Reproducing Segregation: Parent Involvement, Diversity, and School Governance

In Press

Virginia Gordon

Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition

University of California, San Diego

gordonvirginia@yahoo.com

Honorine Nocon

School of Education and Human Development

University of Colorado Denver

honorine.nocon@cudenver.edu

Abstract

Governmental programs currently mandate direct parental input in school governance. In comparing the actions of low-income Latino parents with those of middle-income white and Asian parents within the context of school governance, the authors found that while both groups actively sought and achieved reforms in order to improve their children's education, the eventual outcomes of their efforts differed. The study suggests that within multicultural settings diverse parent constituencies advocate changes in categorical programs like bilingual and gifted and talented education that impact classroom integration and that the ultimate program beneficiaries tend to be the children from higher income households.

The superintendent came to the school to teach parents to read to their children. However, the thirty middle-class parents wanted to talk about the district's new back-to-basics reforms and their effects on the school's music, art and science enrichment programs. One parent told the superintendent, "You're 'preaching to the choir'." The school had arranged for a bus to bring low-income Latino parents from the inner city, but none had come.

Hours after a group of parents at a New York City public school raised $46,000 to prevent a fourth grade teacher from being laid off, Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew blocked the move. Dr. Crew feared that affluent parents might create a two tier system, paying for services that poorer schools could not afford. But parents argued that middle-class and high-performing schools already receive far less than poor and low-achieving schools which qualify for substantial amounts of federal assistance… (Hartocollis, 1997)

The conventional wisdom is that when parents get involved in education, schools get better. In fact, parent involvement is a centerpiece of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. (US Congress, 2001) However, as the opening vignettes suggest, we cannot presume that all parents are the same. Can we then assume that involvement of all parents improves the education of all children? In his recent book, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America,* author and educational activist Jonathan Kozol (2005, p.30) questions this supposition:

> …. in recent years, middle-class city–dwellers have not merely fled from schools in which large numbers of black and Latino children are enrolled but sometimes openly demanded that their school officials carve out new domains of pedagogic isolation to provide their children with exclusive opportunities which they believe they deserve.

> Half a century after the monumental *Brown v. Board of Education* (US Supreme Court,

1954) decision school segregation is making a comeback (Orfield, 2001; Orfield & Lee, 2005), and rather than being part of the solution, involved parents are part of the problem. If parent involvement is a weapon in the fight for school improvement, then it is double edged. This case study explores the dual character of parent involvement. Specifically, we seek to understand parent interactions within schools with diverse populations in the context of school governance and the impact of these interactions on the education of all a school's children.

<div align="center">Parent Involvement</div>

The term "parent involvement" encompasses both the involvement of individual parents in their children's education and collective involvement of parents in school decision-making bodies (Epstein, 1992). Traditional parent roles in schooling include helping the child at home with schoolwork or other educational activities, attending school performances, and helping with school events (Chavkin & Williams, 1993). The positive impact of in-the-home parent involvement on student achievement regardless of the socioeconomic status of the family is well-documented (Clark, 1983; Walberg, 1984). In contrast, there is little data correlating parent participation in school governance with increased student achievement; although, the assumption persists that joint decision-making by parents and teachers enhances the education of all children in the school, improves school accountability, and empowers parents (Bauch & Golding, 1998; Rawid, 1990; Saxe, 1975). The process of shared decision-making is seen as a tool in preventing breakdowns in community confidence such as occurred in the 1968 Ocean Hill-Brownsville confrontation between African American parents and white teachers, which shut down New York City public schools (Fields & Feinberg, 2001). Thus, parent involvement in school-based shared decision making continues to be seen as having a democratizing and legitimizing function.

Democracy, however, does not always mean equity. Parents are not a monolithic group. Parents from lower socio-economic classes, minority parents, and less educated parents are perceived by school personnel and mainstream parents as participating less actively in their children's schooling than their better educated, white, Anglo, middle-class counterparts (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Lareau, 2000, 2003; Lightfoot, 1978; US Department of Education, 1998). While numerous studies have shown that minority and low-income parents are interested in the education of their children (Ada & Zubizarreta, 2001; Chavkin & Williams, 1993; Moles, 1993), not all parents have the same personal resources, skills, relations to school personnel, or access to government support (Gibson, 2005; Valdés, 1996).

Guided by the growing sociological understanding of the complexities of parent involvement, new initiatives are targeting low income and minority parents and striving to "include all families" (Epstein, 2005, p.180). Yet, little is known about what actually transpires when "all families" become involved in today's multi-ethnic schools. While much has been written on the concerns and behavior of distinct socio-economic, ethnic, and racial parent groups in the context of their children's schooling (Clark, 1983; Gibson, 1988, 2005; Lareau, 2000; Ogbu, 1974, 2003; Valdés, 1996), the interactions among varied groups of parents within the same school community remain poorly understood. There is some evidence from the literature on school desegregation that when parents get involved in their children's education, the results can be catastrophic. For example, Coleman, Kelly, & Moore (1975), in a follow-up study to the Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966), found that court-ordered busing of black students was followed by white flight from schools and districts resulting in the partial nullification of the effects of desegregation. A recent study by Shannon (2004) tracked how tensions between Anglo and Mexican parents shattered a Spanish-English bilingual dual immersion school. These studies

suggest that linguistic, cultural and socio-economic differences among parents can destabilize school communities. With today's schools becoming increasingly multi-ethnic (Orfield & Lee, 2005), there is a critical need for new research on the internal dynamics of parent involvement in order to identify the factors that hold diverse school communities together and those that tear them apart.

<div align="center">Social Reproduction Theory and Social and Cultural Capital</div>

Bourdieu's social reproduction framework is particularly useful for dissecting the complexities of parent involvement in diverse schools (Bourdieu., 1977, a,b, 1998, 2001). Linguistic and cultural background and knowledge along with the ability to tap social networks can confer an advantage in one's interactions with social institutions. Social reproduction theory holds that the distribution of advantage favors those who have more "social and cultural capital." According to Bourdieu, social capital includes access to social networks and organizations or "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (2001, pp. 102-103). Cultural capital includes attitudes, preferences, behaviors, educational background, linguistic competence, and formal knowledge. Middle class parents, and white/Anglo middle class parents, in particular, have greater access to and ability to leverage social and cultural capital to ensure the educational success of their children (Coleman, 1988; Lareau and Horvat 1999; Lareau, 2000, 2003; Noguera, 2001). While not intrinsically economic, these more clandestine forms of capital play a determinant role in the reproduction of social relations through successive generations.

Bourdieu further argues that the educational system is not a disinterested party with respect to social relations. Rather, schools contribute to "the reproduction of the social structure by

sanctioning the hereditary transmission of cultural capital….Moreover, the economic and social yield of educational qualification depends on the social capital, again inherited, which can be used to back it up" (2001, pp. 98-99). In other words, the educational system is aligned culturally and socially in a system of exchange with groups that value schooling as the purveyor of credentials essential for the preservation of capital. The children in these groups acquire from birth cultural capital that can be exchanged at school giving them a distinct advantage over the children of groups whose capital, while valuable in their own social networks, does not always have exchange value within the institution of schooling.

A major critique of social reproduction theories is that they are deterministic. The implication is that, because higher–income, educated families possess capital historically valued by the institution of schooling, their success within the educational system is assured. A problem with this interpretation is that it fails to recognize the role of agency. Capital, whether social, cultural or financial, is effective only when activated (Lareau, 2000; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Low-income parents, traditionally marginalized from schools, have networks, experiences, motivations, and skills they can draw upon to effect change. Even in high poverty communities, parents can activate non-traditional resources and leverage relationships with other parents, teachers, and school officials to author positions for themselves and influence life in schools (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004; Gibson, 2005).

Still, a family's ability to successfully utilize social and cultural capital is dependent upon a favorable institutional response. Lareau and Horvat describe the positive convergence of parent capital and school response as "moments of inclusion." Moments of inclusion are the "coming together of various forces to provide an advantage to the child in his or her life trajectory…These moments may include placement in an academically gifted program or the highest academic

track, enrollment in a suburban school…" In contrast, moments of exclusion include "placement in a low reading group, retention, placement in remedial courses, and the failure to complete college-preparation requirements." (1999 p. 48) The efforts of low-income parents to effect inclusion often fail because these parents lack leverage. As a result these efforts are ignored, fail to be sustained or are subverted by school officials or more powerful constituencies (Noguera, 2004). Their social and cultural capital, to extend the metaphor, are not readily exchanged in the institution. Mainstream and more affluent parents, whose capital is readily accepted, are able to deploy it to preserve and expand on their advantage.

Using the conceptual framework of social reproduction based on deployment of social and cultural capital, the present study examines the inner workings of a school with diverse student and parent populations. We analyze how parents from different socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic groups act and interact in decision-making settings to activate resources to support their children's learning. It is our premise that to build successful schools for all children, we must understand the motives and actions of parents as well as their social and cultural resources within the framework of the larger sociopolitical context of the public school, an institution predisposed to social reproduction.

<div align="center">Methodology and Site Description</div>

During the late 1990s, the Hill Park Elementary School (HPES) community was engaged in efforts to address a persistent socio-economic and ethnic-related achievement gap within the school. Parents in the predominantly middle to upper-middle-class school took part in a series of site-based decisions that included the dissolution of the school's Spanish bilingual education program and the development of new strategies for dealing with students identified as Gifted and Talented Education (GATE).[i] We focus on the involvement and interactions of parents in these

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events and the reverberations of parent-instigated changes within school.

The data for this case study were drawn from public documents collected throughout the 1990s and through archival research in 2004-2005. The documents include school site council minutes, district and school reports, newsletters, and articles. In addition, we used field notes and correspondence produced or collected by the first author, who was a parent at the school and a participant observer in the school community as these events unfolded. We performed member checks, interviewing parents, teachers, school administrators, and staff who participated in school governance and the events described in this paper. The authors, who are both affiliated with an inter-disciplinary social science research laboratory, began work together on a university-community-school project in 1996. The project provided a basis and a multi-layered participatory approach (Cole, 1996; Nocon, Nilsson, & Cole, 2004), for systematic collection of data on change over time.

Hill Park Elementary School (HPES) is located in a suburban neighborhood in the southwestern United States. Part of a large urban school district, the school's 400 students come from three populations: middle and upper middle-class neighborhood children, school "choice" children of middle-class parents who work nearby but do not live in the neighborhood, and low-income Latino children voluntarily bused from the inner city. During the period of study, Latinos represented 25--30% of the student body. Twelve percent of the students were Asian, and approximately 50% of the population was classified as white (non Latino). This latter group included a significant population of immigrants from Middle Eastern and European countries. Approximately 40% of the school's parents spoke a language other than English in the home, and the student body represented over 16 different language groups. With respect to socio-economic status, approximately 30% of the student body qualified for free or reduced lunch and

were classified as low income.

In the 1990s, HPES had some of the highest test scores in the district. Middle-class parents knew this, and the school had a long waiting list for children who lived outside the neighborhood. Low-income inner-city Latino parents also knew this, and there was frequently a waiting list to get into the busing program that would allow their children to attend HPES.

Despite its high ranking, the school had a significant achievement gap. In 1999, 88% of white students and 79% of Asians scored at or above the national average in reading, while only 33% of Latino students performed similarly. Nonetheless, Latino parents believed that the school would provide better opportunities than their children could receive in their home neighborhood schools. In fact, the Latino children in the district who were bused to high-performing elementary schools like HPES had higher test scores than their peers who remained in their inner-city neighborhood schools.

HPES had a history of parent activism. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and school foundation raised tens of thousands of dollars each year to enrich the school program. In addition, parents served on elected school decision-making bodies like the School Site Council/ School Governance Team. The bused community also provided input to the principal through regular meetings of the state and district-mandated Bilingual Advisory Committee. It is useful to note, however, that middle-class parent organizing was frequently self-initiated and self-organized, whereas lower-income parent organization was often facilitated by the school administration. Middle-class parents organized the PTA, the school foundation, which raised independent and discretionary funds for the school, and various ad hoc committees. Low-income Latino participation in the Bilingual Advisory Committee was organized by the school principal. All meetings took place at the school except for the Bilingual Advisory Committee (BAC)

meetings which took place at the home of one of the bused families in the inner city. Members of the school governance team, who were not from the inner city, did not attend the BAC meetings.

While the governance team included neighborhood, choice and bused parents, middle-class families dominated the organization. The meetings were held in English, although a staff member was always on hand to translate. Middle-class parents served as the representatives on the district-wide Gifted and Talented and Title 1 advisory boards. Two of the parents who played an active role on the governance team were middle-class Latinos who spoke excellent English. Members of the BAC rarely attended /governance meetings. Generally it was left to the principal to report on the activities of the BAC.

The higher-income and low-income bused families utilized separate informal networks through which they shared information and resources. Higher-income parents shared information through friendships, carpools, church organizations, attendance at their children's soccer matches and other informal social networks, at or in close proximity to the school. They discussed the quality of teachers and how to make sure the principal placed their children in the classes with the best teachers. These networks provided social capital which leveraged cultural capital in the form of tips on how to improve the education of their children. The bused community also utilized family and social networks within their neighborhood to share information and access resources that might improve their children's education. Mrs. Cervantes, for example, whose children and grandchildren had attended HPES, reported that other Latino parents would ask her for help in getting their children into the Hill Park busing program.

The neighborhood/choice and bused networks did not intersect or communicate with one another. So infrequent was the interaction between the two groups that very few neighborhood and "choice" parents knew parents from the bused community either by name or by face. When

the PTA or school foundation parents wanted to communicate with the bused parents, a flyer was translated into Spanish, usually by the bilingual school office assistant, and sent home in a packet with the children. While both the neighborhood and bused parents had social networks based on physical proximity, the social network of the neighborhood parents enjoyed the advantage of proximity to the school and school personnel. They constituted a visible presence at the school. Additionally, while "choice" parents did not live in the neighborhood, they often worked nearby.

A Case of Busing and School Governance

Historically the busing program had led an uneasy existence within the school. Rumors circulated that some neighborhood families sent their children to private schools rather than to a public school with a significant low-income Latino population. On the other hand, for some parents in this highly educated community, sending their children to a "diverse" school was a form of capital, a liberal credential. Yet, busing created challenges. The district-wide busing program dictated school starting and ending times, and school-sponsored after-school activities were not permitted unless the bused children could participate. Additionally, there were persistent concerns over the achievement gap, and the school was frequently cited by the district for the lack of academic and social integration between the neighborhood/choice children and the bused students. Despite these issues, the neighborhood needed the busing program as without it the school enrollment would be too small and the district would close the school.

Tension over the busing issue emerged in a 1990 school site council discussion. The district school board had decided to remove two portable classroom buildings from the school based on a prediction of declining neighborhood school-age population for the following year. With active recruitment within the neighborhood, the resident enrollment had increased by 27 children, but the school would have to increase in size by 62 in order to avoid losing facilities and teachers.

Eleven bused children were on a waiting list along with 35 other non-bused, "choice" children. The principal supported increasing the number of bused children to maintain an adequate enrollment and to combat the segregation of keeping low-income Latino children in inner-city schools. One parent reminded the group that the previous principal had "promised parents not to increase [the proportion of bused children] over a certain %." The goal was to "keep [HPES] excellence, include [bused] students, [and maintain a] stable, networked, strong, dedicated" community of families.

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The neighborhood parents perceived the bused students as being low achievers and their parents as less dedicated to the school community. They viewed the bused community parents as being less involved in the school than the neighborhood families, which in terms of physical presence, was accurate. While the principal was concerned about the overall desegregation of the district and viewed the school as an integral part of the larger urban school district, the neighborhood parents were school-centered and did not view the school as having a responsibility towards the larger metropolitan area. Though neighborhood parents knew they needed bused children to keep the school opened, they sought to limit their numbers.

Parental concerns about the busing program were somewhat mollified by the fact that the HPES essentially operated as two separate schools, one for the poor Latinos and one for the middle and upper-middle-class children. In the early 1990s many of the school's low-income, Latino K-3 students had been placed into two bilingual classrooms where much of the instruction was in Spanish. In grade 4 they transitioned into the regular English-speaking classrooms with some support from the school's ESL teacher. In the upper grades children were divided into GATE and non-GATE classrooms. Most of the low-income Latino 4th and 5th graders were placed into the non-GATE classrooms.

The HPES bilingual classrooms were regarded as being exclusively for the low-income Latinos. The Spanish-speaking children of Latino university professors were placed in the English-only classrooms. First generation Asian and European children from highly educated professional families were always mainstreamed into the English-speaking classrooms, even if they spoke no English at all. Middle and upper-middle class families were well aware through their close community networks that foreign language instruction was included in local private school curricula; however, neighborhood and choice parents never requested that their children participate in the Spanish bilingual program. To address parental demand for language instruction the school offered Spanish and French classes before the start of the school day and charged participating children a fee. The Spanish class was taught by a Latino member of the office staff. The bused community was excluded from these classes both financially and because the buses arrived too late.

In essence, the Anglo and Asian neighborhood and "choice" families led separate lives from the bused Latino community, both in and out of school. A 1993 School Site Council Self Study reported on the lack of integration of the bused children, "The kindergarten does a nice job of integrating homerooms, but it is disappointing that the integration does not continue throughout the day as it was done in years past…Segregation continues during lunch and recess time…." Similarly, at the end of the school day, the bused children returned to the inner city while the neighborhood and choice children attended nearby after-school programs or participated in the local sports leagues.

The fact that the bused students generated income for the school also quelled opposition to the busing program. In 1997, the school principal told the site council that HPES received $2700US per neighborhood or choice student to run the school vs $4000US per bused student.

The discrepancy was due to the supplemental state and federal funds for low-income students, including federal Title 1 funding for children from low-income households and programs for special needs children.[ii] These supplemental funds, the allocation of which was controlled by the school site council, helped pay for a teacher's aide for each of the school's classrooms. The classroom aides were a benefit that reduced the adult-student ratio and kept the middle-class parents from heading for the private schools. The aides also provided support for the teachers and made the school a more desirable place to work.

The middle class children and their teachers benefited disproportionately from busing integration funds. The Title 1 funds paid for aides in all of the classrooms while the bused students were primarily concentrated in one transitional and two bilingual classrooms. That the supplemental Title 1 funds were used to pay for services largely benefiting middle-class children was never questioned or acknowledged. This redirection of funds intended for the poor to middle-class students and their teachers is a perfect example of the Matthew effect (Merton, 1968; Wahlberg & Tsai, S., 1983;): those who have more, receive more; those who have less, lose even more.[iii] It is also demonstrates the institutional role in social reproduction.

Before one concludes that that the middle-class neighborhood and "choice" parents were simply at fault, it is important to remember that they were exhibiting the very behaviors that good involved parents should adopt. As Julie Wrigley, in her introduction to *Home Advantage (*Lareau 2000, p. viii), points out,

> Middle-class parents do not set out to display class privilege. They set out to help their own children. They also want to keep their children from suffering the pain of failure. These desires are harnessed to a larger system in which advantage is systematically generated by some and systematically kept out of the reach of others.

The middle-class parents who sat on the school decision-making bodies used cultural and social capital to maximize the resources available to enhance their children's education. Examples of this included: networking and lobbying the school to select teachers, supporting Spanish language instruction for their children that was separate from the existing bilingual classes, and organizing a powerful PTA and school foundation in ways that effectively excluded parents from the bused community. The middle class parent initiatives often received support from teachers and administrators.

Elimination of the Spanish Bilingual Program

While their presence in school decision-making bodies was limited, in the late 1990s the HPES bused parents found ways to assume a more activist role in their children's education. By the winter of 1998, rumors were circulating around the school that members of the bused community were dissatisfied with the school's bilingual program.[iv] A middle-class Latino governance team member whose husband was a university professor and whose children were in the English classrooms questioned the fact that most of the Latino children spent four years in the bilingual program before transitioning to mixed classrooms. "My children spoke Spanish when they came to this school. I put them in English. They made the transition after two years." This parent, who lived in an area undergoing gentrification close to the bused community, encouraged some of the low-income parents to speak out about their concerns. A group of low-income Latino parents soon called for the elimination of the school's bilingual classrooms. Parent members of the predominantly middle-class site council attended a special meeting at the inner-city home of Mrs. Cervantes. Eight of the low-income Latino parents, the school principal and the bilingual school secretary were also there. At the meeting, which was conducted in both Spanish and English, the bused community parents informed the site council members that they

wanted their children to be placed in the regular classrooms.

Following the community meeting, the whole governance team met to discuss the issue. Teachers were concerned that they would be unable to handle the needs of the Latino bused children in the regular classroom. There was also a concern about the level of participation of bused community parents. One site council member said, "...[bused] parents must know that if their child is placed in an English class, their level of support and involvement must improve – we'd have to speak with [the bused] parents and have them clearly understand their expectations." The governance team decided to poll the bused community. Of the 38 parents who returned the surveys, 35 wanted their children in English-only instruction. The following fall, the principal eliminated the bilingual classrooms and distributed the bused children among the classrooms.

How do we interpret the activism of the bilingual parents? Even prior to the 1998 meetings, this group of parents was already exercising a form of agency. They had the option of remaining in the bilingual classrooms of their overwhelmingly Latino inner-city neighborhood school. By participating in the voluntary busing program and sending their children to a high-performing school like HPES, they were actively seeking out better opportunities for their children.

Once their children had spent time at HPES, these bused parents had come to the conclusion that their children would get a better education in the regular classroom. While they had generally good relationships with the bilingual teachers, they were concerned that the teachers were inflating their children's grades. They noted that their children received excellent grades in the K-3 bilingual classrooms, but when they transitioned to the English-language integrated classrooms in 4th grade they were considered low performers. Perhaps the 4th grade teachers underestimated the capabilities of the Latino students (Diaz, Moll, & Mehan, 1986), or

maybe the children were really further behind than the bilingual teachers had led them to believe. The bused parents assumed that the problem lay with the bilingual program.[v]

Within a diverse school community, the actions of the various groups of parents affect one another. Even though the two parent communities did not intersect, the bused parents knew that middle-class parents, regardless of their native language or ethnic background, did not place their children in the bilingual classrooms. They knew that middle-class Spanish-speaking children were not in the bilingual program. If the English classrooms were better, they did not want to be excluded. A bused parent told an Anglo member of the governance team, "I want my child to sit next to your child."

Another factor likely influenced the bused community's actions. During this period, a statewide movement to eliminate bilingual education gained force. Media coverage of this issue was extensive. Although many Latino leaders and educators opposed the referendum, the state's Latino community was far from united on the issue. An electoral referendum put an end to the state bilingual education program in June of 1998: however, schools could maintain a transitional bilingual program, if the parents voted for a waiver.

A Latino parent recently cited some of the positive effects of eliminating the bilingual program. His daughter now gets invited to birthday parties in the wealthier neighborhoods that surround the school. He also reported proudly that his children speak better English than the children in his inner city neighborhood who attend the predominantly Latino neighborhood school and speak "homeboy style English." This parent placed a premium on two impacts of classroom integration: the expanded weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) with higher income children and also an expansion of linguistic capital. Both of these potential assets can be seen as "moments of inclusion."

Yet the elimination of the bilingual program also had negative ramifications for the school and the Latino bused community. Consistent with Arce's (2004, p. 242) position that bilingual teachers serve as "cultural and political workers" whose efforts support low-income Latino parents, the elimination of the school's two bilingual classrooms curtailed communication between bused parents and their children's teachers. The school's two bilingual teachers left the school as did the bilingual classroom aides. Thus, the school lost a majority of its bilingual personnel. As the regular classroom teachers spoke little or no Spanish, the Spanish-speaking school principal and a bilingual secretary frequently served as translators at parent-teacher conferences, and interaction between the bused parents and classroom teachers became more limited. The decreased support for the Latino children and the severing of communication between school and home constitute "moments of exclusion."

Thus, the attempt by Latino parents to increase integration was perceived to provide their children with greater inclusion in more integrated classrooms, while at the same time the change led to the families' exclusion from interaction with the institution due to the loss of their primary cultural and political advocates within the school, the bilingual teachers. This marginalization of the low-income Latino parents was exacerbated by a middle-class parent movement to address the needs of the school's high-achieving students.

Gifted and Talented Initiatives

Regardless of individual political and social views, in the HPES neighborhood being the parent of a high-achieving student was a form of cultural and social capital. Having one's child qualify for the GATE program, and especially for the elite seminar program, the public equivalent of a private prep school, prompted admiration in this educated, achievement-oriented community. (See for example Brooks, 2000.) Middle-class parents continually applied individual

and sometimes group pressure on the principal and the teachers to make sure that the needs of the more advanced students were addressed. Classroom placement and teacher selection were priorities. Middle-class governance team parents served on the teacher hiring committees, and carefully screened teacher candidates to make sure they were qualified to teach high-achieving students. Inside information was quickly passed to other middle class parents about the quality of new hires. Finally, there was the economic pressure from affluent parents, often large donors to the school, who were able to pull their children out to go to private schools or to special elite GATE seminar programs in other public schools.

Shortly after the bused parents began vocalizing their concerns about the bilingual program, a group of politically liberal, highly educated middle-class parents began to lobby to improve the education of "gifted and talented" students. State law required the ongoing participation of parents in programming and evaluation of GATE programs. In addition, school districts receiving GATE funding were required to provide a specified amount of special instruction to those children classified as gifted and talented. While HPES teachers claimed to be delivering this instruction, many parents of GATE-identified children were skeptical.

Pressure grew from GATE parents to ensure that teachers implemented the required instruction. One parent member of the school site council served as the GATE representative on the District Advisory Committee and reported at the monthly governance meetings. A group of parents, liberal university professors and administrators, met with the principal to demand that she set up separate GATE programs for their high-achieving children.

The individual and collective activism of these parents brought results. In the fall of 1999, GATE and non-GATE students were separated in grades 4 and 5 for math. A separate GATE language arts section followed in grade 5. By the fall of 2000, third grade GATE students were

separated out for math. Most of the bused children were assigned to non-GATE sections for reading and math while the GATE sections were predominantly populated by neighborhood and "choice" students.

There is no evidence the HPES GATE program changes were a direct response to the dissolution of the bilingual program. Certainly, many middle-class parents had long complained that the school was not sufficiently challenging their high-achieving children. It is possible that some middle-class parents were concerned about an influx into their children's classrooms of low-income Latinos with limited English proficiency, children who were generally viewed as less academically motivated or prepared and whose presence in the classroom might deflect teacher attention from more affluent high-achieving students. This explanation is consistent with Bourdieu's notion of social capital being sustained by limited membership and gatekeeping. Such exclusion enhances the value of group membership, in this case, the elite middle-class high performing children and their families (2001, pp. 103-104).

It is also possible that the actions of the bilingual parents promoted an atmosphere of parent activism, a form of cultural capital that similarly infected more affluent parents but was deployed differently. Both groups of parents shared the concern that teachers' expectations for their children were too low, and both groups sought structural changes within the school that they believed would provide their children with the cultural capital necessary for scholastic success. However, the middle-class parents' social and cultural capital had greater value to the school, and they activated it to limit the boundaries of their social network. They understood that the GATE program and high test scores had real exchange value related directly to economic capital, e.g., donations from affluent parents, and cultural capital, e.g., "high performing school."

While the lower-income Latino parents also leveraged social capital in organizing, they did

not have comparable cultural capital. Their children's scores did not have the same exchange value. The bused parents were engaged in a broader effort directed at upward mobility by seeking inclusion and contact with middle-class networks, but, unlike their middle class counterparts, they did not pressure the school to allocate more resources and personnel to support their children, nor did they deploy state policy on behalf of their children.

Ironically, the strongest advocates for the separation of GATE students were the most politically progressive parents. Some of these parents played leading roles in developing and running remedial programs designed to improve the education of low-achieving HPES students, including the bused population. While a number of these mainstream, more affluent parents volunteered much of their personal time and energy to these activities, when it came to their own children's time at school, they wanted them in separate, more academically challenging classes. They saw their primary role as parents as seeking "moments of inclusion" for their own children even if that meant exclusion of the bused children. Helping disadvantaged or low achieving children was respected and valued, but socializing or having one's children socialize with members of the lower class was not. To do so threatened the value of middle-class parents' social capital by loosening group boundaries.

Discussion

In his 2001 report, "Schools more separate: consequences of a decade of resegregation" Orfield writes, "By huge majorities Americans express a preference for integrated education and believe that it is very important for their children to learn how to understand and work with others of different racial and ethnic backgrounds (p. 11)." Certainly almost every parent at HPES would agree with this statement. Yet, in this study middle-class parent actions increased the pedagogic and social isolation of lower-income, bused Latino students.

Parent involvement in school governance restructured bilingual and gifted and talented education, categorical programs designed to support special populations, into frameworks for segregation within the school. Middle-class families could have chosen to place their children in the bilingual classrooms, but they did not value the form of social and cultural capital these classrooms provided. Middle class pressures for teacher selection led to classrooms with most requested teachers having higher proportions of middle-class non-bused students. Ultimately, these more affluent parents activated social and cultural capital at both the site and district levels to achieve what the national GATE parent and educator lobby calls the "non-negotiable" (VanTassel-Baska, 2005), the grouping of gifted learners within classrooms. This perspective became a mantra for involved GATE parents, even at the cost of ethnic segregation within the school. These parents were present in the school and vocal in school governance advocating for the needs of their children, and their social and cultural capital aligned with the kind of capital valued by the educational institution. The school administration, while expressing concern for the needs of the low income Latinos, allowed and even facilitated the segregation.

Yet, why would liberal parents who claim to support ethnic integration seek separate classes for their children? And, why would low-income Latino parents vote to disband a bilingual education program specially designed for their children? We believe that, in part, the two groups shared common motives: they both sought inclusion for their own children in classes with high performing middle class students. According to Coleman (1977, p. 4), parents regard a school as good or bad on the basis of its student body. This is because "the teacher must teach to the level of the class, making a child's learning dependent on others in his class." In the present study, we found that parents, regardless of their economic or ethnic background, wanted the very best for their children. Furthermore, their conceptions of what constituted a good education were

similar. Both the highly educated middle-class parents and the low-income Latino parents wanted their children to be in challenging academic settings, and both groups defined "challenging" as being in the company of middle class, English speaking students whose teachers had high expectations. Neither saw a value in having their children speak "homeboy English." Here, however, the views of what constituted social and cultural capital diverged. Higher income parents saw exclusive GATE membership as necessary for maintenance of social capital and future educational success, while for the bused community contact with middle-class children through inclusive integrated schools and classrooms was viewed as the path to a new level of economic and social capital.

Thus, the utilization of networks differed between the groups. Granovetter (1973) proposed that weak ties, such as those sought by the lower-income Latino parents, can form bridges to new social circles and access to new and potentially useful information. The expansion of new ties with middle-class children was seen as a priority for the bused parents. However, middle and upper-middle class parents did not place a premium on building ties with lower-class Latinos. Thus, the ties that both parent groups prioritized were ties with higher rather than lower-income families. This is consistent with Lin's theory that contacts higher in status are more likely to lead to advances in social status. He proposes that among high status groups, strong ties with one's own group, rather than weak ties with individuals at lower positions become instrumentally important (1982, 1990). For the bused families integration meant access to new higher status networks; however, for the neighborhood and choice families, closed, exclusive networks were more desirable.

A dialectical relationship developed between inclusion and exclusion. Inclusion of middle class children in GATE programs was tied to the exclusion of the bused community. As

Bourdieu notes (2001, p. 104), inclusion in a group is hardly benign as it calls for exclusion of others. For example, the elite value of the GATE program membership is maintained by its restricted access. The inclusion of the bilingual community in integrated English classrooms led to a linguistic and cultural exclusion of the Latino families from the institutional culture of the school with the departure of bilingual staff from the school. Thus, the agency of the bused parents in seeking inclusion was undermined by responsiveness of the school's administration to the participation of both parent constituencies in school governance, responses that while affirmative to both groups, effectively excluded the low-income Latino children and reproduced the advantage of the middle-class parents and students.

The HPES situation is redolent of Coleman et. al.'s 1975 report on the aftermath of busing. While in this case middle-class parents did not flee the school, they sought de facto segregation. Anglo and first generation European families were more likely to support both academic and social integration of their children with first generation high achieving Asian children than they were with poor Latino children. When segregation according to language or ethnicity was no longer acceptable, "separation" according to academic achievement was. The resulting socio-economic segregation could be justified on the grounds that it was merely a by-product of an acceptable means of selection. As Bourdieu and Passeron argue, such selection and exclusion are seen as legitimate by both those who succeed and those who fail (1990 p. 162) providing the "illusion of neutrality and independence of the school system with respect to the structure of class relations." (p. 141) "Thus it may be that an educational system is more capable of concealing its social function of legitimating class differences behind its technical function of producing qualifications." (p. 164.)

Much of the low-income Latino parent participation in school governance was mediated by

school professionals, often in response to federal and state compensatory program mandates for parental input. School-mediated parental input is geared to address the priorities of the school administration, priorities that, as Bourdieu points out and this study demonstrates, ultimately align with those of the more affluent. The GATE program and the presence of affluent parents and children in the school "back up" or sustain the educational institution, and the educational institution in turn sustains and reproduces the advantage of more affluent families. Despite the best of intentions, the "haves" trump the "have-nots."

<center>Conclusions and Implications</center>

In her 2005 essay, *Public Education in the Twentieth Century and Beyond: High Hopes, Broken Promises, and an Uncertain Future*, Sonia Nieto states that "the quintessential questions facing public education….have emerged primarily from the changing demographics in our nation and schools." (2005) Nieto, along with Kozol (2005) and Orfield (2001) call for US schools to recommit to racial, ethnic, and socio-economic integration. Yet, as this study shows, parents, the very forces that should make our schools more democratic, more responsive to children's needs, can contribute to re-segregation. This segregation can be unwittingly aided and abetted by school actions and policies.

For parents to become a positive force in building successful integrated schools that do not reproduce social inequities and social stratification, understanding of the interplay among diverse groups of parents and schools must increase. In particular, a more comprehensive understanding of inequalities in social and cultural capital among parents and the role of schools in the reproduction of advantage is needed. As this study shows, parent involvement initiatives that treat parents as a monolithic group without addressing the complex issues and dynamics among diverse parent constituencies, while well-intended, may support the reproduction of inequalities

leading to a Matthew Effect where middle-class children disproportionately benefit. At the same time, efforts to promote inclusion of low-income students at the expense of the concerns of middle-class parents are likely to exacerbate class divisions and promote middle-class flight or demands for re-segregation.

Half a century after Oliver Brown took the Topeka Board of Education to the U.S. Supreme Court basic questions remain about how to build ethnically and economically diverse integrated schools, What is clear from this study, is that such schools will not succeed without a fundamental restructuring of the educational system. This reinvented system must include a cohesive framework that addresses the particular needs of school populations and integrates, rather than segregates disparate economic, ethnic, linguistic and achievement groups so as to benefit all our children.

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[i] Designation of a student as Gifted and Talented was mediated by a high score on the Raven Progressive Matrices Test. The highest scorers were designated GATE "Seminar." Hill Park did not offer separate elite seminar classes, so children who "tested Seminar" often left to go to other public schools in the district that offered the special classes.

[ii] GATE students also brought increased funds into the school; however, per capita GATE allocations were far lower than the Title 1 funds generated by low-income Latino children. Title 1 refers to federal funds supplied to public schools on the basis of the income level of children's families under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.[US Code] 6301 et seq.) Title 1: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged.

[iii] "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath (Matthew 25.29)" (Holy Bible, 1972).

[iv] Complicating this issue was the demand by the school district that the school have sufficient students to fill the bilingual classrooms. Additionally, bilingual teachers form a special interest group. In many districts, bilingual teachers receive extra pay for their positions and/or their positions are dependent on the numbers of children enrolled in bilingual classes.

[v] It is also likely that the children's academic performance was affected by the language shift to English for all instruction. After three or four years in the school, their social English might be quite fluent, but the development of their academic English would require another three to five years. Therefore, a temporary downward shift in academic achievement would not be unexpected. See Grogent, Jameson, Franco, & Derrick-Mescua, 2000; Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 1997; Short, Hudec, & Echevarria, 2002.