately help them better serve the communities within which they reside. Given the myriad challenges that often face CBOs, particularly with regard to funding and resources, they would benefit from positioning themselves as the kind of asset to schools and communities that can produce outcomes, and as such secure the necessary funding to do so. This CBO and others like it could realize the empowerment goal of shared sense of place between schools and families; however, it would require some substantive changes to the work. Two examples already mentioned include taking a broader approach to the work and targeting administrators and/or whole schools, and expanding the availability of roles that family members can enact through CBO programs, especially parent leadership roles.

Interdependence and partnership between families and schools, goals with the potential to drastically improve the quality of education and schools for students and contribute to more equitable access to opportunities that empower students to be successful, require a scaling up of the CBO's work. In other words, the CBO needs to think more broadly about its work and expand it to include systemic levels. By systemic levels, I am referring primarily to the school level, but also to the district level. This is not to say that systemic work should replace the individualized support the CBO currently does. Rather, with both individual and systemic approaches, the brokering work has more potential to enact change, helping schools and districts operate more dynamically and better serve increasingly diverse populations, not to mention increasingly poor communities. In fact, not only could a combination of individual and systemic cultural brokering work by CBOs better meet the needs of students and families, but with improved educational quality and experiences, students have a better chance of changing their situations and moving out of poverty.

Providing a wider range of roles for students and parents could also contribute to empowerment efforts. The CBO would be wise to pay attention to parent leadership, in particular. Efforts to engage low-income parents meaningfully in the life of schools need to build parent leadership capacity in more intentional ways, focusing on the development of relevant skills and knowledge and a sense of power and self-efficacy (Warren et al., 2009). The CBO could incorporate structured training around issues in education and community life into their

programs to help parents develop the skills and knowledge they need to participate with a greater voice and decision-making role in the school and community (Warren et al., 2009). When parents emerge as leaders, their roles change. Instead of sitting at workshops as passive recipients of school knowledge and communication, they can begin to help set agendas for educational change and program development (Warren et al., 2009). Parent leaders can also help shape initiatives that reflect the true values, concerns, and needs of students and families (Warren et al., 2009). Much like CBOs can help build relationships with parents in and around schools, they can also offer a venue for parent leadership development that schools themselves may not be well suited to offer for various reasons (Warren et al., 2009).

CBOs embarking on this work could benefit from taking into consideration how they go about engaging schools. If CBOs like this one want to partner with schools or school staff to try and support students, they initially need to walk the fine line of frequent contact without too much contact. Spending time at schools, checking in, volunteering and the sort, play a critical role in developing and maintaining a connected, yet not intrusive stance, with regard to schools. Given that teachers working in most schools, but particularly those serving diverse populations in low-income communities, tend to feel overworked, CBOs would be wise not to ask teachers for too much, as they do not want to be perceived as adding to teachers' burden. A useful approach taken by some CBO staff was to work with school staff to create events involving students, school staff, and families, such as a soccer tournament. This seemed to act as a catalyst for developing more long-term relationships that were sustained beyond the particular event.

CBOs may also want to keep in mind that engaging parents in this work may bring its own set of challenges. CBOs could benefit from determining how they might want to convey to parents the idea that the more they and their families engage in and take advantage of CBO programs and services, the increased likelihood that they and their families will benefit. However, another fine line that CBO staff walked regularly was that of providing access to information and opportunities for parents that could equip them to better support their children, while not imposing their own goals on parents. Rather, in line with taking a culturally competent, assets-based approach to working with families, CBO staff frequently talked about their goals for families as helping the families meet their own goals. This could present challenges, however, when CBO staff feel like parents are not necessarily making choices that, from their perspective,

are in their children's best interests. CBOs engaging in this work need to keep in mind how they intend to balance engaging and supporting families while respecting family choices.

Although this CBO ultimately strives to decrease the need for intermediaries between schools and families, this is not to say that they necessarily want to work themselves out of a job. Much like the need for schools to move toward more dynamic operations to meet the changing needs of communities they serve, CBOs are serving the same communities. Therefore, as the needs change, so too must they. For example, if CBOs find success in creating sustainable bridges between immigrant and refugee families and their schools, whereby the two are able to develop positive and mutually beneficial relationships and communicate directly, the need for these CBOs does not necessarily dissipate. As mentioned previously, CBOs can help provide and coordinate various services that would both support families and schools, such as childcare, transportation, and translation services.

For CBOs to be effective in responding to the changing needs in the communities they serve, they need to be nimble. The work of CBOs like this one has the potential to strengthen and improve communities, improve schools, and address asymmetrical power dynamics between the two, particularly if they can scale up their work so they are concurrently working at both the system-level of schools and districts and the individual level of students, families, and school staff members. They are well positioned to do this cultural brokering, which is likely to have the greatest impact and enact the kind of change that will empower communities, and potentially break the cycle of poverty when the work is bi-directional. For this to happen, they will need to overcome the barriers to full school and family engagement in the process.

Alternative Interpretations

This study suggests that CBOs operating like the one described are well positioned to provide cultural brokering between immigrant families living in low-income communities and the schools their children attend, which can a) develop sociocultural capital within the community and b) extend and activate that sociocultural capital beyond the community, particularly in schools and school-related contexts, both of which serve to help cultivate positive

and productive relationships between the two built on trust, understanding, and communication. However, alternative interpretations and their plausibility must be considered as well.

One potential interpretation of this study could be that it functions as a mouthpiece for the organization's rhetoric. Given that CBO staff perspectives play a prominent role in the study, one could readily jump to this conclusion. However, important to point out is the fact that both school and family perspectives were included, as well as staff from all levels of this relatively decentralized organization, where sites operate somewhat autonomously and may do things differently. In analyzing these different perspectives, I was very intentional about triangulating the different viewpoints offered to critically examine how they aligned and diverged from one another. Subsequently, the findings offer a representative and comprehensive picture of the work, which includes a range of stakeholder perspectives, as opposed to one set of perspectives associated with the CBO's official representations of itself.

A second alternative interpretation could be that parents who are engaging with school staff and schools would have done this regardless, and that their decisions to do so are more about individual personality and motivation, as opposed to the fact that they engaged and worked with the CBO. In some cases, this could be true, although the data indicates that, in fact, prior to working with the CBO, many parents were hesitant to engage with schools and school staff, due to prior conceptions. While a number of CBO staff offered this perspective, parent participants also expressed that, as a result of working with the CBO, they came to understand their rights and felt empowered to ask questions and advocate for their children. School staff also talked about CBO staff helping get parents to come to schools, something that had not been the case before. While evidence points to the fact that some parents may not yet directly engage with school staff, it also indicates that the CBO's efforts to create information links, or social network closure, among students, parents, and teachers, did in fact lend itself to parents engaging in their children's education through indirect means. In other words, while the degree to which parents engaged with schools and their children's education could vary, and in some cases be more direct than in others, nonetheless, the CBO's cultural brokering efforts were making a difference and influencing that engagement.

A third interpretation could be that this CBO's work does not empower communities, but rather it socializes them to assimilate and conform to dominant cultural practices, which

ultimately maintain the status quo, and reduce the chances of marginalized students realizing the American Dream. Although the CBO does not view itself as a transformative agent, like a social action organization engaging in school-community organizing would, it nonetheless accomplishes work that empowers the families with whom it works. As I have demonstrated, the empowerment process that the organization undertakes does not focus on political empowerment, but rather on psychological and human and social empowerment. While the CBO could be doing more to realize community empowerment, such as integrating parent leadership into their program designs, they face a variety of challenges that make it difficult for them to make the kind of changes that would result in empowerment that could ultimately change schools to better meet the needs and interests of the community, namely resources. Funding can, and often does, present great challenges for nonprofits, which not only impact the extent to which an organization delivers on its mission, but can result in what is referred to as mission drift, where organizations move away from their missions, typically in pursuit of dollars. Funding presents a big challenge that the CBO needs to try to overcome if it wants to ensure that children succeed in school and life as its mission states.

Finally, a more pessimistic and critical interpretation of the study could be that systemic political dysfunction, in a sense, necessitates that communities and schools do not connect. In other words, it does not matter how much you talk about schools connecting with families because the whole system is set up to avoid meaningful connections between the two. Although systemic political dysfunction may exist, systems are made up of people, and people are capable of changing. Our entire democratic political system is predicated on this notion, and while change certainly does not come easy, it is in fact plausible to enact change with concerted efforts based on evidence-based effective practices. This study offers a glimpse of what is in fact possible, and I would argue a plausible approach to addressing some of the systemic dysfunction we find in schools, districts, communities, and beyond. Succumbing to the idea that hope does not exist is not only unproductive, it is not true. Therefore, I would argue that more studies like this are needed to shed light on the kinds of practices that can work to address disconnects and discontinuities between schools and families, and where schools can seek and find the kinds of supports that could equip them to bridge existing gaps that make their work more difficult.

Unanswered Questions and Topics

for Further Research

A number of unanswered questions emerge from this study, in part due to the study's limitations, also as a result of what the study found. With regard to study findings, it became clear that this particular CBO is under-resourced, limiting the extent of its ability to meet its goals. This raises the question, how, if at all, would things look differently if the CBO had more resources, and not just more resources, but the specific resources that would contribute to its ability to fulfill its mission and vision for students and families. A second question that surfaced in conducting this study was could more schools serving immigrants and refugees in low-income communities change and become more culturally competent, welcoming places where families are engaged and active if the CBO was doing a combination of individual and system-based work? What would it take for the CBO to be able to work at both of these levels effectively?

Another question that emerged from this study related to secondary schools and their lack of engagement with both families and the CBO. I found the comments made by the ELL teachers with regard to how they responded, or did not respond to CBO staff emails puzzling. They did not even seem to understand why they were hesitant or resistant to engage further than at a very base level. What is it about the structure and culture of secondary schools, particularly high schools, that seems to prohibit, or at least create greater barriers to not only family engagement, but also CBO engagement? Also striking was the fact that the principal had never even heard of the CBO. While high schools certainly are larger, serving more students than elementary and probably middle schools, this could actually signal a greater need for engaging the CBO and families in the work of not only educating, but graduating students, and preparing them for further schooling or the workplace. This raises another question, are schools serving diverse populations in low-income communities doing themselves a disservice by neglecting to focus on family engagement and enlisting support to do so, and if so, could this be part of the reason why so many of these schools are struggling to serve these students and families well?

Yet another puzzling question arises related to the apparent disconnect between CBO sites and administration, and how these might be impacting the organization's ability to fully capitalize on the resources it does have. When an organization is functioning in somewhat of a

disjointed manner, and staff, particularly programmatic staff working on the front lines, lack clarity regarding the organization's mission, goals and strategies they are meant to enlist, how does the CBO manage to achieve anything?

With regard to the limitations that arose during the course of the study, another question that became apparent was how and to what extent does working with the CBO impact student outcomes? While the study offers a glimpse of this, it would be helpful to develop a deeper understanding of the connections between the CBO's work and student outcomes. A related question is to what extent does working with the CBO influence the level of engagement parents have with schools. Again, given the nature of study design in actuality, it became difficult to get at outcomes, and further research could help illuminate the range of outcomes that result from the CBO's work and how specific outcomes correlate to the specific aspects of the CBO's work.

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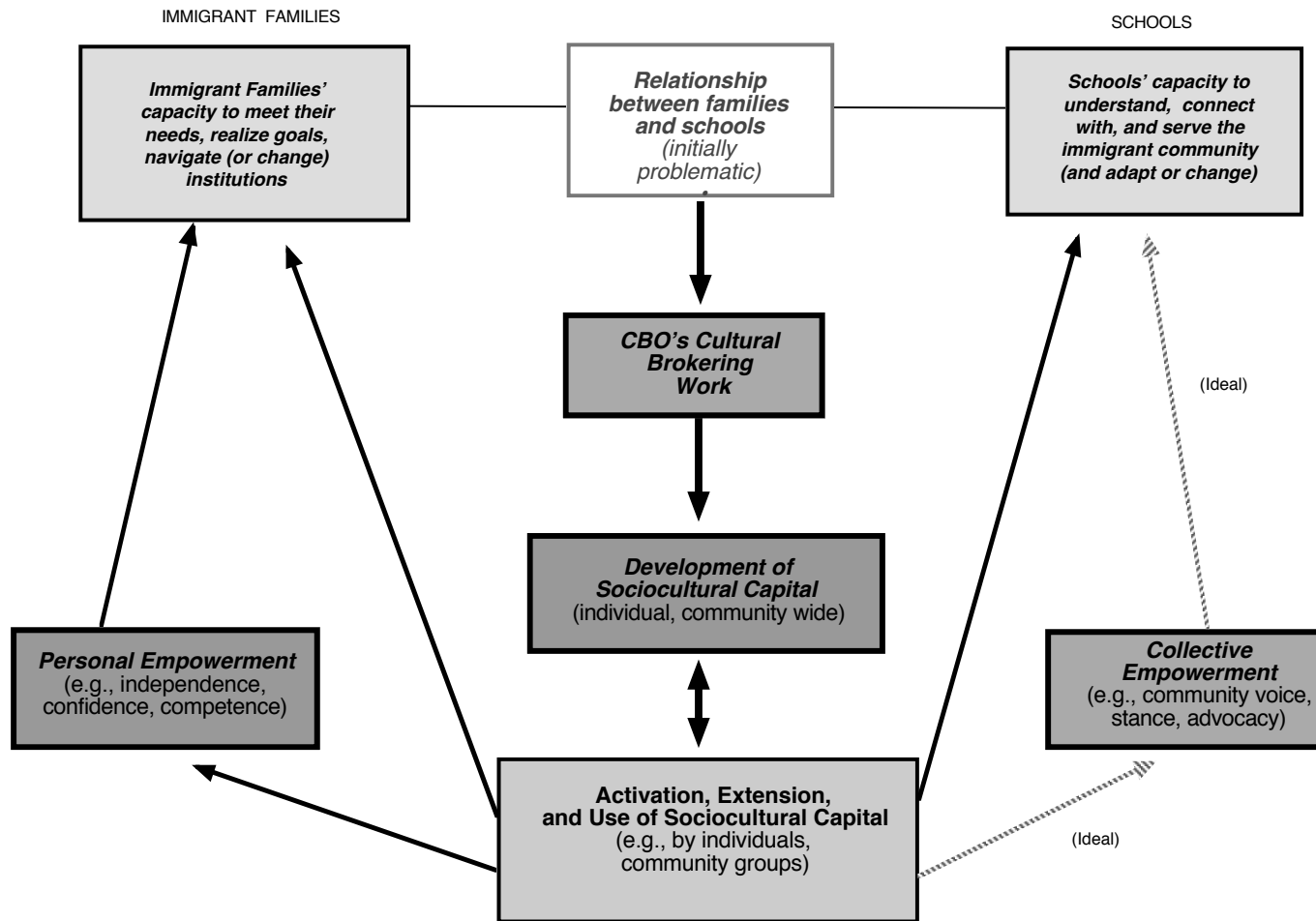
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Appendices

Appendix A: Diagram of Conceptual Relationships

Relationship Between Cultural Brokering, Sociocultural Capital, and Empowerment



Appendix B: Matrices of Research Questions by Data Sources

Following are four matrices of data sources, organized by research questions and sub-questions:

Matrix of First Research Question and Sub-Questions by Data Sources

<i>Question 1: How, if at all, does the CBO try to help recent immigrant families in low-income communities engage productively with the schools their children attend?</i>					
Sub-Questions	Semi-Structured Interviews			Observations	Documents/Artifacts
	CBO Staff	Adult Family Members	School Staff	Meetings, programs, events, and workshops	
What are the goals of the organization with regard to families?	xx	--	--	--	xx
What is the nature of the CBO's work families?	xx	x	--	xx	x
In what ways do these efforts activate and extend families' sociocultural capital?	--	xx	--	xx	x

xx = Primary source x = Secondary source

Matrix of Second Research Question and Sub-Questions by Data Sources

<i>Question 2: How, if at all, does the CBO try to help schools engage productively with recent immigrant families living in low-income communities?</i>					
Sub-Questions	Semi-Structured Interviews			Observations	Documents/Artifacts
	CBO Staff	Adult Family Members	School Staff	Interactions between CBO and School Staff	
What are the goals of the organization with regard to schools?	xx	--	x	x	xx
What is the nature of the CBO's work with schools?	xx	--	x	xx	x
In what ways do these efforts develop the school's cultural competence?	--	--	xx	xx	x

xx = Primary source x = Secondary source

Matrix of Third Research Question and Sub-Questions by Data Sources

Question 3: How, if at all, does the CBO's cultural brokering efforts facilitate positive and productive relationships between the families and schools?					
Sub-Questions	Semi-Structured Interviews			Observations	Documents/Artifacts
	CBO Staff	Adult Family Members	School Staff	(e.g., interactions between CBO and school staff)	
How, if at all, do they facilitate mutual understanding and trust?	xx	xx	xx	x	--
How, if at all, do they facilitate positive and productive two-way communication?	xx	xx	xx	xx	--
In what ways do these relationships display sociocultural capital at work?	xx	xx	xx	xx	--

xx = Primary source x = Secondary source

Matrix of Fourth Research Question and Sub-Questions by Data Sources

Question 4: What accounts for the CBOs' (in)ability to broker relationships between the families and schools?					
Sub-Questions	Semi-Structured Interviews			Observations	Documents/Artifacts
	CBO Staff	Adult Family Members	School Staff	(e.g., interactions between CBO and school staff)	
What supports their work?	xx	xx	xx	x	--
What challenges do they face?	xx	xx	xx	x	--

xx = Primary source x = Secondary source

Appendix C: Interview Protocols

Parents/Guardians/Adult Family Members

Community & Family Info

1. Could you describe the neighborhood where you live in and the people who live here?
2. What brought you here?
 - How long have you lived here?
 - Where did you live before?
 - Who did you know in the neighborhood/apartment complex when you moved here?
 - How did you know them?
 - What kind of resources exist in the community?

Relationships & Experiences with New Futures

3. Could you describe New Futures?
 - What kind of work do they do?
 - What kinds of programs and services do they offer?
4. Which New Futures programs/services have you and your family participated in or accessed?
 - Why those?
 - How did you learn about the programs and/or services?
 - Which people do you know and what are their responsibilities/what is their work?
→ How do they help?
5. How often do you see/visit/work with New Futures staff?
 - With whom?
 - For what reason?
 - Did he/she contact you or did you contact him/her?
 - Where?
 - Who is present?
 - What language(s) is/are spoken?
6. Could you tell me about some times you and/or your family have worked with or received help/support from people at New Futures?
 - When and about what?
 - Who did you deal with?
 - How did they respond to you, and did you get what you wanted or needed?
7. How would you describe you and your family members' relationships with the people at New Futures?
 - Site Manager?
 - Family Advocate?
 - Program Coordinators?
 - Other?
8. Have any of these relationships changed over time?
→ If so, how and why?

→ If not, why not?

Relationships & Experiences with Schools

9. Could you describe the school(s) your child/children attend?
 - Teachers
 - Principal
 - Other school staff
 - School climate/culture
 - Learning environment
10. How would you describe your child/children's experiences at this/these school(s)?
 - Positive, negative, etc. – specific details, examples?
 - Has it changed over time?
 - If so, how and why?
 - If not, why not?
11. How often do you speak/meet with school staff?
 - With whom?
 - For what reason?
 - Do they usually contact you or do you usually contact them?
 - Where?
 - Who is present?
 - What language(s) is/are spoken?
12. Could you tell me about some times you have met with people at the school?
 - When and about what?
 - Who did you deal with?
 - How did they respond to you, and did you get what you wanted or needed?
13. How would you describe your relationships with the people at the school(s)?
 - Teachers?
 - Principal?
 - Other school staff?
 - PTA/Other parents?

New Futures' Work with Families & Schools

14. What role does New Futures play in relation to your family and the school(s)?
 - How did this relationship begin and why?
15. I'm interested in understanding the nature of New Futures' work with your family and the school(s). Could you describe any experiences you have had recently (or your most recent experience) that involved New Futures and the school(s)?
 - How/Who decided to meet?
 - Is this typical/unusual? Why?

Changes over Time?

16. Has your relationship with school staff changed since you began working with New Futures?
 - How has it changed?
 - Why do you think it has changed?
17. Has your understanding of the school and/or school system changed since you began working with New Futures?
 - How has it changed?
 - Why do you think it has changed?
18. Has your child/children's experiences with the school(s) changed since you began working with New Futures?
 - How has it changed?
 - Why do you think it has changed?
19. What, if anything, would you like to see New Futures doing that it is not already doing?
 - With adults? children? families?
 - With schools?
 - With families and schools?
 - Other?

CBO Site Staff

Organizational Structure/Goals/History

1. Could you talk about your current position here at New Futures and how you came to be in this position?
 - What is your role in the organization?
 - What are your responsibilities?
2. What would you say are the goals of New Futures in their work with families?
 - Do you know the origin of these goals – how they were determined, by whom, etc?
 - Do you know if they have changed over time? Please explain.
3. What would you say are the goals of New Futures in their work with schools?
 - Do you know the origin of these goals – how they were determined, by whom, etc.?
 - Do you know if they have changed over time? Please explain.
4. How is this New Futures site organized to do this work?
 - Site staff positions? Roles? Responsibilities?
 - Funding?
 - Other?

Community and School Info

5. Could you describe the community or communities that [site name] works with?
 - What kinds of resources do families have access to in this community?
 - What challenges do families face in this community?
6. Could you describe the schools that [site name] works with?

- What kinds of resources do they offer families?
- What challenges do they face?

Relationships

7. What role(s) do families play here at [site name]?
 - How would you describe the relationship between New Futures and the families served by this site?
 - What does this site do to establish/develop these relationships?
 - What, if anything, do families do to establish/develop these relationships?
8. What roles do schools play at this New Futures site?
 - How would you describe the relationship between New Futures and these schools?
 - What does New Futures do to establish/develop these relationships?
 - What, if anything, do the schools do to establish/develop these relationships?
9. How would you describe the relationship between the families served by this site and the schools their children attend?
 - Specific examples?
10. How, if at all, have the relationships between families and schools changed since New Futures started working with them?
 - Specific examples?

Nature of the Work

11. Could you walk me through what you've done recently that related to the families served by New Futures?
 - Why those?
 - Who/How decided?
12. Could you walk me through what you've done recently that related to the schools that this site works with?
 - Why those?
 - Who/How decided?

Work with Participant Family and Schools

13. Could you tell me about [participant family]?
 - How long have you known them?
 - Could you describe your relationship with them?
14. Could you describe any experiences you have had recently with this family?
 - Why those?
 - How/Who decided?
 - Is this typical/unusual? Why?
15. Could you describe any experiences you have had this week or last with this family and schools?
 - Why those?
 - How/Who decided?

- Is this typical/unusual? Why?

Changes Over Time

16. How, if at all, has the relationship between [participant family] and any of their schools changed since you began working with them?
 - Why do you think it has changed?
17. How if at all, has/have [child/children's] performance, behavior, attitude, etc. changed since the family began working with New Futures?
 - Why do you think they have changed?
18. How, if at all, has [participant family's] understanding of the school(s) and district changed since they began working with New Futures?
 - Why do you think so?
19. How, if at all, do you think the schools' understanding of [participant family] has changed since you began working with them?

Progress – Challenges & Supports

20. What kind of progress would you say New Futures is making with regard to the goals you described earlier?
 - What are the greatest challenges New Futures faces with regard to achieving its goals?
 - What would you say are the greatest supports?
21. What, if anything, would you like to see New Futures doing that it is not already doing?
 - With adults? children? families?
 - With schools? With families and schools?
 - Other?

School Staff Members

School & Community Info

1. Could you talk about your current position here at [School] and how you came to be in this position?
2. Could you describe the school culture/climate?
 - What are the priorities of the school?
3. Could you describe the community that [School] serves?
 - What kinds of students attend [School]?
4. Could you describe the school's relationship with families?
 - How, if at all, has it evolved over time?

Relationship & Work with New Futures

5. Could you describe the school's relationship with New Futures?
6. How long have you been working with New Futures?
 - How did this relationship begin and why?
 - How, if at all, has it evolved over time?

7. What would you say are the goals of New Futures in terms of the work it does in relation to your school?
 - Why those goals?
 - How were they determined and by whom?

Work with New Futures & Participant Family/Families

8. I'm interested in understanding the nature of New Futures' work with you and [participant family/families]. Could you tell me about this/these family/families?
 - How long have you known the family/families?
 - Could you describe your relationship with them?
9. Could you describe any experiences you have had this week or last with New Futures and this/these families?
 - Why those?
 - How/Who decided?
 - Is this typical/unusual? Why?

Changes Over Time

10. How, if at all, has your relationship with [participant family/families] changed since you began working with New Futures?
 - What do you think accounts for these changes?
11. How if at all, has/have [child/children's] performance, behavior, attitude, etc. changed since you began working with New Futures?
 - What do you think accounts for these changes?
12. How, if at all, has/have [participant family/families'] understanding of your school and the district changed since you began working with New Futures?
 - What do you think accounts for these changes?
13. How, if at all, has your understanding of [participant family/families] changed since you began working with New Futures?

Challenges & Supports

14. What are the greatest challenges at your school?
 - How, if at all, does New Futures help you address these challenges?
 - What other supports does the school have?
15. What would you say are the greatest supports for [School's] work with New Futures?
16. What, if anything, would you like to see New Futures doing with families and schools that it is not already doing?

CBO Executive Director

Organizational Structure/Goals/History

1. Could you talk about your current position here at New Futures and how you came to be in this position?

- What is your role in the organization?
 - What are your responsibilities?
2. What is the organization's mission?
 - How, if at all, has it changed over time? Please explain.
 - What are the origins of the mission?
 - Why was the organization founded?
 - For what purpose?
 - By whom?
 - In response to what?
 - Has the context/purpose changed over time? Please explain. If so, how, if at all, has that influenced the mission of the organization?
 3. What would you say are the goals of New Futures in their work with families?
 - Do you know the origin of these goals – how they were determined, by whom, etc.?
 - Do you know if they have changed over time? Please explain.
 - What role(s) do families play in New Futures?
 4. What would you say are the goals of New Futures in their work with schools?
 - Do you know the origin of these goals – how they were determined, by whom, etc.?
 - Do you know if they have changed over time? Please explain.
 - What roles do schools play in New Futures?
 5. How did New Futures get involved in working with families and schools?
 6. How was New Futures organized to do this work between August 2010 and August 2011?
 - Administrative team positions? Roles? Responsibilities?
 - Site staff positions? Roles? Responsibilities?
 - Funding?
 - Other?
 - Possible to get org chart(s)?

Resources

7. Who or what funds New Futures? Grants? Donations? Government? Other?
 - Does funding and/or fundraising differ across sites? If so, please explain.
 - What role, if any, do funders play in determining the work of New Futures and/or specific sites?
8. What kinds of economic resources does New Futures invest in order to accomplish the work?
 - What, if any, additional economic resources would New Futures like to be able to invest in the work?
9. What kinds of cultural resources does New Futures invest in order to accomplish the work?
 - What, if any, additional economic resources would New Futures like to be able to invest in the work?
10. How is time prioritized?
11. In what kind(s) of training and professional development do site staff, tutors and the Administrative team participate?

Programs

12. What is the purpose of the scholarship [look up name]?
 - How decided?
 - How much is the scholarship? Why that amount? How decided?
 - How is the scholarship funded? How did that come about?
13. Where did the Strengthening Families program come from? Did it cost money? Was there training involved?
14. Could you describe New Futures' volunteer program? Recruitment? Functions/Roles? Training?
15. What role do Americorps volunteers play at New Futures?
 - What is the process/cost?

Nature of the Work

16. Could you walk me through what you did this week or last that related to the families served by New Futures?
 - Why those?
 - Who/How decided?
17. Could you walk me through what you did this week or last that related to the schools that New Futures works with?
 - Why those?
 - Who/How decided?

Progress – Challenges & Supports

18. What kind of progress would you say New Futures is making with regard to the goals you described earlier?
 - What would you say are the greatest challenges New Futures faces with regard to achieving its goals?
 - What would you say are the greatest supports?
19. What, if anything, would you like to see New Futures doing that it is not already doing?
 - With adults? Children? Families
 - With schools?
 - With families and schools?
 - Other?

Appendix D: Observation Guide

Field notes recorded during observations focused on the following:

Meetings between Parents/Guardians/Adult Family Members and School Staff (i.e. Parent-Teacher Meetings, Parent-Principal Meetings, etc.)

- Meeting focus/purpose
 - Who requested/scheduled the meeting
- Agenda
 - Items
 - Who created it
- Attendees
 - Who
 - Parents/Guardians/Adult Family Members
 - Students
 - School staff
 - CBO staff
 - Other
 - Race/Ethnicity/Cultural Background
 - Language
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Appearance
- Interactions between school staff and parent(s)/family member(s)
 - Who, if anyone, is leading or guiding the conversation
 - Who speaks, for how long and about what
 - Language(s) used
 - Tone of each speaker
 - Facial expressions/body language of all attendees
- Interactions between school staff and CBO staff member(s)
 - Who speaks, for how long and about what
 - Language(s) used
 - Tone of each speaker
 - Facial expressions/body language of all attendees
- Interactions between CBO staff and parent(s)/family member(s)
 - Who speaks, for how long and about what
 - Language(s) used
 - Tone of each speaker
 - Facial expressions/body language of all attendees
- Role of school staff in meeting
 - Leading/Guiding?
 - Sharing information?
 - Problem solving?
 - Reprimanding?

- Being reprimanded?
- Other?
- Role and participation of parents/family members
 - Leading/Guiding?
 - Sharing information?
 - Problem solving?
 - Reprimanding?
 - Being reprimanded?
 - Other?
- Role of CBO staff (if present)
 - Leading/Guiding?
 - Sharing information?
 - Problem solving?
 - Reprimanding?
 - Translating?
 - Providing moral support?
 - Other?
- Outcomes
 - What if anything was accomplished at the meeting?
 - What, if any, actions are supposed to follow the meeting?
 - Who is meant to do what and when?
 - Will there be any follow-up meetings?
 - If so, for what purpose and when?
 - If not, why not?
 - What were the tones, facial expressions and body language of the attendees upon leaving the meeting?

CBO Meetings/Workshops

- Meeting focus/purpose
 - How decided?
- Agenda
 - Items
 - Who created it
- Physical setting
 - Description of physical space
 - Room/Seating arrangement
 - People
 - Seated
 - Standing
 - Location in the room
- Attendees
 - Number
 - Who
 - Parents/Guardians/Adult Family Members

- Other Community Members
 - CBO staff
 - School staff
 - Students
 - Other
- Race/Ethnicities/Cultural Backgrounds
- Languages
- Gender representation
- Ages
- General appearance of various attendees
- Speakers
 - Who
 - CBO staff
 - Parents/Guardians/Adult Family Members
 - Community Members
 - Students
 - School staff
 - Other
 - Topic(s)
 - Purpose
 - Format
 - Language(s)
 - Translators?
 - Length of time
 - Tone of speaker
 - Reactions to speaker
 - Body language of audience members
 - Comments/Questions
- Activities
 - Who was involved?
 - CBO staff
 - Parents/Guardians/Adult Family Members
 - Community Members
 - School staff
 - Students
 - Other
 - Description of activity
 - Purpose
 - Length of time
 - Participants' engagement in activity
 - Tone(s) used
 - Body language
 - Actual participation (full, partial, etc.)
- Interactions between CBO staff and families/community members
 - Who speaks, for how long and about what

- Language(s) used
- Tone of each speaker
- Facial expressions/body language of all attendees
- Interactions between and among families/community members
 - Who, if anyone, is leading or guiding the conversation
 - Who speaks, for how long and about what
 - Language(s) used
 - Tone of each speaker
 - Facial expressions/body language of all attendees
- Interactions between CBO staff and school staff (if present)
 - Who speaks, for how long and about what
 - Language(s) used
 - Tone of each speaker
 - Facial expressions/body language of all attendees
- Other relevant interactions
 - Who is involved
 - Who speaks, for how long and about what
 - Language(s) used
 - Tone of each speaker
 - Facial expressions/body language of all attendees
- Role of CBO staff members present
 - Leading/Guiding?
 - Training?
 - Sharing information?
 - Gathering information/data?
 - Problem solving?
 - Asking questions?
 - Translating?
 - Providing moral support?
 - Complaining?
 - Other?
- Role and participation of families/community members
 - Leading/Guiding?
 - Training?
 - Sharing information?
 - Gathering information/data?
 - Problem solving?
 - Asking questions?
 - Translating?
 - Providing moral support?
 - Complaining?
 - Other?
- Role of school staff in meeting (if present)
 - Leading/Guiding?

- Training?
- Sharing information?
- Gathering information/data?
- Problem solving?
- Asking questions?
- Translating?
- Providing moral support?
- Complaining?
- Other?
- Outcomes
 - What if anything was accomplished?
 - What, if any, actions are supposed to follow?
 - Who is meant to do what and when?
 - Will there be any follow-up meetings/workshops/events?
 - If so, for what purpose(s) and when?
 - If not, why not?
 - What were the tones, facial expressions and body language of the attendees upon leaving?