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### The Power Of Their Voice: Promoting Equal Respect And Redistributing Power In Hierarchically Differentiated Groups

Karen Sanchez-Griego

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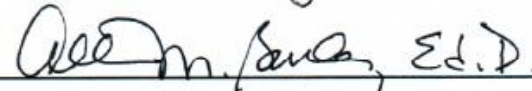
**Educational Leadership and Organizational Learning**

*Department*


This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm:

*Approved by the Dissertation Committee:*

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 Ed.D.

 Ph.D.

 Ph.D.

**THE POWER OF THEIR VOICE:  
PROMOTING EQUAL RESPECT AND REDISTRIBUTING POWER  
IN HIERARCHICALLY DIFFERENTIATED GROUPS**

**KAREN SANCHEZ-GRIEGO**

B.A., Secondary Education, College of Santa Fe, 1988  
M.A., Educational Leadership, The University of New Mexico, 1993

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Education  
Educational Leadership**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**May, 2010**

### **On Behalf of those whom come before us**

This book is written on behalf of my  
Grandfather, Jose Jesus Sanchez, whom I never had the  
opportunity to meet (he died at the age of 42) but who was an  
educator; teacher principal in a one school house in Torreon, New Mexico.

My grandfather strove to get a formal education himself  
and fought for equal rights and considered education the forum in which  
to achieve equality for other Hispanics in New Mexico.

He was passionate about education!

### **Thank You**

To Dr Rebecca Blum-Martinez, who took me on after the loss of my first Chair even though I was not in her department; and who pushed and nurtured me and led me to understand the doctorate, which was that of becoming a “thinker.” I honor her intelligence, her dedication to her craft and to her students, and last but not least, to her community; especially to other Hispanic Women. I could not have finished without her.

To Dr. Steve Preskill, for staying with me even though he moved on to another university, for showing me that servant leadership can come from those who educate you. Steve you are a servant and someone who cares about minority people.

To Dr. Allison Borden, for caring about others (women and minorities, especially) and your commitment to ensuring that leadership in the college of education is taught with pride, honor and excellence. I thank you for allowing me to see the real you (for talking to the janitors at the University of New Mexico as equals to those in the professoriate).

To Dean Richard Howell, for allowing me to share my critical concerns for educational equality and for taking serious the needs of not only all students but those unique needs of Hispanic doctoral students at the University of New Mexico.

Yes, Professors are teachers and you all have proved that!

### **Dedication**

I dedicate my book to my family—my husband Anthony Griego who, since the day I married him 25 years ago, never stopped me in my pursuit to better myself as an educated and liberated Hispanic women; my oldest son, Justin Griego, who spent days, hours and weeks with me as a young mother in classrooms/libraries on the campus of higher education; and my youngest son, Cameron Griego, who was a freshman in high school when I pursued my doctoral endeavors, and who pushed me every day to write and

finish—he would ask me, “Mom, are you working on your dissertation?” Finally, my son, I am finished!

As well, I dedicate this book to my mother and father (Carlos and Isabel Sanchez) both of whom were the kind of parents I wish all my students had. My dads, for having the intelligence, drive and strong work ethic that has become a framework for my resilient personality; I am my father’s daughter. My mother, for her push as a Hispanic women that my sisters and I get educated, have our own money and strive to be something she did not have the opportunity to do. Mom, I wish I could be half the woman you are. To my brother and sisters, Charles, Julie, Tim and Teresa, for your commitment to our parents and our family, and for always supporting my education, I honor you.

To Brenda Chavez, one of the parents involved in the collaborative, she taught me a lot about myself, my culture and about listening to the voices of those who go unheard. For the many hours she spent with me after my university writing sessions to reiterate that telling the story from their perspective was to be honored.

To Dr Alice Warner-Melhorn for the many letters she sent me from Michigan supporting my endeavors and for assuring my efforts to become more and to learn more.

To Dr. Melissa Bruce, for her help and support in the development of my dissertation, the time you spent with me was so appreciated. I am grateful.

To my Colleagues at Atrisco Heritage Academy for allowing me to practice my research of developing a different leadership model, and to the students of Atrisco Heritage Academy High School, you too my students can do this, I believe in you, and I will work hard to ensure that you get the best education we can provide. Take it to the next level my students, generations are watching.

Last but not least, to Dr. Donna Navarrete, who was my colleague at the University of New Mexico when I began my doctoral classes and completed her doctorate several years prior to my own; who loaned me her grandfather’s “cross,” which held strong significance in supporting me to my completion, for the many hours she spent crying with me, preparing me, re-reading my manuscript, pumping me up and never allowing me to get down on this bureaucratic process. I am forever grateful to you, Donna.

**THE POWER OF THEIR VOICE:  
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**BY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Todos Juntos New Mexico was a collaborative made possible through a multi-million dollar grant awarded by the Fellows Foundation to empower the community, students, and educators in New Mexico to affect positive change in our public educational system, leading to increased student success, not just for Hispanics, but for all students. Of particular interest to this study was the organizational structure of Todos Juntos and how successful it was, or was not, during its first years of operation. Many collaboratives are developed with members of the same education level and status who hold similar visions of what they need to accomplish to achieve collaborative goals and objectives. Todos Juntos, on the other hand, navigated uncharted waters by bringing together partners with all levels of education, including those who have historically been silenced by either a lack of formal education or an inability to navigate the complexities of educational institutions. Consider that most organizations operate through a hierarchal

structure, starting at the top position with someone who sets the agenda, runs the meetings and who, most oftentimes, makes the final decisions. Todos Juntos was structured differently, operating as a *flat* organization with a facilitator, hired by members of a leadership team, whose primary responsibility was to ensure a collaborative process that enabled a cohesive, unified and participatory unit. Essentially, *flat* meant that the voices of formally uneducated parents, students and community members would have the same merit as those of other more formally educated and experienced collaborative members, such as a university president and a school superintendent. The purpose of this study was to determine what factors contributed to a change in the Todos Juntos structure from a collaborative, *flat* organization into a hierarchal organization when initially, the collaborative founders and participants were strongly committed to an equalitarian, participatory, non-hierarchical structure. The primary goal of this study was to tell the story of Todos Juntos through its participants' words: as individuals, as members of groups, and from the perspective of learning collaborative as a whole. Research findings indicate that the collaborative that set out to be a flat system, but ultimately failed due to multiple barriers including, but not limited to, the collaborative's funding structure, gender issues, inner racial conflict, and discord among members. The collaborative was also found to be Latino male-dominated. Moreover, a subgroup of parents began to operate in a hierarchical manner against earlier expectations, and, lastly, university students turned out to be the most stable participants in the initiative since they operated internally as a small flat subgroup of their own. The students did not really pay attention to the conflicts within the collaborative, but managed instead to keep their attention on the younger students whom they were mentoring and tutoring.



Many collaborative members wanted the collaborative to be based on a flat organizational structure and moved in that direction on a day-to-day basis. However, they could not sustain their efforts to make the collaborative a flat structure due to fiscal constraints and policies in addition to managerial controls of the university and public school educational systems from which they were operationalized. As such, study results indicate that the collaborative did not succeed in its larger goal of systemic change for educational institutions. However, the results do seem to give credence and support to a need for Latino-based initiatives in the United States. Further discussion of these results will show others in the future how they might identify and thereby avoid barriers to collaborative work that empowers minority groups. At the same time, these future reformers can take to heart the positive lessons from the Todos Juntos project found in the voices of the people themselves.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Challenges in Education in New Mexico.....	1
Resolving Educational Problems Democratically with an Emphasis on Social Justice.....	6
Defining democratic values .....	7
Defining freedom and social justice .....	8
Inadequate Outcomes for Latinos/Hispanos in the Educational Pipeline in New Mexico.....	9
The Fellows Foundation Challenge .....	11
Formation of Todos Juntos to Address Educational Challenges and Social Justice in New Mexico.....	13
Goals and Objectives of the Todos Juntos collaborative .....	14
Organizational System of Todos Juntos collaborative.....	14
Hierarchical versus participatory models of decision making in Todos Juntos .....	15
Benefits of participatory model in working toward social justice .....	16
Todos Juntos Initiatives and Successes.....	17
Purposes of Present Research Study .....	20
Qualitative research methodology .....	22
Primary research questions .....	23
Secondary research questions .....	23
Definition of terms .....	24

<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>27</b>
Introduction.....	27
Types of Leadership in Education .....	28
Hierarchical leadership and education .....	28
Collaborative leadership and education .....	30
Participatory Decision Making and Education .....	32
Consensus in participatory decision making.....	34
Challenges to participatory decision making.....	35
Examples of Community-based Collaboratives.....	37
Rough Rock Demonstration School (RRDS) .....	37
Hispanic Educational Resources (HER) .....	40
CircLES.....	40
Compact for Success.....	42
Parent Roles in Collaborative Education .....	43
Evolution in Attitudes towards Leadership in Education .....	44
New Models for Collaborative Leaders .....	46
Transformational Leadership .....	46
Servant Leadership.....	47
Leaderful Leadership .....	48
Moral Leadership .....	49
Conclusion .....	50
<b>CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODS .....</b>	<b>52</b>
Introduction.....	52

Characteristics of Qualitative Research: .....	52
The Qualitative Interview .....	54
Context and Framework of Present Study .....	55
Participants.....	55
Role and background of researcher.....	55
Research Study Participants.....	66
Data Collection .....	68
Document review .....	69
Participant observations .....	70
Questionnaire .....	70
In-Depth interviews and questionnaires.....	70
Parent and student focus groups interviews.....	71
Research journal.....	72
Ethical concerns in data collection .....	72
Data Analysis .....	72
Data preparation.....	73
Coding data .....	73
Indexing data.....	73
Sorting data .....	74
Retrieving data .....	74
Data reduction .....	74
Data display .....	74
Verification Issues in Qualitative Studies.....	75

Indices of Subjective Adequacy.....	76
Confirmability.....	78
Dependability.....	78
Credibility .....	79
Transferability.....	79
Conclusion .....	79
<b>CHAPTER 4 BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>81</b>
Introduction.....	81
Personal Background .....	81
Fellows Foundation Grant Application Process (1997-1999) .....	82
Fellows Foundation Grant Award (1999) .....	82
Fellows Foundation Grant Initial Phase I (1999-2000) .....	83
Fellows Foundation Grant Implementation .....	84
Leadership and Grant Management .....	87
Other Issues.....	93
Conclusion .....	97
<b>CHAPTER 5 RESULTS.....</b>	<b>98</b>
Introduction.....	98
Description of Ideal Flat Collaborative Organization.....	98
Research Questions .....	99
Primary research questions .....	100
Secondary research questions .....	100
Participants' Voices .....	101

Participants' Perceptions of How Todos Juntos Collaborative Was Organized.	102
Changes in the Organizational Structure of Todos Juntos from 2000 to 2005 ...	103
University's management structure .....	103
Difficulties transforming from hierarchical to flat structure.....	107
Decision-Making in Todos Juntos Student and Family Centers Subgroups .....	124
Participants' Desire to Be Heard within the Todos Juntos Structure.....	125
Existing power structure .....	125
Dependency on university's fiscal management.....	126
Participants' vested interest .....	126
Evolving Role of Facilitators, Leaders, and Leadership in Todos Juntos Over	
Time .....	128
Unknowing push to maintain hierarchical structure .....	128
Lack of direction for how to create and operate as a flat structure.....	131
Difficulties and Successes in Maintaining a Non-Hierarchical System .....	133
Discord among collaborative members .....	134
University students' success in overlooking issues of discord .....	143
Role of Leader/Leadership in Todos Juntos over Time.....	147
Conclusion .....	149
<b>CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>152</b>
Introduction.....	152
Major Strengths of Todos Juntos .....	153
Importance of voices .....	153
Success of the University Student Component to Todos Juntos.....	157

Purpose and Findings .....	159
Success or Failure of Todos Juntos.....	162
Belief in traditional leadership.....	164
Constraints .....	167
Evolution of the parent group toward a hierarchy .....	169
Personal Growth.....	174
Implications of the Study .....	176
Implications for Future Research.....	177
Reflection.....	179
<b>APPENDIX A QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH) .....</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>APPENDIX B QUESTIONNAIRE (SPANISH) .....</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>APPENDIX C CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>APPENDIX E TODOS JUNTOS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (STATEWIDE)</b> <b>.....</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>APPENDIX F TODOS JUNTOS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (LOCAL).....</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>208</b>

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

**“The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life.” ~Plato**

#### **Challenges in Education in New Mexico**

The American dream is a powerful concept. It encourages us all to achieve to our fullest potential. Our society believes that our public schools give us the foundation to fulfill this American dream (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003). As a nation, we view education as the great equalizer (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003), but many people would not agree that we are truly equal. Indeed, a review of statistics reveals that social injustice and inequality are rampant in minority populations and in low socioeconomic communities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000). This inequality affects children and their ability to succeed in school in the United States and, specifically, in New Mexico, a land that is a vibrant, multi-cultural state with a diverse heritage enriched by Hispanic, African American, Native American and Anglo influences.

Public education institutions in New Mexico serve approximately 325,700 students from pre-kindergarten to graduate school (P-20). Yet, current statistics do not paint a bright picture of success for New Mexico children: in 2008, 58.3% of students lived in poverty; 78% lacked health insurance; many of the K-12 population did not graduate from high school; and while approximately 42% of high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary education, just 39% of them graduated with a baccalaureate degree (New Mexico Public Education, website, 2008). This P-20 student population reflects the diverse make-up of our state, with students living and learning in a multi-cultural, multi-dimensional environment. However, many New Mexico students suffer from the same educational crises as other



students across the nation. In 2007-08, New Mexico was ranked 46<sup>th</sup> in the nation when it comes to education (PED graduation report 2007-08).

Many current and past students in New Mexico become disenchanted with the school system and drop out, relinquishing the opportunity to enter college or professional school, much less graduate from an institution of higher education (New Mexico Public Education, website, 2009). The four year co-hort graduation rates in 2008 showed that only 60.3% of the New Mexico student population graduated from high school in four years (PED graduation report 2008). Across the state the graduation rates across ethnic lines is as follows: Caucasian 71.3%, Hispanic 56.2%, Native American 49.8, African American 60.9 and Asian 80.1 (PED graduation report 2008). In 2008, the New Mexico Public Education Department reported that 59.3% of the K-12 school-going population was Latino/Hispanic with a 47.2% dropout rate (NM Commission on Higher Education, 2008). In 2008, Hispanic students had the highest dropout rate in the ninth through twelfth grades, at 14.5% (NCES, 2008). Since the Hispanic student population in New Mexico is sizeable, how these students fare in school has a large impact on how New Mexico schools are rated overall. Since New Mexico has such a diverse population, it is imperative that educators investigate the best means of reaching these students and helping them succeed.

National educational statistical information reveals that background characteristics do affect dropout rates. Specifically, the data show that, in 2000, 44.2% of Hispanic young adults born outside of the United States were high school dropouts (NCES, 2008). Hispanic young adults born in the United States were much less likely to be dropouts. However, among all young adults born in the United States, Hispanic youths were still more likely to be dropouts than other young adults (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008).

High dropout rates point to a failure of the public schools to meet the needs of all students. When certain groups, such as Hispanics, have consistently higher dropout rates, this has implications for issues of social justice as part of education reform efforts. Dropout rates can be seen as an indicator of inequality in education (Chavez, 1992). The implicit message is that under-educating certain social groups can perpetuate race and class separation in terms of decision-making power and initiative. Consequently, the lack of importance given by educational institutions to educating these students may have implications for encouraging full community participation in school reform (Romo & Falbo, 2000).

For Latino college students attending two- and four-year institutions in New Mexico, the statistics are far worse. Although universities around New Mexico take credit for an increase in college attendance of the Hispano/Latino population, there continues to be a 50% dropout rate (NM Commission on Higher Education, 2008). Many students are able to attend postsecondary institutions due to the New Mexico lottery program. However, as stated previously, this does not mean that all students complete a Bachelor's degree. This lack of follow-through is an economic disservice to the Latino/Hispano community and to the people of New Mexico.

In 2000, despite increases in the Latino population, the educational attainment and advancement of Latinos was lagging seriously behind other groups (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000). Federal mandates, set forth in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, along with the re-authorization of the *Higher Educational Act*, give new urgency to addressing shrinking budgets and increasing demands for accountability and the challenges schools face to do more with less. Across our nation, schools and communities have been

examining their practices and resources to discover what they can do differently so that every student P-20 receives a quality education

Latino/a writers have theorized about the existence or non-existence of racism, whether institutional racism is intentional or not, and whether organizational structures or modes of thought perpetuate and contribute to the inequalities experienced by many groups in education and society. According to Chavez (1992), most Latino/Hispano communities are painted with a similar brush: they are perceived by federal funding agencies as communities that can generate federal dollars, but also require additional attention, based on perceived educational and financial deficiencies. These agencies view indicators such as language and culture, as well as poverty (Federal Educational Awards, 2003), as negative factors in calculating funding to be granted to educational institutions. This can give the sense that having a second language, being a member of an ethnic group, or being poor are inherently negative traits. In reality, being fluent in two languages and knowing and understanding a second culture are assets (Chavez, 1992). Rather than simply labeling the poor as being deficient, it is more helpful to recognize the complexity of the economic situation that some families face.

Viewing members of minority groups as deficient can widen the educational divide between Latinos and non-Latinos in the United States and New Mexico. Viewing the world in black-and-white terms is a particular difficulty of Western thought, and has implications for how hierarchically differentiated groups are treated in the West. As Belenky, Bond, and Weinstick (1982) describe, the mindset that pits “us” against “other” divides a wide range of human and cultural experiences into dichotomies and polarities such as “Culture versus Nature,” “Thinking versus Feeling” and “Nature versus Nurture,” which are among the most

divisive opposites in Western thought. When people choose one end of polarity and avoid the other, they diminish their thinking. For instance, when “thinking and feeling” are treated as mutually exclusive and opposing capacities, we are encouraged to develop one and to deny the other. Those who cultivate their capacities for feeling but not thinking are likely to remain subordinated to cultural and societal labels they cannot to attempt control. It is not by chance that those in power all too often attribute the ability for thinking to men and whites and the capacity for emotions to women and minorities (Belenky, Bond, and Weinstick p. 19, 1982).

It may be that undereducating and undervaluing the growing Hispanic population in the United States—or any other population for that matter—will lead to greater economic and social ills. Thus, it is important for educators and school reformers to adopt strategies to better reach all populations, regardless of the traditional hierarchical status of current majority/minority populations. American public education is by nature inclusive, and schools are a part of community. It is necessary to consider how we can remain true to this mandate to engage all students and to increase student success across all demographics. Sensitivity to issues of social justice may provide insight into ways to proceed.

In 2000, due to the dismal state of education in New Mexico, an ever increasing population of Latino students, and the failure of New Mexico educational institutions to face the new reality that New Mexico is now a minority majority state, it became clear to education leaders in New Mexico that education in the state was not meeting the changing needs of New Mexico students, in particular Latino students (Garcia, 2002). In response to this situation, an educational collaborative, Todos Juntos, the subject of the present research study, was formed.

## **Resolving Educational Problems Democratically with an Emphasis on Social Justice**

The present research study examines the attempts of a successful Latino collaborative initiative, Todos Juntos<sup>1</sup>, of which the researcher was a direct participant from 1999 to 2007, to empower marginalized communities through education and participation, and the potential advantages and challenges to a more inclusive approach to educational reform. The collaborative initiative attempted to bridge social and economic gaps by including Hispanic members from differing backgrounds in the reform process while stressing an egalitarian approach to decision-making.

In undertaking the present study, I carefully observed and analyzed this organization--its evolving structure, accomplishments, and challenges—in order to provide insights into the reform process. The present study not only looks into the subjective views of the collaborative members, but also investigates a broader context of the potential positive role of increased social support and democratic community input for our schools. Qualitative studies such as this one give voice to diverse cultural and economic viewpoints while at the same time informing the larger question of how to improve education. Through this study, I hoped that close observation of changing leadership roles, egalitarian and hierarchical governing structures, and role of community as a critical partner in education will ultimately lead to more creative and effective ways to increase student success in school. It is also hoped that this study will address the benefits and efficacy of utilizing a more egalitarian, participatory philosophy, as well as egalitarian, participatory organizational structures and leadership, in educational systems in order to meet the challenges that face Latino communities. Finally, it is hoped that the findings of this study will help improve

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<sup>1</sup> Author's Note: "Todos Juntos" is a pseudonym for an actual educational collaborative and used to preserve the privacy of interviewees in this paper.

educational systems and actions for social justice, and benefit future collaborations between K-16 educational institutions and Latino communities.

### ***Defining democratic values***

We live in a society that is theoretically democratic; however, democracy is not always the reality. Certain groups hold undue influence and use this influence to their advantage. Educators are in an exceptional position to be able to change the balance of power in educating Latino communities by utilizing democratic teaching techniques such as within educational institutions to teach youth how to embrace their power, participate in democratic decision-making processes, and use these abilities in equalizing the powerbase in our communities and in our country (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003).

In theory, citizens of a democracy control the government equally and collectively. Unfortunately, there are many instances that demonstrate the opposite. For example, in the context of this research study, decisions were often made that did not take into account the best interests of disadvantaged children such as their families' situations. Sometimes, this was due to the lack of influence that these children's parents and/or communities had on governmental issues. This lack of influence may occur, in part, because these citizens may not be confident in their abilities as leaders and thinkers. They may allow decisions to be made for them rather than become involved in the process (Gelardi & Wolfson, 1995). Until society addresses these issues, decisions will continue to be made without the input of all citizens. As Shannon (1993) states, "We need to create the conditions under which we can develop democratic voices at all levels of schooling so that together we can engage in an active public life" (p. 90).

### *Defining freedom and social justice*

The specific challenges that face Hispanic students in New Mexico and elsewhere can be seen as part of larger social issues such as freedom and oppression. As Roberts (2001) writes, Paulo Freire described the roles that freedom and social justice play in oppressive social relations, stating that freedom and becoming more human are essential in order to do the work that social justice entails. It is not clear whether or not people who often speak about social justice truly grasp these concepts as described by Freire, who considered it important to transform conditions of oppression while balancing freedom with the authority to make the process of liberation possible. So, freedom is not merely a mode of knowing, but a form of social practice. According to Roberts (2001), we can, in Freirean terms, speak of both a freedom to act and freedom from oppressive structures, practices, and modes of thought. The aim in creating more open and participatory systems is to work towards freedom at its fullest. Freedom to act and to pursue interests and wants only becomes a genuine freedom when such conditions exist for all citizens. Humanization, from Freire's point of view, is not a matter of neutralizing the world but of equalizing and becoming integrated with it (Roberts, 2001).

Freire helps social justice leaders think about why and how they address issues of democracy and fairness. Freire allows reformers to think of concepts that are otherwise difficult to understand by allowing individuals to see these concepts in terms of their own humanity, which helps these leaders ponder the relationship between freedom and justice (Joldersman, 2001). Freire's view supports the sense that the issues that these communities face can be overcome by the way in which reformers and educators train and/or develop

leaders, and helps to support the concept that people who are in charge of their own destiny are better able to gain the freedoms and rights they aspire to have.

Specifically, Freire speaks about the life of the poor and what he describes as the “culture of silence,” a characteristic of the situation of the poor. According to Aronowitz (2000), Freire came to realize that the so-called ignorance and lethargy of people who lived in poverty were the direct product of a complex situation of economic, social, and political domination - and paternalism - of which the poor were victims. Rather than being encouraged and equipped to know and respond to the concrete realities in their world of poverty, “the poor were kept ‘submerged’ in a situation in which such critical awareness and response were practically impossible” (Aronowitz, 2000, p. 31). In a sense, many top-down bureaucratic systems not only fail to listen to the disenfranchised poor, but they also keep them from knowledge and power by reinforcing the limits of their worldview. These known hierarchical arrangements come from a long history of dominance and control and are entrenched (Aronowitz, 2000). Collaborative, inclusive approaches to systems management and leadership may form a potential solution to the disconnect between impoverished communities and bureaucratic systems found in some hierarchical arrangements (Aronowitz, 2000).

### ***Inadequate Outcomes for Latinos/Hispanos in the Educational Pipeline in New Mexico***

In New Mexico, the disconnect between impoverished communities and bureaucratic systems can be seen in the inadequacies that exist in the educational pipeline for Latino/Hispanos, including the failure to successfully move these students through a pipeline of high schools, colleges and universities. An educational pipeline is a productive integrated system of high schools, colleges and universities within a state. For many years, New Mexico



state educators have discussed how to strengthen the educational pipeline, but have not embraced the systemic changes necessary to truly benefit Hispanic New Mexicans. As noted earlier, the dropout rate in New Mexico for Latino/Hispanos in P-20 is high. When this fact is viewed as a symptom of a larger social issue, it becomes clear that reforms proposed thus far do not do enough to reach, include, and empower disenfranchised Latino/Hispano communities in New Mexico.

In the United States, pipeline projects have included initiatives such as articulation (linking levels of education: elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, high school to college), college site visits, and other attempts at integration for disadvantaged communities, but have barely touched the surface of what is possible by integrating the educational system with the community. All in all, there have not been the kinds of systemic changes needed -- large, bold, and broad -- that respond to the voices of Hispanic communities. This is why many community leaders now devote themselves to drawing out the voices of the silenced and making communities more nurturing places in which to live.

The right to access high quality education and opportunities for lifelong learning is universal. Education is more than a top priority; it poses a fundamental opportunity for students and their performance in all areas of life. Education for all is the key to a vital economy and a prosperous future for our children (Locke, 2004). As Nelson Mandela (1982) said, "A nation should be judged not by how it treats its highest citizens, but how it treats its lowest ones" (p.4).

One way in which to address this social issue is to tie educational reforms to participatory leadership models rather than relying on preexisting hierarchical leadership models.

### ***The Fellows Foundation Challenge***

New Mexico leaders' awareness of the difficulties in educational achievement for Latino/Hispanics in New Mexico corresponded to a wake-up call in 1999 from the Fellows Foundation<sup>2</sup>, a well-known national foundation located in the Midwest. The Fellows Foundation, devoted to increasing community capacities to solve their own problems, placed a call for action to United States institutions of higher education to look at the concerns of higher education for Latino students. The Foundation asked institutions of higher education to examine K-16 pipeline initiatives, including K-12 educational institutions, businesses, non-profit agencies, students, and grassroots communities, to see how they could develop a fully inclusive collaborative (Fellows Foundation proposal notes, 1998). This request for action asked that Latino/Hispanos develop programmatic, systemic, and policy-driven changes in the K-16, and now PreK-20, educational systems. In particular, the Foundation wanted to know what kinds of increases in academic achievement might occur through the increased involvement of more family and community support systems, and how collaborative approaches might counter problems of participation for groups that do not feel welcome in schools in New Mexico.

Since its inception in 1930, the Fellows Foundation mission, according to its web site, has been: "To help people help themselves through the practical application of knowledge and resources to improve their quality of life and that of future generations." The Fellows Foundation is very specific about the help it provides. Building neighborhood capacity means encouraging, stimulating and developing the power of neighbors to reach out to each other, to make a plan of action, and to take charge of their future. The Fellows Foundation

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<sup>2</sup> Author's Note: "Fellows Foundation" is a pseudonym for an actual national foundation and used to preserve the privacy of interviewees in this paper.

stipulations supported the belief of Latinos/Hispanics regarding collaboratives. In other words, the Hispanic culture and the Foundation seemed to be rooted in the same belief in social justice, that people themselves need to form partnerships and that every voice must be heard.

The Fellows Foundation decided that institutions given financial support to create programs to serve Latino youth would have to demonstrate they had adopted a structure that was all-inclusive, that is, that each person who was sitting at the table in the decision-making process at any level would carry equal weight (i.e. the president of a university would have the same weight as a parent or student who was a member of the collaboration). The Foundation's funding guidelines required full participation from all segments of the Latino community, including parents, students, business partners, non-profits, P-12 schools, and other community groups.

To respond to this call for action, the New Mexico Latino-Hispano community had to consider the following questions. First, was it possible to create a bridge across the educational divide? Second, was there a way to effectively and culturally develop the kind of P-20, or "womb to the tomb" (Romo & Falbo, 2000), educational reform that truly reflects the needs of New Mexico Hispanics? The challenge issued by the Fellows Foundation provided the logic for the establishment of a New Mexico collaborative dedicated to improving education for Hispanic students while at the same time preserving an egalitarian structure for the input of its members; this collaborative came to be known as Todos Juntos.

## **Formation of Todos Juntos to Address Educational Challenges and Social Justice in New Mexico**

The task before Todos Juntos, which means “all together,” was to address New Mexico’s shortcomings in terms of educating Latino/Hispanos while incorporating community-based initiatives supported by the Fellows Foundation challenge. Todos Juntos was conceived as a collaborative project that could have long-range implications for community and economic development. Todos Juntos continues today, holding fast to its dream of working towards true democracy for all citizens, embedded within our educational institutions and practice, and in particular for Hispanics. Todos Juntos seeks to help educators in New Mexico appreciate the assets of Latino/Hispano minority and poor white communities and their contributions to the culture and economic base of this country. The collaborative is dedicated to bringing a strong voice to the culture of silence by integrating its community-based practices with the educational pipeline.

A preliminary group of 52 Latinos joined together to respond to the Fellows challenge in a way that respected and included Hispanic voices from many backgrounds. Facilitated by staff at the University of Galisteo<sup>3</sup>, the collaborative engaged a full range of community partners in working towards improving students’ academic performance. The group met for a full year before submitting a proposal that was eventually funded by a grant from the Fellows Foundation. In many ways, Todos Juntos can be seen as a convergence of Hispanic community values, recognition of the educational challenges facing disenfranchised students, and funding opportunities offered by the Fellows Foundation to establish team-building partnerships as part of educational reform.

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<sup>3</sup> Author’s Note: “University of Galisteo” is a pseudonym for an actual institution used to preserve the privacy of interviewees in this paper.

### **Goals and Objectives of the Todos Juntos collaborative**

An inclusive goal statement of Todos Juntos New Mexico is found in the Institute for Social Research's summary of Todos Juntos New Mexico, 2001:

“The over-arching goal is to empower the community, students, and educators in New Mexico to affect positive change in our public educational system, leading to increased student success, not just for Hispanics, but for all students.”

Documentation shows that the objectives of Todos Juntos include:

- Bringing together disparate groups for a common cause to create common ground
- Creating a “flat” structure from a hierarchy in education
- Program activities (Santiago, 2007).

### **Organizational System of Todos Juntos collaborative**

Of particular interest to this study is the organizational structure of the Todos Juntos collaborative and how successful it was or was not during its first years. Many collaboratives are developed with members of the same education level, same status, and a similar vision of where they need to go. Todos Juntos, on the other hand, navigated uncharted waters by bringing together partners from all levels of education, including those who had been silenced by either a lack of formal education or an inability to navigate the complexities of educational institutions. There was a sense that the collaborative wanted to stand with these people in their struggles rather than simply tell them how they needed to change their lives. This approach, rooted in principles of social justice, was intended to bring a sense of newness and self-worth to people whose experience with schools may not have been positive in the past. Collaborative members believed it was essential for all participants to have their voices honored, heard, and for participants to have an understanding that sharing their thoughts and

words would help create a strong bond of trust within the educational system. For Todos Juntos, this meant stepping out of the usual framework of hierarchical leadership (operating from the top down) and turning to new models of participatory decision making.

### ***Hierarchical versus participatory models of decision making in Todos Juntos***

The structure of the Todos Juntos collaborative will be examined in greater detail in chapter four. To fully understand its challenges and successes, however, differences between hierarchical and participatory models of decision-making must be defined. Hierarchical organizations operate through a tiered system where someone is the boss, sets the agenda, runs the meeting, and perhaps even makes the final decisions. Todos Juntos was structured differently as a “flat run” organization. A leader was not appointed or elected, but rather members of a leadership team hired a facilitator of the collaborative process. The facilitator’s primary job was to ensure that the group remained a cohesive, unified and participatory unit. “Flat” meant that the voices of formally uneducated parents, students, and others, would have the same merit as those of a president of a university or a school superintendent.

In brief, Todos Juntos was designed to put social justice theory into practice. The concept was that of developing an egalitarian approach, of advocating for and embodying the belief that all people should have equal political, educational, social and economic rights. Many in the Fellows Foundation were avid believers in this concept, which influenced decisions about how to run Todos Juntos. Not much was known about how “participatory decision making” (as flat systems were called in the early 1970’s) would work in educational initiatives that typically had been hierarchical in structure in the past. At issue was the complexity of existing systems of hierarchy in our society and built-in inequities that may or

may not be fully visible but that still may influence operations of groups. Designers of Todos Juntos deliberately sought to design and implement a participatory model for the collaborative, which, in turn, would have implications for social justice in action. How well and for how long this participatory focus worked is an important aspect of the present study.

***Benefits of participatory model in working toward social justice***

Social justice is a value concept that focuses on the relationship among human groups. It is a measure for assessing how power, wealth, and resources in a society are distributed and used. In a just society, power and wealth are used for the benefit of all groups; they are not used by any particular group to control other groups (Flynn, 1995). Thus, social justice is a value concept that stands in opposition to the violence on quality of life inflicted by unjust and inequitable social structures, including some hierarchies. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and subsequent extensions of this document (e.g., the Convention to Eliminate Racial Discrimination 1965; the Covenant on Social and Political Rights 1966; the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966; the Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination against Women; 1979; and the Rights of the Child, 1989) provide a blueprint for achieving a just society. Underlying the Declaration was the belief that a society's progress toward this goal could be measured by the extent to which its members were ensured equitable access to what these human rights allowed. When social justice failed to inform social institutions and dictate social norms, when social conditions and practices condoned social injustice, the context was set for conflict that might lead to physical violence between groups and individuals.

For Todos Juntos, the proposed organizational goal moved away from hierarchical leadership structures toward participatory decision making, or a flat organizational structure

that would better support the spirit of social justice. Flat structure is conceived as a value concept with a twofold emphasis. On the one hand, it measures the extent to which the right of individuals and groups to be consulted in matters that will affect their lives is honored and on the other hand, the extent to which members engage in social action that promotes the common good locally, nationally, and globally. In a society that values participation, authentic opportunities are provided and structures devised to seek the input of concerned stakeholders in matters pertaining to the social good. Moreover, this input is taken into account in the final decision making. At the same time, participatory decision-making is reflected in citizens' engagement in these opportunities and in the initiatives they take to organize social action to protest violent, unjust, ecologically unsustainable practices (Flynn, 1995). Flat structure is a value concept that motivates the development of policies and practices that are nonviolent and socially just for the present and future generations of the community, to achieve the society envisioned by these value goals (Van Soest, 1995). Therefore, it stands in a means-end relationship to nonviolence, social justice, and intergenerational equity.

The decision to adopt an egalitarian flat structure contributed to Todos Juntos's considerable achievements for many years. A review of these successes illustrates the potential of a collaborative based on concepts of social justice, inclusion, and giving a voice to all.

### **Todos Juntos Initiatives and Successes**

Since 2006, through many initiatives and projects, Todos Juntos has served approximately 91,000 thousand students and families in a well-defined, concerted effort to help close the achievement gap in New Mexico (Santiago, 2007). It has done this, in large



part, by joining forces with parents and communities to restructure the educational processes that affect all New Mexicans. In addition, The New Mexico Public Education (PED) and the Higher Education Department (HED) helped support and legitimize the work in which the Todos Juntos collaborative was engaged. Support from these institutions in the form of recognition and replication of the development of a “different” type of educational collaboration helped Todos Juntos become a stable and effective collaborative effort. As part of this effort, the Todos Juntos statewide office was asked on several occasions to address the state legislative and financial study groups about their work. The collaborative was honored by several national organizations as a best practice model of P-20 pipeline graduation and retention of Latino students as well as a model of collaborative development.

Since July 2000, when the Fellows Foundation grant was awarded, Todos Juntos projects have included mentoring, educational access, college course initiatives, P-20 linkages, dropout and truancy prevention, family/community centers, and curriculum development. Todos Juntos has also continued to engage in policy work with national organizations, including the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, the National Council of State Legislators, and the White House Initiative on Hispanic Affairs. It garnered accolades as a finalist for Excelencia and gained the attention of the U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, who asked Todos Juntos to provide input on the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act (February 2007) in the Washington, D.C., Office of the U.S. Secretary of Education. These national groups were particularly interested in how community played an integral part of the educational success of students and how to replicate the Todos Juntos model.

The funding picture also indicates growth and success. Todo Juntos was first established as a statewide collaborative in only three regions of New Mexico (southern, northern and central) with \$4.2 million funding for four years. By 2007, it had developed into a larger statewide collaborative including the five regions of New Mexico: Central, Northeastern, Northwestern, Southern, and Eastern. Currently, the collaboration's work is funded by a multitude of sources including: the New Mexico State Legislature - \$712,000; the Lumina Foundation - \$75,000; the Daniels Foundation - \$30,000; local and statewide businesses; as well as some operational funds from local school boards and superintendents. As of June 2006, funding had accumulated to over \$2 million per year (Santiago, 2007).

Todos Juntos became a strong force seeking to institutionalize culturally rooted best practices in classrooms across New Mexico. However, as the collaborative increased in size and recognition, it seemed to develop a more formalized management structure (Santiago, 2007). There was a push from management at the University of Galisteo and from other sectors such as non-profit organizations, the business community, K-12 educators, parents, and students, to include more formal operational rules of engagement for the collaborative. The collaborative fought against this shift, citing the importance of a "flat run" collaborative. Some of the "top down" push also seemed to come from top administrators providing "you should do directives" for the management of Todos Juntos. It is unclear without further study to what extent these pressures and questions of leadership changed or did not change the character of the collaborative over time. The complex history, organizational dynamics, leadership styles, participatory management, and group politics of Todos Juntos highlight some of the difficulties social reformers face and, as such, are worthy of study to aid future endeavors.

### **Purposes of Present Research Study**

The purposes of the present research study are multiple: first, to determine whether or not Todos Juntos' goal of becoming a participatory collaborative (flat) organization was indeed maintained throughout; second, whether or not the collaborative was able to meet its related goals for social justice; third, to understand the dynamics of this collaborative well enough to be able to enter into the discussion of how to best reform our schools to include potentially disenfranchised students and also to improve the success of all students; and fourth, to determine what factors may have contributed to the change in the leadership structure of this collaborative organization to a hierarchal structure when the founders and participants had initially been deeply committed to an egalitarian, participatory, non-hierarchical structure.

Many educational institutions have a tendency to emphasize and perpetuate hierarchical systems (McLaughlin, 2005), while Todos Juntos had a commitment from the beginning to reject hierarchical, top-down practices and to create a collaborative that would operate as a democratic, inclusive, "flat" organizational system (Todos Juntos Collaboration Notes, 2000). All members of the original collaborative greeted this mandate from the Fellows Foundation with enthusiasm and were confident that such a system could be created and sustained over time. Nevertheless, after a five-year effort, some members of the collaborative believed that in spite of actual progress, this may not have been realized, and the flat system may not have survived intact. Notes and meeting minutes (2000-2004) suggest that one of the greatest struggles of the collaborative was in working with parents and other community members who were not accustomed to having power and, therefore, also lacked experience in learning how to share authority. This study attempts to grapple not

only with the question of how to create a more flat and democratic system but also with how to maintain that system over time, given that the participants in Todos Juntos were originally committed to a collaborative participatory style of working, and yet the collaborative became a more hierarchical organization over time.

In educational circles from universities to P-12 institutions, educators teach, preach, and believe that collaborative, participatory decision making is of the utmost importance. However, it is not always clear how leaders understand what that means and how we can get organizations to do this. Leaders must seek to know how people can create and sustain a structure or organization that is governed by flat, democratic, participatory practices within the constraints of a larger hierarchical system. As Senge (1990) writes,

To grow a structure in a limited amount of time it is useful to understand all situations where growth (of people) bumps up against time limits. For example organizations grow for a while, but then stop growing. Working groups get better for a while, but stop getting better, individuals improve themselves for a period of time then plateau (p. 96).

Senge (1990), states that many well-intentioned efforts for improvements bump up against limits for growth. Thus, it is imperative to clarify how leaders impact such changes and the extent to which education, social class, and culture of the participants influence how effective and sustainable such changes occur.

The discussions and development surrounding the collaborative process of Todos Juntos may be informative to other groups seeking change, especially for minority organizations. The present study is significant in that the findings can potentially offer a new paradigm for furthering educational leadership in K-12 schools, colleges and university

campuses beyond current leadership initiatives dealing with communities of color and poverty. In other words, identification and examination of the components in the Todos Juntos environment inherent to the project itself could essentially be used to contribute to greater cultural diversity when developing collaborations beyond current initiatives.

### ***Qualitative research methodology***

During the study, the researcher, whose duties included helping to keep the Todos Juntos collaborative moving in a manner that was open and participatory, served as a participant-observer in the collaborative. She brought members of the collaborative team to meetings that she attended and she did not go ahead with final decisions until the issues were brought back to the group as a whole. To simplify the complexity of the research, the researcher focused on the interactions among members in two particular subcommittees (of an approximate total of fifteen subcommittees) within Todos Juntos, examining in particular how their interactional structures changed over time and what may have caused one of the subgroups to move toward a hierarchical leadership structure. The researcher paid specific attention to the voices and views of several individuals selected for in-depth interviews, capturing the complexities of their experiences within the Todos Juntos project. Core ideas uncovered during the researcher's role as a participant-observer and through interviews were then explored in two focus groups. Throughout the study, the researcher kept a journal of observations, thoughts, and reflections on the data collection process (see Chapter 3 for further discussion). The researchers's intention was to extract data from participants' words as individuals, as group members, and from the point of view of the learning collaborative as a whole. Certain primary research questions were examined in order to understand behaviors and actions that either enabled or inhibited functioning of the collaborative.

### ***Primary research questions***

The research that framed the present research study was focused on the organizational system of Todos Juntos in terms of flat and hierarchical structure. Primary research questions addressed participant reactions to the system, their beliefs and understandings of any changes that may have occurred, and their perceptions of leadership roles within the collaborative. The following research questions emerged:

1. According to the participants, how was the Todos Juntos collaborative organized?
2. Were there any changes to the organizational structure of Todos Juntos during the period from 2000 to 2005?

### ***Secondary research questions***

Institutions tend to be hierarchical by design, yet the Todos Juntos collaborative based its structure on a participatory decision-making collaborative model. However, in its fifth year, it appeared that programs within the collaborative were beginning to revert to the hierarchical systems model that stakeholders initially had rejected. These preliminary findings led to secondary research questions:

1. How did the subgroups (Galisteo students & Todos Juntos Family Centers) make decisions?
2. What did the participants do to make sure they were heard?
3. What was the evolving role of facilitators, leaders and/or leadership in the collaborative over time?
4. What difficulties did the subgroups within Todos Juntos have in maintaining the non-hierarchical system of organization?
5. What was the role of the leader/leadership in the collaborative over time?

### ***Definition of terms***

In the United States, there are various names for individuals who are members of the Latino/Hispanic ethnic group. In various geographic areas and political arenas, this ethnic group carries different labels. For example, in some areas of the country the word Latino is used, while in other geographical areas Mexican, Hispanic, or Chicano are used. The key terms listed below will help to clarify analysis and discussion of the research findings.

- “Hispanic” refers to a generic term to refer to people who are or at one time were Spanish speaking.
- “Latino” refers to a more inclusive term to refer to people who are or at one time were Spanish speaking and is a more recent and acceptable term.
- “Mexican” refers to the people, language, and culture of Mexico.
- “Gente” refers to people as a group in general.
- “Respeto” refers to the concept of respect.
- “Carino” refers to the concept of caring.
- “Chicano” refers to an ethnic group in the 1960s; this was also an acknowledgment of their native roots.
- “Familia” means family.
- “Hierarchical” refers to systems that are organized in the shape of a pyramid, with power concentrated at the top of the pyramid and decreasing in even increments as one descends through multiple levels to the base. Hierarchical systems pervade everyday life. The army, for example, which has generals at the top of the pyramid and privates at the bottom, is a hierarchical system.

- “Flat system” refers to an egalitarian system focused on participatory decision making, has leaders as facilitators, and emphasizes an atmosphere where all voices are heard.
- “Servant leaders” refers to those who learn to serve as instruments to help and support others, to serve.
- “Transformational leaders” view leadership as a process, not a person, and the concept of leadership is relational. It involves someone who exerts influence, and those who are influenced. However influence can flow both ways. Influence involves persuasion. It is not the same as power, which leaves little choice, but instead the real power of a leader lies in his or her ability to influence followers without resorting to threats. This is one basis for distinguishing true leadership from the most basic level of supervision (Burns)
- “Mexicano” refers to a native or inhabitant of Mexico.
- “Nuevomexicano” is defined by Benjamin (1996) as “a term used to refer to those of Spanish-speaking descent who have lived continuously in New Mexico for several centuries and who, while sharing some cultural characteristics with those from Mexico, identify primarily with their patria chica, Nuevo Mexico.”
- “Primary investigator” refers to a person on a university campus who is fiscally responsible for a pot of monies.
- “Leadership team member at large” refers to a member of the Todos Juntos community team; specifically members who were not voted in but were brought in based on their participation in the meetings.



- “Executive leadership team members” refers to members voted in by the larger leadership and who represent each needed member group (one parent, one university student, one business member, one non-profit member, one K-12 educator, one member of the Higher education institution, one vice president and one primary investigator).
- “Chicanismo” refers to the ideological construct of the Chicano movement, which was a movement that engaged the political, labor and educational issues to challenge the assumptions, ideology and traditional principles of the established and dominate order, all while emphasizing dignity, self worth, pride and ethnic consciousness in Latino communities.

These terms will be discussed more fully as part of a review of the literature, which is designed to identify organizational and structural issues, including participatory decision making that can influence social and educational reform, factors that also will help illuminate processes and conditions of operation within the Todos Juntos collaborative.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter 1 discussed a new, more inclusive approach to education reform as seen in the formation of the Todos Juntos collaborative, which was charged with the goal of improving education for Hispanic students in New Mexico. From its outset, the collaborative was committed to a flat, egalitarian, and democratic organizational structure rather than a more traditional hierarchical structure (Todos Juntos notes, leadership team meetings, 1999 to 2005). Todos Juntos was conceived as an inclusive, community-based decision-making group that gave equal voice to all members based on requirements of the Fellows Foundation that supported its mission (notes leadership team meetings, 1999 to 2005). Todos Juntos members selected the collaborative approach as the best organizational structure for achieving its goals of social justice and academic success for Hispanic students in the P-20 pipeline. One aim of the Todos Juntos collaborative was to meet students' need for a variety of social supports through the participation by family and community in the collaborative, for this reason members selected to use a participatory, non-hierarchical method of organization. Nevertheless, after five some years of operation, it was not clear if the collaborative had achieved this goal. It appeared that hierarchical practices were encroaching upon its collaborative model. Studying this change and the reasons behind it is of use to others working to more effectively involve community in the educational process.

To analyze the experiences of the Todos Juntos collaborative, the present research study examines how organizations work in terms of the benefits and concerns of hierarchy and collaboration, issues of participatory decision-making, and the evolving definition and

role of leadership within a collaborative framework. A discussion of these topics in the following literature review of selected research and case studies provides an understanding of trends and issues involving the use of power and empowerment, which can later be applied to studying the Todos Juntos collaborative. The literature review alerts readers to concepts and topics that will not only raise awareness of the functioning of participatory/inclusive groups, but will also point to areas that have assisted the researcher in analyzing and interpreting the data collected in this study.

### **Types of Leadership in Education**

Educational leadership does not operate in a vacuum, but is part of the larger culture. Ideas about leadership, from traditional hierarchical approaches to looser and more open structures, continue to evolve in theory and in the workplace, influencing how our schools operate. These variations are of importance to the operation of reform initiatives such as Todos Juntos. New, less hierarchical systems lead to new kinds of leaders who seek not to control but to facilitate change. Participants in Todos Juntos tackled not only the move from a hierarchical system to a more egalitarian approach, but also the implications of types of leadership when addressing social ills.

#### ***Hierarchical leadership and education***

In order to see how hierarchical attitudes may have influenced the Todos Juntos collaborative, it is important to understand what a hierarchy is and what it says about power. The word hierarchy, according to Webster's Eleventh New Collegiate Dictionary (2006), refers to a system for ranking or classifying people in groups, where each element of the system is subordinate to the one above it. Classifications can be based on ability, or economic, social or professional standing. Many organizations are hierarchical, such as

schools, businesses, churches, armies, and political movements. Usually senior members, called "bosses," have more power than their subordinates. Although other group dynamics or forces may be at work, the relationship defining a hierarchy is "commands" or "has power over."

A social hierarchy establishes the powers and duties of different members of society. The ability to control or influence people or institutions indicates one's social status. Many social critiques question whether or not social hierarchies are just. Feminism, for instance, often critiques a hierarchy of gender, in which a culture sees males or masculine traits as superior to females or feminine traits. In these terms, some criticize a hierarchy of only two nodes, "masculine" and "feminine," which are connected by an asymmetrical relationship in which one group is more valuable to society than the other (McLaughlin, 2005).

In every group, there is always a hierarchy of ability present. On the positive side, the principle of hierarchy acknowledges current abilities, quality and excellence. It recognizes actualized potential--ability and accomplishment. It values leadership, purpose, direction, vision, and efficiency. Recognizing hierarchy can provide clarity and accountability. It can encourage and reward initiative. It can provide models of achievement to which others may aspire. It can offer mentoring for those who are younger or less experienced (Schein, 1985).

On the other hand, overemphasis on hierarchy can lead to arrogance and abuse of power, as well as missed opportunities for new creative impulses. The limitations of the hierarchical leader or leadership group can become the limitations of the entire organization. This can lead to immense frustration, with a continued threat of rebellion from others in the group, or at least passive resistance and subtle sabotage (McLaughlin, 2005).

The Todos Juntos collaborative can be seen as a way to test the benefits of participatory decision making through a flat organizational structure as a possible solution to criticisms of hierarchical organizations. Its membership dispensed with the notion of a hierarchy and replaced it with an egalitarian idea of participatory decision making. A discussion of collaboration and teamwork reveals the important traits of collaborative groups and some of the challenges that they face. These factors will be used later in analyzing the successes and failures of Todos Juntos as a collaborative group.

### ***Collaborative leadership and education***

Collaborations reflect democratic values. The principle of democracy acknowledges future potential and gives people the maximum freedom to grow and develop (McLaughlin, 2005). It provides opportunity and encouragement. It values inclusiveness, relationship, listening, and compassion. Equal opportunity, political rights, and decision-making power are bestowed to all members so that individuals can develop their full potential. There is an emphasis on inclusivity, where everyone is equally honored and encouraged to participate. This can be reassuring, especially for those lacking self-worth or self-confidence (McLaughlin, 2005).

In the case of Todos Juntos, a flat organizational structure, democratic ideals of equality became the method of choice for structuring the group. Senge (1990) refers to this process as the building of shared vision. He writes, “One is hard pressed to think of any organization that has sustained some measure of greatness in the absence of goals, values, and missions that become deeply shared throughout the organization” (p. 9). Developing and sustaining a flat system requires a fundamental shift in thinking and commitment to the shared vision. It requires understanding the nature of growth processes and how to catalyze

them. But those collaborating also need to understand the forces and challenges that impede progress in these flat systems, and how to develop workable strategies for dealing with these challenges.

One potential challenge to flat systems is teamwork (Senge, 1990), for collaborations require true teamwork. A group, by definition, is a number of individuals having some unifying relationship; however, a group of people does not necessarily work as a team. A team is a group of people coming together to reach a shared goal or task for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. A team is a group of people with a high degree of interdependence; it is not just a group formed for administrative convenience (McGregor, 1964). As McGregor (1964, p. 35) says, “Most teams aren’t teams at all but merely collections of individual relationships with the boss, each individual vying with the others for power, prestige and position.”

A successful team outperforms a group and all reasonable expectations given to its individual members (Hinsz & Nickell, 2004). That is, a team can have a synergistic effect...one plus one equals more than two (Hinsz & Nickell, 2004). Team members, according to Hinsz and Nickell (2004), not only cooperate in all aspects of their tasks and goals, they share in what are traditionally thought of as management functions, such as planning, organizing, setting performance goals, assessing the team's performance, developing their own strategies to manage change, and securing their own resources.

According to Bodwell (1996), a team has three major benefits for an organization:

1. It maximizes the organization's human resources. A success or failure is felt by all members, not just the individual. Failures are not blamed on individual members.

This factor gives members the courage to take chances. Ideally, successes are felt by

- every team member, which helps members set and achieve bigger and better successes. In addition, failure is perceived as a learning lesson.
2. There is a superior output against all odds. This is due to the synergistic effect of a team - a team can normally outperform a group of individuals.
  3. There is continuous improvement. No one knows the job, tasks, and goals better than the individual team members. Real change is accomplished through all members' sharing their knowledge, skills, and abilities. When members pull together as a team, they are not afraid to show what they can do. Personal motives are pushed to the side to allow the entire team to succeed.

The above benefits of teamwork provide criteria for discussing the operations of Todos Juntos and the success of some of its collaborative methods. Most important among these is the idea of participatory decision making.

### **Participatory Decision Making and Education**

As the term suggests, participatory decision making requires direct and active input from all stakeholders in a group. Political scientists and democracy theorists (Benello & Roussopoulos, 1971; Cook & Morgan, 1971; Pateman, 1970) have stated that involvement in decision making helps people “overcome feelings of powerlessness and apathy and enhances feelings of self-determination,” yet according to Wood (1989). “Bottom up” participation improves the way in which employees work as well as employees’ general satisfaction and morale, and is effective in groups or collaboratives developed to solve problems and or create innovation (Wood, 1989).

According to a discussion paper presented by the Civil Society (2005), the following are the core values of participatory decision making.

- **Full Participation**—In a participatory group, all members are encouraged to speak up and say what is on their minds, which strengthens a group in several ways. Members become more courageous in raising, and learn how to share, difficult issues.
- **Mutual Understanding**—In order for a group to reach a sustainable agreement, the members need to understand and accept the legitimacy of one another's needs and goals. Their basic sense of acceptance and understanding is what allows members to develop innovative ideas that incorporate all members' points of view.
- **Inclusive Solutions**—Inclusive solutions are wise solutions. Their wisdom emerges from the integration of all members' perspectives and needs. These are solutions, the range and vision of which are expanded to take advantage of the truth held not only by the quick, the articulate, and the most powerful and influential, but also of the truth held by slower thinkers, the shy, the disenfranchised and the weak. As the Quakers say, "Everybody has a piece of the truth" (Civil Society Members, 2005, p. 41)
- **Shared Responsibility**—In participatory groups, members feel a strong sense of responsibility for creating and developing sustainable agreements. They recognize that they must be willing and able to implement the proposals they endorse, so they make every effort to give and receive input before final decisions are made.

The four core values introduced by the Civil Society members can be used as criteria for implementing successful collaboratives, and for analyzing strengths and weaknesses of collaboratives. Identifying these values clearly at the beginning of the collaborative process can lay the groundwork or create the appropriate atmosphere for employing participatory strategies, such as *consensus* (Civil Society Members, 2005).



### **Consensus in participatory decision making**

A common form of participatory decision making is called consensus, which was one of the strategies espoused by the Todos Juntos collaborative (notes from collaborative meetings 2000 - 2004). In general terms, this is a process through which members find common ground and solutions that are acceptable to all and believed to be best for the group. The process tries to avoid the alienation of minorities that may be given rise to by majority rule and to value everyone's opinion equally. With consensus, everyone in the group must agree to a decision in order for it to be adopted (Shared Planet, 2007). Preconditions for consensus include:

- Everyone must be committed to reaching a consensus view and to having their personal agendas challenged.
- The group must participate actively in the process and good facilitation must be used.
- Awareness of the common ground within the group is needed - or the 'group mind.' If there are disagreements, the common ground can be used to pull the group back together.
- Everyone must understand the process.
- The consensus reached should be a substantial decision.
- Sufficient time must be allowed for the process to unfold (Shared Planet, 2007).

Consensus is a positive example of a shift in attitude from hierarchical top-down decision making to participatory decision making. Challenges to participatory decision making do exist, however, and deserve mention here. Recognition of challenges and where they might appear helps bring another perspective to the analysis of Todos Juntos.

### ***Challenges to participatory decision making***

Challenges to participatory decision making must also be addressed and can also illuminate what can happen within collaboratives. Wood (1989) noted that problems may include: (1) members who neither possess the requisite skills nor regularly seek that expertise from outside sources, (2) affiliation needs that can interfere with the members' ability to stay with a task, (3) operational procedures that can be ineffective in resolving critical issues, and (4) formal status differences that can adversely affect the group operation and decision making processes. Wood (1989) stated the importance of addressing these potential pitfalls through suggestions based on her research findings:

1. That to engage in participatory and group decision making, subordinates acquire knowledge, training, and experiences in such areas as group dynamics and self expression before attempting to participate in decision making on "equal" terms with superordinates; and
2. "Practitioners should be advised that hierarchical differentiation inhibits the possibility that leadership will emerge as a consequence of expertise and group interaction." (p. 23)

Wood also stated that "for leadership to pass from one member to another as the structure demands, the group must begin with everyone relatively equal in status" (p. 445).

Overemphasis on equality in a group can also lead to a lack of motivation for developing one's own potential, since individuals receive no special rewards for their demonstrated abilities. Some may even view others' greater abilities with jealousy. This can lead to what is often called "the tyranny of the structureless group," where no one is

empowered to take initiative on behalf of the group, and there is an anti-leadership bias leading to stagnation (McLaughlin, 2005).

Specific challenges to collaborations involving the Hispanic community also are reflected in the literature. Hispanics are discouraged from entering the mainstream by social pressures from within their community, and in some cases they are encouraged to remain outside, separate, and distinct from the majority culture. This is a view widely shared by Hispanic leaders, though rarely expressed boldly (Torres, 1999). Thus, collaboration with mainstream stakeholders may be hindered. The following is a list of terms for some of the other challenges identified by Torres (1999):

- Gender – The feeling in Latino cultural norms that promotes men as the leaders who dominate, in most cases, over the female Latinas; a machismo or “master of the house” attitude.
- Generations (value shift) – The shift in cultural values from the past generations and how this can affect working with various groups. (This is important for understanding the subgroups studied in detail in Todos Juntos.)
- Class – The depiction and destruction of Latino jealousy, or the “crab” effect of not supporting one another, often based on social and economic welfare.
- Micro-family vs. institutions – The emphasis on the “familia” or family unit and all that this entails in terms of one’s responsibility to the family over work and institutions; the loss of this when one is seen as educated (Torres, 1999).

Awareness of these potential attitudes can help organizations face concerns openly so that their members are less likely to undermine collaborative efforts. A brief look into research concerning other collaborative initiatives also illustrates issues of successes and

challenges raised in this Literature Review and demonstrates that Todos Juntos is not alone in efforts to structure and encourage community commitment to education for increased student success. An Internet Google search of collaborative and/or organizations whose main focus is Latino culture revealed that there were 154 named organizations that in one way or another dealt with education and the participation of communities, educators, and various other groups in order to support student academic achievement.

### **Examples of Community-based Collaboratives**

The operating structure of other community-based collaboratives is similar to that of Todos Juntos and reveals themes and values important to an understanding of Todos Juntos: 1) the attempt to include diverse community members in reform efforts, 2) the belief in collaboration as a starting point, 3) formation of new partnerships, and 4) recognition of efforts that must be made to support lifelong education. Several of these initiatives are examined in this section.

#### ***Rough Rock Demonstration School (RRDS)***

This school in Chinle, Arizona was established based on principles of the Rough Rock Navajo community's philosophy of local control and local governance. RRDS was established in 1966 as the first Native American community-controlled school. At this time, leaders in the community were anxious to cultivate "the talents and resources of the entire community, fostering a sense of shared purpose and hope, and creating a community around the school" (McCarty, 2002, p. 84). Community members taught traditional Navajo weaving and adobe building, and stayed at the dormitories to share their stories with students at night. All community members were valued for their contributions. They transmitted important cultural values of kinship and communal sharing. The staff demonstrated a high level of

dedication as they "participated in periodic live-ins, residing with local families for 2 or 3 days as a way of learning about their students' lives and home experiences" (McCarty, 2002 p. 93). Everyone from the community was involved in creating a place where it was safe to be Navajo.

After the first two operative school years, RRDS demonstrated tremendous success by pioneering Indian education in a variety of areas (Roessel, 1968):

- The Navajo people were directly and actively involved in the operation of the school.
- The school maintained close contact with the home and community.
- The cultural identification program made Navajo culture a significant and integral part of the school program.
- The school provided meaningful adult education opportunities for community members.
- A variety of auxiliary services provided assistance to the community.
- The school encouraged community members to learn and become skilled in traditional Navajo arts and crafts.
- The school constantly attempted to provide and expand employment opportunities for community members.
- The school served as a resource for many other agencies.
- Innovation and experimentation in the classroom was cultivated and encouraged.

Considerable staff enthusiasm accompanied the school's early development, and by the early 1990s, Dick, Estell and McCarty (1994) identified some of the necessary conditions that served as catalysts for positive change at RRDS. First, the program was fortunate to maintain a stable core of administrative and teaching staff. Moreover, all those involved in

the program shared a long history at Rough Rock and with the school. Program staff and faculty thus had an investment in the community and were committed to providing a high quality education for their children. Second, the program maintained funding at levels that permitted sustained staff development. As a consequence, teachers had prolonged opportunities to critique and refine their practice; they were free to take risks and try out new ideas. Through this, they found novel ways to use their bilingualism and knowledge of the community so that the same strengths could be recognized and utilized by Navajo students in the classroom. Third, the program staff members were assisted by long-term collaborations with outside professionals who contributed a wealth of expertise. These specialists and the staff explicitly rejected “one-shot” workshops, focusing instead on direct collegial work in Rough Rock English-Navajo Language Arts Program (RREN LAP) classrooms, extended dialogue and critical inquiry into teaching bilingually, and a mutual process of professional growth. Finally, and most importantly, the program was developed by those who were responsible for implementing it. Teacher ownership and growing trust in their ability to effect change and enhance instruction were ever-increasing (Dick, Estell and McCarty, 1994).

Today there are over 170 contract/grant schools patterned after RRDS. An account by McCarty (2002) outlines the goals and the processes involved in the project, which from the beginning emphasized self-determination in indigenous schooling and made Navajo culture, language and traditions central to the curriculum. According to a review of the McCarty study, the project was a “collaborative effort from start to finish” (Schwarz, 1994).

Administrators and staff worked with community members from many backgrounds, seeking to shift the context of a historically repressive institution to one of community empowerment. The project has had implications not only for other collaboratives such as Todos Juntos,

which also has relied on participation from a broad range of community participants, but for educators investigating issues of indigenous language retention, bilingual and multicultural education, and public policy (Schwartz, 2002).

### ***Hispanic Educational Resources (HER)***

This resource center was established in 1983 and derived from the first non-profit Latino community center in Des Moines, Iowa (Hispanic Educational Resource, 2008). This resource center began as the United Mexican-American Community Center (UMACC). It was established by community leaders and volunteers to provide family services and outreach to communities, to focus on educating and empowering the entire family. The goal of this initiative was to create a community center that focused on the needs and interests of the Latino community while maintaining its cultural language. The major vision of the project was for members to become leaders in Central Iowa regarding Latino success in learning achievement, and the mission of the initiative was to create a “premier Latino learning academy specializing in bi-lingual, cultural affirming educational programming and experiences for children and their families” and to “position Latino children to thrive in school, community and life” (Hispanic Educational Resource, 2008, p 146). In 2003, Hispanic Educational Resources signed a partnership agreement signed with Hispanic Colleges and Universities to try to unify and create a collaborative partnership/agreement in hopes of expansion of Hispanic Serving Institutions in support of increased opportunities for Department of Defense, (American forces press release, October, 2003).

### ***CircLES***

Another collaborative in the United States is the “circle of success,” which is a reform project established at the University of Texas at El Paso (Reference: Hispanic Engineer and

InformationTechnology Circle of Success Lango Deen, 2004). CircLES was conceived by Dr. Pablo Arenaz, then an associate dean of engineering and now Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Texas, and a nationally recognized educator who led UTEP's Bio Medical Research UTEP system Alliance for Minority participation.

CircLES is a comprehensive P-20 project designed to transition minority students into UTEP from the minute they walk into its doors. It is a cohort design model which includes families and surrounding communities. Eight percent of UTEP's students come from the city of Juarez, Mexico, just across the border and 92 percent are from El Paso County. UTEP's student population reflects the demographic it serves. In 1978, sixty-six percent of the students were Hispanic, making UTEP the largest university in the continental United States with a majority Hispanic student population. UTEP has established partnerships with its community, including El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, a program formed in 1991 by a wide range of educators, community members, and business leaders. The goal of the collaborative is to ensure that all children are prepared to enter and succeed at a four-year college. The CircLES collaborative aims to achieve support for students and families by "reforming the entire educational system (K-16) and by involving the entire community in the initiative." (Reference Hispanic Engineer & Information technology; Circles of Success Lango Deen, 2004).

In 2002, UTEP reported the following major accomplishments of the CircLES program (Flores, 2002):

- 78% of the CircLES students entering UTEP in the Fall of 2000 returned in the Fall of 2001 (compared to 68% retention baseline). During their first two semesters at



UTEP these students maintained an average cumulative GPA of 2.83 (compared to 2.02 GPA baseline).

- Institutional Fall 2001 census data show that the two-year retention rate for the 1999 CircLES cohort was 68%. The two-year average cumulative GPA for this cohort was 2.76. Similarly, the three-year retention rate for the 1998 cohort was 57%, while the four-year retention rate for the 1997 cluster pilot group was 47%. In the pilot group 3% of the students graduated within four years.
- The CircLES mathematics refresher continued to be an effective activity during summer orientation. Nearly 60% of the 2001 Circles cohort students enrolled in college-level mathematics courses in their first semester, thus reducing the time they spend on developmental course work. Prior to the CircLES mathematics review, only 37% of the students placed into Mathematics courses at the college level.

### ***Compact for Success***

Compact for Success is collaboration between the Sweetwater Union High School District and San Diego State University in California. This collaboration began as a contract that these two entities mapped out to support Sweetwater students in getting accepted by SDSU and to ensure their success. This compact was signed in 2006 by the University President and the school district superintendent of these institutions. Part of the collaborative mission was to help parents in Hispanic communities know and understand why students benefit from taking rigorous classes in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years. Parents of students were also invited to visit the campus and to participate in classes if their children fell off track (Compact for Success; Thoughtful, collaborative, by Gardner 2007).

When students from the Sweetwater Union High School District meet established benchmarks (e.g., 3.0 GPA, all college course requirements, successful completion of college entrance exams), they are automatically guaranteed admission to San Diego State University. Since its inception, the Compact for Success has experienced significant improvement in a number of areas. For example, according to the program's director (Murillo 2008), the number of graduates (29) who have been admitted to San Diego State University from SUHSD has doubled between fall 2000 and fall 2006. The number of graduates who have enrolled to San Diego State University from SUHSD has also doubled between fall 2000 and fall 2006. Moreover, the number of students who have been admitted who are proficient in math and English has almost tripled during this same span of time. Compact for Success offers students a wonderful experience to better understand the path that they must pursue to enter a college or university. By participating in the core activities of the Compact for Success, students are prepared for the challenges of entering higher education (Murillo, 2008).

The ways in which Compact for Success brought together higher education institutions, public education, and parents from Hispanic communities is similar to how diverse voices and participation were encouraged in the Todos Juntos collaborative venture. Diversity is built into the collaborative structure. This includes motivating parents from differing backgrounds and varying levels of education to play an important role in collaboration.

### **Parent Roles in Collaborative Education**

Many studies have examined types of parent involvement and their effects on student learning and behavior. However, only a few have studied the factors that motivate parents to

become involved (Lanthier, Wright-Cunningham & Edmonds, 2003; Reed, Walker & Hoover- Dempsey, 2000). Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995, 1997) identified three critical factors as determinants of parent involvement: (1) parents role construct (their beliefs about their need to be involved in their child's education), (2) parents sense of self-efficacy (that they have the knowledge and skill to be involved) and (3) school invitations.

Other research has found that cultural and socioeconomic factors strongly influence immigrant families' role construct or perceptions about parental involvement (Carrasquillo & London, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991). Furthermore, these studies suggest that immigrant parents and families need opportunities to learn about the school system and their roles and rights in their child's education (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Valdes, 1996).

These initiatives and research studies show that although there are challenges, community collaboratives can be built and developed based on a vision of educational equality, shared values, and a common civic purpose. This, in turn, invites a new characterization of what constitutes a leader. It appears that the traditional notion of a hierarchical leader is not compatible with participatory decision making. This raises the question of whether leadership is not required in the inclusive collaborative process. The following is a discussion of new modes for thinking about leaders and leadership that might better serve collaborative ventures.

### **Evolution in Attitudes towards Leadership in Education**

Choosing collaborative rather than hierarchical organizational structures may require a shift in attitudes toward traditional leadership, including educational leadership. Traditionally, the direction of an organization depends mostly on what the leader of the organization does (a hierarchical notion). However, consideration of what happens to typical

leadership activities during the development of a collaborative organization is important. According to Senge (1999), there is a radical shift in the collaborative model from thinking of leaders as heroes at the top who drive the organization to seeing the organization as a human community. When it becomes a human community or true collaboration, it is a living system, like a plant that grows on its own. However, there are many tending the garden, not just one overseer.

Sometimes leaders, acting as routine managers, are merely following the scripts that are already in their minds. Rost (1991) would claim that this is due to the fact that they are not renewing themselves as leaders. To develop a community collaboration that is non-hierarchical, educational leaders need to look at whether leaders are born or made, and what strategies should be used to involve everyone in decision making.

As we embark upon the beginning of the twenty-first century, we are beginning to see that traditional autocratic and hierarchical models of leadership are slowly yielding to newer models. These newer models attempt to simultaneously enhance the personal growth of workers and improve the quality of institutions through a combination of teamwork and community, personal involvement in decision-making, and ethical and caring behavior (Wiley, 1995).

Further review of the literature about leadership reveals a concern by experts in the field with developing and redefining new leadership styles. Perhaps the success of the collaborative model is related to the extent to which natural leaders and those used to hierarchical systems can adapt or even overcome their traditional beliefs. In a sense, new leadership models transcend the original definition of “leader” to encompass collaborative values. These new models appear to be transitional, softening the concept of the leader as

being at the top of, and the most important individual in, an organization, and instead emphasizing the leader as a facilitator for the common good.

### **New Models for Collaborative Leaders**

New leadership models that demonstrate collaborative values and attitudes include *transformational*, *servant*, *leaderful* and *moral* leadership. These models share many qualities and are often rooted in concerns for social justice.

#### ***Transformational Leadership***

*“Managers are people who do things right, while leaders are people who do the right thing (transforming others).” --Warren Bennis*

Transformational leadership is a truly mutual model: one that transforms leadership from individual property into a collective practice (Raelin, 2003). This model recreates individual citizens into leaders and encourages long-term relationships that develop both leaders and followers. This style of leadership transforms leaders as well, because they learn from their followers. Leaders become willing students of their followers’ teachings and develop a seemingly paradoxical ability “to lead by being led” (Burns, 2001, p. 117). These leaders are also teachers who guide their followers toward ever-higher goals; i.e., goals that transcend self-interest and attempt to further a notion of the common good.

Preskill (2005) writes that transformational leadership can be described as: 1) working toward the collective good, 2) honoring dissension, 3) causative, 4) morally purposeful and 5) elevating, all which move the organization toward supporting the needs of others. Transformational leaders are able to accept and even encourage dissent as part of the process, while remaining aware of the specific task, including its moral dimension. These same attributes would support the work of collaborations. Leadership may contribute a

temporary role, when and as needed to respond to a shared goal, instead of being bestowed through an existing hierarchical status. Leaders emerge and recede as needed (Preskill, 2005).

### ***Servant Leadership***

“That which touches me most is that I had a chance to work with people, passing on to others that which was passed to me.” --Ella [Baker]’s Song

Activist Ella Baker (1903-1986) serves as a true example of a servant leader and the positive effect that a servant leader on a community. Baker developed a sense for social justice early in her life and turned this into lifetime of service with many civil rights organizations. It is the commitment to others that inspires servant leadership. Baker believed in grassroots reform rather than central leadership, saying, “Strong people don’t need strong leaders” (Ransby, 2005). In the development of a community collaborative, servant leadership works to be untiringly focused on others and sees the leader as the tool to help others see their own leadership abilities and to become change agents themselves.

As Greenleaf (1970) states, “The servant-leader is a servant first.” Leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first and foremost. One aspires to lead due to this conscious choice. Being a servant first ensures that other people’s priorities are being served. A benchmark for success in this leadership model is to see if those being served grow as people while being served, if they become healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous, and if they are more likely to become servant-leaders themselves (Greenleaf, 1970). This type of leadership allows individuals to feel empowered. Servant leadership can help build and strengthen what a community school looks like through building and

strengthening its constituents – the people on campus as well those in the surrounding community.

Another example of servant leadership in our society is the Highlander project led by Myles Horton. Horton believed that there was a need to debunk the role of educators telling people what to do (Payne, 1995). Horton's work in the Highlander Folk School, designed to help people transform the impoverished and oppressed conditions of their lives in Appalachia, expressed a committed vision of change that respected the culture of the people with whom he was working. "People need something for the spirit and the soul" (Payne, 1995, p. 5).

Bill Moyers, (1990) writes in the preface to Horton's autobiography, *The Long Haul*, that few people have seen as much change in the American South or helped to bring it about as Myles Horton.

[Horton] was beaten up, locked up, put upon and railed against by racists, toughs, demagogues and governors. But for more than fifty years, Horton went on with his special kind of teaching -- helping people to discover within themselves the courage and ability to confront reality and change it (p.77).

Horton accomplished this first by loving people, respecting their abilities to shape their own lives, and by valuing their experiences (Moyers, quoting Horton, 1990, p.71). These attitudes are required to serve through leadership and to demonstrate leaderful leadership practices as described in the following discussion.

### ***Leaderful Leadership***

Leaderful practice is an alternative leadership paradigm. "It directly challenges the conventional view of leadership as 'being out in front'" (Raelin, 2003 p. 5). Leaderful

leadership allows people to fight against the “old reality” of leaders possessing all authority and, instead, allows the “followers” to participate in their own leadership (Raelin, 2003). The literature reveals that when communities are involved in the process of change they are more likely to support its implementation (Raelin, 2003). Thus, leadership may emerge from multiple members of the community. These collaborative leaders realize that everyone counts, and all opinions and contributions matter. Leaderful practices look at followership and leadership as part of the same process. Followers and leaders have interchangeable parts in the conduct of leadership (Raelin, 2003). According to McLaughlin (2005), enlightened leaders create "power with" people rather than "power over" people - a blend of leadership and empowered equality, where leadership relates to function and "facilitating energy," rather than to personality. Individual learning and responsibility are fostered, as is a sense of team spirit and ownership by all members.

This type of leadership was exemplified by members of the Todos Juntos collaborative, all of whom deliberately decided to give a leadership voice to those who might typically be considered followers. Everyone in the process was viewed as a potential leader. Nieto, (1999 p. 104), in her book *The Light in Their Eyes*, referred to Paulo Freire’s famous claim that “teaching and learning need to be thought of as reciprocal processes in which students become teachers and teachers become students.” This concept can also be used in terms of leadership: the leader is the teacher, or the follower can be the teacher.

### ***Moral Leadership***

Adopting new leadership practices with moral purpose in mind can also be useful, as leaders fight against what Ella Baker would categorize as the “generic distrust of organizations and their leaders, especially large organizations and those who lead them”



(Preskill, 2004). Moral purpose is defined as “acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and society as a whole” (Fullan, 2001, p. 3). For collaborations to create new types of leaders, they must first understand the change process. Moral purpose without an understanding of change will lead to moral martyrdom. Moral purpose and sustained performance of the organization are mutually dependent (Fullan, 2001). In analyzing Todos Juntos and its organizational structure, the researcher will consider moral leadership in discerning the success or lack of success of the collaborative in instilling trust in its members from diverse backgrounds, and the importance of trust in egalitarian decision making. The researcher will also consider whether moral issues affected any changes in the operations of the collaborative.

Perhaps the success of collaboration is due in part to the extent that these emerging types of facilitative leadership are understood and then implemented faithfully.

### **Conclusion**

To encourage a more participatory, inclusive and just society, methods of collaboration and leadership can be developed to return democratic control back to the people. This means stronger ties between schools and communities, regardless of their social or economic status, backed by a new kind of enlightened leadership. New leadership represents a change in consciousness. It is educative rather than directive—drawing out the best in others. It inspires responsibility rather than creating dependence. It is based on the assumption that all people already have potential wisdom and creativity within them, and, thus, the task of leadership is mainly to encourage and draw out this potential. People are helped to develop self-confidence and a sense of self-worth. Negotiation rather than pure authority is the basis of relationships (McLaughlin, 2005). However, in order to enact these

leadership traits, a delicate balance is required of all members to maintain and support an egalitarian or flat system of organization while at the same time accommodating many levels of ability, initiative and engagement.

It is possible that members of collaborative organizations might blend different modes of thinking by refusing to adopt an either-or attitude toward the role of leaders in their collaborative groups. McLaughlin (2005) suggests that bringing together the best of both hierarchical and democratic organizations is an important possibility for leadership in organizations. He states that perhaps synthesizing the best aspects of hierarchy—responsibility rather than power and dominance—and the strengths of democracy—participatory inclusiveness rather than the lowest common denominator—can allow collaborations to achieve results and flourish. As discussed in Chapter 1, democracy provides the container to hold and nourish the development of all people.

The researcher in the present study determined that the attitudes of participants in the Todos Juntos collaborative toward understanding and working in a collaborative organization were worthy of further investigation and study using a qualitative approach, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **Introduction**

This present study examined the benefits of, and challenges to, the Latino collaborative Todos Juntos, formed to create a more just society by improving education for Hispanics K-20, and pays specific attention to issues of egalitarian versus hierarchical group structures and the evolving role of leadership in the collaborative. Since this shifting group organization is a complex series of human events, this study is best served by using qualitative research methods.

#### **Characteristics of Qualitative Research:**

Several definitions of qualitative research informed the choices of research methods for this study. Qualitative research, broadly defined, means "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 17). Instead, qualitative research produces findings arrived at from real-world settings where the "phenomena of interest unfold naturally" (Patton, 2001, p. 39). Unlike quantitative researchers who seek causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings, qualitative researchers seek instead illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations (Hoepfl, 1997).

Patton (2002) states that qualitative research is a method of gathering data from fieldwork, where the researcher spends time in the setting under study - a program, an organization, a community – to observe events, interview people, and analyze documents. A qualitative researcher makes firsthand observations of activities and interactions, sometimes engaging personally in those activities as a participant observer. Although, as Winter (2000)

claims, quantitative researchers attempt to disassociate themselves as much as possible from the research process, qualitative researchers embrace their involvement and role within the research. Patton (2001) supports the notion of the researcher's involvement and immersion into the research by pointing out that the real world is subject to change, and thus a qualitative researcher should be present over time to record an event before, during and after change occurs.

Qualitative methods inform the study. Through multiple informal conversations and, later, interviews and focus groups, the researcher collected data from members of the Todos Juntos collaborative about their experiences and perceptions, in their own words, of the collaborative in order to “build a complex, holistic picture, analyzing words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducting the study in a natural setting” (Cresswell, 1998, p. 15). The researcher paid specific attention to the voices and views of the participants in the collaborative to try to capture the complexities of the situation and of their desire to use a participatory style of working.

Vital to the Todos Juntos project was the idea that formerly disenfranchised community members would gain a voice. Participant observations and interviews were methods used in the present study, which permitted the researcher to include participants' voices in the study. At the most basic level, Kvale (1996) writes that interviews are conversations, and defines qualitative research interviews as "attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (Kvale, 1996, p.94). The researcher used research literature about conversational and interviewing techniques to design multiple data collection methods, some informal and others more structured, to gain

insight into participant responses. A brief discussion of qualitative interview methods introduces the benefits of using a qualitative approach, which has implications for the reliability and dependability of the different data collection methods used in this study.

### **The Qualitative Interview**

Patton (2002) identifies three basic types of qualitative interviewing for research or evaluation purposes, all of which rely on open-ended responses from participants: informal conversational interview, interview guide approach, and standardized open-ended interview. The informal conversational interview may occur spontaneously in the course of fieldwork, and the respondent may not be aware that an "interview" is taking place. Questions are not predetermined and arise from the immediate situation, and thus are relevant to the individual but may be difficult to systematize later during analysis. In the interview guide approach, the interviewer has an outline of ideas to be covered, but has the freedom to alter some of the wording or the order of the questions. This ensures that the conversation remains fairly informal, but at the same time is more comprehensive and systematic than the simple conversation. A third option, according to Patton (2002), is the standardized open-ended interview, in which interviewers adhere to a strict script. This option is still considered a qualitative interview rather than a quantitative interview because responses are open-ended. This is useful when the ability to compare the responses of different respondents is important; however, it may be difficult to find out issues that are most relevant to the particular respondent.

In the present study, the researcher's intent was to reach a deeper understanding of participant attitudes through using multiple interviewing approaches. As Kvale (1996) states with regard to using interviews in research, the emphasis is on intellectual understanding

rather than on producing personal change. The way in which the theories about qualitative methods and interviewing emerged in planning for this particular study are discussed in the following section.

### **Context and Framework of Present Study**

The present research study focused on a grassroots community collaborative (Todos Juntos) tasked with improving education for Latino youth K-20. The collaborative is a partnership among Latino parents, K-12 schools, and the University of Galisteo. The collaborative project began in 1999 and is still in existence at the date of this writing. Community members of the collaborative represented a range of poor to upper middle class Latinos, and Spanish speaking and first generation immigrants, some of whom had little or no formal education. The collaborative responded to a mandate from the Fellows Foundation to more actively engage the community in efforts for educational reform. All research took place in New Mexico. Interviews were held at places where the individuals felt most comfortable, (i.e. their place of work, at the researcher's office, and in some cases individuals' homes). Focus groups were held at schools, and meetings that the researcher attended for observation purposes included the university, schools, restaurants, and non-profit organizations. Participant/ observational data were collected and reviewed over a four-month timeframe between May 2009 and August 2009. Analysis of the data was ongoing throughout the study.

### **Participants**

#### ***Role and background of researcher***

The researcher's name is Karen C. Sanchez-Griego. I was born to Carlos and Isabel Sanchez on August 1, 1960, at St. Vincent's Hospital in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I am my

parent's oldest daughter, coming from a family of four siblings, with two brothers and two sisters.

A look into my past reveals a search for understanding of my place in the world as a Latina educator who grew up in New Mexico and whose parents came from the small mountain communities of Torreon and Manzano. The steps along the way as I traveled through the educational system from high school to college and beyond reflect my increasing awareness not only of my own disenfranchisement, but of the inequities suffered by others. I believe my upbringing and life experiences led me directly to my work with Todos Juntos, the collaborative that is the basis of my thesis. Shared cultural understanding and background has informed the research and encouraged ease in my participation within the collaborative. Only with my particular past would I be able to fully appreciate the complex issues that arose in our efforts to design an egalitarian collaborative that would truly empower all members of the Hispanic community.

#### *Family background of researcher*

My parents both came from very large families, religious in nature. Their mothers followed the rules of the Catholic Church which did not allow for contraception so, consequently, my parents had 12 and 11 siblings on each side. This is significant because both families emphasized family values. Both of my parents had hard working, dedicated dads, but family was particularly important to my father's dad, Grandpa Sanchez.

My paternal grandfather was a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse, and his dream was to obtain a higher education degree. This struck a chord in my immediate family since education was a much talked about subject at all Sanchez family functions. My grandfather had made a strong commitment to his own education, and he saw and taught that education

was the great equalizer amongst Latinos and people of poverty. Unfortunately, my grandfather never realized his dream of higher education (Grandpa Sanchez was 42 when he died of cancer in the brain), and he left behind 12 children of which my dad was the oldest at age 18.

Left nearly penniless, my father had to take up the reins of his family at a very young age. This made him a resilient young man, yet the stories my father tells us of his young adult years are painful. My father and his siblings share that many times they would get in line at the grocery store, only to discover they did not have enough money to pay for the items they had selected. Dealing with this humiliation and the knowledge that they were without their father was difficult, to say the least. As a result, having and saving money became an obsession for my father.

My parents married when my dad was 22 and my mother 18. My mother and father worked very hard in their own right to raise five children in what I would call a typical Hispanic household. We lived in the South Valley on Harris, a street right off of Isleta Boulevard in Albuquerque, New Mexico. My mother was a stay-at-home mom, who always wanted us to go to college even though she did not know what was necessary to get us there. My father was very hard working and wanted much more for his family. He did have a domineering personality and ruled his house in that manner. My father was the type of man who did not want his kids to be reliant on anyone but themselves. Aside from providing for us, he did not give us anything in our youth, to ensure that we could all fend for ourselves, and he said he did not want to bring up spoiled kids. If something happened to him, he wanted us to know how to survive. My mother, on the other hand, was a woman of incredible faith and strength. She was a very quiet woman when I was growing up and truly



was a servant not only to my father but to all her children. Her career was that of making sure that we were good people, and she strived in all ways for her kids.

I was a strong willed young girl who truly was much more like my father than I wanted to admit. I was a typical kid for that era of the 1960s through the 1980s, when I graduated from high school. I was nothing special; a kid who grew up in the valley and went to Rio Grande High School, a school known for low achievement. As kids we did not know of this reputation until our encounters with others outside of the valley.

To conclude my family history, I jump ahead in time. I married my husband Anthony Griego, right after I received my Bachelor's degree. My husband was a product of the same era, and was the first in his family to graduate from college. Anthony and I had a great deal in common. Our families were similar; our parents had a deep commitment to marriage and held the Catholic religion and family in the forefront of their daily living.

As a woman with strong convictions, I knew that I wanted to be a liberated and working woman, which meant I needed a partner that would allow me to do so. I state "allow" because at the time I married it was still the woman's place to take care of the home, cook, take care of the kids even if you worked. My husband is one of three brothers and was raised by his mother (Helen) and father (Paul), the one difference being that his mother worked full time. She "trained" her boys to help with the house, cook, and really see the woman's role as something different, so when Anthony and I married he did not think it was odd for me to work or continue to go to school.

We have been married for 25 years this past November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and we are the proud parents of two boys, Justin (23) and Cameron (19), both of whom are college students.

Education for us as parents was a must. We taught our kids that college was not an option, but something that came automatically after high school.

*Researcher's college years*

Knowing what to do to get into college was a challenge, as was the case for many of my friends from the valley. We did not have many people to look up to who were role models, people who had overcome the challenges and had enjoyed college success. It was difficult for our parents to help us in most cases, as they lacked the experience of going to college. Without formal education, my parents felt intimidated by the school. They did not feel welcome and were not encouraged to ask questions. My mother would just praise us and tell us that we could accomplish anything.

I remember being at the age of 17, as a senior taking the ACT for the first time, not knowing what this meant except that you needed it to get into college, and I was determined to go to college. I took the exam and the next thing I knew I was being called into the counselor's office to be given my scores. I remember the day like it was yesterday; it was so profound. There were other senior students like me in the office waiting to see the counselor. They called me and with anticipation I went into Mrs. Green's office. She barely acknowledged me and, in fact, I think that was the first time I had ever been in her office. She pulled out this ugly dusty manila folder and she pulled out a one-page paper. She told me that she was going to share my ACT scores with me and, thus, she began. She told me that I had scored very low. "Wow," I thought. She just blurted it out. "Did you plan to go to college? Because, with this score you are not college material, I suggest that you get a job as a secretary or at one of the stores in the valley." As she spoke I just wilted little by little in my chair, my aspiration of going to college gone in a puff of smoke. I thought about this

lady who did not know me, did not care about me, did not understand my family, and thought I was dumb!

As I left the school that day, I thought, “How am I going to tell my parents this? They had such high hopes for me to be their college graduate.” Well, home I went, and when I arrived I spoke with my mother about the day’s events. She told me we would wait until my father got home; so at dinner we spoke again with my dad. He told me to never mind what the counselor said. He would find someone to help me get to college, which, along with my mother, he did. We found a friend from church who had gone to college and he helped me apply to schools and for financial aid.

This was an eye-opening experience for me as a youngster, as I saw that these injustices were happening not only to me, but to my classmates as well. I saw, too, that most of the parents in the community would not go to the school to speak about, much less question, these things. A lot of this I felt could be attributed to the Hispano/Latino culture. My mother always taught us to respect teachers and people in our schools who are perceived to hold legitimate authority. She trusted that these people knew what was best for us. To question them was a sign of disrespect, and respect in Latino families is very important.

As an interesting note, my father went to college when I did, attending the University of Albuquerque and receiving his BA when I did.

My second year in college (while a student at the University of New Mexico), people asked me where I had gone to high school and when I told them I had graduated from Rio Grande they looked at me with disbelief that I was in a college class with them. They asked me questions about the valley and the violence they believed existed there. I didn’t know

what they were talking about, and I could see that they did not have a clue about the valley or about me.

This attitude from my peers got me thinking about the reasons that I struggled academically. Following high school, I had to take many 100-level classes that did not count towards my degree. Was it truly that I was dumb or was the lack of preparation an impediment for myself and for my classmates from Rio Grande? As I struggled, I reflected on what had happened back then. Did I not pay attention in class? Did I not do the work? As the years went on, I came to the conclusion that I had indeed been a part of an educational system that had low expectations, and I remembered my conversations with my mother on about the prejudices that existed at Rio, the way the teachers talked to us, (in some instances there were racial slurs about us directly, about being lazy and not smart). I also reflected on the number of Hispanic teachers at our school (which was limited) and I wondered why they had not spoken up for us and on our behalf. With that, I decided that if I was to be fortunate enough to complete my formal education, I would never let my students be treated as “less than” and that I would push them to the highest levels of academic performance.

As I grew older, and as a Hispanic student at UNM, I became so angry about the lack of culture, educational promise, and support for me as a student, the lack of curriculum related to my history, that I began to take Chicano Studies classes and became a member of MECHA. MECHA in the early years was a militant group of young Latinos who banded together to support one another and to understand our place at the university and in society. During that time I became very angry at others, mostly whites, I hate to admit, but it was true. I do believe that my many encounters with instances of Anglo prejudice against me as a

Latina early on also caused me to hate not only them but myself. I felt I was never good enough, or smart enough.

It has caused me great concern that I had internalized a prejudice against my own ethnic group, and yet it is an important realization to make in order to truly understand ethnic issues in students and in collaborative efforts as well. At the time of my birth and growing up we were considered Hispanic, or of Spanish descent. We as Hispanic New Mexicans were not considered Mexicans, and in fact even on our part there was an underground lack of respect for Mexicans. Now I consider myself Nuevomexicana, with no special emphasis on being a Spaniard or a Mexican, but rather a Latina, a broader, more unified term for all descendents of Latin American countries. Primarily I am a New Mexican from New Mexico.

*Researcher as professional educator*

I am an educator, and I love my profession with all my heart. I became a secondary teacher with certifications to teach English, History and Special Education. I have always honed my craft as a teacher, and I hungered to be better. I began my teaching career at St Mary's in downtown Albuquerque. The principal had been a former superintendent in California and he was very strict. He demanded that we work hard for our students. We would have to turn in weekly, detailed lesson plans, he would check them and return them on Monday morning with comments, and as a result, my work at this parochial school helped me be a much more disciplined teacher. I was paid \$12,000 a year at that time, and I had just had my second son. I needed an increase in salary so I moved to Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) and Ernie Pyle Middle School. I taught at Ernie Pyle for three years and then made a move to high school. I had always wanted to be a high school teacher, and felt fortunate to teach English at West Mesa high school for three years until getting my Masters in

Educational Leadership from UNM. I interned at La Cueva High School because I wanted to see another side to the educational divide. All my teaching experience had been in lower socio-economic communities. Working at La Cueva I learned a lot, not only about administration but about socio and cultural boundaries in communities of prominence.

After about six years of teaching I decided that as an administrator, I could make education better for the students in communities of color. I was not satisfied that I was making the impact that I felt I could make. I saw some of the teachers around me act in educationally destructive ways, failing to support academics for students in predominately impoverished and minority communities such as the one I had grown up in. It infuriated me that the principals of some of these schools would allow the status quo to continue. Little did I know at the time that there were institutional blocks for why some of these principals did what they did. I still did not see that as an excuse.

Once I obtained my Master's in Leadership, I was hired that summer of my graduation to be the activities director at Albuquerque High School. At that time, activities directors had to have an Administrator's license, and my work there was very hard. I worked for a white male who treated me as an object (he made advances towards me of a sexual nature) and advised me on several occasions that if I simply did not speak out about ethnic issues, equality, etc., that I would as a "young Hispanic female" easily move up in the APS system. Luckily, I had a woman mentor (Caucasian), an assistant principal who took me under her wing as she guided and protected me. Three years later I received an assistant principalship at Washington Middle School. It was a great learning experience, but my love and passion was tied to the goal of high school principal. I moved on to be the curriculum principal at Cibola High School for four years and focused on supplying advanced and

innovative educational and academic initiatives for school programs. It was while at Cibola that I first sat on the Todos Juntos collaborative as a community member and then as grant writer for the APS components.

*Researcher's experiences in Todos Juntos*

I had promised myself and my family that if I was ever fortunate enough to get a formal education that I would fight for other students and their families so that their voices would be heard, so that they could experience the wonderful world of education. This led me to my work in education, as a teacher, administrator, and ultimately as the director of Todos Juntos. The collaborative mission to work and maintain a flat, inclusive, democratic structure holds much importance to me, both as a Latina and as an educator.

Passion, equity and ethnic-based—this is what truly lead me to participate in Todos Juntos. I was a member of several Hispanic community organizations, and we had as a part of our mission worked on educational reform in terms of Hispanic hiring of professors, principals, teachers, and equality on campus for Hispanic families. When the grant was being put together during Phase I (1998), my colleagues from the Hispanic Round Table asked if I would come and help them write the part of the grant that dealt with high schools, and I told them I would. Once the initial Phase I grant was awarded, my superintendent asked if I would now move from working on this as a community member and represent the district which I agreed to do. I would do writing and research on the grant in the evenings and on the weekends. It was fun and exciting work.

In 1999, as I worked on the Todos Juntos grant as a community member, I received a call from Ricardo Maestas and his doctoral student. They asked me to come and meet with them at the Frontier Restaurant. At our meeting they told me that they would like for me to

be the director of Todos Juntos, and at first I laughed--who was I, I could not do this, I did not belong at a University, I was not smart enough, I did not have a doctorate! But they and many others in the weeks to follow convinced me that I could do this. As part of Phase II (2000-2004) I spent six years as director of the collaborative by serving at the University of “Galisteo” as an Executive on Loan from the Public Schools. I stayed “on loan” because I wished to maintain my connection to the public schools. It remained my dream to one day become a high school principal.

Phase III (2004-2006) involved continuation of the Todos Juntos grant with a policy objective at the forefront, and I continued as the Executive Director of Statewide Todos Juntos. In 2006, I departed the collaborative as director and became a high school principal.

When the new school on the southwest mesa advertised for applications for a high school principal I applied for the job with considerable enthusiasm. It was my dream job, to build a school from the ground up both physically and academically, to have 90% of the student population be Latino/Hispano/Mexicano, and also the school was approximately six miles from where I had grown up. I have been able to build the school as a college prep school even though many in my own community said it could not be done. I did not want students to come as I had done from a substandard educational background. It would not be fair to them, and I am determined that these students will succeed. I want more of them, I expect more of them, I know they can do more, and last but not least, I know they are worth more.

The other day I was walking the halls, getting the kids to class, all that principal business, when I turned to one of my students and said, “Where is your ID? What are you



thinking?” He answered, “Yes, Miss, I know, I know—you expect more of us.” I wanted to cry because they are now getting it, in and outside of the classroom: Don’t settle for less.

When I reflect on my time with Todos Juntos, the memories are both joyous and painful, I see that my work with the collaborative hits on many passionate issues that continue as my core beliefs for education: equality of education for all Hispanics in New Mexico, empowerment of parents, and an enduring interest in the principles of social justice. My God, my family, my life, and my passion have led me to this study.

Because I was a participant with the collaborative, I was very familiar with other participants, the project, and some of the challenges. However, I did not have a bird’s eye view of the project, so by creating the time, and looking back at documents I was able to gain a different understanding about the project. I created certain criteria so that participants of this study would give me their honest opinions about the study. In order to ensure that my personal perspective was not leading the research I selected eight interviewees who were representatives of the entire collaborative. In addition, the two focus groups represented people with the least power.

### ***Research Study Participants***

All participation in the present study was voluntary. Participants were selected from a subgroup of the statewide/local Todo Juntos membership who participated in the project in the first five years of its existence. Members of the collaborative who have been with the project for these many years represent a range of poor to upper middle class Latinos, Spanish-speaking and first generation immigrants, some with little or no formal education.

### *Selection of participants for in-depth interviews*

The eight participants selected for in-depth interviews were men and women who were members of the Todos Juntos collaborative and worked or volunteered in a subgroup that worked with students and/or parents in one of Todos Juntos' local projects. Potential participants for the in-depth interviews were selected for the study based on the following criteria: 1) willingness to participate in all aspects of the study, including attending focus groups as active members, responding to questionnaires, and agreeing to be interviewed by the researcher (although the researcher attempted to contact the two original primary co-investigators for the Fellows Foundation grant, these individuals did not respond; thus, the researcher selected the current and second set of primary co-investigators for the Fellows Foundation grant as participants); and 2) whenever possible, participation in the Todos Juntos collaborative from its inception. From this pool of potential participants, the researcher selected eight participants who met the above criteria for in-depth interviews, as follows:

- Four participants who belonged to the subgroups included two undergraduate students and two parents who worked/volunteered within the local collaborative.
- One participant was one of the second set of two primary co-investigators for the Fellows Foundation grant.
- One participant was a staff member at the University of Galisteo as well as the second primary co-investigator for the Fellows Foundation grant.
- Two participants came from the collaborative leadership team.

### *Selection of participants for focus groups*

The researcher next created two focus groups, one of which consisted of students who were participating in a mentoring program at the University of Galisteo, and the other one which consisted of parents who had participated or were currently participating in the Family Centers. Both the mentoring program and the Family Centers were local initiatives of the Todos Juntos collaborative. The researcher invited all members of these two initiatives to participate in the focus groups. One focus group consisted of sixteen university students, and the other consisted of 21 parents from the Family Center. The individuals in the study were selected as members who were reflective of the entire collaborative membership and those who would give the researcher their honest opinions about the study. The subgroups were picked because they represented the people who have the least power but the most to gain.

### **Data Collection**

Data collected was qualitative in nature, came from multiple sources, and was informed by research into qualitative interviewing methods. The primary data sources for this study included documents, observations of participants, questionnaires, audiotapes of participant interviews, audiotapes of focus group meetings, and a research journal written by the researcher, all of which were analyzed to explore the experiences, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, interpretations, and decision making processes of the Todos Juntos collaborative. The participation of the researcher in the collaborative led to the formulation of key research questions and the selection of participants for in-depth interviews. From the interviews, the researcher identified certain core themes that could then be further addressed by focus groups. Analysis was ongoing, with the entire data collection process described in the researcher's research journal. This multi-faceted approach allowed the researcher to

crosscheck information and was designed to provide a well-rounded view of participants and their attitudes toward the collaborative process. By using multiple methods, the researcher gained a broader range of material to analyze than she would have through personal observations and note taking alone.

The research tools of interviews, focus groups, and research journal were part of a qualitative methods approach that provides a range of perspectives on the research processes and on the object of study, and thereby increased the validity of the findings by allowing for an examination of the same phenomenon in different ways, through “triangulation” (Wood, 2004). The aim was that the qualitative data gathered through these multiple methods could help the researcher and others understand not just results, but the reasons for the outcomes found in the study (Mertens, 2005).

Document review, interview questions, focus group questions, and questionnaires all focused on participants’ thoughts concerning any organizational changes from flat to hierarchical structure that they had observed, and/or were a part of, in Todos Juntos.

A brief description of each data collection method and its application for the study follows.

### ***Document review***

The author reviewed Todos Juntos documents as needed to augment understanding of events and chronologies. Documents included minutes of meetings, and proposals, statements, and policies issued by the collaborative as they applied to the analysis and discussion. Sign-in sheets were analyzed for participation at meetings relevant to the themes of this study to aid in selection of individuals for in-depth and follow-up interviews.

### ***Participant observations***

Some data collection was based on observations of participants in the Todos Juntos collective, including observations during informal conversations and collaborative meetings. As stated above, the researcher was a member of the Todos Juntos collaborative and had many interactions with members over several months while attending meetings and working on tasks with the team. As described above, the technique of informal conversational interviews was also employed. As Patton (1987) points out, any face-to-face interview is also an observation. The skilled interviewer is sensitive to nonverbal messages, effects of the setting on the interview, and nuances of the relationship.

### ***Questionnaire***

A questionnaire, designed with a standardized open-ended format, asked participants for background information and their attitudes toward the Todos Juntos collaborative and the education system in general. These data allowed for baseline comparisons of attitudes accessed in a more structured format than purely open-ended questioning. The questionnaire allowed participation of some members who may not have wished to participate in longer interviews and also allowed the researcher to solicit views of participants less directly involved in the organizational issues of hierarchical versus flat structures. (See Appendix A for a sample questionnaire).

### ***In-Depth interviews and questionnaires***

The researcher conducted structured and informal individual open-ended and in-depth interviews to obtain background information from participants and to further investigations based on Research Questions listed in Chapter 1 (Also see Appendix B). Individual interviews were designed to provide data based on participant perceptions of the Todos

Juntos organization. Follow-up interviews, as needed, incorporated additional open-ended questions to further elaborate on participant ideas and experiences. In addition, any translations were reviewed by a second person.

Each participant was interviewed individually. The researcher relied on tape recordings and note-taking during in-depth interviews, which lasted about one hour for the initial questioning. The research plan required sharing via email the transcript of each participant interview with the interviewee in order to confirm accuracy, validate the findings, and/or to clarify any statements made by the interviewee. Any changes or suggestions were then noted in writing as part of the analysis and the written record.

The researcher also asked each interviewee to complete a questionnaire. (See Appendix A)

### ***Parent and student focus groups interviews***

Focus groups were used to gather data in order to elaborate on the findings from interviews and observations. Focus groups provided an opportunity to discuss issues that neither individuals nor the collaborative as a whole may have considered, leading to deeper discussions of the research. The researcher interviewed members of each subgroup as a group. After ending the group interviews, the researcher turned off the tape recorder and asked subgroup members to complete the same questionnaire that the interviewees had completed. (See Appendix A) Tape recordings of the focus groups sessions were then transcribed.

The focus groups were an important part of the data collection and analysis for this study. Research demonstrates that many revealing studies result from empowering the stakeholders by involving them at the onset of the data collection process. The intent is to

involve stakeholders in the research study as mutual partners in the review of documents, so that the research truly reflects their participation (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005). Their involvement also ensures that the data reported is responsive and reliable to the collaborative partnership, and helps ensure accuracy and validity.

### ***Research journal***

The researcher kept a data collection research journal to record the process in which each step of the data collection occurred. The research journal served as a record of the data collection for this study.

### ***Ethical concerns in data collection***

The very personal, conversational nature of interview situations highlights many of the basic ethical issues of any research or evaluation method (Patton, 2002). Among these issues are confidentiality and informed consent (see Appendix C). The researcher changed the names of organizations and individuals to preserve anonymity, knowing, however, that this can never be foolproof. For that reason, even though there are no anticipated risks for participants, the researcher requested that interviewees read and sign brief informed consent forms stating that their participation was voluntary.

## **Data Analysis**

Qualitative methods, in many instances, are used by researchers in education, psychology, media studies, nursing and other fields. In this research study, the analysis is not a separate set of procedures applied to an inert body of data. Rather, the strategies employed--research problem, research design, data collection, methods and analytic approaches--contributed to an overall methodological approach and all interacted with one another (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). The analysis in this study was not intended to be an act

completed during the latter stages, but rather a pervasive activity that was ongoing throughout the life of the research project.

The analysis process was a reflective activity that informed the data collection, writing and further data collection. Analysis in this study refers primarily to the tasks of coding, indexing, sorting, retrieving, or otherwise reviewing data such as interview transcripts or field notes (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). From such a perspective, the task of analysis can be construed as data handling, and the procedures of organizing, sorting, and retrieving data are of the utmost importance. One of the first steps in the analysis was to write a descriptive narrative of events—in essence, the story of Todos Juntos—throughout the first five years of its life from August of 1999 to July 2005. During the reconstruction of the story of the Todos Juntos collaborative over these years, the researcher sought to become particularly aware of the regularities and unique events or patterns that occurred in Todos Juntos in this time period (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). To be more specific, the data analysis stages in this study included the following steps:

#### ***Data preparation***

All data collected were transcribed accurately.

#### ***Coding data***

Portions of the transcribed data were placed on 4 x 6 ruled index cards to facilitate the sorting and analysis process. These cards included the exact words of the participants. All of the data were then coded and categorized.

#### ***Indexing data***

The researcher then began to look for recurring categories that might be related to other categories and suggestive of themes.



### ***Sorting data***

The research next took the now-coded and indexed cards and put them into piles that had some similarities. Next, the researcher took the data represented by various codes and themes and linked them with particular segments of data and categories.

### ***Retrieving data***

The researcher continued to review the data, with key word and category headings indicating the nature of the data on the cards, and placed the cards in stacks according to similar codes, and/or headings and subheadings. By reviewing the data and the context, the researcher was able to examine the range of data associated with key terms, the kinds of imagery and metaphors associated with the data, and the distribution of various perceptions among the participants. The ability to identify ideas in the context of the data gathered was vital to this study. The researcher searched for meaning by looking at chunks of data, which helped the researcher notice certain concepts alluded to in the data. As a validity check, the researcher created a list of synonyms, words, ideas, and phrases that captured that concept, and then explored whether, and how frequently, the concept was directly addressed by the participants in the study.

### ***Data reduction***

The researcher reduced collected data through data selection and condensation and, in anticipatory ways, chose conceptual frameworks as instruments, and refined themes.

### ***Data display***

The researcher used diagrammatic, pictorial and visual forms as a way of illustrating what the data implied. In essence, the researcher employed the constant comparative model through which meaning was drawn through a process wherein coded data were constantly

compared and contrasted with other data, and concepts, patterns, and regularities were explored and themes were developed. Throughout the process, the researcher expanded and extended the data beyond the descriptive accounts, as she explained what the data meant in relation to Todos Juntos and other groups that attempted to adopt a participatory decision making style of working.

### **Verification Issues in Qualitative Studies**

Qualitative research results in a different kind of knowledge than is produced by quantitative research. In a sense, the words of the study participants, if they are reproduced accurately and represented fairly, are meaningful, valid and legitimate simply as testimonials. It is not the intent of the present study to “justify” qualitative findings by trying to express them in more quantitative terms. “Traditionally, social scientists have been warned to stay distant from those whom they study to maintain ‘objectivity’, but this kind of detachment can limit one’s openness to and understanding of the very nature of what one is studying, especially where meaning-making and emotion are part of the phenomenon (Coffey & Atkinson,” (1996, p.48).

As Coffey and Atkinson (1996) indicate, objectivity is very different in a qualitative study than in a quantitative one. In fact, rather than maintaining distance from study participants, Coffey and Atkinson portray qualitative research in terms of “having direct and personal contact with people under study in their own environments--getting close to people and situations being studied to personally understand the realities and minutiae of daily life” (p. 48). Thus, as Coffey and Atkinson indicate, closeness does not suggest bias through which loss of perspective is inevitable, just as distance is no guarantee of objectivity. In this

study, the researcher followed Bruyn's (1996) indices of subjective adequacy to guide issues of methodology, as discussed in the following section.

### **Indices of Subjective Adequacy**

Bruyn (1966) speaks to the methodology of participant observation in terms of a balance between objectivity and subjectivity. In other words, the researcher must be subjective enough to represent the participant views, but objective enough to see the broader picture. Toward this aim, Bruyn identified six Indices of Subjective Adequacy:

<b>TIME</b>	The more time that the investigator spends with groups, the more likely s/he is to obtain an accurate interpretation of the meanings of the group members.
<b>PLACE</b>	The more opportunities that researchers have to observe in different settings, the more familiar they become with the objects and physical aspects of participants' worlds.
<b>SOCIAL</b>	Witnessing subjects' interactions
<b>CIRCUMSTANCES</b>	under a variety of circumstances increases the observer's ability to interpret those interactions.
<b>LANGUAGE</b>	The more familiar the observer is with the language of the subjects, the more accurate s/he will be in interpreting their words and worlds.
<b>INTIMACY</b>	The greater the researcher's intimacy with the subjects, the greater will be her/his chances of interpreting their actions and interactions correctly.

## **CONSENSUS**

The more frequently that the investigator checks the interpretations with participants and receives confirmation, the more likely their meanings will be adequately represented.

The researcher strived to meet these goals. First, data collection for the study spanned a period of five years, which allowed for an accurate interpretation of the meaning of the collaborative. Moreover, during this time period the researcher had many opportunities to observe Todos Juntos participants in a variety of settings. This permitted the researcher to become familiar with and attain a greater understanding of the participants who represented all segments of the Latino community, including university students, parents, and other community, business and educational partners. Hence, the researcher had many opportunities to witness participants' interactions under a variety of circumstances, to understand the languages used among participants in varied settings, and to gain a greater intimacy with participants to be able to interpret their actions and interactions accurately. Finally, to gain consensus, the researcher involved stakeholders in the review of documents to ensure their meanings were adequately represented.

The researcher verified the findings of the present study in several ways. In traditional research terms, "verifying" means determining reliability (how consistent the findings are), validity (whether the study really investigates what you intended to investigate), and generalizability (whether the findings apply to anyone outside of this particular program). Guba and Lincoln (1989) discuss the concepts of objectivity; confirmability, dependability, credibility and transferability as alternative ways of ensuring quality of data in qualitative evaluations. Following are some ways in which this study addresses qualitative issues concerning verification of results and analysis.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the extent that the research findings can be confirmed or corroborated by others. Strategies for enhancing confirmability include searching for negative cases that run contrary to most findings, and conducting a data audit to pinpoint potential areas of bias or distortion. Confirmability is analogous to objectivity, that is, the extent to which a researcher is aware of or accounts for individual subjectivity or bias (Guba and Lincoln, 1985).

To illustrate confirmability in this study, a record of the inquiry process, as well as copies of all taped interviews and discussions, notes from interviews and discussions, and hard copies of all transcriptions have been maintained. These records are available upon request from the author of the study.

### **Dependability**

As indicated above, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 300) use the term “dependability” rather than its quantitative research equivalent “reliability.” Dependability pertains to the importance of the researcher accounting for or describing the changing contexts and circumstances that are fundamental to qualitative research. Dependability may be enhanced by altering the research design as new findings emerge during data collection. Dependability is analogous to reliability, that is, the consistency of observing the same finding under similar circumstances viewed by an outside researcher who could perform a dependability audit (Guba and Lincoln, 1985).

To ensure the dependability of the data, the researcher strove for consistency by developing and using a standard set of research questions for conducting interviews and focus groups, repeating detailed views of informants in their voice and language.

### **Credibility**

This criterion is an assessment of the believability or credibility of the research findings from the perspective of the members or study participants. The inclusion of member checking into the findings, or gaining feedback on results from the participants, is one method of increasing credibility. Credibility is analogous to internal validity; that is, the approximate truth about casual relationships, or the impact of one variable on another (Guba and Lincoln, 1985).

Credibility is addressed in this study through member checking, reviews of transcripts by interviewees, transcription of interviews (versus notetaking alone).

### **Transferability**

Transferability applies to the degree that findings can be transferred or generalized to other settings, contexts, or populations. A qualitative researcher can enhance transferability by detailing the research methods, contexts, and assumptions underlying the study. Transferability is analogous to external validity; that is, the extent to which findings can be generalized (Guba and Lincoln, 1985) This study can be used to contribute to the knowledge base of egalitarian verses hierarchical group structures.

These four terms for evaluating findings and enhancing trustworthiness are derived from quantitative terms, but are believed to better reflect the assumptions and epistemology underlying qualitative research, according to Guba and Lincoln (1985). These criteria can be both incorporated into a research design and be used to assess qualitative findings.

### **Conclusion**

The present study uses a qualitative methodology that combines document review, participant observation, interviews and follow-up questions, focus group discussions, and

analysis of categories and themes uncovered during all phases of the research. The researcher kept a research journal as part of her attention to the process. The choice to employ a qualitative approach was made to "engage in research that probes for deeper understanding rather than examining surface features" (Johnson, 1995, p. 4). Reliance on Bruyn's (1996) 6 Indices of Subjective Adequacy served as a guide and measure of the aim for deeper understanding.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter provides the contextual framework for this study in order to better analyze and understand the study results. Specifically, this chapter discusses background information about the organizational structure of Todos Juntos, details the researcher's evolving role within the collaborative, and provides a chronology of the collaborative's formative years. As stated above, one of the researcher's primary objectives in conducting interviews and other conversations in the course of this study was to give a voice to people not usually consulted in quests to improve education. Thus, for this study, I paid specific attention to the voices and views of eight individuals selected for in-depth interviews and participants in the focus groups in order to capture the complexities of their experiences in the Todos Juntos project. The following background information provides a contextual framework for *hearing* the individual voices recorded in this study.

#### **Personal Background**

During my work with the Todos Juntos project, my role in the collaborative during its formative years changed. I began with the project of Todos Juntos as an outsider; i.e., a passive participant making minimal contributions. However, based on my extensive participation in other community-related groups and activities, the collaborative soon invited me to join them for the community assistance that I could lend the project. I became an active participant in Todos Juntos when the collaborative asked me to work as a community representative and help write the Kindergarten through Grade-12 (K-12) section of a multi-million dollar grant application that the collaborative was preparing to submit to the Fellows



Foundation. I came to the collaborative from the ranks of the local school district as a K-12 educator, teacher and administrator. Although I acted as a participant/observer early on within the collaborative, I have now been out of the collaborative for several years. The remainder of this chapter provides a descriptive and interpretive analysis of my first years with the collaborative.

### **Fellows Foundation Grant Application Process (1997-1999)**

Writing of the initial Fellows Foundation grant began early in 1997 and continued until the final grant was awarded to Todos Juntos in 1999. The writing team for the initial grant consisted mostly of university officials (vice presidents, directors and professors, K-12 leaders, superintendents, and associate superintendents, college professors) along with several parents and students from the local community who, in essence, represented the intended beneficiaries of the grant.

After about six months into the writing of the initial grant, which necessitated the collaborative efforts of many people, the writing team recognized the need for a director to lead the initiative. I was then invited to meet with a university official who asked me to consider leading the initiative. After much consideration and conversation with my local school superintendent, mutually agreed upon arrangements were made so that I could act as a K-12 principal *on loan* to the University for the Life of the grant. Hence, my work began as the director of the project.

### **Fellows Foundation Grant Award (1999)**

I viewed the award of such a large, multi-million dollar grant from the Fellows Foundation to be quite a *coup*, from the university's perspective. That is, university officials were elated to have been awarded such a generous grant that they could attribute to

themselves. In fact, one of the most significant lessons I learned about grants and financial awards from the university's perspective, was the tremendous importance and prestige placed on recipients of large, comprehensive grants. The Fellow Foundations grant was not only of significant value for creating opportunities for educational reform, but it also came with tremendous potential for increased job opportunities and promotions for Galisteo participants, especially since the university is a research extensive. It was surprising to me to see this angle of an exciting, large-scale project designed to help and support Latino students and their communities.

***Fellows Foundation Grant Initial Phase I (1999-2000)***

At the beginning of the project collaboration, participants held tremendous hope and excitement about being able to address the concerns of Hispanics/Latinos through the collaborative. In directing this collaborative at its onset, I was very excited to experience its unfolding and the way in which it opened many people's hearts to what could potentially lead to institutional change in educational facilities from preschool through graduate school (P-20). While past initiatives (i.e., other Latino projects) had struggled over the role of the leader and who would lead, the leader's role in Todos Juntos was stipulated in the grant to be that of a project *facilitator*; i.e., a leader whose role was to facilitate the progression of participants towards project goals and objectives rather than to lead by direct order. Over time, however, subtle discord among participants began to emerge, caused primarily by various levels of jealousy, or *la envidia* in Spanish. Most of the inner fighting was among people of the same race and, in essence, was all about how they could improve their careers on the backs of their own people. It became increasingly difficult to maintain a collaborative

spirit in an atmosphere that emphasized money and ambition. Many of the interview results reflect collaborative members' reactions to such a competitive environment.

### ***Fellows Foundation Grant Implementation***

The Todos Juntos collaborative can be best described, during the implementation phases of the Fellows Foundation grant, by using a chronology as outlined below. The chronology reflects the changing dynamics during the implementation phase that may have affected members interviewed for this manuscript and provides a further context for the results described in Chapter 5.

#### *Implementation Phase II (2000-2005)*

- In 2000, Fellow Foundation awards the University of Galisteo 1.2 million dollars for local Albuquerque Project work. (Director of Student Affairs named as Primary Investigator.)
- Fellows Foundation awards a statewide grant to the University of Galisteo for two other institutes of higher education (IHE) in the southern and northern part of the state to work together with the University of Galisteo on statewide initiatives' for Latino students and families. (4.2 million dollars)
- Researcher at this time is asked to become the director of the project
- Objectives stipulated for the Fellows Foundation grants are as follows:
  - a. Bring together disparate groups for a common cause to create common ground.
  - b. Create a *flat* organizational structure from a hierarchy in education.
  - c. Document program activities (Santiago, 2007)

- Establishment of statewide leadership team, consisting of K-16 educators, family and community members, business community members, nonprofit organization members, and researcher as a representative of the leadership team (i.e., director). An organizational chart of the leadership team is provided in Appendix E.
- Establishment of local leadership/executive leadership team, consisting of a K-12 educator, parent, university student, business partner, nonprofit partner, IHE member, university vice president, and university primary investigator. An organizational chart of the local leadership team is provided in Appendix F.
- Establishment of the following programs: *los companeros* mentoring, educational access rooms, family centers, summer bridge reading/math programs, Hispanic teacher pipeline, educational research, UNM law mentoring, Chicano studies, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) college readiness, college campus visits, and student leadership camps.
- New Mexico sustains the Programmatic Initiatives via a recurring line item of \$1.2 million dollars a year through New Mexico Department of Higher Education.

*Implementation Phase III (2005-2006)*

- In 2005, Fellows Foundation approaches the New Mexico Todos Juntos collaborative about an additional policy grant; this grant is awarded through the University of Galisteo for conducting policy work with Todos Juntos in New Mexico. Objectives stipulated for the new Fellows Foundation policy grant are as follows:
  - a. Lobby on the local and national level for Latino education (i.e., allow immigrant students to receive the NM lottery scholarship, cultural competency for educators in the K-12 classroom).

- b. Lobby to institutionalize culturally rooted best practices in the classrooms across New Mexico.
  - c. Engage in policy work with national organizations, including the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, the National Council of State Legislators, and the White House Initiative on Hispanic Americans.
  - d. Bring together one collective voice to the New Mexico Legislator about issues impacting Latino education.
- In 2005, primary investigator changes from Director of Student Services to a joint partnership between the Dean of Galisteo Law School and the Office of the President University of Galisteo.
  - Statewide leadership team at this time is quite large; most of the original members of the Todos Juntos grant are still participating, together with several new partners.
  - Organizational participants remain the same (K-16 educators, families and community, businesses, nonprofit organizations, researcher (who is no longer project director)).
  - Local leadership/executive leadership team members remain the same.
  - Todos Juntos programs continue now with funding from the New Mexico State Legislature).

*Beginning of the End (2006)*

- In 2006, conflict begins.
- Parent members of group begin having internal conflicts with one another (i.e., imposing hierarchal practices on each other.)
- New principal investigators intervene in the internal conflict with parent group.

- New director hired in student retention.
- Programs are still operational but paid for by New Mexico Legislative dollars.
- Policy grant continues operating toward completion in 2008.
- In 2010, Todos Juntos programs continue at the University of Galisteo under a new principal investigator.

From this chronology, it is clear that the origins of the project required diversity of participants across education, community and business, with a special emphasis on including parents and students in the process. Yet, as noted in 2000, no specific efforts were directed toward how different ethnic members of the Latino community would work together. By 2005, conflicts emerged as assessed by independent evaluators. These conflicts were tied to the organization of the collaborative and the difficulties of maintaining a *flat* organizational structure, which eventually continued into the future with a more typical, hierarchical university style program. Results from interviews, which will be discussed in Chapter 5, provide evidence of the tremendous concern among collaborative members about the impacts of conflict on operating methods and attitudes. Many were concerned about how to manage the project. A review of the University of Galisteo's management practices provided below, lends an important perspective for an understanding the results of this study.

### ***Leadership and Grant Management***

The Todos Juntos project began when University of Galisteo administrators heard about educational grants to be awarded by the Fellows Foundation. Galisteo officials (e.g., assistants to the university presidents, vice presidents, directors) who were primarily top-level or director-level personnel at the university attended a pre-proposal conference. At the time, the Foundation announced the availability of 30 grants for \$100,000 to be awarded to

select IHEs that held a long-range, educational improvement plan and to be managed by a large, integrated group of people selected from businesses, non-profits, parents, students, educators, and religious institutions (notes Todos Juntos June 1998). The Foundation wanted to see that the individual universities had developed a collaborative team, one that included the voices of all, in an apparent push to get parents and students involved in a significant manner. The Fellows Foundation wanted to place grants for Latino communities in IHEs based on its concern that IHEs were not doing enough for the growing population of Latinos in the United States (foundation notes grant 1999). The placement of these grants in IHEs meant that IHEs across the country would be committed to making significant operational and structural changes for improving educational outcomes for Latinos.

From the Foundation's perspective, IHEs operated in a mostly hierarchal way, as do so many bureaucratic institutions in our country, and the Foundation believed this method to be *least* effective for Latino communities, based on the institutions' lack of understanding of Latino culture. Since the research knowledge base in this area for Latino communities was minimal, the Foundation stipulated that the collaborative put in place a research component that would look not only at projects' success and sustainability, but examine critical functionalities as well (this research component began in 1999 and continued until 2006). The Foundation deemed it a mission of this initiative to provide the necessary funding to support institutional change in the most critical of places (IHEs), especially since the Foundation strongly believed that educational attainment would lead to greater economic, social and educational changes for some of the most needy communities (Latinos, in this case) in the United States (foundation notes grant 1999).

### *Statewide and local leadership*

Members of the University then began to put together a group of people from the Latino community that included diverse members who had varied interests to support and give input into the collaborative's long-range goal and mission to strengthen the educational pipeline for Latino students. Three universities in New Mexico gathered team members from various departments who were primarily involved in student retention and/or recruitment. Then together, the universities approached the Hispanic Statement of Cooperation (HSOC), which is a non-profit organization with member organizations that represent a large portion of New Mexico's largest businesses. One of the main goals of the HSOC is the educational advancement of the Latino population in New Mexico. The universities asked the HSOC membership to sign on with the collaborative and be the catalyst for establishing business and community partnerships. The members of this organization voted to participate and worked diligently with the universities to begin the process of writing the grant and supporting the development of what would later be called the statewide and local leadership teams. The HSOC was comprised mostly of Latinos in the community from varied backgrounds who had attended college despite tremendous struggles and barriers. In most cases, these people came from Latino families of low- to middle-class upbringing. Their professions ranged from that of lawyers, engineers, business owners, educators, counselors, superintendents, university presidents, vice president of students affairs, vice president of retention, directors of special programs, and director for El Centro De La Raza, and professors. University participants were mostly Hispanic males with one female director and all but one of the professors were white; only one of the initial six professors involved was Hispanic. These individuals were brought together and assigned to make up the initial



outside members of the statewide and local leadership teams. This team, in turn, engaged others in their respective communities to become part of this team. This group became the so-called “faces and voices of the Latino community.”

The team began to form into segments and the HSOC began giving university officials leads on other people in the local communities who were either interested in being involved or already involved with equity issues for the education of Latino students. Many of these individuals were eventually called upon to participate in the development of this collaborative project. University members told these individuals that the development of this project was one that was going to support the voice of all involved. It was a chain of people talking to one another; i.e., one person would be invited, then, in turn, that person would invite someone else, and hence the statewide and local leadership teams began to flourish and grow.

Once the word was out that the statewide leadership team was developing, more people in respective New Mexico communities began to seek membership in the project, some just because monies were attached and they did not want to be left out. (This aspect of the early development of the statewide and local leadership teams was disappointing, because some team members viewed this large grant as a funding opportunity for their organization’s existing interests.) Everyone who attended meetings was considered a member of the statewide or local leadership teams, whether they attended once or many times—no one was ever turned away.

#### *Leadership meetings*

All local and statewide leadership team meetings were conducted openly; meeting agendas were always posted on the Todos Juntos website along with welcoming invitations

to new members. In addition, invitation letters were mailed to local community groups and businesses to inform them about these meetings and the need for participation by Latino community members (notes Todos Juntos 1999 to 2003). All who attended these meetings were welcome, and everyone was asked to contribute to the meetings in verbal, written or electronic form. Attendees were also asked how the participation of the group should be heard and managed. In the beginning, discussions were held at many of the meetings about how everyone should be treated and represented, and how the statewide and local initiative should be led if it was to truly be a *flat* organizational structure that considered everyone's voice, suggestions, and thoughts equally (notes Todos Juntos meeting 1999).

#### *Grant management*

The development of the management component for Todos Juntos was unique in that the vice president of student affairs was not listed as the primary investigator, but his department was responsible for the project's fiscal management. Meanwhile, the vice president of student services named the director of special programs to be the primary investigator. It is noteworthy to mention that, at IHEs, primary investigators are the fiscal managers of any grant awarded to the university and the title of "primary investigator" (PI) at the university carries a great deal of managerial responsibility and recognition. Hence, all of the foundation funds received for the Todos Juntos community collaborative lay within the University of Galisteo's rules and regulations. That is, any use of these funds had to be in accordance with the university's managerial and fiscal guidelines, and any release of funds and any changes in the funding requests had to be approved by the PI. Therefore, the University of Galisteo's rules and regulations may have influenced the collaborative's hierarchical fiscal and organizational design, which limited the university's ability to

relinquish administrative power in order to open the way for the Todos Juntos initiative to exercise its true mission, that of operating as a flat organizational structure and giving voice to the disenfranchised for the purpose of improving Latino education. In other words, the desire for monetary gain influenced decision-making in the Todos Juntos collaborative, not voices.

Another management component of the Todos Juntos project involved the people who ran Todos Juntos meetings. They were not viewed as *leaders* of the initiative; rather, it was their job to facilitate the meetings, prepare meeting agendas with input from the leadership team, and order food. When the vice president of the University of Galisteo ran meetings, he was explicit about Todos Juntos meetings being reflective of what members wanted to discuss, and he asked that any and all questions from members, no matter the topic, be addressed. In fact, all matters, from the programmatic end to the funding end, were open for discussion.

#### *Leaders within the project*

In the beginning of the project, Todos Juntos leaders were designated by the university presidents, community college presidents, superintendents; as IHE representatives, this was one way they participated in the collaborative. Many of the IHE representatives came from the local university, community colleges, and public schools, and they held titles such as associate superintendents, vice presidents, directors. Initially, most of the high-ranking officials from the University of Galisteo were Latino males. These men were very much in command of the project and, at each Todos Juntos meeting, would state that the collaborative was operating as a diverse group but housed and sustained by the university (meeting notes, December, 1998). This staunch management style by the university was in

direct odds with grant's stipulation to operate the collaborative as a *flat* organizational structure.

During the entire Todos Juntos project, meetings were held monthly, and, eventually, the role of the leader settled into that of facilitator. The meeting facilitator called upon others in the collaborative to discuss various projects as they were rolled out, from project inception to project target attainment. To participate fully in these meetings, it was necessary that a representative from each subgroup or committee speak and provide updates about their respective project. Leaders within the project consisted of primary investigators (i.e., university appointed officials in charge of the fiscal management of the grant) and leadership team members, who comprised anyone who had been a member of the group and had participated in the group at least one or more times, including business officials, members of the community who owned and operated their own businesses, parents, students, and members of nonprofits who participated with the project in some capacity. Everyone who participated in the Todos Juntos collaborative was considered a leader in their own right.

The formation of the teams and indeed the entire leadership process for Todos Juntos as described above provides strong evidence of the complexities faced by the collaborative, the varied nature of project participants, and the ambitious nature of the collaborative effort. In these beginnings, some of the potential successes and challenges to the project are obvious.

### ***Other Issues***

Other issues played a strong role in how perceived changes impacted the collaborative: ethnicity, policy work, poverty, and communication.

### *Ethnicity*

The people of New Mexico are more commonly known as *Nuevomexicanos*, a term used to refer to Spanish-speaking descendants who have lived continuously in New Mexico for several centuries and who, while sharing some cultural characteristics with those from Mexico, identify primarily with their *patria chica*, Nuevo Mexico (Benjamin, 1996). Members of the Todos Juntos collaborative were predominantly Nuevomexicanos and, given this level of participation, project conversations and issues held steadfast to Nuevomexicano ideology with little concern or recognition to the growing population of Mexicans in New Mexico. Unfortunately, no genuine effort on the part of the Todos Juntos collaborative was made to discuss or think about how the two ethnic groups, Nuevomexicanos and Mexicanos, would function as one Latino voice for the improvement of education. This discord most definitely led to internal, cultural struggles among members of the Todos Juntos parent group (as discussed in Chapter 5). Nuevomexicanos, as a unique population in New Mexico, have a distinct set of cultural prejudices; in most cases, they are raised to see themselves exclusively not necessarily as Spaniards, but not as Mexicans either. They also see themselves as the core population of New Mexico and different from Latinos who live in other parts of the United States (Benjamin, 1996).

### *Policy Work*

In 2005, an addition to the existing grant was awarded for conducting policy work related to Todos Juntos. Specifically, this new grant was awarded to the collaborative to establish itself in New Mexico as an educational and political entity. This policy work was to look at current policy issues in education in New Mexico, which affected Latinos, and to see if the policies in place supported or were a hindrance to Latino students and communities.

The policy work that was being done was that of advising, researching, and writing new legislation for educational reform for Latino students and communities. However, during this time period, policy work for Todos Juntos was greatly impacted by a high turnover of leadership team members. Specifically, when this grant was awarded in 2005, it was taken over by the office of the president at the University of Galisteo. This takeover necessitated a change in primary investigators, which, in turn, changed the aims of the collaborative. The collaborative's approach became geared toward discussion and daily work on policy initiatives, giving members more training on how to lobby, and striving to be more sensitive to the voices of the collaborative and, in turn, to place these voices and concerns at the forefront of policy initiatives. (Todos Juntos notes, 2004). Moreover, the Todos Juntos collaborative experienced a high turnover in leadership throughout the grant years, because individuals who held the position of university president had changed four times during the life of the grant life starting in 1999. This made it extremely difficult for a large, communal collaborative such as Todos Juntos to operate. Undoubtedly, this lack of continuity in leadership affected attitudes toward the collaborative over time.

### *Poverty*

The role of poverty—and how it may have affected the group dynamics in the collaboration—was not clearly investigated or understood. That is, many of the Todos Juntos leaders, participants, and members were themselves individuals who were raised in households or communities of poverty, but they did not understand the impact of their poverty and its effects as participants within this collaborative. Although there had been other organizations in New Mexico that had worked with some of the same issues (education, poverty, and race) that were central to the Todos Juntos initiative, the previous work had not

been as extensive as that of Todos Juntos. The previous organizations had not partnered with the same organizations as those involved with the Todos Juntos project. Reducing poverty was one of the essential aims of what the collaborative was working toward in improving Latino education in New Mexico, especially since the majority of Todos Juntos projects existed in schools and communities where at least 80 percent of students and families qualified to receive free and reduced-price lunches.

Furthermore, *poverty* is not simply a monetary condition but also a cultural condition with particular rules, values, and knowledge communicated from one generation to the next that informs how people live their lives. Ruby Payne (2006) asserts that children growing up in a culture of poverty do not succeed because they have been taught the "hidden rules of poverty" rather than the hidden rules of being middle class. In this context, *hidden rules* are the unspoken cues and habits of a group. Distinct cueing systems exist among groups and economic classes. Generally, in America, this notion is recognized to be true for racial and ethnic groups, but not particularly for economic groups. Payne's work then, provides a lens through which to examine the issue of poverty within the Todos Juntos collaborative. The fact is that in Todos Juntos, discussions of poverty were minimal at best; the collaborative never closely examined the relationship between poverty and Latino education, or how poverty impacted the project and its participants. Yet, all of the schools and communities that participated in Todos Juntos maintained a very low socioeconomic status.

### *Communication*

Communication difficulties often arose within the Todos Juntos collaborative. Within Hispanic communities in New Mexico, it appeared that a level of distrust existed between formally educated people and those who were non-formally educated, who lived in

the communities targeted by the collaborative. Some of these community members had been party to other previous but similar projects that had shown minimal success. In some cases, these members saw Todos Juntos participants as “money grabbers”, as they were coined, or as people involved in the collaborative for *personal* gain rather than for the good of the entire community.

From the beginning, some people saw the Todos Juntos project as an avenue to reinvent the interactions between large educational institutions and Hispanics. New Mexico universities had garnered the monies from a very prestigious foundation and most importantly wanted to use this initiative as learned lessons that others P-20 Educational Institutions could use as established best practices for Latino students and communities. Unfortunately, these ideas were never fully implemented and put into a sustainable action plan for new and innovative ways in which universities could operate.

### **Conclusion**

The above background information sets the scene and informs the reader about the context for the results presented in Chapter 5. These results are the expressions, or *voices*, of individuals directly involved in the development and processes of Todos Juntos. Some of these voices were often not heard in the collaborative. Nonetheless, the *flat* organizational structure of the collaborative is an important part of including all members of the Latino community in educational reform.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RESULTS**

*“Parents wanted to be heard, but in order to be heard, we needed to be listened to, what our needs were”*

*--Focus group member September, 2009*

#### **Introduction**

Although, as McLaughlin (2005) writes, educational institutions have a tendency to emphasize and perpetuate hierarchical systems, the Todos Juntos collaborative was committed from the beginning to reject hierarchical, top-down practices and to create a collaborative that would operate as an inclusive, democratic, flat organizational system (Todos Juntos Collaboration Notes, 2000). The purpose of the present study, as discussed earlier in this paper, is to examine how well this flat structure was implemented and how well it served the Todos Juntos collaborative’s goals for reform. An inclusive goal statement of Todos Juntos is found in the Institute for Social Research’s summary of Todos Juntos New Mexico (2001, p.10): “The over-arching goal was to empower the community, students, and educators in New Mexico to affect positive change in our public educational system, leading to increased student success, not just for Hispanics, but for all students.” This chapter will analyze whether or not this organizational structure was able to remain consistently flat enough to support the goals to Todos Juntos.

#### **Description of Ideal Flat Collaborative Organization**

In order to create a context for analysis of the data gathered in the present study, the following is a discussion of what an ideal collaborative organization at a university based on

a flat structure would look like. This ideal collaborative is based on research on flat organizations.

Within the collaborative, the following characteristics would be expected: 1. All members would have equal say in each and every decision regarding all activities of the collaborative, from project-based initiatives to the absolute allocation of the budgetary funds; 2. All members and all representatives of the collaborative organization would be present when decisions are made; 3. There would be an agreement between the university and the collaborative that puts in place smoothly functioning operational procedures in terms of fiscal management and managerial systems, that support the collaborative's endeavors; 4. There would be an written understanding between the university and the collaborative stating that if the collaborative was to run effectively, the president and the fiscal manager of the university would put in place ways to allow for funds to be distributed in a manner that would be different from how universities usually distribute their funds, but legal, in order to meet the needs of what the collaborative members/community was requesting; 5. Members of the collaborative would share a common set of core values, including respect for one another, respect for members' cultural and gender differences, a desire to understand, and to work toward understanding, the communities that the collaborative serves, and, ideally, that all members share a vision of servant leadership.

### **Research Questions**

The primary and secondary research questions that framed this study will be addressed in the following discussion. It is important to note that I used both the primary and secondary set of research questions to frame my study of Todos Juntos. That is, in the collection of data for this study, I continually kept these questions in mind to guide the

analyses of my research. However, the results of my study not only address these questions, but they incorporate all findings that derived from the data collection and analysis.

### ***Primary research questions***

The present study focused on the organizational system of Todos Juntos in terms of flat and hierarchical structure. Primary research questions addressed participants' reactions to the system, their beliefs and understandings of any changes that may have occurred, and their perceptions of leadership roles. Thus, the following research questions emerged:

1. According to the participants, how was the Todos Juntos collaborative organized?
2. Were there any changes to the organizational structure of Todos Juntos during the period from 2000 to 2005?

### ***Secondary research questions***

Although institutions tend to be hierarchical by design, the structure of the Todos Juntos collaborative was based on a participatory decision-making collaborative model. By its fifth year, it appeared that programs within the collaborative were beginning to revert to the hierarchical systems model that stakeholders had initially rejected. Preliminary findings led to the following secondary questions:

1. How did the subgroups (Galisteo students & Todos Juntos Family Centers) make decisions?
2. What did the participants do to make sure they were heard?
3. What was the evolving role of facilitators, leaders and/or leadership in the collaborative over time?
4. What difficulties did the subgroups within Todos Juntos have in maintaining the non-hierarchical system?

5. What was the role of the leader/leadership in the collaborative over time?

### **Participants' Voices**

The following discussion provides the qualitative research findings of this study. In this discussion, I will include the voices of the participants themselves, which led me to my research findings, to support my discussion of the data analysis. Participants' actual names will not be used in order to protect their privacy. Rather, participants will be referred to by the following terms to protect their identities. The eight interviewees will be referred to as: Primary Investigator A, Primary Investigator B, Leadership Team Member A, Leadership Team Member B, Parent Interviewee A, Parent Interviewee B, University Student Interviewee A, University Student Interviewee B. Focus group participants derived from two subgroups within the local projects. The first subgroup included 21 parents from the family center who are referred to as Parent Focus Group Members 1 through 21. The second subgroup included 16 University of Galisteo undergraduate students who are labeled as University Students Focus Group Members 1 through 16.

Data analysis based on the voices of the study participants noted above revealed seven findings regarding whether or not the Todos Juntos collaborative was able to maintain a flat structure. These findings were focused in the following areas: 1) participants' perceptions of how the Todos Juntos collaborative was organized; 2) changes in organizational structure of the Todos Juntos collaborative from 2000 to 2005; 3) decision making in Todos Juntos student and family centers subgroups; 4) participants' desire to be heard within the Todos Juntos structure; 5) the evolving role of facilitators, leaders, and leadership in Todos Juntos over time; 6) difficulties and successes in maintaining a non-

hierarchical system; and 7) the role of the leader/leadership in Todos Juntos over time.

Discussion of each of these findings follows.

### **Participants' Perceptions of How Todos Juntos Collaborative Was Organized**

As discussed in Chapter Four, the Todos Juntos collaborative was organized as a collaborative effort by many individuals. Chapter Four addressed background information about the organizational structure of Todos Juntos and details about the researcher's evolving role within the collaborative, as well as provided a chronology of the collaborative's formative years. As previously stated, one of my primary objectives in conducting interviews and other conversations in the course of this study was to give a voice to people not usually consulted in quests to improve education.

Participants' perceptions of how Todos Juntos was organized varied in that some perceived the organization as a collaborative while others perceived it as a leader-directed organization. As Parent Interviewee A stated,

Somehow we seemed to get off track of what we were doing, on the outside it looked like things were good, and we knew exactly what we were about, but on the inside we were struggling for identity to be this thing that no one really knew what it meant to be organized.

In contrast, Leadership Team Member B stated,

It was a collaborative that was ever changing; sure we all had our thoughts on what we thought the organization was, and we all pushed for a common goal; for the most part I thought that we did that, even if it seemed to others we did not.

These comments by Parent Interviewee A and Leadership Team Member B suggest that there was not a commonality in how they saw the collaborative efforts. On the one hand Parent

Interviewee A shares the concern that there may have been an identity crisis in regards to how Todos Juntos was organized, if organized at all, which also led the parent to share the concern that a struggle existed about what “this thing” as they saw it was. Yet, Leadership Team Member B shares that this ever changing collaborative was a part of developing a common goal of wanting to do something good.

### **Changes in the Organizational Structure of Todos Juntos from 2000 to 2005**

Analysis of data collected in the present study showed that changes in the organizational structure of the Todos Juntos collaborative occurred between 2000 and 2005. Three aspects of the collaborative structure negatively impacted the nature of the changes in the organization of the collaborative, and served as major barriers to achieving a flat structure, which was one of the major goals of the grant. These three aspects included: 1) the University’s management structure, 2) difficulties in transforming the structure of the collaborative from a hierarchical structure to a flat structure due to participants’ lack of knowledge about how to create and function within a flat structure, and 3) gender issues among collaborative members. One aspect of the collaborative positively contributed to structural changes in the collaborative, that is, Hispanic family and cultural values and norms.

#### ***University’s management structure***

An analysis of the University of Galisteo’s management structure revealed the following: Although a legitimate effort was made to develop a flat structure using the Fellows Foundation grant monies, and an apparent willingness by the institutions of higher education to comply with these demands, the participating groups (or subgroups) remained hierarchical. Data analysis revealed that the organization or the collaboration had become

very much university-run. Of interest was that most members of the collaborative believed that they were developing and operating within a flat structure, yet this effort may have been sabotaged from the outset due to the fiscal and managerial style of the University of Galisteo.

Initially, the collaborative set out to change the ways in which institutions of higher education (in this case the University of Galisteo) worked differently with Latino communities. But data analysis revealed that university officials (e.g., vice presidents, primary investigators, and directors) in order to comply with fiscal and financial responsibilities could not let go of their control of the project. Because of this, from 2000 to 2005, the members of the collaborative viewed the university as the grant funder, even though the grant monies had come from an outside funding source (i.e., the Fellows Foundation). Since the university was fiscally accountable for the issuance of grant funds, it was in absolute control of the monies even though the Fellows Foundation expected the collaborative, as a group entity, to manage and allocate grants funds. In other words, the University of Galisteo did not fully comply with the Foundation's expectation. Although university representatives were to meet with collaborative members and ensure that members were part of every decision, in most cases, when the collaborative requested funds, the university would return to the collaborative and tell members that this was something that they could not do, that it was not allowable via the universities policies. (Leadership team notes 2000-2004) Hence, this caused considerable disparity between the expectations of the grant and what was in fact happening. The collaborative members moved, in acceptance of the status quo, toward the same hierarchical structure most educational institutions employ—and this was not anticipated by members of the collaborative outside of the university.

Furthermore, the grant itself was awarded to the university to support educational initiatives, including educational access rooms, mentoring, parent and community involvement centers, summer bridge classes, Chicano study classes and college access programs. However, the Foundation's real objective was to create systemic change in the management culture of the educational institutions (elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions), which would support a shift from a hierarchical to a flatter organizational structure. In the initial phase of the collaborative, it was stated in Fellows Foundation requirements that the project needed to be collaborative in order to receive the funding: "Awarded Grant recipients must demonstrate their involvement with educational and community partners, including but not limited to, parents and students" (Fellows Foundation 1999). In other words, the collaborative needed to set up and to operate in a manner that was reflective of total participation. This participation had to include educators P-16, business partners, parents or family members, students in the programs at all levels of the educational pipeline, and non- profits organizations . McLaughlin (2005) writes about how when setting up social hierarchies, members need to create and establish powers and duties for the different members from the onset. However, analysis of the data showed that, even though the emphasis in Todos Juntos was on a flat structure, it continued to remain hierarchical. As Primary Investigator A stated,

I think that the collaborative was considered to be something that really worked with communities, worked with students, [but] it didn't really have a hierarchical [or] organization chart. It was very flat, and I think that was challenging for an organization [the university] that houses it, [which] is not flat. (2009)

As well, Student Focus Group Member 7 states,



I think that people came together but clashed heads a bit that created a clash of ideas and a different approach, in leadership and how the collaborative ran (2009).

Many participants in the study stated that the Todos Juntos collaborative lacked full commitment from the higher education representatives (e.g., university president, vice president, directors in charge of Todos Juntos at Galisteo) to make the necessary changes to convert from a hierarchical structure to a flat structure. Parent Focus Group Member 1, commented,

they [the university] did not quite know what to do with us as we gained power in what we understood was our role in this collaborative, so they tried to control all of us and it felt like they never understood us and/or wanted us to be a real part of the university from the beginning (2009).

The collaborative, then, found itself in a dilemma. On the one hand, the educational institutions involved in Todos Juntos (specifically, the University of Galisteo, which was the fiscal grant recipient) had to make a commitment to bring participants in the collaborative to the table and allow them to function as full and inclusive members of the collaborative. Moreover, all participant members were expected to be involved in every single aspect of the work, invited to daily meetings, involved in visits to schools and universities where collaborative projects were housed, given space at the university where Todos Juntos resided, and invited to meet with all university officials, to attend all meetings with the foundation funders, to participate in all project related travel in order to participate, and to contribute to the larger statewide collaborative committees. The commitment by the university then was to ensure that necessary decisions were made to achieve collaborative goals.

On the other hand, however, this situation created conflict and discord because the collaborative had to rely on the fiscal management of the university and its procedures. The realization by members of the collaborative who were not part of the university was that the university had made a greater commitment toward obtaining the Fellows Foundation grant and, once it was awarded, the university had become somewhat complacent and seemingly less committed to working long-term toward accomplishing much needed institutional changes. For example, collaborative decision making was often delayed to allow university officials to check decision alignment with university policies and procedures. In some cases meaningful conversations regarding collaborative activities could not take place at collaborative meetings due to non attendance by university officials (collaborative meeting notes 2003-2005). As discussed above in Chapter Two, Wood (1989) writes, “in order for leadership to pass from one member to another as the structure demands, the group must begin with everyone relatively equal in status” (445). Yet, the University of Galisteo had a great deal more influence.

### ***Difficulties transforming from hierarchical to flat structure***

While fiscal management issues were at the heart of the issue of autonomy between all collaborating partners, other matters acted as barriers to achieving a flat structure. One such barrier was the process of transforming the collaborative from a hierarchical to a flat organizational structure. The specific problems that blocked this transformation from happening successfully were as follows: a) participant members’ lack of knowledge about creating a flat structure, b) lack of knowledge about what a flat structure is and how to function within a flat structure, c) gender issues amongst members, d) Hispanic family and cultural values. Wood (1989) states that to engage participants in group decision-making,

subordinates must acquire knowledge, training and experiences in such areas as group dynamics and self expression before attempting to participate in decision making on “equal” terms with superordinates.

*Lack of knowledge about how to create a flat structure*

According to analysis of the data, much of the difficulty that members had in transforming the collaborative to a flat structure could be attributed to the divide between formally and non-formally educated members of the collaborative. The various levels of knowledge, or lack thereof, among collaborative members, particularly about how to transform Todos Juntos into a flat structure proved to be a substantial barrier to that happening. One university official, Primary Investigator A, described the difficulty of creating a flat system as follows:

I think that in our great world, a flat system is terrific, but I think if people are not prepared it is tough....I think that it's like shared decision making. I think it's a lack of a hierarchical thing [In] other words, let's say I am a parent, who never graduated from even eighth grade. You are a supervisor of this program [and] you've got graduate degrees...[But] my voice is just as valued as your voice even in areas where I don't really have an understanding of something, but I just have a feeling about it. It's tougher sometimes to make decisions where the decisions are sort of emotional decisions or value-laden decisions. I am not sure that a flat system can do that. I'm not suggesting hierarchical systems are great, because they're not. (2009).

Significantly, Primary Investigator A points out the distinction between formally and non-formally educated members of the collaborative. Primary Investigator A was concerned with disparities in members' educational backgrounds and thought that this divide led to a lack of

understanding (from the parents) about how institutions of higher education are managed. Primary Investigator A's comment regarding the parent who never graduated from eighth grade suggests that a more formal education was required for participants to fully understand what was happening within the educational systems; that perhaps the non-formally educated participants did not have the required knowledge about higher education institutions to understand the process of transforming the collaborative into a flat structure.

Additionally, Primary Investigator A reveals that with regard to knowledge about management and organizational structures, members' reactions to decisions made could be emotional. These emotions were often displayed by member in that they would cry and in some cases have to step out of meetings in which heated arguments would ensue. Because the community participants were not accustomed to having a voice, their participation was often emotional. This passionate behavior manifested itself sometimes by members yelling at one another, participating in exchanges of a confrontational nature (one person standing physically up to another member), and in some cases, when participants were engaged in heated or emotional exchanges, simply leaving the meeting all together.

*Lack of knowledge about functioning within a flat structure*

This study further revealed that Todos Juntos participants held a consistent perception about the need for everyone to stay committed to the end result of what the Fellows Foundation expected when it awarded the grant: to create and operate Todos Juntos as a flat structure. However, according to some of the interviewees, there was not always a consensus among participants about how to operate or function within a flat structure; many people stated that they did not even know what a flat structure was.

The following collaborative member expressed the problem with achieving consensus in a variety of ways. Leadership Team Member A, for example, stated:

I think that most [people] wanted a flat structure, but I don't think that they really knew what that meant. And I think when you say "a flat structure" I think what they're saying is that it sounds like it's very democratic and stuff like that. I am not sure they really knew exactly what that meant." (2009)

This comment by Leadership Team Member A suggests that members of the collaborative may not have had a clear understanding of the essential operating procedures of a flat structure and how to function within such a structure. Moreover, the fact that from the project's onset, not all of the participants held the same understanding about achieving a flat structure may have set the project up for not reaching its full capacity from the start.

Leadership Team Members A and B also commented on this aspect of the collaborative, as follows:

There was an overall goal of aligning and connecting the ...the school systems.  
(Leadership Team Member A, 2009)

It was a plan to connect everybody, and that had never happened. (Leadership Team member B, 2009)

There was not really a clear line that I saw as a student of what the decision making structure was, so we felt as students that the structure had gone by the way side.  
(Student Focus Group Member 9, 2009)

Their comments indicate that they saw the flat structure as the connecting of individuals to enable an educational system to better function. In contrast, the following comments from Focus Group Parent Members 7 and 3 indicate disagreement:

Everybody at Todos Juntos had their own agenda to make the program work. (Focus Group Parent Member 7, 2009)

It can stay flat if a person who runs [knows about] flat structures...can manage a flat structure...I'm talking "manage" in a very sensitive way, because you can't manage Todos Juntos; Todos Juntos manages you. That means you can't manage the community, the community manages you. (Focus Group Parent Member 3, 2009)

The above comments by Focus Group Parent Members 7 and 3 provide evidence that the parents themselves attempted to maintain a flat structure, that is, they made considerable effort towards community management as a group rather than as individuals. As was the view of servant leader Ella Baker, who believed that grassroots reform rather than central leadership, saying "strong people don't need strong leaders" was the way in which the focus was that communities see their own leadership to become the change themselves (Ransby, B. 2005). It was clear then, at least from some parents' perspective, that one individual cannot manage a flat structure; it takes an entire community. As Primary Investigator B stated,

I think it's characterized by lots of feedback, lots of input, and lots of feedback to the input. Ah, I think that...I haven't seen very many of them work to the degree that flat systems are, are supposed to work, because in a flat system, in a lot of cases, everybody is considered to be a leader. Now that's not bad because, I would say many parents have a lot more information on non flat systems. I think when people are prepared to participate in a flat system, which simply would mean that I could say to you, "You know what? I don't know that much about this, but you do, so therefore I'm going to give you the ability to do what you think is best because I'm giving that to you

from me, but I'm not losing anything when I give it to you, you know what I mean." But I hardly... hear a lot of talk about his. I don't see much of this.

(2009)

In this comment, Primary Investigator B speaks about the wealth of information that parents and community members have about operating flat systems, and the intent to share power and leadership. But, if university members began to see that the parents had more innate knowledge of flat systems, why had they not nurtured this aspect of the collaborative? Perhaps the answer to this question lay in the fact that university participants did not, in essence, believe that non-formally educated collaborative members were strong contributors to educational reform for Latinos.

*Gender issues among collaborative members*

One of the major surprises that came out of this research was the finding that the Todos Juntos collaborative was truly male-dominated. Starting at top with the university president and the superintendent of schools, men were in decision-making positions and, in the case of Todos Juntos, Latino men were in charge (this male dominance began in 1999 and continued until the change in PI's in 2005). To date, most educational institutions in New Mexico are male-dominated and, while recognizing the growing number of minorities in our country, leadership positions across the nation are still dominated by white males. In the Todos Juntos collaborative, a white university president appointed a Hispanic male vice president, and a white male school superintendent appointed a Hispanic male associate superintendent to this collaborative. The grant was written by a team of 27 participants, most of whom were university employees; the leader was the vice president of student affairs, followed by the director of special projects and the assistant to the university president—all

of whom were Latino males. Other participants from the local public schools and community colleges selected to represent their institutions (e.g., associate superintendents, vice presidents) were all Latino males as well. All others, mostly women within the Todos Juntos project were either volunteers from the local community or participants who had been named to the project via their educational institutions under the leadership of the Latino males assigned to the collaborative. Most significantly, there was a large percentage (over 90%) of Latino males involved with the Todos Juntos project who held some type of leadership role.

From the very beginnings of the collaborative (from the proposal to the day-to-day operation), the universities, public schools and community colleges were required to assign one person from their institution and/or primary investigators to the project (individuals assigned to be the fiscal managers of the grant on the educational institutions' end). All people assigned by university/college presidents, superintendents and others, were Latino males, predominately between the ages of forty and sixty. (Later), after obtaining their degrees they ascended into their positions as vice presidents, associate superintendent's, deans and such—these were men of power and prestige. In many cases, these Latino males were the first in their families to attend college; and they graduated from college in the early to late 1960s when the Chicano movement was prevalent.

The Chicano Movement of the 1960s had many multifaceted social struggles of affirmation. This movement took on issues related to political, labor, educational and social spectrums and became known as the Chicano Movement or *movimiento* (Gonzales-Berry & Maciel, 2000). This *movimiento* had the goal of raising the status of Chicano communities in an Anglo-dominated world. The underlying issues and concerns were their political, economic and social status in the United States. The Chicano movement had its own



dynamics and process, but its leaders for the most part were Latino males (Gonzales-Berry & Maciel, 2000).

Of interest is that the Chicano Movement lacked clear female leadership; it was a male-dominated movement that included females as participants only. During the time of the Chicano Movement, Hispanic women's status or lack thereof was particularly interesting because Hispanic women, in addition to overcoming gender discrimination, also had to challenge Hispanic cultural norms, which relegated women to an apolitical, docile role (Gonzales-Berry & Maciel, 2000). Many of these problems were in relation to the limited political roles women held (women could not vote, sit on juries nor hold public office). Moreover, in the 1960s, social and Hispanic community norms relegated women to domestic homemakers and family caregivers. "The stereotypical image of the Hispana, particularly in colonial rural New Mexico, is that of submissive, cloistered, powerless women, victims of a highly patriarchal society and culture" (Gonzales-Berry & Maciel, 2000, p. 192). Many Latina feminists would argue that this stereotype still prevails.

In the 1960s, many Chicanas who entered a leadership or political role in local, state, and federal government did so by assisting their husbands or fathers. As participants in these political endeavors, these women were seen as the workers as opposed to leaders, as depicted in the film "Salt of the Earth," a story about the role of the Women's Auxiliary of Local 890 of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union. The fact that many Latino men currently in leadership roles were educated during the Chicano Movement era leads to some understanding of how the dominance of the males in the Todos Juntos project may have prevailed. In the Todos Juntos collaborative, 90 percent of the collaborative leaders were

men and 90 percent of the collaborative workers were women (leadership team sign in sheets 2000-2005).

The men who held leadership roles in Todos Juntos were appointed to these positions based on the University of Galisteo's desire to have Hispanic administrators represent the institution. As Leadership Team Member B states,

This dominance of Hispanic males is seen as a culture inside New Mexico.

(2009)

Leadership Team Member B alludes to the old methods of Hispanic male dominance in New Mexico, and how male dominance has become integral to Hispanic culture.

Primary Investigator B, who was *female*, commented that she had come to New Mexico as an outsider and encountered the large population of male dominance in her role as an educational leader on the University of Galisteo campus. Her following comment suggests that she encountered and dealt with a level of this old patronage in her work in the collaborative.

I'm an outsider, still considered an outsider in New Mexico, and there is a belief that male domination is part of New Mexico culture; that if men have access to power and money that they will use it...in kind of an old patronage kind of way. You do something for me; I'll do something for you. (2009)

Primary Investigator B's perception, as indicated above, presented itself in the research data as a gender issue, such that the men in the collaborative drove the operational decisions while the women carried out the programs, as other collaborative members also observed, as follows:

I certainly felt like there was a predominantly female...leadership that did the work end of things. (Leadership Team Member A, 2009)

We did not see much male participation, the workers if you will in the day-to-day events except at the top. I think because in most Hispanic families they are the dominant wage earners. (Primary Investigator A, 2009)

The above comments reveal a concern with the pattern of underlying gender issues. There was a definite concern within the collaborative that the women were the workers and the men the ones who gave the orders. The existence of male dominance was explained by the interviewees as based on cultural norms for Latino families and how they operated; therefore, maintaining this cultural norm within the collaborative was seen as normal by both men and women members as the following collaborative members state:

You know generation after generation copies it down [male dominance], now I'm sure it's much weaker and less obvious than it was, you know, five generations ago, but I think it's still there. At least that's what people keep saying to me. I keep pointing out examples of it because you know it does still exist. (Primary Investigator B, 2009)

I think that people from the outside and newcomers to the state feel that Hispanic male dominance is very strong here, my experience was that Hispanic men from New Mexico tried to explain to me that [this political way] was the way it was and that I needed to be careful or be aware that this is how this place works, and this is how it was in Todos Juntos.” (Primary Investigator A, 2009)

Primary Investigator B explains this phenomenon differently, in that she saw male dominance, for the most part, as generational as well as not being particular to New Mexico.

As indicated below, Parent Focus Group Member 5's suggested that the old adage of power and money is still considered one of the most important criteria for those who are in power or are able to obtain power.

The whole Mafia/Godfather idea that, you know, the people who hold the money and the power can give it out to those who do not, and in most cases this was the women of New Mexico. (2009)

Parent Interviewee A also suggested that, historically, male dominance commonly occurs and is accepted as just being a part of our society.

Some of this male dominance is very common in our history. (2009)

Student Interviewee A states,

It seemed that there were quite a bit of males in roles of power but to me it was just a common thing, in my home and in the world I see it is a common thing (2009).

While it is true that in New Mexico there are more Hispanic leaders in state government than in other states, white male dominance is still in existence. In the case of the University of Galisteo in 2010, there are 21 people in the top levels of the upper administration, one president and 20 vice presidents. Of these, 12 are white males. In the local public school district, five white males hold high administrative positions. Even in New Mexico, which is now a majority minority state, white males still dominate. The fact that Todos Juntos was male-dominated in Educational Institutions was not surprising.

It appears from the comments above that there was common knowledge of how the Todos Juntos collaborative was affected by gender issues. There seemed to be some tension

and resentment from the women in the collaborative about the male domination of the collaborative and how this situation may have grown out of the institutional placement of these individuals. It seemed that the men in charge of Todos Juntos operated under the hierarchical systems of the university and the bureaucratic educational systems, and so they were inclined to be unfamiliar with true collaboration. Note that one of the participants in this study, Primary Investigator B, stated that she did not think that this male dominance was unique to New Mexico, but that it seemed to be stronger in New Mexico (2009).

In 2004, there was a change in the primary investigators; the two new primary investigators were Caucasian women. These women came into the project after the initial four-year grant was ended; they were assigned to take on the collaborative project when it moved from “project-based initiatives” to policy-based legislative work. These particular women were assigned to their positions due to the jobs they held at the university where they dealt with policy issues. Primary Investigator A came from the law school, where policy is a major area of study. Primary Investigator B worked in the office of the president. These Primary Investigators had made a commitment to put their best feet forward and work for the good of the students and families. As Focus Parent Group Member 2 commented, “They had an uphill battle to get on board with the collaboration but seemed to have a much more balanced base of what needed to be done from the grassroots level (2009).

The two Primary Investigators spent many hours meeting with and talking to collaborative members, mostly parents and students. These interactions led to a much greater understanding of the grassroots intentions of the project. Their commitment to listen to the members of the collaborative was a change from the lack of commitment from the first

Primary Investigators of the initial four-year grant to listen and truly hear the members (Family Center Meeting Notes, 2006).

Data analysis conclusively revealed that an operational shift in the Todos Juntos collaborative occurred when the primary investigators changed, in that they were no longer involved with, and did not manage, any aspect of the collaborative, not even the monies. This change meant that now the new female Primary Investigators were in charge of the fiscal management of the program. The former male Latino Primary Investigators struggled with the idea of the loss of the grant, since at research extensive universities, grants and funding equal power and prestige. As Primary Investigator A commented,

There was some fighting amongst the former PIs to move the monies, I think because at the university level, monies signify power, and the loss of that leads to much gossip on a university campus. (2009)

As Student Interviewee B states,

There was a difficulty to be flat and inclusive, it takes more time, and you get caught up in making the easy decisions that do not take weeks, and months. Quick decisions with those in charge allow for things to move quickly (2009).

This operational change occurred after the first four years of the project. In years 2000 to 2004, the Todos Juntos collaborative was focused mostly on organizational structure and projects (i.e. how the collaboration worked together and what were the educational programs in the K-20 pipeline). In other words, the work performed within this structure involved projects (e.g., family centers, mentoring, tutoring, university classes) as part of the original Fellow Foundation grant and this work was done by the community. This focus

changed with the development of a new and continued grant from the Fellow Foundation, a grant that went from the end of the first grant in 2004 to 2007 with the focus still on structure but with the work now in educational policy development in New Mexico. It can be said, in other words, that these data provided strong evidence that the project pre 2004 was a collaborative that may have operated under strong male dominance. Much of the data showed that there were significant findings that the male dominant group created and imposed the set values that it carried to the larger group. For Todos Juntos Latino male dominance over the collaboration was most likely the greatest impediment or barrier to achieving a flat organizational structure, and in itself may have contributed to a climate of discord among collaborative members.

*Hispanic family and cultural values*

One research finding in this study (that may have allowed for greater participation by all collaborative members) was that Todos Juntos as a collaborative was heavily reliant on family and culture; that is, the collaborative was founded on those family and cultural values specific to the Latino community it served. From the outset, the collaborative, with guidance from the Fellows Foundation, was built upon the assurance that the Latino culture would be uniquely looked upon as a community with a deep conviction towards educational excellence. As well, that the collaborative would look and work as a cohesive unit involved in the educational arena. As University Student Interviewee A stated,

We are a group of passionate people; and something about the development of Todos Juntos gave Hispanic people something to be passionate about at a school; now parents, students, teachers addressing a common issue. People felt valued and safe. (2009).

Parent Interviewee B stated,

There seemed to be some honor to the words that we as a culture of people brought to this collaborative, the where you were from, to how we could help one another, to see us as a race and culture come together (2009).

Parent Focus Group Member 17, commented,

In some cases our work as a group was like a “tilma” [an outer garment worn like a cloak] something that represented us as a people, something that did not have knots at the end something that was there to carry and represented strength (2009).

A set of cultural and religious values held by Latino families would drive the collaboration. Specifically, a high level of respect was recognized by the collaborative, much like that held in Latino families. For example, rather than rush to business, as members entered the meeting room and before meetings began, most members hugged and/or spoke to each other, inquiring about the welfare of families (Transcripts of meeting notes, 2000-05). This show of respect and attention to cultural norms among collaborative members was demonstrative of the genuine kindness and respect so prevalent in the Latino/Hispano culture in New Mexico.

#### *Hispanic cultural norms*

A very important aspect of this collaboration was the use and inclusion of Hispanic cultural norms, which were demonstrated in various ways, like the hugging of one another, creating an atmosphere of *la familia* (the family). Other evidence included the relative placement of students and parents at the table and allowing these norms to be expressed, and the use of the Spanish language at every meeting, gathering, or event that was sponsored by Todos Juntos. In many cases you would hear members use Bilingual expressions; i.e., one person speaking in Spanish and another member answering in English (Collaborative



meeting notes, 2000-2005). In the case of the mentoring program, university of Galisteo students took on the responsibility of the students they mentored as very serious. In Hispanic culture the oldest sibling or older sibling, take care and are concerned for their younger siblings. The university students took this same care with their mentees.

The Hispanic women in the project took on the role of the mothers of the project, such as taking care of each other. For example, if something happened to someone from a family within the collaborative (i.e. a death, loss of a job, injured child,) the members would call one another, send e-mails, and decide that there needed to be something done on a personal level for those members. Latino families, rely on one another's strengths, and knowledge base, (much like my parents did when I wanted to go to college). Within the collaborative there were people who had varying kinds of expertise. Their expertise did not have to mean expertise that came from formal education. Rather, it could have been cooking for events within the project or setting up meeting with local community activists. These practices were included in Todos Juntos because they were familiar ways of acting as Latinos.

#### *Family values and the education system*

In Chapter One, I discussed how the data showed that Latino families held a deep-seated distrust for the educational system as a whole. As Primary Investigator B commented, I think that for Latino parents and families the bureaucracy is smothering them, and they see people who talk a good talk but, you know, come down there to get their picture taken when it's appropriate for them, ah, in doing whatever. And I think they've lost faith in the system to a large degree, you know, a lot of them think the system has failed them (2009).

Primary Investigator B and other educational institution members knew that this loss of faith in education was so embedded in members of the collaborative, that it was going to require a great deal of trust and support for Latino/Hispano families to believe in the collaboration's ability to support and change these institutions for their children. As stated by Leadership Team Member B,

I mean the overall goals were to engage more Hispanic families in their children's education. I think that is kind of the overall goal, and to focus on, Hispanic students that were being challenged in the school district by either low performance—low academic achievement or early drop outs or just families who were unable to, to understand and navigate the educational system. (2009)

As Parent Interviewee A said, "We're tired of what's going on. We need to be heard" (2009).

Student Interviewee B commented,

Our culture leads us to be passionate and that passion is what our parents bring to the table, it maybe a problem for some, because they do not understand us, we as a people want our families to be at the forefront of what is happening, I am a college student and my parents are still involved with me as a person. That is our culture, family (2009).

There was a belief by the majority of the Todos Juntos members that what was needed in the Hispanic community was a set of collaborations that worked much more towards supporting a culture that sees family values as necessary in the working of our educational systems. Some parents within the collaborative saw the need for the collaboration and family values as a move in the direction that most if not all Latino communities could understand.

You know that's a double edged sword there, because Hispanics or Mexican Americans, or Latinos are very united, and work as collaborations within our own communities, [examples of this are] you say you're gonna have a matanza (the killing of a pig in celebration), so everybody's there, you're having a quinceañera (the coming of age of a 15-year-old girl or boy) and everybody's there, so the double edged sword about this is that in everyday Latino living we do collaborate, as I mentioned above about the examples I gave, but in educational collaborations it is not as apparent." In Todos Juntos we were treated like we were doing very similar things as we do in our celebrations. (Parent Focus Group Member 13, 2009)

In the end there was an establishment of the Hispanic culture between the collaborative members (as a whole) and the melding of the cultural norms and this Hispanic collaboration.

### **Decision-Making in Todos Juntos Student and Family Centers Subgroups**

Results of decision making in the parent and university student subgroups of Todos Juntos were both positive and negative. Much of this is addressed above in the discussion concerning changes that occurred in the organizational structure of Todos Juntos between 2000 and 2005. Parents' and students' roles in decision making were important to the organizational structure of Todos Juntos because parent and university student subgroups were direct descendants of the larger Todos Juntos collaborative. At collaborative meetings, functions and program groups, members of the larger leadership team modeled through their actions both positive and negative leadership styles and behaviors to the parents and students. The parents were affected more negatively than the students in that they initially wanted a flat structure that was more *familia* (family) to them than the hierarchical, bureaucratic

structures of educational organizations as they currently exist. On the other hand the University students were the most successful of all the collaborative members in terms of staying on their tasks of mentoring other students. As will be discussed below, they did not get involved in discord underlying decision-making in Todos Juntos.

### **Participants' Desire to Be Heard within the Todos Juntos Structure**

Analysis of the data showed that although participants desired to be heard by all collaborative members, they often did not know how to ensure that they were heard and did not understand where to voice their concerns within the power structure. Three factors contributed to participants having difficulty being heard over the more dominant and existent people and structures, including: 1) the existing power structures, 2) participants' dependency on the university's fiscal management of the collaborative, and 3) participants' move to vested interest and job security.

#### ***Existing power structure***

The power structure that existed within Todos Juntos created an additional barrier against maintaining a flat structure. In other words, the power structure that was set up within the Todos Juntos collaborative (in the community) was essentially flat, but the lines of communication between this flat structure, i.e., the collaborative, and the University of Galisteo, which acted as financial and fiscal managers of Todos Juntos, was hierarchical. In other words, since the university held the purse strings, it held ultimate power as well. At times, the university would ask collaborative members what they wanted in terms of where and how the monies should be distributed. However, the present study revealed several instances when the university was not willing to change or challenge the policies set forth for distributing the funds to the collaborative partners. This was especially true if what the

collaborative wanted was in direct conflict to how the university policies were set. The vice presidents and directors would simply not challenge the status quo even if it meant failing to support the collaborative wishes and the grant's intent (leadership meeting notes 2003-2005).

### ***Dependency on university's fiscal management***

After several years (2003-2005), the participants came to understand that the collaborative was not operating as a flat structure. In fact, members realized that they could not function productively without some level of hierarchy due to the university's fiscal management upon which they were dependent. This dependency was challenging, too, because there were collaborative members who now relied on this fiscal management for job security. Therefore, the original intent of the project took a back seat to job security, and these members found themselves functioning as a part of the hierarchical system that they had originally distrusted and sought to change. As Leadership Team Member A commented,

The community tried to create that structure, rather than having it a top down structure, making it come from the bottom, but that was the real challenge, and when it came right down to it some of the community members faltered. (2009)

As well Student Interviewee B commented,

We knew that times more recently had changed, and the structure of all together had gone by [not happening] and went to the top down reality of today, the values of the collaborative no longer existed (2009).

### ***Participants' vested interest***

Vested interest is a communication theory that seeks to explain how influences impact behaviors (Crano, 1995). This theory is related to how individuals (in this case, collaborative members) perceive their right to have a direct, or *vested*, interest in the project

goals that they are attempting to achieve. For example, university administrators had vested interest in Todos Juntos. First, the administrators received much credit and attention from the University for acquiring such a prestigious national foundation grant worth millions of dollars. Universities all over the country see the awarding of grants, and the funding that is funneled into institutions of higher education, as a primary mission of their work; such grants provide sustainability, especially for research extensive institutions. The award of the Todos Juntos grant to the University of Galisteo led to the promotion of several university administrators who were charged to lead this initiative.

Todos Juntos then, had participants who held a vested interest in the project's work as a direct result of having obtained and secured this grant. However, they had little interest in seeing this collaborative through to its' major goal of creating institutional change (leadership team minutes 2003-2005). Unfortunately, university officials were not the only participants who had a vested interest in the collaborative; parents eventually became vested members as well. That is, parents and community members began in the collaborative as *volunteers*, but after one year, several parents became employees of either the University of Galisteo or the local public school district due to this project. Once their roles changed from volunteers to employees, their relationship with the collaborative also changed, because they were now employees of the very institutions imposing a hierarchical structure on the collaborative; they were now bound by the policies of their employers. Moreover, since employment improved the economic situation for these parents, their commitment to the collaborative weakened. Now, the loss or the failure of the collaborative initiative did not have the same significance to these parents as when they first started out as volunteers; now

their interest shifted to ensuring that they did not lose their jobs. Therefore, participants' desire to be heard, which was one of their initial goals in the collaborative, was not fulfilled.

### **Evolving Role of Facilitators, Leaders, and Leadership in Todos Juntos Over Time**

Data analysis also revealed that the role of facilitators, leaders, and overall leadership in the Todos Juntos collaborative evolved over time in several ways, including: 1) collaborative participants' unknowing push to maintain a hierarchical structure even though not all members, especially those who were non-formally educated, understood what this meant; and 2) lack of direction given to collaborative members about how to create a flat structure.

#### ***Unknowing push to maintain hierarchical structure***

Not only were collaborative members confused about the essential components of, and how to function within, a flat structure, the members held different perspectives about the importance and usefulness of hierarchical structures and the role of leadership. Some of the members' attitudes toward hierarchies appear below, ranging from perceived advantages of hierarchies to, in one instance, denial that a hierarchy even existed. As Leadership Team Member A stated,

I think that it was hierarchical because it needed to be. Because it was---there was a lot of resources involved, a lot of people involved that needed to be organized, that needed to be --kept moving forward, that's the thing about leaderships that it keeps moving forward, and if you do not have leadership that does that, then things fall apart and we see that all the time in places where there is not leadership. But I think that hierarchical carries with it a negative connotation, okay? And, I don't think it

needs to, but it can, and I think that, part of the reason that the negative connotation is there also goes to the strength of the leader. (2009)

Similarly, Primary Investigator B stated,

A flat system usually takes longer. In a hierarchical system, you can look at leadership from a different perspective. You've got flat over here and you've got hierarchical over here, and these are the two methods in which to push the initiative where there's large difference. You have intense hierarchical and you have intensive flat. There are times that you need an intensive hierarchical. For example if the building is on fire, we're not going to sit around and decide whether or not we ought to get out. Somebody needs to say, "Get out." We must use somewhere in between, and in doing so knowing how to use these systems to the best, understanding that a lot of this is predicated on trust. (2009)

Student Focus Group Member 2, stated,

There was an attempt to try and have a different approach to leadership in education, against the hierarchical structure that society was used to in government, both federal and state, which is very top down and heavy (2009).

The above depict the differences and disparities that existed among members of the leadership team and student who were interviewed. Specifically, Leadership Team Member A spoke about the levels of hierarchy that existed in the collaborative and noted a deep-rooted sense about operating within a hierarchy, which in this collaborative offered the element of control. In the first comment, Leadership Team Member A raised the issue of resources and the need for leaders (presumably *educated* leaders) to move resources forward. This speaks volumes about the participatory roles of the formally educated leaders versus the



non-formally educated leaders. These types of comments reflect the concern within the collaborative that only formally educated leaders understood budgets and funding. Even though Latino community members, who were considered undereducated by some, ran family homes and family budgets, these experiences did not receive the same consideration as those of the more formally educated members who dealt with and managed the many project resources. This suggests that formally educated member believed that only they had the expertise to manage resources.

In addition, Primary Investigator B also commented about the need at times to have an intensive hierarchical structure. Primary Investigator B used the example of the burning of a building to illustrate that “individuals” of their own accord would not leave a burning building without a leader ordering them to leave. This suggests that without trust among participants in an organization, individuals will only listen to the leader in charge (with the official title) whom they view to be responsible for telling them what to do.

In contrast, comments from one student and two parent members of the collaborative subgroups show a different view, as follows:

I think that hierarchy carries a negative connotation, and I don't think it needs to.

(Focus Group Student Member 5, 2009)

Because the institutions do not want to let go of that hierarchical control, you know,

“It's my school, my way of doing things,” you know.” (Parent Interviewee A, 2009)

I don't think it was a hierarchical collaborative. (Focus Group Parent Member 2, 2009).

These comments seem to suggest that Parent Interviewee A and Student Focus Group Member 5 were oblivious to the hierarchical structure that framed them as members of this

collaborative. The parents were very mindful of the opportunities that the collaborative gave them to have an equal voice. However, given their experience with educational systems, they knew that educational leaders would not give this (power) up easily. The members of the parent focus group, then, did not consider the collaborative as a hierarchy and continued to advocate for this flat structure.

***Lack of direction for how to create and operate as a flat structure***

Analysis of the data revealed that little effort was made by the university leadership involved in the initial grant to develop and understand the implementation of a flat structure. The leadership team never discussed how to operate as a flat structure nor did they ever think it was necessary to get training in this. These people included all 27 members that wrote the initial grant, most members of whom were employees of the University of Galisteo. As discussed in Chapter 2, members of The Civil Society (2005) believe that identifying values and understanding common terms at the beginning of any collaborative process can help lay the groundwork and support a creative and appropriate atmosphere for employing participatory strategies. The *intent* to operate as a flat structure certainly existed in grant documents, but these intentional terms were never discussed at Todos Juntos meetings and gatherings of the collaborative members (Leadership team minutes 2000-2004).

The fact that this issue was never discussed created conflict among many of the collaborative members, mostly leaders and parents. Confusion about these terms presented itself whenever collaborative members made decisions. Discussions would center on the question of who the final decision-maker was. At times, collaborative members would come to consensus on an issue but were kept from going forward if the decisions were in direct conflict with university policies (leadership team notes 2003-2005). Collaborative members

expressed their concerns at monthly meetings about the drive to become a flatter structure. However, in reality, this did not occur. As Parent Interviewee A states,

We would go to meetings and what we understood was our decision was not, this leads to frustration and trust on the part of some of us parents, flat to us meant we decided.

Student Interviewee A commented,

The university leadership will not give them ,others within the collaborative, mostly parents the key comfort level, and their [university officials] actions spoke louder than words, and they looked upon others in the collaborative besides them as invalid, so why would you put yourself out there (2009).

Essentially, the various communities were ignorant of how the university functioned. This study revealed that very little, if any, time was spent bringing a level of understanding to all members of the collaborative as to how institutions of higher education operated. There was such an intense push by university officials to get the grant funded that the time and effort needed beforehand was not made toward considering long-term sustainability of the collaborative. Furthermore, little attention was paid to the differences between two distinct worlds: university and community. These differences would bring out the rather notable issue of non university people entering into a university system with a common goal but lacking common operational reality. As Parent Interviewee B states,

We were meeting with them [the university] but at times they did not hear us, it may have been because they felt we did not know enough and did not spend the time to make us understand.

Student Focus Group Member 1 stated,

Why would you put your self out there to feel ignorant (2009).

The idealization of the project in the minds of the community members far exceeded the need to understand how the university operated; this would eventually include complete managerial and fiscal control of grant resources (leadership team notes, 1999).

As the members participated, they began to see that the collaborative was not operating as a flat structure, as stipulated in the grant and communicated at initial meetings (leadership meeting notes 2003-2005). It became apparent that hierarchy as a part of university policies ruled when it came down to the final decisions being made. Had the university spent some time in the initial stages of the grant, or taken time during the grant, to teach community members about university functions such as fiscal and organizational management this might have led to a common understanding instead of a sense of distrust. Parents commented about not being heard. The university, in its drive to obtain a grant in a limited timeframe, may have unwillingly pushed the initiative through without considering how the collaborative would be affected, therefore creating divisions.

### **Difficulties and Successes in Maintaining a Non-Hierarchical System**

Data analysis revealed that subgroup participants had both difficulties and successes in maintaining a non-hierarchical organizational structure in Todos Juntos collaborative at the time when they were attempting to maintain and/or move to a flatter organizational structure. Difficulties manifested as discord among parent members of the collaborative due to inner ethnic conflict and issues of race. Student members of the collaborative, on the other hand, were successful in overlooking the issues of discord.

### ***Discord among collaborative members***

There were a number of collaborative members that belonged to the Todos Juntos project, but there was a deliberate, strategic effort to get, keep and empower the parents and students within this project. It was written into the grant that in the collaborative of Todos Juntos, there would be equal numbers of people in the educational field as there would be parents and students from the local Hispanic community (Todos Juntos Grant notes, 1999). In doing this, the unintended result was that, by having more stakeholder input it was harder to keep the project moving forward. The issue of that is, the group maybe pushed the program into being more hierarchical. This happened with some of the subgroups of the collaboration.

One of the major groups that evolved in this project—the parent group—moved toward hierarchy. These parents or family members were drawn in very intentionally at the beginning of the project in 1999. Previously, in 1997, a group of university officials, lead by a university vice president, had struggled to develop working relationships with the local Hispanic community in New Mexico. To counter this difficulty, they intentionally began to work with a group of local Hispanic mothers who were active in a particular community and had been in attendance at other community meetings earlier, meetings that included top university officials. The mothers sought to make the university officials aware of the lack of support for them and their children. In 1999, the initial primary investigator met with these mothers, who knew others in the community, and the university officials asked them to bring in more parents who were active in their local communities. Because parent and community involvement was an essential component of the Fellows Foundation grant, the Primary

Investigators needed to ensure the parents had a primary role in the project and their voices were heard.

Between 2005 and 2006, however, the parents began to experience dissention within the group. Oftentimes, there was a “large elephant in the room” in terms of what was occurring with the parent group. This “large elephant in the room,” as mentioned by one of the parents interviewed, presented itself in many ways. Internally, the parent group evolved very differently and away from the project goals they had set for themselves, namely to function in a collaborative grassroots manner. Unfortunately, what occurred was a return to a hierarchy that they imposed upon themselves, (not only to function), but to impose control over one another. Initially, parents had been the grassroots developers of a project initiative called Family Centers. These centers were operated and run primarily by parent volunteers. Additionally, parents were hired by the university to supervise the family centers; this was an effort to control at the parent level. These family centers became hierarchal structures with particular parents in charge; in essence they (some of the parents within the group) made unilateral decisions and did not permit other parents to participate while making all decisions impossible. Unfortunately, the parents did not stay true to a flat structure. This was shocking to all members of the collaboration but especially to the parent group members themselves, who initially fought against the educational, hierarchical institutions. Philosophically, they (the parents) believed that hierarchical structures were detrimental to achieving educational success for Latino students. As stated by Leadership Team Member B,

It seemed like one of the subgroups; the parents in particular, (to them) it was about them and it wasn't about the kids. And so... when you talk to us about what Todos Juntos was about, it was always about the kids, so it, just became kind of interesting

that we were spending time; a lot of time at that point, trying to figure out how to manage the subgroups. (2009)

Leadership Team Member B's comment above suggests that there had become some discord within the parent group, and a concern that they (some of the parents) had forgotten why they had been a part of this collaborative in the first place. As addressed in Chapter Two, Shared Planet (2007) presented the need for much discussion about consensus in participatory decision making and how having common ground and processes help to avoid the alienation of minorities (in this case the parents) to have majority rules that do not value everyone's opinion equally. As Primary Investigator B said,

I think that prior to....whenever we were having some of those challenges, there seemed to be sort of like, parents who were afraid of another group, that was a little bit smaller, but it, it did seem to be ...we's and they's and it was uncomfortable and in some sense when we [Primary Investigators A and B] would sort of pull ourselves back to think about this it seemed to be, antithetical to the goals of the project, you know. (2009)

Primary Investigator A also commented on this same situation, saying,

Some of the parents wanted to do their own thing, and I am a believer that ... this is where some of the conflict occurred, because I'm a believer that people should be able to do their own thing, but it's [ah], it's the way they talk to each other and communicate that keeps them...that allows them to keep doing their own thing but together. (2009)

Student Interviewee A commented,

It seemed like there was some fighting going on with the families, but we did not want to get caught in the mess, we [the university students] just turned to each other and the students we were working with. (2009)

Subgroups began to form from out of the larger parent group and these subgroups were perceived to be on opposite sides. This opposition can be attributed, in large part, to the fact that many of these volunteer parents eventually became employees of either the university or school district, and this created a level of vested interest that did not exist at the inception of the collaborative when they began their work. Then, when leadership roles began to emerge from the parent subgroups, this created jealousy and distrust among the parents, who eventually started to mistreat one another. Many of the parents could no longer get along. Primary Investigator A and parents observed this happening, stating,

We certainly saw a problem with a group of parents, in that some parents were trying to dominate other parents in the process, and that was very unhealthy caused a lot of fear and problems, so that was a negative side of this subgroup. (2009)

Some of this discord may also have stemmed from the lack of equity of voice and the reality that there was still conflict between formally educated people and non-formally educated people. This conflict arose when university polices and collaborative voices did not match. Decisions would be made and members were made to feel inadequate because of their lack of formal education.

An uneducated culture feels not welcomed with educated people. I do not need that, because educated people identify families that are not educated, they perceive to help them at their level, and label them as not knowing how to be a parent. (Parent Interviewee B)



From this parent's perspective, he/she thought that parents were viewed and in some cases treated unequally, and that parents often felt *put down*, or belittled, for their lack of formal education. This parent also thought that other parents within their subgroup had moved on to a more hierarchal model of operating. As this parent also said,

In some cases we went from nothing, to being territorial to being political, within the family centers it became political.” (Parent Interviewee B, 2009)

Members of the parent group saw their own work as “side-by-side” work. They believed they were in charge of their own destiny and that of their families and communities. Parent Interviewee B commented, “I had the opportunity to have that relationship with other parents that needed to be heard or listened to side by side rather than having somebody tell you how things should be done” (2009). This side by side work, as the parents called it, included support for one another and the understanding of how they as parents operated within an educational collaborative where they often felt insecure. “When they, [educators] for example used big words, we would just reword and keep it simple amongst ourselves” (Parent Focus Group Member 1, 2009). Additionally, many of the parents felt that Todos Juntos was a collaborative that was created by them. That is how involved they were in the process and the “movement” as they sometimes called it. Some of the participating parents who were members of the collaborative stated as follows:

I'm talking about a movement with the parents, within the families—families that are fearful of being heard or being labeled. (Parent Focus Group Member 1, 2009)

We as parents want to know that we can work together and not apart, like others outside of ourselves think we cannot not, but we can support one another and work

side by side if we give it a change and that's what Todos Juntos gave us a chance to see to experience, painful or not. (Parent Interviewee B, 2009).

### *Inner ethnic conflict*

Research results indicated that inner ethnic conflict also impeded the progress of Todos Juntos towards achieving a flat structure. Consider that about seventy five percent of the people involved in the Todos Juntos parent group were Nuevomexicano and twenty five percent of the parents were Mexicano. Both groups were distrustful of each other reflecting inter ethnic problems in the community As stated previously. the majority of the members of the collaborative were native New Mexicans, or *Nuevomexicanos*, who came with their own very unique value set, which in some cases, assumed an underlying prejudice judgment against Mexicanos. Acuna, (1988), states that “many New Mexicans have historically found security in believing that they assimilated into Anglo-American culture and that they effectively participate in the democratic process” (p55). The reality was that a small oligarchy of Anglo-Americans aided by a small group of rich Nuevomexicanos, established their privilege at the expense of the Mexican masses. Many New Mexicans in order to survive economically found it convenient to separate them from the Mexican who arrived at the turn of the twentieth century. Many New Mexicans called themselves Hispanos, or Spanish-Americans as to distinguish them from other Mexicans. New Mexicans in that era isolated themselves from the rest of the southwest and Mexico during the colonial era; thus believing that this allowed them to remain racially pure and were Europeans, in contrast to the mestizo (half-breed) Mexicans. Through this process, Native New Mexicans distanced themselves from intense racism toward Mexicans, allowing them to better themselves both economically and socially (Acuna, R. 1988). This may be attributed to a lack of

understanding on the part of participants to recognize the importance of ethnic identity, especially among Latinos. In the Todos Juntos collaborative, these two ethnic groups appeared to have been treated uniformly, and equally during the course of the grant, but in reality, this may not have been the case. Benjamin, (1996) suggests that that there was ambivalence that seemed to grow between Nuevomexicanos and Mexicanos over the years that presented itself via the Spanish language. The Spanish language was shunned by Nuevomexicanos because they had now shifted to the English language for predominate use and this shift now placed them in an English speaking world, which carried more prestige in New Mexico. Mexicanos, on the other hand, were seen as *less than*, or not equal to Nuevomexicanos and this, therefore, created tremendous internal conflict within their own communities. Because there was no discussion of inner racial complexities at the onset of Todos Juntos, this lack of communication and recognition of these two ethnic groups most likely took a heavy toll on the progress of this initiative. This ethnic conflict may not have occurred had there been some thought (via discussion about this multi ethnic world) given to development of the collaborative at the onset.

#### *Issues of race*

Within the parent group, issues of race arose to the detriment of the collaborative. As one of the members of the parent group, Parent Interviewee B, stated,

The race issue was so much...the big elephant in New Mexico, and what I mean by the big elephant is ...it was very prominent to see that our own students and families within the same race [were vying] against each other. Mexican versus Hispanic, I mean Mexicans versus New Mexicans. (2009)

Student Focus Group Member 8, stated,

We as students worked mostly with Mexican students because those were the students within the schools whom were identified for us to work with, but this was not really looked at as a problem like it was for the families. (2009)

Unfortunately, from the inception of the initial grant, with the conflicts that took place, no conversation took place about the issue of race in New Mexico. It appears that collaborative members did not realize or recognize the existence of subtle feuding between native New Mexicans and Mexicans from Mexico. Therefore, it came as somewhat of a surprise when the data revealed an “us versus them” dynamic within parental groups. This displayed itself in meetings within the parent subgroup in various ways, including 1) all of the Mexican immigrant parents sat together, 2) side conversations in Spanish were discouraged by the Native New Mexican parents, and 3) conversations about monies and who should get paid often led to discussions about who had legal status to get paid or not. However, most prevalent of all was the members’ lack of respect for one another’s inner racial culture. Given the historical context of this conflict, certainly more attention should have been given to the issue of race from the start.

Issues of race seemed to permeate, in some cases, how the parents interacted. Sometimes parents seemed to have a sense of respect for one another; at other times, parents were disrespectful to each other and they would express this by ignoring each other or talking about each other, e.g., spreading rumors. So there were definite times, as revealed in meeting notes 2000-2004 and in the focus group, when parents were not always respecting one another. This prevalence of disrespect appeared to be due to the difference of cultural norms that existed between native Hispanic parents and Mexican immigrant parents (Parent center meeting notes 2003-2005). Parents would congregate as well as sit in groups at the local

meetings based on whether or not they were native Hispanic New Mexicans or Mexicans.

The data also revealed that, sometimes they (the parents) would argue about the translation of the Spanish language: such as: Was translation needed? Did they really have to do this, and some comments from the parents were, that translations were making the meetings last much longer than just doing the work in one language (Parent Focus Group, 2009). As well, it did come out in some of the meeting notes that there was a disrespect (although limited) that fell along both ethnic lines, both native Hispanic New Mexican and Mexican, in the conversations about which ethnic group was the least respected and most discriminated against.

#### *Mexican immigrants*

Upon further reflection during the writing of this paper, I began to realize there was no involvement of Mexican immigrant parents in any of the primary discussions, nor were there any conversations among the collaborative participants about the issues of intercultural race and how these dynamics might affect this project, if at all. Yet the research data revealed that there *was* conflict and the extent of it may have gone completely unnoticed had parents within the group not spoken out about it themselves. Other researchers like Benjamin (1996) have documented the discourse between Nuevomexicanos and Mexicanos and the effects of language and cultural identity and the search for creating divisional unity among inner ethnic minorities, like in this case of Latinos in New Mexico. The search for Hispanic identity in minority cultures, “is an especially critical search because in essence, their task is to develop, at the very least a bicultural identity—one for their interactions with white society and one for interactions for their own group” (p. 27). This was of significance because there seemed to be a lack of bicultural identity in the Todos Juntos parent group. As

they worked more closely together, more of the cultural conflicts manifested. As the power struggle among parents increased, their disrespect manifested itself along ethnic lines.

It is important to note, however, this clash of norms was not the case with the university students (mostly New Mexican) who managed the Todos Juntos Mentoring Program. Interestingly, these data revealed how the university students, who were significant and strategically targeted members of Todos Juntos, were left virtually unaffected by the discord that existed among collaborative members. A description of results from this subgroup brings depth to the results of the study.

### ***University students' success in overlooking issues of discord***

Per the Fellows Foundation grant requirement, the collaborative specifically intended and was planned to include the voices of university students. Students who were selected and/or targeted for their participation came out of one of the university minority directed areas of study. Letters were sent to the university's minority studies professors as well as to all Hispanic-led student organizations to invite them to participate. In order to get the students involved, the collaborative set up a project that university students could manage themselves. Through the support of the university minority programs, and in looking at their participation, it was deemed by the collaborative that there was a need to pay these students to participate by having them tutor and or mentor other students within the pipeline. The university sent out notices and put up signs for jobs specially geared towards Latino undergraduate students who were themselves in college and could be role models for other Latino students coming up and into the educational pipeline. The collaborative felt that to include these young students would mean a tremendous commitment on the part of the collaborative to support, nurture, and serve as role models, and otherwise engage these

students. Most of the students were Hispanic (native New Mexicans) between the ages of 18 and 24 years old; they had similar backgrounds, beliefs, and values as those students they were mentoring.

As the collaboration moved and changed, the university students became more invested in the work they were doing for students. Most significantly, in the operation of this mentoring and tutoring program, the students were the least affected by the discord among other collaborative members and, thus, were the most progressive in working towards achieving the collaborative goal of maintaining a flat organizational structure. The crucial aspect of this achievement was that it existed with very little consideration; in other words, no spotlight was shone on these students and their work remained equally valued as any other project. These students seemed to be unfazed by the events around them. Most interestingly, they did not allow the chaos about the collaborative, or their knowledge or lack of knowledge about the power struggles at top, to impact their work. Primary Investigator A commented that the university students kept the collaborative closer to its original intent. “I think that the kids [university students] did it better than most.” (2009)

Moreover, the results from the University student questionnaire administered in May, 2009, revealed very rich and compelling data that provided strong evidence of how a flat structure within the students’ own subgroup not only existed but functioned effectively. First, the university students described what it was like to work collaboratively in the questionnaire responses, as follows:

With Todos Juntos, we all communicate and work together closely. (University Student Interviewee A, 2009)

It was strong; it looked like college students working at different levels. (University

Student Interviewee B, 2009)

It looked like 15 wrestlers, and a coach, everyone worked together to enhance competitive styles. (University Student Focus Group Member 3, 2009)

[It was] A team of equal contributors working together, working together as a team, organized, disciplines, hardworking and a lot of fun. (University Student Interviewee B, 2009)

Members working together on promotional ideas for students. (University Student Focus Group Member 11, 2009)

Parent Focus Group Member 5, stated, “Our students at the university seemed to be the least affected of all of us” (2009).

Parent Interviewee A, stated, “the students seemed to do it best, I am not sure why, but they just seemed to do it best, they kept together and did not come to the same place of turmoil, that we as parents did” (2009).

University of Galisteo Student Interviewees A and B, as well as University Student Focus Group Members 3 and 11, spoke about the creation of their work in positive, supportive and equal partnerships. Of interest was how, even though there were various university students interviewed, for the most part, shared similar positions when discussing their work within the collaborative.

Furthermore, the university students through a questionnaire if they felt that the collaborative had an effect on the academic success of the students whom they mentored. The results showed that all respondents agreed that the collaboration did indeed support student academic success, both at the college and high school/middle school levels.



University of Galisteo students were asked to elaborate and respond to a questionnaire. Here is a compilation of their comments:

*I believe it gives an example to the students, plus when collaborations happen more ideas are used. I think that collaborations such as Todos Juntos are working hard to focus on students in need and have all the necessary support and diversity to do so. It helps them learn responsibility and how to manage time... because they can have a greater impact if they hold on to their vision...because they learn to work together and help each other. The more people included in a student's academics, the better. Through my job, I get to see first hand students' academic progress. Students are more motivated to perform well...because you always have somebody to count on. There are many people and resources available for the students...because we really concentrate on students' academic progress.*

As the researcher, I felt it was important to determine if the students felt validated within the project because we know when students feel validated, they are more likely to succeed, put their best efforts forward and flourish into what is their greater potential. The results of the questionnaire revealed that the majority (83% out of 100%) did indeed feel validated. As Student Focus Group Member 1 commented,

Being in this urban community inspired and motivated us to do this work with bilingual and non bilingual students and who they are, to be proud of being educated and allowed opportunity, this was obtainable for who us and the kids we worked with, the passion for this work came from within. We believed whole heartedly that (we) changed the world of some of these people and the work it took to empower them. We were very engaged in the mission and the life of these kids at the end, and the

passion we will take from Todos Juntos gave us something to be passionate about.

(2009)

Finally, the results from the questionnaire revealed a high level of interaction among the students. Specifically, two of the university students said that they felt they spoke out within the collaboration, seven students felt that they were involved and fully participated in the project, three stated they had limited participation in the project, and one noted that it was his/her role to make critical change as a undergraduate student within the project.

Conclusively, these data provide strong evidence of a unique opportunity for university students to gain knowledge (learn) from the contributions of each other, and by so doing, avoiding the trap many other collaborative members could not escape. That is, the university students were able to function cooperatively within their subgroup, while maintaining a cohesive, flat operating structure. This made for a very successful mentoring and tutoring program. Thus, this subgroup became the example of what this entire collaboration was supposed to become, flat and egalitarian. At the same time this group managed to avoid other difficulties experienced by collaboration members, such as the slow process of change and reliance on family and culture, described next.

### **Role of Leader/Leadership in Todos Juntos over Time**

Leadership can be problematic because leaders often have a tendency to overpower and control people. Leadership comes with a set of behaviors that are modeled and or taught in our society. The goal of the collaborative was to create an organizational structure in which all members were to have equal voice and to become leaders. However, parent members of the collaborative held the view that the educational leaders who were collaborative members, including university and K-12 administrators and teachers, needed to

change the way in which they operated not just in their words but in their actions and practices. Parent members also believed that the educational leaders were unable not to attempt to overpower and control members of the collaborative. As Parent Interviewee B stated, “[We] were trying to teach the king to be a peasant” (2009).

While analyzing the data, my intent was to stay true to the voices of those I interviewed, taking into consideration their innermost emotions concerning this project. In the findings, the term “process of change” was often used by many of the participants speaking of the project. In what context was this term generated? I began to look closely at the different aspects of the data collected; e.g., various minutes, project notes, interviews, and questionnaires. Nowhere in the formal written paperwork was it stated that this project was coined as a “process of change.” This was implied, however, whenever project meetings, gatherings, or events were conducted. University Student Interviewee A commented,

I consider this collaborative a process of change, and I called it that because we as a community were moving to try and change but it was going to have to take on the life of some process. (2009)

Primary Investigator A reaffirmed the Student Interviewee A’s comment, as follows:

It makes you scared that we can’t move fast enough for some of these programs or processes of change. (2009)

As both University Student Interviewee A and Primary Investigator A suggested, this process of change was difficult because university leadership originated from a hierarchy; yet, the members of the collaboration operated from a different vantage point. All collaborative members, when gathered for meetings of decision-making, had to refocus their efforts to ensure that they were placing their attention on one another’s voices. In other

words, they came together as separate project entities to collaborate as a single voice. This process took up so much time, energy, and focus that as the collaborative began to move and expand, the participants stopped paying attention to the ultimate goal. The only exception, which will be examined further in Chapter 6, was the mentoring and tutoring program that the university students ran. This process of change, that is, the need to refocus efforts, may indicate some of the difficulties that can take place within institutions (i.e., higher education K-12, community colleges) that seek to reform from the grassroots level up.

Given the discussion in this chapter, the following questions are worthy of further study: Is there something inherent in the structure or procedures of the decision-making gatherings that made consensus difficult? What were the particular impediments to the transition from small project groups to single voice collaboration? Did the diversity of the groups contribute to the slow pace of change by having to cover more territory between beliefs? The gap between Latino culture and family life and Latinos' distrust of education were both targets of reform that the collaborative tried to address. Were these trust issues adequately addressed?

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this qualitative research study as presented above were based on several forms of data analysis, including examination of project minutes and multiple interviews and, subsequently, were used to highlight in the words of the participants themselves about Todos Juntos' goal to maintain a flat rather than a hierarchical structure. Data analysis based on the voices of the participants in the present study revealed seven findings regarding whether the Todos Juntos collaborative was able to maintain a flat structure. These findings were focused in the following areas: 1) participants' perceptions of

how the Todos Juntos collaborative was organized; 2) changes in organizational structure of the Todos Juntos collaborative from 2000 to 2005; 3) decision making in Todos Juntos student and family centers subgroups; 4) participants' desire to be heard within the Todos Juntos structure; 5) the evolving role of facilitators, leaders, and leadership in Todos Juntos over time; 6) difficulties and successes in maintaining a non-hierarchical system; and 7) the role of the leader/leadership in Todos Juntos over time.

In summary, analysis of the data first revealed that the collaborative that set out to be a flat system, ultimately failed due to multiple barriers including, but not limited to, the collaborative's funding structure, gender issues, inner racial conflict, and discord among members. The collaborative was also found to be Latino male-dominated. Moreover, a subgroup of parents began to operate in a hierarchical manner against earlier expectations, and, lastly, university students turned out to be the most stable participants in the initiative since they operated internally as a small flat subgroup of their own. The students did not really pay attention to the conflicts within the collaborative, but managed instead to keep their attention on the younger students whom they were mentoring and tutoring.

Many collaborative members wanted the collaborative to be based on a flat organizational structure and moved in that direction on a day-to-day basis. However, they could not sustain their efforts to make the collaborative a flat structure due to fiscal constraints and policies in addition to managerial controls of the university and public school educational systems from which they were operationalized. As such, study results indicate that the collaborative did not succeed in its larger goal of systemic change for educational institutions. However, the results do seem to give credence and support to a need for Latino-based initiatives in the United States. Further discussion of these results will show others in

the future how they might identify and thereby avoid barriers to collaborative work that empowers minority groups. At the same time, these future reformers can take to heart the positive lessons from the Todos Juntos project found in the voices of the people themselves.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

The following discussion of the Todos Juntos collaborative touches on the struggle to effect positive change in our public school systems to bring about increased student success. Initially, the collaborative was built upon a flat egalitarian organizational structure that members thought would be most conducive to their aim to include Latino families and students in the educational process. Their hope was that empowerment of these families and students would lead to the increased involvement of those who had formerly been left out of the educational process. Differences in philosophy in the collaborative appeared between the grassroots members and university members who were more attuned to a hierarchical method of running organizations. Some of these differences influenced the collaborative's ability to function as a flat structure and, consequently, to serve as a model for further reform. This chapter presents a discussion not only of the barriers to change that manifested themselves in this particular collaborative, but of the successes as well. The first section of this chapter discusses the positive aspects of the Todos Juntos collaborative and some of the important lessons that came out of this grant initiative that were not included above because they did not respond to the questions asked in this study. The next section of this chapter focuses on the purpose and findings of the present study and addresses the implications of the present study as well as implications for future research. Another purpose of this discussion is to draw upon participants' voices in order to extend and further deepen the research findings. The final section of this chapter presents my reflections on the present study.

## **Major Strengths of Todos Juntos**

Continued discussion of the major strengths of the Todos Juntos collaborative from the vantage point of the participants furthers the earlier discussion in Chapter Five of participants' perceptions of others' and their own actions to make sure they were heard within the collaborative. Participants' views of the major strengths of Todos Juntos are interwoven into the discussion below to give power to their voices. In spite of the failure of the collaborative to function in a flat structure; several positive elements about the collaborative emerged during the course of the present investigation. Thus, while it is possible to learn from the mistakes of Todos Juntos collaborative, it is also beneficial to use its example to inspire others. As Primary Investigator A commented:

It's projects like Todos Juntos that are really critical to higher education because one of the things we know is that, over 90 percent of the fastest growing jobs are going to require a college degree, and it was important for our K-12 students to have a pipeline program like Todos Juntos to help prepare them, and to work with their parents as well (2009).

Many members of the collaborative were able to keep the original goals of the project in mind, including that of supporting Latino students to graduate from the various levels of the P-20 pipeline and that of encouraging community members to speak out and become more involved in the education of their children.

### ***Importance of voices***

From the beginning of the Todos Juntos collaborative there was a strong commitment on the part of the members to include conversation between educational institutions, i.e., the university and the public schools, and members of the Hispano/Latino community. Many of



these conversations led to important decisions regarding how to deal with Latino communities in the various pipeline areas. The conversations manifested themselves at meetings, in the classrooms, and in the community. Conversations between K-12 educators, university and colleges presidents, vice presidents, superintendents, parents, university students and community members were the mainstay of the project. By holding and maintaining these conversations, collaborative members were at least able to see one another's perspectives and others' varied points of view, even if they did not agree with one another in the end.

A major outcome of these conversations was that they allowed the voices of the parents and students to be heard. Most collaboration members felt that the "giving and hearing of voice" was the foundation of the project. Most importantly, most members felt that Todos Juntos was a safe environment in which to communicate ideas and opinion, that is, a place where their voices would be honored. As noted by Parent Interviewees A and B,

What it means to be heard is, first, to be listened to, and that means being able to have communication, build that relationship. (2009)

The underlying factor was how much has been done to the families and to the community from an educational standpoint. So what's on the books of theory does not necessarily work in actuality for families. (2009)

These parents' voices suggested that while the parents believed that the educators depended on theory or rhetoric in the managing the collaborative, they did not really care if the parents really understood these theories and rhetoric. Their voices also suggested that the use of educational theory and rhetoric with parents may not, in fact, be the best practice to

use when working with or for them. As Parent Interviewee B and Parent Focus Group Member 4 commented:

No other program that I know has given parents that voice, that right, education, and I am talking from experience in this part. Had it not been for Todos Juntos in that sense, I should say that most of our parents were quiet, didn't have [confidence], were timid, knew they wanted their kids to succeed but didn't know how to make that happen, were given that opportunity. (2009)

If you were quiet, you were listened to, you found out the reason why you were quiet, and then you moved forward with what your decision was. (2009)

These comments demonstrated the parents' beliefs that what was lacking in the relationship between the community and the educational institutions was that the parents' voices, beliefs, and values needed to be heard. As Student Interviewee A also stated:

It voices it, it gave back—that little –that little anchor just gave back that voice saying, “You know what? You have a voice. You have the right to say, you have the right to know, you have the right to state your opinion to what's going on.” 2009).

In addition to the parents' desire to be heard, they also spoke about the importance for members to develop the skill of listening to one another. As one parent focus group member said, “Rather than speaking I had to shut up and listen” (2009). Members of the collaborative spent an equal amount of time trying to develop *listening* as a very important part of working with one another. Learning to listen supported the development of a set of cultural norms such as respect and of a flat organizational structure to support working collaboratively with one another. The importance of voice had larger implications, too, allowing some project

members to expand connections with one another and with others outside of Todos Juntos, and to grow personally. These lessons need to be given further in-depth study in the future.

Another important finding in the study was the positive way in which the university students, i.e. the mentors, were able to operate. The university students took charge and operated within the structure that they created for themselves, seemingly ignoring all the discord and chaos that surrounded them. The university students may have been more successful in creating a flatter structure, because they came into the collaborative without the expectation of being of equal standing with the more formally educated members. In contrast, the parents bought into the line that all of them (including students and parents) would be sitting with formally educated members as equals. Students who were in the educational system as students may have had more of an understanding (although limited) that hierarchy does exist and may have just accepted their role within the collaborative as members with limited voice. This could also have been attributed to their young age and inexperience with educational systems except as students in the K-12 schools and now higher education. In other words, the university students might not have had any expectation that they would be equal to those holding the power within the project. Another issue that may have helped the students remain more true to the values of a flat system was that most students (about 90%) involved were the first in their families to go to college and they had a lot invested in being successful. Hence, they may not have wanted to involve themselves in things that might be harmful and/or distract them from what they were doing as college students. As first generation college graduates, they had a lot invested in being successful, not only for themselves, but in most case for their families and communities.

### **Success of the University Student Component to Todos Juntos**

Discussion of the success of the University student component in Todos Juntos furthers the discussion in Chapter Five of participants' perceptions of the difficulties and successes for Todos Juntos subgroups in maintaining non-hierarchical systems.

The role of the undergraduate university students who were brought into the project initially was to give feedback at collaborative meetings and to support the development of a program initiative that involved them. Most of their work was geared to mentoring and tutoring of students from middle school age on up. At the collaborative meetings, the university students were the ones with the most to contribute in a positive way (Minute Notes 2000-2005). The students shared stories of how their mentees were succeeding in their classrooms, and or how they themselves were contributing to the academic success of future generations in New Mexico. Of interest were their comments in the meeting notes, which suggested that they were obtaining and working towards student success, a primary goal of Todos Juntos. As Student Interviewee B commented, "We just did what we did best and that was work for the students, nothing else mattered to us". (2009)

When members of the project began to experience turmoil in the parent subgroup, this seemed to affect the entire collaborative in one way or another. Yet the university students stayed on track and did not allow the turmoil to change the purpose of their work. As the student surveys showed, 83% out of 100% remained validated by their experiences in the collaborative, and students themselves described attributes of operating within a flat structure. For them, the collaboration was working.

The University of Galisteo students in the collaborative were the exception and not the rule in regards to the work of a flat structure. They managed to succeed where others

were having conflict. The data showed that these students on a day-to-day basis merely did what the design of the mentoring and tutoring program called for. The mentoring component called for the university students to give a specific number of hours to mentoring and tutoring individual students in middle and high schools. This focus on a clear task may have helped guide their group performance. In addition, in interviews and the focus groups, they commented that they were in some cases oblivious to what was happening around them in the collaborative, or that they had made a conscious decision not to get involved. As Student Interviewee A and Student Focus Group Member 9 commented:

We did not react to what was happening around us; we just looked at our own full potential and what we needed to do for the kids, at times their [the kids] problems overwhelmed us but not what was happening within the collaboration. (2009)

We were very engaged, in some cases it seemed to be our mission in life, at the end it may not have not been that healthy to be so involved with our students because we had to have such a strong back bone, yet we were still green behind the ears and dealing with our own day to day problems as young students. (2009)

The university students also had many other interests and other priorities: attending classes themselves, outside family commitments, and dating and other matters that were of greater concern for students their age. Student Focus Group Members stated that they just ignored any internal fighting and negative conversations, and when they were confronted with this they turned to each other for support (2009). The students did have separate meetings in which they themselves could refocus their efforts. These meeting seemed to help them put the attention on the matter at hand, which was the tutoring work with students. Students were

able to tell that the mentoring process was working. Having measurable results may also have kept them focused.

Because many of the students within the collaborative had not been exposed to theories of formal organizational structure, they had not formed opinions that could have become divisive but instead operated naturally or with relative ease. Student leaders who attended the collaborative meetings learned about organizational structure (how to run a meeting, follow an agenda, get input), but their general approach was informal and effective. Although they may not have used the terminology, they essentially were working within a structure of participatory decision-making. As a group, the university students and the students whom they tutored in most cases had similar backgrounds (90% of the mentors and 90% of their mentees were Latino native New Mexicans). This may have contributed to the cohesiveness of their group and their ability to maintain a flat structure.

During my data analysis process, I found it to be like a breath of fresh air to read the transcripts of interviews with students and student focus groups, and questionnaires that the students had filled out, because these showed to me how resilient young people in our society can be. I believe that we need to work more closely with these students and study more about how young people seem to survive the ills that society imposes on them generation after generation.

### **Purpose and Findings**

The purpose of the present study, as discussed in Chapter 5, was to examine how well the flat structure was implemented and how well it served the Todos Juntos collaborative's goals for reform. Specifically, the over-arching goal of Todos Juntos was to empower the

community, students, and educators to effect positive change in the public educational system, leading to increased student success not just for Hispanics but for all students. As presented in Chapter 5, the results of the present study revealed seven specific findings directly related to the Todos Juntos collaborative and its ability to maintain a flat organizational structure.

First, participants' perceptions of how Todos Juntos was organized *varied* in that some perceived the organization as a collaborative while others perceived it as a leader-directed, hierarchical organization. That is, the data suggested that there was not a commonality in how the participants saw the collaborative efforts.

Second, changes in the organizational structure of the Todos Juntos collaborative between 2000 and 2005 served as major barriers to achieving a flat structure. These barriers included: 1) the University's management structure, 2) difficulties in transforming the structure of the collaborative from a hierarchical structure to a flat structure due to participants' lack of knowledge about how to create and function within a flat structure, and 3) gender and ethnic issues among collaborative members.

Third, the decision-making process in Todos Juntos student and family center subgroups had both positive and negative aspects. Decision making was *positive* in that the participants' voices were honored in decision making, whereas they had traditionally not been heard and had been underrepresented in the field of educational reform. They now emerged as important voices to be heard within the organizational structure of Todos Juntos. This was important because the participants as well as others would be directly impacted by these P-20 institutional changes in education based on their decisions. However, the parents adopted negative traits in the decision-making process, ones that are commonly used in

hierarchical educational structures, whereas initially they had wanted a flat structure that was more *familia* (family) to them.

Fourth, the participants had a strong desire to be heard within the Todos Juntos structure, but they often did not know how to ensure that they were heard and did not understand the power of their voices within the collaborative structure.

Fifth, the role of facilitators, leaders, and leadership in Todos Juntos evolved over time and led to a push to maintain a hierarchical structure even though not all members, especially those who were non-formally educated, understood what this meant.

Sixth, although difficulties and successes in maintaining a non-hierarchical system manifested as discord among parent members of the collaborative due to inner ethnic conflict and issues of race, student members of the collaborative were successful in overlooking the issues of discord.

Seventh, the role of the leader/leadership in Todos Juntos over time became problematic because the leaders often overpowered and controlled people. For example, parent members held the view that the educational leaders (e.g., university and K-12 administrators and teachers) needed to change the way in which they operated not just in their words but in their actions and practices. Parents shared with me in almost every interview and focus group meeting as well as in their questionnaire answers that they thought that there was a need for educators to really look within themselves and reflect on how they interacted with the parents. As Parent Focus Group Member 5 stated:

I think the educators wanted to change but their actions did not match what they were saying (2009).



The following discussion draws upon participants' voices to address participants' experiences of the Todos Juntos collaborative, particularly their thoughts about their personal growth through participation and shared conversations in the collaborative.

### **Success or Failure of Todos Juntos**

The following discussion of the successes and failures of the Todos Juntos collaborative from the vantage point of the participants furthers the earlier discussion in Chapter Five of participants' perceptions of how the Todos Juntos collaborative was organized, changes in the organizational structure of the collaborative, the evolving role of the facilitator, leaders, and leadership in Todos Juntos over time. Participants' views of the successes and failures of Todos Juntos are interwoven into the discussion below and give power to their voices.

At the beginning of the Todos Juntos collaborative, all members of the collaborative intended for the collaborative to have a bottoms-up or grassroots feel. In other words, the collaborative was to operate and be founded upon the premise that all parties were on equal footing, e.g., members of the Latino community wanted to be viewed as equals with members of the educational systems who held higher more centralized positions of power. As these connections were being developed, some collaborative members and participants saw the role of the collaboration differently. As Leadership Team member B commented:

I think that...from the perspective of how it evolved, which was really taking what I call stakeholder feedback, in particular the parent feedback and using it to improve what was being done, and to derive, what parents wanted, that part I would say was not hierarchical. I think it was just the opposite, it was very bottoms-up kind, of a

structure that is really what made several parts so powerful. It also--in my opinion, led in the end to some of the dysfunction (2009).

The vision varied amongst the participants; the data showed that, in the eyes of university officials, university students, business members, and non-profit organizations, the same qualities that made the collaborative a success were the same qualities that may have led to its inability to remain a flat organization. In other words, the coming together as a collaborative and striving to operate successfully as one unit in a flat structure eventually pushed the collaboration towards hierarchy. Comments from Primary Investigator B and Leadership Team Member B revealed how some members believed this came about:

I think that it [the collaborative] tried to, and I think there was every, effort made to do it, [be flat] but I think at certain points in them, the leader had to make some decisions that she needed to make, and it certainly wasn't without a whole lot of consideration (Primary Investigator B, 2009).

This participant and several others believed that the only way to move the project forward was by having a leader who would direct others. In contrast, many other parents believed that the only way to make significant changes was to have a leader whom they could trust. As Parent Interviewee A stated,

We wanted and needed someone in education we could trust, not many educators from our point are trust worthy (2009).

Leadership Team Member B commented,

This also led to some of the dysfunction, because when you have stakeholders feedback and what you're hoping is that people then begin to trust that you're using their ideas, but you won't always use them because it's not just not always possible, I

think that at some point people will say, you know you're not listening to us any more (2009).

Essentially, participants suggested that the push toward a smoothly operating, flatter structure may have led, in large part, to the destruction of the collaborative as it had originally been envisioned. The initial success of the open, inclusive flat structure may have increased expectations of all members to be heard at all times. In this way, efficiency of decision making was compromised. Or perhaps the organization itself grew large enough that some hierarchical leadership seemed inevitable. By forcing the issue, the collaborative inadvertently created an atmosphere that encouraged individuals to take charge. Moreover, it appears that the flat structure of the collaborative ran into preexisting ideas about leadership arising from the realities of keeping a focus on the big picture, that is, the students.

### ***Belief in traditional leadership***

As discussed in Chapter Five, research analysis showed the existence of male members who dominated and held control from the onset of the collaborative's fiscal and managerial structure. The predominance of leaders who were male and workers who were female seemed to be connected with the traditional male leadership and dominance seen in our society and in Hispano/Latino culture. Again, in this discussion, participants' expressions of their beliefs about the traditional leadership roles that some members took in the Todos Juntos collaborative are interwoven into the discussion below.

In most Latino communities, men are seen as dominant figures in their homes, at the workplace, and in their roles in the church. Women leaders in the collaborative were seen as major players at the inception and in the workings of the project, but they did not have control of fiscal operations. This set-up may have encouraged members of the collaborative

to absorb traditional views of leaders and leadership. Specifically, the following quotes express participants' ideas about the role of a leader in the collaborative as an individual force, not a collective one, that keeps the collaborative on track and moving forward. As stated by Primary Investigators A and B:

She was strong. Just gutsy, she wasn't afraid, and she never lost sight of what it was about (2009).

I mean, the leader was trying to grow the project, trying to be responsive to, different sections of the states needs, trying to deal with some of the tension that the subgroups, had engendered, just trying to make sure that the project itself was not neglected and also, ah, the policy piece, in other words, what does this mean for educational policy? Ah, so I think the role of the leader during this particular time was very challenging. (2009)

Well I think that there were some tough challenges where there were personalities involved, but I think the thing to your benefit and the benefit of those people in leadership positions is that you never lost sight of the kids, and that this was about them. I think that some of the changes in, positions, and some of the people changes; have helped the project move on. (2009)

In their comments, Primary Investigators A and B suggested that there was a need for leadership in the forming and sustaining of a flatter structure and that the leader needed to be strong and decisive while maintaining the educational vision for students and families. As Leadership Team Member A also commented:

This collaborative had a strong willed director, okay, and all of those things are needed in any kind of, of system to help the system move forward, from my

perspective, yeah somebody had to be the leader and has to be setting the direction and has to be ultimately making decisions, so from my perspective I think it was hierarchical. (2009)

In other words, Leadership Team Member B conveyed the view that the collaborative needed a “strong willed” or domineering leader for the collaborative to succeed all the while believing that this collaborative was necessarily hierarchical. In contrast, Parent Focus Member 18 stated:

When I first started, the collaboration always told the director what to do, and the director always led by what the collaboration asked. Whether it was statewide, the collaboration always asked –not controlled but guided by the director, and what I mean by that is, there’s decisions that were made as a whole. (2009)

The above participant comments indicate that they (the parents) struggled with what the role of a leader in the collaborative was and at the same time seemed to value leaders as essential to progress.

Another challenge that presented itself in the data involved leaders as facilitators, not directors. Leaders in the collaborative had a commitment to become different, more effective types of leaders within a system to which they were not accustomed; i.e., a system operating within a flat versus hierarchical structure. This commitment was not always met, however. The data showed that there was not much push for leaders to operate or function outside of the box, especially when they were continuing to work within the educational institutions themselves. In fact, a self-protective and hierarchical attitude took over when parents became more empowered. As Leadership Team Member A commented:

You need to get this collaborative under control, [because] they (parents, students, community members) are too out of control; they can take the institutions down (2009).

In Chapter Two, the question of how to understand the new concepts of leadership was addressed. It may be that the research discussions about new styles and attitudes that emphasize consensus could be of use conceptually for others attempting to initiate newcomers into methods of any collaborative operation. As Shared Planet (2007) describes, one leadership ideal is that of a process in which members find common ground and solutions that are acceptable to all and believed to be best for the group, all the while avoiding alienation of minorities, which majority rule often does, and valuing everyone's opinion equally. Understanding all possibilities in leadership helps prepare the way for the success of grassroots collaborations.

### ***Constraints***

Many constraints existed in the operation of the Todos Juntos collaborative, creating avenues for participant defensiveness and ways of working that somehow turned into negative and nonproductive issues. Participants' views of these constraints in the operation of Todos Juntos are interwoven into the discussion below.

*Time*, for example, was something to which the partners in the beginning did not give enough thought. Quite a bit of time was spent in the development of the collaborative and in day-to-day work without conversations about the time limit of the grant. In other words, not enough thought was given to how the Todos Juntos collaborative would become institutionalized or to how the educational institutions and the collaborative would develop and evolve over time throughout the life of the grant. Similar to the time issue was the fact

there was a need for side-by-side work, which was not nurtured and cared for in the way that the people actually doing the work needed it to be. As Student Interviewee B stated, “It seemed that as we got more into the collaboration it changed, and became complicated, the original structure had gone by the way side, and top down was the reality of today” (2009). Through this comment, Student Interviewee B suggested that as the collaborative became more complicated, the need to control became more apparent.

Another problem was that in most cases, community members did not trust the institutions and the institutions were leery of the project due to the political nature of being labeled a minority project that arguably yielded political and community power. This political and community power came from the fact that many of the participant members of the collaborative were members of communities that had strong legislative and educational leaders who were outside of the collaborative membership. Todos Juntos had gained not only local, statewide and national attention for its work, but now member participants had become more empowered individuals and voters. The university and the educational institution’s lack of commitment to truly operate at the grassroots level and lack of willingness to move to the changes that were set out in the original grant proved to be a substantial barrier towards achieving a flatter structure, which could have potentially lost them the support of the political and financial leadership of the state.

More also needs to be said about issues of the lack of trust within the collaborative. The word trust in itself for this collaboration was something that was discussed but was not truly acted upon or seen as a priority. The members seemed to forget that they were on a time and structural limit (Meeting notes 2000-2005), given that the duration of the original grant was only for four years. The commitment to address the issues that arose surrounding

trust and all that trust entails never occurred either initially or over time. Analysis of the data showed that when the project was trying to gain traction and/or develop a long-range commitment to sustainability, collaborative members and university officials could not come to common consensus because they did not trust one another. Parent Focus Group Member 7 stated,

It became a problem when we tried to trust the university, it seemed like there were games being played between the members, (us the parents) and them the university people (2009).

### **Evolution of the parent group toward a hierarchy**

The following discussion of the evolution of the thoughts of members of the parent group about hierarchy in leadership in the Todos Juntos collaborative furthers the earlier discussion in Chapter Five of participants' perceptions of decision making in Todos Juntos student and family center subgroups, and difficulties and successes for Todos Juntos subgroups in maintaining non-hierarchical systems. Participants' views of the evolution of the parent group members' thoughts about hierarchy within Todos Juntos are interwoven into the discussion below

As a researcher, I found that the most disturbing of all of my findings (to me as a Hispanic woman) was that members of one of the most relevant and powerful subgroups (the parent group) revealed to others that they began to run their own internal project in the manner in which educational institutions function, that is, in a predominately hierarchical fashion. As Parent Interviewee B commented:

Decisions were made by us as a whole in the beginning, from that came the educational participation part, no other program had given parents the voice and



although most parents were quiet and sort of timid, we did make things happen. Then we saw parent leadership change within our own group, parents were being told to shut up and more less to be silent, do not say anything, the power struggle from within was frightening (2009).

Parent Interviewee B also commented that, in essence, “no other program had given parents a voice.” This suggests that there was still a belief on the part of many parents, especially the Latino parents, that they needed someone else in authority to permit them to give their opinions and/or to participate in the educational pipeline. Moreover, the present study also suggests a greater need to study Latino parents’ reluctance to understand the power that they can exercise in making things happen in educational systems; i.e., the voices of Latino and impoverished parents are essential to creating change in education, and this study should foster further research on this phenomenon. As Parent Focus Group Member 6 stated:

Parents’ own agendas began to surface. The need for individuals to be noticed, this was the beginning of intimidation, and what we believed was taught and learned behavior on the part of these few over empowered parents (2009).

The parents may have acted in this way, because all around them they were witness to the economic and positional successes of other members of the collaborative (mostly university and K-12 school officials) who themselves had an increase in their pay and or moved up the ranks in position at the university based on their involvement with the Todos Juntos collaborative. Unfortunately, in many of the parents’ lives, they and their families struggled to make ends meet and/or had never experienced the level of recognition that they were now seeing as members of this highly visible collaborative. When their social status changed, they understood that they had gained more power both economically and socially. So they

now took the behaviors that they had either learned or been witness to, and or a part of, and used them with one another to gain economic and positional power for themselves.

As Parent Focus Group Member 6 suggested above, as well as the research findings, other parents within their own collaborative subgroup (family centers) had begun to impose the same perceived intimidation tactics that hierarchical educational institutions themselves display. Therefore, the assumption on the part of this parent and others was that they (parents within their subgroup) had learned from what they had witnessed from the Todos Juntos collaborative about how to control not only one another but the subgroup project as a whole. These learned lessons displayed themselves as they (the parents) saw members of the university get promoted within the university based on the collaborative's success. Parent Focus Group Member 14 stated,

All around us people were getting hired and more money was coming their way, for some of us it just seemed the way to go. We wanted more for our families and this for some was what we were willing to do (2009).

The fact that now the collaborative had become a job for the parents led these parents to become more involved in their own vested interests, and, hence, they no longer supported and nurtured their fellow parent group members.

Assuming that the University of Galisteo and the K-12 educational institutions did not intend for this to happen, this seemed to be a by-product of what parents in our society see as others' progress toward control and success. This, in turn, encouraged them to repeat the actions of the power and leadership that they had witnessed.

It seemed to be intentional on the part of the educational institutions from the inception of the grant that the collaborative would be *just be a project*, and that they had no

true intention of carrying over what they learned to create systemic change. The data revealed that there was not enough effort and/or structure in place on the part of these educational institutions to make the Todos Juntos collaborative not just another program on a university campus, such as often happens with many minority programs. It seemed that “upper-level university officials” wanted to support “poor disenfranchised Latino communities”, but did not give the collaborative the support that was needed to sustain its operation in a manner that would contribute to its long range sustainability. It is important to note that the collaborative as it functioned in the first few years was given a great deal of notoriety and attention due to its grant, a \$4.2 million dollar investment in the state, one of the largest, if not the largest of its kind in New Mexico. It seemed to me as a Hispanic female who viewed the collaborative through the lens of my own culture and gender, that the institutions truly did not care about this disenfranchised group of minority (Latino) students and community members, or perhaps that they took on this initiative because it was attached to a very large amount of dollars and seen as a coup for university officials. Nonetheless, it remains clear that some members of the parent subgroup itself were influenced by attitudes that were similar to those of the educational hierarchy as expressed in the data regarding changes within the parent subgroup’s operation from 2000 to 2005.

It is possible that while the project was running smoothly and without controversy, collaborative members found it acceptable for the parents to work towards what was seen as the common good. However, as the collaborative progressed, it became more apparent that the parents were witnesses to the power struggles that existed in the collaborative. As parents became more familiar with the educational system as employees and as they saw how the

power plays were taking place, they themselves stepped in to ensure their control of power within the collaborative. As Parent Interviewee A stated,

We just changed, we did not know how or why but we just changed with each other, the way we worked, the way we talked to each other, just or day to day work and passion for our own community had changed (2009).

Some parent subgroup members had risen into leadership positions that would now sustain them personally, and the goals for the entire group became second to their will for their own personal gain. As a Hispania/Latina researcher, I found this to be the most devastating part of my research findings, simply because when I read, worked and lived in some cases as a participant observer, I saw my mother in many of these women, women who were extremely smart, and who had become empowered by a collaboration in which their most inner thoughts and suggestions were finally being heard. To note that in the end the result was that of greed, power and a move towards similar leadership and systemic indoctrination was sobering. This has led me to believe that educational reform must occur all through the P-20 pipeline beginning even in pre- and elementary school. This, in turn, will affect how young students think about working together and becoming better leaders at a very early age. Moreover, this reform needs to take place where communities' ethnic and cultural strengths reside. This insight comes from the core of my being, in that I believe that we as a minority group (Hispanos/Latinos specifically) need to look within ourselves and consider what we are doing to one another and how we support or do not support one another, and further examine the negative aspects of our behaviors toward one another, even within our own race. If we can further study, be true to, and try to understand our own Hispano/Latino communities, and then take what we learn—whether good, bad, or indifferent—and develop

methods to become more empowered, resilient, and supportive of one another as a people, then we will be more equipped to work with the external world of education that we often tend to blame for our problems.

### **Personal Growth**

Within the collaborative there were unintended consequences to having all levels of people working together. These consequences led to the development of individuals (parents within the subgroup, in particular Mexicano parents) who were formerly uninvolved in the collaborative but who now became educational leaders in their own right. These individual leaders in some cases emerged out of the turmoil that the collaborative was experiencing.

For example, in the case of the parents, very timid parents began to speak up, take charge and not conform themselves or allow others within their own group to silence them. Some parents seemed to empower one another during the time when their subgroup seemed to be in major chaos. They would meet together outside of the normal group meetings. These parents stood together to remind one another of the values and morals behind the original push for collaboration. These parents pushed against the grain of the subgroup crisis and urged a return to the key issue of student success, at the same time reminding one another of the need for mutual respect. As Parent Interviewee A commented:

We finally decided that no matter what was happening that we are not going to be a community left behind, and that at the end of the fight we did something good for a child, showing us that we can do whatever it takes. (2009)

The collaborative's intention to stay flat as an organization allowed for different leaders at different times to gain experience and grow. In other words, at various times, members within the collaborative (mostly students and parents) became more involved. For

example, some members asserted themselves when things began to go awry, grew in terms of being able to speak out more, and went to university officials (the new Primary Investigators) who were now in charge of the collaborative to ask for help. The flat structure allowed all participants to have the opportunity to converse with all levels of educators, presidents, and community members. Sitting in a room where all voices were heard equally was essential to promoting the sense of the potential in each individual. This unintended cultivation of leadership and self worth caused many members within the collaborative to expand professionally into other areas. Members of the collaboration branched off into becoming teachers, leaders of non-profit organizations, speakers on circuits about Latino education and collaborations, lawyers, and doctors. Others just became more empowered, enlightened and better educated community members. The initial democratic structure of Todos Juntos helped build on the strength of what the Latino families and communities brought to the table.

Leaders who emerged were seen by the collaborative as important and key. One member in particular was a young man (a university undergraduate student) who went through the collaborative as a mentor working with high school students. All members interviewed mentioned this young man. As Primary Investigator B stated:

I saw him in his own way emerge, and I actually tried to talk him into leaving the state, not the program, going away for his graduate degree, because I really thought, um, I thought it would benefit him and then he would come back, you know, but apparently there were reasons why he didn't. I think his care for the students played a big part in this, he cared a lot about this project, so I think that sort of played into it, but I think that the project really helped grow him.

In particular, the university students recruited into the program showed not only growth but resilience in the face of difficulties experienced by other subgroups of the collaboration.

The university students' work is one of the true success stories of the collaborative. This was because they did not allow the negativity and difficulties of other subgroups to affect their own personal growth and experiences in the collaborative.

### **Implications of the Study**

Today, one of the most pervasive questions in P-20 pipelines is: *Why, despite long-term efforts by P-20 institutions, does it remain so difficult to operate in a flatter structure and a more inclusive way?* The present study is significant because it illustrates the difficulties in attempting to operate a flat structure within the hierarchical systems that currently exist. These difficulties are based on various current realities, including the following: 1). flat structures are dependent on many external factors such as the prevalence of hierarchies in our public educational systems; 2). male dominance and its place in educational institutions; 3). race, including inter-racial conflicts; 4). vested interest and its place within hierarchies; 5). Latino community members' lack of knowledge of educational systems and how they operate; and 6) attitudes toward leadership, and the realization that subgroups and/or change agents in education can be overrun by people's need to conform. The more clearly that these complex constraints can be recognized and brought into public awareness about public education P-20, the better chance that reformers have to succeed in future collaborations and the more voices that will be heard. For example, it is important that reformers address issues concerning the educational needs of Latino/Hispano communities that may differ from the needs of other communities, including the importance of having open forums and changing P-20 educational systems to address issues that impact the

academic performance of students of color and poverty. Educators in the P-20 pipeline and others who work with communities of color and impoverishment need to understand the concept of hierarchies as well as male dominance and their negative effects on Latino communities, who seem to want and need a flatter structure that much more resembles how they operate as *familias* (families).

While the effect of hierarchies is important, it is also advisable to offer alternative methods for organizing structures and to prepare participants to handle new ways of thinking about participatory decision-making and leadership. This means educating students, parents, administrators and other community members about flat structures and their potential, and preparing the groundwork necessary to maintain trust. How to best accomplish this is one of many topics for future study.

### **Implications for Future Research**

As a Hispanic woman in the middle of my career as an educator, I am excited about the educational possibilities that lie ahead for P-20 educational institutions in terms of collaboratives that involve specific targeted minorities (Latino/Hispano). From my research analysis, I was pleased to find some very promising aspects of the present study that could lend tremendous support towards achieving systemic changes for Latino communities in P-20 pipelines. First, my research revealed that there is indeed a desire and need for P-20 educational institutions to operate in a flatter structure, one that includes the culture of the participants and other cultures represented in all educational institutions in New Mexico. This indicates a need for the development of more practical models linking education and community.



For the above reasons, I believe that there is a need for future research that duplicates the research undertaken in the present study in other promising higher education institutions with strategic goals for implementing transformation from hierarchical to flatter structures. Based on the present findings, I also would recommend that there be more accountability on the part of the leadership, and perhaps in-depth training for university leadership members given by university professors in education who know a great deal about leadership and collaborations. Participants in this training can be both formally educated and non-formally educated people who have led programmatic efforts in communities such as Todos Juntos and who have supported similar initiatives in a more positive and productive manner.

Based on the present findings, I would also recommend that programs such as Todos Juntos be placed within Colleges of Education. Colleges of Education, in most cases, have a platform in place for understanding the needs of diverse communities. They also hold student achievement and academic success as one of their strongest missions, and it is imperative that the community recognize this. A primary goal of such future research would be to implement recommendations from the present findings in other areas of education, including the training and development of educators inside and outside of the classroom, including P-20 educational leaders such as principals, university deans, vice presidents and presidents. Classes in Colleges of Education across the country need to include classes on cultural/ethnic identity and cultural competency. Without proper training in these issues, educators enter classrooms ill-prepared for the students and communities that they serve. Based on the findings of the present study, educational institutions and their leaders need to have an understanding of such initiatives as well as a commitment to engage and empower educators

to partner closely with Hispano/Latino communities. Doing such work would lead more Latino students and communities into the higher education pipelines.

Research conducted to obtain the Todos Juntos grant indicated there is also room for further research on how Hispano/Latino communities can be best served within collaborations and/or through side-by-side models. More can come from this research in terms of how to truly understand the Latino culture, including inner racial conflicts within Hispano/Latino culture, the power of the Hispano/Latino language, and the role of gender bias in leadership. The results of such research could lend significant support to the design and implementation of new and innovative paradigm shifts for diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, shifts that move all members of our society towards respect for diversity on P-20 campuses, and become of central rather than peripheral importance in education.

Lastly, it is important to consider how we can take what was learned from the university students who operated the most effectively in the Todos Juntos collaborative and successfully apply this knowledge to P-20 educational settings. We educators need to take a more in-depth look at young university students and their approach to leadership in education, and how student-directed services and mentoring programs effectuate positive academic outcomes for students, both mentors and mentees. We need to measure and view the resilience of Latino young people and to consider the possibility of educating Hispano/Latino students throughout the P-20 pipeline about concepts of collaboration and the effects of collaboration on their group participation.

### **Reflection**

The Todos Juntos collaborative was designed to operate as a flat egalitarian structure, and while it did not succeed in all applications, its underlying goal to empower students,

parents and community members to effect change in the school system remains a valid and necessary one. With the ever-growing Latino population there is indeed an urgency to develop programs that truly support Latino students and to understand the role that communities can play in the educational process. Without programs like Todos Juntos that are aimed at inclusivity, an entire generation of students and communities may become unable to contribute to and participate in the economic success of our country. In the end, the internal and racial conflict among members of our own Hispano/Latino culture made me understand that there was a greater need for us Hispano/Latinos to come to terms with our internal racial conflicts and how they contribute to negative educational outcomes for our children in the broader society that we are trying to change. As stated in Chapter One, education is the “great equalizer”, and our students, communities and country are destined to failure without a strong education.

Because my intention in the present study was to give the Hispano/Latino community an opportunity to be heard, I did not seek to fully examine my role in the Todos Juntos collaborative as the former director. However, I will undertake this research in the future.

Over the years I have had the opportunity to continue practicing and refining a synthesis of democracy and hierarchy in my own leadership. Through leadership courses at The University of Galisteo, my colleagues and I have studied methods and strategies for nurturing a more enlightened leadership, especially in the younger generation. I have sought to build coalitions among leaders within the school building where I am a high school principal in order to bring about new politics in the school and to bring Latino core values into education on this campus. In my ongoing work as a principal, I have tried to instill and use values of participatory decision making by encouraging the view that all people who

work at the school are colleagues, rather than adhering to the traditional educational hierarchy of administrator-in-command and staff. I have recognized that the best leaders know how to work behind the scenes and avoid ego and power trips that often snare leaders who seek the spotlight. Most importantly, I have learned the special wisdom of the ancient Chinese sage, Lao Tzu (born 600 BC) who said, “Leadership is best when the people say, we have done this ourselves.”

**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)**

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Todos Juntos Collaborative members:

In the last three years I have been working on obtaining my doctorate from the University of New Mexico Educational leadership, and this academic experience has allowed me the opportunity to understand the workings of data collection and leadership in a very significant manner. As part of my educational work I would like to collect data from within the Todos Juntos partnership to see if there is any significance or merit to the development of a collaborative partnership which in turn may or may not lead to academic success of Hispano/Latino children and their families.

My proposed dissertation title is:

**THE POWER OF THEIR VOICE:  
PROMOTING EQUAL RESPECT AND REDISTRIBUTING POWER IN  
HIERARCHICALLY DIFFERENTIATED GROUPS**

Your responses to any questionnaires, interviews, focus groups etc., are confidential, all names places, and the collaborative will be changed to ensure privacy and \_\_\_\_\_ and will be used to help answer the question, Why was it so hard to maintain a non-hierarchical system when the collaborative initial goal was to do so.

I appreciate your allowing me to study the Todos Juntos collaborative a part of my dissertation.

Sincerely,

Karen Sanchez-Griego

<sup>1</sup> Author's Note: "Todos Juntos," the "Fellows Foundation," and the "University of Galiesto" are names in the upcoming discussion created by the author to represent actual institutions, while at the same time preserving privacy of interviewees in this paper.

1. Describe your relationship to the Todos Juntos project:

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2. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1. At Todos Juntos meetings I would speak;

Never

Sometimes

Always

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2 At Todos Juntos functions I would speak;

Never

Sometimes

Always

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3. List the people you interacted within the Todos Juntos Project? (By category and not by name, for example, 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, president of the university)

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4. What year(s) were you involved in the Todos Juntos Project?

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5. What was your main reason for taking part in the Todos Juntos Project?

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6. Describe your role in Todos Juntos:

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7. List the three ways you think the Todos Juntos Project made/make(s) a difference.

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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8. What is your age?

☐ 18-22

☐ 23-29

☐ 30-34

☐ 35-39

☐ 40-44

☐ 45-49

☐ 50-54

☐ 55-59

☐ 60-64

☐ 65-70

☐ 70 and above

9. Please check the highest level

☐ Did not graduate from high school

☐ High school graduate

☐ GED

☐ Associates degree

☐ Bachelors Degree

☐ Masters Degree

☐ Doctoral (Ph.D, J.D., Ed.D, M.D.)

10. Please describe how you identify yourself racially/ethnically.

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11. What level of education did your mother complete?

- ☐ Completed elementary school (K-5)
- ☐ Completed Middle school (6-8)
- ☐ Attended High School but did not graduate
- ☐ High school graduate
- ☐ GED
- ☐ Associates degree
- ☐ Bachelors Degree
- ☐ Masters Degree
- ☐ Doctoral (Ph.D, J.D., Ed.D, M.D.)

12. What level of education did your father complete?

- ☐ Completed elementary school (K-5)
- ☐ Completed Middle school (6-8)
- ☐ Attended High School but did not graduate
- ☐ High school graduate
- ☐ GED
- ☐ Associates degree
- ☐ Bachelors Degree
- ☐ Masters Degree
- ☐ Doctoral (Ph.D, J.D., Ed.D, M.D.)

## **Interview Questions**

### **Dissertation Karen Sanchez-Griego**

- 1 In your opinion what does it mean to be heard?
- 2 Tell me what you know about the Todos Juntos Collaborative.
- 3 Please describe your interaction as an individual in the Todos Juntos Project.
  - a. What was your role in this collaborative?  
What was the feeling from your perspective in the group?
  - b. Did this group seem like it was democratic?
  - c. Did you think the decisions that occurred in Todos Juntos were done by joint decision making?
  - d. Do you know what Joint Decision making is?
  - e. To what extent was the decision making process via your voices being heard?
- 4 Have you ever worked in a collaborative team? If so, what did it look like?
- 5 Did you know what the goals of the collaborative were/are?
- 6 What did these goals mean to you as a team member?

- 7        Were you considered a team member?
- 8        How did you become a part of this collaborative?
- 9        Why were you a part of this collaborative?
- 10       Please describe your interaction as an individual in the Todos Juntos Project.
- 11       If you stayed involved why did you? If you left why did you?
- 12       Was Todos Juntos a hierarchical collaborative?
- 13       Did you consider Todos Juntos a hierarchical collaborative? Why or Why not?
- 14       Do you know what a flat structure is?
- 15       In your opinion was Todos Junto a flat structure?
- 16       Do you think changes occurred over the life of the project?  
If so, what were those changes?
- 17       Do you feel that collaborations have an effect on students and an effect on student's academic performance? Why or why not?
- 18       Do you feel welcome at school K-20? (Local elementary, middle, high, 2 or 4 year college?)
- 19       How do you feel as parents in our educational system?
- 20       How do you feel as family members in our educational system?
- 21       How do you feel as community members in our educational system?
- 22       How do you feel as undergraduate students in our educational system?
- 23       Were you welcomed into the Todos Juntos collaborative and what does this mean to you?

- 24 Explain in your words: Do you feel that there is a need for Hispanics to have a collaborative that focuses solely on them? Why or why not?
- 25 Tell me about your beliefs of collaboration in supporting Hispanic children?
- 26 Did you see subgroups emerge within the Todos Juntos collaborative?
- 27 If so, what were they?
- 28 Do you know what a facilitator is?
- 29 What was the role of the facilitator in this collaborative from your vantage point?
- 30 What was your perception of the facilitator?
- 31 Did you see other leaders/facilitators emerge?
- 32 Do you know what a “flat system” is?
- 33 Did Todos Juntos from your point of view operate as a flat system?
- 34 What in your opinion characterizes a participatory (Flat) decision making or non-hierarchical structure?
- 35 Do you think that most institutions rely on a hierarchical structure?
- 36 Do you think that the members of the collaborative Todos Juntos wanted a (flat) structure?
- 37 Why do you believe they did or did not want a flat structure? Why or why not?
- 38 How did the collaborative of Todos Juntos operationalize a participatory system, or did they?
- 39 Were there subgroups? (ie. Gender, race, generational)

- 40        How were they formed?
- 41        Did the subgroups maintain this (flat) structure?
- 42        Could you please draw a diagram of the Todos Juntos and how it  
operated from your viewpoint?

**APPENDIX B**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE (SPANISH)**

Fecha\_\_\_\_\_

Queridos miembros colaborativos de Todos Juntos:

En los últimos tres años he estado trabajando para obtener mi doctorado del liderazgo Educativo de la Universidad de Nuevo México, y esta experiencia académica me ha permitido la oportunidad de entender las funciones de la colección de información y ser líder en una manera muy significativa. Como parte de mi trabajo educativo quisiera coleccionar información dentro de la asociación de Todos Juntos para ver si es que hay significancia o merito al desarrollo de una sociedad colaborativa que pueda o no llevar al éxito académico de niños Hispanos/Latinos y sus familias.

Mi titulo de disertación propuesto:

**EL PODER DE SUS VOCES;  
IGUALDAD EN RESPETO EN GRUPOS JERÁRQUICAMENTE  
DIFERENCIADOS**

Sus respuestas a cualquier cuestionario, entrevista, grupo de muestra etc., son confidencial, todos los nombres, lugares y la colaboración serán cambiados para asegurar privacidad \_\_\_\_\_ y se usara para asistir a responder a la pregunta, Porque fue tan difícil mantener un sistema no jerárquico cuando la meta inicial de la colaborativa era de ser así.

Le agradezco en permitirme estudiar a la colaboración de Todos Juntos como parte de mi disertación.

Sinceramente,

Karen Sanchez-Griego

<sup>1</sup> Nota del Autor: “Todos Juntos,” y “Fellows Foundation,” y “University of Galiesto” son nombres en una future discussion creada por el autor para representar instituciones actuales, mientras al mismo tiempo preservando la privacidad de los entrevistados en este papel.



1. Describa su relación con al proyecto Todos Juntos?

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2. Indique su nivel de acuerdo con las siguientes declaraciones:

1. En las juntas de Todos Juntos yo hablaría;

Nunca

A Veces

Siempre

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2 En las funciones de Todos Juntos yo hablaría;

Nunca

A Veces

Siempre

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3. Haga una lista de las personas con las que tuvo interacción dentro del Proyecto Todos Juntos? ( Por categoría y no por nombre, por ejemplo, maestro de sexto grado, presidente de la Universidad)

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4. Cual año(s) estuvo involucrado con el Proyecto de Todos Juntos?

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5. Cual fue su razón principal por tomar parte en el Proyecto Todos Juntos?

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6. Describa su papel en Todos Juntos?

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7. Ponga en lista las tres maneras en que usted piensa que el Proyecto de Todos Juntos hizo/hace una diferencia?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Cual es su edad?

☐ 18-22

☐ 23-29

☐ 30-34

☐ 35-39

☐ 40-44

☐ 45-49

☐ 50-54

☐ 55-59

☐ 60-64

☐ 65-70

☐ 70 y mayor

9. Por favor marque el nivel mas alto

☐ No gradúe de la preparatoria

☐ Graduado de la preparatoria

☐ GED

☐ Diploma de Asociado

☐ Diploma de Bachillerato

☐ Diploma de Maestreado

☐ Doctoral (PhD, J.D., Ed.D, M.D.)

10. Por favor describa como se identifica racialmente/étnicamente?

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11. Que nivel de educación complete su madre?

- ☐ Completo primaria (K-5)
- ☐ Completo secundaria (6-8)
- ☐ Atendió la preparatoria pero no se graduó
- ☐ Graduada de la preparatoria
- ☐ GED
- ☐ Diploma de Asociado
- ☐ Diploma de Bachillerato
- ☐ Diploma de Maestreado
- ☐ Doctoral (PhD, J.D., Ed.D, M.D.)

12. Que nivel de educación complete su padre?

- ☐ Completo primaria (K-5)
- ☐ Completo secundaria (6-8)
- ☐ Atendió la preparatoria pero no se graduó
- ☐ Graduada de la preparatoria
- ☐ GED
- ☐ Diploma de Asociado
- ☐ Diploma de Bachillerato
- ☐ Diploma de Maestreado
- ☐ Doctoral (PhD, J.D., Ed.D, M.D.)

## **Preguntas de Entrevista**

### **Disertación Karen Sánchez-Griego**

- 1 En su opinión que quiere decir ser escuchado?
- 2 Dime lo que sabes de la Colaboración Todos Juntos?
- 3 Por favor describe tu interacción como individuo en el Proyecto Todos Juntos?
  - a. Cual es tu papel en la colaboración?
  - b. Cual es el sentimiento, de tu perspectiva, en el grupo?
  - c. Pareció que este grupo era democrático?
  - d. Piensa que las decisiones que ocurrieron en Todos Juntos fueron hechas en conjunto?
  - e. Sabe lo que es hacer decisiones en conjunto?
  - f. Hasta que punto se escucho la voz del proceso de tomar decisiones?
- 4 Ha trabajado usted anteriormente en un equipo colaborativo? ¿Si es así puede describirlo?
- 5 Sabia cuales eran/son las metas de la colaboracion?
- 6 Que significaron estas metas para usted como miembro del equipo?
- 7 Era usted considerado miembro del equipo?
- 8 Como se hizo parte de esta colaboración?
- 9 Porque fue parte de esta colaboración?
- 10 Por favor describa su interacción como individual en el proyecto Todos Juntos?

- 11 Si se mantuvo involucrado porque lo hizo? ¿Si lo abandono porque lo hizo?
- 12 Era Todos Juntos una colaboración jerárquica?
- 13 Considero a Todos Juntos una colaboración jerárquica? ¿Porque o porque no?
- 14 Sabe lo que es una estructura plana?
- 15 En su opinión era Todos Juntos una estructura plana?
- 16 Piensa que ocurrieron cambios sobre la vida del proyecto?  
Si es así cuales fueron esos cambios?
- 17 Siente que las colaboraciones tienen un efecto en el desempeño académico? Porque o Porque no?
- 18 Se siente bienvenido en las escuelas K-20 (primaria, secundaria, preparatoria, colegio de 2 o 4 años locales)?
- 19 Como padre como se siente en nuestro sistema educativo?
- 20 Como miembro de familia como se siente en nuestro sistema educativo?
- 21 Como miembro de la comunidad como se siente en nuestro sistema educativo?
- 22 Como estudiante de pregrado como se siente en nuestro sistema educativo?
- 23 Fue bienvenido en la colaborativa de Todos Juntos y que quiere decir esto para usted?

- 24 En sus propias palabras explique: Siente que hay una necesidad de que Hispanos tengan una colaboración que enfoca solamente en ellos?  
¿Porque o porque no?
- 25 Dígame de sus creencias en la colaboración para el apoyo de Niños Hispanos?
- 26 Vio a subgrupos surgir dentro de la colaboración Todos Juntos?
- 27 Si es así, cuales fueron?
- 28 Sabe lo que es un facilitador?
- 29 Cual es el papel del facilitador en esta colaboración de su punto ventajoso?
- 30 Cual es su percepción del facilitador?
- 31 Vio a otros lideres/facilitadores emerger?
- 32 Sabe lo que es un “sistema plano”?
- 33 De su punto de vista piensa que Todos Juntos opero como un “sistema plano”?
- 34 Que en su opinión caracteriza una estructura de participación (Plana) para hacer decisiones o una estructura no-jerárquica?
- 35 Piensa que la mayoría de instituciones dependen de una estructura jerárquica?
- 36 Piensa que miembros de la colaboración Todos Juntos querían una estructura (plana)?
- 37 Porque cree que querían o no querían una estructura plana? Porque o porque no?

- 38        Como opero la colabora un sistema participativo, o no lo hicieron?
- 39        Había subgrupos? (Ej. genero, raza, generacional)
- 40        Como se formaron?
- 41        Mantuvieron estos subgrupos la estructura plana?
- 42        Por favor puede dibujar un diagrama de Todos Juntos y como opero de su punto de vista?



## APPENDIX C

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

#### Consent Form

*(For Participants 18 years of age and older)*

**Title of Research: Dissertation “The Power of Their Voice: Promoting Equal Respect and Redistributing Power in Hierarchically Differentiated Groups”**

#### Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research dissertation study of Todos Juntos a national, multi-year educational initiative funded by the Fellows Foundation and the New Mexico State Legislature to improve the educational attainment of Hispanic and other students in the State of New Mexico. The purpose of this study is to determine what factors contributed to a change in structure of a collaborative organization into a hierarchal organization when the founders and participants were committed to an equalitarian, participatory, non-hierarchical structure.

Note that the name of the study has been changed to ensure protection for all involved. Therefore the collaborative name for the study is “Todos Juntos.”

#### Purpose of the Study -Dissertation (Doctoral Student)

Educational institutions have a tendency to emphasize and perpetuate hierarchical systems (McLaughlin, 2005). Todos Juntos, on the other hand, had a commitment from the beginning to reject hierarchical, top-down practices and to create a collaborative that would operate as a democratic, inclusive, “flat” organizational system. All members of the original collaborative greeted this mandate from the Fellows Foundation with enthusiasm and were confident that such a system could be created and sustained over time. After five years’ effort, the members of the collaborative understood that despite actual progress, this confidence may not always have been realized. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine what factors contributed to a change in structure

of a collaborative organization into a hierarchal organization when the founders and participants were committed to an equalitarian, participatory, non-hierarchical structure.

#### Procedures and Activities

If you choose to participate in this dissertation study, you may be asked to participate in qualitative data collection, where Karen Sanchez-Griego the doctoral student will take care to 1) administer surveys and/or conduct interviews of sample leadership team members, as well as sample over 18 participants and families, regarding the overall leadership implementation and its success; 2) conduct focus groups of over age 18 participants regarding the overall implementation of Todos Juntos and its success; 3) record and preserve observations of meetings, workshops, tutorial sessions, clinical, one-on-one discussions, and email queries with of age participants. All will be produced in accordance with the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*.

#### Potential Risks and Discomforts

This study poses no risks to you greater than those that might ordinarily be encountered in your daily life. A potential benefit is that, through your participation, you might gain valuable insight about how fundamental institutional change can impact educational attainment of Hispanic students in New Mexico

#### Potential Benefits to Participants and/or to Society

1. *Describe benefits to participant expected from the research. If the participant will not benefit from participation, clearly state this fact [Incentives or payments should not be described as benefits.]*

Participant will not benefit from the research.

2. *State the potential benefits, if any, to science or society expected from the research.*

Support other educational collaborative endeavors, and find if there are positive and/or negative effects to the sub group studied.

### Confidentiality

Your identity will be protected to the fullest extent possible throughout the period of research and thereafter if the research is published. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your explicit permission. All information collected from document examinations, observations, and narrative survey results will be destroyed upon completion of this research.

### Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Further, if you decide to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop participating at any time with no penalty to you.

### Identification of Investigators and Review Board

If you have any questions about this study, you may call Karen Sanchez-Griego Doctoral Student at (505) 899-0484. If you have other concerns or complaints, contact William L. Gannon, Ph.D., IRB Director and Chair, the Institutional Review Board at the University of New Mexico, 1717 Roma NE, Room 205, Albuquerque, NM 87131, (505) 277-2257, or toll free at 1-866-844-9018.

***I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been provided a copy of this form.***

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Name of Participant (please print)

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Signature of Participant

---

Date

**Signature of Investigator**

In my judgment the participant is voluntarily and knowingly providing informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study

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Name of Investigator or Designee

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Signature of Investigator or Designee

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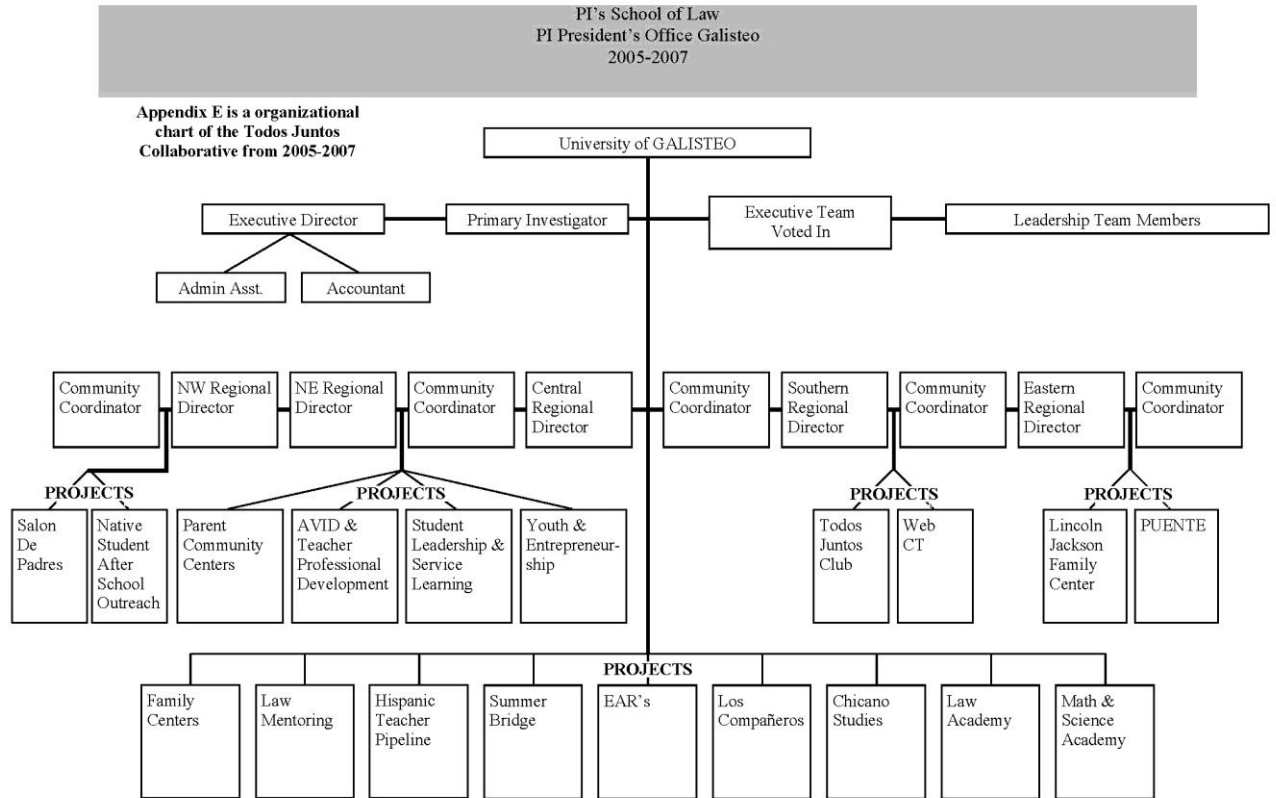
Date

## APPENDIX E

### TODOS JUNTOS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (STATEWIDE)

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#### APPENDIX E Todos Juntos Organizational Chart STATEWIDE

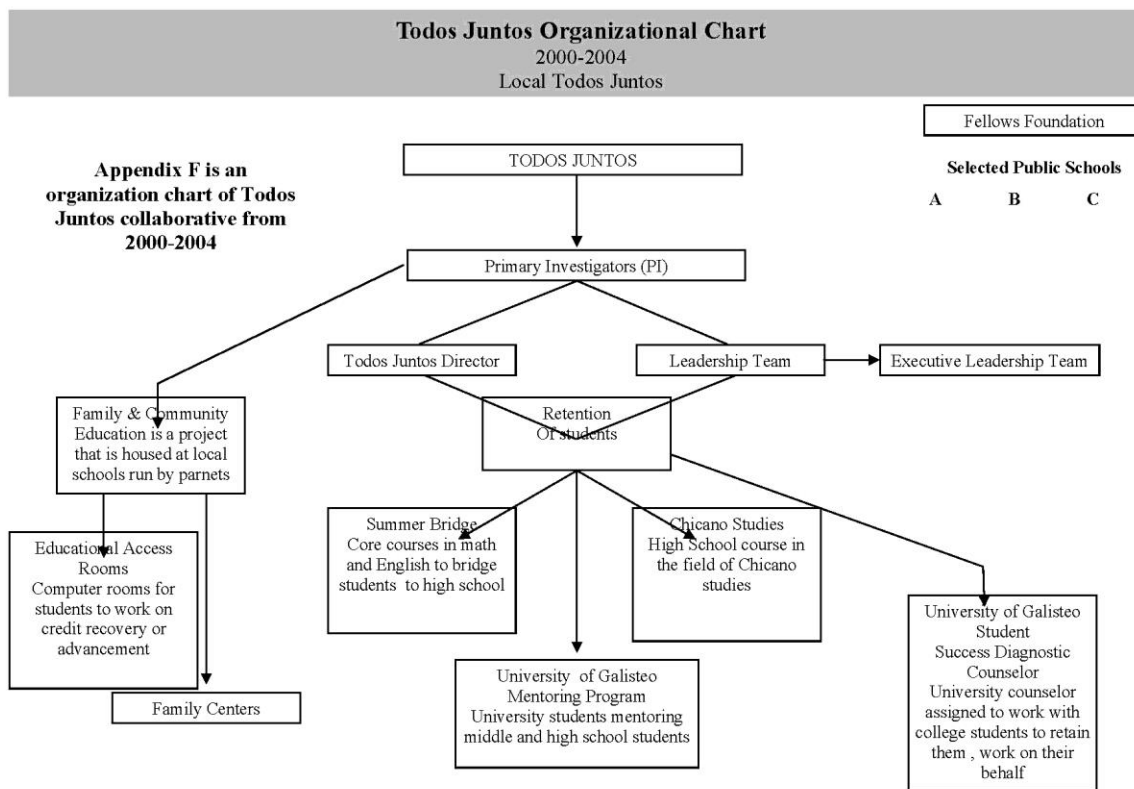


## APPENDIX F

### TODOS JUNTOS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (LOCAL)

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## APPENDIX F



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