'Yo soy la única burra' [I'm the only dumb one]. Not Anymore. An Intersectional Approach to Digital Inclusion

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Abstract

This paper applies intersectionality theory to analyze the challenges and successes of vulnerable communities in developing techno-capital—a form of cultural capital that influences individuals' technology adoption and usage. Through ethnographic methods, such as participant observations and interviews among a group of working-class US Latinas in central Texas, this work aims to explore why digital inclusion programs should go beyond the first and second levels of the digital divide. Our findings show that this group of women faced unique barriers to digital inclusion, such as skills, time, perceived self-exclusion, and self-doubt. Even when Internet access, devices, and knowledge existed in their homes, they felt they lacked the abilities to

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access them, thus reflecting complex gendered family dynamics. A two-year ethnography with a non-profit serving the youth and parents of their neighborhood revealed that even this organization had trouble recognizing multiple, interconnected issues arising from gender, household roles, and age on top of the other categories of issues faced by working-class Latino immigrants in a large urban enclave. However, intersectional analysis by the lead author, when working for the non-profit, enabled her to better see and make decisions to serve these women's needs for digital inclusion and parent education.

Keywords

Gender; class; intersectionality; technology; digital divide; digital inclusion.

'Yo soy la única burra'. Ya no. Un enfoque interseccional para la inclusión digital

Resumen

En este artículo se aplica la teoría de la interseccionalidad para analizar los desafíos y aciertos de las comunidades vulnerables en el desarrollo del tecnocapital, una forma de capital cultural que influye en la adopción y el uso de la tecnología por parte de las personas. A través de métodos etnográficos, como observaciones participantes y entrevistas a un grupo de latinas estadounidenses de clase trabajadora en el centro de Texas, este trabajo pretende explorar por qué los programas de inclusión digital deberían ir más allá del primer y segundo nivel de la brecha digital. Nuestros hallazgos muestran que este grupo de mujeres enfrentó barreras únicas para la inclusión digital, como las habilidades, el tiempo, la percepción de autoexclusión y la desconfianza en sí mismas. Incluso cuando en sus hogares contaban con acceso a Internet, dispositivos y conocimientos, sentían que carecían de las capacidades para manejarlos, lo que reflejaba una dinámica familiar de género compleja. Una etnografía de dos años de duración con una organización sin ánimo de lucro que atiende a jóvenes y padres del vecindario reveló que incluso esta organización tuvo dificultades para reconocer los diferentes problemas interconectados que surgen del género, los roles domésticos y la edad, además de otro tipo de problemas que enfrentan los inmigrantes latinos de clase media en un gran enclave urbano. No obstante, el análisis interseccional que llevó a cabo la autora principal, cuando trabajaba para dicha organización, le permitió ver y tomar mejores decisiones para satisfacer las necesidades de estas mujeres tanto en materia de inclusión digital como de educación de los padres.

Palabras clave

Género; clase; interseccionalidad; tecnología; brecha digital; inclusión digital.

"Eu sou a única burra". Já não. Uma abordagem interseccional da inclusão digital

Resumo

Este artigo aplica a teoria da interseccionalidade para analisar os desafios e os sucessos das comunidades vulneráveis no desenvolvimento do tecno-capital, uma forma de capital cultural que influencia a adoção e o uso da tecnologia pelas pessoas. Por meio de métodos etnográficos, como observações participantes e entrevistas com um grupo de latinas estadunidenses da classe trabalhadora na região central do Texas, este artigo tem como objetivo explorar por que os programas de inclusão digital devem ir além do primeiro e do segundo níveis da exclusão digital. Nossas descobertas mostram que esse grupo de mulheres enfrentou barreiras exclusivas para a inclusão digital, incluindo habilidades, tempo, percepção de autoexclusão e insegurança. Mesmo quando tinham acesso à Internet, aos dispositivos e aos conhecimentos, elas sentiam que não tinham as habilidades necessárias para gerenciá-los, o que refletia a complexa dinâmica familiar de gênero. Uma etnografia de dois anos com uma organização sem fins lucrativos que atende jovens e pais do bairro revelou que até mesmo essa organização tinha dificuldade em reconhecer as várias questões interconectadas decorrentes de gênero, papéis domésticos e idade, bem como outros tipos de problemas enfrentados por imigrantes latinos de classe média em um grande enclave urbano. Entretanto, a análise interseccional realizada pela autora principal, enquanto trabalhava para essa organização, permitiu que ela visse e tomasse decisões melhores para atender às necessidades dessas mulheres em termos de inclusão digital e educação dos pais.

Palavras-chave

Gênero; classe; interseccionalidade; tecnologia; exclusão digital; inclusão digital.

Introduction

This article discusses an empirical case study of a digital inclusion program for low-income Latina mothers living in the United States. This group of women is in a vulnerable position within the digital divide, as they face several barriers stemming from intersectional socio-cultural and technological issues (Arroyo, 2020; Garcia, 2011) that may hinder their growth. For example, Roselia was a 37-year-old Mexican immigrant in the US and a working-class stay-at-home Latina mother of three children (ages 4, 14, and 20) when she applied to Compu-Clase[4]—the observed digital inclusion program facilitated by a Central Texas non-profit organization. Roselia was not eligible for the program because she had access to a computer and Internet at home, and the organization was initially interested in addressing only the first level of the digital divide (those without access to a computer or Internet). She ended up being accepted and graduated from the program since the first author of this paper, who was the person who selected candidates for the program at that time, advocated internally in the organization for the program to accept women who had computers or Internet at home but did not feel confident to use them. However, being accepted into the program was not the only challenge she overcame. Roselia faced barriers with *macho* culture, as her husband did not want her to attend the training. He wanted her to be home when he got back from work, not only to cook dinner but also to keep him company. Roselia expressed her frustration in an interview before the training: "*Yo soy la única burra*" (I am the only dumb one—at home) because she considered herself the least capable of using computers and technologies compared to her husband and children.

Through ethnographic observations, a pattern emerged among Compu-Clase candidates: Almost all were women, although the program was designed for parents/caregivers in general. Moreover, since part of the eligibility criteria was having school-age children, nearly all were mothers. As we will discuss below, we seek to analyze the intersectional challenges that women may face in their digital inclusion journey and, in so doing, see social identities as well as subjective measures like confidence shape

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4   A pseudonym for the name of the program. All names given in this article are pseudonyms, including the quotes.

their technological *habitus*, a set of durable dispositions toward technology (Bourdieu, 2017; Sterne, 2003). Framing the conversation under intersectionality is useful to analyze how aspects of identity and experience drive their dispositions toward technology.

Roselia's case reveals a wealth of factors in the digital divide through an intersectionality lens. Firstly, there are gender identity layers. She was a mother, a housewife, and a woman. Moreover, she had ethnic layers: being Latina of Mexican heritage, an immigrant, and living in an ethnic enclave of a US city whose economy depends on technology, known as a technopolis (Straubhaar et al., 2012). Secondly, all these interrelated social identities typify the intersectionality of issues facing a vulnerable community (Crenshaw, 1989). Thirdly, this experience directly challenges the non-profit's strategy to focus only on those who did not have access to and skills for information and communication technologies (ICT) (Cooper, 2006; Gonzales, 2016). Lastly, the case study reminds us that the digital divide still affects vulnerable groups, even in countries like the US with high internet penetration (Helsper & Reisdorf, 2017).

Intersectionality can be a tool to critically evaluate programs like Compu-Clase and its role in developing techno-capital among the populations they serve. Building on the theories of capital by Bordieu (1984), techno-capital (Choi et al., 2021; Straubhaar et al., 2012) is a specific type of cultural capital that informs people's attitudes to, adoption, and use of technologies depending on their *habitus*, understood as a set of dispositions that create durable and transposable practices and perceptions over a long process of social interaction, as part of a group, like the women in this ethnic enclave who took these classes.

In some ways, this project took on aspects of participatory action research (McIntyre, 2007) as a constructive dialogue between the lead researcher and the directors of the parent organization helped them realize how subtleties of intersectionality, the relationships between income, technology access, gender, domestic role, and age can best help the non-profit understand whom they serve beyond the more obvious issues of geography, ethnicity, and immigration status faced by people in that neighborhood.

Theoretical Background

Gender, Motherhood, and Technology

Not all women are mothers, and not all mothers share the same attitudes toward motherhood and caregiving. However, numerous studies on gender and technology, from the early 2000s (Habib & Cornford, 2002; Lally, 2002; Wajcman, 2004) to the last decade, have presented empirical evidence that gender inequalities influence the extent of technological competence women develop. Time use has been identified as a challenge in digital competence for women due to the work needed to carry their multiple roles, thus placing greater emphasis on how free time is spent (Acela & Sæbø, 2021; Arroyo, 2020). Martínez Mancilla and Gonzalez Ramos (2021) remind us that gender stereotypes must not be ignored, as in Mexico, for example, mothers missed digital inclusion classes because caregiving responsibilities preceded non-traditional expectations. Moreover, they found that technology was used for family-related activities, such as assisting children with homework. In addition, Park et al. (2021) observed that during COVID-19, the struggles Latina mothers in the US faced went beyond navigating web-based learning platforms but how the educational system is non-responsive to economic constraints and stressors. These authors explain how their participants worked one or two full-time jobs and returned home to cook, clean, and care for family members. Most importantly, they supported the notion that the digital literacy divide does not exist outside socio-cultural and economic structures and emphasized the resourcefulness of everyday Latina mothers.

The Lens of Intersectionality

This study takes the definition of intersectionality provided by Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2016), who use it to understand and analyze complexity in society and human relations. They note: "Race, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, ethnicity, nation, religion, and age are categories of analysis, terms that reference important social divisions. But they are also categories that gain meaning from power relations of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and class exploitation" (p. 46). All in all, social identities are not observed as sets of additions but rather as interwoven social structures

that (re)produce inequality and discrimination. Intersectionality, coined by Crenshaw (1989) to explain structural discriminations of gender and race, can also be used as an analytical tool of inquiry and critical praxis. It could be a means of achieving social justice through an awareness of how power is created and challenged (Goel, 2015).

We ground intersectionality in our work to enable digital inclusion organizations to use it as a tool to help mobilize digital inclusion as a human right and social justice issue (Sanders & Scanlon, 2021), and in so doing, put gender at the forefront as a key layer in digital exclusion as others have also positioned it (Arroyo, 2020). We add, through intersectionality, that digital inclusion is a nuanced production of interwoven social layers that must be teased out and put together, and recognizing it as such can work to bridge the digital divide.

The Digital Divide and Intersectionality

Most digital divide research initially focused on problems of access to computers or other devices and connectivity to the Internet, which defines the first level of the digital divide (Perrin & Duggan, 2015; Van Dijk, 2005). People's choice of what devices they use may depend on socioeconomic factors. For instance, replacing broken or obsolete technologies is harder when there is low disposable income, thus constraining people to what they have available (Gonzales, 2016; Grošelj, 2021). Others argue that mobile-only use does not necessarily lead to an immersive digital inclusion process due to its technological limitations (Correa et al., 2019). The limits of using only a cell phone for family Internet needs, including schoolwork, were shown during COVID-19 (Katz & Rideout, 2021). Following this academic debate, the question about mobile Internet access bridging the digital divides remains: "the role of devices employed for Internet access and how devices influence people's digital inclusion process, including their levels of digital skills" (Correa et al., 2022, p. 2), which is related to their techno-capital, the knowledge and disposition required to learn to use new technologies.

However, researchers noticed that access to hardware and Internet connection was not enough and that the second level of the digital

divide was access to knowledge and skills (Hargittai, 2002; Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2014). Another next-level issue in the digital divide is the question of a person's disposition to use digital technologies (Choi et al., 2021; North et al., 2008; Rojas et al., 2003). Dispositions toward technology use are related to an underlying *habitus* (Sterne, 2003), to deeper habits and roles related to gender, like home-making motherhood, class, ethnicity, and place, particularly when those are ethnic enclaves like the one studied here. This relates to people's decisions regarding how they use the Internet and choose devices to do so (e.g., computers, smartphones, or tablets), setting forth the idea that, for those who have Internet but do not use it, it can be a matter of digital choice rather than digital exclusion (Eynon & Helsper, 2011).

Past studies have found an empirical connection between gender, age, and ethnicity on the digital divide (Alper et al., 2018; Choi et al., 2021; Scheerder et al., 2017). In a study of the city where our study is located, Choi et al. (2021) found three sets of techno-capital: general internet use centered on cellphone use, productivity skills related to work, and deeper skills and knowledge related to creativity and privacy protection. All these were then related to gender, age, education, and ethnicity.

In the few digital divide studies that apply intersectionality as a framework, this theory has served as an analytical tool to avoid technological determinism or a homogenous view of certain social groups (see Alper et al., 2018; Calderón Gómez, 2019; Goedhart et al., 2019). For instance, Calderón Gómez (2019) explores the techno-capital of young people in Spain by taking an intersectional approach in a quantitative digital divide study, which challenges reductionist notions that youth are all digital natives. In addition, Goedhart et al. (2019) took an intersectional and qualitative approach to avoid generalizing or homogenizing conclusions on a group of immigrant women in the Netherlands. They concluded that the perspectives, experiences, and needs of mothers with a low socioeconomic position in respect to ICT were mainly influenced by motherhood, poverty, and the complexity of ICT, all amplified through being first-generation, non-Western immigrants.

While these studies use intersectionality as a theoretical instrument to avoid generalizations, in this paper, we apply intersectionality as praxis to inform organizations and governmental institutions about the complexities of the digital inclusion process. Guided by them, our article addresses the following research question: How can digital inclusion programs go beyond issues of ethnicity, gender, or class to approach the digital divide through the lens of intersectionality and techno-capital?

Methods

Why this Case Study of Compu-Clase? Understanding the Digital Divide in Central Texas

This section will explain our rationale for selecting the organization and its digital inclusion program as a case study (Gerring & Cojocaru, 2016) and stress its relevance to understanding gender and technology. Our knowledge of this non-profit organization began with participant observations in 2012 as part of a comparison of digital inclusion organizations in Central Texas.

We can summarize why this organization stood out among other community organizations as follows: 1) They decided to be very specific to their neighborhood, a heavily Latino, working-class, immigrant area of a Texan city that covers several square miles so that they could get to know the people they were working with. 2) Although their original mission, like several others, was to help youth develop digital skills, they decided that to do that more effectively, they had to work with the children's parents. 3) They decided that to help the children set goals for careers and education, the parents needed to understand better how work and educational demands were changing in the US. So, being a parent was an eligibility criterion for adult participation in this program. This is unique among digital inclusion programs we reviewed, although some school outreach programs do pursue this. 4) As a result, parent education and digital skills training came to be closely integrated, which was also not common in the city where the case study was done.

Noticing Gender from the Start: Early Observations during the First Phase

Students were recruited between November 2015 and February 2016. Out of 51 applications, 40 were approved. Only two were men, of whom only one completed the class. All were of Mexican heritage, except two women who were Honduran and Cuban. Of the 40 accepted students, 35 took the classes in the morning or evening. Participants were, on average, 36 years old. Each family had, on average, 2.8 children, mostly school-age, as the organization required participants to have children enrolled in K-12 (kindergarten through secondary school). This data highlighted the importance of women, although the non-profit organization had trouble recognizing how gender and age were interwoven with class, ethnicity, and geographical issues at first since they had thought of it as a course for parents and hoped for more men/fathers to enroll. The first author, then employed there, was able to have a useful dialogue with the two directors to get them to focus more on the intersectional characteristics of the group of women they had. There was also a participant in her late 50s, a grandmother who was admitted into the program because she was a primary caregiver of her grandchildren. This opened a question of age differences, the importance of which emerged more slowly. During this first phase, our data collection consisted of participant observations and field notes (Emerson et al., 1995).

Diving into Gender: Interviewing Women during the Second Phase

A year after the training, between September 2016 and June 2017, the first author conducted post-training in-depth interviews in Spanish via voice calls with 17 participants (all Mexican, except for one from Honduras) out of the 27 who graduated Compu-Clase. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted 40 minutes to an hour and a half. The researcher informed the participants that the interviews were for a research project unrelated to the non-profit organization they trained and that the study was anonymous. Upon these conditions, participants provided oral consent via the phone to use their interviews in scientific publications and presentations. To ensure participants' privacy, all personal and institutional names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

The interviews were structured according to two main strands: First, we aimed to find out three things: (1) what activities were performed through the Chromebook they received upon graduation and for what purpose; (2) to identify which device (Chromebook vs. smartphone) is the most comfortable to them; and (3) to understand the indirect impact of the training they received on Chromebooks on how they use their smartphones to improve their own lives. The second central strand of interview questions focused on gender in the participants' lives. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Transcribers were required to destroy the files after transcriptions were completed. We analyzed the interviews via "thematic analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis unfolded as follows: First, the two first authors manually coded the interviews separately by reading them repeatedly to find common themes (prevalence of ideas within the data) in what the women were saying. Second, researchers discussed their codes and created more significant themes. Later, we reviewed the themes and refined them. Field notes proved valuable in corroborating certain gender dynamics observed prior to the training, particularly regarding these women expressing a perceived lack of ability to handle computers and the Internet.

Findings and Discussion

We found that physical devices, such as Chromebooks, given to participants may not have the direct outcomes organizations expect from their participants. We observed, however, a symbolic gain from learning to use these devices for our specific group of Latina mothers in instilling self-confidence, motivating them towards digital literacy and increasing their techno-capital (Calderón Gómez, 2019).

After Compu-Clase: Smartphones over Chromebooks

For our participants, smartphones had a more prominent place in their lives than the laptops they received from Compu-Clase. Smartphones were Internet-ready due to their data plans, were easier to charge, and more convenient to carry around for entertainment purposes while they waited for their children, for example. We cannot generalize from our qualitative data that all these women made an empowered digital choice (Eynon & Helsper, 2011) in not using the Chromebook they were given. However, some

of them did. Our observations do correlate with what Grošelj (2021) concluded, that access inequalities may be shaped by desire and convenience (digital choice, at the third level of the digital divide) but also by costly and unreliable Internet connectivity, such as the separate broadband plan required for a Chromebook, and devices with limited capabilities, coupled with low personal resources (digital exclusion at the first level). There also seemed to be an effect of group *habitus* for these women. All their family and friends used smartphones more than laptops, and the knowledge and experience they shared with each other, post-training, was much more about cell phones.

Many reasons exist why smartphones were prominent in the lives of our group of Latina mothers. Out of 17 interviewees, seven did not have broadband Internet at home, and out of these seven, three mothers were not using their laptops at all. One had recently moved home and had not yet installed broadband Internet. Another said her granted computer was broken or not working correctly. The third one had no Internet at home and felt she did not need her laptop for public spaces like libraries that offered connectivity. The other mothers did occasionally use their computers. A few women addressed the lack of broadband at home by visiting public establishments (e.g., fast-food restaurants, libraries) or neighbors/family occasionally to use their Wi-Fi. Both factors, however, strongly affected their use of ICTs at home.

Beyond ICT Skills and Access: Considering Confidence within the Digital Divide and Their Habitus

One key element emerging from the research is that limited ICT knowledge or skills significantly contributed to how most Latina mothers in the study belittled their ICT competence, particularly in the larger context of their family and friends. Such observations reveal a gendered pattern towards technology that has to be domesticated or adapted to use at home (Morley, 2003), similar to the category "making do" identified by Grošelj (2021).

As mentioned in the introduction, Roselia (three children, Mexican immigrant, stay-at-home, 37) felt like the only dumb one in her domestic sphere, as she compared herself to her husband and children, whom she

perceived as knowing more about technology than her. This shows a complicated bias in the home against her as a stay-at-home mom with limited opportunities (or time) to learn about digital technologies (Arroyo, 2020). This case provided much of our insight into how gender was connected to ethnicity, class, family dynamics, neighborhood/geography, and what factors contribute to their self-perception and competence. Similarly, Valeria (part-time housekeeper, 47, Internet at home) mentioned:

> I want to learn because I make my son tired [by asking him about technology]. I do not want to rely on him. I do not feel useful. I want to feel capable and that I am moving forward.

Overcoming the digital divide, at least for this group of working-class Latina mothers, goes beyond skills and access to technology into self-issues of perceived competence and confidence. While some studies have shown that low-income Latinos often rely on their children for guidance and help with technology, who often become technology brokers in the home (Correa, 2014; Correa et al., 2022), we found in this study some children and spouses are reluctant to help stay-at-home mothers, making them feel like "the dumb ones" about digital technology and the Internet.

Before and during the training, their lack of self-confidence often manifested as fear and stress toward touching or operating the laptops given to them as part of their ICT training. However, even after working with their laptops for about eight weeks during Compu-Clase, some women did not always feel comfortable using them at home after graduation. For example, some of them mentioned in post-training interviews that they had put their computers in a drawer or closet and did not use them, or only took them out for educational purposes. This finding has been observed before among some US Latinos because devices were seen as expensive necessities that needed to be kept safe and secure (Straubhaar et al., 2012).

Nevertheless, the breakthrough of Compu-Clase in the lives of this group of women came in the form of techno-capital development, in the sense that technology-use dispositions were integrated into their *habitus*, the daily life patterns they shared with family and friends. We argue that,

even if our participants set their granted laptops aside, they still served an essential role in their understanding and knowledge of ICT at home and outside. Owning a portable device meant having ownership of a computer that was at home, whereas previously, for most of them, these devices were only available by traveling to libraries, schools, or community technology centers. Laptops were a physical, as well as symbolic manifestation and reminder that they, in fact, could utilize, and be part of the current technological era. This is what Goedhart et al. (2019) called motivational access toward digital literacy, and the more people have it, the more they gravitate to ICT. Also, their symbolic gain of techno-independence is what Alper et al. (2018) understand as indirect assets obtained from participating in digital inclusion programs.

Post-training interview data also suggests that their newly found confidence manifested as pride and gave them a sense of validity in that they were at least as capable, if not more, than those in the social and cultural milieu. Take, for example, Daniela (stay-at-home mother, 42, three children, Internet at home), who said:

> Yesterday, when I went to my husband's work, I spoke to this young guy; and he went to school here at the university, and he couldn't see the app. The thing is that he was using the same program as me. I use the same web pages to solve my daughter's math questions... I don't feel as ignorant in just a few words because, at the level that they studied, I don't know how many years, and can speak English really well, and for us to be using the same system, I was shocked!

Compu-Clase helped women to not "shy away from a technological world, but instead know that this is the world we have to live in," said Rosela (stay-at-home mother, 45, Internet at home). In addition, about a year after Compu-Clase, women appeared to have shifted their ICT narrative from that of "They know better than me" to "I know better than them," feeling that they have techno-capital in how to use ICTs, especially in comparison to their husbands. As these cases illustrate:

> I use the Chromebook more with Christopher (her youngest son). My husband rarely uses it because he doesn't like it (laughs). He knows

how to use it a little bit because he is required to order some things at work. When he returns home, he says he doesn't like it, and I tell him, "If you want, I can help you. I will help you (laughs). I am the expert. (Elena, stay-at-home mother, 40, Internet at home)

He is not interested. He doesn't know anything. He doesn't know how to use it...Every time he wants to check his email, he tells us or our daughter, "Open my email or recover my password." He works in construction and comes back home at around six, all tired. On the weekend, he uses his cell phone but pays no attention. He doesn't know how to write well and barely went to school. (Felisbina, stay-at-home mother, 44, no Internet at home)

Motherhood, Self-improvement, and Access to Digital Skills

Similar to other studies on ICTs and mothers (Goedhart et al., 2019; Martínez Mancilla & Gonzalez Ramos; Park et al., 2021), our post-training interview data corroborate the finding that mothers often take an interest in digital inclusion efforts because of their perceived benefit towards the social mobility of the family (Arroyo, 2020). Our participants expressed that they joined Compu-Clase to become more capable of monitoring their children's schooling online (e.g., filing applications, being able to send teachers emails, checking grades), their desire to transition into other classes and programs (e.g., GED, meaning "General Educational Development," a certificate equivalent of a high school diploma in the US; language proficiency), or taking advantage of social services online that would improve their family's chances of succeeding as their intake interviews (pre-training) show:

As I have my GED, it is important to learn and improve myself. Besides, my son does not want to help me. They always have excuses. (Ester, part-time worker, 38, three children, Internet at home)

I want to learn how to use the computer to help my daughter with her homework. Even if I am a citizen, I did not have the privilege of getting a good education because my parents took me to Mexico, and I finished elementary school there. Such schools did not have computers, and therefore I did not learn how to handle them, and this is why I am very interested in this new opportunity that is being offered. (Esmeralda, stay-at-home mother, 25, three children, Internet at home)

Limited and specific techno-capital through mothering

The main goal of women for Compu-Clase was digital inclusion through the acquisition of techno-capital (Choi et al., 2021; Straubhaar et al., 2012). While there was optimism that taking Compu-Clase and being given a laptop would bridge the digital divide for participants, the result was mixed. A portion of the women did not have broadband Internet at home, thus were still subject to the first-level digital divide. As our interview data showed, often their children become the official owners of the device, or simply the mothers noticed that it was easier to complete their tasks through their smartphone.

> Well, I do not need it [her computer] because I have a phone, and with the phone, today I can find what I need to look for. Once, I started looking for information about a Dallas hotel. But here (on the phone), I could not... Then my son told me, 'I think you should use the computer because (here on the phone) it is more difficult.' Then I went to the computer. But here on the phone, I can do what I want to do... And it is easier because I can do it in the store when I'm waiting for Vandro (her son) at school ... The computer... I have to take it out [of the closet], to connect it, to charge it; the fact is that I do not have it set somewhere. I have to get it out, which makes things more complicated to me, and I use it when I need it, and especially my son, when needed, and perhaps, after all, I do not need it]. (Valeria, part-time housekeeper, 47, Internet at home)

Computers, whether in the form of desktops or laptops, and smartphones were viewed as significant in how techno-capital is gained and maintained, but the attitudes and behaviors exhibited among the participants reveal that their set of dispositions (*habitus)* towards ICTs, even after Compu-Clase, is limited and grounded within the realm of their social and cultural relations. This fits with what Choi et al. (2021) discovered, that the most widespread, basic level of techno-capital focuses on finding information, sending messages, and using apps, mostly on the cellphone. As mothers, this set of Latinas had a disproportionate share of housework. Their relationship with and use of ICTs depends on how much time they have after their daily tasks (Arroyo, 2020; Martínez Mancilla & Gonzalez Ramos, 2021; Park et al., 2021). In our research, their packed schedules, which included picking up their children and attending to their needs be-

fore and after school on top of classes and/or part-/full-time jobs, resulted in them reducing the presence of ICT in their daily lives or using it on the go on a cellphone. When asked what they did on a typical day, the standard narrative across the interviews was like that of Roselia (stay-at-home mother, 39, Internet at home):

> I wake up at 5:30 in the morning, and at six, I wake up my girl. I dress her, comb her hair, give her food, wait for the bus, wash the dishes, and take out the trash. At 8:30 am, I take my other daughter to school, and thirty minutes later, I go to my English class. I cook lunch and wait for my daughter, who gets here at 3. She eats, and then I go for my other daughter. I leave at 4 because she gets out at 4:30. We get here, she eats, and I shower the youngest. I shower her one day and not another. Then I serve her dinner, and I try to get her to sleep early so she is not lazy the next day. That is a typical day for me. It's a lot, isn't it?

Only one Latina mother in our interviews incorporated ICTs into her daily narrative, and that was Rosela (stay-at-home mother, 45, Internet at home), whose morning routine resembles the digital culture in the Western world nowadays: "I first wake up and check my phone to see if I don't have any missed calls because I lower the volume at night. Then, I look at my schedule and go to the bathroom."

Techno-capital research typically looks at the family unit or parent-child relationships (Correa, 2014; Correa et al., 2022). We directed our attention to Latina mothers and how socio-cultural subjectivities impact techno-dispositions and, consecutively, techno-capital. First, according to our interview data, their role as mothers was seen as a gift from God and/or a responsibility that required 100% or more. This "intensive mothering" (Hays, 2006) frames how they acquire and use techno-capital in our analysis. Secondly, although most were active on Facebook and WhatsApp, they did not bring that technology use into their daily narratives when asked to describe a typical day. This observation tells us that these behaviors do not fit into the mother's narrative. Perhaps they did not include it because it is an activity that is not family-oriented or simply not considered part of a routine. Thirdly, as the enforcers and protectors of their household and now having a tangible computer via their laptop at home, this device was worth protecting or monitoring.

Age as a Factor for Digital Inclusion: Intersectionalities within Intersectionalities

Participant observation during Compu-Clase sessions showed that age was a key element of intersectionality and discriminated against older women. Younger participants (those in their 20s and 30s) were more likely than older ones (ages 45+) to absorb the material covered in class. Compu-Clase relied heavily on cloud computing in its pedagogy, emphasizing advanced conceptual learning—the second level of techno-capital identified by Choi et al. (2021)—rather than focusing on basic skills such as operating browsers and email, which falls within the first level. The experience that younger women had with their smartphones, like using apps and going online, came in handy for them to complete the lessons and assignments through a Drive in the cloud (like uploading pictures and pasting them on files). This was a challenge for students like Zelda (in her late 50s, Mexican immigrant, grandmother, three sons, and five grandchildren), whose previous interaction with computers was when she cleaned them at offices where she worked. Zelda was the oldest participant in our group of participants. She had attended two other training rounds but could not finish them due to personal and health issues. When she started the training, she did not have a smartphone, unlike younger participants, and had trouble grasping how to access email and do a basic Internet search.

Zelda's learning struggles and those of older participants in Compu-Clase led the first author to recommend that the organization should extend the computer training longer than six weeks or give them their own class, to recognize the key element of age within their intersectional situation. In doing so, the learning would become more equitable among students. We must note that confidence and pride in learning about ICTs may be more vital to older women who are deeper into the digital divide (Acela & Sæbø, 2021). Rosela (stay-at-home mother, 45, Internet at home) said in her post-training interview: "I started playing [with my smartphone] and getting Christian songs and movies (*she gets emotional*). I don't have to take away time from anyone. I just get it and click." Alper et al. (2018) stress that media research should consider how overlapping forms of social distinction create advantages and disadvantages, and what Rosela mentioned indicates

that taking time with older participants is worthwhile because their hurdles are different from others in the same cohort, and the rewards are perhaps more appreciated.

Final Remarks and Recommendations

Through the lens of intersectionality, drawing on a diverse qualitative dataset, this study intended to problematize the context of a digital inclusion program aimed at low-income/working-class migrant Latino parents, which was almost exclusively attended by women. Our research question was interested in the praxis of intersectionality for digital inclusion efforts. In this sense, our main contribution is twofold: (1) It concerns how grassroots/non-profit organizations aiming at social justice may better achieve their goals if they apply intersectionality in their praxis (Collins & Bilge, 2016); (2) For our group of working-class Latina/Mexican mothers, it was relational, home-heavy, and welcoming of anything that benefits the social mobility of their families. This means that mobile technologies like smartphones were seen as the most appropriate for their on-the-move routines. Smartphones were viewed as user-friendly with portable Internet, which allowed them the ability to access information at any time, look for information for themselves (e.g., recipes, trips, beauty tips) and for their children (e.g., math solutions, translators), and contact friends and family through apps like WhatsApp and Facebook. Having a computer at home, and learning how to use it, helped clarify keen differences between smartphones and laptops for them, in addition to enhancing their cellphone use, such as using them to save and store electronic documents on the cloud, creating service accounts online, and remembering passwords. The Chromebook they received on graduation often had no fixed place in their homes but was, rather, often stored away when not in use. It had no single or dominant use, nor one owner, as it was considered a "home" computer and open to anyone. Owning a laptop also encouraged a few Latinas in our group to purchase/update their smartphone, and in other few cases, motivated their buying of hardware like printers to use with the laptop.

All in all, the laptop at home, and its cloud-computing characteristics for our group of low-educated Latina mothers, was complementary to

cellphones. However, the device was a physical and symbolic reminder of the active steps this group of women-mothers took towards becoming digitally included.

The non-profit organization we analyzed had trouble recognizing how gender and age were interwoven with class, ethnicity, and geographical issues in their community. ICTs have gendered cultural practices through their role as mothers that inform and disrupt their technological *habitus* (Choi et al., 2021; Goedhart et al., 2019; Martínez Mancilla & Gonzalez Ramos, 2021; Straubhaar et al., 2012). Organizations like the one in our study can benefit from recognizing the interconnected components that enable mothers to build techno-capital, as they also understand them as technological brokers for their children and husbands. However, organizations should be aware that within the context of working-class Latino families, stay-at-home mothers may be at a unique disadvantage, often with no access to the technologies at home (the first and most basic digital divide), but also often not getting the help they need from other family members to learn about how to use them (the second level of the digital divide). This dynamic is further complicated by age, which adds extra layers to their already intersected technological experience. Social mobility and digital literacy were harder for older participants than younger mothers in our study, highlighting that already vulnerable populations may have further sets of challenges to overcome. We must not forget that digital inclusion efforts should not only keep intersectionalities in mind but also motivate techno-independence and increase techno-capital while reducing techno-fear. Our findings thus lead us to continue advocating and exploring the intersectionality of people in the digital divide because a set of loosely connected categories can obscure a dynamic picture or the lived experience of women in particular.

To conclude, we suggest that digital inclusion programs may go beyond mothers focusing on learning ICTs only to address their children or family needs, as our research and past studies have shown (Martínez Mancilla & Gonzalez Ramos, 2021). In this sense, we summarize our recommendations: 1) Consider focusing on women/mothers rather than the

general term parents; 2) Consider age on top of ethnicity and geography; 3) Consider including general content in training about women's empowerment and specific material on mothers. This is true for the academic literature as well, it needs to do more examination of the unique intersectional situations where the role of mother further complicates gender, class, and ethnicity. Future research is encouraged to investigate how the significant others of working-class Latina mothers view their digital inclusion efforts and to what extent it has the potential to transform those around them just like they intended when they signed up for the class.

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