

LATINA CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

**St. Edward's University Behavioral and Social Sciences**

**LATINA LEADERSHIP: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF  
LATINA CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Education of Leadership in Higher Education

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**DEDICATION**

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Earning a doctorate degree is not for the faint at heart, especially during a pandemic, so I must acknowledge all the scholars and amazing leaders that I met along my virtual doctoral journey. My cohort, the SEU Ed.D. Cohort #1, was the lifeline that kept me going. We endured a pandemic, grieved the loss of friends and family, and witnessed and collectively endured protests, civil unrest, and one of our country's darkest moments in our nation's capital. We also supported and encouraged each other, as we navigated our doctoral journey, changed careers, and cast our hopes and dreams into the future. I will always have great respect and appreciation for each member of SEU Ed.D. Cohort #1.

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The success of our global economy depends on how these narratives elicit change and continue to shape our community, family, and work. As Latina leaders, we must continue to support other women and celebrate and value who we are, our ancestry, our culture, and our Latina essence. We are a force for good, collaboration, change, and for access for all. I remain forever grateful for this profound opportunity. Thank you, my sisters. *¡Gracias; mis hermanas!*

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### VITA

Melinda Gonzales Rodriguez, a native of Brownsville, Texas, is the Deputy Director for Administration for the Port of Brownsville. She graduated from Homer Hanna High School and later attended Texas Southmost College. Rodriguez earned a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from the University of Texas, Pan American, and a Master of Arts in Human Services from St. Edward's University.

Rodriguez began her fundraising career in the Rio Grande Valley in 1989, when she served on the inaugural senatorial campaign of then Texas Representative Eddie Lucio, Jr. Over the past 34 years, she worked her way up to leadership positions with organizations such as Texas Southmost College, Brownsville Chamber of Commerce, NextDecade, El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission, and Catholic Charities of Central Texas/Marywood Foster Care and Adoption Services. She has earned a reputation for leading programs and organizations through significant organizational change. Her career achievements stem from successfully branding and marketing organizations, achieving high-level stakeholder engagement, and raising millions in support of education, health and human services, homelessness, hunger, higher education, and faith-based services.

In 2011, she was recognized by St. Edward's University as an Outstanding Alumni, and in 2009, she was named the 2009 Outstanding Fundraising Professional of the Year by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. In that same year, she received the highest designation in the fundraising industry, by becoming a Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE). A highly coveted professional designation earned by a select few in the fundraising industry. She is now retired from fundraising. Rodriguez is married to Eddie Rodriguez, MSOLE '07, and they have two children.

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative research was to add to the body of knowledge on Latina leadership by describing, through a cultural intelligence lens, the lived experiences of seven Latina leaders and their utilization of the four elements of cultural intelligence: (a) motivation, (b) cognition, (c) metacognition, and (d) behavior. The population studied was Latina, Hispanic, Mexican American, or Chicana, female administrators in mid-or-upper management positions that represented multi-context business sectors within the United States. This study contributes a more nuanced understanding of Latina leadership and the utilization of the four elements of cultural intelligence: (a) motivation, (b) cognition, (c) metacognition, and (d) behavior. This study provides additional knowledge to the limited research on Latina leadership and cultural intelligence. The research used *pláticas*, or conversations, which the research shows are more effective in Hispanic-focused research, to collect rich and thick narratives which enabled the researcher to create a circle of trust, familiarity, and *Latinidad* with the study's participants. Based on the findings of the study, the research shows that the seven Latina leaders in this study inherently know and practice cultural intelligence in many aspects of their lives, but especially in their careers. From their ambicultural perspectives, the study's participants described how their values, self-awareness, and empathy strongly influenced their motivation, knowledge, strategy, and action in multicultural interactions. More so, the findings show that the seven Latina leaders did not develop their cultural intelligence in isolation. Their collectivist culture played an integral role in their motivation, knowledge, strategy, and action in cross-cultural environments. Additionally, their *Latinidad* influenced their knowledge, assumptions, sense-making, behavior, and call to be change agents.

*Keywords:* cultural intelligence, Latino culture, Latina leadership.

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction to the Problem

Over the past thirty years, there have been significant changes in the demographics of the United States (U.S.) population. Research shows that since 1990, the number of Hispanics living in the U.S. has more than doubled (Gándara and The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, 2015; U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Known as the fastest-growing minority group, the U.S. Hispanic population continues to outpace the growth of other groups, becoming the most significant ethnic minority in the country (Gándara et al., 2015). Frey (2018) affirms Gándara et al., (2015), adding that Hispanics are among the fastest-growing minority groups. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020), the Latino population has reached 62.12 million, increasing from 50.7 million in 2010 (Saenz, 2021). Moreover, the growth of the Latino population is estimated to grow to over 100 million by 2060. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Valverde (2008) predicted this demographic shift, “By 2050, if not sooner, the future of the United States, could be in the hands of its Latino population” (p. 3). This means that Latinos represent a larger share of the country’s population and remain an essential part of the country’s demographic mosaic. More so, this continued growth and demographic makeup cement the pivotal impact that Hispanics will have on the country’s social, cultural, political, and economic implications.

Throughout this study, the words Latino/a, Chicano/a, and Hispanic are used interchangeably to describe persons (male or female) in the United States that are of Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Spanish, Central American, or South American descent regardless of race (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). According to Gracia (1999), the terms Hispanic and Latinos/as are used as nouns and adjectives.

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Hispanic/Latina women are a growing and influential constituency in the United States. (Nielson and The Hispanic/Latino Advisory Council, 2013). Latinas are tech-savvy and known for expanding their purchasing power and being strategic networkers (Nielson et al., 2013). “Latinas build affinity groups around their ethnicity and their common trajectories within American society, as well as internationally, as they create robust connections with relatives and friends in their countries of origin” (p. 2). Typically, Latinas are from multigenerational and interethnic Hispanic families, so they are considered ambicultural, meaning they can function competently between Latino and American cultures (Abasto, 2016; Nielson, 2015; Nielson et al., 2013). Research by Nielson et al., (2013) further reveals that Hispanic/Latina women “overwhelmingly want to stay that way” (p. 8). Moreover, Nielson (2015) contends that Latinas “love to share their personal culture and explore the culture of others” (p. 3).

According to Catalyst (2021), the number of Latinas in the United States will increase from 18 percent of the total U.S. population to 27 percent in 2060. As their growth and influence continue to rise, Latinas will play a critical role in moving the United States forward socially, culturally, politically, economically, and globally (Nuño, 2017; Nielson et al., 2013). More so, Hispanic/Latina women, considered a key growth engine of the U.S. female population, are expected to increase their mark on the labor force (Hernández, García, Nazario, Rios, and Domínguez-Villegas, 2021; Gómez, Figueroa, Mathis, & García, 2020). Nielson et al., (2013) reported that U.S. Hispanic/Latina women also represent a significant segment of the economy, “making them pivotal to the Hispanic/Latina market’s 1.2 trillion in annual buying power” (p. 2). Catalyst’s (2021) research reveals that Latinas will represent a more significant percentage of the U.S. labor force over the next ten years. Hernández et al., (2021) contend “Latinas are poised to transform the U.S. labor force and catalyze economic growth” (p. 1). Gómez et al., (2020) assert

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that Latina majority-owned businesses grew by more than 87 percent between 2013 and 2018. (p. 26). The research shows that Hispanic/Latina women are also advancing their education at all levels (Catalyst, 2021; Avilés, 2019; Gómez, 2019; Gándara et al., 2015; Nielson et al., 2013). “Latinas are embracing opportunities to advance, demonstrated by positive gains in higher education and higher earnings, shifting Latinas towards the middle-class and beyond” (Nielson et al., 2013, p. 7). Latina leaders remain underrepresented in leadership roles (Gómez, 2019).

It is essential to start from the beginning. The Coronado expedition in the mid-1500s paved the way for Spanish-speaking women to migrate north of Mexico into the borderlands of the West and South. Between the 1600 and late 1700s, they were instrumental in founding notable cities, such as San Antonio, Texas, Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Los Angeles, California. According to López (2013), despite their presence in the Southwest and Texas, Latinas are often not included in the history of our country. Spanish-speaking women migrated from the Hispanic Caribbean to the Northeast in the early 19th century. Moreover, the migration of Spanish-speaking women from Mexico and the Caribbean paved the way for other women to immigrate from South America. These Spanish-speaking women, regardless of their countries of origin, confronted a duality in expectations and were expected to conduct themselves as gentle, timid, and delicate women focused on “health and home,” but also expected to perform manual and strenuous labor (Ruiz & Korrol, 2006).

A paradox becomes evident when looking at women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and their historical, professional, workforce, and academic progression compared to their male counterparts (Barroso, 2020; Catalyst, 2021; Smith, Roebuck & El Haddaoui, 2013). According to Halpin and Teixeira (2010), a landmark study by The Center for American Progress, A Woman’s Nation, The Rockefeller Foundation, and TIME Magazine revealed there is a positive

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sentiment that the rise of women in the workforce is a positive advancement. The positive sentiment was echoed among all of the study's participant groups and across most demographic and ideological groups. Moreover, across all demographic groups, women are also underrepresented in senior leadership roles (Carli and Eagley, 2002; Kellerman and Rhode, 2007; Nefdt, 2019; Smith et al., 2013). According to Catalyst (2021), in 2020, women of color represented 64 percent of all U.S. management, business, and financial operations employees, of that Latinas, represented 12.4 percent. Latinas have had the opportunity to thrive and make their presence and contributions known for generations, making noteworthy contributions to this country's social, cultural, political, and economic prosperity.

### **Problem Statement**

Today, the Latina population is rapidly growing in the United States, and demographers add that by 2045, the U.S. will become a minority-majority nation (Mordechay, Gándara, & Orfield, 2019). More recent research shows that despite the growth of the Latina population in the United States, their representation in leadership positions does not mirror that growth. They are leaving corporate America at an alarming rate (Gómez et al., 2020). Increased globalization and the inherent challenge of a diverse workplace creates new demand for leaders to increase their understanding of various cultures. Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2013) state, "Leaders who have a higher level of cultural intelligence exhibit a higher level of transformational leadership style, which suggests that individuals with high cultural intelligence can lead and manage more effectively in multicultural environments" (p. 836). To fully understand the impediments for Latina leaders, it is imperative to examine the drivers of Latina leadership and describe how cultural intelligence affects their leadership. Given the changing demographics in

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this country, the search for 21<sup>st</sup>-century leaders must also identify, promote, and retain ambicultural and culturally intelligent Latinas leaders.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe, through a cultural intelligence lens, Latina leaders' leadership stories. Every leader is shaped by their lived experiences, and those experiences inevitably influence their leadership qualities and styles. Through structured *pláticas*, or conversations, with the researcher, this study provided further insights into the lived experiences of Latina leaders from their ambicultural perspectives. This dissertation aimed to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Latina leadership and the utilization of the four elements of cultural intelligence: (a) motivation, (b) cognition, (c) metacognition, and (d) behavior. (See Figure 1).

### **Research Questions**

Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher utilized in-depth *pláticas*, or conversations, to answer the proposed questions. The overarching research question was: In what ways were Latinas leaders impacted by their cultural intelligence? The sub-questions include the following:

#### *Sub-Questions*

1. RQ1a: Motivation (CQ Drive) - In what ways did Latina leaders use self-efficacy to provide effective leadership?
2. RQ1b: Cognition (CQ Knowledge) - In what ways did Latina leaders' experience with diverse cultures impact a Latina's leadership style?
3. RQ1c: Metacognition (CQ Strategy) - In what ways did understanding diverse cultures impact a Latina leader's leadership framework?

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4. RQ1d: Behavioral (CQ Action) - In what ways did cultural awareness affect a Latina leader's behavior?
5. RQ1e: Culturally Intelligent Leadership - In what ways did Latina leaders perceive that the use of cultural intelligence impacted their ability to lead effectively?

### **Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Proposed Study**

There is a Latina leadership crisis in the United States (Gómez et al., 2020). Although the literature suggests positive improvements in women's advancement, there is a lack of knowledge on Latina leadership and limited research on Latina leadership and cultural intelligence (CQ) (Rodríguez, 2021; Avila, 2018; Bonilla-Rodríguez, 2011). The extant research on the experience of Latina leadership provides insights into their successes and challenges, but those findings do not explain how cultural intelligence impacts their leadership. A 2020 study by the Network of Executive Women (NEW) revealed that senior-level Latinas leave their leadership positions at an alarming rate because corporate America does not value their ambicultural leadership. With the significant growth of the Latina population in this country, Latina women and girls will heavily influence the nation's future. According to Avolio, Walumba & Weber (2009), most leadership research and theory were developed and tested within a Western context. Still, there is a growing interest in the role of leadership in a cultural context (p. 438). Solomon & Steyn (2017) assert that "cultures are of utmost importance in the leadership context" (p. 1).

More so, gender research is replete with examples of the negative perceptions of women's ability to succeed in leadership positions (Milville, Arredondo, Consoli, Santiago-Rivera, Delgado-Romero, Fuentes, Domenech Rodríguez, Field & Cervantes, 2017; Chin, 2011; Caiazza, Shaw & Werschkul, 2004; Skrla, Reyes & Scheurich, 2000; Montoya, Hardy-Fanta, and García, 2000; Valian, 1999). Méndez-Morse (2000) argues that leadership research is "limited

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and uninformed by how racial or ethnic cultural differences can provide an alternative view. She further adds, “It is not too late to claim the legacy or current contributions as part of the descriptions of Hispanic/Latina women and to include the research findings concerning Latina leaders into the discourse of leadership” (p. 595).

### **Significance of the Proposed Study**

The practical significance of this study merits expanding academic research on the practice of Latina leadership. Additionally, this study sought to describe how Latina leaders’ cultural intelligence influences their leadership. Moreover, increased globalization and the inherent challenges of a post-pandemic workplace create new demand for leaders that can effectively lead in an ambicultural context and workspace (Gómez, 2019). This study described the lived experiences of Latina leaders from their cultural intelligence perspectives.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following are the operational and technical terms used in this study.

*Adelante.* In English, meaning “forward” and is used to refer to the Hispanic/Latino culture’s global connectivity (Bordas, 2014).

*Chicana.* American woman/girl of Mexican descent. In the 1960 Civil Rights movement, Chicanas were the collective voice for social change (García, 2019).

*Cognition.* “Refers to [a person’s] knowledge about culture and its role in shaping how business is done” (Livermore, 2015, p. 28).

*Comadreo.* A colloquial Spanish term that is used to refer to gossiping (Definify.com, 2022).

*Conciencia.* Self-awareness (Bordas, 2014).

*De Colores.* Defined in English as “many colors” and used to refer to the

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Hispanic/Latino culture's inclusiveness (Bordas, 2014)

*Culture.* It comprises the values, traditions, worldview, shared history, geographic location, language, social class, religion, beliefs, social, and politically transmitted ways of thinking (Nieto & Bode, 2012; Gollnick, Chinn, Kroeger & Bauer, 2006).

*Cultural Intelligence (CQ).* The capability to effectively function and interpret in a culturally diverse environment (Earley & Ang., 2003).

*Destino.* The belief is that each individual has a distinct path and purpose in life (Bordas, 2014).

*Familismo.* A form of social structure in which the family's needs as a group are more important than the needs of any individual family member (Definify.com, 2022).

*Fe y esperanza.* Faith and hope (Bordas, 2014).

*Generosidad.* Generosity (Definify.com, 2022).

*Globalization.* "The free movement of people, goods, services, and capital across national borders" (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011).

*Gozar la vida.* Enjoy life. (Bordas, 2014).

*Hispanic.* Viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before arriving in the United States. People who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

*Hispanic Americans.* Used to refer to persons living in the United States who are descendants of Spanish-speaking people (Britannica Academic, n.d.).

*Identity.* Distinguishing character or personality of an individual (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

*Juntos.* Defined in English as "together" and used to refer to the collective and

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collaborative nature of the Hispanic/Latino culture (Bordas, 2014).

*La Cultura.* Refers to the belief that Hispanic/Latino culture is bound by history, language, traditions, and spirituality (Bordas, 2014).

*Latina.* Refers to women of Hispanic or Latin American descent. It includes subpopulations, such as Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Chicanos. Also used as a feminine form of Hispanic. The U.S. Census Bureau now counts both Hispanics and Latinos/as in the same category (Rodríguez, 2019).

*Latin American.* Refers to people in the U.S. who have origins in a Latin American country but may prefer the term Latino/a (for Latino, masculine, or Latina, feminine) (Turner-Trujillo et al., 2017).

*Latinidad.* An identity term used by Latinas that includes gender and ethnicity simultaneously or in tandem (Murakami et al., 2015; Mendez-Morse, 2000).

*Latino.* Refers to men of Hispanic or Latin American descent. It includes subpopulations, such as Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Chicanos. Also used as a masculine form of Hispanic. The U.S. Census Bureau now counts both Hispanics and Latinos/as in the same category (Rodríguez, 2019).

*LatinX.* Refers to people living in the United States that have Latin American heritage. Used as a gender-neutral alternative to Latino or Latina (Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, n.d.; Rodríguez, 2019).

*Marianismo.* It is a sociocultural script of female gender role socialization and a set of values and expectations of Hispanic females (Nuñez, Gonzalez, Talavera, Sánchez-Johnson, Roesch, Davis, Arguelles, Womack, Ostrovsky, Ojeda, Penedo, and Gallo, 2016).

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**Metacognition.** A person's "ability to strategize when crossing cultures"  
(Livermore, 2015, p. 29).

**Mestizo(s).** The term is used throughout Latin America to describe people of mixed ancestry with a white European and an indigenous background (González-Barrera, 2015).

**Mexican-American.** Refers to U.S. citizens of Mexican ancestry. Most Mexican Americans are the descendants of the Indigenous peoples of Mexico and Europeans, particularly Spaniards. (Mexican Americans Law and Legal Definition, 2021).

**Mulatto.** The term refers to a mixed-race ancestry that includes White European and Black African roots (González-Barrera, 2015).

**Pan-ethnic.** Affecting or embracing people of all ethnic backgrounds (Oxford University Press, 2022)

**Personalismo.** Hispanic/Latino leadership principle emphasizing personal, authentic, and caring relationships (Bordas, 2014).

**Plática.** A form of collegial and intimate dialogue that is used to develop social networks and mutual, reciprocal relationships (Fierros & Bernal, 2016).

**Respecto.** Defined in English as respect (Definify.com, 2022).

**Sephardim.** The Sephardic group of Jews originated from Spain and their name Sephardi, in Hebrew, means Jews of Spain. Their descendants came from Spain, Portugal, North Africa and the Middle East (Differencebetween.net, 2022).

**Sí de puede.** Yes, we can! (Bordas, 2014).

**Simpático.** Defined in English as having a compatible temperament or pleasing qualities (Definify.com, 2022).

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*Testimonio.* Refers to testimonial literature as a form of women's resistance and political movements. In this study, the term describes anything written or spoken by a first-person witness who wishes to tell her/his story of trauma (Smith, 2010).

Women of Color. Refers to all groups of women who share the attribute of being nonwhite" (Lien, Hardy-Fanta, Pinderhughes & Sierra, 2008, p. 2). In this study, the term will represent females from the following ethnic groups: African American, Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic/Latina, and Pacific Island heritages.

### **Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations**

This study was delimited to Hispanic/Latina, mid-or-upper-level, leaders. The information gathered for this study is also delimited by the small sample of Hispanic/Latina leaders, representing different industry sectors, which were recruited to participate in this study. Due to these delimitations, findings from this study are not generalizable to the larger population. Also noteworthy is that the purpose of the study is to understand this phenomenon from the participants' perspectives.

As with all research, this study had limitations that deserve further discussion: sampling, the definition of Latina leadership, and leaders' reflections. Limitations of the sample include the demographics and diversity of participants. Although attempts were made to control sampling bias, participants in the research study might be similar to the researcher. This can limit the diversity of the sample. As previously mentioned, the sample consisted of Hispanic/Latina, mid-or-upper-level leaders, representing various business sectors. Other factors to consider included the participants' socio-economic status, how many generations of their family have been in the United States, and their country or culture or origin. Caution should be used in generalizing the study's findings.

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The definition of Latina leadership is purposely ambiguous. Leadership is a complex, social construct that is not easily defined. Bennis & Townsend (1995) researched and found at least 650 definitions of leadership in literature. According to Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Lee, J-Y. (2003), 47 studies identify 183 leadership constructs. There is no distinction between the distinct types of leadership or organizations in this study. It is intentionally left ambiguous to allow participants to define it themselves. The only difference is that the study's participants are Hispanic/Latina leaders.

Being a Latina is a privilege and a challenge. There is no shortage of adjectives that define Latinas. As a Latina, holding leadership roles for thirty-four years, my interest and investment in this topic is more than superficial. I am passionate about Latina leadership because it resonates with my experiences and aspirations. As a Latina, I come from a complex mix of races, countries of origin, traditions, and experiences. I have struggled, from a young age, with the dualities of my worlds and identities.

The sample in this study has limited diversity. The sample consisted of Latina, Hispanic, Mexican American, or Chicana, female administrators in mid-or-upper management positions that represent multi-context business sectors.

Consideration is also necessary given that the leaders' in-depth reflections are based on experiences and memories of their past. Since an interview in qualitative research is focused on getting the story behind the knowledge of the subject in their terms, they are also considered interpersonal encounters. These encounters are subject to factors that have influenced the participants' lives, such as their family, culture, generational lineage, education, country of origin, faith, and spirituality.

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Effective research warrants authentic reflexivity because it must be believable, coherent, insightful, and purposeful (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). As the researcher, I have reflected on how my objectivity and subjectivity co-relate. There is a dialectic relationship between the two, and that is where my positionality exists. This awareness is essential for transparency, which creates an environment of trust, objectivity, and openness. As the researcher, I know that my voice impacts subjectivity and my ability to understand a problem through the experiences of individuals or groups. Mayan (2009) asserts, “it is imperative to think through the assumptions we make about access to the setting, who holds power, and commonality of experience. Trust is gained through the researcher’s disposition” (p. 81). Moreover, Bourke (2014) states, “Research represents a shared space, shaped by both researcher and participants” (p. 1). Our experiences, biases, and reflections influence and shape us as researchers. This can positively or adversely affect research design, data collection, relationships with participants, and the quality of research. More so, research continues beyond the completion of a study, and for this reason, the influence of the researcher’s positionality is especially significant.

Mayan (2009) reminds us, “Responsibility is first to the participant and the setting and second to the goals of the research” (p. 130). She asserts, “We should be engaging in research involving participants who want representation” (p. 134). Without positionality, there is no research. The researcher’s positionality has a place in research; it contextualizes the environment, captures the boundaries of the study, and recognizes the “truth.” Bearing this in mind, I acknowledge my positionality as a Latina with thirty-four years of experience in leadership and management roles which has provided me with the bona fides to conduct this qualitative research study.

### Summary

The interconnections of this study included identity development, gender, cultural intelligence, and Latina leadership. The point of intersection helped define the framework for this study which informed the researcher that aimed to describe the lived experiences of Latina leaders and the effect of the four elements of cultural intelligence: (a) motivation, (b) cognition, (c) metacognition, and (d) behavior.

“Culture is what a group learns over time, and it shapes the behaviors, feelings, attitudes, and espoused values of group constituents” (Bortz, 2014, p. 13). Castellanos, Jones, and Rendon (2003) assert that gender roles are “ascribed through socialization and cultural transmission” (p. 172). They contend that cultural perceptions depict Latina women as passive, feminine, and American culture magnifies these perceptions. They also argue that contemporary perceptions of acculturated Latina women characterize them negatively and that they are depreciated and often overlooked for leadership positions (Castellanos et al., 2003).

According to Ramirez (2014), cultural intelligence is “The skill to identify, the ability to understand, the motivation to learn, and the flexibility to adapt to cultural norms” (p. 4). Aldhaeri (2017) found that cultural intelligence influences a leader’s ability to adapt their leadership style. Ramirez’s (2014) research reveals that cultural intelligence might also affect an individual’s Implicit Leadership Theories (ILT) (Yulk, 2021). Moreover, when it comes to adapting to diverse cultural contexts, Ramirez (2014) contends that more culturally intelligent persons “adjust their ILTs based on the cultural expectations of what characteristics would be needed to be effective in certain cultural contexts” (p. 4). Ngunjiri, Madsen & Longman (2015) contend that global leaders “must be culturally sensitive, knowledgeable of other nations, and understand boundaries that span organizations. They further elaborate that the research reveals

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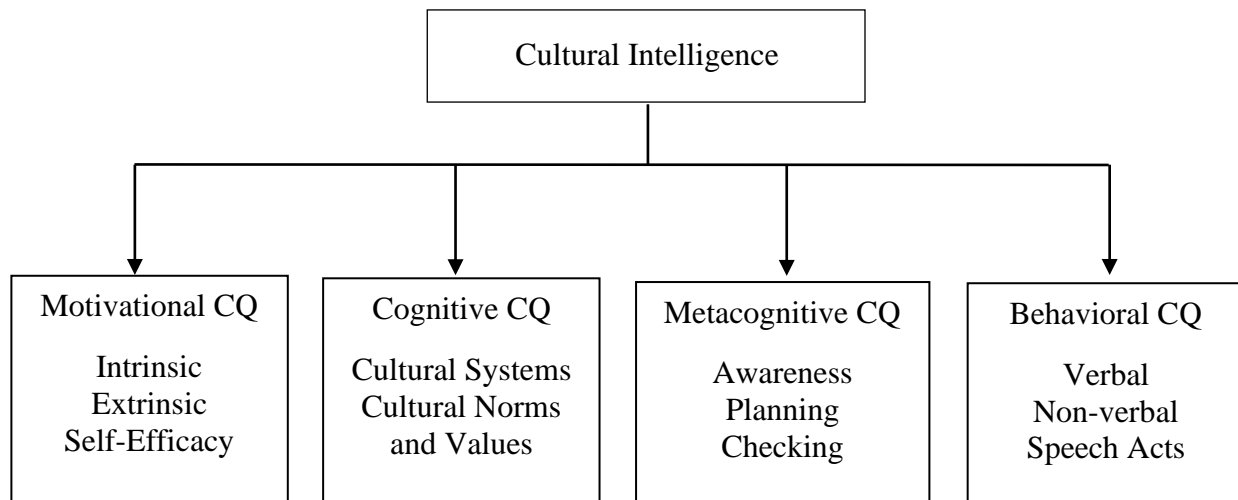
that emotional, social, and cultural intelligence are essential competencies for global leaders (73).

According to Gill and Vasquez (1996), for Latinas, gender behavior is instilled at birth by their Latina mothers, who are considered “the most important agent” in instilling these critical gender principles (p. 53). Ngunjiri et al., (2015) assert that female leadership aspirants need to understand gender dynamics. Valian (1999) argues that it is paramount to understand our perceptions of others and how those perceptions influence our conscious beliefs. Moreover, gender schemas, what Valian (1999) refers to as “intuitive hypotheses about behaviors, traits, and preferences about men and women,” can become disadvantages that accumulate and cause disparities (pp. 2-3).

According to *Fulfilling America’s Future: Latinas in the U.S.* (2015), the future of the United States is tied to the future of Latinas (p. vii). Considered critical influencers and the next generation of leaders, due to their rapidly growing demographic, ambition, bilingualism, and multiculturalism, Latinas have made and are expected to continue making significant contributions to the success of our country. As the number of Latinas continues to grow and emerge, understanding, developing, and promoting their leadership talent is significant to the prosperity and well-being of families, communities, and organizations. The barriers Latina leaders face are heavily influenced by context and culture (Bordas, 2012, 2013, & 2014). Greater representation at higher levels, in all sectors, is possible. There is still room at the top for Latinas. It is imperative to hear the voices of Latina leaders, describing their interconnectedness and cultural intelligence.

**Figure 1**

*The Four-Factor Model of Cultural Intelligence*



*Note:* This model was developed in 2003 by Early & Ang, as they conceptualized the concept of cultural intelligence that includes mental (meta-cognitive and cognitive), motivational, and behavioral components. Copyright 2008 by L. Van Dyne and S. Ang. All Rights Reserved. Van Dyne, L. & Ang, S. (2008). The Sub-Dimensions of the Four-Factor Model of Cultural Intelligence. Technical Report. Cultural Intelligence Center.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction to the Literature Review

We are ethically bound to pay attention to how we word the world. We must pay attention to humanism's desire for unity, coherence, totality, and equilibrium, as well as to the language that enacts that desire, a language that produces real, material structures – categories, binaries, hierarchies, grids of intelligibility based on essences – that reward identity and punishes difference (St. Pierre, 2000).

The primary purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe, through a cultural intelligence lens, Latina leaders' leadership stories and to examine the impact of cultural intelligence on their leadership. A thorough review of the literature was conducted to identify relevant studies and to contribute a more nuanced understanding of Latina leadership and the utilization of the four elements of cultural intelligence: (a) motivation, (b) cognition, (c) metacognition, and (d) behavior.

The complexity of the topic, which was focused on cultural intelligence and Latina Leadership, requires the integration of several theoretical frameworks that provide insight for thorough analysis and understanding. The literature review provided the context for theoretical perspectives, such as gender bias, women's leadership, Hispanic/Latina identity and culture, Latina leadership, cultural intelligence, and Latina feminism.

The genesis of this study occurred in 1997 when I came across the book *The Maria Paradox* (Gill et al., 1996). As I turned the pages, the narrative resonated strongly with me, compelling me to understand my duality and it inspired me to learn how to leverage my bicultural assets while honoring my cultural values. Finding that book helped me realize that my experience and struggle with cultural duality is common among Hispanic/Latina women. I did not buy the book in 1997, but that moment sparked a profound interest in my pursuit of a life-

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long journey of self-awareness, cultural identity, and leadership. In 2021, my dissertation chair, Dr. Tom Sechrest, motivated me to purchase the book. Twenty-five years later, it sits on my desk as I draft my dissertation on Latina leadership and cultural intelligence.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The research approach consisted of acquiring digital and hard copy full text, peer-reviewed articles, and publications written in the last five years. Still, the lack of literature and research on the topic necessitated the review of literature and publications as far back as 1999. The older research is especially relevant because it sets a historical perspective. Despite the dramatic growth of the Hispanic/Latino demographic in this country, there is a lack of development of research and literature on Latina leadership and cultural intelligence. It also amplifies the critical significance of the need for this research. The Munday Library and Sorin web applications were used to collect articles from sources such as ProQuest, Google Scholar, and business, academic, and social science journals. Also, my book collection on the topic, collected over the past thirty-four years, and new books added to the collection since I began the program in 2019 were essential to completing thorough research and analysis of the phenomena. Search terms included gender bias, women's leadership, Hispanic identity and culture, Latina leadership, cultural intelligence, Latina feminism, Critical Consciousness, and Borderlands Theory. While limited, the obtained scholarly peer-reviewed research articles and relevant publications were sufficient to meet the focus of this research study.

### **Review of the Research and Methodological Literature**

#### **Gender Bias**

The relationship between leadership and gender has been an important research topic (Rodríguez, 2021; García, 2019; Taftaf, 2018; Crespo, 2013; López 2013; Bonilla-Rodríguez,

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2011; Cuadrado, Morales & Recio, 2008; Curseu & Boros 2008; García, Martínez-Ebers, Coronado, Navarro, & Jaramillo, 2008; Sánchez de Valencia, 2009; Earley et al., 2003).

Northouse (2004) defines gender as “The way in which meaning and evaluations are associated with sex by members of a culture” (p. 266). According to Drucker, Goleman, & George (2011), a social psychology study revealed that if a group’s representation falls below 20 percent, it can become susceptible to stereotyping. García (2019), citing the work of Skrla et al., (2000), state that even though women have advanced in the workplace, men have a higher likelihood of ascending to leadership roles.

Research by Crespo (2013) and Bonilla-Rodríguez (2011) shows that Latinas face unique professional and personal obstacles when pursuing leadership roles due to their gender, which impacts their motivation. Research by Eagly & Carli (2007) highlighted that women leaders’ career aspirations and experiences in the workplace are affected by gender roles. Significant literature also showed that gender and culture provide additional frameworks to examine women’s leadership (Nefdt, 2019; Avila, 2018; Milville, et al., 2017; Klenke, 2018; Wyatt & Silvester, 2015; Chin, 2013; Perez-Litwin, 2012).

Other pertinent research reveals that women leaders of color, like Latina leaders, also experience challenges, such as greater isolation, negative perceptions by others due to their gender and culture, and fewer opportunities for support and mentoring (Robinson & Harvey, 2008; Rosette, Koval, Ma & Livingston, 2016; Crespo, 2013; Bonilla-Rodríguez, 2011; Sánchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Carli et al., 2002). Smith et al., (2013) assert that a woman’s career development is different from a man’s. The research of Wyatt et al., (2015) reveals that little attention has been given to the voice of minority employees and their assumptions about what has influenced their leadership journey. Nefdt’s (2019) research insists that the omission of

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women from higher representation in upper levels of management stems from the acceptance of “corporate male stereotypes” (p. 130). According to Valian (1999), unconscious beliefs about the differences between men and women are a significant factor in the professional lives of men and women. Chin (2011) argues that a gender-neutral view of leadership is not enough, and effort should consider how culture and socialization affect leadership.

Other gender research includes the study and impact of *Marianismo*, a social construct within the Hispanic/Latino culture, stemming from Christianity, Catholicism, and the veneration of the Virgin Mary. The culture and the Church insist that women are subservient to males (Anzaldúa et al., 2012). According to Stavans (2018), *Marianismo* stems from Iberian Catholicism during the Middle Ages and Renaissance when it ascribed women to two roles, that of a nun or a wife. *Marianismo* emphasizes the submissive role of the ideal Hispanic/Latina woman, a self-sacrificing caregiver, and homemaker (Barrón, 2021; Metcalfe & Obregón, 2020; Gidon, 2018; Rangel-Hernández, 2018; Nuñez et al., 2016; Bordas, 2013; Anzaldúa, Cantú, and Hurtado, 2012; Noreeka Avalos, 2011). According to Metcalfe et al., (2020), the study of gendered leadership is paramount to understanding influences on culture. Moreover, earlier research by Gill et al., (1996) argued that *Marianismo* is foundational to a Latina’s confidence to achieve leadership roles.

### **Women’s Leadership**

The literature on women’s leadership is limited and typically demonstrates a bias towards women in research, literature, and publications. A recent study by Calitz, Cullen & Fani (2020) states that women leaders have “strong societal ties to family units, religion, and cultural activities,” which underpin their career decisions (p. 348). Research by Milville et al., (2017) highlights Cheung & Halpern’s (2010) leadership model, which emphasizes the inclusion of

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relationships, teamwork, collaboration, and the interface of family and work with family-centric responsibilities. They contend that women use this leadership model to break barriers and gain access to leadership opportunities. Moreover, their leadership model adopted cross-cultural elements to include cultural variables, such as a collectivistic orientation, to signal the significance of those variables on leadership development and success (p. 833).

For women, the journey toward career goals and the balance between family and other life demands is filled with barriers and complex routes that form obstacles that can impede a leadership career. Carli & Eagley (2016) contend that a “labyrinth” to leadership can occur at various stages of women’s careers and is unique to each woman, which results in women leaders fending for themselves. Research by Crespo (2013) and Eagly et al., (2007) states that the “labyrinth” is more than one barrier but instead a series of unexpected complexities throughout their careers.

Drucker et al., (2011) argue that women leaders have disguised themselves by blending in and “talking tough” to avoid negative stereotypes, but this has reduced their opportunities to be perceived as leaders (p. 91). Moreover, Sánchez-Hucles et al., (2010) argue that leaders of color face unique challenges too, “as leaders these women report being more visible, yet they feel “socially invisible” (p. 175). López-Mulnix et al., (2011) contend that women’s leadership is associated with traits, such as collaboration and inclusivity, but Chin (2011) argues that women leaders can be at a disadvantage if they do not conform to behaviors or expectations that are perceived to be male leadership norms. Earlier research by Carli et al., (2002) tells us that “leadership has been traditionally construed as a masculine enterprise with challenges and pitfalls for women” (p. 633). Also, it has been reported that “mainstream literature tends to focus on the social and reproductive roles of women” (Montoya et al., 2000, p. 555). “Women take

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every aspect of their livelihood and include it in their leadership style.” (Montas-Hunter, 2012, p. 318). More so, studies have shown that women are expected to model behaviors and meet expectations to fit in contemporary leadership models (Chin, 2011; Kellerman et al., (2007). Research by Northouse (2004) reveals that the unsuitability of women in leadership has been refuted by a considerable number of published research findings and meta-analyses. He argues, “Women have not only demonstrated a strong achievement record but have also exhibited a number of personal qualities conducive to the executive rank” (p. 275).

### **Hispanic Identity & Culture**

Let us assume, furthermore that by Hispanics we mean the community of persons who, since the end of the fifteenth century, have become a kind of family, not always, or necessarily, tied politically, racially, linguistically, culturally, genetically, or by class, but rather historically, by a web of relations that distinguishes it from other communities and explains some of the features which characterize it at various points in history (Gracia, 1999, p. 88).

Identity is complex, so conceptualizing the Hispanic/Latino experience is challenging (Pew Research Center, 2021; Caso, 2011; Gracia, 1999). Identity is significant to this research study as the literature states that unclear social identity is a factor in the underrepresentation of Latinos in leadership positions (Sánchez de Valencia, 2009). Research by Gracia (1999) and Taylor, López, Martínez, and Velasco (2012) states that the application of Hispanic/Latino identity has been met by discourse and opposition, especially by those the identity is imposed upon. Gracia (2015) questions the legitimacy of ethnic identity and its application to Hispanics/Latinos. Identity, in this context, refers to identification with or a sense of belonging to a group(s) based on cultural categories in relationship to oneself (Fellows, Goedde,

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Schwichtenberg, 2016; Avalos, 2011). Cultural identity is considered a critical piece of personal identity and worldview that is heavily influenced by how people and groups absorb, interpret, and adopt the beliefs, values, behaviors, and norms of their communities (Fellows et al., 2016; Phinney, Niel, and Baltes, 2001). The literature reveals that self-awareness and identity are essential to studying social constructs, such as leadership (Fellows et al., 2016).

One path to understanding this construct was to delve into the terms and labels used to identify Hispanics and Latinos. According to Senices (2005), Hispanics/Latinos were considered Caucasian or White in America until 1954 when Congress ordered the classification of Hispanics as a “colored minority.” Hispanic and Latino are terms used as nouns and adjectives and applied to individuals and groups from various ethnic backgrounds. Hispanics can be of any country of origin, ancestry, or race, as Hispanic is an ethnicity (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020; Avalos, 2011; Senices, 2005). Other terms used similarly include *Mestizos*, *Chicanas/nos*, *Afro-Latino/na*, and *LatinX* (Barrón, 2021, Bordas, 2012; Bordas, 2013; Gracia, 1999). According to the Pew Research Center (2021), the upsurge of the term *LatinX* comes from the globalization of gender-neutral nouns and pronouns into languages that use gender-specific constructions. López, Krogstad, and Passel (2022) report that Hispanic and Latino labels are not unilaterally accepted by the population that has been labeled by those terms. Another term used to refer to Hispanics and Latinos is pan-ethnic, a term intended to identify the Hispanic or Latino population of people living in the U.S (Pew Research Center, 2021). A 2019 survey by the Pew Research Center found that 47 percent of the study’s participants prefer to be described by their family’s country of origin, while 39 percent use the terms Hispanic or Latino, and 14 percent prefer to be identified as American.

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Pertinent research by Gracia (1999) reveals that the name Hispanic is a transliteration of the Spanish form of *hispano/a*, formed from the Latin term *Hispania*, which was used in Roman times and onward to refer to people from the Iberian Peninsula, and later people from Latin America. The Iberian Peninsula is located in southwestern Europe and includes the countries of Spain, Portugal, and Andorra (Reference.com, 2020). Research by Barrón (2021) states that textbooks exclude Mexican and Hispanic or Afro Latinos or African heritage which creates barriers for persons from these groups to develop their identity. Avalos (2011) argued that there is no “one true Hispanic/Latino experience” (p. 13). Gracia (1999) contends, “Hispanic Americans are Americans who have a history of relations with other Hispanics within and outside the United States” (p. 128). Moreover, he argues that this history makes Hispanics members of a “historical family” with ties such as origin, culture, and values (p. 128).

This research is relevant to how identity is defined and characterized because identity is foundational to self-awareness and leadership. While the definition of identity implies sameness, a common mistake made in describing Hispanic/Latino identity is that it is defined by common qualities (Barrón, 2021; Senices, 2005; Gracia, 1999). Gracia (1999) argues that Hispanics are a historical people, and history involves change. “Identity can be and most often is founded on historical relations that create historical families” (p. 191). Suárez-Orozco & Páez (2002) argue:

We share the experience of being uprooted by large socioeconomic forces from our original homelands. We come from societies with a history of unequal association with the United States, a country that has influenced and sometimes even dictated political behavior in Latin America (p. 9).

García, Martínez-Ebers, Coronado, Navarro & Jaramillo (2008) argue that the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity will be notable in Latina leadership and reflected in their cultural identity.

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The roots of Hispanic identity date back to when conquest and colonization were forged by a “cataclysm” history that produced a non-homogenous group of people (Gracia, 1999). “Homogeneity is a human invention. No people are homogeneous. Societies are heterogeneous” (pgs. 129, 191). Suárez-Orozco et al., (2002) and Castellanos et al., (2003) contend that Hispanics are a heterogeneous population that cannot be easily generalized as one seamless group. Research by Avalos (2011) echoed Gracia’s position, stating that the Hispanic/Latino experience lacks a shared history and, as such, cannot have a shared identity (p. 14). Gracia (1999) contends, “If there are no common properties to Hispanics and no homogeneity to them, there cannot either be any successful search for an essence, for there is no essence to search for” (p. 192).

### **Culture**

Leadership is strongly influenced by cultural values, which play a significant role in Hispanic leadership (Conde-Brooks, 2020; Metcalfe et al., 2020; Sánchez de Valencia, 2009). As previously stated, Latinos are ambicultural, which means that they can functionally shift between Hispanic/Latino and American cultures (Abasto, 2016). The role of culture for Hispanics/Latinos is imbued in every aspect of life. Research by Anzaldúa (1999) tells us that “culture forms our beliefs” (p. 38). While Hispanic and Latino Americans come from diverse social, economic, and geographic backgrounds, they have cultural similarities that can shape worldviews, thoughts, and behaviors (Ruiz, 2005; Castellanos et al., 2003). Thomas & Inkson (2017) tell us that culture is “mental programming held in common that enables insiders to interact with each other with a special intimacy denied to outsiders” (p. 23). Research by Moreno & McLean (2016) states that some cultures place higher regard on differences in gender roles and the acceptance of women as leaders. Research by Bordas (2013) tells us that the Latino culture is an amalgamation of the

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histories of people from other countries, such as Spain. She and other researchers assert that examining Hispanic/Latino culture is paramount because it forms the foundation for Latino leadership and personality development (Metcalf et al., 2020; Bordas, 2013; López-Mulnix, Wolverton, Zaki, 2011; Ruiz, 2005).

The research also reveals that the Hispanic/Latino culture is a collectivist group that places a high value on gender-specific scripts, shared history, spiritual traditions, and indigenous roots that underpin the cultural values which are sacred cornerstones (Barrón, 2021; Moreno et al., 2016; Bordas, 2013; Bordas, 2014, López-Mulnix et al., 2011; Sánchez de Valencia, 2009; Ruiz, 2005). The literature also reveals that collectivist cultures, in contrast to the individualistic American culture, that view success as dependent on the group's outcome rather than the individual (Bordas, 2013; Ruiz, 2005; Castellanos et al., (2003). “The culture’s humanistic core propels a people-oriented leadership through which the leader strives to empower the community” (Bordas, 2014, p. 3). A key element of collectivist cultures is the belief that interdependence is highly regarded; therefore, the family is the nucleus of life, work, and community, always stressing that collaboration and inclusion are expected behaviors (Bordas 2013; López-Mulnix et al., 2011; Ruiz, 2005; Castellanos et al., 2003). Castellanos et al., (2003) agree, “We learn that we must sacrifice for others and that our behaviors do not solely exemplify our individual personalities, rather than our comportment are reflections upon our entire community” (p. 17).

Research by Miville, Arredondo, Consoli, Santiago-Rivera, Delgado-Romero, Fuentes, Domenech Rodríguez, Field & Cervantes (2017) and Bonilla Rodríguez (2011) argue that traditional cultural values can be obstacles that can influence Latina’s attitudes, behaviors, and overall worldviews as leaders. Bordas (2013) contends that Latino leadership’s most significant

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contribution is the ability to bring diverse communities together, which she believes is paramount in today's multicultural and global workspace. Research by Méndez-Morse (2000) tells us that there are specific cultural characteristics that Latina leaders possess that tend to be overlooked but that can benefit a Latina leader's profile. From a collectivist cultural perspective, Latina leadership is driven by the belief that an effective leader contributes to the group's welfare, whereas traditional theories view self-sacrifice as unhealthy (Bordas, 2013; Ruiz, 2005;). The research consistently reiterates that collectivist cultures stress the importance of maintaining harmony with past and present cultural knowledge and traditions, which are also notable of Hispanic/Latino leadership (Barrón, 2021; Thomas et al., 2017; Bordas, 2013; López-Mulnix et al., 2011; Anzaldúa et al., 2012; Castellanos et al., 2003).

There is compelling research that reveals that Latina leaders have found a way to mitigate the challenges of their cultural duality and have repositioned them as advantages as leaders (Mordechay et al., 2019; Bordas, 2013; López-Mulnix et al., 2011). This research builds upon prior research that reports that culture is utilized to form communal funds of knowledge (Yosso, 2005). López-Mulnix et al., (2011) agree with this research, adding, "Having two cultures gives me a unique perspective and two distinct ways of dealing with people" (p. 118).

### **Latina Leadership**

"Latinas have always exercised leadership, especially in families and communities" (Chin Lott, Rice, & Sánchez-Hucles, 2007).

"Latinos are invigorating American leadership" (Bordas, 2012). It is important to reiterate that despite the growth of the population and its historical significance, there is an apparent lack of and need for literature on Latina leadership, especially in the context of cultural intelligence, which is why pursuing this research is significant (López-Mulnix et al., 2011;

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Bonilla-Rodríguez, 2011; Sánchez de Valencia, 2009). Early research by Chin (2007) questioned whether leadership theories considered including women. It is also significant that the limited scope of current Latina leadership comes at a time of rapid globalization, which requires multicultural and socially responsible leadership at all levels of society, making this emergent research necessary and relevant. Research by Milville et al., (2017) echoes earlier research by Méndez-Morse (2000), highlighting that Latina leadership is seldom noticeable, forgotten, or ignored in all facets of society in our country, especially for those aspiring to leadership roles. Other research shows that the lack of narrative on Latina leadership is due to the institutional inequalities entrenched in all aspects of our lives and society (Montas-Hunter, 2012).

Seminal research on Latina leadership by Bordas (2013) sets the foundation for understanding the multifaceted social construct. Latino leadership is heavily influenced by cultural identity (Bordas, 2014). According to Bordas (2014), seven fundamental values underpin culturally-based Latina leadership, which is rooted in collectivism. The values include (1) *familismo* (family-first); (2) *simpático* (congenial); (3) *generosidad* (sharing); (4) *respeto* (respect); (5) honesty; (6) hard work; and (7) serving community (p. 8).

*Familismo*, or family-first, emphasizes the leading role of the family in all things, especially life, work, and community. In this context, self-sacrifice, loyalty, and interdependence are not negotiable expectations. Next, *simpático* or congeniality focuses on courteousness, fostering harmonious relationships, and respect, especially for elders. The phrase, “*mi casa es tu casa/my house is your house*,” is the perfect example of *generosidad* or caring. This Latina leadership value signifies extending hospitality to all and welcoming a stranger. *Respeto*, or respect, is a core teaching in the Hispanic/Latino culture, requiring respect, conformity, and hierarchical gender-centric obedience for the greater good. Honesty is highly valued in Latino

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culture and leadership. It is critical to establishing credibility and underpins all relationships and transactions. The value of working hard and a strong work ethic are instilled at an early age in Hispanic/Latino culture, so as a collective culture, “we” versus “I” is a mantra frequently heard. This value places a strong emphasis on working and sacrificing for the good of the family or community, which teaches that all who adhere to this value earn respect and dignity from the collective group. Equally important is the belief that serving the community, or those considered vulnerable, like children and the elderly, takes precedence over self-service and sets the tone for how people relate to one another (Anzaldúa, 1999; Barrón, 2021; Thomas et al., 2017; Bordas, 2014; Bordas, 2013, López-Mulnix et al., 2011; Anzaldúa et al., 2012; Castellanos et al., 2003).

Bordas’ (2014) research states that Latino leadership is founded on ten culturally based principles: (1) *Personalismo*, or character is a principle based on establishing authentic and personal relationships focused on earning respect, (2) *Conciencia*, or self-awareness entails practicing in-depth reflection, (3) *Destino*, or collective purpose which encompasses awareness of purpose, (4) *La Cultura*, or cultural identity which consists of shared history, spiritual traditions, language, shared values, and indigenous roots, (5) *De Colores*, or diversity and inclusion which values a shared identity within the Hispanic culture, (6) *Juntos* or community stewardship stresses shared power, access, and vision, (7) *Adelante* Global Vision and Immigrant Spirit, or global leadership, which advocates for recognizing and honoring the culture’s immigrant history and social justice orientation, (8) *Sí Se Puede*, or activist leadership is focused on social activism and community change which are expected of leaders, (9) *Gozar La Vida* emphasizes leadership focused on community prosperity, equality, and optimism, (10) *Fe y Esperanza*, or faith and hope is a leadership value based on spirituality, optimism, activism, and change (Bordas, 2014, Castellanos et al., 2003).

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Research on Latina leadership in a political context reveals that Latina leadership is identified as collaborative, participatory, and empowering of others (López-Mulnix et al., 2011; García et al., 2008). “They also demonstrate leadership traits that reflect their struggles as minority women, and an awareness of both gender and culture” (p. 28). According to Sánchez de Valencia (2009), research by the National Council of La Raza reports that traits such as character, competence, compassion, and community service are cornerstones of Hispanic leadership.

### **Cultural Intelligence**

The research on Latina leadership and cultural intelligence is sparse despite other research indicating that Latina leaders mitigate leadership and cultural conflicts from their multicultural worldview (Thomas, 2017; Bordas, 2013; López-Mulnix et al., 2011; Sánchez de Valencia, 2009; García et al., 2008). There are plenty of theories and books about cross-cultural communication (Thomas et al., 2017; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2005; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004; Earley et al., 2003). The literature reveals that the interest in and study of cultural intelligence stem from a response to global factors related to technological drivers (Ramirez, 2014). Today, globalization creates a strong demand for leaders who have the competencies to lead a rapidly growing workplace (Aldahaheri, 2017; Matear, 2009). The increase in the study of cross-cultural leadership has led to the insight that global competencies are necessary for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century leader (Fellows et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2014; Robinson et al., 2008). Research by Sánchez de Valencia (2009) argues that Hispanic leaders are innately equipped to lead in multicultural contexts.

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The literature defines cultural intelligence as the ability and skill to interpret and function appropriately in diverse cultures (Earley et al., 2003; Thomas et al., 2017; Brannen, 2016; Wilson, Ward, and Fischer, 2013). Earley et al., (2003) extended the traditional concept of intelligence to include other forms of intelligence. CQ is the skill to identify, learn, understand, and adapt to cultural norms (Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Yee Ng., Templer, Tay & Chandrasekar, 2007; Fellows et al., 2016; Van Dyne, Ang & Livermore, 2010; Ramirez, 2014). Wilson et al., (2013) contend that cultural intelligence is the capacity to “survive and thrive” in a new cultural environment. Aldhaferi (2017) found that cultural intelligence influences a leaders’ ability to adapt their leadership style. Moreover, he asserts that qualitative inquiry is appropriate for obtaining new insights and extracting meanings from the participants’ experience in or with the phenomena (p. 724-725). Earley et al., (2003) define cognition as the ability to create patterns from cultural cues, motivation as the inclination and determination to engage others, and behavior as the capacity to act appropriately. The literature tells us that CQ is comprised of four independent components consisting of motivation (CQ-drive), cognition (CQ-knowledge), metacognition (CQ-strategy), and behavioral (CQ-action) (Fellows et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2014; Ang et al., 2007). (See Figure 1).

Ramirez’s (2014) research demonstrates that CQ-Drive (motivation) is the ability to embrace learning the cultural norms of diverse cultures and decide how to function within those differences. According to Fellows et al., (2016), CQ-Knowledge (cognition) is the awareness and understanding that a person has about diverse cultures (p. 23). Another element of cultural intelligence is CQ-Strategy (metacognition), which Van Dyne et al., (2010) contend is an individual’s consciousness and awareness while interacting with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The fourth element is CQ-Action (behavioral) which is considered the behavioral

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component of CQ. According to Fellows et al., (2016), CQ-Action is characterized by an individual's ability to use culturally appropriate behavior and adapt to diverse cultural environments.

### **Latina Feminism**

Feminist and Latina feminist theories have been the underlying framework of numerous studies of women, leadership, and Hispanic/Latina women. Latina feminism epistemologies are significant to this study because they provide context and navigation of critical issues that have impacted Latinas, such as gender, sexism, patriarchy, culture, and lived and embodied experiences (Sánchez de Valencia, 2009). Latina feminism contends that unlike other forms of feminism theory, it is based on lived experiences, not abstractions. “Unlike French and American feminisms, the inclusion of ethnicity, social class, and cultural norms in addition to gender must enter the equation when theorizing the Chicana experience” (Quinn-Sánchez, 2014, p. 13). Moreover, Quin-Sánchez contends that through the use of “testimonios, which requires ‘creating *comadreo*, the Latin American/Latina tradition of kinship, reciprocity, and commitment,’ Latina feminists have created a new way to produce theory” (p. 14). Mayan (2009) contends, “If you claim a feminist position/perspective, you will work from the assumption that the nature of reality ‘is unequal and hierarchical’ and will conceptualize the study, collect and analyze the data, and explain the findings through a gendered perspective” (p. 26).

### **Summary**

The United States is experiencing a dramatic demographic shift that includes growth in the Hispanic or Latino population (Barrón, 2020; U.S. Census Bureau, 2020; Gándara et al., 2015; Crespo, 2013; Nielson, 2013). Also significant is the rapid globalization and emerging markets that compel leaders, as global citizens, to accept the interconnectedness of all persons

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(Fellows et al., 2016). The advancement of Latina leaders is critical to meeting the demands of globalization, and leaders, especially in the United States, have a growing challenge and opportunity to embrace people from multicultural backgrounds. All leaders, especially Latinas, can empower individuals, organizations, and societies to transform from within, initiate equitable solutions, and motivate others to commit to and work for sustainable change. Price et al, (2014) contend that leaders have a “noble calling that extends beyond their office walls—a mission that spreads into the world and influences others for the better” (p. 13).

The literature and research on Latina leadership primarily call attention to and reference social inequalities, negative perceptions of a woman’s ability to lead, underrepresentation, and differences between the behavioral styles of men and women leaders (Nefdt, 2019; Smith et al., 2013; Kellerman et al., 2007; Carli et al., 2002; Anazaldúa, 1999). Exploring leadership through interrelated dimensions such as gender bias, women’s leadership, Hispanic identity and culture, Latina leadership, cultural intelligence, and Latina feminism provides insight into the skills, practices, and behaviors that form the essence of a Latina leader. While the literature and research on Latina leadership and cultural intelligence are limited, that gap is where these theories intersect (Rodríguez, 2021; Avila, 2018; Bonilla-Rodríguez, 2011). To bridge the gap between research and practice that has yet to be filled, this action research study will describe the stories of Hispanic/Latina leaders through a cultural intelligence lens and contribute in a positive way to what we already know about Latina leaders, but more so to a better understanding of Latina leaders and their utilization of the four elements: motivation, cognition, metacognition, and behavioral. (See Figure 1).

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The advancement of Latinas in this country is notable (Gómez et al., 2020; Avilés, 2019; García, 2019, Gómez, 2019; Gándara, 2015; Crespo, 2013; Nielson, 2013; García et al., 2008; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2002; Montoya et al., 2000). The research and literature clearly state that Latina leaders are best poised to positively influence the social, cultural, political, and economic future of the nation. For generations, they have demonstrated their ability to adapt to adversity and embrace diversity, a Hispanic/Latino cultural imperative, and lead change. More so, the principle and core values of Latino leadership, referenced by Bordas (2013 and 2014) and Castellanos et al., (2003), are typically found in literature and theoretical research on transformational leadership (Johnson, 2021; Bass and Bass, 2009; Bass and Riggio, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Bass, 2000; Bass, 1996; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Seltzer & Bass, 1990) and servant leadership (Johnson, 2021; Ingram, 2016; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010; Bass & Bass, 2009; Boyum, 2008; Patterson, 2003; Russell, 2001; Kouzes, Posner & Peters, 1993).

The changing world demands a culturally-competent leadership approach that emphasizes social impact and the common good. “The cross-cultural skills of the culturally intelligent decision-maker will include a repertoire of behaviors that recognize and value differences across cultures.” (Thomas et al., 2017, p. 74). Latina leaders are compelled to learn and reflect from those they serve while helping to address pressing global problems and enabling sustainable and equitable growth Bordas (2013 and 2014) and Castellanos et al., (2003). The suffrage endured by generations of Latina leaders—like me—was necessary to transform this country and, more importantly, to bridge twentieth-century leadership theory and practice to emergent 21<sup>st</sup>-century multicultural leadership practices.

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Today's Latinas are more qualified than ever to serve in leadership roles. Still, the lack of acceptance and value of their ambicultural leadership continues to be a challenge for businesses and organizations in this country, limiting opportunities for leadership roles for Hispanic/Latina women. Rodríguez, Martínez, and Valle (2016) argue that leadership is a form of power and influence for the purpose of transformation, so it is imperative to understand that leadership underpins the construct of Latina leadership. Their research reveals that the understanding of knowledge is shaped by shared and lived collective experiences influenced by access and the distribution of power (pp. 138-139). Lawrence (2013) contends that "leaders must make continuous shifts in people, process, technology, and structure" (p. 3). McNeal (2000) affirms this position, "Leaders do not develop in isolation. They emerge within a community that plays a vital role in shaping them" (p. xiii).

Arora, Elawar, & Cheng (2019) contend, "The solutions that our world needs must be rooted in conscious and collaborative leadership that honors individual empowerment, community building, and social justice (p. 38). Anzaldúa (1999) contends, "Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in our heads" (p. 109). It is paramount to cultivate agile, socially conscious leaders that can leverage their complex, sense-making competencies and tear down social oppression, power and privilege, and systemic inequities. There is a leadership crisis in the world. People from every rung of society have revered leaders who acknowledge their self-awareness, self-leadership, and awareness of others. Due to the emergent and evolving social context that today's leaders face, Latina leaders are more important than ever. Chapter 3 provides a detailed justification and explanation of the proposed research method and the design of the study.

## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

To add to the body of knowledge on Latina leadership, this qualitative study described the lived experiences of Latina leaders and their utilization of the four elements of cultural intelligence: (a) motivation, (b) cognition, (c) metacognition, and (d) behavior. (See Figure 1). This chapter describes the rationale for the study's research paradigm, the appropriateness of the research method and design, the research questions, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Given the nature of this study, the philosophical framework was constructivism, the design was qualitative, and the method of inquiry was phenomenological.

The epistemological framework adopted for this qualitative research was constructivism, an approach that reveals that human understanding and knowledge are socially constructed because human beings create their reality as a result of social interactions, relationships, and experiences (Ivankova, 2015; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). According to Fierros et al., (2016), epistemology is a "system of knowing" that is linked to worldviews based on the conditions under which people live and learn" (p. 101). It emphasizes understanding how individuals create meaning and how lived experiences influence the person, their voice, and where they live and work (Merriam et al., 2019; Creswell et al., 2017; Klenke, 2018; Mayan, 2009). More so, this approach allowed the researcher to inquire through the lens of multiple individual perceptions and intersecting identities that are socially and experientially based (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Abes et al., 2007). The aim of this study was aligned with the principles of constructivism, which is focused on meanings that are interpreted through social, historical, and cultural norms (Creswell et al., 2017).

### **Research Questions**

Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher utilized in-depth *pláticas*, or conversations, to answer the proposed questions. *Pláticas*, or conversations, known in the Hispanic/Latino culture to create trust and kinship, allowed the participants to share memories and experiences connected to their personal and familial lives (Oliva & Alemán, 2019).

According to Huante-Tzintzun (2016), the *plática* methodology emphasizes collaborative theorizing, which relies on conceptual, strategic, cultural, and organizational conditions for dialog, reflection, and action. Ryan & Jeffrys (2008) contend that collaborative theorizing is integral in learning communities because it grows in complexity as the “learning community develops, applies, and expands its knowledge over time.” Moreover, the *plática* methodology adds to a growing body of knowledge on Latina epistemologies and methodologies.

The overarching research question was: In what ways were Latinas leaders impacted by their cultural intelligence? The sub-questions included the following:

#### ***Sub-Questions***

1. RQ1a: Motivation (CQ Drive) - In what ways did Latina leaders use self-efficacy to provide effective leadership?
2. RQ1b: Cognition (CQ Knowledge) - In what ways did Latina leaders' experience with diverse cultures impact a Latina's leadership style?
3. RQ1c: Metacognition (CQ Strategy) - In what ways did understanding diverse cultures impact a Latina leader's leadership framework?
4. RQ1d: Behavioral (CQ Action) - In what ways did cultural awareness affect a Latina leader's behavior?

5. RQ1e: Culturally Intelligent Leadership - In what ways did Latina leaders perceive that the use of cultural intelligence impacted their ability to lead effectively?

### **Purpose and Design of the Study**

The literature and research tell us that qualitative research is best suited for the study of leadership because it facilitates the inclusion of the reflexive researcher who is attempting to interpret how participants construct the meaning of their views and experiences (Creswell et al., 2017; Klenke, 2018; Mayan, 2009; Bryman, 2004). According to Klenke (2018), “Quantitative generated leadership descriptors often fail to lead to an understanding of the deeper structures of the phenomena we study.” Moreover, she argues that qualitative analysis is “context-dependent and best suited” for studying leadership (p. 4). Klenke’s (2008 & 2018) position is relevant because it underpins this study's epistemological and ontological framework.

Creswell et al., (2017) contend that one of the benefits of qualitative research is that the researcher can “purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p. 185). In contrast to other designs, the qualitative approach possesses various characteristics that are best-suited and offer a “fit” between the data needed to answer the questions being asked, the technique being used to collect and analyze the data, and the outcome the researcher is seeking (Merriam et al., 2019). The research explains that qualitative research in the study of leadership allows the researcher to produce a wealth of detailed data about a small number of people, resulting in a deep understanding of the phenomena through “thick description” (Klenke, 2018, p. 29). Bryman’s (2004) research affirms recent research by stating that qualitative research best emphasizes how a leader’s leadership style responds to a particular circumstance. He also contends that the research approach is impactful because it allows a participant’s ideas, beliefs,

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and values to form a leader's framework, thus providing insights into leadership that quantitative research does not. Based on the literature, research, and purpose of this study, which was to describe, through a cultural intelligence lens, a Latina leader's leadership journey, this study was best suited for a qualitative design because it allowed for the interpretation of participants' experiences and the holistic in-depth, analysis of similarities, versus differences (Klenke, 2018).

Phenomenology describes meanings and understands the essence of lived experiences for a group of people (Merriam et al., 2019; Patton, 2015; Flood, 2010). Creswell et al., (2017) contend that the study of individuals is best suited for phenomenology. Moreover, a phenomenological approach can be effective when the study aims to investigate emerging concepts related to culture (Stringer, 2014). Other research reiterates the same stating, "Intellectually, phenomenology is powerful when the study's goal is to explore a concept loaded with social and cultural meanings especially when the topic does not render itself easily to quantification, and when new and fresh perspectives are needed (Lin, 2013, p. 470).

A phenomenological approach fit this study because it allowed the researcher to engage with Latina leaders and their sense-making through their conscious or unconscious worldviews, as well as provide insights into what they know and the origins, nature, and limit of that knowledge (Klenke, 2018; Herr & Anderson, 2015; Mayan, 2009). The researcher intended to study the phenomenon of cultural intelligence and its impact on the lived experiences of Latina leaders, so a qualitative design with a phenomenological method was best suited for this study. The researcher became the primary instrument through phenomenology, focused on engaging in natural, culturally sensitive inquiry, such as *pláticas*, to answer the proposed questions. This data collection method, which has also been conceptualized and used as a Chicana/Latina feminist methodology, emerged when researchers realized that traditional methods, such as surveys and

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ethnographies are not as effective in Hispanic focused research (Flores Carmona, Hamzeh, Delgado Bernal & Hassan Zareer, I., 2021; Fierros et al., 2016). Olivia and Alemán (2019) contend that the method facilitates personal interaction with participants and allows the researcher to crystalize those experiences and form a new understanding of the phenomena. According to Fierros et al., (2016), Ramón Valle and Lydia Mendoza identified the *plática* “as a culturally appropriate methodology with Latinos because of the focus on cultural formalities in the interview process” (p. 103). Known for creating trust and kinship in the Hispanic/Latino culture and building upon an epistemological framework that facilitates gaining knowledge and linking the researcher to the participant through a genuine relationship, the three-phase method, includes *la entrada*, or the beginning, which establishes linkage between the researcher and participant. Next the *amistad*, or friendship phase, which consists of the formal interview and informal conversation, followed by a closing referred to as *la despedida*, or the farewell, which entailed the researcher and participant demonstrating mutual appreciation and personal communication and linkage (Fierros et al., 2016).

As Latinos, from a young age, we grow up *platicando*, or conversing with our parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. It is the primary way that familial and cultural knowledge, guidance, and jests are communicated. Fierros et al., (2016) assert that the researcher’s worldview is synced with the methodologies they use in their research and that the linkage between method, methodology, and epistemology is crucial to understanding how *pláticas* serve as a data collection method. More so, it is how we learn who we are, where we come from, and how to be. Fierros et al., (2016) also explain that *pláticas* are “critical to witness shared memories, experiences, stories, ambiguities, and interpretations that impart us with a knowledge connected to personal, familial, and cultural history” (p. 99). Huante-Tzintzun (2016)

tell us that the use of *pláticas* signifies that the researcher and participant understand how to practice being in relation to one another. Moreover, Flores Carmona et al., (2021) contend that while this method has been marginalized and remains invalidated by academia in support of traditional epistemologies, it is best suited for moving toward transformative qualitative inquiry (p. 1213).

### **Research Population and Sampling Method**

The theoretical significance of the study required a population consisting of Latina, Hispanic, Mexican American, or Chicana, administrators in mid-or-upper management positions that represented multi-context business sectors. The scope of the study was limited to the United States. There was no preference for age, explicit career position, or preference for geographic representation within the U.S.

Based on the study's population, criterion sampling was used to recruit and interview seven Latina, Hispanic, Mexican American, or Chicana, female administrators. Research suggests that this sampling method is appropriate in qualitative research, especially for identifying and selecting cases that provide rich information (Moser and Korstjens, 2018). One of the advantages of this sampling method is the low margin of error because the information comes straight from the source, the convenience of the sampling, and the small sample size (Moustakas, 1994). Klenke (2018) asserts that qualitative research focused on the deep understanding of a phenomenon, such as the study of leadership allows the researcher to generate robust, detailed descriptions from a small sample size of participants. Creswell et al., (2017) contend that one of the benefits of qualitative research is that the researcher can “purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researchers understand the problem and the research question” (p. 185). Moreover, Patton (1990) agrees,

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stating that homogeneous samples are well-suited for research that aims to describe a group in depth.

The data source for the recruitment of participants was derived from a database of Latina administrators from the researcher's professional network. This network, developed by the researcher over the past 34 years, included a diverse pool of Hispanic/Latina administrators. Participants were recruited to participate in the study via email. The researcher followed an interview protocol to ensure that the interviews were well-constructed and professional. An interview protocol provided the framework that ensured that the research methodology was consistently applied throughout the study (Creswell, 2009). It also aided in developing the questions and how to manage the *pláticas* or conversations.

### **Instrumentation**

The researcher became the primary instrument by interacting with the study's participants and actively participating in in-depth, *pláticas* or conversations with the seven Latina leaders (Tesch, 1990; Klenke, 2018). Additionally, a 20-item cultural intelligence scale developed by Ang, et al., (2007) was used to incorporate the four cultural intelligence elements, meta-cognition, cognition, motivation, and behavior, into the questions. Moreover, Creswell et al., (2018) tell us that qualitative researchers collect data themselves, examining, observing, and interacting with participants, but focused on learning the meaning that the participants attribute to the problem or issue, not the sense that researchers impose or express.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection procedure included gathering semi-structured, in-depth *pláticas*, or conversations, with seven participants from the target population. Ivankova (2015) contends that qualitative data collection, such as interviews, is used to collect "rich, in-depth" data (p. 201).

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According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), the determination of a study's sample size is based on the purpose and focus of the study. The sampling strategy for this study was to select appropriate and sufficient participants to provide the information needed to understand the phenomenon (Moser et al., 2018).

The *pláticas*, or conversations, lasting between one to two hours in length, were recorded in web and video teleconference settings. A set of open-ended questions focused on the reflexivity necessary to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena (Moser et al., 2018). The interview questions addressed leadership, cultural intelligence, and focused on the four elements cited in the literature, including self-efficacy (CQ-Drive), knowledge of diverse cultural norms (CQ-Knowledge), cultural awareness (CQ-Strategy), and the ability to adapt to diverse cultures (CQ-Action). Other research materials included hand-written notes, the researcher's journal, participants' observations, audio recordings, correspondence with the participants, interview transcriptions, coded data, informed consent forms, and protocols.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

According to Patton (2015), "Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings" (p. 521). A phenomenological method was used to make explicit and find meaning, through a cultural intelligence lens, in the experiences and consciousness of Latina leaders. This study adopted the following six steps to analyze and interpret the qualitative data: (a) preparing and organizing the data for analysis, (b) coding the data, (c) using the codes to develop themes, (d) representing the findings through narratives and visuals, (e) making meaning of the results, and (c) validating the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2012).

All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and reviewed before the analysis began so that the researcher could get a sense of the participants' experiences in their entirety. The research

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reveals that these measures enable the researcher to conduct quality data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Moustakas (1994) states that the qualitative analysis process begins with the transcription of all interviews. Creswell (2009 and 2012) echoes the same asserting, “Data analysis involves collecting open-ended data, based on asking general questions, and developing an analysis from the information supplied by the participants” (p. 184).

This study used an elemental coding method by bracketing the data into segments through descriptive terms and categories and then labeling it (Ivankova, 2015; Hedlund-de Witt, 2013). According to Finlay (2013), in phenomenology, the researcher reduces personal thoughts, attitudes, and habits that are taken for granted and sets them aside through a process referred to as *bracketing*. Saldaña (2016) tells us that a code means, “to discover,” as a “word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (pgs. 2-4). Codes were identified and added as they emerged throughout the reading process. Hedlund-de Witt (2013) contends, “coding moves the data to the idea, then from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea” (p. 2). This research underpins this study’s approach to data analysis and enabled the researcher to make sense of what was described by the participants.

Since coding is considered a “cyclical and interpretive act” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 9), the researcher coded and re-coded the transcriptions in a minimum of two cycles. In the first cycle, the researcher followed what Saldaña (2016) referred to as *middle-order coding*, a cross between holistic coding (extensive excerpts) and line-by-line coding. The second cycle of coding focused on clustering similarly coded data and, if necessary, reducing the number of codes and eliminating redundancy in the codes (Saldaña, 2016). According to Saldaña (2016), citing the work of Charmaz (2014), “Coding generates the bones of your analysis...[I]ntegration will

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assemble those bones into a working skeleton” (p. 9). Additionally, throughout the coding cycles, the researcher made notations in the margins during each cycle. Creswell (2012) refers to this act as “reading and memoing” (p. 183). The key data points were thematically categorized and organized, allowing the researcher to identify elements in the data collection process that aligned with the research questions. Creswell (2009) contends that qualitative researchers “can do much with themes to build additional layers of complex analysis” (p. 189). Also, the researcher widened the interpretation of the data by engaging two readers to provide feedback and verification of the researcher’s interpretation. By employing an iterative process with additional readers, the researcher acquired constructive feedback and suggestions to determine data collection and analysis quality and effectiveness.

### **Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Conformability**

#### **Credibility**

The researcher also took great caution and avoided perceiving the interviews as transcripts, but more so as *pláticas* or conversations. As a researcher with a story and a voice, there is a risk of bias. Mayan (2009) reminds us, “Responsibility is first to the participant and the setting and second to the goals of the research” (p. 130). The research shows that credibility is essential to ensure that the research represents a phenomenon appropriately (Marshall and Rossman, 2016).

#### **Transferability**

Marshall, et al., (2011), tell us that dependability is considered problematic because “the qualitative assumption of the social world is always being constructed and the concept of replication is itself problematic” (p. 253). Thus, triangulation was adopted, and it allowed the researcher to examine data from different data sources and to determine congruity with the

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themes (Ivankova, 2015). According to Creswell and Miller (2000), integrating multiple data sources is an effective triangulation method. Confirmability in the findings is based on the participants' responses, not the researcher's bias or motives. Additionally, member-checking was used to ensure the participants' voices and experiences were accurately represented, and it enabled the participants to review the data and findings for accuracy and interpretation, which is critical to the study's trustworthiness (Ivankova, 2015, Lincoln et al., Guba, 1985).

### **Ethical Issues**

Prospective participants were provided with detailed information and instructions about the study's purpose. This design ensured consistency, emphasizing that their participation was voluntary and, therefore, participants could choose to leave the study at any time. Participants in non-exempt research must give their informed consent to participate, so for this study, they were asked to provide their informed consent before participating. A consent form that meets St. Edward University's Institutional Review Board's compliance standards was used (See Appendix G). It is important to stress that the invitation to participate provided the prospective participants with a reasonable amount of time to understand the implications of participation so they could reach a fully informed, low-risk decision to participate in the study without any pressure or coercion.

### **Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is paramount to the study's credibility, so every reasonable measure was taken to ensure the meaningful, transparent, ethical, and procedural criterion required of qualitative research. Steps necessary to protect the participants' identities were implemented by removing all identifiable participant information. The researcher safeguarded confidentiality through the proper collection and locked storage of all data and the use of pseudonyms to protect

participants' identities. References to any resume-like data, background information, or other identifying information were not linked to any of the participants.

### **Summary**

This chapter outlined the study's epistemological framework, theoretical design, and methodology, which were aligned with the principles of action research. The study intended to add to the body of knowledge on Latina leadership by providing additional insights into the lived experiences of ambicultural Latina leaders and their utilization of the four elements of cultural intelligence: (a) motivation, (b) cognition, (c) metacognition, and (d) behavior. (See Figure 1). Kitto, Chesters & Grbich (2008) state that the primary focus of qualitative research is to explore meanings, interactions, beliefs, and behaviors. To effectively meet this objective, this chapter addressed the strategies that met the methodological criteria of qualitative research.

Additionally, the study aimed to ensure that the findings were derived from meaningful data collection through theoretical soundness, an explicitly stated purpose, meaningful research questions, dependable data collection and analysis procedures, and research findings that support the data. Additionally, the research plan was rooted in approaches that adopt sampling techniques that supported conceptual generalizability and increased the interpretation through a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. Because the researcher was the primary data instrument, the study acknowledged the researcher's positionality, contextualizing the environment, capturing the boundaries of the research, and recognizing the truth from the participants' experience and sense-making. Mayan (2009) states, "It is extremely important to think through the assumptions we make about access to the setting, who holds power, and commonality of experience. Trust is gained through the researcher's disposition" (p. 81). More so, the reflexive method of the study was designed to allow the researcher to follow and uphold

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ethics and confidentiality criteria through transparent evaluation and free of researcher bias.

Relevance was also significant, so the study framework, design, and methodology was selected because they are best suited to underpin the findings and how they inform the body of knowledge and similarities in context and practice (Ivankova, 2015; Kitto et al., 2008). The next chapter includes the research participants' stories, followed by summaries of the findings from the data in chapter 5, and provides conclusions, implications, and recommendations

## CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### Introduction

To introduce this chapter, a brief review of a) the purpose of the study, b) questions, c) participant demographics, d) data collection and analysis, and e) summaries and insights of the leadership journey of each of the seven Latina leaders, who elected to participate, is provided.

The purpose of the study was to describe Latina leadership through a cultural intelligence lens. The research shows that cultural intelligence consists of four independent components consisting of motivation (CQ-Drive), cognition (CQ-Knowledge), metacognition (CQ-Strategy), and behavioral (CQ-Action) (Fellows et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2014; Ang et al., 2007).

Additionally, the study aimed to contribute a more nuanced understanding of Latina leadership and the utilization of the four elements of cultural intelligence. (See Figure 1). Throughout the semi-structured *pláticas*, or conversations, the participants were forthcoming with their responses and shared stories of their challenges, triumphs, and resilience. According to the Latina leaders, their culturally intelligent experiences described their self-awareness, vision and self-leadership, action, and consciousness of others.

### Research Questions

Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher utilized *pláticas*, or conversations, to answer the proposed questions. The overarching research question was: In what ways were Latinas leaders impacted by their cultural intelligence? The sub-questions included the following:

#### *Sub-Questions*

1. RQ1a: Motivation (CQ Drive) - In what ways did Latina leaders use self-efficacy to provide effective leadership?

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2. RQ1b: Cognition (CQ Knowledge) - In what ways did Latina leaders' experience with diverse cultures impact a Latina's leadership style?
3. RQ1c: Metacognition (CQ Strategy) - In what ways did understanding diverse cultures impact a Latina leader's leadership framework?
4. RQ1d: Behavioral (CQ Action) - In what ways did cultural awareness affect a Latina leader's behavior?
5. RQ1e: Culturally Intelligent Leadership - In what ways did Latina leaders perceive that the use of cultural intelligence impacted their ability to lead effectively?

### **Description of the Sample**

Creswell et al., (2000) state, "It is essential that all participants experience the phenomenon" (2000, p. 118). This phenomenological study explored, through a cultural intelligence lens, the lived experiences of seven Latina leaders through a cultural intelligence lens. The prospective participants originated from a database of Latina administrators from the researcher's professional network. Using criterion sampling, fourteen Latina leaders were invited by email to participate in the study, and seven agreed to participate in the study by providing their informed consent. All seven Latina leaders met the established criteria. All *pláticas* were digitally recorded via Zoom online audio and web conferencing, lasting between one to two hours. Additionally, the researcher used a backup recorder and took notes throughout the *pláticas*.

The Latina leaders invited to participate were selected due to their ethnicity, gender, and career stage. Specifically, the seven participants were Latina females in various stages of their leadership careers. These leaders identified themselves primarily as Latina, Hispanic, Mexican, or Mexican American leaders in mid-or-upper management positions, representing the following

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sectors: education (higher education and primary-secondary education [K-12]), the federal government, law enforcement, and county government. While there was no preference for age, all the participants were over 25 years old, ranging in age from 69 to 33.

All the participants had an in-depth understanding of their familial ancestry, history, and origin dating back to their families' presence in Mexico before the Mexican Revolution. The participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity and confidentiality. For this study, they became Latina-leader 1, Latina-leader 2, Latina-leader 3, Latina-leader 4, Latina-leader 5, Latina-leader 6, and Latina-leader 7. Additionally, their place of work and location remained anonymous. Table 1 shows the demographics of each of the participants.

Table 1

### *Participant Demographics*

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Years of Experience</i>	<i>Employment Sector</i>
<i>Latina-leader 1</i>	<i>11</i>	
<i>Ancestry</i>	<i>Mexican-American</i>	<i>Higher Education</i>
<i>Latina-leader 2</i>	<i>7</i>	
<i>Ancestry</i>	<i>Mexican-American/Spanish/Sephardic Jew</i>	<i>U.S. Government</i>
<i>Latina-leader 3</i>	<i>20+</i>	
<i>Ancestry</i>	<i>Mexican/Mexican-American</i>	<i>Judicial/County</i>
<i>Latina-leader 4</i>	<i>11</i>	
<i>Ancestry</i>	<i>Mexican-American</i>	<i>Higher Education</i>
<i>Latina-leader 5</i>	<i>16</i>	
<i>Ancestry</i>	<i>Mexican/Mexican-American/Lebanese</i>	<i>Higher Education</i>
<i>Latina-leader 6</i>	<i>20+</i>	
<i>Ancestry</i>	<i>Mexican-American/Spanish/Portuguese</i>	<i>Judicial/Law Enforcement</i>
<i>Latina-leader 7</i>	<i>30+</i>	
<i>Ancestry</i>	<i>Mexican</i>	<i>Education (K-12)</i>

*Note: List of study participants' pseudonyms, years of leadership experience, employment sector, and ancestry.*

### **Data Collection**

The data was collected through *pláticas*, or conversations consisting of open-ended questions (Appendix F) with the seven study participants. The *pláticas*, or conversations, methodology is considered culturally appropriate in Hispanic-focused research (Fierros et al.,

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2016). The Zoom-recorded *pláticas*, or conversations, in this phenomenological research enabled the researcher to make meaning of the lived experiences shared by the seven Latina leaders. When necessary, iPhone recordings provided additional backup information in the event of technical difficulties.

Initially, each participant described their background and leadership experience. This element of the three-phase *pláticas* method, known as *la entrada* or the beginning, established a linkage between the participant and the researcher (Fierros et al., 2016). The second phase, *amistad* or friendship, consisted of formal interviews and informal conversations (Fierros et al., 2016). A series of 26, open-ended questions addressed cultural intelligence, focused on the four elements cited in the literature, including self-efficacy (CQ-Drive), knowledge of diverse cultural norms (CQ-Knowledge), cultural awareness (CQ-Strategy), and the ability to adapt to diverse cultures (CQ-Action), and also included follow-up questions, which were used to facilitate more detailed responses from the participants.

The final phase of this methodology, *la despedida* or the farewell, involved the researcher and participants demonstrating mutual appreciation, personal communication, and linkage (Fierros et al., 2016). Interestingly, throughout most of the *pláticas*, or conversations, the participants preemptively responded to many questions before being asked. This phenomenon was attributed to the participants' years of work and leadership experience. They are highly-educated professionals with leadership roles that require maintaining high levels of public trust, extensive public speaking, diverse stakeholder engagement, and executive-level responsibilities. Also, during each *plática*, or conversation, the researcher made notes to capture salient points.

Confidential files for each participant and the folders for all the participants were locked. Each participant file was assigned a copy of the research questions, which allowed for notations

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during the *pláticas*. Other research materials were hand-written notes and observations, audio and video recordings, correspondence with the participants, interview transcriptions, coded data, informed consent forms, and interview protocols. The researcher listened to each *plática*, or conversation recording multiple times to fully comprehend the participant's responses.

Recordings were transcribed and edited to ensure that the transcriptions reflected the participant's responses. The names of the participants and any identifiable information were removed from each transcript, and a unique non-identifying code was used for each participant's transcript, referring to them as Latina-leader 1, Latina-leader 2, Latina-leader 3, Latina-leader 4, Latina-leader 5, Latina-leader 6, and Latina-leader 7

### **Data Analysis**

The qualitative data was analyzed and interpreted by (a) preparing and organizing the data for analysis, (b) coding the data, (c) using the codes to develop themes, (d) representing the findings through narratives and visuals, (e) making meaning of the results, and (c) validating the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2012). The researcher performed manual coding to manage and sort the data. As salient points emerged, the research made notations on the transcriptions and then placed them in categories. This process enabled the researcher to synthesize and identify themes and patterns by “moving the data to the idea, then from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea” (Patton, 2015; Hedlund-de Witt, 2013, p. 2). Initially, after at least two manual reading and coding cycles, the codes were migrated to NVIVO, a research software, to organize and analyze the data.

Moreover, the researcher read the transcripts and listened to the recordings again to refine the coding further. As this process unfolded, the researcher focused on listening to the participant's responses, honing in on their tone of voice, animated gestures, and code-switching. According to McCluney, Robotham, Lee, Smith, and Durkee (2019), code-switching occurs

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when a person adjusts speech, appearance, behavior, or manner of expression to improve communication or convey a thought.

The *pláticas*, or conversations generated a generous amount of thick narrative, and the analysis involved examining the data to determine if it answered the study's central question. The researcher focused on the relevant responses to the questions, reorganized data, reduced the number of codes and eliminated redundant codes, and then thematically categorized, organized, and aligned them with the questions (Saldaña, 2016). Moreover, using triangulation, the data was examined from different sources to reduce the bias in gathering, reporting, and analyzing data (Ivankova, 2015). Additionally, using two readers enabled a broader and potentially more balanced perspective and interpretation of the data. Also, each participant received a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences. A total of five of the seven participants responded with no necessary changes to their transcript. The remaining two participants did respond to the researcher's member checking. A total of five categories and 13 themes emerged from the data analysis. Table 2 illustrates the major themes and categories obtained from the data analysis.

Table 2

*Thematic categories for culturally intelligent Latina leaders*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Theme</b>
Motivation	Values Empathy Self-awareness
Knowledge	Implicit Tacit
Strategy	Adaptability Relationship building
Action	Change Agent Interpersonal skills Social justice
Culturally Intelligent Leadership	Self-leadership Social Consciousness

*Note:* List of Latina leadership cultural intelligence categories and respective themes.

### **Practical Application of the Findings**

The following sections describe the themes that emerged from the *pláticas*, or conversations. The themes for each research question, as well as the participant's descriptive responses follow:

#### **Research Sub-Question 1**

Motivation (CQ Drive) – *In what ways did Latina leaders use self-efficacy to provide effective leadership?*

The themes that emerged from this question are self-awareness and empathy, with confidence playing a significant role in self-efficacy. The Latina leaders shared that self-awareness was critical to their ability to navigate the challenges they faced throughout their leadership journeys. They described their formative years in households that expected them to understand and value their ancestry and respect their cultural norms and traditions. Also, they shared in-depth knowledge of the lives of their parents and grandparents, reasoning that their parents' and grandparents' identities were significant influencing factors in forming their values, identities, and cultural intelligence confidence. They shared that knowing and understanding their culture and being exposed to other cultures best prepared them to feel confident and well-equipped with strategies to adapt and overcome obstacles and embrace different cultures.

Latina-leader 1 said, "My confidence level is pretty high because I have been exposed to many different cultures." Latina-leader 2 added, "So that is the strategy I take. I feel very comfortable and confident talking to a diverse group of people or traveling internationally, but that is based on my exposure. I am a citizen of the world." Latina-leader 7 said, "We were a family of optimism, so I grew up with a lot of optimistic views, which led to my development as a risk-taker, and that gave me confidence in analyzing and understanding consequences, parameters, and how far you can go." Another Latina leader described using self-talk to remind

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herself of her journey as a leader and as a strategy to remain mindful and confident that she had and could persevere through a challenge. Latina-leader 1 stated that positive affirmations are critical to her self-efficacy and cultural intelligence. She said, “You know, creating positive affirmations, brainwashing yourself to know and be confident, if you have no one in your life to help guide you, how do you do that for yourself? So, I tell them my story.” Latina-leader 3 echoed, “Sometimes I will retell my own story to myself.” Latina-leader 4 shared how she became interested in learning about other cultures because her family highly regards oral history. She said, “I became interested in learning other cultures to learn the stories and to understand people. We understand people through story, and we also understand people through work and working on projects with one another.” Latina-leader 7 commented, “I think that not growing up being afraid to showcase who you are and being willing to learn about other cultures impacted me positively.”

Another revelation was that self-awareness also influenced the leadership style of the Latina leaders. All seven participants shared stories and experiences throughout their careers with gender and racial bias and discrimination (López-Mulnix, 2011). Consequently, the participants expressed great empathy for others who might have experienced similar bias and discrimination. Each participant demonstrated strong self-awareness and described how they were aware of being uncomfortable when they experienced bias and discrimination. Moreover, all the participants expressed strong sentiments about those moments in their lives and careers and how they transcended their experiences by practicing self-management, being authentic, and carrying a deep sense of responsibility to create change. Latina-leader 2 stated, “So I mean, it just means so many things, and I think you have to be constantly aware of those things to lead effectively and be confident every day.” Latina-leader 1 stated, “I have used my experience. I

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believe it should never be as hard for others as it was for me.” Latina-leader 5 shared how her self-awareness affected her leadership, adding, “People do not want to hear that. Right? So, from a leadership perspective, I try to shield my team.” Latina-leader 6 echoed the same, stating, “I will never let anybody be in my position. I will never treat anybody the way I was treated.”

All of the participants acknowledged the integral role that their culture and values play in their leadership. Latina-leader 3 said, “My culture, even my language affects my leadership style and how I approach certain situations.” Another participant, Latina-leader 2 added, “I think my culture and identity have expanded my toolkit of leadership skills. I use certain tools in my belt for certain individuals or certain situations.” Latina-leader 6 revealed, “I could relate well with many people across different cultures because my mother came from a poor upbringing, and she was a foster child.” Latina-leader 7 added, “I share a lot of my cultural background as a leader, and I am not afraid of that.”

In particular, the Latina leaders expressed profound appreciation for the challenges and triumphs that their familial matriarchs faced and overcame. Latina-leader 1 explained, “I think more than anything, the traditional Latina identity forces me to be more compassionate, like my mom. I have learned so much from her in terms of being selfless.” She also said, “My Latina identity is what makes me feel strong, powerful, and empowered. We have gone through so much as Latina women for so many generations.” Latina-leader 3 said, “My mom impressed upon us her belief system that if you have faith and do right by people, yourself, and your family, and for the right reasons, you cannot fail. She instilled in us that we do not walk alone.”

### **Research Sub-Question 2**

Cognition (CQ Knowledge) – *In what ways did experience with diverse cultures impact a Latina’s leadership style?*

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Showry and Manasa (2014), citing the work of White, Hodgson & Cranier (1996), expound that self-awareness is the "foundation of all tacit knowledge" (p. 17). Early et al., (2003) tells us that tacit knowledge is "knowing how to act in particular situations, therefore practically oriented" (p. 53). The Latina leaders' responses to sub-question one affirmed the literature on cultural intelligence and implicit and tacit knowledge. One by one, the Latina leaders described how they confronted cultural challenges in various contexts by relying on implicit information and tacit knowledge to lead themselves and others. As the participants shared their stories and how they directed their behavior and thinking patterns and persisted in adversity, it was evident that they were skilled in retrospective thinking and inherent ways of knowing. Showry et al., (2014) further suggest that self-awareness is more important to leadership success than intelligence which is integral to achieving effective leadership.

As the Latina leaders described their leadership journeys beyond self-awareness of their cultures, motivation, and behavior, several described a quest-like pattern for seeking knowledge and understanding of other cultures. Latina-leader 1 said, "I think cultural awareness is first; you have to identify where you stand and what is your culture? Once you make sense of yourself, you can make sense of others." She stressed the importance of being mindful by observing, picking up cues, and listening for repetitive use of words. "Being able to make these observations and listen helps me navigate the influences and raises my confidence when doing it. It comes from being immersed in so many cultures," she said.

Several Latina leaders referenced managing and navigating cultural assumptions acquired through everyday experiences, handed down through generations, or considered "rules of thumb." Latina-leader 2 described how challenging it was to speak her truth at work without the risk of being marginalized. She said, "I learned there is this assumption that Latina women are

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subservient and quiet. It is how my executive expected me to be.” She also explained how as the first female manager, she asserted her ideas in a room full of male colleagues. After the meeting, her executive told her he received complaints about her because she was aggressive. She added, “It was patronizing, but it is also very ‘Latino’ for women to be treated by ‘Latino’ men like they are being scolded.” Latina-leader 7 explained how the confidence she developed to mitigate different cultures and challenges could also have an adverse effect. She said, "As a woman, confidence helps you, but it also hurts you because people are intimidated by your confidence to exercise the job or your responsibilities." She believes men with the same confidence are not perceived as intimidating because they are considered “bold and strong.”

Latina-leader 5 described growing up in a cultural-fusion home with a mix of Mexican, American, and Lebanese customs, traditions, and values. She explained how in the Mexican and Lebanese cultures, the women are expected to serve the men before they serve themselves. She described one occasion when her father expected her to adhere to *Marianismo* values by serving her younger brother. She described how she flippantly refused to serve him. She said, “My father almost slapped me because I did not want to serve him. I did not understand the consequences.” She further explained that failing to do so brings criticism and is perceived as disrespectful.

Latina-leader 4 explained that she gained a greater understanding of different cultures in college. While she learned their differences, she also learned their commonalities. She said, “We were young women, and the one thing that bound us together culturally was the sexism in all of our cultures.” While discussing tacit knowledge and cultural awareness, Latina-leader 2 said cultural intelligence is “Getting past some of these hindrances that our culture can impose, and that is why I think you have to unpack and have that conversation with yourself.” Latina-leader 4 added, “The role of women in my family was a strong role but under the umbrella of male

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domination.”

Latina-leader 3 explained that aside from her cultural upbringing, she also credits her prior career as a social worker with helping her learn how to know and what to know. From the researcher’s perspective, the Latina leaders believe that their cultural background and implicit learning enabled them to understand how to learn and practice behaviors and values that are inculcated. The research tells us that culturally intelligent persons know how to interpret new information, then motivate themselves to respond in different contexts based on what they know (Early et al., 2003). Latina leader 3 said, “I had to learn how to modulate what I was taking in.” She talked about being trained to make social worker home visits and how she was highly skilled at picking up cues, scanning the room for anomalies, and transferring that information in different settings and areas.

Some Latina leaders credited their mothers and elders for teaching them to discern differences and social behavior; others credited their grandparents. Latina-leader 7 said, "My mother was always service-oriented, and she would help the other women in the village mitigate challenges. It inspired me to always help, doing things for people.” Latina-leader 3 said, “We had our elders to learn from, and they conveyed wisdom through spoken word, which developed into details.” She also stated, “We have learned much about generational trauma and how it comes into our genetics.” Latina-leader 1 shared, “We are taught to respect our elders, not talk back, to do as we are told to do, and to follow the rules.” Latina-leader 3 explained how culturally there is much to understand. She said, “It is like an explicit and implicit barrage.” Latina-leader 4 explained that as a teenager, she felt she had a role in creating change. She described how her ancestors were part of the Alamo and San Jacinto battles. However, at that time, the history books did not mention Mexican Americans who fought in the Texas Revolution.

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When she asked her middle school teacher, an African American, why there was no mention of them, her teacher said, “Child, we are not in there either! If you want to read it, right it!” Latina-leader 4 said, “So that treatment and understanding had a role in me being able to create that change.”

### **Research Sub-Question 3**

*Metacognition (CQ Strategy) – In what ways did understanding diverse cultures impact a Latina’s leadership framework?*

The research demonstrates that knowing about diverse cultures is only one of four elements of cultural intelligence. According to Fellows et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2014; and Ang et al., 2007, knowledge of cultural intelligence leads to action. The Latina leaders described the strategies they used to understand diverse cultures, and the emerging themes are adaptability and relationship building. The seven Latina leaders described how they tackled distinctive challenges by adapting, learning and practicing acceptance, and learning about themselves and other cultures. They also shared how they navigated setbacks by focusing on self-perseverance and being strategic by influencing their leadership paradigms. Latina-leader 7 explained how she makes calculated decisions based on “How I see myself forward, not backward.” Latina-leader 1 stated, “Being culturally aware is acknowledging that there are other ways of being in the world that may be better or inferior to what you believe. The thing is acknowledging there are different ways of being in the world.” Latina-leader 2 shared that adapting to unfamiliar cultures was driven by her knowledge and comfort with her lineage and cultural background. She remarked, “Those are the things that I was raised with in my background, and it affects how I lead and walk in life.” Latina-leader 3 commented that her ability to adapt and build relationships comes from her commitment to respect others. “And so different strokes for different folks and as long as we

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respect each other's definition. That is very much a part of how I interact with people.” Latina-leader 6 said, “Respect and love other people!” The Latina leaders shared that adapting and building relationships required work and commitment. Latina-leader 1 said, “These are not static identities or experiences. They are fluid and ever-changing. To understand your culture and how we are different, you need to dissect our different identities or norms and learn how we differ and are not different to find common ground.” Latina-leader 7 said, “As a leader, sometimes you have to be a bitch, but also you have to be very caring, and sometimes you have to be nonchalant and find the middle ground.”

Learning was a common theme shared by the seven Latina leaders. Latina-leaders 1 and 2 explained that they learned about other cultures by performing independent research on cultures, their norms, and their origins. The Latina leaders consistently stressed the importance of self-study, formal and informal research, education, and a commitment to continuous education and learning. Latina-leader 2 shared that she felt that her undergraduate studies in international relations significantly contributed to her success in a foreign service federal agency. She remarked that her educational background and continuous learning bolstered her ability to develop a diverse knowledge base of different cultures and how to do business and negotiate with them. She also shared how she learned to “scan the biography of these people, how they are, and how they think. Again that is all culture! Doing that ahead of time helps me turn on my ability to be open, a curious listener, and compassionate.”

The Latina leaders also described their navigation strategies, using tactics such as negotiation, being analytical, persistence, and leveraging their cultural differences as advantages. Latina-leader 2 described using her analytical skills daily, stating, “In my daily life, I can almost be overly analytical because when you have that foundation, you have nothing else but to

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continue to use it in everyday scenarios.” She also shared that being exposed to other cultures helped her “fit in” because she could adapt. She stated, “When you can fit in, you have an advantage. I was able to negotiate better, garnered better trust and intelligence, and better information.”

Persistence and self-management were commonly shared themes. Latina-leader 2 described how she balances her cultural positionality by practicing mindfulness and self-management. She said, “I also think of how to balance my culture and myself. I do a lot of self-management.” Remarks such as “We find better ways to do things better, and when we are told no, we work around it!” were echoed throughout the *pláticas*, or conversations, as the Latina leaders described how they persevered through challenges. Embedded in their persistence was their ability to make sense of their environments which gave them confidence and optimism. Latina-leader 7 said, “We were a family of optimism,” while Latina-leader 1 added, “You create your goals, and you stay positive, and just all this is temporary.” The Latina leaders also described staying true to themselves and being authentic as a strategy they used throughout their journeys. Latina-leader 1 commented that she strives to balance her authenticity and need to adapt, often asking herself, “How much do I adapt versus how much do I stay true to myself.”

The Latina leaders also described a high degree of mindfulness and consciousness. They described being aware of their cultural differences and how the indifference they experienced affected their lives and careers, such as being ridiculed and marginalized. Latina-leader 3 stated, “Everyone has an issue with some part of my identity.” Similarly, Latina-leader 1 described when she first realized, while away at college, that her cultural identity set her apart from others. She said, “That was the first time in my life I realized there is a different way to live and be a woman in the world.” Latina-leader 3 shared a story about when a college classmate asked if she

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would accompany her back to her home during a semester break because her parents had never met a Mexican before. Latina-leader 3 accepted the offer. She said, “Okay, let us go educate your parents!” Latina-leader 2 explained that her cultural background empowered her with confidence, adding, “You know, because of my background, I felt comfortable, which then made me feel even more confident, but I also had to be very conscious.” Latina-leader 6 said, “I learned not to judge and to go with the flow.”

### **Research Sub-Question 4**

RQ1d: Behavioral (CQ Action) – *In what ways did cultural awareness affect a Latina leader’s behavior?*

The changing world demands a leadership approach emphasizing social impact and the common good. With rapidly evolving economies and the effect of a global pandemic, the construct of leadership is also changing. Three themes emerged during this question: change agent, interpersonal skills, and social justice. Latina-leader 1 described how witnessing her mother’s sacrifice for their family influenced and motivated her to make a difference for others. She said, “Seeing my Latina mother sacrifice so much for other people and us to have a better life—that guides me. It is not about me. I am interacting and impacting change for others.” Moreover, the Latina leaders described how they carry a powerful sense of responsibility to change inequities, injustices, bias, and discrimination against others.

According to Latina-leader 1, “People have had it worse than me, and I need to be strong for the next generation. We are all helping each other become better.” Speaking about how cultural identity influenced a sense of responsibility to create change, Latina-leader 2 described how her cultural background affects her motivation. She said:

This culturally ingrained moment is instilled in us as we grow up and within our

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family. I see it in my style of leadership. I see how that moves me for social and behavioral change because it gets at the heart of what people lack, which is self-validation and self-care.

Two Latina leaders work in judicial careers, and they expressed a profound sense of honor to serve and a responsibility to change how their courtrooms welcomed defendants and their families. Both take extraordinary steps to teach and demonstrate empathy to everyone affected by the judicial and criminal justice systems. Latina-leader 3 said, “I pursue educating people on what we do in the court and how we deal with defendants, educating them on the programming, and they, in turn, see me as someone to turn to. That is what makes me a good leader that I truly care.” Both Latina leaders described the unique roles and responsibilities that they shoulder by taking extra time to mentor defendants by personally visiting them in their cells, making personal and cultural connections with defendants and their families, and explaining the law and court proceedings. Latina-leader 6 said, “I want people to feel that it is everybody’s courtroom, no matter their color.” Latina-leader 3 said, “I care that defendants know that they are going to get due process in this court, and I care that a victim knows that we are not just going to sit on a case for years. We are going to try to get this resolved.” Latina-leaders 3 and 6 stated that they genuinely care and faithfully report to work to be present and available to hear cases promptly and keep their dockets well-managed. That sense of responsibility also compels them to create change. She also recalled being in court as a rebellious teenager and not understanding the consequences of her actions on herself or her family and how no one explained the court system to them. She told a story of a time when she was a police officer responding to a public disturbance call at a house with many Hispanics standing in their front yard while grilling and listening to music. Another backup officer also responded to the call. Latina-leader 6 approached

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the group first. She described how her Latino cultural background enabled her to analyze the scenario and interpret her environment quickly. Latina-leader 6 said:

It was a tense moment, but after I analyzed the situation, I decided to approach them. As I entered the yard, I smiled and asked, where is my invitation? They laughed! They even invited us to eat with them, and we stayed. That might have had a different outcome if not for my Latino background.

She explained how her approach and cultural intelligence eased tensions, built trust, and that they enjoyed eating with them. She also disclosed that the other female officer, a non-Hispanic officer, later admitted to being scared during the tense moment because she did not understand the culture. Latina-leader 6 added, “They were a Hispanic family making their dinner. That is all! It was not a party or a disturbance. It was a family feeding their family! I know because that is what I am used to in my Latino family.”

A leader’s action is the spark that kindles the consciousness of others and enables leaders to actualize their mindfulness. Ruben, De Lisi, & Gigliotti (2014) state that communication and leadership is inseparable. Moreover, they assert that effective communication allows a leader to tap “social influence” (p. 101). According to Price et al., (2017), leaders play many roles, such as “storyteller, agent of change, visionary, and cheerleader, to name a few.” The Latina leaders were not shy about describing how they used their voices to create change. Latina-leader 3 said, “I had to decide. Am I going to become someone who helps lift others and owns their identity to lift others, or am I going to be someone who takes this privilege and this opportunity, and I am just in it for me?” Other Latina leaders explained how they use code-switching to influence outcomes by leveraging bilingualism to connect, build trust, and bolster communication, especially with Latinos. Latina-leader 1 explained that she takes cultural identity into account

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and sometimes communicates in Spanish. She said, “I consider not only their culture but also identities. I have to switch communication based on what I know about that individual.”

Additionally, the Latina leaders described how they use storytelling to relate and empathize with others. Latina-leader 1 said, “Narratives are a very powerful teaching tool for helping students believe in themselves, so I tell them my story! It is important for us to tell our narrative and struggles.” Latina-leader 7 has written a play that focuses on her Mexican upbringing and experiences. The play portrays a colorful and impactful story of the positive values of the culture depicting the music, the language, and the optimism that she experienced in her Mexican family. Latina-leader 4 described how early in her career, she used code-switching to build trust with social work clients and how a judicial colleague mentored her to use code-switching with defendants in her courtroom so that they could relate to her and build trust with them and their families. The mentoring judge said:

If you do it and communicate with them, you will know and connect. They will listen to you, but you have to let them know that you have not forgotten where you come from, and that itself wraps you in credibility in a way that you can impact their lives. They will listen to you because you will develop a connection with them (Latina-leader 3, 2022).

Owie (2017) believes leaders are responsible for leveraging their positionality, power, and influence. Arora et al., (2019) assert that leaders are best suited to challenge the status quo and to lead the change to a more socially just and equitable world. The Latina leaders expressed strong sentiment for leading social change and being social justice oriented. Leader-leader 2 said, “This type of engagement and trying to solve problems and learning about them, is the type of work that I want to do.” Latina-leader 2 also elaborated on the deeply rooted value of creating change, “Social justice is in our blood, as our family has fought back for our lands.” She said:

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My grandmother taught my cousins and me, at an early age, a lot about our history. She tried to make sure that we understood that we came from families that spoke up and believed in great causes and that we knew the power of community and high moral ethics. I have been raised with this background, which is how I live my life.

### **Research Sub-Question 5**

Culturally Intelligent (CQ) Leadership – *In what ways did Latina leaders perceive that the use of cultural intelligence impacted their ability to lead effectively?*

People from every rung of society have revered leaders that acknowledge their self-awareness, self-leadership, and awareness of others. More so, due to the emergent and evolving social context that today's leaders face, culturally intelligent leaders must be able to "draw on personal talents, skills, and cognitive maps as guides to action" (O'Neill & Nalbandian, 2018, p. 314). Price et al., (2014) contend that leaders have a "noble calling that extends beyond their office walls—a mission that spreads into the world and influences others for the better" (p. 13). Two themes that emerged during this stage of the *pláticas* were self-leadership and social consciousness. Chaleff (2009) argues that as moral managers, leaders are expected to bring their beliefs, self-interests, high ethical standards, and relationships to their work.

During this stage of the *pláticas*, or conversations, the Latina leaders described the impact that cultural intelligence had on their leadership framework, such as compelling them to become self-aware and to consciously influence their thoughts and behavior to overcome challenges or create social change. Sergiovanni (2005) argues that leadership "is about helping people understand the problems they face, helping them manage these problems, and even helping them learn to live with them" (p. 118). These seven Latina leaders boldly embraced their roles as leaders in their community, within their families, and at work. As the theme of self-

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leadership began to surface, words such as accountability, courage, humility, and optimism resonated throughout each *plática*. Knowing who we are and why we think the way we do is at the core of our human behavior.

The Latina leaders contended that leading others requires being able to self-lead, practicing humility, and remaining optimistic. Latina-leader 6 explained that it is important to remember to practice humility. She asserted, “You do not know everything!” Latina-leader 3 described her role and participation in community and social justice organizations. She explained how her authenticity affects everything she does to create sustainable social change and help her community. In particular, she said that she once served on a board focused on inequality and bias but added that the board members refused to hold a board member accountable for being hypocritical. She said, “They were just window dressing and wanted to have their United Nations on this committee without really doing the work!” That experience weighed heavily on her mind and heart. Another Latina leader stated that she would lead herself through challenges to overcome being discriminated against. She said, ‘So, how did it affect me when I was being told, ‘Well, you are a woman, you are nothing—just be quiet!’ It made me angry, and it made me want to prove him wrong even more!’ Latina-leader 4 shared a similar experience, retelling a story when she gave a Latino-male colleague a pep talk because he was being disrespected by his direct reports in a group meeting. She explained how she met him during a meeting break and told him, “A lion does not back down when the animals in the jungle are gnarling at him!” She also explained that she meant no harm and was merely trying to support him because he was being disrespected, but from that point forward, he marginalized her. “He disowned me and reminded me every chance he had that he had gotten me my job,” she said.

Demonstrating courage was also common among the Latina leaders. Latina-leader 1

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shared, “You must be very strong-willed, use your voice, and stand up for yourself. I got those cultural nuances as an empowered Latina.” She further added that she often reflects on her mother’s struggles and how she persisted for the sake of her daughters. Latina-leader 1 said:

I use those experiences to feed the anger, and I force myself to be better or to create a better environment for people who may be going through what I experienced. That is why I am such an advocate of education. Education single-handedly changed my entire family.

Latina-leader 4’s comments resounded Latina-leader 1’s comments, “You have the responsibility to break that mold because you just cannot sit back and be passive!” For many Latina leaders, breaking the mold meant empathizing with and mentoring others. For example, Latina-leader 2 shared that she tries to see situations from more than one perspective. She said, “I seek to understand the meaning because I know that I am walking into their culture. I cannot impose my culture on someone else’s culture. I have to take that moment to fully observe.”

Discussion about caring for others was consistent among all seven *pláticas*. Topics such as self-care, family, traditions, and cultural norms consistently surfaced. Latina-leader 2 stated, "I think we, as Latinas, do self-care, but we also do self-care for others. That is something you do not see in other women of color." Latina-leader 4 said, "As Latina women, we are brought up to nurture and care for others." moreover, she explained that it is part of the tacit knowledge of the culture. "I think even more so, Latina women are ingrained servant leaders because we are taught to serve others," she said.

According to the Latina leaders, caring for others includes mentoring, being surrogate caretakers, and being hospitable at home and work. Latina-leader 2 described her efforts to care for her co-workers and direct reports. She said:

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We are always willing to support and console others, and those are the things that I have brought into my team. I show care and concern for my employees, ensuring they are cared for. Those are all part of the cultural elements that you learn.

Latina-leader 1 also expressed a similar approach noting that as a professor, she knows that many of her students are poor. She explained how growing up poor, she and her siblings suffered from hunger. She said, “Food insecurity is a huge issue for students. Many of our students do not know where their next meal comes from. When I teach an in-person class, I always bring them snacks.” She also added that she is mindful and removes barriers by creating a learning environment that is comfortable and culturally relevant, sometimes by playing Mexican music, speaking to them in Spanish, or “telling them my story, helping them feel like they have a support system, even if they do not have a supportive family, they have us,” she said.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Although attempts were made to control sampling bias, participants in the research study might be similar to the researcher. As previously mentioned, the sample consisted of Latina, Hispanic, Mexican American or Chicana female administrators in mid-or-upper management positions that represent multi-context business sectors. The scope of the study was limited to the United States. Other factors to consider include the participants’ socio-economic status, how many generations of their family have been in the United States, and their country or culture or origin.

Also, digital recordings and transcription can create technical challenges, so extra efforts were taken to confirm the transcription by using backup recordings. The leaders’ in-depth reflections are based on experiences and memories of their past. Moreover, these descriptions are also considered interpersonal encounters. They are subject to factors that have influenced the participants’ lives and experiences.

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As a proud Latina leader, holding leadership roles for more than thirty years, my passion for this topic is deep. While I am passionate about Latina leadership framework, I was extremely attentive to describing the study's results from the participants' eyes. The researcher practiced reflexivity throughout the study focusing on clarity, trustworthiness, richness, and accountability (Ivankova, 2015). While small samples are common in phenomenological research, caution should be used in generalizing the study's findings. The researcher believes that the results and findings captured the true essence of the participants' descriptions.

### **Summary**

This chapter describes, through a cultural intelligence lens, the seven Latina leaders' leadership stories and their utilization of the four elements of cultural intelligence: (a) motivation, (b) cognition, (c) metacognition, and (d) behavior. The intricacy of the topic required the integration of several theoretical frameworks that provided the researcher with the insight necessary for thorough analysis and understanding. The literature review provided the context for theoretical perspectives, such as gender bias, women's leadership, Hispanic identity and culture, Latina leadership, cultural intelligence, and Latina feminism.

The literature that underpins this phenomenological research reveals that "what is defined, conceptualized, or regarded as intelligence or intelligent behavior in one context or culture is not universal." Moreover, it is imperative to focus on the cultural environment rather than just the "biological, mental or behavioral functioning" (Early et al., 2003, p. 53). Thomas et al., (2017) propose that cultural intelligence consists of three parts, "knowledge, mindfulness, and appropriate intercultural skills and behaviors" (p. 14). The study participants shared their experiences as culturally intelligent Latina leaders. It was a powerful experience to witness the participants describe how they faced adversity and overcame challenges, focused their attention

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inward, learned about themselves and others, and held themselves accountable. They strived for optimism, self-regulated, and mentored and nurtured others so they could overcome and create change. They used their voice to tell stories of how and why they learned to understand themselves and others. They then metabolized that understanding by creating mindful strategies to persist and lead themselves and others. They also described how they developed a collection of skills and behaviors that changed themselves, their families, their communities, and their work. Owie (2017) believes leaders are responsible for leveraging their positionality, power, and influence. “Thus, a socially conscious leader that is responsible does not focus on financial performance alone but makes intuitive and genuine socially responsible activities based on personal values and morals” (p. 143). Through their motivation, knowledge, strategy, and action, the seven Latina leaders focused on being catalysts for change by guiding self and others from a place of self-awareness (looking inward) to a position of understanding one’s role as a global citizen (looking outward), by recognizing the interconnectedness and dignity of all persons (social justice-minded), practicing equity and empathy (solidarity), embracing learning and unlearning (presence), challenging the status quo (courage), valuing all voices (acceptance), and leading with intentionality (purpose).

## CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

This chapter summarized and discussed the study's major findings, conclusions, and recommendations. At the center of this phenomenological study were the descriptions, through a cultural intelligence lens, of the lived experiences of seven Latina leaders and their utilization of the four elements of cultural intelligence: (a) motivation, (b) cognition, (c) metacognition, and (d) behavior. (See Figure 1). This phenomenological study is a powerful way to understand the subjective experience and to gain insight into seven Latina leaders' motivations, approaches, actions, and behavior. The researcher attempted to set aside biases and preconceived assumptions by allowing the participants' emotions, memories, perceptions, feelings, and responses to tell the story. Every leader is shaped by their lived experiences, and those experiences inevitably influence their leadership qualities and styles. Through *pláticas* or conversations, the researcher became the primary instrument and actively participated with the seven Latina leaders that elected to participate in this study. This chapter concluded with personal reflections from the *pláticas* or conversations with the study's participants.

The primary purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe Latina leaders' leadership stories through a cultural intelligence lens. Through *pláticas* or conversations with the researcher, the seven Latina leaders provided further insights into their lived experiences and ambicultural perspectives. This dissertation aimed to contribute a more nuanced understanding of Latina leadership and the utilization of the four elements of cultural intelligence (See Figure 1).

## Discussion of the Results

### Research Questions

Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher utilized in-depth *pláticas* or conversations to answer the proposed questions. The overarching research question was: In what ways were Latinas leaders impacted by their cultural intelligence? The sub-questions included the following:

### *Sub-Questions*

1. RQ1a: Motivation (CQ Drive) - In what ways did Latina leaders use self-efficacy to provide effective leadership?
2. RQ1b: Cognition (CQ Knowledge) - In what ways did Latina leaders' experience with diverse cultures impact a Latina's leadership style?
3. RQ1c: Metacognition (CQ Strategy) - In what ways did understanding diverse cultures impact a Latina leader's leadership framework?
4. RQ1d: Behavioral (CQ Action) - In what ways did cultural awareness affect a Latina leader's behavior?
5. RQ1e: Culturally Intelligent Leadership - In what ways did Latina leaders perceive that the use of cultural intelligence impacted their ability to lead effectively?

As identified in Chapter IV, five categories and 13 themes were identified. As Table 2 demonstrates, the five themes are: (a) Motivation, (b) Knowledge, (c) Strategy, (d) Action, and (e) Culturally Intelligent Leadership. The following is a summary of the findings identified by the researcher. The findings were organized by the research questions and the commonly described themes in Chapter IV. The major themes aligned with the questions the seven Latina leaders were asked. The responses to the questions illuminated the Latina leaders' descriptions of

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their interest and motivation to adapt to different cultures, their understanding of culture and how it shaped their thoughts and behavior, their ability to observe their thoughts and processes to understand different cultural contexts, and their ability to act appropriately in different cultural situations (Van Dyne et al., 2010).

### **Major Findings for Research Sub-Question 1**

The following section highlights the findings for Research Sub-Question 1:

Motivation (CQ Drive) - *In what ways did Latina leaders use self-efficacy to provide effective leadership?*

#### ***Finding 1: Values***

The seven Latina leaders anchored their self-efficacy and cultural intelligence on their cultural values. That is, while they expressed confidence in their ability to interact in multicultural settings and value cultural differences, they asserted that their values were a source of their self-efficacy. The seven Latina leaders boldly and honestly embraced their cultural identity, which the research tells us influences decision-making (Thomas et al., 2017). According to Montas-Hunter (2012), self-efficacy is integral to self-consciousness and what individuals do with their skills and knowledge. Villarreal and Peterson (2009) also tell us that cultural values have an influential role in identity and cultural practices. As leaders, understanding ourselves is essential to forming our leadership identity. One of the common threads between all seven Latina leaders was their knowledge and appreciation for their cultural ancestry. Each participant voluntarily provided a summary of their families' origins, telling in-depth stories of how their grandparents or parents journeyed through Mexico, later settling in what is now known as the United States. They were animated, bilingual, proud, and highly spirited summaries of their

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heritage, often pausing to express appreciation for the bicultural nuances woven into their family tapestries.

Latina-leader 2 said, “I bring my culture and my leadership style every day. I brought all my cultural nuances and how I was raised into my team. My office became a high-performing office within a year.” Latina-leader 7, a Mexican immigrant, said, “Never! I never have been a traitor to my culture, never! I grew up loving the Mexican culture, but I also grew up loving the American culture.” Latina-leader 1 asserted, “You do not jeopardize your identity, beliefs, or yourself.”

### ***Finding 2: Empathy***

Research by Dirani, Abadi, Alizadeh, Barhate, Garza, Gunasekara, Ibrahim, and Majzun (2020) contend that current leaders need to shift from traditional leadership models and competencies to a leadership approach that leverages a leader’s sensemaking skills and ensures the emotional stability and well-being of followers (p. 390). The seven Latina leaders wholeheartedly demonstrated their ability to develop behavior and skills integral to successful multicultural interactions. As empathetic leaders, they spoke about tackling challenges and relating to others culturally by knowing and understanding how others feel and what they might be thinking, emotionally sensing what others are feeling and experiencing, and being compelled to respond to a person’s predicament. The research of Zhu, Riggio, Avolio, and Sosik (2011) affirms that developing empathy is integral to moral motivation and action.

Latina-leader 6 explained how her delinquency and cultural experiences compelled her to change how defendants were treated in her courtroom. She said, “I did not understand it. I always felt bad for those people who do not understand.” She further explained how she deliberately explains the judicial proceedings in her courtroom to ease tensions. “It is

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heartbreaking to me. They are mostly Hispanics.” Latina-leader 2 stated, “I feel comfortable in these other cultures because of how I see myself.” As a former police officer, Latina-leader 6 explained she could often relate to cultural interactions when she responded to police calls because of her background. “When I respond to kids that had been abused, I would say, ‘I understand because a member of my family abused my sibling,’” she said.

### ***Finding 3: Self-Awareness***

According to Sturm, Taylor, Atwater, and Braddy (2014), the foundation of self-awareness can be traced to social, clinical, and developmental psychology. Moreover, the research also reveals that self-awareness is paramount for effective leadership. Self-awareness is essential to developing an effective leadership framework that nurtures and sustains an enduring leadership identity. Moreover, self-awareness is relevant to the construct of leadership because leaders are expected to deliver outcomes, honor duties, and add value by understanding their values, beliefs, and experiences, then integrating that understanding and experience to meet expectations in various contexts. Price et al., (2014) contend that leaders must have an awareness of self. “Self-awareness helps them become more effective and always moving forward in the journey toward completeness” (p. 10). Caldwell and Hayes’ (2016) research affirms that leaders’ self-awareness compels them to understand how personal and lived experiences impact their leadership approach.

Latina-leader 1 explained how she used her self-awareness to stay motivated. She said, “I learned at a young age to use anger as my motivator to go to my next step and to prove people wrong.” Latina-leader 4 said, “When you are in environments that are not diverse, it does get harder because you are in conflict with what you represent, and you are trying to maintain

confidence when you know you do not look like everybody in that room.”

### **Major Findings for Research Sub-Question 2**

The following section highlights the findings for Research Sub-Question 2:

Cognition (CQ Knowledge) - *In what ways did experience with diverse cultures impact a Latina’s leadership style?*

#### ***Finding 1: Implicit Knowledge***

According to Ciechanowska (2014), implicit knowledge is “objective knowledge” (p. 115). Implicit knowledge is the practical application of explicit knowledge. Throughout this phenomenological study, the seven Latina leaders often referred to learning and how they applied what they learned about other cultures in their careers and life. They enthusiastically shared how they took steps to seek out explicit information about different cultures, learned as much as they could, then adapted their behavior and actions to practice, demonstrate, or successfully navigate different cultural contexts. Moreover, Sechrest and Middelberg (2007) tell us that implicit knowledge plays a role in achieving personal goals. They also argue that total commitment in the translation of implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge requires exploration into one’s “subjective perceptions and assumptions about values and curious about how the concepts and theories hold relevance within one’s own or one’s organization’s value system” (p. 24).

The seven Latina leaders described how they confidently perceived how to navigate multicultural issues and differences based on influencing factors such as their values. Latina-leader 2 described that she attributes her cultural intelligence to understanding other cultures by learning and understanding their cultural norms, systems, and values. She shared an experience while studying in India, explaining that she witnessed poverty, their education systems, and

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social development work. From that implicit knowledge and awareness, she drew on her lived experience in her hometown. She said, “It showed me a lot of parallels to where I grew up. So the issues in another country and another part of the world enlightened me to acknowledge and feel this consciousness in my fabric.” Latina-leader 4 shared her experience with Latinas being nurturing. She said, “As Latina women, we are brought up to nurture and care for others. I do feel that it is part of our culture.” She added, “There is something about that in every Latina I have met.”

### ***Finding 2: Tacit Knowledge***

According to Sechrest et al., (2007), tacit knowledge entails information derived from personal insights, skills, experience, or intuitive ideas. Because it is subjective, it can be challenging to communicate and transfer, and it requires experience to master. In a cultural intelligence context, tacit knowledge can be information or insights passed down to younger generations and shared to overcome challenges such as inculturation or other cultural practices, beliefs, norms, and values.

Latina-leader 4 said, “Caucasian individuals in my life have been very individualistic. I would get conflicting advice.” She explained how that advice did not agree with her collectivist cultural background. Latina-leader 2 explained how her cultural intelligence relied on personal, emotional, and cultural values and then transferred that knowledge to action. She added, “It was more than just my education, experience, and knowledge; I had to execute.” Latina-leader 7 explained how being a native Spanish speaker when her family immigrated to the United States made her highly skilled at watching and interpreting non-verbal cues. She said, “I developed a higher level of leadership skills. I had a deeper skill level than someone who did not have to do it as a child.” She further explained that she was not a native-English speaker, so she relied on tacit

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information to inform her decisions and behavior. As a result, in school, she taught herself to observe the type of shoes worn by people. Depending on the type of shoes a person wore, she would adjust her behavior in accordance with her observations of her parents' and siblings' behavior around other cultures in the immigrant community where she lived which included Whites, Mexicans, or Filipinos.

### ***Major Findings for Research Sub-Question 3***

Metacognition (CQ Strategy) - *In what ways did understanding diverse cultures impact a Latina's leadership framework?*

#### ***Finding 1: Adaptability***

The research has shown that flexibility, mindfulness, and openness are predictors of successful multicultural transitions, interaction, and adaptation (Wilson et al., 2013). The seven Latina leaders described their ability to understand different cultures, knowing how to adjust their understanding, knowing what influenced their understanding, and having a strategy to engage and interact. The leadership journeys of the seven Latina leaders were not without challenges. Each leader shared how they learned to overcome setbacks by practicing acceptance and remaining adaptable. According to Murray (2010), immigrants typically face challenges and stressors when they enter new environments. The stories shared by the Latina leaders were infused with cultural adaptation. The seven leaders told stories of how their grandparents and parents adapted to being the first or second generation in their respective families to be raised in the American culture. Many shared that their ancestry and cultural experience instilled their confidence to adapt because their parents, grandparents, and other relatives modeled it. More often than not, it was also expected from them. The Latina leaders exuded self-confidence, adaptability, self-assessment, empathy, influence, learning, and valued diversity. Moreover, the

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Latina leaders described how they learned to consciously heighten their cultural awareness by exposing themselves to different cultural experiences, practicing self-care, or self-regulating their mental maps.

Latina-leader 3 explained how her formative years prepared her to adapt because her mother kept her busy and active, which she later learned to do on her own through civic and community involvement and participation. Today, she is a high-profile, elected leader who is highly sought after for her authentic leadership and ability to engage with diverse groups of leaders and stakeholders. Latina-leader 2 described how her work in foreign service helped her see life from a different perspective. She said, “I changed the way I saw things and the way I would live life by being more existential. This is how the business world operates. You navigate and assimilate to a certain degree.” Latina-leader 7 explained how she strategically accepted leadership roles that enabled her to develop her skills and competencies in managing challenges. “It was more of a strategy for me to become better versed in dealing with difficult issues,” she said.

### ***Finding 2: Relationship building***

As humans, we have an instinctive need to belong. Price et al., (2017) contend that mutuality is integral to effective leadership. Being a relatable leader involves taking ownership of life experiences and thought processes, strategizing how to interpret and understand cultural differences, and then checking our assumptions. The seven Latina leaders in this study described how they learned to make sense of multicultural contexts by building allies, sometimes by code-switching, planning cultural interactions by establishing personal connections with others, being vulnerable, sharing their narratives, and taking the time to learn about other cultures. From a cultural perspective, relationship-building is inherent in the Latino culture. As a collectivist

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culture, Latinos identify with a “we” consciousness. They are born into extended families, stress belonging, and relationships prevail over tasks (Hofstede et al., 2005).

Latina-leader 2 said, “I would do the general things like research the culture or the region. I would also seek out individuals from that region or culture, seeking to understand before making assumptions.” Latina-leader 1 shared, “I have to switch my communication based on what I know about that individual.” Latina-leader 3 described how she strategized by “...using my judgment as to what norms to bring, which ones are you comfortable with, and most importantly learning not to judge.” Seeking allies was also mentioned by Latina-leader 1, who said, “I started finding allies of different colors, shapes, and sizes, which was very helpful,” as she described how she learned to embrace her cultural identity in an environment where she was no longer in the majority.

### **Major Findings for Research Sub-Question 4**

Behavioral (CQ Action) - *In what ways did cultural awareness affect a Latina leader’s behavior*

Throughout the *pláticas*, the Latina leaders explained how they astutely knew when to adapt to other cultural settings and when *not* to. Participants described how they learned to interpret situations, draw from and transfer the implicit and tacit knowledge needed to feel confident in their abilities to interpret cultural settings, and their use of experiential learning to act on their understanding. According to Dyne et al., (2009), behavioral cultural intelligence involves flexible actions tailored to a specific cultural context. The literature shows that action is a critical differentiator in socially conscious leaders that rely on experience, skills, and cognitive maps to guide their actions (O’Neill & Nalbandian, 2018).

### **Finding 1: Change Agent**

According to Price et al. (2017), leaders play many roles, such as “storyteller, agent of change, visionary, and cheerleader, to name a few” (p. 121). A change agent is a facilitator who brings the perspectives of adopters and leaders' vision into sharper focus and alignment. The seven Latina leaders described how their cultural identity and experiences shaped and influenced their role as change agents. While some participants felt that they were motivated and influenced by their cultural values to create change, two other Latina leaders felt that her impetus to create change was inherent to being a Latina. Another felt she was privileged to change her socioeconomic circumstances through education, which was the impetus of her desire to create change.

Latina-leader 1 explained that she acknowledges her “earned” privilege, which motivates her to create change. She said, “ I acknowledge my privilege, and I use my leadership to remedy all of the obstacles that were unnecessary because of my culture, identity, and experiences.” She also plans to create change in the future, when she becomes a college president, by changing how decisions that affect students are made. As a future college president, she wants to build a greater understanding of students’ challenges and believes establishing deeper connections with them is important. She said, “When I become a college president, I will require my leadership staff to teach one class.” Latina-leader 6 said talked about her role as a police officer and how she worked to affect the lives of delinquent youth. She said, “I created a program at the foster home, and I would bring my mother to talk to them because I thought it would be better to become their friend before they got in trouble.” She explained that her motivation was her personal delinquency in her youth and her mother’s experience in foster care. Latina-leader 1 said,

“Culture is the way to design solutions, conversations, and the types of changes you want to see.”

### **Finding 2: Interpersonal Skills**

Ruben, De Lisi, and Gigliotti (2014) state that communication and leadership are inseparable. Moreover, they assert that effective communication allows a leader to tap “social influence” (p. 101). The Latina leaders in this study are highly skilled communicators. Interestingly, all seven Latina leaders hold executive-level positions requiring extensive public speaking, high-profile stakeholder engagement, and relationship building. Each participant demonstrated high self-confidence, poise under pressure, charisma, lively story-telling, and engaging showmanship. Three Latina leaders also engage in public performances and live audience settings. Moreover, through the *pláticas*, it was evident to the researcher that the participants are keenly aware of and value the power of leveraging their interpersonal competencies to influence or manage themselves or others in different cultural contexts.

Latina-leader 2 said, “I was surrounded by and culturally brought up to be assertive by speaking up, finding opportunity, and taking the initiative.” Latina-leader 7 explained how she executes different roles as she navigates situational leadership. She stated, “The ability to exercise different characters to execute the job to the fullest takes a lot of confidence and willingness to make mistakes.” Latina-leader 3 added, “When the colonizers came, they destroyed all our written material, tablets, and bibles. We had to learn to communicate our history through the spoken word.”

### **Finding 3: Social Justice**

A social justice orientation draws insights from biblical principles that espouse a just society where every person has a distinctive dignity, which entitles him/her to fundamental

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human rights and to reach their God-given capacities. Social justice also refers to the view that everyone deserves equal rights and treatment. More so, a social justice orientation calls for people to address inequities in political, social, and economic systems, emphasizing themes such as access, diversity, equity, participation, and human rights. Leaders must reflect on their values, motivation, beliefs, and social justice orientation to lead others effectively (*Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching*, n.d.).

Latina-leader 2 explained how her family immigrated to Mexico from the border of Spain and France. They were conveyed Spanish-land grants in the Southwest United States by the King of Spain but later were deprived of their land. So, from then forward, her family fought to regain their land and royalties. She said, “Social justice has been in our blood with our family. Latina-leader 2 explained that everyone has humanity in common regardless of cultural differences. She said, “You have to know humanity and really understand the human being because we are all human beings at the end of the day.” Most of the seven Latina leaders mentioned their efforts to care for others, affecting suffering, and changing inequality. Specifically, caring and empathy followed by action for change was a common message shared in the *pláticas* or conversations. Latina-leader 3 said, “I think that what makes me a good leader is that I really truly care.” This sentiment and demonstrating empathy were expressed by Latina-leaders 1, 3, and 6. They explained that their respective cultural backgrounds and life experiences compelled them to pursue change in their work and community. Latina-leader 1 talked about feeding her college students, mainly due to her strong connection with her experience as a poor and hungry child and adolescent. Eating is a basic human need and social concern that she strongly feels no one should

have to endure. Similarly, Latina-leaders 3 and 6 spoke about how the judicial and criminal justice systems are prone to disregard basic human needs such as participation and human dignity.

### **Major Findings for Research Sub-Question 5**

Culturally Intelligent Leadership - *In what ways did Latina leaders perceive that the use of cultural intelligence impacted their ability to lead effectively?*

#### **Finding 1: Self-leadership**

According to Norris (2008), social learning and cognitive theories form the basis of self-leadership. Self-leadership is the ability to consciously influence personal thoughts and behavior to achieve personal goals and organizational objectives. Moreover, Norris (2008) adds, “Self-leadership explains how self-leaders think and how they behave according to cognitive, motivational, and behavioral strategies” (p. 45). The research also shows that self-leadership affects a leader’s ability to know personal strengths and build upon those strengths and competencies to lead others (Rath et al., 2008). While Price et al., (2014) argue that leading others “first involves being able to lead yourself” (p. 99), Johnson (2021) contends that self-leadership entails “exercising influence over our thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors” (p. 287).

Latina-leader 3 described her understanding of her positionality and its effect on her leadership framework. She said, “Learning how culture and identities intersect affects my daily communication strategy. Of course, it affected my leadership. I had to change my leadership style and the way I communicated.” She also explained how her upbringing prepared her to be able to shift her mindset, actualize her change muscle, and lead herself and others. She added, “It forced me to be flexible, to be able to shift gears, and to have different paradigms of thinking with whom you are dealing.” Latina-leader 4 demonstrated behavioral-focused awareness and

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constructive thought strategies when she acknowledged that her multigenerational home environment in her youth prepared her to lead more effectively because she confidently leads employees older than her. She said, “I am definitely aware of my age, the fact that I am younger, and that there is a level of accountability that they have towards some things that I am asking of them.” She added, “I was once told, ‘I do not need some little girl telling me what I am supposed to do.’” Latina-leader-4 responded by using her silence to convey to her co-worker that she had crossed a boundary.

### **Finding 2: Social Consciousness**

Our common humanity creates a diverse way of life for everyone; thus, leaders must be able to empathize with others, recognizing the distinct experiences and voices of all people. Price et al., (2014) contend that leaders who exercise consciousness of others create the opportunity to become “more self-aware of their feelings and experience” (p. 143). Social consciousness is not a prescribed set of competencies, skills, or behaviors. It is a transparent, values-driven process of self-awareness to a position of understanding one’s role as a global citizen by recognizing the interconnectedness and dignity of all persons, practicing equity and empathy, embracing learning and unlearning, challenging the status quo, valuing all voices, and leading intentionally. Gigliotti (2020) argues that “human actors who interact with one another must also take into account what the other is thinking, expecting, and doing” (p. 29). An effective leader acknowledges that being socially conscious entails leveraging personal awareness, vision, and action within the necessary context and justification. Seymour’s (2014) research suggests, “Each human being enacts her social consciousness in a way she is structurally able to at any given time” (p. 117).

Latina-leader 7 said, “Having all these experiences from culture, such as my creative ways, to speaking two languages, allows me to sit at a bigger table of knowledge and infuse that

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knowledge to understand the dynamics of people.” Latina-leader 4 described moments in her life where her social consciousness entailed “holder her power and her ground.” She said, “My grandmother would say, ‘There is going to be tornadoes, and you are the eye of the storm. Be the eye of the storm.’ There have been many moments like that.” Moreover, in her childhood, Latina-leader 4 recalled hearing that Mexican women were docile. She explained how she could not reconcile this belief with her experience because she perceived it differently. She said, “All the women I know hold power in the family, not because they hold the job, but because they employed that silence.” She believed that silence was a source of power, rather than weakness.

### **Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature**

The seminal work of Thomas, 2017; Fellows et al., 2016; Ramirez, 2014; Bordas, 2013; López-Mulnix et al., 2011; Sánchez de Valencia, 2009; García et al., 2008; Ang et al., 2007; Hofstede et al., 2005; House et al., 2004; and Earley et al., (2003) form the theoretical foundation of this phenomenological study. Through the lived experiences of seven Latina leaders, the researcher observed that the Latina leaders’ practice of cultural intelligence is different from what the literature reveals. The researcher attributes this difference to the fact that these seven ambicultural Latina leaders are not transitioning between cultures but are interfacing and coexisting between them. It is important to note that through this study, the researcher found that much of the cultural intelligence literature is focused on the experience of expatriates. There is limited research on cultural intelligence and Latina leadership.

Research by Dyne et al., (2012) states that motivation for cultural intelligence consists of three elements: planning, awareness, and checking (p. 301). In contrast, this study revealed that three elements strongly influenced the cultural intelligence motivation of the participants: their

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values (what they believe), self-awareness (who they are and where they came from), and empathy (how they relate, interact, feel, and act towards others).

The researcher also attributed the difference in motivation to practice cultural intelligence to the collectivist nature of the Latino culture and its impact on their leadership framework style. The *pláticas* reveal that leadership style is deeply rooted in their sense of inclusion and, as Bordas (2014) states, a “humanistic core (that) propels a people-oriented leadership through which the leader strives to empower the community” (p. 3).

### **Implications of the Results for Practice, Policy and Theory**

#### **Theory and Practice**

##### **Implication 1: Include cultural intelligence training in leadership programs**

Individuals who earn postgraduate degrees are in a position to advance their understanding and experience by teaching, leading, and researching. Including cultural intelligence in doctoral programs is necessary as it helps leaders better understand and transform their mind maps on culture and how it influences leadership. These culturally intelligent leaders can play a pivotal role in creating greater awareness of the benefits and value of culturally intelligent communities and organizations.

##### **Implication 2: Include cultural intelligence training in professional development**

Public and private sector organizations would benefit from education and training programs that include cultural intelligence training. Some potential benefits of this training include increased awareness of the role of culture in interactions and improved communication with co-workers, customers, and stakeholders.

##### **Implication 4: Create or support opportunities for the development of affinity groups**

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In private and public sector environments, affinity groups help provide a sense of belonging and community through inclusivity and members' shared experience. They also harness members' skills, education, resources, and passion. Latino leaders across all sectors can benefit from belonging to such groups that bring greater awareness to the value and benefit of enhancing cultural intelligence in communities and organizations.

### **Implication 5: Develop mentoring opportunities for culturally intelligent Latina leaders**

Mentoring that emphasizes minoritized ways of knowing and being in the world would create opportunities for aspiring Latina leaders to find the support they need to develop and enhance their self-awareness, increase their cultural intelligence, and learn how to adapt behaviorally to other cultural contexts.

## **Policy**

### **Implication 6: Explore policy opportunities through engagement with thought leaders in Latina leadership**

Bringing sustainable change in a rapidly global workspace and hyper-connected communities requires leaders that are apt to use their intention, focus, and voice to create that change. Thought leaders are informed opinion leaders that can turn ideas into reality. They are changing the world in meaningful ways and engaging others to join their efforts. Thought leaders in Latina leadership have the opportunity to encourage change at the policy level by sharing the value and importance of cultural intelligence with a broader audience and then accelerating change locally, then nationally.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Through a cultural intelligence lens, this phenomenological study contributed a more nuanced understanding of seven Latina leaders' lived experiences and utilization of the four elements of cultural intelligence, motivation, cognition, metacognition, and behavioral (See Figure 1). Based on the study's findings, the following are recommendations for potential future research:

1. Conduct a similar study with qualitative and quantitative approaches using mixed methods.
2. Conduct studies that examine the role cultural intelligence plays in the leadership style of other ethnic groups.
3. Conduct studies that examine, compare, and contrast the role cultural intelligence plays in Latina and Latino leadership styles.
4. Conduct studies that examine the role cultural intelligence plays in leadership style within Latino groups such as Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and Cubans.
5. Conduct studies that examine the role cultural intelligence plays in the leadership style of Latino men and women working in other sectors, such as healthcare, education, law enforcement, judicial and criminal justice systems, and municipal/county government.

### Conclusion

This phenomenological study aimed to contribute a more nuanced understanding of Latina leadership through a cultural intelligence lens and how the participants' cultural intelligence (motivation, cognition, metacognition, and behavior) impacts their leadership. (See Figure 1). An examination into how Latina leaders navigate their lives and careers using cultural intelligence was investigated. In-depth *pláticas*, or conversations with seven Latina leaders, ranging in age from 33 to 69 and representing sectors such as education, law enforcement, and national and local government, were conducted to understand and later describe their lived and shared experiences.

There is a Latina leadership crisis in the United States (Gómez et al., 2020). While the literature suggests positive improvements in women's advancement, there is a lack of knowledge on Latina leadership and limited research on Latina leadership and cultural intelligence. According to McNeal (2000), "Leaders do not develop in isolation. They emerge within a community that plays a vital role in shaping them" (p. xiii). This study was necessary to understand how cultural intelligence impacts Latina leaders and to provide another perspective between cultural intelligence and leadership. Moreover, this study may help provide greater insight into opportunities to enhance leadership training by integrating cultural intelligence in different organizational contexts.

Findings from this study revealed that Latina leaders relied on their cultural intelligence to enhance their leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities in different contexts and environments. Additionally, the findings indicate that the Latina leaders' cultural intelligence motivation and self-efficacy were influenced by their *Latinidad*, affecting their knowing, sense-making, interpretation, behavior, the impetus for change, and action across cultures.

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This study has been a personal journey for more than 30 years. The role of the researcher in this study is a privileged one. I am honored, inspired, and humbled to know and interview the seven magnificent Latina leaders. The underpinning background of the *pláticas* was optimism and triumph, which the seven Latina leaders described through their captivating and inspiring stories. Throughout the study, I sensed that they journeyed through their careers and lives, surviving humiliation, mistakes, marginalization, loneliness, and success, breaking the mold along the way. They triumphed because failure was not an option, because they had faith, they knew they were not alone, they believed in themselves, had grit, and were resilient.

When I began this study, I had a firm understanding of my positionality and cultural identity. I am a third-generation Latina. My grandparents and parents were born in Texas. In contrast, my great-grandparents became Tejanos when the country's boundaries changed due to the Mexican War. Otherwise, they were Mexicans living in Northern Mexico and what is now Texas. Through this journey, I gained a greater appreciation of my culture, family, and beginnings. I am the daughter of college-educated parents who worked their way to a better life. My father was a migrant worker in his youth. I never made a strong connection with part of my identity, but through this journey, I did!

During this journey, the world around me changed, and it also changed me. The seven Latina leaders reminded me of valuable life lessons. First, Latina women are resilient and persistent. Also, do not mistake their silence for being passive or docile. They know their power, how to stand in the "eye of the storm" and leverage their influence. Second, do not forget where you come from and your *Latinidad*. I am not alone! Latina leaders are compassionate and authentic, but the self-work underpins these competencies. Third, being a Latina leader is hard

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work. Our work and community are important, but family comes first. Last, be fearless, live your life unapologetically, and know that you can do whatever they can.

In closing, today's culturally intelligent leaders must embrace feeling what others are experiencing, listen to other points of view, build a vision for change, engage others in that vision, then act by flexing their courage muscle. I felt that this study captured why Latina leaders are culturally intelligent leaders that empower individuals, organizations, and societies to transform from within, initiate equitable solutions, and motivate others to commit to and work for sustainable change. It is increasingly important that leaders emerge from their distinct lived experiences with a leadership approach that reflects the individual, environmental, organizational, multicultural, and societal contexts that intersect with their leadership framework and emphasizes social impact and the common good.

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APPENDIX A

**Letter of Invitation to Participate in Research**

**Study: Latina leadership through a cultural intelligence lens**

Date:

Greetings,

My name is Melinda Rodriguez, and I am doctoral candidate in the School of Behavioral and Social Sciences at St. Edward's University. Currently, I am conducting research with a faculty member as part of my dissertation. I would like to extend an invitation for you to participate in my study. I am reaching out to you in hopes that you will agree to participate in my study as I believe your background and expertise will contribute a great deal to the research I am conducting.

As you probably know, there is very little research on factors that contribute to the success of Latina leaders. This study aims to describe the possible role that cultural intelligence plays in Latina leadership. Your participation will help to further research and understanding in the field of Latina leadership.

As a participant, you would partake in a 45-minute interview which will be set up at a time convenient for you. I propose to conduct one face-to-face interview for approximately 45 minutes at an arranged time convenient to your schedule. If a face-to-face interview is not possible or convenient with your schedule, the interview can be done through Zoom, Teams, or Webex.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me or my faculty research director, Dr. Tom Sechrest. You will find both of our contact information at the bottom of this email.

Thank you for your time.

**Melinda Rodriguez, Student Researcher**  
[mrodri83@stedwards.edu](mailto:mrodri83@stedwards.edu)

**Tom Sechrest, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor**  
[tsechrest@stedwards.edu](mailto:tsechrest@stedwards.edu)

If you have any concerns about this study, please contact,  
Laura Minnigerode, MEd  
IRB Administrator  
[IRB@stedwards.edu](mailto:IRB@stedwards.edu)  
512-416-5838

APPENDIX B

**Research Participant's Bill of Rights**

STUDY: Latina leadership through a cultural intelligence (CQ) lens

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment or who is requested to consent on behalf of another has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs, or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects, or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researcher to answer them. You also may contact Dr. Tom Sechrest at [thomasls@stedwards.edu](mailto:thomasls@stedwards.edu) or the SEU IRB Administrative Office at [IRB@stedwards.edu](mailto:IRB@stedwards.edu) or at 512-416-5838, or by writing- Laurie Cook Heffron, Ph.D., LMSW, IRB Chair at St. Edward's University, 3001 South Congress, Austin, TX, 78704-6489.

APPENDIX C

**Consent Form for Adults**

**What is the purpose of this research project?**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Melinda Rodriguez, a doctoral candidate, from the St. Edward's University School of Behavioral and Social Sciences. The Principal Investigator of this project is Melinda Rodriguez. This is a student research project under the supervision of faculty member Dr. Tom Sechrest. This study has been approved by the IRB, Protocol ID #0000122.

This study aims to describe Latina leaders' leadership stories through a cultural intelligence (CQ) lens. Through structured interviews with the researcher, this study will provide further insights into the lived experiences of Latina leaders from their perspectives. I am reaching out to you in hopes that you will agree to participate in my study, as I believe your background and expertise will positively contribute to this research.

**Eligibility:** To be eligible to participate in this phenomenological research study, you must meet the following criteria:

1. You are at least 25 years old.
2. You are Latina, Hispanic, Mexican-American, or Chicana.
3. You are female.
4. You hold a mid-or-upper management position for at least one year.

**What will I have to do?**

If you agree to participate in this study, I propose to conduct one face-to-face interview about your current leadership experiences and practices for no more than one hour through Zoom. Your responses will be digitally recorded; then, the recording will be transcribed. The interview will include topics such as the skills you use to lead effectively across cultures. I intend to safeguard your confidentiality and anonymity as a participant by assigning you a pseudonym. All references or identifying information, such as your name and worksite, will be removed. No information from the interview will be shared with or discussed with anyone. Participation in the interview is entirely voluntary, and there are no known or anticipated risks to involvement in this study. You may decline to respond to any questions you do not desire to answer.

**What are the risks and benefits?**

This study involves no known or anticipated risks. There are no known harms or discomforts associated with this phenomenological study research beyond those encountered in regular day-to-day life.

**Subject benefits**

Benefits to you may include a better understanding of your cultural intelligence and an awareness of how cultural intelligence allows you to lead effectively across cultures. However, I cannot guarantee that you will receive any benefits from this research.

## LATINA CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

### **Benefits to others or society**

Benefits to society and others may include a better understanding of how cultural intelligence impacts leadership and the type of training needed for Latinas entering leadership roles.

### **Compensation for participation**

There is no compensation for participation in this phenomenological study.

### **Costs**

There are no costs involved for your participation in this phenomenological study.

### **Counseling**

Due to the sensitive nature of personal information that might be shared, the following information is offered as a resource to all research participants. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Hotline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

### **Confidentiality**

Only the researcher will have access to your study records. Identifying characteristics about you will be changed so that no one reading the study will be able to identify you. All transcriptions for the study will be stored in a secure location. Digital recordings will be kept until transcribed; then, the recordings will be deleted. Any publication of the study will not identify you as a participant. All references or identifying information, such as your worksite, will be removed. When the results of this study are published or discussed at conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity or work location. In instances where participant-specific information is shared, every effort will be made to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, including altering demographic details to disguise the identity of the participants. Identifiers resulting from this research study will not be released without your separate consent and in accordance with the limits required by law.

### **Data storage**

Data storage for this study follows the standard research data protection protocols. The consent and official IRB documentation and communication will be stored for three years, and then appropriately discarded. The researcher will retain all other records from this study for as long as needed. This includes the storage of all data in locked and secure locations. The only documents that contain personal data are the signed consent forms and the name and contact details of the participants. These forms are stored in a locked filing cabinet, separate from all other data. Audio recordings of sessions will be saved to a password-protected external hard drive for the duration of the transcription process and will then be deleted from the drive. All qualitative data collected in this study will be screened for any identifying features before permanent storage, and, if any identifying features are found, this content will be deleted. This data will then be treated as anonymized data. Hard copies of the anonymized data will be stored in locked and secure locations in the researcher's home office. Anonymized data may be used for published output, such as journal papers or book chapters. Participants have the right to request that all or some of their data be destroyed.

**Data Contact and Retention**

The consent and official IRB documentation and communication will be stored for three years, and then appropriately discarded. The researcher will retain all other records from this study for as long as needed.

**Withdrawal or termination from the study and consequences**

The decision of whether to participate in this phenomenological study research is at your discretion. Participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. You may refuse to answer any of the questions you do not wish to answer. You can decline to participate or withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time, and such a decision comes without any negative consequence to you. If you decide to withdraw your participation from this study, all information and data you have provided to me will be destroyed. If you choose to withdraw from this study, you should notify the principal researcher, Melinda Rodriguez, as soon as possible at 512-587-0920 or email at mrodri83@stedwards.edu.

**Do you have any questions?**

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, comments, or concerns related to this research study, the informed consent process, or the way this study is being conducted, contact Dr. Tom Sechrest at thomasls@stedwards.edu or the SEU IRB Administrative Office at IRB@stedwards.edu or 512-416-5838. or 512-416-5838. You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

**Statement of consent:** *Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you will receive a copy of this form, that you are not waiving any legal claims, that you meet the eligibility criteria, and that you are at least 25 years of age.*

**Signature of participant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of investigator:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D

**Interview Protocol**

STUDY: Latina leaders and the impact of cultural intelligence in their leadership

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**Welcome:**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview session. I appreciate your willingness to meet with me and share your leadership experience which will serve to greater a greater understanding of the role that cultural intelligence plays in leadership journey of Latinas. Before we begin the interview, and prior to signing the forms, I would like to review the Informed Consent and Research Participant’s Bill of Rights and answer any questions you might have.

**Purpose of the interview:**

As previously discussed, this interview is meant as a means to collect information for a phenomenological study research of Latina leadership and cultural intelligence. During the interview today, we will talk about your leadership experiences and the context of your life and work. I have provided a copy of the questions I will ask for your reference; however, I may have follow-up questions if clarity is needed. Before we begin, I want to remind your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. At any point throughout the interview, if you would like me to turn off the digital recorder, or end the interview, please tell me.

**Confidentiality:**

Our interview today will be digitally recorded. In addition, I will be taking notes during the interview. The digital recording will then be transcribed and analyzed. All of the information you offer is confidential. Identifying characteristics about you will be changed so that no one reading the phenomenological study would be able to identify you. All transcriptions for the phenomenological study will be put in safekeeping in a locked file cabinet housed in a safe location. Any publication of the phenomenological study will not identify you as a participant. All references or identifying information, such as your name, location, and your worksite, will be removed. Only I will have direct access to the digital recording, transcription, and notes. When the results of this phenomenological study research are published or discussed, no identifying information will be included.

**Informed Consent:**

This consent notice summarizes some information from the Consent to Participate in Research and communicates the procedures. You may not benefit from involvement in this phenomenological study personally; however, the study findings may help other university doctoral programs understand how cultural intelligence contributes to the success of Latina leaders. Procedures in this interview are limited to semi-structured personal interview sessions.

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Please read this form carefully prior to signing it. Participation in the interview is completely voluntary, and there are no known or anticipated risks to involvement in this study. You may decline to respond to any questions that you do not desire to answer. Furthermore, you may withdraw from this research study for any reason, at any time, without any negative consequence to you, by simply notifying me of your decision to do so. If you decide to withdraw your participation from this study, all information and data that you have provided to me will be destroyed. You are not waiving legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this interview.

### **Identification and contact information of the principal investigator:**

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, the details of this study, or any other concerns please contact to Dr. Tom Sechrest at [thomasls@stedwards.edu](mailto:thomasls@stedwards.edu) or the SEU IRB Administrative Office at [IRB@stedwards.edu](mailto:IRB@stedwards.edu) or at 512-416-5838.

### **Timing:**

Our interview today will last approximately 45 minutes in length. Before we get started, do you have any questions about the interview process?

### **Conclusion:**

*Thank you for taking part in this interview session. I appreciate your contributions to my research study and I am grateful that you took the time to share your thoughts, ideas, and experiences with me. I will be integrating the information collected in this interview with information gathered from other data sources such as documents and observations. Finally, should you have any questions please free to ask them at this time.*

## APPENDIX E

**Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS)**

Read each statement and select the response that best describes your capabilities. Select the answer that BEST describes you AS YOU REALLY ARE (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)

<b>CQ factor</b>	<b>Questionnaire items</b>
<b>Metacognitive CQ</b>	
MC1	I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.
MC2	I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.
MC3	I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.
MC4	I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.
<b>Cognitive CQ</b>	
COG1	I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures.
COG2	I know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages.
COG3	I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures.
COG4	I know the marriage systems of other cultures.
COG5	I know the arts and crafts of other cultures.
COG6	I know the rules for expressing nonverbal behaviors in other cultures.
<b>Motivational CQ</b>	
MOT1	I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.
MOT2	I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me.
MOT3	I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.
MOT4	I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.
MOT5	I am confident that I can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture.
<b>Behavioral CQ</b>	
BEH1	I change my verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.
BEH2	I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.
BEH3	I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.
BEH4	I change my nonverbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it.
BEH5	I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.

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Note: Use of this scale granted to academic researchers for research purposes only.

APPENDIX F

**Interview Questions**

1. Background Information-Audio Recorded Question
  - a. Can you tell me a little bit about your background?
  - b. How long have you been in your role as a leader?
  - c. Can you tell me about your current leadership position?
  - d. How did you enter your field?

A definition of cultural intelligence will be provided for the participant

*Definition of Cultural Intelligence*

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is defined as a person's ability to effectively adapt among different cultures (Earley & Ang, 2003). Cultural intelligence includes CQ-drive or what motivates a person to engage with different cultures; CQ Knowledge or the knowledge a person has of different cultural norms; CQ Strategy or the person's ability to make sense of cultural differences; and CQ action or a person's ability to adapt to diverse cultures.

2. CQ Motivation (Drive) –Audio Recorded Question

*Definition of Self-efficacy*

Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as “one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task.” For the purposes of this study, self-efficacy refers to a person's self-confidence in interacting with different cultures.

- a. How do you use self-efficacy to provide effective leadership?
- b. Give me an example of how self-efficacy impacts your leadership effectiveness?
- c. In what ways are you confident when dealing with other cultures?
- d. How does your identity influence your leadership?
- e. Give me an example of how identity impacts your leadership effectiveness?
- f. What interpersonal strategies do you use?
- g. Describe how those strategies assist you in your leadership?
- h. Give me an example of how those strategies impact your leadership effectiveness?
- i. How does being multi-cultural influence your leadership?

## LATINA CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

- j. Give me an example of how multiculturalism impacts your leadership effectiveness?
  - k. How does being a Latina influence your leadership?
  - l. Give me an example of how being a Latina impacts your leadership?
3. CQ Cognition (Knowledge)—Audio Recorded Question
- a. What has been your experience working with other cultures?
  - b. Give me an example of when you worked with other cultures?
  - c. How does this experience impact your leadership?
  - d. How is your attitude toward other cultures influenced?
  - e. How well can you sense when something is going well or something is wrong in a new cultural situation?
  - f. Give me an example of when you sensed something was going right or wrong in a new cultural situation?
4. CQ Metacognition (Strategy)—Audio Recorded Question
- a. What is your definition of cultural awareness?
  - b. How does cultural awareness influence your leadership?
  - c. Give me an example of how your cultural awareness impacts your leadership effectiveness?
  - d. Give me an example of a time when you had to adapt your behavior to a new situation dealing with different cultures (gestures, tone, and posture)?
5. Culturally Intelligent Leadership—Audio Recorded Question
- a. In what ways do you think cultural intelligence influences your success as a leader?
  - b. Give me an example of how cultural intelligence impacts your leadership success?
  - c. Give me an example of how cultural intelligence has impacted your interactions in a business/work setting?

Possible Probes that can be added to any question, for clarification:

1. "Would you expand upon that a bit?"
2. "Do you have more to add?"
3. "What did you mean by....?"
4. "Why do think that was the case?"
5. "Could you please tell me more about...?"
6. "Can you give me an example of ...?"
7. "How did you feel about that?"

APPENDIX G

IRB Approval



Institutional Review Board

April 28, 2022

Protocol ID #0000122

Greetings, Melinda Rodriguez:

Thank you for your recent proposal submission to the St. Edward's University Institutional Review Board. Your research proposal "Latina leadership through a cultural intelligence (CQ) lens, version 2 dated April 26, 2022, has been reviewed and is approved on this date: April 28, 2022. Please use protocol number #0000122 on all consent and recruiting materials, and in future communication with the IRB.

Compliance with 45 CFR 46.115(b) requires that all records relating to IRB approved research be retained for at least 3 years after closure of the project. Records may be preserved in hard-copy, electronic or other media form, and must be accessible for audit purposes. Records for completed projects should be stored in secure locations on campus with the same care used when the project was active.

If you experience unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others, adverse events and/or other problems with the study during the approved period, please note that you will be required to complete the appropriate report form to the IRB within 5 business days of the event. See the link for these forms on the IRB website, on the Forms and Templates page. [1]

When you have completed your research project, please submit the "Study Closure Form", also found on the Forms and Templates page of the IRB website. [1]

We wish you success with your research. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the chair of the IRB or contact [irb@stedwards.edu](mailto:irb@stedwards.edu).

Sincerely,

Laurie Cook Heffron, PhD, LMSW  
Associate Professor & Social Work Program Director  
SEU Institutional Review Board  
E-mail: [lheffron@stedwards.edu](mailto:lheffron@stedwards.edu)

[1] <https://stedwards.edu/institutional-review-board/forms-and-templates>