

**BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POLITICAL NON-PARTICIPATION:
THE EFFECT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND CIVIC EDUCATION ON LATINO FAMILIES**

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Introduction:

In 2007, less than 4.5% of the eligible Latino community in Quincy, Washington turned out to vote. With less than 16% of eligible voters registered, a turnout of only a quarter of that group on Election Day,¹ the voice of the Latino community in the Hispanic-majority town was barely heard. What is even more alarming is that these already low rates of participation are trending in a declining direction. 2003 found 18% voter registration among eligible Quincy Latinos and a turnout rate of 31%.² As the Latino population in Quincy is increasing,³ the fact that participation, and thus accurate representation, is dwindling leads to a need for a reassessment of effective communication and mobilization techniques which are able to increase the rate and influence of political participation within the Latino community in a sustainable manner.

This report examines political mobilization in the Latino community of the small Central Washington town of Quincy, looking at the way in which community programs and organizations encouraging participation in youth serves to mobilize the entire political community. This report seeks to answer the following question: *How is it possible to initiate a new political culture and environment in a nonparticipatory and racially divided climate?* More specifically, *(1) How can group and organization involvement help the Latino community overcome the barriers to political participation? And (2) How does youth mobilization and participation contribute to this goal, particularly in relation to successful youth-based community service and education programs?* A democratic society can only function successfully if all members are able to participate politically and effect meaningful change through the political system. The fact that Latinos make up a majority of the population in Quincy⁴ reinforces the importance of cultivating effective participation so that the political democratic system continues to be the primary means of influencing local and national decisions. The primary research consisted of interviews with a wide variety of community residents, including community leaders, students, actively involved adults, caucus participants and those in charge of specific organizations or programs, and attending several meetings and events. This primary information was then set in the context of broader studies and other literature that has examined similar questions both in general and specifically within the Latino community. This project is very much indebted to Veronica Sosa for her seemingly inexhaustible contact list and her continuous ability to provide me with more complete explanations and relevant local history when things did not seem to fit together.

The findings indicate that *political efficacy* (the feeling that one can understand and influence political processes) is relatively low within the adult Latino community in Quincy.

¹ Quincy Auditor's Office, cited in Phillips, 2008

² Ibid.

³ American Factfinder, 2000 US Census,

http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&geoContext=&street=&county=quincy&cityTown=quincy&state=04000US53&zip=&lang=en&sse=on&pxt=fph&pgsl=010&show_2003_tab=&redirect=Y

⁴ Ibid.

Among most residents, this has translated to low rates of political participation.⁵ This is due to a lack of understanding about how and why to effectively participate, exacerbated by linguistic and cultural communication barriers in addition to group-specific schedule conflicts. However, participation is relatively high within a significant percentage the Quincy youth. This is due in large part to student involvement in specific organizations and programs, including the mandatory senior service project in the Quincy High School (QHS) and the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) program in Quincy. Additionally, trusted community resources such as the Quincy Community Health Clinic, the local chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and respected community activists such as Mary Jo Ybarra-Vega of the Health Clinic play a crucial role in providing community information and an entry into civic participation through non-traditional means. This report also finds that civic and political participation increases in the Latino community when parents see the issue as directly impacting their children, and that organizations in which families already participate such as churches or health care centers are able to assist with civic education and mobilization due to both their community nature and the fact that they are already built into people's schedules.

Specifically, report focuses on the impact of the local GEAR-UP program in creating a community resource and "third space" which was accessible to both parents and students. When funded in such a way that it was accessible to all, GEAR UP served as an education and mobilization center by both encouraging community participation and empowering its attendees to be able to make a demonstrable difference. In this way it was able to make political participation more appealing and accessible through education, role-modeling, and accessibility, in addition to deepening the civic awareness impact of the senior project requirement. The report recommends empowering and expanding programs such as GEAR-UP and action groups offered the Church or Quincy Community Health Clinic such as the *Women's Justice Circle* (a program in which women work to effect local political change), and restructuring the set-up of the Quincy High School Culminating Project in a way that deepens student participation and ownership as the most effective ways to increase political participation within the Latino community. In general, these organizations and programs serve to provide both the political socialization and the institutional trust necessary for high political efficacy and participation. Additionally, this report recommends an augmentation of the services provided on the part of the towns and local political parties, in order to make participation more accessible to the Latino community so that they are able to take advantage of the mobilizing aspects of the programs and organizations in which they are already engaged.

Literature Review:

The Role of Organizational Involvement

The link between organizational involvement and political participation has been explored by numerous political scientists, psychologists, sociologists and other scholars. Recently, literature has begun to focus on examining this linkage specifically within the Latino

⁵ Phillips (2008) documents a history of low voter registration and turnout rates among eligible voters in Quincy.

community. Using the Latino National Political Survey, William Diaz examined the relationship between participation in voluntary groups and political activity in his article *Latino Participation in America: Associational and Political Roles*, and found that “there is a strong link between organizational membership and political participation for Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans and that this link helps close the political participation gap between these two groups with Anglos” (Diaz, 1996, p. 168). This connection has been documented across numerous studies including the groundbreaking study by Sidney Verba and Norman Nie in 1972 which found that in society in general “those that belong to more than one organization engage in almost three times as much [political] activity as nonmembers” (Verba and Nie, 1972, p. 182). Diaz explains that mobilization through organizational participation is far more effective and sustainable than one time ‘Get Out the Vote’ campaigns, which generally fail to produce long-term involvement through encouraging meaningful civic engagement. Additionally, Diaz focuses on the importance of membership, which creates a sense of being part of a specific group. Membership within a group provides political socialization and builds a long-term participatory attitude of its members due to the more comprehensive political socialization it provides. Given the history of sporadic political participation of the Latino community in Quincy, which has tended to come together around specific issues and then subsequently dissolve⁶, this idea of fostering non-issue specific sustainability is particularly salient.

Numerous studies have identified community group participation as the precursor to political participation. Thus, the next question becomes how these organizations mobilize their members. Through his study of minority political participation and organizational affiliation, Darryll McMiller examines the various elements of different groups and organizations to determine if certain groups are more effective mobilizers than others. McMiller explains that political participation is encouraged in three ways: “by making explicit or implicit suggestions, introducing [members] to political leaders, or by applying social pressure” (McMiller, 2005, p. 450). McMiller divides voluntary organizations into two categories – the *instrumental organizations* such as political clubs and school service organizations which are formed to affect a specific change in the community and *expressive organizations* such as hobby clubs and fraternal organizations which are formed more generally to enjoy one another’s presence. As the mentality behind instrumental groups has been shown to create a greater degree of political participation within its members (McMiller, 2005), examining the ways in which these organizations encourage their members both implicitly and explicitly to politically participate illuminates ways to effectively mobilize political actors in instrumental organizations such as the Women’s Justice Circle in Quincy. However, the popularity of soccer within the Quincy Latino Community also leads to a need to look at the ways in which expressive organizations such as sports clubs are able to “provide a critical point of entry into the political process” (McMiller, 2005, p. 459).

Differing structures of these types of organizations influence their relative ability to cultivate the kinds of participatory attitudes within their members which can eventually lead to political involvement through the formation of social networks and the discussion of ideas. The connection to leadership is one avenue in which this happens in both sets of groups, as the process of the selection of group leaders tends to role model participation in the political process

⁶ Esmeralda Blancas, interview with author, Quincy, Washington, February 21st, 2008

and cultivate feelings of efficacy within group members. The idea of social pressure is especially helpful in explaining why membership in voluntary organizations is such a much stronger mobilizer than other places which can provide similar politically relevant information. This is due to the previously established relationship between the people encouraging participation and those who are being encouraged. Especially in organizational settings such as churches, where a sense of a “‘sacred’ nature of [...] informal conversations” (McKenzie, 2004, p. 622) results in a high level of trust in what is being said, the fact that these conversations are occurring among familiar people with shared religious ideals helps create a higher sense of importance, in addition to holding all members accountable to each other and the group for their civic behavior. Thus, these groups and individual relationships serve not only as a moral motivator, but also as a trusted informational resource. McKenzie explains how “gathering information about governmental policies and political leaders requires a combination of money, time, skill knowledge and self confidence from citizens [...] and] political conversations in religious social networks lower the costs of participation by providing [that] information” (McKenzie, 2004, p. 623). This function is particularly salient because a significant percentage of the Quincy adult Latino community is unable to read in English (whether due to a language barrier or to more general illiteracy), and thus conversations and word of mouth communication serve as the major venue for information transfer between the Latino and Anglo communities and within the Latino community itself.⁷

While it is important to demonstrate the ways in which the behaviors of Latino community fit with the patterns demonstrated in the Anglo community, it is also important to examine the differences. In her article *Does the shoe fit?: Testing the models of participation for African-American and Latino involvement in local politics*, M. J. Marschall argues that “attachments to neighborhood and religious institutions most strongly predict the participatory behavior of African-Americans and Latinos” (Marschall, 2001, p. 243), more so than within the Anglo community. This argument rests on the idea that due to their minority status and other socioeconomic issues, organizational participation is a stronger predictor of political participation within certain minority ethnic groups than among the population at large. Marschall argues that these groups tend to be “resource poor” (Marschall, 2001, p. 230) in comparison to the Anglo community, meaning that they are not only in a more difficult socioeconomic situation, but also that they lack the political knowledge, skills and education to be able to effectively participate. Thus, the political socialization provided by participation and involvement in voluntary organizations is able to “provide individuals with opportunities to develop organizational and communication skills relevant for political participation” (Marschall, 2001, p. 233) which members of more resource rich communities already possess. This outcome serves to provide increasingly equalized opportunities and access to participation within the previously resource-poor group.

Hritzuk and Park (2000) take this argument a step further by differentiating the benefits that the African American community receives from those that benefit the Latino community more specifically. They argue that due to the high percentage of foreign born members of the Latino population within the United States, “Latinos have tended to remain on the fringes of the

⁷ Blancas, 2/21/08, Veronica Sosa, interview with author, Quincy, Washington, February 21st, 2008, Chris Trevino, interview with the author, via phone, March 28th, 2008

political process due to an unfamiliarity with the workings of American politics and a lack of socialization into the norms of American democracy” (Hritzuk and Park, 2000, p. 161). This is something which the native born African American population does not generally face, as members of that community received their formal and informal education within the US. Through their study, Hritzuk and Park are able to demonstrate that organizational involvement is a far stronger predictor of Latino involvement than it is even for the African American community. They argue that the effect of being part of a politically active social network is a very effective tool within the Latino community for helping bridge the participatory gap, as such an inclusion has a much higher effect on the Latino community (especially on the foreign born section) as compared to other groups. These social networks are able to build the familiarity and trust necessary for successful participation. This trust in peers is echoed in the work of Roderic Ai Camp, who states that “Mexican Americans are much more likely to view their friends as a potential influence on their political views” (Camp, 2003, p. 19-20) as compared to Anglos or others. This research highlights the necessity of active organizations in Quincy which serve as effective political socializers for the Latino community.

Quincy does not have any enduring groups or organizations dedicated to effecting political or social change, either within Quincy or at a larger level, which are appealing or accessible to most Latino community members. For this reason, this report instead focuses on the political mobilization functions performed by certain groups or organizations for whom increased political participation is not a main goal, but rather a byproduct of the structure, activities, and other goals of the group. This function has previously been examined mainly in regard to the roles played by religious organizations. McMiller states that “in the absence of other kinds of resources, religious institutions may make the difference by cultivating the kinds of attitudes needed to participate in community-based politics and creating the opportunities for relative newcomers to engage in political activities at the neighborhood level” (McMiller, 2005, 451). The role of certain non-political groups and organizations as active political educators and socializers serves to demonstrate why “churches and voluntary organizations [have been] crucial to the mobilization of Latinos” (McMiller, 2005, 459) in numerous examples. Increasingly, however, research is breaking away from the traditional construction of an ‘organization’ which implies an enduring group of individuals who make up a specific unit and looking at the effect of the attitudes and behaviors motivated by participation in programs and activities. This report specifically focuses on youth-oriented programs and their ability to inspire both youth and adult civic and political participation.

Youth Participation

Scholars such as Paul Allen Beck and Elizabeth Smith have examined the effect of youth participation in extracurricular activities on subsequent political participation. Their work has generally concluded that increased involvement in groups as a young person will increase one’s level of political participation, both as a youth and as an adult. Smith focuses mainly on the immediate effect of such experiences in providing young people with sufficient *social capital* (the beneficial networks and other societal resources gained by sustained interaction) to become active in their communities. She argues that “participation in extracurricular activities, even as early as the 8th grade year, emerges as the most important predictor of young adult virtue and political participation” (Smith, 1999, p. 571). This, she explains, is due to the fact that such

participation gives students the opportunity to directly affect the realization of group goals, thus giving them a higher sense of personal efficacy and role-modeling the kind of participation which is possible at a larger scale within the political arena. Additionally, the social capital resources which are created through this kind of interaction serve to socialize young people to the norms of political participation, which she argues is a more effective “alternative to the traditional civics course [...] develop[ing] the skills and social capital required to be effective participatory citizens” (Smith, 1999, p. 574) both as young adults and throughout their lives, a key aspect in examining youth participation in Quincy.

The Effects of Investments in Social Capital⁸

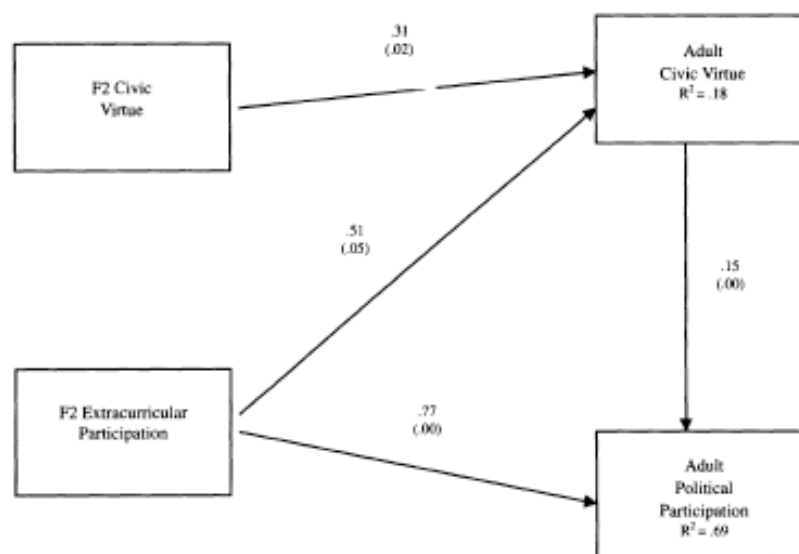


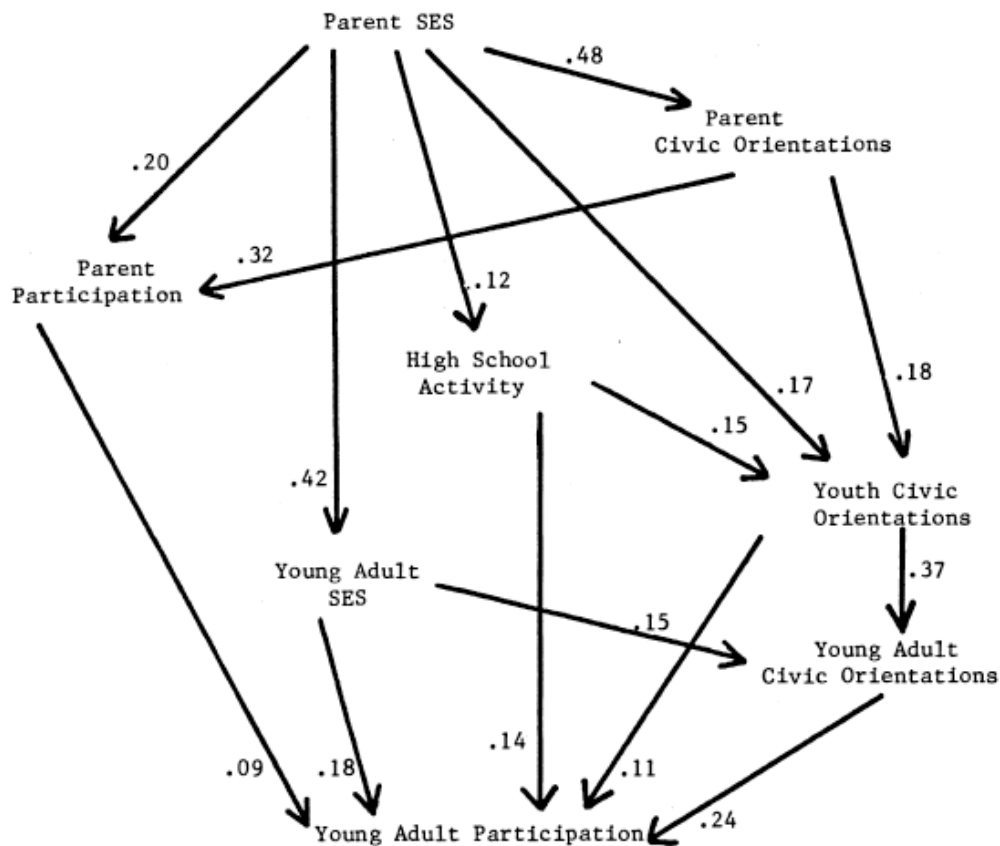
Figure 1. As this diagram shows, when examining the long-term result of generating social capital in youth, it has been found that youth *civic virtue* (behaviors and attitudes which benefit the community) is linked to adult civic virtue, and adult political participation. In addition, participation in extracurricular activities is linked to both civic virtue and participation later in life (Smith, 1999)

Beck *et al* (1982) focuses not only youth participation in organizations, but also the role of those adults who are in a position to influence student involvement in such activities, focusing mainly on parents but expanding the discussion to include other role models. This focus on the “apprenticeship mechanism” (Beck, 1982, p. 105) further explains why organizational involvement is such a strong mobilizer of youth, as so much political socialization learning takes place through observation and imitation. Because parental political participation is fairly low in the Quincy Latino community, the study of positive parental role modeling is able to be shifted to those such as town activist Mary Jo Ybarra-Vega of the Quincy Community Health Clinic and others who provide students with discussion and examples of political participation within Quincy. Smith broadens the idea that increased youth political participation is due to voluntary organizational involvement to encompass participation throughout one’s adult life, thus

⁸ Smith, 1999, p. 571

demonstrating the long term societal importance of youth socialization (Smith, 1999). Michael Hanks builds upon this idea of the continuity of participation when he argues in *Youth, Voluntary Associations and Political Socialization* that similarly to the way that participation in interscholastic sports during middle and high school leads to an increased likelihood of continuing to play those sports through adulthood, “participation in voluntary organizations in adolescence is related to the form and extent of people’s participation in political activities in adulthood” (Hanks, 1981, p. 221). In this way, Hanks raises the importance of youth participation and mobilization not only in shaping the current political situation but also in modifying the future. Combining the arguments of all three of these scholars, one can see how initial political socialization of youth, due to their likelihood of continuing on to be politically active adults and providing the crucial political socialization activities to their own children, is able to break the cycle of nonparticipation.

The Combined Socialization Effects Model⁹



Source: 1965-73 Parent-Child Socialization Panel, Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan.

Figure 2. This model examines youth participation from the perspective of the impact of parental role modeling. When examining this model in relation to Quincy, it is important to remember that adults other than a student’s biological parents can serve as the political socializer and mobilizer demonstrated in this model (Beck, 1982).

⁹ Beck, 1982, p. 104

Niemi *et al* (2000) offers another avenue into successfully cultivating sociopolitical behavior and civically participatory attitudes in youth by examining the relationship between performing community service while in high school and civic participation both during high school and throughout one's adult life. They argue that when community service is sustained and the school is able to help set it in context, the experience is able to help facilitate and motivate political participation through several means. Most notably, community service is found to *increase political knowledge* even when the student's service activity was not politically related, *put students in more frequent contact with adults*, and *provide opportunities for active expression and participation*, such as public speaking (Niemi *et al*, 2000). These aspects all contribute to an increased feeling of both personal and political efficacy, as increased contact with adults and activities such as public speaking encourage discussion with parents and other adult role models, in addition to increasing familiarity and comfort with expressing one's ideas to adults or groups of unfamiliar people. These experiences serve to increase "students' confidence in their own ability to understand what is happening in the political world" (Niemi *et al*, 2000, p. 60) which empowers them to feel more comfortable participating in it. As community service is incorporated differently over many educational institutions and the correlation between community service and civic participation has been attributed by some to be simply a demonstration of already civically minded individuals seeking out service opportunities, Niemi *et al* include a discussion of the importance of such service being purely voluntary rather than required. The study finds, however, that "even among those whose participation was facilitated by the school or was not voluntary, community participation was associated with greater political knowledge, more frequently talking with parents about the news, and the feeling that one can understand politics" (Niemi *et al*, 2000, p. 61). This demonstrates that it is the act itself, rather than the idiosyncratic situations which lead individuals into service activities, which provides the politically beneficial effect. It is important to remember, however, that some individual, organization, or institution (Niemi *et al* focus on the school) must serve as the contextualization resource for such an experience in order to make it meaningful and encourage sustained participation.

In communities which lack the resources to independently generate these types of supportive educational alternatives, federal programs designed to motivate students to extend their education beyond simply traditional educational expectations are frequently able to provide students with a place in which to connect classroom experiences to civic and political action. One such program which has been particularly vital in providing this type of resource in Quincy is GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). GEAR UP is a federal program funded through the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board in coordination with a grant from the US Department of Education¹⁰. The program was instituted in various states across the nation with the stated goal of increasing attendance and success in post-secondary education among low income and minority students, although its strategies for doing so have allowed it to accomplish much more than that. The effects of similar programs which have also been accomplished under the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 including TRIO programs (so titled because initially there were only three of them) such as Upward Bound and Talent Search have been examined by scholars not only in relation to their effectiveness in

¹⁰ Higher Education Coordinating Board. "Washington State GEAR UP"
<http://www.hecb.wa.gov/collegeprep/gu/guindex.asp>

their immediate goal of increasing attendance of institutions of higher education among their participants, but also in developing sociocultural strengths which increase community and political participation. J. Herman Blake explains that certain TRIO programs have been able to “provid[e] a positive model for a revitalized democracy” (Blake, 1998, p. 330) both through their ability to cultivate high levels of trust and respect both amongst participants and between participants and leadership, and also through the activities which allow participants to take active leadership roles. These two characteristics allow program participants to experience and role play the experiences and skills important in civic and political participation. White *et al* document specific examples of civic and community participation related to TRIO programs which serves as a direct role model for political activity. A specific example of this participation and its effect is demonstrated by the experiences of co-author Noreen Sakiestewa:

[We were] preparing for an “Indian Week” full of activities, guest speakers, and a Pow-Wow as the grand finale. In our attempts to utilize the school facilities, the principal refused to cooperate with us and refused to allow us access to the facilities. [...] we walked out of the school and held our activities at the local community center. The following year the principal’s contract was not renewed [...] we had encouraged the entire community to participate and assist in this endeavor (White *et al*, 1998, p. 449).

Sakiestewa’s example demonstrates how the communities created both within and around programs such as Upward Bound and GEAR UP are able to provide services beyond the specific mission statement of the program. The students Sakiestewa describes were able to use the framework of the TRIO program to experience political action firsthand. Seeing the immediate effect of their own participation, as well as the strong power associated with community mobilization provided these students with a living model of successful political and civic participation. This allowed them to create a meaningful interaction with the process of public engagement. As such, these organizations are able to serve as an alternative to school and parental political socialization and mobilization resources; this is especially crucial for the large number of Latino students for whom neither of those resources are able to provide the necessary information and adequate role modeling for effective participation.

While TRIO and other programs serve to directly benefit the students they serve, it is important not to overlook the positive effect that interaction with these programs has on the feelings of political efficacy and civic mobilization in parents. Oyemade *et al* (1989) examines the benefits gained by parents through their participation in the Head Start program, which assists preschoolers from economically disadvantaged families. Similar to GEAR UP, Head Start focuses on increasing parental involvement and participation in order to benefit both the children and the parents through increased skills and confidence. Thus, it serves to “advance the skills and knowledge of Head Start parents far beyond the acquisition of child development information, [including...] practice in negotiating with public officials, enhanced leadership types of experiences, exercising control over aspects of their lives and so on” (Oyemade, 1989, p. 14). Gross *et al* document the benefits to parents as a result of these types of experiences, focusing mainly on the upward mobility of the low income and minority parents due to skills gained through active participation and engagement in activities that role-play community participation. These same skills, however, when applied to civic engagement “can be transferred into the political world” (Beck, 1982, p. 105), thereby giving these parents the necessary basic skills and familiarity to successfully participate politically. These organizations are thus able to serve as political socializers for parents who would otherwise be unable to participate in the civic and

political arena due to a lack of participatory resources and unfamiliarity with the process. The role of trusted organizations such as GEAR UP and the communities they create are able to be expanded to fulfill other roles generally attributed to Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Trusted organizations within the community are able to provide parents with access to other services and information beyond what they officially offer simply because parents feel comfortable seeking these resources there. Grubb *et al* examine the idea of partnerships between CBOs and noncredit education programs in providing educational opportunities for such non-traditional learners which are “more flexible in their schedules; physically closer to students; and more overtly community based, less bureaucratic, [and] more open to immigrant students” (Grubb *et al*, 2003). This kind of partnership allows programs such as the educational programs at the Quincy Community Health Clinic and GEAR UP to provide an educational resource for parents as well as youth. Such places serve as gathering places for parents due to common schedules and shared parental responsibilities and interests, thus allowing them to serve the role of the organizational affiliation and social network resource which Hritzuk, Diaz and others have so strongly linked to increased participation.

Additionally, it is crucial to examine both the motivators and the barriers to parental involvement with the educational and extracurricular activities of their children, due to the strong link between parental involvement and student participation. This is clearly demonstrated by Smith, who explains that “involved parents communicate to the child through their interest their sense of the significance of the events in the child’s life, including the child’s involvement in the school community. Students learn from their parents that engagement in the school community is important and thus are more likely to participate” (Smith, 1999, p. 564). Smith further explains how this interest and involvement translates into increased civic and political involvement in the students both as young adults and throughout their lives, underscoring the importance of working to eliminate the barriers to parental engagement in student activities. These barriers are frequently very different for minority (particularly Latino) parents as compared to their Anglo counterparts. In their article *What Motivates Participation and Dropout Among Low-Income Urban Families of Color in a Prevention Intervention*, Gross *et al* explain that the “reasons [for not attending] are consistent with what we know about the lives of low income working families, which tend to be complex and crisis oriented. Parents employed in low wage jobs have little control over their work schedules” (Gross *et al*, 2001, p. 252). This is especially true when looking at undocumented parents, who tend to have very little power of control over their employment conditions in general. The article, not surprisingly, cites lack of time, schedule changes, and lack of childcare for other children as top reasons for parental non-participation in the program. In examining ways to overcome these obstacles in relation to the specific study that they were conducting, Gross *et al* note that “parents rated having the parent program on site as most important in encouraging their involvement [... as it is] convenient because they must come to retrieve their children anyway” (Gross *et al*, 2001, p. 251). The importance of making parental involvement as low cost as possible in regard to time, money and effort expended for participation is crucial in increasing accessibility to minority parents. Additionally, scholars such as Leal note how “difficulty with the English language [makes ...] participation much more challenging” (Leal, 2002, p. 356), thus adding another barrier to meaningful parent involvement in many student activities and educational experiences.

Through its focus on examining and affecting motivators and obstacles to student achievement from a broad perspective in an effort to help students and their parents realize the possibility of post-secondary education, the GEAR UP program is particularly able to work to overcome traditional barriers to Latino parental participation. Weiher *et al* (2006) examine the effectiveness of the Texas GEAR UP program based on the key strategies that it employs, namely “improving outreach to students and parents, [...] mentoring, [...] scholarships [...], [and] social integration” (Weiher *et al*, 2006, 1038) - an amalgamation which serves to help make the program’s approach uniquely successful. One of GEAR UP’s salient features under the grant during which Weiher *et al* examined it was its concentration on parental engagement and integration. Focusing on “involving parents in their children’s education” (Weiher *et al*, 2006, 1038), GEAR UP recognized that language barriers and group-specific factors tend to limit participation among minority and low-income parents. Identifying the needs of those parents who were unable to participate in the institutionalized educational system in which their children were involved, GEAR UP programs “extended [programs] to after-work hours for parents who couldn’t come in during the day” (Weiher *et al*, 2006, 1038) and made all information available in a bilingual form. Weiher *et al* noted the importance of successful parental involvement in the “important increases in [...] minority student achievement” (Weiher *et al*, 2006, 1036) which the GEAR UP program helped to bring about. In this way, the GEAR UP program was able to both accurately assess and overcome many of the participation obstacles identified by Gross *et al* through an increased ability to communicate with and educate the parental community.

Organizations such as GEAR UP serve a role for students and parents beyond simply that of the direct services they offer. As an available space that is neither home nor work, GEAR UP is able to fulfill the crucial role of the ‘Third Place’, an interactive space other than work and home, put forward by Ray Oldenburg. He explains that “third places are normally open in the off hours, as well as other times. The character of a third place is determined by most of its regular clientele and is marked by a playful mood [...] the third place is remarkably similar to a good home in the psychological comfort and support that it extends” (Oldenburg, 1989, p. 42). The third place serves not only as a social and associational resource for people, but also as a place to become comfortable practicing civic and political participation in a meaningful and applicable way. Oldenburg gives the example of the tavern throughout history as a place of association information, contrasting that with the non-interactive newspapers and television which are now seen as major socialization and informative resources. He argues that the tavern offered “a source of news *along with* the opportunity to question, protest, sound out, supplement, and form opinion locally and collectively. And these active and individual forms of participation are essential to a government of the people” (Oldenburg, 1989, p. 70). This is true for both parents and students, as GEAR UP provided not only information and educational assistance, but perhaps more importantly a space in which to interact with that information in a meaningful way. The role of the third place is especially crucial for the students of Quincy, who lack both a avenue into the adult world and the resources to create a successful situation on their own. Oldenburg notes how “increasingly costly consequences of segregating youth from adults are forced upon the consciousness of the decision-makers” (Oldenburg, 1989, p. 263) through youth behavior. The significance of this behavioral shift in both adults and youth has been clearly stated by Smith, who demonstrates the link between “declining levels of parental involvement in the young person’s life [and...] declining rates of participation in school extracurricular activities [which leads to...] disengagement of future citizen from civic and political communities”

(Smith, 1999, p. 575). As such, the importance of a third place in providing a location and a means for cultivating connections and personal ability gains a position of increased importance. Oldenburg touts the “alternative outlets for recreation and association” (Oldenburg, 1989, p. 280) such as the GEAR UP program and its activities as a means through which youth can develop “engagement and involvement with the neighborhood” (Oldenburg, 1989, p. 289) beyond the more structured and sterile interactions generally initiated through organizations such as schools.

Overall, scholarly literature has clearly established the link between active organizational involvement and civic and political participation in both adults and youth. Factors such as social networks, increased political knowledge and heightened confidence and feelings of efficacy, all strong predictors of meaningful participation, are generated by such involvement. This affects the less culturally and politically socialized minority communities to a higher degree than the established Anglo community, whose members are generally more integrated into the political culture. The barriers to using organizational involvement as a mobilizer in minority communities, however, come with the interaction between a desire to effect change and a lack of time and other resources required to transcend the *critical threshold of participation* (a point at which a sufficient number of people within the community are active that both sustaining and increasing the number of people who are mobilized can be done without constant outside intervention) to a point that sustained involvement can be cultivated endogenously. The literature has demonstrated, though, that such barriers to participation in other areas can be overcome through including certain services and incentives that make such involvement a viable option. Additionally, focusing on mobilizing those individuals who are able (such as the youth who have more time) and then allowing processes such as ‘apprenticeship mobilization’ (Beck, 1982) to happen in a slower, more accessible, ad hoc manner with other members of the community provides a strategy which is able to reach a far larger number of people. Among the many avenues for pursuing these strategies of mobilization, the literature speaks to the effect of youth community service involvement and family participation in student educational support programs. Community service has been demonstrated both to increase participatory skills, and also to increase one’s feeling of connection, thus encouraging lifelong civic participation. Educational support programs serve a variety of functions, including politically relevant education and socialization of both the students and parents, in addition to the creation of a ‘third space’ in which they can cultivate social networks and role play political behavior such as contacting officials and voting. As experiencing this type of interaction in a civic area increases its ability to inspire *political participation* (active engagement with governmental processes that affect one’s life), educational support programs such as GEAR UP which include a community service aspect are thus doubly effective.

Research Methods:

In order to determine what specifically was impacting the Quincy political community, the research process focused on gaining an understanding of the larger contextual framework through newspapers, interviews and other records, and then subsequently identifying successful strategies and what had differentiated them from unsuccessful ones. Combining that activity framework with an understanding of how certain communities within the town operated, it was

then possible to identify organizations or programs which could capitalize on key aspects and thus help aid mobilization efforts.

With a community as small as Quincy (population 5,044, nearly 65% of which are Latino¹¹) and the politically active subgroup of the Latino community being a far smaller circle of individuals, it quickly became clear that personal interviews were going to serve as the most effective and informative means of gaining insight into the workings of the community as well as the avenues for effecting change. In order to create both context and understanding, an initial set of interviews was conducted with people within the community at large who were viewed as very politically active. This included both interviewing approximately fifteen people at the Democratic caucus (both Latino and Anglo) on February 9th and interviewing a man who has been very involved with assisting the Latino community both through his career with the Public Utility District and his involvement with town politics, Peter Smith. Mr. Smith was also responsible for the founding of the Mayor's Commission on Cultural Relations, a fairly new organization which has been tasked with improving race relations in Quincy. While the interviews with caucus members were fairly short, approximately ten minutes, and were not recorded, they were able to provide a strong picture of the Quincy political community, both from a Latino and non-Latino perspective. The recorded interview with Mr. Smith was much more extensive, lasting approximately forty minutes and taking place in his home. With the exception of two caucus interviews, all of these interviews were conducted in English. The questions asked in these interviews were fairly broad and open-ended, as their main purpose was to gain a general perception of the state of political participation within the Latino community in Quincy and some of the general motivators and barriers to involvement. Due to Mr. Smith's extensive experience and expertise, however, it was possible to acquire some more targeted information which addressed specific problems and some possible solutions, thus illuminating new aspects about the Quincy political environment. Additionally, a long discussion with the community partner for this project, Veronica Sosa, and an informal conversation with group of girls who go to school in Quincy served to provide a vast wealth of specific information and also context and connections. From these interviews, augmented by articles from the local newspapers and statistical data from sources such as the US Census and the Public School System, it was possible to construct a broad framework in which to understand Latino participation within Quincy specifically in the context of the political climate of Central Washington.

The second round of interviews identified specific community leaders of the principle organizations which had been identified as potential mobilizers based on the initial research and interviews. A twenty to forty minute interview was conducted with each person in his or her office, all of which were in English. This included recorded interviews with Father Mario of the Catholic Church and Esmeralda Blancas, who helps run programs such as the Women's Justice Circle at Quincy Community Health Clinic and was the past president of the local chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). Additionally, this set of interviews

¹¹ American Factfinder, 2000 US Census, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=quincy&_cityTown=quincy&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&_pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show_2003_tab=&redirect=Y

included a formal, recorded interview with Veronica Sosa about her roles both as the leader of the Guiding Good Choices parenting classes and as the advisor for high school seniors who are completing their senior Culminating Project through the Community Health Clinic. With these interviews, the types of questions were twofold – focusing on both how they as community leaders viewed political mobilization and political participation within the Latino community in Quincy, and also interviewing them about their specific organizations or programs and what role they played in the civic and political arena. These interviews were set in context with the supplemental research conducted for each organization (St. Pius X Catholic Church, the Quincy Clinic of the Moses Lake Community Health Center, The Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center (the organization which created the Women’s Justice Circles), and the Channing Bete Company (the group responsible for the Guiding Good Choices program) on its respective website.

Another information-gathering style which was incredibly helpful in the research for this report was that of recorded small group discussions, in which the interviewer simply interjects specific questions into a participant-led discussion. By sitting in on the Women’s Justice Circle at the Quincy Community Health Clinic the night that they discussed social, political, and economic issues which were important in Quincy, it was possible to gain far more information than would have been obtainable had each woman been interviewed separately. The women were able to spark discussions and memories in each other which was based on information only community members have, thus offering a far richer picture of life in the Quincy Latino community both past and present. Additionally, it is helpful to have the thoughts and opinions of people who, while being active enough in their communities to attend the Women’s Justice Circle program and work to plan a town-wide discussion, are also regular civilians in that they are able to offer kind of views and scope of knowledge which represents those other than the thoughts of people in leadership positions of instrumental groups. This interview clearly demonstrated the low feeling of political efficacy which is experienced by the Latino adult community, in addition to helping convey many of the subtle and not so subtle tensions which exist between the Latino and Anglo communities in Quincy due to language and cultural differences. This served to re-enforce many of the barriers to participation among minority communities identified in the scholarly literature, such as having non-participatory family members and friends, difficulties understanding the process and a sense of being below the critical threshold of awareness and participation (the point at which political participation is common enough within the community that the community is able to sustainably mobilize itself) as being issues applicable to the Latino community in Quincy.

It was possible to employ a similar style of interviewing during a meeting Veronica Sosa and some of the students who are completing their senior projects in connection with the Community Health Clinic. This method worked very well, as the students felt more comfortable answering my questions as a group, instead of being put on the spot individually. Similar to my experiences with the Women’s Justice Circle, this more casual and comfortable atmosphere allowed the students to open up about things which they might not have deemed ‘important’ enough to discuss in a more formal setting. Their candid discussion about their own experiences with their senior projects, the high school, their parents’ involvement in their lives and their education and organizations such as youth groups and GEAR UP helped to tie together the groups and historical mobilization efforts which had previously lacked a clear connection. The

girls and Ms. Sosa described how the initial GEAR-UP program, which was structured in a more community-centered style provided a resource which served both the needs of the students and the parents in increasing civic knowledge and familiarity to the point of reaching the critical threshold of participation at which political activity becomes both accessible and meaningful. Additionally, they discussed how, through what they perceived to be a funding cut, the GEAR-UP program was changed so significantly that many of its key services and beneficial elements were eliminated. The group focused specifically on the dramatic effect of that change on the civic participation and awareness of the Latino community and also on youth and parental involvement.

Based on the information from the group interview with the students, categorical research was conducted on programs directed by the Washington Higher Education Board and the federal Office of High Education. This included a third set of phone interviews in which asked the directors of programs identified by the students as sources of civic participation and community mobilization targeted questions about the roles that their groups play in youth activism and parent involvement, looking at how these specific organizations are structured and why they are structured the way that they are. This included speaking to Kirsten Escure who ran the GEAR UP program during its broadly accessible first grant, and Joelle Heikkila, who is its director under its more participant-limited second grant. An interview with Chris Trevino, who was also very active in GEAR-UP and now works as the Migrant Graduation Specialist for Quincy High School (QHS) helped to compare GEAR UP and QHS programs. Another key interview was that with Tracy Higgins, the woman in charge of the senior Culminating Projects and other service requirements at the high school. The questions in these interviews were targeted toward the actions of the specific organization or program which they were responsible for, focusing mainly on determining what services it provided, specifically what the students do in their program and then the impact that this had on their civic and political participation, building on research conducted on the GEAR UP and Quincy High School websites. Additionally, since all of these professionals work (or worked) directly with the youth population, they were a wonderful resource in learning about the general behaviors and mindsets which they had observed and experienced among the students in Quincy.

Political Mobilization Assessment:

The Quincy Political Climate: Racial Segmentation and Nonparticipation

Unlike many areas in the state of Washington, there has never been any direct campaign to mobilize Latino political participation in Quincy, beyond simply attempting to motivate turnout for specific events such as immigration marches and certain school related issues, or ultimately ineffective attempts to encourage electoral participation in major elections that seem particularly salient to the community.¹² Activities such as moderately successful voter registration drives and other efforts have slightly increased the numbers of Latinos registered to vote, but cultural and communication barriers between Anglos and Latinos have inhibited the institution of sustained participation. Among all the efforts, only the immigration marches were

¹² Women's Justice Circle, Quincy Community Health Center, Quincy, Washington, February 21st, 2008

able to generate the large turnout representative of the fact that Quincy is a majority Latino community. When Esmeralda Blancas was speaking about the events and activities of the local LULAC chapter she explained, “We actually held the march for, you know when... immigration reform? And we had so many people. It was amazing, and I wish that we could have that many people participate in the community events. Like...the caucuses”.¹³ The general lack of civic and political participation was clearly identified by those both inside and outside of the Latino community, although their explanations for this low level of involvement differed.

It is important to note that the successful mobilization came from within Latino organizations such as LULAC and were generally advertised simply ‘*boca a boca*’ (by word of mouth) from one person to another. The inability of existing Anglo political institutions such as political parties, town committees and boards and other political structures to reach out to and incorporate the Latino community has been an enduring trend in Quincy. This was clearly demonstrated on the February 9th Democratic Caucus. Of the more than ninety people who showed up to the caucus, only five were Hispanic, two of whom arrived too late to actually participate due to a lack of successful communication about the location and process. Of the people interviewed about how they heard about the caucus and whether or not they thought it was well advertised, *every* person who identified as ‘white’ or ‘Anglo’ expressed satisfaction with the level and style of advertising, and felt that the time, location, and significance of the caucus had been made very clear to the public. This was not the case with *any* of the people who self-identified as Hispanic.¹⁴ Two of the women spoke only Spanish (the caucus was conducted in English, without translation) and so were very unclear about what a caucus even was and the process by which they could vote but had been told by a friend or family member that they should attend. All five people (four women and one man) explained to me how the caucus had not really been advertised at all, and how they had only just heard from a friend that they needed to go to it in order to have their vote count. Thus, while the caucus (like nearly all political events – both large and small) was well advertised to the Anglo community, this advertising did not reach Quincy Latinos. Ms. Sosa explained how this was probably not due to an intentional maliciousness, but rather to simply a lack of desire to take the time to figure out the ways in which Latino community outreach is different from Anglo community outreach:

At the caucus I was at the table with a gentleman, he sat on the Democrat something of the county, I forget. And I mentioned something that there was very little announcements toward the Latino community about the caucuses, and he said 'well, we've been trying to reach the Latino community forever and we try to do all these things, but they never show up.' And I said 'so, what did you try to do for the caucus?' And they said 'Well we put it in the newspaper.' and I said 'Well, you know, a lot of Latinos don't get a newspaper', I said 'You know, I think there's a gap between how the ... understanding how the Caucasian and Anglo culture functions and how we function'.¹⁵

The existence of this understanding gap was strongly expressed by Peter Smith based on his work with both the Latino community and the town of Quincy (both politically and non

¹³ Blancas, 2/21/08

¹⁴ Caucus Participant Interviews, conducted by author, Democratic Caucus, Quincy, Washington, February 9th, 2008

¹⁵ Sosa, 2/21/08

politically). Mr. Smith explained how both the language barrier and the lack of “education as to how the Anglo government works, and how they can become involved, and how they can have a voice”¹⁶ serves as the major barriers to Latino participation in Quincy because many people have neither the time nor ability to seek out that information and due to the limitations of district fiscal policy, the town is unable to fund programs which target a specific group. Echoing the work of Grubb *et al*, Mr. Smith argued that the for-credit based structure of ESL and civics classes at the local community college makes it inaccessible to most of the people within the Latino community who would derive the strongest benefit from it. Thus, while the Anglo community feels that the Latino community has the resources to become responsive to certain types of outreach, the lack of actual accessibility of these resources means that town and party outreach is for the most part misdirected.

As many of the Latino adults in Quincy are first generation, very few are sufficiently socialized into the cultural and political processes of Quincy to be able to benefit from the level and type of outreach offered by the town. While the town did send out a pamphlet with candidate biographies and issue positions prior to the most recent election, this flyer was only sent out in English and was written at a rather high reading level. This made it inaccessible not only to the those who could read only in Spanish, but also to the vast majority of people who are in the process of learning English. Veronica Sosa explained that “some of our Latinos are barely trying to learn English, and while maybe they can manage speaking a very little, they might not be able to read and fully understand a document like that”.¹⁷ In a town with such a high percentage of first generation Latinos, the non-English speakers and the partial English speakers make up a sizeable percentage of those eligible to vote within the Latino community. First generation Latinos in Quincy must overcome other knowledge hurdles in order to effectively participate. The importance of communicating basic participatory information cannot be overlooked. Many “first generation have never voted, not even in their home country. And now become citizens and are expected to vote. They don't know how to”.¹⁸ Because the events and programs intending to provide this information are not connected enough to the Latinos to know how to effectively communicate with them, the information, familiarity and comfort levels with electoral and non-electoral civic and political participation remain dramatically different from those of the Anglo community.

This culture in which the majority of adults do not know how to effectively participate or the extent of the potential benefits of their participation, coupled with the high level of undocumented and non-citizens within the community, creates a political culture of non-participation. Since fellow community members serve as the most powerful mobilizer for most people, a tradition that has been found to be particularly strong within the Latino community, even those who legally are able to participate electorally do not because those around them are not. Non-electoral adult participation (in which one does not need to be a citizen to participate) also has a long history of being very low. This is due to a variety of cultural and political reasons. This can be partially attributed to a desire of keeping a low profile for the entire community in order to protect the undocumented, the idea that “because of the undocumented

¹⁶ Peter Smith, interview by author, Quincy, Washington, February 9th, 2008

¹⁷ Sosa, 2/21/08

¹⁸ Sosa, 2/21/08

[people within the community] the tendency of a big percentage of the Hispanics is to cast a small shadow, don't make waves".¹⁹ Additionally, scholars such as Camp point to the lingering effect of people's experiences in Mexico and the civic knowledge they gained there. As a very high percentage of Quincy's Hispanic population is first generation, it is likely that these factors and perceptions shape Quincy Latino participation to some extent. Furthermore, the daily schedules of the majority of the people in the Latino community are very different from those of most people holding political positions in Quincy, meaning that even when Latinos want to attend events such as school board meetings, they are frequently unable to due to scheduling conflicts.²⁰ This knowledge feeds on itself, as people are not eager to be the one lone participator in an unfamiliar situation. Esmeralda Blancas explains how "knowing that there's going to be Latinos there, speaking their own language, letting them know what's going on"²¹ is a major factor for many Latinos in feeling comfortable enough to voluntarily participate. This is compounded by a low estimation of the effectiveness of political participation. Many Latinos who currently participate admit that "I didn't care... before. Now I do, because now I know what it's all about, and I know that it's being part of the community, and it makes a difference. You know, your vote".²² The focus on voting as the 'most important' form of political participation serves to depress participation within the Latino community²³, as non-citizens are unable to participate in that aspect and thus many adopt the mentality of "'who cares?' ... our vote's not... we can't say anything anyways"²⁴, a mindset which tends to saturate the community as a whole, including naturalized citizens who are able to participate electorally.

A history of low participation, however, is markedly different from a history of complete nonparticipation. Over the past few years, there have been a few specific instances in which the Latino community has mobilized around a certain. Quincy Latinos were very active in the 2006 immigration reform protests, organizing marches and rallies and generally being very visible in the community. Additionally, the Latino community demonstrated a high level of interest and participation with a discussion within the school board about the idea of having uniforms in the schools, a situation for which Esmeralda Blancas was instrumental in mobilizing the community: "[I asked the principal] 'Do you want us to get Latinos together so you can explain this to the Latinos?' [...] Girl, we filled that place up".²⁵ She went on to explain that regardless of the fact that the eventual decision of the town was not the one for which that the Latino community was hoping, it was a successful event over all, because the principal was "very surprised"²⁶ at the level of Latino participation, and it served also to send a message to the Anglo community, "show[ing] them that, 'You know what? When we want to, we can'".²⁷ What is important to look at, therefore, when examining the political mobilization of Latino adults in Quincy is both what

¹⁹ Smith, 2/9/08

²⁰ Blancas, 2/21/08, Sosa 2/21/08, Student Discussion, facilitated by author, Quincy, Washington, March 7th, 2008

²¹ Blancas, 2/21/08

²² Blancas, 2/21/08

²³ Women's Justice Circle, 2/21/08

²⁴ Blancas, 2/21/08

²⁵ Blancas, 2/21/08

²⁶ Blancas, 2/21/08

²⁷ Blancas, 2/21/08

makes them ‘want to’ and in what ways ‘can’ that be accomplished. In interviewing various people about Latino participation in Quincy, certain themes continued to arise. The sporadic mobilization has not been centered around simply a random assortment of issues. The Latino community will mobilize “if it's something that they really, really want to participate in and they think it's going to make a difference, involving their children. Because [...] children [are] the most important thing for them. [In relation to] that they will participate more”.²⁸ This held true for the mothers in the Women’s Justice Circle as well, who after brainstorming a list of issues in the town which they felt needed to be addressed, such as high costs of rent and utilities, preferential treatment for certain neighborhood in regard to town services such as snow removal, and issues with the police, all identified a lack of accessible busses for their junior high and high school students as the issue about which they most strongly wanted to do something.²⁹ The women then planned a town forum which they hope will attract the attention of the school board members and other people who have the ability to effect change. It is illustrative to contrast the difference in turnout between the LULAC Candidates’ Forum the year Peter Smith ran for mayor whose mission was to give the Latino Community a chance to ask questions of local candidates, and that of a discussion between Congressman Doc Hastings and his opponent, who work at a more distant level. For the Candidates’ Forum, “the room was full”³⁰, whereas the discussion was attended by “a couple - [meaning a...] husband and wife”.³¹ There is a clear distinction between the perception of the direct linkage to effecting change in Quincy by voicing opinions to local officials among those in the Latino community, as compared to the more indirect linkage to the 4th District Congressman and his impact on their lives. This disconnect decreases the prominence of the opinion that their participation is of enough importance to make it worth the resource expenditure of the time needed to participate.

With the work schedules of many people in Quincy, the resource of ‘time to participate’ is precious, as what little is left after working and sleeping must be split between a wide variety of important things. These include spending time with one’s family, church related activities, spending time with one’s friends and soccer, something around which nearly the entire community rallies, in addition to general errand running and normal life responsibilities. The students observe how it seems as if because most “parents are usually working overtime, [...] they spend like zero time with their kids”³², which they note causes a host of other problems. One student explained how her mom “stopped working because she wanted to spend more time with us, [meaning that] she only worked like five days a week, and eight hours a day, or ten - the most. So she would spend more time with us”.³³ It is easier to understand the high value that Quincy Latino parents place on their time and how frugal they are to spend it on any activity when one takes into consideration that spending forty to fifty hours a week at one’s job is considered ‘non-working’. When examining parental participation in voluntary organizations and other associations, it is therefore important to look at the ways in which these develop in

²⁸ Blancas, 2/21/08

²⁹ Women’s Justice Circle, 2/21/08

³⁰ Smith, 2/9/08

³¹ Blancas, 2/21/08

³² Carina Diaz, in Student Discussion, facilitated by author, Quincy, Washington, March 7th, 2008

³³ Diaz, 3/7/08

places which the Latino community already attends – namely church and the Community Health Clinic. Both of these places are used to disseminate information, with Migrant Graduation Specialist Chris Trevino describing the Health Clinic as “a huge information hub for the town [especially among...] migrant families, [and] a lot of monolingual Spanish speaking families”.³⁴ In fact, bringing information to the Quincy Community Health Clinic has been found by the school system to be the most effective and efficient method of disseminating information amongst the largest number of parents, even more so than the school’s mailings or phone calls. This connection demonstrates the central place that the Clinic holds in the community and thus why it is a strong organization with which to be associated. Groups such as the Women’s Justice Circle at the Community Health Clinic, and the community of parental support which has formed around the Guiding Good Choices classes which have helped to keep parental attendance high testifies to the Clinic’s ability to serve as a site for facilitating network and community building amongst people who share similar opinions and goals, thus creating both formal and informal instrumental groups such as the ones discussed by McMiller. The church also serves as a strong associational and informational resource in Quincy. Father Mario of the St. Pius X Catholic Church in Quincy describes his parish as “very active. Yes. Very very active”³⁵ and describes how they hold support groups, Bible studies, ESL and citizenship classes and also host large group events such as the annual Parish Fiesta. All of these events serve to bring people together and help them build familiarity and trust.³⁶ It is of no surprise, that here as well the community has begun to foster participatory attitudes, with youth groups running voter registration campaigns and those interested in effecting community change such as Peter Smith using that forum to communicate to Latinos.

Even though the Latino community has been able to mobilize numbers on certain occasions, the lack of civic and political knowledge within the community has in many cases thwarted their ability to actually accomplish their end goals. The local LULAC chapter put a lot of effort into helping people fill out the ballots for the primary in February, but because of a misunderstanding about the way in which the primary/caucus system worked in Washington State, leaders did not work on mobilizing people to go to the caucus until almost directly before it happened. As only a very small percentage of the Latino community realized that it was the caucus, not the primary, which selected the candidates, only a very few people participated in it. Thus, the already low number of Latino political participants was made even smaller, as many who believed they were helping to select a candidate through their actions were not actually voicing their opinion in an area that had the ability to effect change. Similarly, in regard to the school uniform issue, even though mobilization took place, at that point it was only possible to participate in a public discussion which the school board members could choose to listen to or not. Amongst the mothers who were interviewed, none were able to identify a school board member whom they felt represented either themselves or the Latino community.³⁷ As school board elections do not receive the kind of media coverage and mobilization efforts that national elections do, the communication barrier that exists between the Latino community and town officials serves to make school board member selection extremely inaccessible to most Latinos.

³⁴ Trevino, 3/28/08

³⁵ Father Mario Salazar, interview by author, Quincy, Washington, February 21st, 2008

³⁶ Salazar, 2/21/08

³⁷ Women’s Justice Circle, 2/21/08

Even somebody as politically involved as Esmeralda Blancas, who has worked to mobilize others within the community and brought all four of her daughters to the caucus in hopes of socializing them into the political process from a younger age, says, “I don’t even know when they run”.³⁸ This disconnect means that while Latino parents may hold strong opinions about specific aspects of their children’s education and the life experiences that surround that, and want to effect change, they are frequently uninformed about how specifically that change can take place. Additionally, the general lack of successful results even when effort is expended only serves to re-enforce an attitude of non-participation by failing to demonstrate the potential effect of such action.

Youth Participation: Actions and Obstacles

It is of interest, then, that this culture of seemingly non-participatory adults generates a group of relatively highly participatory youth. Studies have demonstrated the strong power of parental role modeling in political participation, including the ‘apprenticeship mechanism’ which Beck uses as a means of explaining the relationship between parental and student involvement. However, in a situation such as that of the Latino community in Quincy in which the adult community for the most part is fairly non-participatory and many members of the youth community have assumed roles of high participation, clearly other factors must be at work. Carina, one of the interviewed students, identified how generally parents can serve as role models for political participation, but for her that was not the case.

I think in a way it does [shape your ideas about getting involved] because it's kind of like how they brought you up, you know? If they... they're the person that's so politically involved, like 'oh, we're voting, I'm voting..' you are going to be more encouraged to vote. But then on your own, I think too ... my parents - they aren't citizens, they're residents. But then, I don't know, I just got the idea that I wanted to vote, for the president... to make a difference.³⁹

This student is now completing a senior Culminating Project on voter registration, through which she hopes to be able to encourage more participation within the Latino community. She is not alone in her level of activity. Another student, whose mother recently discovered that she was diabetic, is now working with a friend to carry out diabetes screenings among people who are usually not screened (those who do not regularly attend the doctor) as her senior community service project. Veronica Sosa, who grew up in Quincy and now attends a local college (allowing her to remain integrated in the community) is incredibly active as well, something which began when she was in high school and that she has carried over into her adult life. She is now president of Quincy’s LULAC chapter, and served as a delegate to the Democratic caucus in this most recent primary. Students are involved in a variety of other projects around the community, some through work and some through volunteer, in addition to “joining lots of different other things involved in the school, like clubs and sports”⁴⁰. These types of involvement range from participation in student clubs such as Key Club, FFA and the Latino-focused MEChA, to work

³⁸ Blancas, 2/21/08

³⁹ Diaz, 3/7/08

⁴⁰ Joelle Heikkila, interview with author, via phone, April 10, 2008

and volunteering at the Health Clinic. This activity tends to be overshadowed fact that “right now [...] everybody, practically everybody [is involved] in a sport”.⁴¹ This high level of involvement in sports, is something which is readily attributed by most Quincy residents to “[the lack of] enough opportunities for them to become involved [in anything else]”.⁴² While it is of note that not all students are as actively involved as those who were interviewed, the girls seemed to think that their level of participation was fairly normal as compared to most of their peers. Peter Smith noted in an interview: “I see in LULAC there are an awful lot of the young folks now... and that’s who has to be there. People who are in it when they are young are going to carry through when they get older”,⁴³ in addition to being active participants now. The question remains, however, as to what generated these participatory ideas in the first place.

Youth Programs: Their Role and Differing Styles

The two programs most influential in motivating youth political involvement, particularly Latino youth involvement, in Quincy have been the high school’s service requirement and the GEAR UP program. The politically participatory result of these programs, like so many other successful political endeavors in Quincy, have been supported by the Quincy Community Health Clinic and Mary Jo Ybarra-Vega, whom one student names as “the one who encouraged me”⁴⁴ and Chris Trevino describes as “help[ing] out tremendously with parent involvement [and providing...] great opportunities [...] for kids who want to help out”.⁴⁵ Thus, it is important to remember that their success is based on a combined effect of their integration into the community through the help of current community mobilizers, in addition to the successful resources and results that cause them to flourish in their respective goals. The varying styles of these programs have led to unequal outcomes in relation to the political activity in the Latino community. As institutions, both function in different ways to provide distinctive levels of political socialization and motivation to the students.

Outline for Comparison

*QHS’s Culminating Project Graduation Requirement and the GEAR UP Program*⁴⁶

⁴¹ Heikkila, 4/10/08

⁴² Trevino, 3/28/08

⁴³ Smith, 2/9/08

⁴⁴ Priscilla Garcia, in Student Discussion, facilitated by author, Quincy, Washington, March 7th, 2008

⁴⁵ Trevino, 3/28/08

⁴⁶ Based on interviews with Tracy Higgins (Culminating Project Program Advisor at QHS), Joelle Heikkila (GEAR UP Director under Grant 2), Kristen Escure (GEAR UP Director under Grant 1), Chris Trevino (GEAR UP Coordinator under Grant 1, Migrant Graduation Specialist at QHS), Veronica Sosa (past QHS student and GEAR UP participant under Grant 1), Carina Diaz, Priscilla Garcia, Mariela Medira, and (one anonymous student) (current seniors at QHS who are in the process of completing their Culminating Projects), the QHS Student Handbook and the websites, annual reports and other available documents of the Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (www.hecb.wa.gov) and the Washington GEAR UP Program (www.gearup.wa.gov)

	Culminating Project	GEAR UP (Grant 2)	GEAR UP (Grant 1)
Is program participation mandatory?	Yes	No	No
Is service required for participation in the program?	Yes	No	No (except for Ambassador Leadership Program)
How high is the level of participation in service projects in the program	High	Moderate	High
Is program perceived as being separate from institutions and responsibilities of home and work? (a 'third place')	No	Partly (experienced by a percentage of the strictly limited number of participants)	Yes
Does the student have a mentor?	Yes	Yes	With individual projects
Is there parental involvement?	No	Yes, non-mandatory	Yes
Is there a monetary incentive for participation?	No	Yes	Yes
Do participants cultivate relationships that often lead to job offers?	Yes	N/A (program participants are all 9 th graders)	Yes
How much assistance is provided for setting up projects?	Some	N/A (there are no individual projects)	A lot
Is there an application process to approve a project?	Yes	N/A	No
How encouraged are student-suggested projects? (based on assistance and approval)	Moderately	N/A	Highly
How many people work on projects?	Pairs or small groups, often lumped by topic	Individuals or larger groups	Individual or larger groups
Common Projects	Assisting animal shelter, assisting with the blood drive, fundraisers, kids' sports camps, collecting food for the food bank	Job shadowing, projects in collaboration with Lion's Club, Rotary, Communities that Care, etc.	Town beautification, tutoring of younger students, individual internship-style volunteering at Health Clinic, Senior Center, etc.
Are there direct	Sometimes	Not really	Sometimes

connections to political action?			
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Figure 3. This table serves as an outline for comparing the key aspects in the youth programs in Quincy that most directly influence youth civic and political participation – the high school Culminating Project community service requirement, the GEAR UP program under its first grant, and the current GEAR UP program

Quincy High School Community Service Requirement:

One aspect of youth mobilization springs from the high school itself. The Quincy High School has a mandatory service project as a graduation requirement known as the Culminating Project. This program was instituted eight years ago and requires that underclassmen complete a certain number of hours (either family-service, school-service or community-service) each year as part of their advisory program which includes a four year portfolio. As seniors, students must take on a community project referred to as the Culminating Project. This project is not limited to their own community, but can serve any community (be that the town of Quincy, the state of Washington or a small town in rural Thailand) as long as students are able to identify in their proposal which community it will serve. In order to set the project in a context other than the traditional school setting in which students are used to working, the school requires that each project has a mentor from the community at large. Additionally, the program demands a high level of personal ownership. Students must fill out an application form to gain approval for their project, planning out a timeframe for completion, materials needed, where it will take place and what they see as the goal of the project.⁴⁷ At the end of the year, students give a short community presentation about their project and the advisory binder portfolio they have been working on for four years, which is evaluated by community volunteers. Tracy Higgins, the woman who oversees the program in the high school, explains that while some students complain initially, most are “really happy with what they get out of it”⁴⁸ by the time they finish. She also speaks to the benefit of the program both to the students involved and the community in general. The students “develop relationships with people, and some of them end with jobs”.⁴⁹ Other successful projects develop into annual projects, things that the community comes to count on – like the annual basketball tournament. Additionally, community members come to Ms. Higgins with projects they need taken care of and she helps find students to take them on. This program as a whole serves to bring students into contact with their community and give them the opportunity to practice acting in the community as individuals, while learning from their mentor. Thus, students gain both participatory knowledge and confidence and familiarity with the practice of participating.

The high school program, however, is not the complete story to Latino youth mobilization. There is a widely differing conception of the accessibility of achieving one’s goals through this program, in addition to a lack of complete agreement as to what those goals actually are, between administrators and students. While Mrs. Higgins perceives the program application process to be fairly straightforward and states that “most projects are approved”⁵⁰ and that

⁴⁷ Tracy Higgins, interview with author, via phone, March 27th, 2008

⁴⁸ Higgins, 3/27/08

⁴⁹ Higgins, 3/27/08

⁵⁰ Higgins, 3/27/08

unsuccessful proposals are returned to the students which recommendations for revision or other projects, many students do not experience it in this way. The Latino students who were interviewed, in addition to the experiences of Veronica Sosa who serves as the coordinator for their projects, explain many aspects very differently. They describe how it is very difficult to get a proposal passed if the project is attempting to serve a need previously not approached. Whereas Mrs. Higgins cites video-game tournaments as an example of a project which the committee did not approve, the girls pointed instead to the attempted founding of a local LULAC youth council, STD testing, and bringing a motivational relationship speaker who focuses on abstinence as more telling examples of unapproved projects. Additionally, those projects were apparently rejected without explanation. When the proposal for the LULAC council was rejected this year “they didn't really give her a reason, it just didn't go through”,⁵¹ and the girl did not re-apply for it or a similarly pioneering project because she was so discouraged with the probability of another unexplained rejection. As all students must find a mentor for their project, “more than half”⁵² of the Latino students (who comprise nearly 80% of the student body⁵³) have come to the Community Health Clinic to find a senior project. There are so many, in fact, that Veronica Sosa had her job title expanded to include being the official ‘mentor’ to the majority of the students. Both she and Mary Jo Ybarra-Vega work with students and the community to help facilitate successful projects that are meaningful to both parties. When the students and Ms. Sosa were interviewed, however, about the process of making these projects available and accessible to students, they did not rate the response from the senior project committee very highly. Ms. Sosa notes how for voter registration, “[like many of the] senior projects, we really had to fight for it to come through”.⁵⁴ The girls contrasted the school’s response to projects to which they attached personal importance such as voter registration, diabetes testing, establishing a youth Women’s Justice Circle, and other such projects to the “easy”⁵⁵ annual projects of helping out with a blood drive or assisting with bingo at the community hall in nearby George, and painting picnic tables. They note extensiveness of their proposals,⁵⁶ and the fact that Ms. Sosa had to go in and meet with the school on numerous occasions. While the school was expressly given the option of speak with one of the project mentors at the Clinic if they had any questions, this never happened – despite some of the projects being rejected. The lack of support they received from the school for projects which seemed to fulfill all of the program’s goals to the letter is surprising. This sentiment was reflected by many of those interviewed: “you'd figure that voter registration would be like [snaps] 'yes!', versus somebody that's painting - there's nothing wrong with painting picnic tables - but doing voter registration...”.⁵⁷ While the Clinic is very supportive of the students’ projects, Ms. Sosa admits that the amount of work required on its part to pass each individual proposal makes it difficult to tell with how many more projects she is going to be able to help to the extent required to get them approved and moving in the right direction.

⁵¹ Veronica Sosa, Student Discussion, facilitated by author, Quincy, Washington, March 7th, 2008

⁵² Diaz, 3/7/08

⁵³ Trevino, 3/28/08

⁵⁴ Sosa, 3/7/08

⁵⁵ Garcia, 3/7/08

⁵⁶ Garcia, 3/7/08

⁵⁷ Sosa, 3/7/08

For the students, the Clinic's help is invaluable. We "want[ed] to do something that's different, do something actually for the community, that's actually not just a blood drive" one student explained, "we wanted to do something different and we struggled".⁵⁸ The students acknowledge that were it not for the help of Veronica Sosa and others at the Clinic, they would not be carrying out the projects that they are working on now. Despite the clearly good intentions of school officials and programs, all the things where the students "said 'yeah, yeah, that's motivating me, yeah that's helped me out!' It has not been ... the school".⁵⁹ Rather, the Clinic has served as a place to help take the requirements offered by the school and help the students translate that into something meaningful in their own lives and then carry it out. Ms. Sosa helps the students brainstorm ideas beyond the list of generic senior projects which the school offers as examples. This helps inspire the students to see their project not as simply yet another task to fulfill the school's graduation requirement, but rather as an opportunity to actively engage in their community through something that is meaningful for them. One student speaks to that when talking about a project some of her friends are doing: "It's good, it's beneficial but it's like 'do something that can really change something!' How can you change people just by helping them do bingo?"⁶⁰ It becomes clear, therefore, that the town would benefit from an organization such as the Clinic gaining the necessary resources to create a student support center, which could serve the students in these areas.

Quincy High School's program provides the basic structure within which students are able to gain the mobilizing benefits of community service even though that is not their active and conscious stated goal. Tracy Higgins explains that the program administrators "have more buy-in [from the students] because it is a graduation requirement"⁶¹ so even students who are not initially supportive of the idea participate because it is linked to their high school diploma. In an attempt to make it accessible for everyone to complete, the program has been kept fairly simple, with the high school providing a list of common annual projects from which most of the choose to continue for their year. While this makes the project simpler and so encourages a higher rate of completion among the senior class, it also can serve to strip the project of its possibility of personal appeal and connection, which Niemi *et al* (2000) have demonstrated is very significant to the sustained civic and political participation aspect of the project. Students are able to invent their own projects, but the structure of the program is in many ways not set up to support that, requiring outside assistance of the Community Health Clinic or another adult mentor to make those projects possible. Additionally, because the projects are based on a school system, it can be more difficult for students to see the full community and political relationship between active engagement and effecting change than with a non-school organization. One student explains how many students are involved in the community "more their junior and senior year, maybe, because they need to... Like for their senior project or the job shadow"⁶² demonstrating the strong link students perceive between their 'community based' actions and the school's role.

Quincy's Grant 1 GEAR UP Program: A Community Space

⁵⁸ Garcia, 3/7/08

⁵⁹ Sosa, 3/7/08

⁶⁰ Diaz, 3/7/08

⁶¹ Higgins, 3/27/08

⁶² Diaz, 3/7/08

Such a non-school resource used to exist in Quincy. In 1999, Quincy was one of the communities that was approved to take part in the initial GEAR UP program. GEAR UP, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, serves to provide academic support and as a college awareness and planning resource to students who might not otherwise attend college. Participation in the GEAR UP program allowed students to earn scholarship money in relation to the number of hours that they and their parents put in to the program, thus increasing participant involvement and also working to overcome the idea that college must be paid entirely out of the family's own resources. GEAR UP served students in grades seven through twelve, taking students on college trips, facilitating community service and internship opportunities, and providing tutors (many of whom were college students) who also served as mentors. In a town without a YMCA, community center, or other similar resource, GEAR UP became popular very quickly with the students. "Everybody was in GEAR UP, and I mean that's where pretty much all the kids went"⁶³ one past participant explained. Due to the level of parental involvement which the program incorporates in its method (Weiher *et al*, 2006),⁶⁴ the vast majority of the parents within the Latino community were very connected to the program as well. Because GEAR UP served students over a six year period, it cultivated a very strong, trusting community. GEAR UP was successful because "it was a long term relationship that wasn't just come in and let me give you knowledge and then dash out. And there was a chance for kids to learn and grow in the program because [there was] a leadership program also within GEAR UP".⁶⁵ This strong community was created not only within the group of students, but also amongst parents. Additionally, families came to trust and depend on director Kristen Escure and others who ran the program as not only academic but also community resources. Ms. Escure left the GEAR UP program over two years ago and she still has students calling her at home with questions about everything ranging from help applying for college to other questions they do not know where else to go to find the answers. Parental faith in the program was a key element to its success. Both Ms. Escure and Chris Trevino, who was one of the coordinators for GEAR UP and now works as the Migrant Graduation Specialist at the Quincy High School, identified GEAR UP as being a "safe place"⁶⁶ for kids, and one that their parents trusted.

Parental involvement was one of the key components which made Grant 1 GEAR UP such a strong resource not only in its primary goal of increasing post-secondary graduation among the students with whom it worked, but also as a potentially politically mobilizing resource for the community. GEAR UP offered 'parent nights', providing classes on things such as filling out the FAFSA, school-related questions, and any other topics which parents requested. Because the structure of the scholarship program required that parents complete 40 hours of involvement in order for their kids to earn the full amount of scholarship money, it was far easier to familiarize parents with the habit of attending these classes initially, in addition to engaging them from the beginning in projects such as creating advertisements for GEAR UP programs and other work. Some parents even logged hours by coming in to tutor kids in certain subjects. Parents were not only involved in participating from the receiving end, either. GEAR UP had an

⁶³ Sosa, 3/7/08

⁶⁴ Kristen Escure, interview by author, via phone, March 25th, 2008

⁶⁵ Escure 3/25/08

⁶⁶ Trevino, 3/28/08 and Escure, 3/25/08

advisory committee which was made up of not only school district members, but also of parents and several students. This both “gave them a chance to give some input into what was happening in the program”⁶⁷ and also served as a chance for the parents to familiarize themselves with that type of participation, thus serving as a political socializer as well. Additionally, GEAR UP parental involvement strengthened parental awareness of school activities and events, as GEAR UP was able to help translate and explain much of that information for parents. Having parents more engaged in their children’s education system empowers both students and parents. Chris Trevino notes that while it is difficult to determine one exact cause for any change, he has noticed that coinciding “with the end of the GEAR UP program we started to lose contact with parents and more kids”.⁶⁸ The decrease in parent involvement in the school⁶⁹ demonstrates the necessary link that GEAR UP provided between the parents and the school. Additionally, since GEAR UP was already a trusted source, parents were responsive to what they learned from the staff. Thus, GEAR UP was able to serve as a resource “for parents to come and ask questions and find information out about - whether it be the world of education or whatever”.⁷⁰ GEAR UP parental involvement thus provided parents with the educational resource which the community had previously been unable to provide – one with which they felt comfortable enough to ask meaningful questions and that operated on the type of time schedule and in a location that was accessible to them. Because of the communication which leads to an information barrier between the Latino community and the town, “the parents not only were doing community service hours and were learning about the kids' education, but they were also getting, like, town education. They were getting informed about certain services or privileges that maybe they have in the community that they did not know before”.⁷¹ This clearly demonstrates the type of successful political socialization described by Niemi (2000) and Diaz (1996). Additionally, GEAR UP also served the role of the kind of voluntary associational group which is linked to increased participation due to social networking, as parents were able to connect with other parents while participating in this program.

However much of an impact GEAR UP had on Hispanic parents in Quincy, its stronger effect by far was on the students. The program, “[was able to] collect the kids that didn't have a home. So the kids that weren't connected to school in any other way other than getting an education really connected with it, and so it helped those kids be comfortable in the education world, and in the school world”.⁷² Once the students were comfortable within their own community, GEAR UP was able to help them connect that world to others, most notably those of post-secondary education and community involvement. GEAR UP socializes kids through experience, bringing them to colleges to learn about the undergraduate experience and performing service in the community to learn about civic participation. Past coordinator Chris Trevino explains that “the idea is, if they can begin to visualize themselves there, then it makes it a lot easier process. I've always kind of functioned on the notion that goals are a familiarization

⁶⁷ Escure, 3/25/08

⁶⁸ Trevino, 3/28/08

⁶⁹ Student Discussion, 3/7/08

⁷⁰ Escure, 3/25/08

⁷¹ Sosa, 3/7/08

⁷² Escure, 3/25/08

process, so if you don't become familiar with goals there is no way you can achieve them".⁷³ This hypothesis has proven to be a success. Some Quincy students were able to go off to college with \$16,000 in scholarship money earned through their hard work and participation in six years of GEAR UP.⁷⁴ These students flourished once in college as well, some of them even studying abroad in Europe or Latin America. Many students, especially those who participated in the leadership aspect of GEAR UP known as the Ambassador Program, have carried with them the civic participatory knowledge that they gained there. Chris speaks to the fact that after students graduate and then go to college, most "come back and want to help out and be more involved. [They...] begin to gain a natural appreciation for it. But I think that having them do the community service through the GEAR UP program helped foster that as well".⁷⁵ Within GEAR UP, service hours were linked to working toward earning scholarship money, making them not mandatory (except for students involved in the Ambassador Program) but at the same time offering an additional incentive for participation. Both the additional motivation and the work GEAR UP did to set up and encourage participation led the project to being "a huge part of getting kids involved into community service",⁷⁶ a resource which is now notably absent to a majority of the youth community in Quincy.

Students in the Ambassador Program were additionally connected to the community, as the GEAR UP program helped them find personalized volunteer work or an internship with a specific organization which was personally significant to them. Recognizing that many students in the program could not afford to be entirely unemployed, GEAR UP was able to provide these junior and senior students with some compensation for the hours they donated to the business or organization with which they were working.⁷⁷ The students tended to excel in these positions, frequently to the point that they were offered a job there after graduation or when they returned from college. Veronica Sosa's current position at the Quincy Community Health Clinic is an example of exactly this situation. Students in the Ambassador Program also took leadership roles within GEAR UP, helping staff plan trips and events and assisting younger students academically and socially. This experience developed the sense of personal efficacy within the majority of these students, and additionally helped socialize them into the world of adults, creating the familiarity with the political process due to volunteering, the causal relationship which was described by Oyemeade (1989). The GEAR UP staff were excellent role models – educated, positive and engaged – and so students were able to learn from them both by feeling comfortable enough to ask questions, but also through learning by association and imitation.⁷⁸ Thus, these students especially had the personalized civic engagement opportunity in a meaningful area in addition to the safe educational support to place it in context and develop a deeper connection to it.

GEAR UP served as a place for students to contextualize the information they were offered in schools by having a chance to apply it to their own lives through experience and make

⁷³ Trevino, 3/28/08

⁷⁴ Trevino, 3/28/08

⁷⁵ Trevino, 3/28/08

⁷⁶ Sosa, 3/7/08

⁷⁷ Trevino, 3/27/08

⁷⁸ Student Discussion, 3/7/08

it their own. For many, it served as their third place - a refuge from both home and school. One past GEAR UP student described how students “would be there doing their homework, or just hanging out, or being there just to be there”.⁷⁹ In this way, GEAR UP provided an academic and social resource, in addition to giving students a trusted space within the public world, thus increasing their comfort level with connecting to a place other than school. Students developed a community not only with their peers, but also with their parents and with the other adults (both staff and parents) whom they came to trust. The academic support which GEAR UP provided served to strengthen the student’s ability to gain positive experiences and information from both their GEAR UP connections and also from their interactions with the school. In this way, it automatically increased students’ political knowledge simply by actively engaging them in the mandatory high school social studies classes they were already taking, lifting them up beyond simply putting out work in order to pass to working to apply it to their own lives and more fully understand what they were learning. Many of the students who participated in the GEAR UP program “utilized it to the fullest”,⁸⁰ and thus benefited from it very strongly. Though GEAR UP was not focused on political activism specifically, the program did work to incorporate awareness of the political process into its curriculum. The group took several trips to Olympia, and would take part in politically focused service activities such as running voter registration drives for the community. The most important resource that GEAR UP provided to increase civic and political participation, however, was the fact that it served as a place where students knew they would be supported in any project they wanted to undertake.⁸¹ This provide GEAR UP students with the resource of being able to learn through action. Thus, whether the project was initially inspired by a school requirement or through a personal desire to effect change, the social and academic support resources helped participants develop a high feeling of a potential for success, thus increasing the risks and challenges they were willing to take. Students and staff repeatedly described the strong role of GEAR UP in working “to motivate the kids”,⁸² more so than the school system or in some cases the parents were able to do for most students.

The Switch to the Grant 2 GEAR UP Program in Quincy: Focusing on a Few

This set up was dramatically altered in 2005, however, when GEAR UP’s ‘Grant 1’ expired. Grant 1 ran from 1999 to 2005 and provided 19 million dollars for tutoring, mentoring, after school programs, summer camps and scholarships for 2,040 seventh through twelfth grade students in eleven school districts (GEAR UP Program Update and Expansion Proposal, 2006). This grant was replaced by ‘Grant 2’, a 21 million dollar grant designed to fund GEAR UP for an additional six years and to serve an additional district. ‘Grant 2’ however, was written in such a way that it stipulated a very different program from the initial GEAR UP program. Quincy Grant 1 GEAR UP Director Kristen Escure notes that while “they did ask us for our input, but I don’t know that they necessarily utilized it a lot, because the grant that they came out with was very different from anything that we thought would be - it was very different from what we were working with”⁸³. The two main differences were the choice to follow a specific consortium of

⁷⁹ Garcia, 3/7/08

⁸⁰ Escure, 3/25/08

⁸¹ Escure, 3/25/08, Student Discussion, 3/7/08

⁸² Sosa, 3/7/08

⁸³ Escure, 3/25/08

students rather than having it be open to any students of the right age group who qualified, and a dramatic cut in the amount of scholarship money participants could potentially earn. “Under Grant Two, 1,035 seventh-grade students have been identified as “GEAR UP Scholars” [...] the Scholars program will follow each student in the cohort from seventh grade through graduation providing students and parents with [GEAR UP resources]”.⁸⁴ Chris Trevino explained how because of the nature of the program, students are only able to join when they are in eighth grade, and must continue through to senior year without stopping – once a student has dropped the program he or she cannot rejoin. Because many “middle school junior high students really can’t see that far ahead yet”⁸⁵ it further limits the number of participating students beyond simply the limitations imposed by the number of students the program can officially take (only seventy-five of the one hundred spots offered in Quincy were taken, and more than twenty students have already dropped from the program).⁸⁶ Additionally, the requirements for earning scholarship money have changed as well, with students now having to demonstrate meeting certain benchmarks in order to be eligible for earn the funds.

Grant 2 GEAR UP works to provide many of the same benefits as the previous grant’s program such as tutoring and scholarship opportunities to encourage post-secondary education, but is limited in that it is only able to officially serve the limited number of students it is allowed to initially admit. Additionally, in order to increase the focus on post-secondary education in all aspects of the students’ interaction with the program, the necessary tasks to earn scholarship money and the official activities of the program no longer contain community service. Ms. Heikkila has incorporated a community service aspect into the Quincy GEAR UP program through collaboration with local organizations such as the Rotary Club and through “Job shadowing, which is sort of the same as community service but with a different name, because that is more in tune with what the grant is than community service is”.⁸⁷ Because of the other required activities and the lack of immediate incentive, community service is a much smaller component of student activity. Additionally, the career-focused nature of the Job-Shadow style of community service serves to strip it of many of its potential civic and political participatory benefits (Niemi, 2000). Another major change is that the program no longer contains an official parental involvement component, which has made the process of gaining a sustained high level of parental involvement much more difficult.⁸⁸ Ms. Heikkila works very diligently to incorporate parent involvement through bilingual communication, parent nights, and other forms of outreach, and while currently there is “a good level of parent participation in most things now, [...] that took a while to get”.⁸⁹ Additionally, the voluntary and ‘non-essential’ nature of parental participation under the second grant serves to make it a subordinate activity to other, more directly ‘necessary’ ones. The limitation on the number of student participants and the lack of a motivational requirement for parental participation with Grant 2 GEAR UP served to effectively strip GEAR UP’s of its perception of being a community space. Ms. Heikkila extends the offer of voluntary attendance to both parents and non-gear up students as best she can, but due to the

⁸⁴ GEAR UP Program Update and Expansion Proposal, July 2006, see Appendix C

⁸⁵ Trevino, 3/28/08

⁸⁶ Trevino, 3/28/08, Joelle Heikkila, interview with author, via phone, April 10th, 2008

⁸⁷ Heikkila, 4/10/08

⁸⁸ Heikkila, 4/10/08

⁸⁹ Heikkila, 4/10/08

lack of access to program services and a feeling of membership (Diaz, 1996), GEAR UP under Grant 2 does not draw a large enough percentage of the student and parent body to generate the feeling of a community third space.

This grant switch had a dramatic impact on the Latino community in Quincy. Though the services GEAR UP had provided under its initial grant had namely focused specifically on the seventh through twelfth grade students and by association on their parents, it quickly became obvious that these resources had become an integral part of the entire community. “When funds were cut from GEAR UP the whole town was like ...shooken”.⁹⁰ Without the bridge which GEAR UP provided between parents and students and town and state resources, that information was no longer able to get to those members of the Latino community and thus could not be distributed amongst the friends and family members of these participants, thereby spreading through the community as a whole. Grant 1 Director Kristen Escure cites one of her reasons for leaving her position as director of the GEAR UP program as the realization that she would be unable to continue to fulfill the role for which the Latino community currently depended on her under the new grant:

The new format of the program was not going to allow me to continue working with the families that I had been working with for all those years and I knew that I couldn't cut that resource off because I was considered a resource within the community and so if I was there I was going to be paid to be doing one and needing – and the community was going to be wanting me to do another thing, and so it would have been a really huge struggle⁹¹

Students describe how because of the limited number of students in program activities that can officially serve, GEAR UP is now “just a homework - like a study [place], it's not like community involvement before”.⁹² Additionally, the services that GEAR UP used to provide for the community such as student volunteers in the hospital, as summer school TAs and at the swimming pool have also disappeared due to the far fewer number of volunteers and the lack of program focus on encouraging such activities. This serves to make student participation far less visible to community members, thus furthering the appearance of a non-participatory civic culture amongst youth and adult members of the Quincy Latino community. It also had a direct impact on parental participation for parents who are no longer able to be directly involved in the GEAR UP program, frequently revolving around language barrier issues. One student explained how “one of the reasons why my mom's not really involved ... like, school-wise, she's doesn't go to board meetings for that same reason [that it was before GEAR UP] - language barriers”.⁹³ The school works to make information and decision making processes as accessible to parents as possible, but due to the community accessibility of the GEAR UP program under Grant 1, it was able to provide a highly successful communication and parental education resource which the school has been unable to duplicate as of yet. Thus, the new GEAR UP grant has effectively stripped the program of the majority of its elements that make it an effective as a means of

⁹⁰ Sosa, Student Discussion, 3/7/08

⁹¹ Escure, 3/25/08

⁹² Diaz, 3/7/08

⁹³ Garcia, 3/7/08

encouraging civic and political participation within the Latino community, while at the same time reducing its effectiveness in the academic and motivational goals it was founded to fulfill.

The change in the trend of youth participation since the changing of the GEAR UP program is perhaps the most noticeable aspect of the way in which the loss of this resource has re-shaped the community to continue to foster an attitude of non-participation. As someone who was strongly involved with students in the GEAR UP program and now works with students in the high school, Chris Trevino has been able to observe a marked difference in the attitudes of the student body:

I work with kids on a daily basis and the motivation is changing, there really isn't any. [...] As far as opportunities civic or political or otherwise around here, the only types of extra curricular activities that we see our kids engage in are athletics, really. Because I just don't think that there are enough opportunities for them to become involved. I try to get [local activist Mary Jo Ybarra-Vega] as many kids as possible [for her projects] because those opportunities don't come up often enough, or maybe it's just the schools and the people who are offering those opportunities are not connected. I really don't think they do anything [after school], and I don't know if it's a lack of opportunity or a lack of motivation or maybe both.⁹⁴

His hypotheses are clearly echoed by the students, who when asked what they do after school generally answer simply 'nothing'. For many students, the lack of participation is simply a reflection of the inaccessibility of many opportunities due to a lack of communication and some kind of set up.⁹⁵ The students who were interviewed enjoyed participating both civically and politically, definitely preferring it to being at home, but did not know how to seek out those opportunities on their own. The level of engagement in the GEAR UP program under its first grant demonstrated that the motivation can be brought to the surface when the opportunity is there. By a similar argument, however, when the opportunity recedes, so too does the motivation and thus the level of participation.

Synthetic discussion of findings and recommendations:

The Political Climate

The Quincy Latino community has a history of civic and political non-participation interspersed with intense efforts to mobilize around certain issues. This is due to a political environment of nonparticipation containing several particularly active members who are able to effectively communicate the importance of certain crucial issues and serve as the catalyst for mobilization. As the Quincy Latino population is largely first generation, most adults have never been socialized into the US political system, either with high school civics or simply through familiarity based on time and exposure, echoing the reasons which Hritzuk and Park (2000) cite linking Latino organizational involvement predicting increased political participation more so than with any other group. The language barrier serves as another hurdle for many of those who

⁹⁴ Trevino, 3/28/08

⁹⁵ Student Discussion, 3/7/08

want to participate, as does that often forgotten literacy barrier. Additionally, many members of the voting age community are not citizens, and a significant percentage are undocumented. In a community which lacks political education and where many cannot vote and some depend on maintaining a very low profile in order to continue living their lives without disruption, it is not surprising that the community as a whole would not be highly participatory. However, this pattern is likely to persist beyond the current situation in which a high percentage are ineligible to participate, as this lack of participation feeds on itself because the community remains below the critical threshold of participation. Mobilization efforts by the town and other political organizations do not reach out to the Latino community in ways to which it is responsive, and because there are no members of the Latino community helping to make those decisions, the unsuccessful actions are generally simply repeated instead of modified to be more effective.⁹⁶ This lack of change only serves to further the non-participatory condition of the community.

The several successful instances of mobilization of Latinos in Quincy have all resulted from efforts within the Latino community, springing mostly from active and respected community members tapping into the social and community networks formed around groups and organizations such as churches, the Quincy Community Health Clinic, and community leisure activities such as soccer - frequently invoking the assistance of trusted community names such as LULAC. These groups and organizations have served as the common ground upon which people are able to form group connections and discuss areas of interest or concern. Latino-based organizations understand the best ways to disseminate information within the community, and so have been able to mobilize the community particularly around issues of immigration and those which deal with children. It is illustrative of the dramatically increased effectiveness of organizations endogenously woven in to the Latino community rather than those attempting to access it from the outside that Quincy High School sends information to parents via the Community Health Clinic.

Although the Quincy Latino community can be very effective in getting a large group of people to turn out at a specific time and place, this alone is not sufficient for broader mobilization efforts because very few members of the adult Latino community have the requisite knowledge to effect meaningful political change. Also, faith in the effectiveness of many forms of political action remains fairly low among many Quincy Latinos. Often, a lack of education as to how to participate effectively leads to large resource expenditures with minimal results thus reinforcing the mindset which maintains much non-participation. Additionally, as so many believe that the only way to participate politically is to do so electorally – an act which is limited to only a certain percentage of the population – many adults simply brush off political participation as something which does not apply to them.⁹⁷ Thus, though the desire to effect change exists, the political mobilization and understanding of how to participate has remained low due mainly to a lack of ‘starter information’ upon which other knowledge can build. While Leal (2002) states that “for non-citizens, non electoral participation is significantly affected by political information” (Leal, 2002, p. 368) he fails to suggest how people who are part of an uninformed community should go about acquiring that political knowledge, especially in a small community such as Quincy with limited resources and even more limited time constraints due to

⁹⁶ Sosa, 2/21/08

⁹⁷ Women’s Justice Circle, 2/21/08

overburdening work responsibilities. This is because the path to creating a community of politically active adults does not start with the adults, but rather, mobilizes them indirectly in a manner and time schedule which is accessible and non-threatening.

The Effect of Youth Empowerment

If one is going to work to break the culture of non-participation within the Quincy Latino community, the most effective and efficient way to do that is by working to politically empower the youth. This serves a triple benefit. Initially, it works to mobilize the age group in which the largest percentage of the current Latino electorate is found – those ages eighteen to twenty nine.⁹⁸ In a broader framework, as youth political socialization leads to increased activity throughout one's life and youth understanding and involvement will help politically socialize parents. In this way, one is able to look at Beck's (1982) model from a different angle, that in which the children are more socialized into the culture and political system than their parents. This 'reverse socialization' is frequently found in first generation families around other aspects of life, as children frequently learn the language of the new country more quickly than their parents, and are more rapidly socialized through the school systems "and other socializing agents including [...] the media, the workplace, [and] friends" (Camp, 2003, 25). Additionally, as parents, these students will be able to politically socialize their own children in a similar way to that which has been found within the more participatory Anglo parent community.

The process of gaining political knowledge has been documented by many scholars as being 'high cost', meaning that it requires a lot of time and energy to complete effectively. While Quincy Latino adults tend to have such demanding work schedules that any activity perceived as 'additional' is untenable for sustainable periods of time, the Quincy youth are pretty much in agreement that there is 'nothing' for them to do after school. Thus, the youth are in a far better position resource-wise to gain the initial information and understanding which they are then able to pass on through association, familiarity and role modeling to others within the community. The success of the *Promotor(a)s* health education system instituted in Quincy several years ago, which is based on a similar premise of mobilizing individual community members to spread necessary information in a non-formal setting, speaks to the effectiveness of such an approach in this community (Niermeyer, 2006). As language and cultural barriers make many members of the Latino community feel much more comfortable attending an event if they know other Latinos will be there to interpret⁹⁹, generating a critical mass of participation is key to transforming the community. Were the more timid and borderline participatory community members to know that there was a strong core of bilingual Latinos participating, they would be much more likely to attend events such as school board meeting and caucuses, thus dramatically increasing the level of participation within the community.

Enhancing QHS's Culminating Project

Effecting this kind of change within the Quincy young adult community has two very specific aspects. One key element is a simple increase in civic education which is gained through

⁹⁸ NALEO Education Fund, 2006

⁹⁹ Blancas, 2/21/08

a combination of classroom lessons and the community service Culminating Project requirement at the Quincy High School. Both of these programs already exist with many very successful components, but a re-examination of their goals could lead these programs to not only be more effective in their stated missions, but also allow them to work toward raising the town's low political participation rates, an aspect which is strongly connected to their founding goals. In regard to the civics curriculum, students would benefit from a higher amount of direct transmission of basic participatory knowledge, such as the specific roles of certain elected officials, how to find out where and when different elections take place, how to participate in public meetings and other such information which is necessary for effective participation. The significance of this process can be re-enforced by the work of the senior service project in attempting to effect change within a community. Regardless of whether the student's project deals directly with the political system, he or she will be working within a structure affected by the decisions of political officials, and an initial framework for understanding will help the students comprehend and care about these connections on a more personal level. Niemi *et al* (2000) argue, in fact, that community service is "an essential part of civic education that can make textbooks come alive by arousing interest, increasing knowledge, and generating positive participatory and civil attitudes"(Niemi *et al*, 2000, p. 48). Right now, the program is structured in such a way that it is very focused on careers, with a job shadow junior year and a binder section in their portfolio directed to how to be a good employee.¹⁰⁰ While this is important, it is not all-encompassing.

The advisory program, which concludes with the graduation requirement of the Portfolio and the Culminating Project, was created to help students prepare for adult life, and so incorporating familiarization with civic and political participation with the community service project and the process of finding a successful career is a logical and complimentary step. This change would involve encouraging students to seek out projects that they feel would make a difference in their community which is significant to them by working to initiate and implement new and different projects and helping students learn how to craft experiences which support their interests. One significant change would involve work-shopping unsuccessful proposals with students to something that could be approved, instead of simply rejecting them. This way students would not simply sign up for projects in which they were uninterested simply because they knew they would not be rejected. This change could be re-enforced with the addition of a section in the portfolio which is specifically directed as to how to be a strong civic participant, similar to the current sections which focus on being a good family member, planner, and other adult roles. Motivating students to take on more personalized, unique projects would encourage them to set the civically participatory knowledge they had gained in the classroom in the context of an area of the community which they care about, thus applying the same effective education techniques currently used in the Job Shadow and other programs to successfully increase civic and political participation.

Empowering the GEAR UP Program

In looking at programs which are able to fulfill the necessary elements in creating successful and sustainable political participation, the GEAR UP program stands out as

¹⁰⁰ Higgins, 3/27/08

particularly ideal. GEAR UP provides a number of the crucial elements to successful involvement and participation. Due to the number of students for which the school is responsible and the constantly increasing list of mandated responsibilities and regulations which it must meet, Quincy High School is not able to provide the level of personalized attention which each individual student might need for success, especially given the limitations on parental participation within much of the Latino community. With more focused resources and a smaller student population, GEAR UP under Grant 1 was better able to address the individual needs and concerns of specific students. Thus, a reinvigorated GEAR UP would be able to serve as an additional support system to help students really learn the civic knowledge the school is trying to impart and provide the assistance with creating successful senior projects which their parents are frequently unable to provide. GEAR UP, however, provides more than simply a ‘back-up’ support to the school. Rather, the ‘third place’ program serves to provide the place where students are able to pull together their school knowledge and their home knowledge with the help of the staff and mentors at the program and translate it into a personally meaningful experience. The trust which GEAR UP had cultivated in the community, in addition to the scholarship incentives and social resources it provided encouraged the kind of strong, sustained, non-mandated participation which is necessary for familiarizing oneself with political participation. Oldenburg’s (1989) idea of a ‘third place’ additionally plays into GEAR UP’s success in that it provided a space for students with a different social atmosphere and different resources than were available to them either at school or at home. In this way, GEAR UP was able to serve the role of the ‘associational organization’ referred to by Smith (1999), Hanks (1981) and Beck (1982) as a strong factor in both motivation and mobilization.

Additionally, the parental component of GEAR UP serves a key role, as parents are not only more engaged in what their students are learning, but also gain an educational resource themselves through the family nights and the trusted relationships built with GEAR UP staff. GEAR UP’s parental leadership opportunities further served as a means of providing political socialization to its participants through role playing. As GEAR UP was an educational resource rather than a political resource, it was viewed as both important and accessible within the community, something which is not always the case with outwardly political organizations. A key piece which differentiates Grant 1 GEAR UP from similar programs was that it was not a ‘high cost’ program for parents resource-wise, as it operated on flexible hours, took place in a space they would have to come to retrieve their children anyway, and provided parents with compensation for their time through scholarship money for their children.¹⁰¹ While it may seem at first that the level of monetary compensation required for GEAR UP to maintain parental participation over the course of oldest to youngest child, would be untenably high, Gross *et al* has found that “monetary rewards may effectively get a participant’s attention,” (Gross *et al*, 2001, p. 246) but “no enticement will gain committed participants if the participant does not see the [program] as important”(Gross *et al*, 2001, p. 252). Parents participated in the GEAR UP program both to help their children (academically and monetarily) and also because of the personal benefit they received through the classes offered and the opportunity to socialize and network with other parents – two elements which have been identified as instrumental in increasing political participation among Latinos. This is further demonstrated by the level of parental participation Ms. Heikkila was able to cultivate, albeit with initial difficulty, within the

¹⁰¹ Escure, 3/25/08

restrictive framework of Grant 2. Thus, while the scholarship assistance served as a key component, it was not the only motivator for participation, illustrating that the success of a parental participation requirement would be able to weather a time of lean budgets, and thus should not be discounted for this reason.

While it may not be possible to re-create Grant 1 in a post No Child Left Behind world which demands the kind of increased benchmarks and standards-based education which is unable to view pedagogy from a community perspective, the importance of finding funds to re-institute a resource which fulfills the necessary community roles provided by GEAR UP cannot be over-emphasized. Quincy has experienced a negative trend of participation since the loss of Grant 1 GEAR UP. This has been demonstrated through a loss of political participation in a wide variety of community members in nearly all areas of civic engagement, of parent participation in students' lives both academically and socially, and of student participation in meaningful extracurricular activities – all three of which are closely linked with increased political participation in both youth and adults. The positive resource GEAR UP provided is still fresh enough in the minds of most community members that were funding to become available and the community aspect of GEAR UP could be re-instituted, the beneficial impact of GEAR UP could be rejuvenated without nearly as much time and effort as was required the first time. That opportunity, however, is rapidly eroding. If the State of Washington would like to be able to benefit from the fantastic groundwork it laid through the initial GEAR UP program, time is an important consideration. The ability of the GEAR UP program to break the cycle of non-participation among members of the Latino community in Latino-majority¹⁰² town of Quincy, means that this funding is not limited to simply the Higher Education Coordinating Board, but rather could come from other non-educational venues such as political grants, youth action initiatives, 'Get Out the Vote' campaigns and other areas. This would not only increase the amount of money available, but also decrease the limitations imposed the number of by restrictions and requirement generally associated with federal education grants. The alleviation of many of these specific mandates and tasks would dramatically increase the director's ability to be successful with the mission he or she is tasked with achieving.¹⁰³ As the most effective and efficient means of creating a democratic process which is able to accurately represent Quincy's population in a sustainable manner is through youth mobilization, GEAR UP's immense success speaks to the very strong potential of its position as a political socializer and mobilizer.

Re-assessing Town Outreach

Additionally, however, some changes are necessary in town outreach. While mobilizing the youth is incredibly effective and is the necessary act for producing long term, meaningful change through altering the political environment, it is unfair to the students to place the sole responsibility for their parents' political socialization on their shoulders. Rather, students should serve to re-enforce and role model the methods and demonstrations of effectiveness which parents are gaining elsewhere. In order for the community to function effectively, it is important that all members are able to access the necessary information for informed participation. Recently, on Peter Smith's suggestion, the town formed the Mayor's Committee on Cultural

¹⁰² US Census, 2000 Demographic Profile of Quincy, Washington

¹⁰³ Heikkila, 4/10/08

Relations, which is tasked with advising the city on racial issues, although it is self-admittedly “just finding itself”¹⁰⁴ and has yet to affect the kind of change it was set up for, the groundwork is there. Though its advising position it would most likely be able to recommend appointing a member of the Latino community to the group which is in charge of communicating political information to the town. Thus, this individual (or group of individuals) would be able to implement means of communication more applicable to the Latino community, such as including radio announcements rather than just printing information in the paper. Additionally, they would also be sufficiently plugged in to the Latino community to know whether or not the information was actually reaching the people it was intended for and what gaps still existed. Taking this course of action recognizes that politically significant information such as candidate biographies and the street addresses of polling places are only able to help further the political engagement of those who have the requisite political understanding to place such information in context. Additionally, increasing bilingual services at public events is a key element in making them accessible to Latino community members who are otherwise too intimidated or find them too inaccessible to participate, thus serving as a point of entry for those who are still in the early stages of the political and cultural socialization processes.

Sustainability and Success

This change in the level of information within the Latino community would complement the change in the political environment from non-participatory to participatory as the successive years of graduating youth established themselves as active political members within the Quincy community. As electoral and non-electoral political participation became more accessible, it would serve to perpetuate itself, with active community members serving as mobilizers for less active members, and their success cultivating a sense of the importance and effectiveness of political participation amongst all members of the community. Thus, the amount of effort which is necessary to be expended at this point is not permanent, but serves to raise the base level of political knowledge to a point where it is endogenously able to maintain and build upon itself within the community.

Encouraging student, and through this parent, civic and political participation is a major step toward deconstructing the culture of political nonparticipation within the Latino community in Quincy. The combination of the school requirement for service and community involvement coupled with the context and socialization provided by programs such as GEAR-UP provide students with the opportunity to be sufficiently involved to cultivate feelings of political efficacy and generate the requisite knowledge to effectively participate both civically and politically throughout their lives. Encouraging Latino representation among those responsible for disseminating town information could also help support this effort by making town outreach more accessible to the Latino population. Chris Trevino described Quincy as in the “infancy stage”¹⁰⁵ of mobilizing its Latino community politically, which in many ways serves to succinctly describe the solution. Perhaps the most effective and efficient way to overcome the history of nonparticipation is to empower existing processes, most notably those which work directly with youth, to mature toward grander goals, thus incorporating a more comprehensive

¹⁰⁴ Smith, 2/9/08

¹⁰⁵ Trevino, 3/28/08

political socialization and mobilization aspect to the successful work they already do. Research has demonstrated this political knowledge and civic virtue will remain with those students, cultivating a framework for disseminating that knowledge to previous and successive generations. Thus, once matured, this new political culture will be able to care for itself.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Interview List:

Escure, Kristen, via phone, March 25th, 2008
 Heikkila, Joelle, via phone, April 10, 2008
 Higgins, Tracy, via phone, March 27th, 2008
 Blancas, Esmeralda, Quincy Community Health Clinic, Quincy, Washington, February 21st, 2008
 Salazar, Mario, St. Pius X Catholic Church, Quincy, Washington, February 21st, 2008
 Smith, Peter, at interviewee's residence, Quincy, Washington, February 9th, 2008
 Sosa, Veronica, Quincy Community Health Clinic, Quincy, Washington, February 21st, 2008
 Trevino, Chris, via phone, March 28th, 2008

Caucus participant interviews (anonymous), Democratic Caucus, Quincy, Washington, February 9th, 2008

High School Students, Quincy Community Health Clinic, Quincy, Washington, March 7th, 2008
 Participants: Veronica Sosa, Priscilla Lopez, Carina Diaz, Mariela Garcia, (an anonymous student),

Women's Justice Circle, Quincy Community Health Clinic, Quincy, Washington, February 21st, 2008 – participants: Esmeralda Blancas, Irma (last name withheld), Mariela (last name withheld), (an anonymous woman)

Appendix B – Question Lists

Paraphrased versions of the question lists from interview transcriptions

Kristen Escure Interview:

- 1) How did GEAR UP get started?
- 2) How did you get involved with it?
- 3) What were your goals for GEAR UP?
- 4) How did GEAR UP develop its good position within the community?
- 5) What was the Ambassador Leadership program like?
- 6) How did GEAR UP's bilingual services help provide a link for students and parents with the school?
- 7) How did the leadership board that to which parents were elected function? What else were parents involved in?

- 8) What services did GEAR UP provide that weren't offered elsewhere in the community?
- 9) How did GEAR UP cultivate the trust which the community had in it?
- 10) How has GEAR UP changed with the new grant?
- 11) What effect has this had on the students in GEAR UP?
- 12) What effect did this have as far as removing a resource for parents and students?
- 13) Did GEAR UP do anything to encourage kids to learn about political process?

Joelle Heikkila

- 1) Did you work for GEAR UP under the old grant?
- 2) What is the current GEAR-UP's goal?
- 3) What services does it provide?
- 4) What are examples of the required benchmarks?
- 5) What kind of activities do you do with the students?
- 6) Do you do anything at all political (like a trip to Olympia)?
- 7) Is there a community among the GEAR UP students?
- 8) How active are GEAR UP parents?
- 9) What did you do to increase parent participation?
- 10) Do you send your newsletters in English or Spanish?
- 11) How is GEAR UP perceived by students and parents who are involved? Those who aren't involved?
- 12) What other kinds of things are students involved in?
- 13) Do you do anything that interacts with local community? Like community service?
- 14) What other kinds of activities does GEAR UP collaborate with?
- 15) Effect on having limited number of students now
- 16) What aspects are GEAR UP are increasing student involvement in other areas of their lives?
- 17) As somebody who works with the current grant, do you have any suggestions as to what changes should be made to funding?

Tracy Higgins Interview:

- 1) How is the service requirement structured at Quincy High School?
- 2) Why is it structured in this way?
- 3) How successful is it?
- 4) What kinds of projects do the students do?
- 5) Has there ever been any relation to or collaboration with the GEAR UP program?
- 6) What level of parental support to do experience with this program?
- 7) Do students ever drop out of high school because they can't complete the service requirement?
- 8) What is the application for getting a project approved like?
- 9) What types of programs aren't approved? What is the course of action after a student has his/her project rejected?

Esmeralda Blancas Interview:

- 1) What was it like growing up in Quincy? What did you do?
- 2) How did you come to be doing the work you are doing now?
- 3) What kinds of things get people together in the Latino community here? Classes? Events? Churches?
- 4) Do you think the Latino Community feels able to participate in making changes in Quincy?
- 5) How politically active do you think you are as compared to your friends and neighbors?
- 6) Do you feel like events like the caucuses are well advertised? To the Latino community?
- 7) What kinds of things do you think would help make people feel more comfortable attending events like caucuses?
- 8) Do you think that sub-communities like church groups or parents who attend the same classes at the Clinic helps people build connections to the point that they feel more comfortable participating?
- 9) What was your experience as president of LULAC?
- 10) Have there been any events/elections that have had really high participation within the Latino community? Why do you think these received such large support?
- 11) How do the Women's Justice Circles work? Do their activities link to or lead to political participation?
- 12) What have been successful tactics to mobilizing the Latino community in the past?
- 13) What have your experiences been interacting with the town government other officials in Quincy?
- 14) What elections/positions are important? Are there any Latinos in those positions? Why or Why not? What effect does this have?
- 15) What effect do you think increasing Latino representation in these positions would have?
- 16) Do you feel like the town officials have tried to reach out to Latinos at all? Has it been successful?
- 17) What do you think can be done either by the town or within the Latino community help get people to be more involved?
- 18) Do you think there is a certain issue that brings people together?

Father Mario Salazar Interview:

- 1) How did you end up in Quincy?
- 2) What do with the community?
- 3) How involved are the people in the church?
- 4) Do you have youth groups? Any other groups? What do they do?
- 5) What kind of changes have you seen in the church and the town since you first got here?
- 6) What kind of services do you have available for people in the parish? Classes?
- 7) How integrated is the church between the Anglo and Hispanic members? How does language effect this?
- 8) What have you noticed that is different about Quincy from other places you have worked?
- 9) How do you see Anglo/Latino interactions in Quincy in general?
- 10) Do bilingual Latinos ever go to the English mass? Why not?
- 11) Does Quincy get a lot of new people? How easy do you think it is to integrate into Quincy as newcomer?

- 12) What kinds of things do people do/participate in to build bonds with other members of the church community?

Peter Smith Interview:

- 1) How did you end up in Quincy?
- 2) What kinds of things are you/have you been involved in here in Quincy?
- 3) What do you think is changing the Hispanic political awareness in Quincy?
- 4) What groups or individuals are influential in Quincy?
- 5) Who makes which decisions here in the political system?
- 6) What kinds of things would you like to implement in Quincy? Why?
- 7) Do you feel like there's a lot of interaction between the Anglo and Latino communities? Why/why not?
- 8) What do you think has been done to make it better?
- 9) Do you think the Anglo community is working to make changes?
- 10) What was your experience running for mayor?
- 11) What role do organizations like LULAC play? What role does trust play?
- 12) Who in the Hispanic community is particularly active?
- 13) Have there been any racial issues in any of the elections?
- 14) Is there anything that you think is unique to your experience in Quincy that you haven't really seen anywhere else?
- 15) Do you feel like things are moving along the right path now, or are some big structural changes still necessary?

Veronica Sosa Interview:

- 1) What kinds of activities or groups does the Latino community participate in, politically or non-politically?
- 2) Do you feel as if the Latinos in Quincy identify as a community?
- 3) What kind of political participation is there amongst Quincy Latinos, both electorally and non-electorally?
- 4) How high do you think that the level of understanding is within the Latino community as to how to participate?
- 5) Have seen a connection between people who participate in organizations such as the Women's Justice Circle and are thus more plugged in to political activity?

Chris Trevino Interview:

- 1) What organizations/groups do you think have the biggest impact of community and/or political participation in the Quincy area?
- 2) What types of outreach has the school found to be unsuccessful in contacting parents? Why?
- 3) How big of an impact do groups such as the Quincy Community Health Clinic, LULAC and the Church have on community and/or political participation? Can you think of anything specifically political they have done?
- 4) Does the high school offer any classes which offer basic civics information?
- 5) What was the first GEAR UP grant like? How does that differ from the second grant?

- 6) Do you think that there was a loss of a sense of community among parents and different age students which when the GEAR UP program switched to the restrictions of its second grant?
- 7) How has the Quincy Latino community as a whole been affected by the switch in the GEAR UP program?
- 8) In what ways do you think GEAR UP served to link parental involvement to the school?
- 9) What are parent/student interactions like in your experience working with Quincy high schoolers?
- 10) What else are students involved in other than the school?
- 11) How did GEAR UP's community service aspect help kids connect to the community?
- 12) Have kids who were involved in GEAR UP gone on to be more involved adults after they graduate from the program?

Caucus Participant Questions:

- 1) How politically active would you consider yourself?
- 2) How did you learn about the caucus? Did the Democratic Party encourage you to come out today? What did they do?
- 3) Do you think there was outreach to the Latino community?
- 4) What made you decide to come to the caucus today?
- 5) Do think anyone in Quincy has difficulty participating in the caucus? Why?
- 6) Are you planning on voting in the primary? Why/why not?
- 7) Are you glad/not glad that you came to the caucus today?
- 8) Do you self-identify as Latino?

Women's Justice Circle

(direct transcription of questions from the *¿Qué sabemos de este lugar?* activity, Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center)

- 1) ¿Qué hay aquí?
 - a. ¿Cómo es el medio ambiente de este lugar?
 - b. ¿Como ha sido cambiado por el desarrollo humano?
 - c. ¿Qué está dañado el medioambiente aquí?
 - d. ¿De dónde viene su comida? ¿Quién la produce?
- 2) ¿Quiénes viven aquí?
 - a. ¿Qué grupos raciales/étnicos están aquí?
 - b. ¿El equilibrio racial/étnico está cambiando? ¿Como?
 - c. ¿Hay algo que pasó recientemente que indica tensiones entre los diferentes grupos?
 - d. ¿Las relaciones raciales son buenas o malas en este lugar? ¿Hasta qué punto?
 - e. ¿Qué clases sociales ves en este Lugar? (Piensa en los desempleados, obreros y los que proveen servicios, oficinistas, técnicos, gerentes y profesionales, y los super-ricos)
 - f. ¿Cuáles son las clases que están aumentando en número?
 - g. ¿Cuáles son las clases que reciben la mayor parte de los beneficios económicos?

- 3) ¿Cómo circula el dinero aquí?
 - a. ¿Quiénes son los mayores empleadores?
 - b. ¿Cómo es la relación entre el comercio y la mano de obra en este lugar?
 - c. ¿Qué tipo de trabajo podría uno encontrar...
 - i. ...si no tiene más que escuela secundaria?
 - ii. ...si no tiene un habilidad técnica u oficio?
 - iii. ...si tiene una incapacidad?
 - iv. ...si no ha tenido empleo por un tiempo?
 - v. ...si aceptaría trabajo temporal?

- 4) ¿Cuál es la realidad política aquí?
 - a. ¿Quiénes votan? ¿Quiénes deciden no votar? ¿Por qué?
 - b. ¿Quiénes son los líderes elegidos en esta comunidad?
 - c. ¿Cuáles son los partidos políticos más fuerte?
 - d. En tu opinión, ¿los líderes elegidos son responsables?
 - e. En tu opinión, ¿quién(es) tiene(n) influencia con los líderes elegidos?
 - i. los comerciantes
 - ii. las iglesias
 - iii. los medios de comunicación
 - iv. los barrios
 - v. las uniones

Discussion with Students:

- 1) What kinds of things are you guys involved with in the community?
- 2) Why do you do it?
- 3) How involved do you think you are as compared with other students at the high school?
- 4) What sparked you to get really involved? What encouraged you?
- 5) What kinds of things are other students doing for their senior projects?
- 6) How involved are your parents in what you are doing? Do you talk to them about it at all?
- 7) What makes you want to get more involved in your senior service requirement than just the bare minimum?
- 8) Do people within the Latino community feel distanced from the electoral process?
- 9) Do you feel like the Latino community is involved in the political process at all? Do you think people are trying to get there through their community involvement?
- 10) Do you think your parents' political behavior influences your involvement?
- 11) How involved do you think parents are in their students' lives? What impact do you think that has?
- 12) What other kinds of things to high schoolers in Quincy do for activities?
- 13) Do you think the change in the GEAR UP grant changed the way students interact with the town, or see the town?
- 14) To what extent did parents participate in GEAR UP?
- 15) Do you think that 'practicing' civic and political participation within GEAR UP increased the sense of comfort participating in the wider political arena for parents and students?

- 16) Do you think political and community participation have dropped off since GEAR UP switched grants?
- 17) Do you think GEAR UP helped provide kids with role models?
- 18) What was the timeframe of GEAR-UP's operation? How long was it in its period of strong success?
- 19) Is the WASL a big problem here?
- 20) What is the level of comfortableness with English among Latinos in the high school?
- 21) What is the effect on kids of the situation of having to serve as interpreter for their parents?
- 22) Are there a lot of bilingual services in Quincy with things like insurance companies and the post office and other similar places? Schools?
- 23) What were the major obstacles you've encountered with the school in trying to do your senior project?
- 24) Do people get pretty attached to their senior projects or do they mostly just do them to do them?
- 25) How did the Clinic become the resource it is for students working on their senior projects?

Appendix C

GEAR UP Program Update, July 2006 (attached)

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