CAMINO NUEVO CHARTER ACADEMY’S IMPACT ON THE WESTLAKE NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH A FOCUS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

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ABSTRACT

CAMINO NUEVO CHARTER ACADEMY’S IMPACT ON THE WESTLAKE NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH A FOCUS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

Mark Ben Healy
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This study focuses on one charter school in the Westlake neighborhood of Los Angeles, Camino Nuevo Charter Academy’s Burlington Campus. The purpose of this study is to better understand how staff and parents at Camino Nuevo Charter School understand the term social justice. I also seek to understand how parents and staff members have interpreted Camino Nuevo Charter Academy’s focus on social justice and how they have seen it influence the community.

As the perception of the school’s impact is closely tied to its stakeholders’ opinions, I will largely base my findings on data collected from interviews with staff and parents. Findings will look to understand commonalities and differences between the views of these stakeholders. Understanding the political issues (city, state and federal) that charter schools have needed to negotiate will also inform my findings of how well Camino Nuevo Charter Academy has been able to keep a focus on social justice. As the Burlington Campus enters its sixteenth year of operation and has opened seven other campuses using the best practices from the Burlington campus, my research will help the organization further understand its impact based on stakeholder feedback.
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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Purpose of Study

The development of Charter Schools in the United States started as a discussion around reforming current public schools in America. These new schools would be guided by a charter and run by a group of community members, who may or may not be educators. The authorizing agent, or agents, in each state would allow them to use public funds for their operation, and as a result, would be required to meet specific requirements. Charter schools are required to implement the state's content standards and assessments, and most states require reporting of student performance on the state assessments.

The charter school movement began in the United States in the late 1980s when a professor of school administration first brought the idea into the public discourse (Vergari, 2007). The idea gained further momentum in 1988 when Albert Shanker argued that he could increase choice in our public school systems without deteriorating the systems. Minnesota researchers actively promoted the idea of charter schools, which led to the creation of the first Charter Law in the United States being written in Minnesota in 1991. This law allowed for the first set of charter schools to open in 1992 in Minnesota1. Today, any community member can apply to open a charter school using public funds, and enjoy broad autonomy, with full control over educational programs, personnel and business decisions, and governance (Millot, 1997). In exchange for freedom

from constraints, such as a local collective bargaining agreement, the charter school needs to demonstrate that the academic performance of the charter school and all pupil subgroups is at least equal to the academic performance of the public schools that the charter school pupils would otherwise have been required to attend. Charter schools have their charter reviewed every 3 to 5 years to determine if they are meeting this goal. Low performing charter schools can have their charter revoked at this time and be forced to close.

Today, charter schools are in operation in 43 states and the District of Columbia, with the District of Columbia, Arizona, Colorado, Michigan, and Delaware enrolling the highest proportions of students in charter schools (CCSSO, 2013). Alabama was the latest state to pass a charter school law, becoming the 43rd state to enact charter school law in 2015. Charter school legislation has gained bi-partisan support from conservatives and liberals, and from some teachers’ unions and entrepreneurs (Lubienski & Weitzel, 2010).

When California lawmakers passed the Charter Schools Act of 1992, California became the second state to enact charter school legislation. One of the state’s charter schools that started as a result of the law’s passage was Camino Nuevo Charter Academy (CNCA). CNCA, a charter school located just west of Downtown Los Angeles in the Westlake neighborhood, had its original charter approved in August of 1999. It began operating in September 2000 as an elementary school supporting Kindergarten through 5th grade students. One year later, it expanded to enroll students in 6th through 8th grade as well. The school
was started as part of a community revitalization strategy for the MacArthur Park neighborhood in Los Angeles. When the community school opened, it set out to involve parents in the process of their children’s education and to offer a wide variety of programming to community residents. This focus on parents and the community would help the school become a stabilizing and energizing force in the MacArthur Park neighborhood. As Zimmer & Buddin (2009) illustrate, charter schools often serve a specific population, usually a population that has been historically underserved by traditional public schools within the neighborhood. In this case, CNCA was working to improve outcomes for the children in the predominantly Latino immigrant community.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore and understand how community stakeholders define social justice and have viewed CNCA’s implementation of social justice in the school and in the Westlake community since opening in 2000. Previous research has shown that charter schools serving Latino students in areas of Los Angeles with high poverty rates have proven to be successful. Research has also shown that student motivation towards academics increases when the school values the cultural identities of its students. The last research study of CNCA’s impact on families and student achievement occurred in 2005. Given the many changes affecting schools today, including increased federal and state accountability measures around academic performance, understanding how Camino Nuevo Charter Academy has continued to meet its original purpose and, at the same time, adapted to meet the
newer accountability requirements is an important topic to study now as the
organization continues to consider other school replication opportunities.

There are many factors that have influenced the school’s social justice
implementation, from political to financial to contextual. The school has been in
existence for 16 years, meaning that history has allowed for many variables to
make an impact on the surrounding neighborhood. As I looked to understand
these factors, I took a qualitative approach in my research. My hope was to
explore and understand the meaning that community members ascribed to
CNCA and its efforts to improve the Westlake community. By interviewing the
people most impacted by the school, I was able to uncover how much impact the
school itself had within the neighborhood and if other factors were stronger or
weaker in the shaping the neighborhood.

Background and Context

Charter Schools in California

California charter law introduced charter schools as way to improve the
quality of education in the state, and to increase innovation in schools. In
California, charter schools were created through sections of the California
Education Code, also known as the California Charter Schools Act of 1992:

It is the intent of the Legislature, in enacting this part, to provide opportunities
for teachers, parents, pupils, and community members to establish and
maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district
structure, as a method to accomplish all of the following:

(a) Improve pupil learning.
(b) Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on
expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving.

(c) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
(d) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
(e) Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.
(f) Hold the schools established under this part accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems.
(g) Provide vigorous competition within the public school system to stimulate continual improvements in all public schools.

(Ed. Code § 47601(a)-(g), 1992)

In California, charters are approved for five years. Charter schools are accountable to their authorizer, and to the students and families they serve, to produce positive academic results and adhere to the charter contract. Charter schools in California are authorized by a school district, a county office of education, or the state department of education, depending on the geographic location the charter school will serve. At the end of the five-year term, the entity granting the charter may renew the school’s contract. Before amendments to the Charter School Act were created in 1998, only local or county school boards were listed as authorizers and they were “allowed to deny charters for virtually any reason with no reporting requirements” (Vergari, 2002, p. 36). The amendments made in 1998 created a process for allowing denied charters to be appealed to the county board of education and/or the state board of education, and required that school boards reported their specific reasons for denying a charter school application (Vergari, 2002).

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Nationwide, 19% of the new public charter schools that opened in the 2013-2014 school were based in California (National Alliance for Charter Public Schools, 2014). California operated 1,130 charter schools enrolling 519,000 students, making charter schools a popular school choice option within the state, especially in Los Angeles. As of 2014, Los Angeles had 263 charter schools serving 143,580 students within the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which was about 20 percent of the student population. Charter high schools within LAUSD enrolled 19 percent of the city’s high school students and supplied 37 percent of the city’s college-ready graduates (California Charter Schools Association, 2014). In comparison to other school districts in the country, Los Angeles enrolls the largest number of students in charter schools versus district public schools, which in 2014-2015 was 151,300 students: “The number of students enrolled in public charter schools in Los Angeles alone would place Los Angeles charter schools in the top 15 of the 100 largest school districts in the United States” (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2015, p. 6).

**Westlake Neighborhood**

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy is located in the Westlake neighborhood, which is just west of Downtown Los Angeles. In 2010, the US Census reported that the Westlake neighborhood is one of the poorest and most densely populated neighborhoods in Los Angeles.

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populated neighborhoods in Los Angeles\textsuperscript{6}. Specifically, the neighborhood has the highest percentage of severe overcrowding in Los Angeles, the highest non-fluency in English with the majority of the population speaking Spanish, and the lowest availability of automobiles. Most of the neighborhood’s residents are recent immigrants from El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, and other Central American countries. Evidence of the neighborhood’s overcrowding can be seen with multiple families living within the same apartment, which is a common occurrence within the neighborhood.

The annual income within this neighborhood is one of the lowest in Los Angeles, with an average median annual income of $11,476. This statistic, “together with high unemployment, low paying jobs, and pervasive poverty undermines neighborhood stability and contributes to the prevalence of gangs, drug trade, and violent crime” (Bruner Foundation, 2003, p. 6). Recently, the Westlake neighborhood has started to undergo a gentrification process with the construction of new luxury condominium buildings in the area along with the rehabilitation of historical theaters to bring more concerts to the area. But, these developments have created a more noticeable gap in income levels within the neighborhood, and has created more overcrowding within poorer areas of the neighborhood.

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy’s History

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy is a charter school that runs the length of South Burlington Avenue, from 7th Street to Wilshire Boulevard. The school was created through the efforts of a local business development organization, Pueblo Nuevo Development (PND), in August 2000. The creation of the school was part of the organization’s larger plan to revitalize the industrial and crime-ridden area of Los Angeles. The school was repurposed from a failed mini-mall, which was attracting crime to the area. The goals for the school were:

- To create an elementary school that would provide neighborhood children an excellent education (which would include a focus on developing English language proficiency) in a safe and nurturing school environment;
- To ensure that the elementary school, through community programming and parent involvement, becomes a stabilizing and energizing force in the MacArthur Park neighborhood;
- To eliminate blight caused by a derelict mini-mall and design a school that would serve as a catalyst for reinvestment by other neighborhood property owners;
- To create a new model for elementary education in disadvantaged communities in Los Angeles (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 2004, p. 3).

The leader of these efforts was Phillip Lance, an Episcopal minister in the Echo Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. In that neighborhood, he started a Spanish language ministry and developed his own congregation. In an effort to
empower families in the Westlake neighborhood, he started a nonprofit community development corporation and called it Pueblo Nuevo Development (PND). The corporation worked in concert with local parents, the New Visions Foundation led by Dr. Paul Cummins, and Excellent Education Development (ExEd), a financial agent, to develop the school. In addition, PND also worked to create an employee-owned janitorial business, thrift shop, and church as part of their neighborhood revitalization project. The founding parents of the school wanted an alternative to the five local district schools, Esperanza Elementary, Tenth Street Elementary, Hoover Elementary, Grats Elementary, and Union Avenue Elementary. At the time, LAUSD was suffering from overcrowded schools, which meant that the needs of their children were not being adequately addressed, specifically in mastering the English language. Some students were being transported out of the Westlake neighborhood to schools in other cities, ones that did not exhibit the same diversity or honor their home culture. This was felt as an injustice to neighborhood families.

In an effort to keep students within their own neighborhood and bring a sense of justice back to neighborhood families, Camino Nuevo Charter Academy was created. The school would support students in becoming bilingual within a Development Bilingual program, a program that develops English language proficiency, while also honoring the family’s home language of Spanish. In addition, the school would focus on parent involvement, recognizing that it would be central to the school’s success. The school encouraged all families to
volunteer at least 15 hours in the school, with their efforts focused on supporting their child's education. The dual goals of parental involvement and a focus on bilingualism were meant to work in concert to develop students who become agents of social justice, as listed in the school’s mission statement.

**Rationale and Significance of the Study**

As stated by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (2010), “one of the most important and high-profile issues in public education reform today is the replication of successful public charter school programs” (p. 1). This is a result of a need for strong alternatives to public schools that have been perceived as failing by community members. CNCA saw a need to support children in the Westlake neighborhood as result of overcrowded local district schools that they felt were failing their children. Warren, Hong, Rubin, and Uy (2009) conducted a case study of CNCA’s community development model between 2004 and 2005. In that study, they noted that the founders of CNCA saw their school as a vehicle to develop social justice in the community by encouraging parents, teachers, and students to work together as community activists. They wanted parents to not only become leaders within the immediate neighborhood, but to also become leaders within a larger social reform movement. At the time of their research, Warren et al. (2009) found that CNCA had “made strong progress in developing the school as a community-based institution, one where an engaged parent body and social justice-oriented school staff build community and actively work to foster neighborhood development. In
so doing, Camino Nuevo changed the culture of schooling for Latino families in the MacArthur Park area” (p. 2229).

Since the opening of CNCA in 2000, Camino Nuevo Charter Academy has expanded its reach with 7 more distinct campuses in other relatively close neighborhoods of Los Angeles. These neighborhoods, like the Westlake neighborhood, are also historically underserved: Pico-Union, Wilshire Corridor, and Echo Park. With this expansion, they created a charter management organization (CMO), and worked to keep the same focus on social justice as their original school. The organization runs one Prekindergarten campus, one elementary school (Kindergarten through 5th grade), three Kindergarten through 8th grade schools, one middle school (6th through 8th grade), and two high schools (9th through 12th grade). The most recent addition to the organization was the Miramar High School campus in September 2013. Many of the core programs that exist at these various campuses saw success at the Burlington campus and were replicated in the other campuses, such as the Developmental Bilingual program. With the replication of these programs across campuses, the organization has worked to codify their best practices and ensure alignment across each campus. Although many of the core programs that exist at the CNCA Burlington Campus exist across all of the campuses, there are also unique programs and supports that define each campus, based on the characteristics and demographics of each particular school community. For the purposes of this study, when Camino Nuevo Charter Academy (CNCA) is
referenced in this study, it will refer to the original campus, also referred to as the CNCA Burlington Campus. References made about any other campus or the larger organization will be explicitly identified.

I started this study in 2014 when I became the principal of the school. I had moved from Boston, Massachusetts, where I had spent time understanding the charter school landscape across that state. Upon moving to Los Angeles, I recognized that the city had enrolled the highest number of students in charter schools in the country and wanted to better understand the charter school movement within California (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2015). I was attracted to Camino Nuevo Charter School because of its focus on social justice and its commitment to parental involvement. I recognized that the school’s focus on the whole child, such as physical and mental health supports, would allow its students to bring their best selves to the classroom and become college-bound scholars. Even though the school has been in existence for 16 years now, its focus on the whole child as a way of developing social justice is not changed. I have been serving as the school’s principal for over two years now, and I have found that engaging in this study not only helped me to understand how to best lead my school, but to better understand how charter schools such as Camino Nuevo Charter School can be a viable, and sometimes necessary, option for students, especially in Los Angeles.
Conceptual Framework

Charter schools have become an integral component of the school choice movement, especially in Los Angeles where charter schools enroll one in five of the students within the school district’s boundaries. Because charter schools are often free from teacher union politics and school committee policies, they are given greater autonomy than schools within a public school district (Vergari, 2007). As charter schools are funded using public funds from the locality, they must abide by federal and state education laws and regulations because they are part of the public education system. School choice can offer quality educational options for families with racially and/or economically diverse children who may have few opportunities, but researchers have found that some school choice options actually increase the inequalities felt in these neighborhoods (Estes, 2004; Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2010; Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin, & Branch, 2005; Knoester, 2011; Lacireno-Paquet, Holyoke, & Moser, 2002; Ni, 2007; Weiher and Tedin, 2002). At the same time, some charter schools are offering inclusive environments that are supporting students and families in ways that families did not feel supported in the prior public school (Fiore, Harwell, Blackorby, and Finnigan, 2000).

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy responded to a need in the Westlake community. Before the school opened, students were forced to enroll in overcrowded schools that were not responsive to their needs. Schools in

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7 As a note, CNCA teachers created a teachers’ union in 1994, which continues to exist today. It has not effectively bargained for teacher tenure, a topic that has historically been a contentious issue in school districts.
California were experiencing overcrowding at the time as a result of two issues. First, Proposition 13 was passed in 1978, which reduced property taxes and shifted the approval of school construction grants to voters. Second, California experienced the largest increase in their school age population between 1987 and 1997, enrolling 160,000 to 190,000 additional students every year (Ready, Lee, & Welner, 2004). Families were coming to the neighborhood from other countries as Spanish-only speakers, and were forced to navigate the LAUSD system to enroll their child in school.

In addition to these factors of overcrowding, some schools were not able to be responsive to the needs of their local community as a result of the passage of Proposition 227 in 1998. This proposition, also known as the English Language in Public Schools Statute, was “designed to replace the bilingual education programs [in California] with one-year English immersion programs” (Parrish, Linquanti, & Merickel, 2002, p. 1). This meant that all limited English proficient (LEP) students were to enroll in the one-year program in order to acquire a working knowledge of English. The proposition stated that these programs could not last more than one year. In essence, this proposition made the long-term teaching of academic subjects in Spanish in a California public school illegal. This further restrained local schools within the Westlake neighborhood from meeting the needs of their local population. This proposition is still in existence, meaning parents of students in bilingual settings need to sign a waiver every year allowing their child to be in a bilingual setting. This
proposition may be repealed in November 2016 with a vote on Proposition 58. The 2016 proposition will remove the sheltered English immersion requirement and waiver provisions of Proposition 227, and allow schools to develop a structured English immersion program, possibly within a bilingual program.

As Camino Nuevo Charter Academy opened as a charter school in the Westlake neighborhood, the school was free from many of the requirements of local district public schools. The school took some of the overcrowding burden off of the surrounding schools, giving parents an option to have their children in a local neighborhood school, versus being bussed out to a school in a different neighborhood. The school worked to be a more inclusive environment where students and families felt welcomed, regardless of their spoken language or nationality – something that the founders of CNCA felt was lacking in the local LAUSD schools. After 16 years of the school’s operation, it was important for me, as the school’s principal, to understand how various community stakeholders have perceived the school’s revitalization of the neighborhood and how they have felt the school is meeting its mission of developing agents of social justice.

**Summary**

Given that CNCA is a charter school within California, it is important to understand the charter school movement within the state, as well to understand the political environment in which CNCA is working to develop social justice and neighborhood revitalization. The following is a diagram to illustrate my conceptual framework and how I hope to better understand Camino Nuevo Charter
Academy's effects on the neighborhood and students, and the environment in which it operates:

![Conceptual framework for study](image)

**Autonomy and Responsiveness to Local Needs**
- Development of Charter Schools starting from 1991
- School Choice movement
- The impact Charter Schools have had on underrepresented populations.
- The freedom from some state and local regulations in order to meet local needs.

**Social Justice**
- What does social justice mean within the context of a low-income Latino community in Los Angeles?
- How has the development of social justice changed within Los Angeles? Within the Westlake neighborhood?

**Camino Nuevo Charter Academy**
- Their place-based approach in revitalizing a neighborhood
- Their focus on social justice and its impact in the community
- Their implementation of a bilingual program to strengthen both languages.
- Their belief that parental involvement is central to each child’s success.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for study
CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

In order to fully understand Camino Nuevo Charter Academy’s impact on the Westlake community, it is important to unpack research related to its impact. My research focused on two central ideas: understanding the charter school landscape and a charter school’s impact on communities, as well as understanding the impact of having a social justice focus within a school supporting a Latino community of students.

School Choice

Children come to school with different needs and from different backgrounds. Some children come to school having affluent parents that have provided them with tutoring before even entering school. Some children come to school from other countries, not speaking English the day they arrive at the school. And, some children come to school having had interrupted formal education in another country. As a result, in thinking about schools, education reform leaders felt that it was important to give families a choice in the type of school their child attends. This differentiation in educational options available to families allows them to match the characteristics of the school with the needs of their child.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a non-profit organization of state public officials charged with “providing leadership,
advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues\textsuperscript{8}. CCSSO released their \textit{Policy Statement on Opportunities and Options for Students} that states in part,

As state chiefs, we commit to ensuring that every student has access to a high quality education resulting in readiness for college and career. To meet this goal, we will pursue innovations in policy, practice, and structure to offer high quality options to meet the needs of all students, regardless of circumstance. (CCSSO, 2013, p. 4)

CCSSO outlines the five main categories of school choice, along with their subcategories, in the diagram below:

![Figure 2: Conceptual Diagram of School Choice Types (from CCSSO)](image)

Charter schools are just one of the school choice options for families in 42 states and the District of Columbia. Charter schools now enroll roughly 3.7% of all public and private school students in the United States (Miron, Urschel, Mathis, & Tornquist, 2010). Some feel that charter schools are a “compromise between supporters of vouchers and those who favor traditional public schools” (Schneider, Teske, & Marschall, 2000; Vergari, 2007). Charter schools offer

\textsuperscript{8} Retrieved on January 31, 2014 from \url{http://www.ccsso.org/Who_We_Are.html}
many of the, what some researchers have described as, positive aspects of the voucher system (which uses public funds towards a student’s attendance at a private school), but charter schools continue to have government oversight of their operations (Hanushek et al., 2005). The autonomy provided to them allows charter schools to differentiate their educational approaches and provide for increased competition in the public sector. Fiore et al. (2000) found that charter schools “represent innovation when viewed in their local contexts. Most charter schools have developed in response to local needs and to solve local problems” (p. 39). At the same time, some people feel charter schools take away from the effectiveness of the local school district: “Since charter schools first opened in the United States, fears that they would compete for public funds and drain away top students have kept attendance-area schools and districts from wanting to cooperate” (Finkel, 2010, pp. 63-64).

Charter Schools in the United States

Charter schools have demonstrated mixed results across the country. In some states, less restrictive laws have allowed charter schools to be less transparent about their use of funds, allowing for schools to become private, for-profit businesses. Some charter schools have also been accused of choosing the students that they enroll, creating an intended lack of diversity.

One of the biggest concerns raised about charter schools in the United States is focused on how students are enrolled and retained in charter schools. Researchers have found that many of the charter schools in the United States do
not reflect the same diversity as the city in which they are located (Hanushek et al., 2005; Ni, 2007). In fact, some charter schools are exacerbating the segregation and inequality found in education, especially for students of color. Hanushek et al. (2005), who studied charter schools in Texas, found a substantial difference in charter school enrollment by ethnicity, with Black students being far more likely to attend a charter school, and Whites being much less likely to attend a charter school. They also found that the difference in ethnicity was much greater than the differences in enrollment by family income. Ni (2007), who studied charter schools in Michigan, found that both charter schools and public schools were racially segregated, with charter schools enrolling predominantly more African American students. She found that district public schools were more racially diverse than many of the charter schools in the state. In the Southwestern states where the Latino population is high, Latino students are underrepresented in the area’s charter schools (Frankenberg et al., 2010). The authors theorized that this might be because little focus is being placed on the English language learners who come from Spanish speaking families. They state, “[Charter schools] create the illusion of real choice without providing the slightest challenge to the color and class lines that usually define educational opportunity” (p. 3).

Some charter schools have shown success in celebrating diversity. Frankenberg et al. (2010) feel that, as a reward, those strong schools should become “relatively autonomous parts of public school systems, since charters
often have trouble in management, finance, and succession of leadership” (p. 3). Boston Public Schools has experimented with such an idea. They created pilot schools in 1995 in an attempt to create more school choice within their own district. Pilot schools operate with the same school-based per pupil budget that other schools receive, but they are given greater decision-making authority, which includes not being held to the work rules of the Boston Teacher’s Union or the Boston School Committee.

Pilot Schools are given the same five autonomies that are granted to charter schools, which include autonomies over hiring, budget, curriculum, schedule, and governance (Knoester, 2011, p. 388). Knoester found that the demographics of pilot schools and non-pilot schools within the school district were similar, and as such, were not a positive solution to Boston’s concerns around segregation in their public schools. But, he did find that non-pilot schools served substantially more students with special needs and English language learners. This, in his opinion, suggests that Boston’s pilot schools may be producing “in-district segregation based on language learning and special education, rather than skin color” (p. 400).

**Charter Schools in California**

The California Charter Schools Act requires that “each [charter] school maintain an ethnic balance reflective of the general population of the district in which the charter school is located” (Vergari, 2002, p. 44). As the Charter Schools Act was being drafted, California legislators thought that charter schools

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should serve a larger proportion of at-risk students; however, the actual law did not establish a percentage of at-risk charter schools or a percentage of at-risk students that needed to be enrolled in a charter school (Vergari, 2002). Given the overall heterogeneity of the California student population, California charter schools continue to face issues of diversity, equity, and access. Although California charter school law requires that a charter school have an ethnic balance reflective of the general population within the school district, lawmakers have not taken steps to address this racial diversity concern, suggesting that the issue is likely to be left to charter school authorizers (Vergari, 2002). Many of the charter schools in California are located in Los Angeles, and the demographics in LAUSD show that the racial composition of students within charter schools in Los Angeles is comparable to the racial composition of students within LAUSD.¹⁰

Schools with a College-Going Focus Within Underserved Latino Communities

According to the California Department of Education (CDE)¹¹, California posted an overall high school graduation rate of 82.3% across the state in 2015. Within this statistic, the CDE posted a graduation rate for White (not Hispanic) students of 88.0% and a graduation rate for Hispanic or Latino students of 78.5%, which is a gap of almost 10%. Cook, Pérusse, and Rojas (2015) discuss how schools may be creating this gap by not addressing the needs of the Latino

¹⁰ The demographics of students served by charter schools in the 2012-2013 school year in Los Angeles: 72% Latino/Hispanic, 8% White, 13% African American, 2% Asian, and 5% Other. In comparison, LAUSD served a student population in the same school year comprised of 65% Latino/Hispanic, 14% White, 8% African American, 8% Asian, and 5% Other. Retrieved November 1, 2014 from http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/
community. They point to the need for schools to address cultural factors within the Latino community to fully understand how to support academic achievement and college access for Latino students: “Focusing on linguistic needs, while simultaneously taking a culturally sensitive approach, will arguably be more helpful in effectively assisting Latina/o ELL students due to the different challenges and needs that may be present” (p. 4). Cook et al. identify and name one cultural protective factor for Latinas/os that schools should understand: familismo. This term refers to the interdependence and strong connections between family members within a Latino family (Esparza & Sanchez, 2008; Reyes & Elias, 2011). In homes where familismo is high, children often have a higher rate of attendance, and apply themselves with greater effort as they are working for the happiness of the entire family (Esparza & Sanchez, 2008; LaRoche & Shriberg, 2004). In addition, a study by Ong, Phinney, and Dennis (2006) showed that when a family exhibits a stronger sense of interdependence, and the parents are supportive of their children, students experience greater academic success and exhibit a strong desire to achieve in school. All of this research shows the need for schools to engage in practices that value the family’s culture and home language in order to strengthen academic success and create a college-going focus for its students.

**Charter Schools Improving a Community of Latino Immigrant Families**

California supports approximately 38% of the nation’s English Language Learners (ELLs), with 50.8% of elementary students and 48.9% of middle school
students identified as Latino/a (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012a). Furthermore, 71.4% of California Latino students attend schools where the majority of students receive free or reduced lunch, and 47.9% attend schools with a third or more students identified as ELLs (UCLA/IDEA & UC/ACCORD, 2009). Unfortunately, our current systems of support are failing are students as Latino students consistently underperform their white peers by an average of more than 20 points on national assessments of reading and math in fourth and eighth grade (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011). The need to support Latino students in California in ways that ensure their academic and social emotional success is great. Research has shown that Latino families place a high importance on education and Latino students have reported feeling supported but not in traditional ways (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). This demonstrates a need to look for alternatives to support these families and students, such as schools who not only acknowledge the Latino culture, but who celebrate it.

In 2014, the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) conducted a quasi-experimental study design focused on the performance of charter schools in Los Angeles over four years, from the 2008-2009 school year to the 2011-2012 school year. They present their findings “in terms of the academic progress that a typical charter school student in Los Angeles would realize from a year of enrollment in a charter school” (2014, p. 5). The study used a Virtual Control Record methodology where the academic experiences of
students in traditional public schools (TPS) are compared to similar students enrolled in charter schools. Students were matched using several factors: grade-level, gender, race/ethnicity, free or reduced price lunch status, English language learner status, special education status, and their prior test score on state achievement tests. The number of observations was large enough to be confident that their results were at the statistically acceptable standard of $p < .05$. In that study, CREDO found that students in Los Angeles charter schools made larger educational gains in Reading and Math versus students in traditional LAUSD public schools. Specifically, they found that “on average, charter students in Los Angeles gain an additional 50 days of learning in reading and an additional 79 days of learning in math over their TPS counterparts” (p. 15). In addition, they found that Hispanic charter students, especially Hispanic students in poverty, receive 58 additional days of learning in reading and 115 additional days in math than their PS counterparts. Even with this notable difference in achievement, Hispanic students in charter schools still continue to show lower learning gains than White students in traditional public schools.

Los Angeles has a notably larger Latino population given that the Southern California region used to be a part of Mexico. As a result, the Latino culture is very prevalent in the area with Spanish being spoken by many Los Angeles residents. Even with the dominance of the Latino culture, Latino groups in Los Angeles continue to suffer from poorer economic outcomes as compared to Whites in the area (Perreira, Fuligni, Potochnick, 2010). Some charter schools,
like Camino Nuevo Charter Academy’s Burlington Campus, were created to support Latino immigrant families in navigating the school system within the neighborhood. These charter schools create school choice for families who may not feel supported by their neighborhood school. Some charter school supporters “hope that the autonomy given to charter schools will not only raise the achievement of students who attend them, but also promote healthy competitive pressure on the existing K–12 educational system” (Zimmer & Buddin, 2009, p. 831). Bohon, Macpherson, and Atiles (2005) note that students from immigrant Latino families face a different set of barriers when they enter US schools than US-born Latino families do, such as not having access to translated materials, not having college-educated role models, or not being able to navigate the local school district’s registration process. In addition, these students also receive biased or discouraging messages about their ability to attend college, even though College is often the key to improving their social and economic status (Perreira, Fuligni, & Potochnick, 2010).

Gonzalez, Stein, and Huq (2013) conducted a study involving 171 middle- and high school Latino students from immigrant families. They researched the students’ college hopes and plans with predictors that included cultural identity variables, such as acculturation and ethnic identity, and their perception of barriers to college. They found that “adolescents with greater ethnic centrality or importance also reported greater levels of motivation around academics, greater feelings of connection to their schools, and a more positive sense of self-esteem.
and well-being” (p. 106). The authors suggested that schools and organizations include acculturation to Anglo norms and a college-going self-efficacy focus when working with Latino students from immigrant families. They also found when students and families felt culturally validated by others at school, they were more confident in their college-planning tasks. This points to the need for schools to understand and honor culture, especially with a large Latino immigrant population.

*Developing Social Justice for Latino Students*

As I looked to define the term *social justice* within current research, I found that many articles used the term without actually defining it. Maxwell, Locke, and Scheurigh (2014) noted that there was a difference between what social justice meant between urban and rural settings, but the term itself still went undefined. Lazar (2013) discussed how the need to address social justice within teaching came in response to “educational inequalities that undermine the achievement of students, and particularly those from high poverty culturally non-dominant communities” (p. 702). This helped to understand why the term exists, but not the exact understanding of what it means. Cochran-Smith (2010) discussed three principles of social justice in an effort to guide teacher practice and teacher education: promote equity for all students, work against society assumptions that reinforce inequities, and directly acknowledge contradictions that emerge from different ideas of justice (pp. 454-455). Storlie and Jach (2012) discuss how social justice can be used to alleviate many of the concerns undocumented
Latino students experience in school, such as cultural shifts, fears of deportation, and restricted opportunities for higher education and employment. They feel that these concerns can be addressed through a collaborative social justice model in schools.

Throughout the research, it seems clear that the term social justice is often not defined or articulated clearly, particularly in relation to discussions of social justice in education (Boylan & Woolsey, 2014). Bull (2009) explains a theory of social justice in education and applies it towards a hypothetical community where there has been significant immigration of Latino citizens. He argues that given the differential needs of students, social justice is conceptualized through the emphasis or de-emphasis of each of the four purposes of public schooling: personal liberty (the ability for a child to develop as an individual, and as a member of a community), democracy (the ability for a child to engage in public decision-making processes), equality of opportunity (give children “an equal chance to develop the differential abilities required for success”), and economic growth (help children grow economically valued capabilities) (p. 144). Bull argues that this theory of social justice in education is deeply respectful of the student diversity in achievement, but that is often in odds with our current environment of state assessments, which call for more of a uniformity of student achievement. He argues that, in this hypothetical community, “the Latino community faces a forced choice between two unsatisfactory alternatives: school accountability for results that do not fully
represent their members’ aspirations for Latino children, or a lack of accountability that leaves localities free to neglect Latino children’s interests altogether if they so choose” (p. 147). Bull states that, in order to address the needs of the Latino student, local authorities need to provide access to aspects of the Latino culture within their curriculum and that curriculum is taught in English and Spanish. In general, to achieve social justice in education, a more comprehensive perspective on education must be implemented at the school level that provides a context where students can “exercise and develop their freedom, mutual respect, and intelligence” (p. 152).

*Latino Parents and Schools Partnering to Promote Social Justice*

In a study by Martinez and Ulanoff (2013), the researchers looked to understand how parents and teachers in the Boyle Heights/East Los Angeles community worked together to positively impact student success and promote social justice. Martinez and Ulanoff use research from Epstein (2001) within their conceptual framework, who discusses the responsibilities that schools, families, and communities (represented as spheres in his model) have through his conceptualization of overlapping spheres of influence. His research explores the three spheres and their interplay in an effort to support student development.

The study by Martinez and Ulanoff (2013) acknowledges that teachers are often encouraged to be culturally responsive within their instruction, using an asset-based mindset versus a deficit-based mindset towards a student’s home culture. This means that teachers need to recognize that Latino students, and
their families, possess funds of knowledge that can contribute to student success if engaged in a way that honors their culture. Monkman, Ronald, and Theramene (2005) note that cultural capital is necessary in order for students to have acquisition of social capital. Martinez and Ulanoff (2013) further state that both social and cultural capital are necessary for improving academic achievement. To develop these important understandings, schools, parents, and the community share responsibility for supporting students in their learning and development.

The study showed how two different organizations, located in the same high-poverty low-income neighborhood, helped parents understand the way that schools work in an effort to enable them to better support their children. This helped parents move from aspirational support focused on going to college, to more of a focus on academics. Parents began to understand the importance of their children taking advanced coursework in order to succeed, as well as the significance of high school exit exams for graduation and college entry: “Parents are provided with knowledge and encouraged to take action by speaking to school counselors and teachers” (Martinez and Ulanoff, 2013, p. 202). The study concludes that parents need to be seen as active developers of social and cultural capital, which often represents a departure from deficit notions that prevail in many US schools: “Viewing Latino communities through a strengths based lens can facilitate a more accurate inventory of the neighborhood’s history, resources, and future” (Martinez and Ulanoff, 2013, p. 207).
**Understanding Social Justice Through a Strengths-Based Perspective**

As Martinez and Ulanoff (2013) discuss using a strengths-based perspective to understand the community in which a school is situated is important to the school’s success. By using this perspective, educators, and in my case, researchers view families with a focus on maximizing their strengths and minimizing their weaknesses: “Those who embrace a strength-based perspective hold the belief that children, youth, and their families have strengths, resources and the ability to recover from adversity (as opposed to emphasizing problems, vulnerabilities, and deficits)” (Hammond, 2010, p. 4). Gardner and Toope (2011) discuss viewing social justice in educational contexts through a strengths-based perspective. One of the practices that they identified was recognizing students-in-context. Kamler and Comber (2005) also identified this practice as important. They found that when teachers changed their literacy curriculum to incorporate their students’ interests, not only were students more engaged, but the teachers’ perceptions of their students also changed. Teachers understood more about their students’ capacities, which created new possibilities for their own teaching and learning. As schools often have a central goal of uplifting students and communities, using a strengths-based perspective to understand students and the community, especially with schools focused on creating social justice, is important.
**Summary of Findings**

Within my review of the literature, I unpacked findings that related to the effects charter schools have had on the educational landscape. The literature supports that charter schools have changed the educational landscape and what schools can do to support a communities of students. Although charter schools have shown mixed results across the country, they have shown to create greater achievement gains with underserved populations, especially with the Latino community in Los Angeles.

I was also able to unpack findings within the literature focused on the impact of having a social justice focus with a Latino population of students. The literature supports that having a social justice focus, especially through a strengths-based perspective, creates more opportunities for students to thrive. It helped the school create a stronger inventory of the neighborhood’s assets, as well as allowed teachers to see their students with new capacities.

This research helped to inform my data collection methods and data analysis, allowing me to keep a focus on the strengths that community brings to the school, and how the school can use the freedoms given to it through charter law to fully uplift the community.
CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology

Research Questions

CNCA set out to build a school that would create a college-going culture while also honoring the community’s culture. This meant creating a focus on all aspects of the child and the family, and not just a focus on academics. When the school was introduced to the community, the school stated it had a focus on social justice with goals of neighborhood revitalization and community involvement. Given the findings from CREDO (2014) about how charter schools in Los Angeles are finding the most success with Hispanic students in poverty, it seemed important to understand if CNCA’s approach is contributing to this success.

CNCA is now in its sixteenth year of operation. The school has developed a mission statement with a focus on social justice:

The mission of Camino Nuevo Charter Academy is to educate students in a college preparatory program to be literate, critical thinkers, and independent problem solvers who are agents of social justice with sensitivity toward the world around them.\(^\text{12}\)

Given the school’s focus on social justice and its goals of neighborhood revitalization and community involvement, my research studied how stakeholders perceived the school’s efforts in creating social justice and improving the neighborhood. My research looked to answer the following questions:

(1) How do CNCA stakeholders (CNCA parents and staff) define social justice?

(2) How do various CNCA stakeholders perceive social justice, as used in the school’s mission statement, within the context of the Westlake neighborhood?

(3) Which mechanisms do CNCA stakeholders believe the school has used to effectively create and implement social justice to improve the neighborhood since the school opened in 2000?

Understanding the answers to these questions helped me to understand how stakeholders perceived the school’s efforts, as well as how well they thought the school was doing in achieving its mission and purpose. Knowing these aspects will help the organization in its future school replication efforts, and can support other charter schools who also serve historically underserved communities.

Appropriateness of the Design

I recognized that participant answers would be varied, so using a qualitative approach to my data collection allowed me to look for recurring themes in individual meanings. I did not use a quantitative approach in my research as I would not have been able to fully unpack the variance in answers, or understand the importance that participants place on different efforts by the school to enact social justice within the neighborhood.

My overall viewpoint as a researcher in this study aligned with the social constructivist approach (Creswell, 2014). My research mostly relied on the
viewpoints of my study’s participants, and I believed that the best way to make sense of the school’s impact is to interview community members who are immersed in the neighborhood’s culture every day. The process for my research was largely inductive as I generated meanings about the school’s impact from data that I collected from stakeholders at the school.

**Setting and Participants**

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy’s Burlington Campus is located within the Westlake neighborhood of Los Angeles. In 2000, when the school opened, the MacArthur Park region was one of the poorest and most densely populated neighborhoods in Los Angeles. The population density at the time was estimated at 145 person per acre, as compared to the Los Angeles average of 14 persons per acre. The most current census data lists the Westlake neighborhood as the second most densely populated neighborhood in Los Angeles County, behind the adjacent neighborhood located just a few blocks from the school, Koreatown. The population density means that multiple families often live within the same apartment. Other important facts about the neighborhood include the education of residents (59% of residents have less than high school education) and birthplace for families within the neighborhood (67% of residents are foreign-born with 37% of residents born in Mexico and 17% of residents born in El Salvador).

**Research Design**

My research design followed a more inquiry-based approach, aligned to

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the phenomenological approach espoused by Creswell (2014). Using this approach, I used participant descriptions of CNCA’s impact on the community to guide the inferences I made. Using the lens of a constructivist perspective, I told the story of CNCA’s impact on the Westlake community through the eyes of the families who have lived in the community. To do this, I interviewed parents and staff members who have been with the school for at least three years to understand their interactions with the school when they first enrolled or moved into the neighborhood, and their interactions with the school now. This helped me better “assess causation as it actually plays out in a particular setting” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 11). In addition, as a practitioner researcher with insider perspective, I recognized that I also collect qualitative and quantitative data every day just by being in the school and interacting with families.

Given that the primary focus of this study is on the community and how the school has worked to support the community as a whole, the selection process for participants was nonrandom. I used a purposeful selection where I deliberately selected participants that could provide me with information that is particularly relevant to my research questions (Maxwell, 2013). Furthermore, participants were selected specifically because they have an understanding of the Westlake neighborhood and CNCA’s presence in the neighborhood. These participants were adult family members of students who attend or have attended the school, as well as staff members who work or have worked for the school. I purposefully selected interview participants from across an amount of experience
so that I could collect data from the different periods of time in the 15 years of CNCA’s presence in the neighborhood. With that said, participants needed to have had their experience for at least three years to be considered for the study.

I conducted 15 interviews of families who have children who have attended CNCA, or people who are now adults but attended CNCA as a child. Each participant was chosen to be interviewed if they lived in the Westlake neighborhood for at least 3 years. Given the school’s focus on building parents as leaders within the community, some former students and parents of current students currently work at CNCA. I included them in the study as well, but I limited their participation to no more than 10 of the interviews, as they have different knowledge of the school than participants who are only parents. Additionally, I conducted 15 interviews of CNCA staff members, past and present. Each participant was chosen to be interviewed if they had worked at CNCA’s Burlington Campus for at least 3 years since the school started in 2000.

**Methods and Data Collection**

I used two qualitative data collection methods to understand the school’s impact on the community: participant interviews and document analysis. These methods allowed me to better use my role as an insider in CNCA for this research. I had better access to community members and was able to understand their experiences using the lens of my day-to-day knowledge of the school. As such, the data I collected for my research came from interview data and document reviews. I collected data through interviews of present and past
staff, students, and families of CNCA. The data collection helped me better understand the implementation of social justice at the Burlington Campus, as well as the history and impact of Camino Nuevo Charter Academy on the Westlake neighborhood.

Instrumentation

The first method I used for data collection was participant Interviews. I conducted 15 interviews of CNCA families and 15 interviews of CNCA staff. The protocol for this interview can be reviewed in Appendix B. These interviews were semi-structured interviews where I had a specific topic to learn about, prepared a limited number of questions in advance, and planned to ask follow-up questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Each interview lasted for about 30 minutes and was audio recorded and transcribed. I chose to use semi-structured interviews versus unstructured interviews as I focused on “planned items that speak to the research questions” and used follow-up questions, versus developing questions based on the responses of my interviewee (Rubin & Rubin, 2011, p. 31). Each interview was audio recorded, which allowed me to be engaged during the interview and also allowed me to further analyze the data at a later time by transcribing the responses.

Given the number of interviews I needed to complete, I used contact summary forms as a way to analyze data after each interview. From those, I was able to create general themes within my data analysis. I did not create a list of formal codes until I had completed all interviews, which allowed me to see the set
of data as a whole first. When I created my list of codes, my first draft was based on the themes I discovered in my contact summary forms. Miles and Huberman (2014) describe the contact summary form as “a one-page document with some focusing or summarizing questions about a particular field contact” (p. 124). The form is a “rapid, practical way to do first-run data condensation without losing any of the basic information to which it refers” (p. 124). My biggest concern about completing 30 interviews was the large amount of resulting data that I would need to analyze. With the use of the contact summary form, I was able to quickly begin the data condensation process, leaving me with about 30 pages of data from which to start my analysis versus 300 pages of interview transcripts.

I began this process by creating a contact summary form template that combined different aspects of the examples used in Miles and Huberman (2014). I started the form by listing main issues or themes that were prominent from the interview. This was helpful as the first question as I walked away with some pretty clear themes from each interview that I wanted to capture immediately. I then pulled out themes from each of the 6 main questions in my interview protocol. This greatly helped me to condense the data as I pulled out key ideas or phrases captured by each question. I then listed further thoughts or idea I pulled from the interview that might not have been caught by the questions. And lastly, I listed next steps for future interviews, where I listed things I learned about myself as an interviewer, such as interviewing strategies that worked or did not work.
The second method of data collection used for this study was document review. My hope was that data from my document review would validate or further illuminate my qualitative data, as well as further contextualize it. To provide evidence of community improvement, I reviewed historical documents from the school, including their charter applications in 2000, 2005, 2010, and most recently, 2015. This helped me to understand how the school's focus on social justice has changed over time. I also looked for evidence of meeting their goals, such as board meeting notes, parent meeting notices, and outreach materials. I also looked at public documents that listed the characteristics of the neighborhood over the 15-year period of the Burlington Campus, such as census data that listed the neighborhood's median income, the racial composition, primary language spoken, and the level of education attained. I looked for changes in these characteristics of the neighborhood over time. I recognized that these changes could not be attributed solely to the existence of the Camino Nuevo Charter Academy’s Burlington Campus, so I looked for other factors that could have attributed to the changes I identified in the data.

**Data Analysis**

To ensure I presented a well-developed analysis of the data, I analyzed the data as I collected it to see emerging patterns using the contact summary forms: “the experienced qualitative researcher begins data analysis immediately after finishing the first interview or observation, and continues to analyze the data as long as he or she is working on the research, stopping briefly to write reports
and papers” (Maxwell, 2013, Kindle locations 2351-2353). After I wrote all contact summary forms, I followed a process outlined by Miles et al. (2014) as a structure to analyze my data: first cycle coding, second cycle coding, and then jottings and analytic memos. These helped me to funnel my analysis, going from broad themes in my first cycle of coding, to more specific subthemes in my second cycle of coding and in my jottings and memos.

In my first cycle of coding, I assigned codes to larger chunks of data. This helped me condense the data and pick out the pieces of information that were the most relevant in answering my research questions. I followed a protocol outlined by Robson (2002): I took the responses from my interviews and copied them on to a large sheet of paper, broken down by question. I looked for patterns and based my conclusions off of those patterns. I coded data into thirteen categories. The codes were determined through a descriptive coding process, which “assigns labels to data to summarize in a word or short phrase…the basic topic of passage of qualitative data” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 74). Two larger categories were focused on stakeholder definitions of social justice in the neighborhood and school efforts to implement social justice within the school and surrounding neighborhood. Each larger category was broken down into subcategories to make up the thirteen codes, which were determined by the data.

In my second cycle of coding, I looked to focus only on the data that I pulled in the first cycle of coding. I looked to generate pattern codes with a focus
on creating a narrative description from the patterns (Miles et al., 2014). This helped to deepen my data analysis and more adeptly tell the story of CNCA’s effect on the community. I looked to build the themes along a timeline so that I could build a historical perspective with the patterns I saw.

After my data analysis was completed, I conducted two focus groups, one with staff and one with parents. I shared my findings with them to see if I had captured their thinking and recorded it in a way that honored the work of the school in the past, and was supportive of possible areas of future work. Their feedback was used to further refine my data analysis. In this cycle of review, I also kept a stronger focus on using a strengths-based perspective in my analysis, ensuring that I was honoring the community and its work.

**Researcher Role & Issues of Validity**

**Researcher Positionality**

According to Miles et al. (2014), “the words we choose to document what we see and hear in the field can never truly be ‘objective’; they can only be our interpretation of what we experience” (p. 11). As the current Principal of CNCA’s Burlington Campus, I see and experience the school’s effects on the Westlake community and its students every day. I started in the position in July 2014, so I do not have the important historical context needed for this research, but I did have immediate access to the resources needed to get this information. Before beginning in my role with CNCA, I worked in the central office of a public school district in Massachusetts serving 17 schools from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The
city in which our school districted was located also housed three charter schools. Unlike California, school districts do not authorize charter schools within the same city. In Massachusetts, authorizer was the Commonwealth. That meant that I did not have any interactions with the charter schools in our city through my position with the school district. As a result, this role with CNCA was my first experience working in a charter school, as well as my first time working in California. I came with little knowledge of the politics surrounding charter schools in California, which meant the only biases I brought to this research were those involved in my current role as Principal of the school.

In addition to my role as Principal, I am also an immigrant to the United States. I immigrated to the United States in 2006 from Canada through employment. In 2007, my employer supported me in obtaining permanent residency (often referred to as obtaining a green card), and in 2012, I received US citizenship. Although I went through the immigration process, my process was not similar to the process that many of our families are experiencing. My nationality as a Canadian, my graduate degree, and the support of my employer all led to quick approvals at every step in my immigration process. Some of our families are American citizens, but many of them are not. In addition, several families are also living in the United States as undocumented immigrants. As a result, I used my immigrant status as a way of understanding the experience of moving to a new country, but not in a way to understand the pathway many of our families have had to travel to get to the United States.
**Researcher Role**

My current role as Principal of the school was helpful in securing interviews with CNCA staff and families. With that said, my authority within the contexts of the school may have created issues of validity that I needed to be aware of during my interviews. These included variations in what would have been said to someone who is not the leader of the school being studied. I worked to overcome these issues by thoroughly explaining my research from the beginning, and addressing any concerns participants might have had early within the interview. Given that I am not a Spanish speaker, and that over 80% of our families only speak Spanish, I conducted and analyzed interviews with the support of our school’s Student and Family Services Coordinator, who was paid to support me in translating.

**Issues of Validity**

The design of this study provided me with an opportunity to better understand the school’s impact on the community over 15 years, as well as document the lived experiences of the community members while maintaining sensitivity, reliability, and validity.

My hope was to create an interpretive understanding of what the school has meant to the community and its students (Miles et al., 2014). It was important for me to test the meanings that emerged from my data for plausibility, which meant understanding if the findings made sense to people who interacted with the school (Miles et al., 2014). As stated by Maxwell (2013), validity needs to be
assessed “in relationship to the purposes and circumstances of the research, rather than being a context-independent property of methods or conclusions” (Kindle Locations 2665-2666). As a result, I assessed the validity of the data from interviews within the context of my questions and the participants I was interviewing. I took into account my positionality and each participant’s reaction to my positionality as I drew conclusions from the data. I did find that some participants were less forthright in sharing some information, given that I was still somewhat new to the school when I conducted some of these interviews. As a result, I needed to be aware of this as I chose my participants and as I conducted my interviews. I considered my data valid if I found that the data from participant interviews were showing some consistent themes.

Another issue of validity was that this study looked at how the school had met the needs of the community over 15 years. With that said, the economy has changed over those 15 years. I needed to consider how some of the changes in the neighborhood might have occurred as a result of economic changes and not changes that resulted from the school’s presence. As a result, I looked to see if students have had more challenges or fewer challenges now than they did 5, 10, or 15 years ago as a result of changes within the economy.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS: Definitions of Social Justice

This is a study about Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, a charter school in the Westlake neighborhood of Los Angeles. Camino Nuevo Charter Academy is located in the Westlake neighborhood, which is one of the poorest and most densely populated neighborhoods in Los Angeles. The neighborhood has the highest percentage of severe overcrowding in Los Angeles, the highest non-fluency in English with the majority of the population speaking Spanish, and the lowest availability of automobiles. The creation of the school was part of a neighborhood business organization’s larger plan to revitalize the industrial and crime-ridden area of Los Angeles. This qualitative study looked at the school’s stakeholder understanding of social justice and the school’s implementation of it within the school and outside of the school.

Findings for this study were drawn from interviews of staff and parents, which focused on these research questions: (1) How do CNCA stakeholders (CNCA parents and staff) define social justice? (2) How do various CNCA stakeholders perceive social justice, as used in the school’s mission statement, within the context of the Westlake neighborhood? (3) Which mechanisms do CNCA stakeholders believe the school has used to effectively create and implement social justice to improve the neighborhood since the school opened in 2000? For the purposes of this study, the focus of the discussion was on Camino Nuevo Charter Academy’s Burlington Campus, and not on any of the other seven CNCA campuses. Stakeholders who have not been employed at the school, or
who have not had children enrolled at the school were not selected to be interviewed for this study.

One of the intents of this study was to understand how stakeholders defined social justice at this one campus, with a focus on comparing and contrasting definitions between staff and parents. Another intent of this study was to understand the school’s work in implementing social justice since 2000, and how stakeholder voices could be used to continue improving the school’s implementation of social justice in the future. This study helped me better understand the school as a researcher, but it also helped me in my work as the school’s current Principal. As discussed in the Literature Review section of this study, Storlie and Jach (2012) felt that many concerns felt by Latino students could be addressed through a more collaborative social justice model in schools, which is how I intend to continue using this data in my work as the school’s Principal.

The findings of this study have been organized into two different chapters. This chapter, Chapter 4, discusses the definition of the term social justice by staff and by parents. This question is listed in the interview protocol and was used to help each interviewee situate their thinking of social justice in a general context before being asked to apply their thinking to the school’s implementation of social justice. The next chapter, Chapter 5, discusses the staff’s and parent’s perceptions of the school’s implementation of social justice as described in the school’s mission statement. This question in the interview protocol got to the
purpose of this study and helped me understand how stakeholders perceived the school’s efforts over the past 15 years. As I conducted interviews of staff and parents at the school, I gained insights into how social justice has been perceived and implemented since the school’s inception in 2000, as well as in what ways the school could improve its implementation in an effort to better match stakeholder perceptions. In addition, the interviews helped me to uncover areas of agreement between parents and staff, as well as areas of disagreement between them. One staff member in her interview shared, “We need to think about what the parents think is social justice. I think their definition is really different from ours” (Recorded interview #5, 09-01-2015). This sentiment helped to shape the purpose of my study.

**Definitions of Social Justice by Staff**

In my interviews with staff and parents, I asked them to define the term social justice (see question 4 from the interview protocol: What does the term *social justice* mean to you?). As the school uses the term in its mission and it is a prominent focus of the school’s efforts, I thought it would be important to see how our stakeholders understood the term. After analyzing the answers from both staff and parents, I found some commonalities and some differences between their answers.

Overall, staff definitions applied to lived situations inside and outside of the school and community. They also applied their understanding of the term from different experiences they have had, including their own education. Parent
definitions, however, were more focused more on the immediate implication of, and immediate need for, social justice within their own lives and neighborhood. Given the needs of the community, parents lived experiences exemplify the need for the school’s focus on social justice. In contrast, all of the staff members interviewed did not live in the area surrounding the school, so their understanding of social justice often could not have involved the same experiences of the families at the school.

After interviewing staff and coding my interview data, I extracted several themes from their definitions of social justice, which I grouped into the following four categories: equity, advocacy, empowerment, and access. These categories had overlapping characteristics, but I found them to be distinct categories when analyzing the data.

Equity

Equity came out as a prominent theme from staff when defining the term social justice. The term equity and its related synonyms are not used explicitly within the mission statement, but the equity aspect of social justice seemed to be an important part of defining the term for staff. Staff used the term equity to describe a setting where people would have opportunities available to them based on their need. Instead of giving everyone the same opportunity, which is more in line with a theme of equality, this theme discussed the need to give more opportunities to those who need more, and less opportunities to those who already have access to resources.
In thinking about the impact of equity within educational settings, Lazar (2013) discussed the need to address “educational inequalities that undermine the achievement of students, and particularly those from high poverty culturally non-dominant communities” (p. 702). Lazar’s point helped to clarify why equity came out as a strong theme within the staff discussions when defining social justice.

One interviewee, a former principal of the school and a current leader within the larger charter management organization, defined social justice in terms of equal opportunity:

> Working towards an environment that engages people, treats people as human beings, and does not create a tiered system for access or opportunities, but where we are creating an environment for all to have equitable access to all kinds of opportunities, not just educational ones.

(Recorded interview #8, 09-28-2015)

One of the purposes of public schooling identified by Bull (2009) within his discussion of social justice in education was equal opportunity, which is in alignment with this staff member’s vision. Although the staff member is no longer the principal at the school, she remains a prominent leader within the organization. Her work continues to guide the organization, which may explain why her vision of creating equitable access to opportunities is a commonly-held belief amongst staff members.

In addition to the understanding of equal access to opportunities, two other staff members had a focus on equal treatment within their definitions of social justice:
• “changing behaviors that have been unfair for a group of people”
  (Recorded interview #1, 07-16-2015).

• “creating opportunities for fairness that are not available to a group of people now” (Recorded interview #2, 07-19-2015).

Many staff members reported that they work at the school because they had the same experiences when they were their age. One staff member stated,

I myself being a minority and also coming from the same situation as many of our students with my parents not being literate. They also were immigrants, now they’re residents. I felt that I had the opportunity to be a role model and serve as a role model for social justice which assured our scholars that anything is possible if you demonstrate that desire and just keep on assuring them that you can meet your dreams and goals and being successful in any means possible, but not giving up (Recorded interview #3, 08-26-2015).

As such, it seems important to staff that the school has a focus on equity as students have many barriers to overcome that are often not barriers for students in areas where poverty is not an issue.

**Advocacy**

Advocacy, a term that is used explicitly within the school’s mission statement, was found to be a prominent theme within the data. The focus of the theme advocacy, as used in staff definitions, is on the student. When the term was used, staff were describing how social justice can be achieved when students are advocates for themselves. This matches with the school’s mission to create agents of social justice. With that said, even though advocacy is the only identified theme from this study explicitly used within the school’s mission
statement, it was not the theme that was articulated the most within staff definitions.

To further analyze their use of advocacy to define social justice, staff used the term to describe actions made by a student to empower themselves, as well as actions made by a group of students to empower the entire group. One staff member used the term in both ways within her definition: “Being able to advocate and being a network system where you can make changes in our current society” (Recorded interview #3, 08-26-2015).

**Empowerment**

When defining social justice, 10 staff used the idea of empowerment. The focus of their use of the term was on giving people tools in order to create a more just society. Perreira, Fulgini, & Potochnick (2010) discussed how Latino students receive biased and discouraging messages about their ability to attend College. This means that schools often need to counter those messages by explicitly reinforcing their ability to attend College in an effort to improve their social and economic status.

One staff member used the following statement to define social justice, focusing on the tools people need in order to create or enact social justice: "My own sense of social justice is that everyone is given the tools and is equipped with whatever they need to be able to be successful, regardless of your social-economic status, and your ethnicity, or your race" (Recorded interview #4, 08-28-
2015). Another staff member focused on the need for awareness of their situation, which will better empower them to do more:

They need to see the world, they need to understand the world, and they need to value the things that are important for them and fight for that. Not only look at themselves and their family but also have like a broader [understanding]. Like a bigger view of what's around them so they can be conscious about things that are happening to other people. How can they help and support the one that around them and their community (Recorded interview #5, 09-01-2015).

Another staff member reflected on the idea of agency, a term that she meant to discuss how empowered our students and community members feel:

“How aware are they of their own history and where they live and how much agency do they have to change things. When I think of that and when kids are aware, I feel that’s a move toward social justice” (Recorded interview #6, 09-02-2015).

Another staff member, who also used to be a student at the school when it first started, defined social justice in terms of herself and her peers:

That we’re able to go to college and get the same education like another person does. We just have to know the way and all the opportunities [we] have to get there and reach out. Now I know that some things are not going to be fair, but there are resources out there that can take us [to College]. We just need to reach out, and know how to reach out. (Recorded interview #10, 11-25-15)

This thinking about empowerment by the school’s staff shows that staff think our work is to educate people about the world around them, explicitly countering negative messages and illuminating options for success.
Access

As staff defined social justice, a theme of access was apparent. Staff felt that social justice can only be experienced when everyone is given access to the same opportunities. Lazar (2013) discussed how the need to address social justice within teaching came in response to “educational inequalities that undermine the achievement of students, and particularly those from high poverty culturally non-dominant communities” (p. 702). As such, access is an important consideration when trying to define what social justice means, especially for the school’s surrounding neighborhood.

A staff member reflected on how our community is more insular, and that our students do not have access to a lot of opportunities that might be available in more wealthy neighborhoods: “I think of the opportunities that they could have that maybe they don't have access to” (Recorded interview #6, 09-02-2015).

Definition of Social Justice by Parents

As parents are an important part of the school’s success, I wanted to research how they understood the school’s efforts, especially in how the school’s efforts have created opportunities for social justice. To do this, I first needed to understand how they defined and understood the term social justice. I interviewed parents with a Spanish translator as all but two parents spoke only Spanish. The two parents (interviews #15 and #16) were bilingual and spoke English. When interviewing parents who only spoke Spanish, their answers were translated into English for my analysis.
After interviewing our parents and asking them how they defined social justice, I found some themes that were similar to those of our staff members. But, I also found some themes that focused more on ideals held by the surrounding community members as they have had real lived experiences that staff members did not. I grouped these themes into the following three categories: equality, respect, and parenting.

*Equality*

When thinking about equality, it often means equal treatment. This means that people will receive the same treatment, regardless of their background or level of access to opportunities. The term *equality* was used by several parents to define aspects of social justice. I found a theme of equity within staff responses, which was used to describe a need to support people based on their need. But within the parent responses, I identified a theme of equality, which they used to describe equal treatment at a basic human level.

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) wrote the report *Resilient Youth: In Their Own Words* to describe Latino youth have been able to cope with adversity and excel while growing up in extremely challenging circumstances. In their report, they state,

For those growing up in neighborhoods of high-concentrated poverty, poor schools, crime, limited economic opportunity, and segregated housing—who for the most part tend to be Black or Hispanic—it takes a very particular set of personal assets, skills, orientations, and support networks to overcome such geographically and racially marginalized environments (2015, p.17).
Following the findings of this report, it makes sense that one way that equality was used within parent definitions of social justice was to illustrate equal treatment, especially for their own situations. Their focus was on how all people should be treated as the same, regardless of national origin or socioeconomic status. One parent described social justice as “equality for all people, regardless of race, color, and religion” (Interview #17, 02-02-2016). Another parent discussed this same idea through the lens of non-discrimination: “Social justice means not discriminating against others. I feel discriminated against because of my skin color. I wish people would recognize that we are all just people” (Interview #29, 02-05-2016). These interviewees focused on the need to feel like an equal human being, which is more of a basic fundamental need that they felt was not being met in their current lives. This was an important finding as myself and many of our staff members often have not lived these same experiences, yet some of our students and parents do not feel like they are being treated simply as a human being.

Another way that equality was used within parent definitions of social justice was to discuss a need for equal opportunities in terms of equal opportunities for education. Cook et al. discussed the term familismo, referring to the interdependence and strong connections between family members within a Latino family (Esparza & Sanchez, 2008; Reyes & Elias, 2011). In homes where familismo is high, children have a higher rate of attendance and apply themselves with greater effort, (Esparza & Sanchez, 2008; LaRoche & Shriberg,
In addition, Ong et al. (2006) found that when familismo is high, students experience greater academic success and exhibit a strong desire to achieve in school. One parent discussed her idea of social justice with a focus on equal access to educational opportunities: “It means to me that every student, doesn’t matter their social status, can have an equal education. And they have the right to [go to] college or university” (Interview #15, 09-08-2015). Other parents discussed a focus on education within social justice in terms of a developing an intrinsic desire to be educated. They discussed this to contrast experiences they have had with people in their community who believe their children should work after high school to support the family. One parent defined social justice as “when one country or institution offers tools for preparing people for the future. That preparation should be academic and should focus on equality for all” (Recorded interview #21, 02-03-05).

Respect

The Westlake community, and especially the community surrounding the school, is a densely-populated community. I found that many families have had limited interactions with the greater Los Angeles community, which could be attributed to the number of families who only speak Spanish. In addition, some of our families have the means to live in other neighborhoods within the city, but they choose to live in the neighborhood surrounding our school because they feel a sense of community. This means that members of the community surrounding
the school often interact with each other more than they interact with members outside of their community.

As a result, respect for other members, and from other members, of the surrounding community was an important theme within the parent definitions of social justice. One parent illustrated this need for a sense of community togetherness within her definition of social justice:

We’re all different, and as a community, we have to learn how to get along with each other. We all have different ways of thinking. We all have different cultures. We all have different beliefs, but as a community, we try to help each other to maintain this community” (Recorded interview #16, 02-02-06).

Another parent discussed a need for community members to treat each other with respect for the sake of the community: “Social justice is achieved when we treat all people within our community with equality, respect, and above all, we make the best of everything for the community” (Recorded interview #22, 02-03-2016). This sense of community and the need to respect all members within the community came through in parent answers, but it also comes through in my day-to-day interactions with parents at the school.

Parenting

Given the sense of community identified within the parent themes, I also identified a theme for strong parenting within the parent definitions of social justice. More specifically, parents identified a need for good parenting in an effort to enact social justice for children. Some responses focused on parenting in general, and some responses focused on parenting within the community
surrounding the school. One parent stated, “I think that social justice would have to come from the personal education of oneself. We should teach our children to respect each other and to be better people in the future” (Recorded interview #26, 02-05-2016).

In my interviews, parents also reported that when their child exhibited poor behavior, it was seen as a reflection of their parenting abilities. They expressed a desire to work together to support their children versus judging each other and their parenting skills. One parent felt that social justice could be achieved when “parents are not judges of problems with other students.”

**Summary of Findings**

The founders of Camino Nuevo Charter Academy saw the school as a vehicle to develop social justice in the community by encouraging parents, teachers, and students to work together as community activists. To help me understand how to best lead the school 16 years after its opening, I wanted to determine if staff and parents had the same understanding of social justice as each other. I felt that knowing this would help me lead important discussions with both sets of stakeholders about how to better collaborate. What I found was that teachers have an understanding of social justice and are dedicated to implementing it in the school, but parents have lived experiences that require the implementation of social justice every day in the school and in their community. Social justice to them seemed to focus on basic equality, as well the role of the parent in creating agents of social justice. I can use this information to help
teachers recognize the importance of understanding each family’s lived experiences. They can do this through home visits, participating in community events, and better understanding each family’s culture. This will help create greater trust, and help families see the school as a true partner in their lives.
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS: Implementation of Social Justice

In my interviews with staff and families, I asked them to explain how they saw social justice being implemented at the school site. As I had just asked them about their own definition of social justice in question 4, I followed that question with a question asking if their vision of social justice matched with the school's efforts (see question 5 of the interview protocol: In what specific ways has CNCA created and implemented the idea of social justice within the school? How has CNCA created and implemented the idea of social justice within the neighborhood?). This question was likely the most significant question in the interview as it got to the real purpose of my research. My hope was to understand if the work of the school was matching the perceived needs of our stakeholders.

Staff Understanding of Implementation of Social Justice at the School

In interviews with staff, I found that their answers could be categorized into categories that I have labeled as mindsets promoted by the school to enable a focus on social justice. When staff were asked about how they felt the school was implementing social justice, several staff indicated that the school promoted different ways of thinking, which I categorized as mindsets. My use of this category was meant to capture the various non-tangible efforts that interviewees listed as the school works to keep a focus on social justice. The mindsets below are presented in order of how frequently the mindset was discussed by different interviewees, from greatest to least.
Mindset 1: College-Going Focus

The school has created a motto of “College Ready! College Bound!” to stress their focus on a college-going mindset\textsuperscript{14}. In my literature review, I discussed the study by Gonzalez, Stein, and Huq (2013), which researched Latino students’ college hopes and plans. The authors suggested that schools and organizations should include a college-going self-efficacy focus when working with Latino students from immigrant families. In my interviews with staff, the school’s college-going focus was the most referenced mindset in relation to the school’s implementation of social justice. One staff member, who included this focus in their answer, stated, “We know that, especially in communities like this, unfortunately, a lot of kids make it to college, but they’re having a really hard time being successful there. I think it’s really important for our parents to be aware of what that means for their child, and their future college education” (Recorded Interview #4, 08-28-2015).

Some staff discussed the need for more than just a college-going focus, as that only focuses on going to College. They felt there is now a need for the school to focus on being successful in College. One staff member stated, “[Some of] our kids right now are going to college,…[but] they feel that they weren’t prepared fully” (Recorded Interview #11, 11-25-2015). Another staff member stated, “[We need to] give them a better experience here so that when they get to college, they know what to do and have more knowledge” (Recorded interview

This sentiment has created a new organization focus, shifting their efforts from college access to college readiness.

**Mindset 2: The Importance of Being Bilingual**

As the school serves a community where Spanish is the most predominant language spoken at home, the school adopted a Developmental Bilingual program for classroom instruction. Lindholm-Leary and Genesee (2010) describe the Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) program, also referred to as maintenance bilingual education or late-exit bilingual education, as an enrichment form of dual language education. DBE differs from other bilingual education models in how it uses both English and the English learners' home language, which in this school is Spanish, for literacy and academic instruction throughout the elementary grade levels.

At the CNCA Burlington Campus, the program starts in Kindergarten by delivering instruction in an 80% Spanish and 20% English model each week. Instructional time in English in Kindergarten is used to help students learn the language. The percentage of Spanish used for instruction decreases by 10% each year as the percentage of English used for instruction increases by 10%. By 5th grade, students receive instruction in a 70% English and 30% Spanish model. The goal for the Burlington Campus is to have students become bilingual and biliterate by the end of the 5th grade.
Most staff felt that this was a priority focus area in the school’s implementation of social justice. As the school’s mission states that students will become agents of social justice, staff felt that being bilingual was an important characteristic to develop in order for them to become those agents. One staff member stated:

- The fact that we have a bilingual program that allows kids to maintain their primary language and to develop that pride in their language and their cultures and their identity...I think that that is definitely something that connects to having a social justice agenda because you’re recognizing the individuals for who they are and you’re not changing them. We’re not looking at them from a deficit perspective (Recorded interview #8, 09-28-2015).

One staff member disagreed, though, and felt that a Developmental Bilingual program is actually a disservice for students: “I think an early exit model is better. It allows students to get the English academic vocabulary they need quickly, and gives them better chances at enrolling in AP [Advanced Placement] classes in high school” (Recorded interview #12, 01-28-2016). This teacher felt that the school’s goal should be to support students in being proficient in English by the end of the second grade, and to not have the goal of Spanish proficiency. This teacher’s viewpoint was not shared by any other staff members or parents interviewed.

Mindset 3: Whole-Child Approach

When staff were asked to think about how the school has worked towards implementing social justice for families, they discussed the school’s focus on the
whole child. The school has created a program, which they call its Continuum of Care:

A key component of our mission is our focus on the whole child where we address students’ comprehensive needs ensuring that each student is healthy, supported, engaged and challenged—setting the stage for comprehensive and long-term student success. To that end, we have developed a comprehensive “Continuum of Care” which supports early childhood education, high quality K-12 college pathways, college completion support, and authentic parent engagement.¹⁵

I identified the school’s whole child approach as a mindset, as the approach guides much of the work of staff at the school. Staff feel compelled to work in the community as the school not only works to meet the academic needs of its students, but also the social and emotional needs of each student. One staff member stated that the school implements social justice by “assuring that we're not just focused on academics, but also the social and emotional needs of every student that comes to our school” (Recorded interview #14, 01-29-2016). Another staff member stated, “I think we really think about not just the academics of our students, but also how we're preparing them emotionally, physically, mentally, everything for life” (Recorded interview #2, 07-19-2015).

Much of the trauma felt by students at the school is a result of poverty. Over the years, the impact of that poverty has changed. One of the former principals of the school described the community when the school first opened:

When the school opened it was a very, just challenging time in the community…There was a lot going on to the point where there was no parking on the streets…Whenever there was a car parked, they would tow it because of all the illegal activity that was going on…We had tons of homeless people that would just be walking the sidewalk. There were many, many, men

that would use the bamboo trees as a location to relieve themselves which is right adjacent to the playground. The alley was also very problematic when we first started. We had to have someone come very early to clear out the allies so when the employees came, they could actually drive into the parking lot (Recorded interview #8, 09-28-2015).

This interviewee felt that the effects of poverty on our students and families over have decreased as the community has changed over the school’s 16 years. She described a community that was crime-ridden and problematic, but that is not the community in which the school operates now. Another interviewee, a teacher who has worked at the school for 10 years, felt that poverty is still a big challenge for our families and its effects have not decreased. This teacher stated, “Poverty has had a big impact in our community. In the past, I felt like that there was more parent involvement as compared to as what we see now. I think it has a lot to do with parents needing to work and they're taking on more work hours” (Recorded interview #3, 08-26-15). When this participant was asked about how the school helps students become agents of social justice, she felt the school has placed importance on helping students understand that they “can change poverty through education or through other means” (Recorded interview #3, 08-26-15). Another interviewee elaborated on how the school partners with mental health agencies to support students who suffer the effects of poverty: “I'm really glad that we have counseling service…it's important for their child’s success, to receive these, to serve their needs in counseling, it's definitely a powerful way to do that” (Recorded interview #4, 08-28-2015). This finding was important as we have focused on supporting students with trauma felt from poverty, but we also need to focus on the messaging that education is the most important way to get.
out of poverty with our students and families. I do not think this message is heard enough and if it were, it would help create an even greater sense of commitment to the school.

**Parent Understanding of Implementation of Social Justice at the School**

In my discussions with parents, identified themes were again more aligned with their lived experiences, giving a more real and important understanding of the school’s implementation of social justice. I categorized parent answers into two themes that were similar to answers from staff, which were a college-going focus and a whole child approach. I also identified one more theme from parent answers that differed from staff, which was theme on how the school uses community service to develop a sense of social justice.

**College-Going Focus**

The school has become more focused on students not only having access to college, but on having them be ready for college. This means that they will have the academic requirements to be successful in college courses, and that they will be prepared with the social capital to compete with any student who has come from a more privileged background than them. I was excited to identify a theme within parent answers that matched with the school’s goal.

One parent explained how much she appreciated that students are called scholars, or in Spanish, *pre-universitarios* in the school. She also explained how this has become more of a focus for the school over the 15 years she has been involved with the school: “For me, the line for students to go to university was not
clear. I didn’t see it. Now, I see it more and the school emphasizes it more. We can hear it. We can see that all students are expected to go to university.” (Recorded interview #18, 02-02-06). Another parent discussed how her child has moved into the Camino Nuevo high school (now known as the Camino Nuevo Charter Academy Dalzell-Lance Campus) and how she much appreciated the academic advising and college application support that her child received. She had heard about the organization’s alumni outreach as well, and thought that this support would be a big benefit for her child while she is in college (Recorded interview #23, 02-03-16).

In addition, the organization administers a parent satisfaction survey every year to parents to get their feedback about the school’s success in meeting its goals. One question on that survey asks parents about their agreement with the following statement: “I believe my child is on the path to attend a 4-year college/university after high school.” The results for that question over four years (2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015) are displayed in the graph below:
Although there were slight increases and decreases from year to year, parents still believe that their child will attend a 4-year college or university with the support of their education from Camino Nuevo Charter Academy.

In comparing parent answers about a college-going focus to those of staff, I found that staff discussed the concept more as an ideal that our school is working towards, whereas parents talked about it in terms of its immediate application to their child and its importance to their family. They did not consider how a college-going focus is being implemented at other schools, which I found interesting as our focus is to be more dedicated to this approach than other local schools. With that said, both staff and parents indicated agreement in that the school does implement a college-going focus in an effort to create agents of
social justice. Future research in this area could seek to understand how different the school's college-going focus is to other schools. In a recent teacher hiring interview, I interviewed candidates from another charter management organization who only allow students to cross the stage at their 12th grade graduation if they have a 4-year college acceptance letter in their hand. Exploring a college-going focus within local schools would help to strengthen our school's focus.

**Whole Child Approach**

One of the most important ways that the school works to support students in being successful is through its whole child approach. This involves providing students with access to mental health services such as counselling, as well as medical supports such as vision and dental. The school encompasses all of these supports within what it calls its Continuum of Care.\(^{16}\)

One parent discussed the mental health supports that the school offers for students: “The school offers therapy for students, which gives them the tools they need to be more focused in the class. I know some students have very difficult situations at home, so the counselling helps them to overcome some of the pain they experience” (Recorded interview #17, 02-02-16). This parent’s comments made me think about how the school supports students in building resilience. NCLR’s report (2015) discussed the importance of developing resilience with communities of Latino students:

Resilience is, in fact, a complex process that develops through time, and while some of its traits might be part of one’s psychological make-up, it is nurtured, learned, and tested as people grow up and develop personal skills and social competencies that help them cope with the difficulties they encounter along the way (p. 10).

I felt that the previous parent was discussing how the school’s mental health supports are helping their students to build resilience in the face of the challenges they have every day. NCLR’s report (2015) states that the definition of resilience “assumes exposure to significant adversity, on the one hand, as well as some current measure by which to describe positive functioning, well-being, or success” (p. 25). As such, I think that the school’s efforts to develop a Continuum of Care that meets the needs of all of its students is one of the most important strategies it uses to implement social justice.

Community Service

Several parents recognized the school’s efforts to improve the community surrounding the school, as did staff. The answers between staff and parents differed though, in that staff identified a need to improve the community through the elimination of poverty, and parents identified a need to improve the community through cleaning and more access to opportunities. One staff member has recognized that there is a difference between what staff members think about social justice and what parents think is social justice: “I think it's really different and we need to empower the parents so they will feel that they can do things. It's not only cleaning and cooking. There's so much more that they can be doing. It's a matter of educating them too” (Recorded interview #5, 09-01-2016).

In the past, some parents have been involved in the school by cleaning the
sidewalk and exterior of the school. This initiative came from parents and was parent organized. Their purpose was to partner with the school in improving the place where their children learn every day. One parent stated, “I see social justice being implemented by the school when we do things to improve the community, like when we used to clean the outside of the school.” (Recorded interview #22, 02-03-2016). Another parent discussed how students and parents have been involved in cleaning MacArthur Park, a park located a few blocks away from the school, which has become a safer place for families over the years (Recorded interview #27, 02-04-16).

Although this theme was identified in several parent answers, it seems to be a theme that staff, as expressed by interviewee #5, feel should be not be a theme for parents. It seems important for the school, in its efforts to implement social justice, to support parents through education that will empower them to better understand how to implement social justice within their own lives.

Summary of Findings

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy has developed a mission statement that is focused on developing agents of social justice. To that end, it is important that staff and parents agree on what that implementation should look like to ensure that the school is meeting the needs of the community.

My findings in this area outlined some commonalities and some differences. Both staff and parents agreed that the school’s focus on a college-
going culture was important. My research also identified that the messaging of 
this focus could be even stronger and could be a greater focus on 
communications from the school. Staff and parents also agreed that the school’s 
focus on supporting the whole child was also important as a healthy student will 
be better equipped to succeed in school.

One important theme that was identified in the parent answers, but not the 
staff answers, was a focus on community service. Some families felt that tasks 
like cleaning the outside of the school would help to create a stronger sense of 
the school’s commitment to social justice. They felt that this made the school a 
much stronger presence in the neighborhood and would make its commitment to 
the community felt in stronger ways. But, one staff member felt that we needed to 
do more work within this understanding, helping parents to see that it involves 
more than just cleaning, and making parents feel really empowered in 
implementing social justice alongside staff. Future research in this area could 
further explore how community efforts such as cleaning the outside of the school 
could contribute to creating a socially-just environment for students and families.
CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy’s Burlington Campus is located in the Westlake neighborhood, which is also home to MacArthur Park. The predominantly Latino community suffers from overcrowding and families often experience poverty and its related traumas. The school started in the year 2000 as part of a community revitalization strategy, working to remove the blight of an empty mini-mall and create a greater focus on education within the community. In addition, it was developed as an option for families to the overcrowded neighborhood LAUSD schools. In 2002, the CNCA’s Burlington Campus developed a mission statement to guide its work:

The mission of Camino Nuevo Charter Academy is to educate students in a college preparatory program to be literate, critical thinkers, and independent problem solvers who are agents of social justice with sensitivity toward the world around them.

The school’s focus on social justice, more specifically in creating agents of social justice, is an important facet of its work with students within the community. This study was conducted in an effort to understand how stakeholders define social justice, and how stakeholders perceived the school’s efforts in creating social justice and improving outcomes for students within the neighborhood. This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do CNCA stakeholders (CNCA parents and staff) define social justice?
2. How do various CNCA stakeholders perceive social justice, as used in the
school’s mission statement, within the context of the Westlake neighborhood?

(3) Which mechanisms do CNCA stakeholders believe the school has used to effectively create and implement social justice to improve the neighborhood since the school opened in 2000?

This study helped me, as the school’s current Principal, understand how our staff and parents defined social justice, as well as how they felt social justice was being implemented by the school in an effort increase student success. I used an interview protocol with 15 parents and 15 staff, which provided much of the data used in Chapters 4 and 5 of this study. From this data, I am able to make conclusions about the school’s next steps in strengthening its implementation of social justice. In addition, I also asked staff and parents two questions that also helped to inform my thinking around the school’s next steps:

- Question 6: What changes would you make to make to the school so that it better meets the academic needs of the students in the community?
- Question 7: If CNCA did not exist, how would the community or neighborhood be different?

The data from Chapters 4 and 5, along with data from these questions helped me to develop the school’s next steps that staff and parents felt were important to take in the future.
Next Steps for the School

As the school has been supporting neighborhood students and families for over 16 years, the school has needed to make changes to its approach over time. These changes were made in an effort to match the needs of the neighborhood, as well as the changing requirements within the educational landscape. With that said, these changes have been more logistical as the organization has not moved away from its overall purpose of supporting students and families within the neighborhood surrounding the school.

The school was created in effort to meet several goals. First, the creation of the school was part of Pueblo Neuvo Development’s larger plan to revitalize the Westlake neighborhood Los Angeles, especially in the area close to MacArthur Park. The school was repurposed from a failed mini-mall, which was attracting crime to the area. Second, PND wanted to create an elementary school that would provide neighborhood children an excellent education focused on developing English language proficiency. And lastly, through community programming and parent involvement, PND wanted the school to become a stabilizing and energizing force in the MacArthur Park neighborhood (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 2004, p. 3).

Given the compelling reasons for opening the school, the school should continue supporting efforts that stay true to its original purpose. The school should focus on strengthening its current supports in a way that more fully meet the needs of the neighborhood 16 years after its opening. Although the
neighborhood has gone through some changes, such as the addition of a Starbucks and Home Depot a block away from the school, children in the area still suffer from some of the same traumas induced by poverty. Moving forward, the school should look to invest more time in three areas: creating a common understanding of social justice with all stakeholders, look for ways to further empower parents as true partners, and increase supports to meet the needs of the whole child.

Create a common understanding of social justice

As discussed in my Chapter 4 findings, staff and parents shared their definitions of social justice. These definitions had some clear areas of agreement, as well as some areas that differed. Overall, I found that staff definitions focused on characteristics and outcomes of social justice that could be applied in multiples settings, not just the neighborhood surrounding the school. These characteristics included equity, where staff felt it was important that people with less should receive more. Another characteristic was access, where staff felt that people should not be denied opportunities because of their zip code. Parent definitions, on the other hand, focused more on characteristics of social justice that were necessary within their own context and neighborhood. Their definitions focused more on their lived experiences and how social justice could help to alleviate some concerns. These characteristics included respect, where parents felt that all people deserve respect, regardless of their circumstances. Another characteristic was parenting, where parents felt that parents are responsible for
ensuring the success of their children. The difference in how parents viewed social justice is incredibly important as it means that staff need to better understand each family’s lived experiences in order to really implement a socially just education for neighborhood students.

As a result, the school should look to bring staff and families together to create a common definition of social justice. Ensuring that all stakeholders have an understanding of the school’s original purpose for opening will be an important part in starting this work. The school opened in an effort to increase the supports for children within the neighborhood through a developmental bilingual program, so it will be important that the school’s common vision for social justice incorporate this intent. In addition, the school’s mission includes a focus on educating students to be agents of social justice. As such, the school should look to strengthen current structures, and develop further structures, where parents and staff can work towards that goal in the same way. One of the school’s current structures to build stronger partnerships between families and staff is through its Site-Based Council (SBC). This group consists of parents, teachers, and school staff who meet regularly to discuss school issues and provide suggestions to the school principal. In addition, it acts to further inform parents of daily activities at the school, and get their input in strengthening future school activities. Given that the focus of the SBC is to continuously improve the school, this council might provide a good place to start the discussion of which further
structures are still needed to give parents the opportunity to be leaders within the conversation.

When the school starts this work of creating a common understanding of social justice, one area of focus in that discussion should be on the difference between equality and equity. When conducting interviews with parents from the school, I found that many parent definitions of social justice included aspects that could be categorized under the theme of equality as they focused on equal treatment. Their view of equality was focused on people within their own neighborhood, outlining immediate needs for the implementation of social justice within their own lives. As an example, some parent definitions described how students and parents need to respect each other given their proximity to each other and their need to be role models for their children. But, as Lazar (2013) states, discussions of social justice within schools and, more specifically teaching, need to focus on the “educational inequalities that undermine the achievement of students, and particularly those from high poverty culturally non-dominant communities” (p. 702). The school and staff should work together to acknowledge the inequalities that many of the children face, and work together to address them through the education of their child. This was the original purpose for the school’s development, so again, having a common understanding of how the school came to exist with all stakeholders will be an important part of this discussion. In addition, the discussion should focus on equity versus equality as the school is not looking for students to receive the same opportunities as students within affluent or more privileged areas, but in fact, the school should be
looking to give more opportunities to its students in an effort to overcome the inequalities they face daily as a result of where they live.

More importantly, the school should look to ensure that its staff understand and empathize with the lived experiences of their families. The staff represent the school and its mission, so they first need to understand why the school exists, and then ensure that their actions are in line with that purpose. The school could help staff in this effort by placing a greater focus on making home visits and being a part of culturally-important events. This will help staff better understand their families, and truly value what families experience within their community. The school staff recently did an activity where they placed themselves on a map that indicated where they live in comparison to the school. In that activity, only one staff member lived close to the school. So, in order to fully understand what social justice means to families, teachers need to be more present within the community and in the lives of families.

*Parent Empowerment*

When the school started, it set out to involve parents in the process of their children’s education and to offer a wide variety of programming to community residents. This focus on parents and the community would help the school to become a stabilizing and energizing force in the MacArthur Park neighborhood. The school has created a goal of “parents as partners”:

At Camino Nuevo, parents are our most important partners. We strongly believe that students will find greater levels of academic success when their home and school share similar values about learning and forge a genuine
partnership. CNCA seeks to move beyond parent involvement and actively engage families as partners. We believe that graduates will experience greater levels of success in college and career when their most important advocates develop a positive relationship and work together in the best interest of the student.  

Given this focus, the second step the school should take is to continue to find ways to further empower parents. With a common understanding of social justice in place, the school should look to support and empower parents in enacting the commonly-created definition of social justice for their children and for themselves. Although it is important for staff to also be involved in this work, the school’s parents will continue to support their child when they leave the school, so empowering them with the tools to fully support their child in becoming an agent of social justice should be a priority. Although poverty is an extreme barrier for many of the school’s families to overcome, parents are already working to break the cycle of poverty, which is being handed down from generation to generation, by ensuring their children attend school and holding a college-going focus with their child. As a next step, parents should be empowered with the knowledge and tools to ensure that their children are successful in school and in their college-going endeavors. One staff member shared the history of CNCA’s parent involvement strategies and her hope for moving forward:

I think at the beginning, we wanted the parents to be at the school, to become part of the school community. Throughout the years, I think the measure of success is not going to be exactly the parent involvement, but more how the kid is performing in school. We had parents that have come to every single

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workshop from day one and their kids are still facing a lot of challenges, so then it doesn’t make sense (Recorded interview #5, 09-01-2015).

As Martinez and Ulanoff (2013) explained, parents need to be seen as active developers of social and cultural capital, which often represents a departure from deficit notions that prevail in many US schools: “viewing Latino communities through a strengths-based lens can facilitate a more accurate inventory of the neighborhood’s history, resources, and future” (Martinez and Ulanoff, 2013, p. 207). Within the context of Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, this means that parents need to understand important milestones in their child’s education from Kindergarten through Eighth Grade. This will further highlight the school’s, and the families’, commitment to be ready for College. An example of these milestones include developing an understanding of the importance of state assessments, such as the new Smarter Balanced assessments and the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) assessment for English language learners. These state assessments are the key to demonstrating that students are on track to be college and career ready. Additionally, parents need to understand their child’s progress throughout the year, and how the school measures that at each grade level. Having the knowledge of what an A or a 4 means when they see it on their child’s progress report or report card will allow parents to have more specific conversations with their child’s teacher about their child’s progress. One parent in my interviews shared, “We need to care about educating our parents too. They don’t have the resources to be able to learn [on their own]” (Recorded Interview #7, 09-08-15).
Increase Whole Child Supports

Over its 16 years of existence, the school has continued its efforts to offer whole child supports. They have done so recognizing that students need to be supported physically and mentally if they are going to be able to flourish and grow into a college-bound scholar. The school’s support of the whole child is an area that is important to the organization. The level of support that the school offers far exceeds the level of support offered by local district schools. These supports have included offerings for students in mental health support, dental cleanings, and vision screenings. Throughout my interviews with staff and parents, I found that they have appreciated the organization’s efforts in this area, but felt that the school could do even more in an effort to better meet the needs of students and families.

The main area of focus for parents and staff was on the organization’s mental health counselling supports. One staff member shared:

We are definitely dealing with a lot of kids with a lot of trauma. I feel like there’s so many kids that are on the waiting list. I feel like a lot of kids just need someone to talk to and the teacher doesn’t always have that time or the expertise (Recorded interview #6, 09-02-15).

Staff and parents felt that the organization needed to not only increase this support for students, but to also offer it more regularly to families. Some of the trauma felt by students is a result of the trauma being experienced by their parents, such as poverty, job loss, or abuse. As such, it is important that counselling not only focus on students, but on the whole family.
In addition, some interviewees requested that mental health counselling support happen earlier in a student’s life, especially when we see the warning signs that will contribute to traumatic experiences. The organization should be more proactive with its support, rather than being reactive when something has gone wrong. One staff member shared:

This particular community has so many needs that I think being able to work with the kids sooner would support them in growing up to be healthier individuals. Right now, we tend to focus more on crisis management (Recorded interview #8, 09-28-15).

As a result of these findings, I have already hired a full-time mental health counsellor at the school. The mental health counsellor has started to work with staff, families, and students in an effort to build a more trauma-sensitive environment at our school. My hope is that her supports will help us in being more proactive with our supports, versus needing to be reactive when trauma has created a challenge for our students.

In addition, the school recently adopted a focus on using Restorative Justice as a practice for supporting student discipline procedures. This practice uses a restorative point of view when dealing with discipline challenges, versus a retributive point of view:

Restorative justice is an alternative to retributive zero-tolerance policies that mandate suspension or expulsion of students from school for a wide variety of misbehaviors...Although zero-tolerance policies have resulted in substantial increases in student suspensions and expulsions for students of all races, African American and Hispanic/Latino youth are disproportionately impacted by a zero-tolerance approach.18

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The school’s choice to use restorative practices helps students not only realize that there is a consequence for their actions, but it places an emphasis on repairing the harm and restoring harmony back to the community. It also helps students take more ownership of the peace in their community, working to stop other students from making bad choices.

This model of student discipline should continue to emphasized and built out within the school in an effort to better support the school’s focus on the whole child. The practices used when implementing Restorative Justice help students understand the socially appropriate ways to act. The focus helps the school in its efforts to further build each child’s social capital. To further the school’s implementation, it should look to other school districts, such as Oakland Unified, to find ways to integrate it into more aspects of the school. The school’s charter was last revised in 2015 and given that LAUSD is the school’s authorizer, LAUSD set out expectations for what needed to be included in the school’s discipline policy. The school should look to revise its discipline policy in its next charter renewal, creating a greater focus on implementing restorative outcomes.

**Conclusion: Implications for Future Research**

This study was about stakeholder understandings of social justice and how they view social justice being implemented in the school over the past 16 years. In asking stakeholders what would be different about the neighborhood if the school did not exist, I was able to see the areas where the school has done well, and the areas where the school needs to continue to improve.
One theme that was a thread throughout the data in this study, and was mentioned as a concern if the school did not exist, was about parent involvement and engagement. If the school did not exist, participants overwhelming felt that parents would not be involved with the school and their child’s education. As a result, parents would not feel empowered with the tools to help their child. Additionally, students would feel isolated in their quest to pursue a college education, making it even harder to meet that goal. As one of the implications of this study is that parent empowerment needs to be strengthened, it seems important for the school to better systematize how it partners with parents and to ensure a consistency in that support for all parents. Future research in this area could involve case studies about how parents feel supported by the school, in comparison to parent views of support at neighboring schools.

Another theme that was found throughout the data in this study, and was mentioned as a concern if the school did not exist, was the school’s focus on going to college. Staff and parents felt that many students in the community would not move on to college because they would not be able to see it as a possibility. Through its operation in the community, the school is working to reverse many of the traumas experienced by families in the neighborhood. They are doing this first by empowering students with education, and second, supporting the whole child and their family. Future research could focus on what aspects of a college-going culture implementation in other schools have been successful with similar populations. This would help the school in building a
coherent understanding of what it means to be college bound for students at each grade level from Kindergarten through 12th grade. This would then help outline specific student goals in each grade level and related supports for parents. This would also help the school in achieving its newest goal of not only college access, but college readiness.

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy opened its doors in August 2000 in effort to uplift an underserved community. It worked to educate students who were enrolled in overcrowded schools, and it worked to include parents in their child’s education who were feeling alienated by their child’s local district school. The school has spent the past 16 years working to improve the community and has found great success. The next steps outlined in this research will help the school further realize its success, and further empower families to be a part of creating that success for themselves and for their neighborhood. The test that will help the school see if their efforts are successful will be through an increase in students going to college and succeeding.
Appendices

Appendix A: Letter of Informed Consent

Researcher: Mark Healy
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CNCA Burlington Campus
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Advisor: Dr. Rand Quinn
Assistant Professor
University of Pennsylvania
Phone: (215) 898-9330
raq@gse.upenn.edu

Research Protocol
Letter of Informed Consent

Date: _______________________________

My name is Mark Healy and I am a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania. I am also the current School Principal at Camino Nuevo Charter Academy’s Burlington Campus. I am working on my dissertation, which is focused on understanding how social justice has been used by Camino Nuevo Charter Academy’s Burlington Campus to impact the surrounding neighborhood. I respectfully request your permission to participate in my research dissertation, Camino Nuevo Charter Academy’s Impact on the Westlake Neighborhood Through a Focus on Social Justice.

The purpose of this research is to document the work of Camino Nuevo Charter Academy since it opened in 2000. As the one school has now expanded into eight different campuses across the neighborhood, understanding what has worked and what has not is important in the school replication process. The research will be conducted during the spring and summer of 2015, and the data collected will be used to inform the direction I, and the larger organization, take with the campus in the coming years.

With your permission, I will be audio recording our interview, which will last for about 30 minutes. I will be the only person who hears this recording and the recording will be destroyed after it is transcribed. Any data taken from this interview will not personally identify you. If you choose not to have our interview recorded, I will transcribe your answers during the interview. You can also decline this invitation to interview with no consequence.

Participation in this study is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time. Your participation in this study would involve:
• Complete confidentiality and anonymity regarding the information shared and provided. Any information obtained will be considered confidential and will be used solely for research purposes in fulfillment of my dissertation.
• Face to face and/or phone interview lasting approximately 1 hour.
• Completion of one more interaction (email, phone call, or in person) if I need to follow-up on any data you shared in the interview.
• Permission to audiotape interview(s) (You will be entitled to review the transcripts and negotiate changes)

I sincerely appreciate your time, energy, and participation in my research, and hope that you will allow me to document your experience. There is no anticipated risk on your behalf for participation in this study. You may withdraw from the study at any time by speaking with me, and all data collected from your interview will be destroyed immediately.

Completion of the consent form will indicate permission to use the data obtained in the study.

Research Protocol
Letter of Consent

Participant's Signature: _________________________ Date: __________
Researcher's Signature: _________________________ Date: __________

For further information regarding this study, please contact:

Researcher: Mark Healy
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Apéndice A: Carta de Consentimiento Informado

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Protocolo de Investigación  
Documento de Consentimiento Informado

Fecha: _______________________________

Mi nombre es Mark Healy y soy un estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad de Pennsylvania. Yo también soy el director actual del plantel Burlington, Camino Nuevo Charter Academy. Estoy trabajando en mi tesis doctoral, enfocado en la comprensión de cómo el plantel Burlington de Camino Nuevo Charter Academy ha utilizado la justicia social para impactar la vecindad que le rodea. Respetuosamente solicito su permiso para participar en mi tesis de investigación, El Impacto de Camino Nuevo Charter Academy en la vecindad de Westlake a través de un enfoque de la Justicia Social.

El propósito de esta investigación es para documentar el trabajo de Camino Nuevo Charter Academy desde su apertura en el año 2000. Como una escuela que ya se ha extendido a ocho diferentes planteles por toda la vecindad, entender lo que ha funcionado y lo que no ha funcionado es importante en el proceso de replicar la escuela. La investigación se llevará a cabo durante la primavera y el verano del 2015, y los datos colectados se utilizarán para informar la dirección en que Yo, y la organización entera, tomemos con el plantel en los próximos años.

Con su permiso, voy a grabar en audio nuestra entrevista, que durará aproximadamente 30 minutos. Seré la única persona que escuchara esta grabación y la grabación será destruida después de que se transcriba. Los datos de esta entrevista no lo identificarán a usted personalmente. Si usted decide que nuestra entrevista no sea grabada, sus respuestas serán transcritas durante la entrevista. Usted también puede negar esta invitación de participar en la entrevista sin ninguna consecuencia.

Su participación en este estudio es voluntaria y puede descontinuarse en cualquier momento. Su participación en este estudio involucra:

- Total confidencialidad y anónimo respecto a la información compartida y proporcionada. Información obtenida será considerada confidencial y se
utilizará exclusivamente para fines de la investigación en cumplimiento de mi tesis doctoral.

- Entrevistas en persona o por teléfono que duraran aproximadamente 1 hora.
- Realización de más de una interacción (por correo electrónico, llamada telefónica, o en persona) si es necesario dar seguimiento a los datos compartidos en la entrevista.
- Permiso para grabar el audio de las entrevistas (usted tendrá derecho a revisar las transcripciones y negociar cambios).

Yo sinceramente aprecio su tiempo, energía y participación en mi investigación y espero que usted me permita documentar su experiencia. No se anticipa ningún riesgo de su parte por participar en este estudio. Usted puede retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento hablando conmigo, y todos los datos recogidos para la entrevista serán destruidos inmediatamente.

_El completar este formulario de consentimiento indicará la autorización para utilizar los datos obtenidos en el estudio._

**Protocolo de Investigación**

**Documento de Consentimiento**

Firma del participante: _______________ Fecha: __________

Firma del investigador: _______________ Fecha: __________

Para obtener más información sobre este estudio, por favor comuníquese con:

**Investigador:** Mark Healy
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Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Background Questions
1. Briefly describe how you have interacted with the Burlington Campus? For how long?

CNCA Burlington Campus’ History
2. Camino Nuevo Charter Academy opened in the MacArthur Park neighborhood in 2000. In what ways have you seen the community change since 2000?

3. In what ways do you think the school has successfully involved parents? In what ways have they not been successful in involving parents?
   Probe: When the Burlington Campus was created, it wanted to involve parents in the process of their children’s education and offer a wide variety of programming to community residents. How has the school met this goal?

Social Justice at Camino Nuevo’s Burlington Campus
4. What does the term social justice mean to you?
   Probe: CNCA’s mission is to educate students in a college preparatory program to be literate, critical thinkers, and independent problem solvers who are agents of social justice with sensitivity toward the world around them. How does CNCA’s vision of social justice match with yours?

5. In what specific ways has CNCA created and implemented the idea of social justice within the school?
   Probe: How has CNCA created and implemented the idea of social justice within the neighborhood?

Future Programming at Camino Nuevo’s Burlington Campus
6. What changes would you make to the school so that it better meets the academic and social emotional needs of the students in the community?

7. If CNCA did not exist, how would the community or neighborhood be different?

Conclusion
Thank you for your participation in this study. If you have any further thoughts on the school’s focus on social justice or its impact on the neighborhood, I would welcome those thoughts now.
Apéndice B: Protocolo de la Entrevista

Preguntas Antecedentes
1. ¿Describa brevemente cómo usted ha interactuado con el plantel de Burlington? ¿Por cuánto tiempo?

Historia de Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, Plantel Burlington
2. Camino Nuevo Charter Academy abrió en la vecindad del parque MacArthur en el año 2000. ¿En qué maneras ha visto a la comunidad cambiar desde el año 2000?
3. ¿En qué manera cree usted que la escuela ha logrado su meta con éxito en involucrar a los padres? ¿En qué maneras cree usted que no han tenido éxito involucrando a los padres?
   *Sondee:* El plantel de Burlington fue creado cuando quiso involucrar a los padres en el proceso de la educación de sus hijos y ofrecer una amplia variedad de programación para los residentes de la comunidad. ¿Cómo ha cumplido esta meta la escuela?

Justicia Social de Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, Plantel Burlington
4. ¿Qué significa el término justicia social para usted?
   *Sondee:* La misión de Camino Nuevo Charter Academy es de educar a los estudiantes en un programa de preparación para el colegio, a leer y escribir, pensar críticamente, solucionar problemas independientemente, y ser agentes de la justicia social con sensibilidad hacia el mundo que les rodea. ¿Cómo coincide la visión de CNCA sobre la justicia social con la de usted?
5. ¿En qué maneras específicas ha creado e implementado Camino Nuevo Charter Academy la idea de justicia social dentro de la escuela?
   *Sondee:* ¿Cómo ha creado e implementado CNCA la idea de justicia social en la vecindad?

Programación futura en Plantel Burlington de Camino Nuevo Charter Academy
6. ¿Qué cambios haría usted en la escuela para mejor satisfacer las necesidades académicas y socioemocionales de los estudiantes en la comunidad?
7. ¿Si no existiera Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, cómo sería diferente la comunidad o el vecindario?

Conclusion
Gracias por su participación en este estudio. Si tiene alguna idea más sobre el enfoque de la escuela en la justicia social o su impacto en la vecindad, le doy la bienvenida a esos pensamientos en este momento.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


