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Impact of Latina Identity on Leadership Styles

Blanca Ruiz-Williams
National-Louis University

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IMPACT OF LATINA IDENTITY ON LEADERSHIP STYLES

Blanca Ruiz-Williams

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DISSERTATION ORGANIZATION STATEMENT

This document is organized to meet the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation

- Change Leadership Plan

- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation,** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The "program" can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan,** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement with a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document,** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state, or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for

supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane, and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

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ABSTRACT

This program evaluation focuses on the impact of Latina identity on school leadership. I

offer voice to a silenced and minimally recognized group by including my story and the

story of other Latina leaders. Through this ethnographic and case study approach, I

explore the central question: "How does race and gender of Latinas influence their

leadership style?" Being female and Latina, I seek to understand how the pressures of

conforming to traditional White male leadership style impacts Latinas' ability to lead

with authenticity. This research suggests that in order for Latinas to practice authenticity,

we must create an environment in which we embrace and use Latinas' strengths and

experiences. The research on emotional intelligence broadens the perspective on

leadership styles which challenges the notion that we must conform to one style. I

combine emotional intelligence research with research on Latina strengths and offer

recommendations on how organizations can support Latinas and leverage our strengths to

add to an organization's value rather than find ways for Latinas to assimilate.

PREFACE

Since birth, I have experienced being in the "minority." I experienced some challenges growing up as the only girl amongst four male siblings. I then went to a predominantly Black elementary and middle school, followed by a predominantly White high school and college experience. My identity was clear to me; I was a female and Latina who had the luxury of embracing who I was in the comfort of my own home. As I navigated the world outside of my home as a student, a worker, a teacher and a leader, it soon became apparent to me that my identity did not reflect the majority. I struggled with deciding on whether or not I should conform or embrace who I was. As I grew into my leadership role as a principal, it became increasingly challenging to remain true to myself and lead with authenticity, particularly in a world where I felt misunderstood or silenced. I questioned myself repeatedly. Can I lead without giving up the core of who I am? What am I teaching our students if I don't? I began to see a pattern in similar stories as I coached and led other Black and Latina school leaders who struggled to make their voices heard and valued without compromising their style and authenticity. This led me to explore the impact of race and gender on leadership styles. I explored in this research, opportunities for Latinas to lead with authenticity and the need for an understanding and commitment to honoring the strengths of individuals. As I wrote, I incorporated my own voice and the voices and stories of others to convey the importance of honoring individual experience, even within a structured forum. The power of voice matters. We work every day with students whose academic and social lives we impact. The goal of my work is to help educators see the positive power made manifest in creating an

environment that embraces and encourages authenticity for all and the power that is

unleashed when we allow our staff and students to be their highest and fullest selves.

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

My Story, My Voice, Our Dilemma

Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to

translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather

speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers

rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate. I will

no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. I will have my voice: Indian,

Spanish, White. I will have my serpent's tongue—my woman's voice, my sexual

voice, my poet's voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence.

― Gloria E. Anzaldúa (2012)

I struggle as a Latina to find my voice having been born with two *challenges*,

being female and Latina. Over time I discovered that who I was/am impacts my

leadership. I oftentimes have to translate my thoughts, ideas, and actions to conform to

the existing White male dominant structure. In finding the right words or methods of

expression, I often struggle with others misinterpreting my voice. At times, I silence

myself so that I do not have to face criticism or scrutiny. As I began coaching and

talking to other female leaders, I realized that feeling silenced, ashamed, and voiceless is

common amongst other women of color. Many other strong and powerful Latinas share

the same struggle. Through this research work, I will explore how race and gender

impact Latina's leadership style. Although I recognize that these struggles impact other

women of color, I am narrowing my focus to Latinas—a group that has received minimal

attention, especially in the area of school leadership.

Mi Cuento, Mi Madre, Su Voz—My Story, My Mother, Her Voice

I first recognized leadership in education when I was a six-year-old little girl attending a public school in Brooklyn, New York. I loved school and eagerly awoke each morning excited for yet another day. On the last day of school, my 1st grade teacher handed me my report card which listed my grades and my class for next year. I remember receiving "Excellents" across the board; I was indeed excited at what I accomplished. Mami, however, was not and I didn't fully understand why. My mother is a quiet, reticent, religious woman with very little to say. Yet, on that day, she used the power of her voice as she spoke with Ms. Fiducia, my 1st grade teacher, about my class for next year. Despite my high grades, school administrators decided to place me in the lowest tracked class because I was bilingual. Mami demanded to speak to the principal, Mr. Lerner. She showed him my report card with all "Excellents" checked off and the number grades which indicated high percentiles based on tests. She told him that her daughter earned a seat in the Extra Talented class, but instead was placed in the lowest class because of her last name. I cried as I watched my mother use her voice to advocate for my needs; she was upset, so I was upset. I was too young then to truly understand the long-term implications this would have on my life. In September of 2nd grade, I was enrolled in Ms. Harrison's class—2-206 class for the Extra Talented. They had heard my mother speak.

In that moment, I saw the power of voice and the ability to transform silence into power. Having a Spanish-speaking, illiterate, single mother of five on welfare champion for me opened my eyes to education, to intelligence, to opportunities, to advocacy, to equity, to empowerment. My mother, who could not be clearly understood due to

language barriers and a speech impediment, made her presence and cause known. Even though she did not know the basics of math, reading, and writing, she knew education would be the ticket to a better life for her children. She wanted for her children what she did not have readily available to her. Although she quietly accepted many of life's hardships, her children's education was worth fighting for. This would be her reason for exercising her reluctantly used voice. I began to realize the importance of speaking up, advocating, and finding comfort in who I was/am despite my race, class, or gender. Schoolwork became an outlet for me and with my mother's persistence, I used my high grades to speak for me. As I navigated through private school, college, and teaching, I struggled to find my power and my voice and use it properly.

<p style="text-align:center">Soy Mujer—I Am Woman</p>

Flash forward ten years later. I am 16 years old. "You think you know everything with your fancy school. You are a girl; you don't know how to do anything. Your place is in the kitchen." The words stung as I heard my own flesh and blood proclaim this one drunken night. I did not shed a tear in papi's presence. Instead, I defied his machismo and told him, "Get the hell out! You don't live here and your name is not on the lease!" This exchange was painful for many reasons; yet, reality hit. My own father made me realize that my gender was also a potential impediment. I not only contended with my last name denying me access to a better education as a six-year-old, but a decade later my father forced me to question how being a female could potentially have an impact on my success. Others used my existence as I knew it—a Latina, a woman—against me. I compensated by masking pain with strength and hiding my

weakness, especially in the presence of a man. I struggled to expose my genuine self because this, I was told, was not good enough.

Mi Camino—My Walk

As background, I grew up in Brooklyn, New York in a Spanish-speaking Puerto Rican home as the only girl and youngest out of five children. Although my parents were divorced, my father, now a recovering alcoholic, was in and out of our lives. I went to public elementary and middle schools before the Albert G. Oliver program, a high school placement program, placed me in Packer Collegiate Institute, a private independent high school. There I earned high grades despite my difficulty with socializing. I struggled at home with being the only female; except for my mother, I had no other female presence. Each day I traveled 20 minutes on the B26 bus to school where I was one of three Latinos in my graduating class. Contrary to home, I became vocal in school and highlighted my "Latin-ness," which at times got me into trouble with the director of the upper school. When I came home, I did not have to prove my "Latin-ness"; so instead, I focused on my strength and power as a female. I watched sports, learned to break dance, and loved to jump, climb, and run—all things seemingly male. I existed in a ball of confusion, trying to internally make sense of all of my worlds. Oftentimes I lived in extremes. I had to learn to navigate in both arenas; simultaneously, I wrestled to find my authentic self but instead lived in masquerade. This became my experience as a Latina, as a woman, as a student, as a teacher, and as a leader. As a teacher and a leader, I realized that my students and schools reflected me. I did not want to see a false image of myself reflecting back; and so I began my quest to express my genuine self. I still wondered how these

experiences and my identity as a Latina Puerto Rican and woman ultimately impacted my

role as a leader.

Statement of Purpose

After having coached several women of color and reflecting on my own

leadership, I have witnessed a similar pattern of female leaders grappling to project their

authentic selves in their leadership. They too struggle with advocating for themselves

without being judged based on their racial and gender identity. I sought to gather enough

information that answered the central question: "How does race and gender of Latinas

influence their leadership style?" A related sub-question is: "How does this identity

impact Latinas' ability to communicate, motivate, and lead?" In addition, I sought to

uncover how Latinas adapt their leadership styles to conform to the more dominant White

male traditional style of leadership as well as answer the question: "Is there a need to

adapt at the expense of Latinas' authentic voice?" My goal was to not only research the

influence of Latina identity, but to also determine best ways in which we Latinas can

leverage our identity to positively impact student learning and provide additional

opportunities for our growing Latino population.

Why Is This Important to Education?

Even though one can argue that anyone's identity and experience can impact

leadership style, I narrowed my focus to solely Latinas in leadership. Not only has my

lived experience shaped my desire to uncover more, but the lack of available research

suggests the need to examine this focus further. In general, women are underrepresented

in school leadership. Black women and Latinas represent an even smaller number of

school leaders. There is research on women and more specifically, African American

women; however, the amount of literature on Latinas in school leadership is very limited. When researching the percentages of Latinas in leadership, I was not able to surface any results regarding Latina principals and this was after an hour of searching numerous educational research sites. Méndez-Morse (2000) offered two possible reasons for the absence of Latina leadership studies in the research.

> One is the fact that there are small numbers of researchers investigating the lives of Latinas, and even within this group of researchers, the focus is seldom on issues of minority female educational leaders. A second reason is the reality that there are very few Latinas in administrative ranks, especially the superintendency. (p.584)

Méndez-Morse also maintained that the assumption that Latina leaders do not exist stems from three areas: (a) the stereotype of what Latinas can achieve, (b) the lack of public representation of Latinas as leaders, and (c) the limited research on this particular subgroup when research is conducted on minority women. Yet, as Méndez-Morse asserted, this absence does not mean that Latinas do not exist, but rather are unrecognized. This lack of recognition provides further reason for why this research is important; Latinas can no longer be silenced, unrecognized, or misrecognized.

The lack of representation by Latinas in positions of power does not in fact reflect the growing population of Hispanics. Latinos are quickly growing to be the largest minority group in the United States. Humes, Jones, and Ramirez (2011) compiled an overview of Hispanic census data.

> In 2010, there were 50.5 million Hispanics in the United States, composing 16 percent of the total population. Between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic population

grew by 43 percent—rising from 35.3 million in 2000, when this group made up

13 percent of the total population. The Hispanic population increased by 15.2

million between 2000 and 2010, accounting for over half of the 27.3 million

increase in the total population of the United States. (p. 3)

Although the Latino population is growing, the Latino representation in the area of

leadership is not. According to the National Center for Statistics on Education (2009),

the results from the 2007–2008 Schools and Staffing Survey showed that, in public

schools, 81% of principals were non-Hispanic White, 11% were non-Hispanic Black, and

7% were Hispanic. Among private school principals, 87% were non-Hispanic White, 7%

were non-Hispanic Black, and 4% were Hispanic. About 50% of public school principals

and 53% of private school principals were female (Battle & Gruber, 2009). There was no

available data on race and gender combinations; therefore, I was not able to gather

accurate data on the number of Latina principals. Despite progress and the increasing

Hispanic population, the voice and presence of Latinas is still scarce.

Defining Terms

In order to lay the ground work of common understanding, it was essential to

ensure accurate definition of the terms used throughout this research. Chavira-Prado's

(1994) work on Latina leaders stated that Latina identity includes elements of their

ethnicity, class, and gender (p. 244). Additionally, I also incorporated the lived

experiences of the Latinas interviewed in this study. Chavira-Prado further broke down

the concept of ethnicity in two ways:

Ethnicity depends upon at least two criteria. One is ascription, where ethnicity is

assigned; the other is self-identification. The first involves the perceptions,

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attitudes and practices of the society toward particular individuals or groups. I

view these perceptions, attitudes and practices as shaping the ethnic experience by

representing conditions which are outside the control of the individual, or of her

group, and represent a context to which the individual and her ethnic group must

adjust. The second involves the multiple roles, expectations, circumstances,

collective history of one's life, family and community, and the myriad other

factors which a person experiences or learns through enculturation and

socialization. These criteria interact in the relationship between the ethnic

group(s) and the larger society. The relationship is represented in the structure of

society. (p. 245)

In the interviews in this study, I explored how both the perception toward Latinas and

their individual experiences impact leadership styles.

It is also important to clarify the labels Latino and Hispanic. In 1976, the U.S.

Congress passed a law mandating the collection of information about U.S. residents of

Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Central American, South American, and other Spanish-

speaking country origins and labeled this group "Hispanic" (Taylor, Lopez, Martínez, &

Velasco, 2012). Consequently, on census data forms, the term Hispanic includes

"Americans who identify themselves as being of Spanish-speaking background and trace

their origin or descent from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central and South America and

other Spanish-speaking countries" (Passel & Taylor, 2009, p. 2). In 1997, the Office of

Management and Budget (OMB) added the term "Latino" to "Hispanic" (Taylor et al.,

2012). There is ongoing debate on the preferred label based on the government's

imposition of the category. There are multiple ethnicities under the Latino/Hispanic

umbrella based on the country of origin. Even though there are shared experiences and similarities amongst Latinos, cultural differences also exist amongst different ethnicities. Throughout this research, I use the term Latino/Latina because it is what I most closely align with politically. However, I do not oppose others choosing to use the term Hispanic.

The subjects interviewed in this study were a mere snapshot of the Latino mosaic. I focused on their individual lives and upbringing to determine how this impacted their leadership. My aim was to uncover the layers that limit Latinas as well as transcend the borders and boundaries that restrict us. These written words are a homage to my mother and many other women who have been silenced due to their race/ethnicity, gender, experiences, and general identity. I sought to remove the silence that prevents us from true freedom and instead recognize the strength Latinas possess to lead authentically. Rather than playing the victim, this work and the words of those interviewed are empowering words that bring light to the stories of Latina leaders—a group that does in fact exist. Over three decades later, I now duplicate the very example set for me by my mother. I use these pages to project our voices and to express our struggles and hope as women, as Latinas, as survivors of these multiple roles, and as warriors.

SECTION TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Living with her taught me this:

That silence is a thick and dark curtain,

the kind that pulls down over a shop window;

that love is the repercussion of a stone

bouncing off that same window—and that pain

is something you can embrace, like a rag doll

nobody will ask you to share.

— Judith Ortiz-Cofer (2003)

mami did not read or write . . . who would tell her story?

her tales of walking to la factoria with her mami, buscando como darle comida to

her sons . . .

she recounts memories of el perrito blanquito con la mujer blanquita—both of

which served as her angelito when she was in danger . . .

she has cuentos of strength, of triumph, of the work del Dios poderoso

she has a story to tell, but who will hear her?

i hear you, and for you i write

because of you i write

your stories will not be silenced for your stories are you

you will not be silenced . . . jamás

— Blanca Ruiz (juniorette)

In this chapter, I review the literature available for my research on Latina identity and its impact on the leadership style. With limited research available in this area, I broke down my research into three main components—literature on (a) the experiences of African American women and Latinas, (b) leadership styles, and (c) women in leadership. In segmenting the research into these parts, I was able to synthesize and create an overall pattern for my analysis.

<center>Experiences of Latinas and African American Women</center>

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), 59.3% of Latina women were in the labor force as of October 2012. Yet, with such a large presence, I found minimal research focused on Latina leadership in education. At the time of this study, I noticed a similar trend amongst other doctoral students who were also on a quest for more information on the impact of Latina leaders in education. Despite my attempts, I found it difficult to access relevant data points and helpful statistics, even after searching through various databases. This roadblock led me to poke and prod through various dissertations by other Latinas that helped guide me to various texts. Equally helpful was research on African American female leaders who are also underrepresented.

In the book, *Sister Citizen*, Harris-Perry (2011) provided a framework to understand the marginalization and politicization of African American women. Three main stereotypes were the focus of Harris-Perry's research (a) the over-sexualized Jezebel,(b) the nurturing and mothering Mammy, and (c) the angry matriarchal Sapphire. Acknowledging and understanding these stereotypes, Harris-Perry stated, allows us to understand the way in which Black women serve as political actors. Even though my focus is primarily on Latinas in leadership, Harris-Perry's book explored the notions of

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the crooked room, misrecognition, and *shame*. Harris-Perry (2011) asserted that there is

a crooked room in which Black women attempt to stand upright: "Bombarded with

warped images of their humanity, some Black women tilt and bend themselves to fit the

distortion" (p. 29). Similarly, Latinas in educational leadership seek to combat limiting

stereotypes and their distortions while carving their place in an arena in which we are

scarcely present.

Misrecognition, Harris-Perry explained, occurs when individuals are either

recognized for any existing stereotypes, or are not acknowledged for their equal

contribution to society as citizens. Arguably, Harris-Perry (2011) noted:

One's sense of self is connected to the positive accomplishments of other African

Americans, then it is also linked to negative portrayals and stereotypes of race.

The flip side of pride is shame, and like racial pride, racial shame is an important

political emotion. (p. 103)

Shame, Harris-Perry asserted, "urges us to internalize the crooked room" (p. 105). If in

fact women of color lead with pride, they will recognize their strengths. If shame

overpowers their sense of being, women of color feel the need to conform. Harris-Perry

explored how stereotypes limit women of color and, therefore, become roadblocks to

finding their authentic selves.

Latinas also experience parallel struggles to those described by Harris-Perry as

they navigate leadership. Latina school leaders exist, yet are not prioritized in the data;

they too are misrecognized. As Latinas enter the leadership field, they too struggle with

adapting to a crooked room and this impacts their leadership presence and ultimately

style once they enter. Although I do not explore the political involvement of Latinas,

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Harris-Perry's work on *misrecognition, shame,* and *the crooked room* provide a context

for the struggles Latinas also face.

I set out to find information focused on Latinas' strengths. Stereotypes create a

negative portrayal; however, I sought balanced information which encouraged Latinas to

empower themselves by recognizing their assets. In the book, *Latina Power: Using 7*

Strengths You Already Have to Create the Success You Deserve, Nogales (2003)

identified the seven characteristics Latinas naturally embody as:

- *Espíritu Creativo* (Creative Spirit),

- The *Aguantadora's* (Survivor's) Passionate Determination,

- The *Comadre's* (Girlfriend's) Networking Ability,

- The *Diplomática's* (Diplomat's) Discretion,

- The *Atrevida's* (Risktaker's) Courage,

- The *Malabarista's* (Multitasker's) Balance, and

- La *Reina's* (A Queen's) Confidence. (pp. 11–16)

Nogales (2011) pointed out philosopher Carl Jung's theory on "collective

unconscious" which contains mental patterns shared by a group (p. 8). These patterns

then form archetypes and appear as themes in tales and religion. Contrary to Harris-

Perry's emphasis on stereotypes, Nogales expounded on Latinas identifying the

archetypes by focusing on Latinas strengths. These seven strengths are also archetypes

that Latinas embody. Rather than see these as a hindrance, Nogales encouraged women

to use these strengths to actualize our path. Nogales stated, "It struck me that, contrary to

what many people think about Latino culture holding back, the reasons for these

women's successes lay in the very qualities which have their roots in our cultural origins"

(p. 2). Rather than dismiss some of our innate characteristics and diminish the role of

these archetypes, Nogales took on a strengths-based approach and encouraged Latinas to

utilize what we already have as a means of progress, empowerment, and forward

movement. This work is extremely important because many Latinas feel the pressure to

adapt to another style.

Holvino (2010) also encouraged us to positively frame the experiences of Latinas:

"I think it's a cultural thing *and* a woman thing: cultural scripts in Latinas' careers," and

asserted that Latinas live gender and race simultaneously and these cannot be separated.

Holvino argued that Latinas have eight common cultural scripts:

1. *familismo* (close family),

2. *machismo-marianismo* (gender roles),

3. *personalismo* (personal relationships),

4. *simpatía* (positive relationships),

5. *colectivismo* (community),

6. *el presente* (the present time),

7. *respeto* (respect for people based on age, authority, or power), and

8. *espiritualismo* (belief in a higher power).

Cultural scripts are cultural norms and practices articulated by patterns in behaviors and

beliefs. This is different from a stereotype because stereotypes are an external belief and

generalization about others (p. 2). Similar to Nogales' approach, Holvino encouraged

Latinas to not only be aware of their cultural scripts but use them to their advantage, and

suggested that managers become aware of cultural scripts and re-engage in what it means

to be an effective leader. Holvino offered yet another perspective on seeing these traits as assets and encouraging Latinas and leaders to see them as such.

<div align="center">Identity</div>

Even though Harris-Perry and Nogales encourage us to dissect these archetypes and even embrace them, many Latinas struggle with accepting their identity. Latinas must not only make their presence known in the work field, they must also contend with their home life. The Latino culture is stereotypically male dominant, known as machismo (Chavira-Prado, 1994). In exploring Latina identity, Chavira-Prado stated that in many Latino homes, women typically care for the home and the children and men are the providers for the home. "For women, self-sacrifice and virtue are culturally valued" (p. 255). Yet, as Latinos acculturate and adapt, they begin to establish new norms and new habits. As second and third generation Latinos begin to graduate and advance, we see that Latinas enter the workforce. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), the employment rate for Latinas was 52.5% by the end of 2011. Latinas face the challenge of balancing home life with a professional life.

Catalyst is a New York-based advocacy and research group for women in corporate America. In 2003, Catalyst addressed the growing Latina population in their report "Advancing Latinas in the Workplace: What Managers Need to Know" by surveying 342 Latinas. This report offered strategies for managers to assist in empowering and addressing the concerns of the growing Latina workforce. Catalyst (2003) researchers primarily focused on strategies for three key areas: (a) work/family issues, (b) relationships with others in the workplace, and (c) responding to workplace challenges (p. 4). "As diverse as Latinas are, family appears to play an essential role in

their lives. Managers who recognize, understand, and address this role will be better able to recruit, retain, and advance Latinas" (p. 11). In this report, Catalyst researchers highlighted the importance of building relationships within the workforce and providing support through sponsors, role models, and mentors. According to the Catalyst survey, 42% of Latinas identified not having a mentor/sponsor as being a barrier for their advancement and 28% highlighted that a lack of role models from their racial/ethnic identity posed as a challenge (p. 20). Latinas clearly need to feel connected to others at their place of employment. Mentorship appears to be a strong motivating factor to advance and engage Latina leaders.

Latinas also face the challenge of making adjustments to fit in. Nearly one-half of Latinas agree with the statement:

> To fit in, women of my racial/ethnic group must make many adjustments. Like other women of color, most Latina survey respondents report maintaining a conservative style of hair and makeup [87%] percent) and conforming to the corporate norm in dress [84%]. (Catalyst, 2003, p. 24)

In this Catalyst study, some Latinas felt they had to modify their behavior, especially communication styles, and others maintained directness. Whether through physical appearance or conduct, Latinas struggle with adapting to fit into the mainstream; this is our reality. The Catalyst report encouraged addressing the needs of the employees and receiving diversity training. If organizations, companies, and education systems took a strategic approach and put concentrated effort into understanding the concerns and challenges of Latinas, they could better support Latinas in their professional development.

Leadership Styles

There are multiple theories on leadership styles; yet, for the purpose of narrowing these down, I followed Goleman's work on emotional intelligence and leadership styles. Goleman has led a charge on the impact of emotional intelligence on leadership. "Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively" (Goleman, 2000, p. 80). Goleman highlighted four specific capabilities: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skill, and under each of these capabilities, corresponding traits are listed. Goleman pointed to research by the consulting firm Hay/McBer which found six leadership styles that lead to positive results. Goleman pointed out that the key is not embracing each leadership style or all styles at once, but rather, determining which style to use when. According to Goleman (2000), these six leadership styles are:

- coercive leadership: demands compliance;

- authoritative leadership: mobilizes people towards a vision;

- affiliative leadership: creates harmony, bonds and connectivity;

- democratic leadership: builds consensus;

- pacesetting leadership: establishes high expectations and self-guidance; and

- coaching leadership: develops people for the future. (p. 80)

Goleman's study continued to determine how the style impacted the environment. Overall, authoritative leadership yielded the best results with affiliative, democratic, and coaching styles following. Both pacesetting and coercive leadership styles had negative impacts on the work environment. With much practice over time, Goleman believes that we can in fact expand our leadership tool box. The task for leaders is to determine which

style they rely on, gauge its effectiveness, and expand the skills to use other styles. After experimenting with the various styles, leaders become more aware of choosing the necessary style to fit the moment.

Goleman's (2000) theory challenges the dominant paradigm of leadership as authoritative, dictatorial, commandeering ways, and instead encourages us to open ourselves to various leadership styles. This way of thinking opens up opportunities and allows natural relationship builders to lead with their strength. It allows for the visionary to step in. This flexible perspective on leadership styles makes room for what Nogales (2003) identified as the *Comadre's* (Girlfriend's) Networking Ability and the *Diplomática's* (Diplomat's) Discretion as well as the cultural scripts Holvino (2010) identified as *personalismo, simpatía,* and *colectivismo*. If more workforces can accept these various leadership styles, Latinas will have more opportunities to flourish.

<center>Women and Leadership Styles</center>

With men dominating leadership in the workforce, it is important to see if these styles are gendered. Do these researched leadership styles transfer to and apply to women? Women have increasingly earned managerial and leadership positions. Women have had to navigate their way through a male dominant field. According to Rosener (1990), the first group of women entering managerial roles had to abide by the rules (p. 3). Yet, as an increased number of women entered the field, they began to change the rules and instead leveraged their strengths. The nontraditional approach in fact lends itself to their success. Rosener described one such approach as interactive leadership in which leaders solicit feedback from others, share information, and seek to increase the esteem of employees. Rosener referred to a study done by International Women's Forum

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(IWF) in which the organization surveyed men and women with similar responsibilities, age, and educational level to assess their leadership styles, personal characteristics, and work-life situation (p. 5). When describing their leadership styles, more men described their work as "transactional" and used their position as a means of extending power. Women, on the other hand, said their work was "transformational" and used charisma and interpersonal skills (p. 4).

Rosener (1990) argued that women can in fact navigate their way through the traditional approach; yet,

> organizations should expand their definition of effective leadership. If they were to do that, several things might happen, including the disappearance of the glass ceiling and the creation of a wider path for all sorts of executives—men and women—to attain positions of leadership. (p. 10).

Rosener's work encourages us to reshape effective leadership to include an interactive model similar to Goleman's work on emotional intelligence. By bringing light and value to the transformational and emotional side of leadership, opportunities arise for others to lead and for employees to further thrive and develop.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The research highlighted in this study is an indirect path to exploring the impact of Latina identity on leadership styles. However, the research conducted on Latinas' strengths and various leadership styles give me hope that there are opportunities for Latinas to comfortably find their niche in leadership. Holvino (2010) noted that cultural scripts are both a blessing and a challenge.

As gifts, they are unique resources and perspectives that Latina managers bring to

organizations. As challenges, Latina cultural scripts clash with Anglo cultural

scripts and their pervasive unexamined influence as dominant scripts which

determine organizational practices, guidelines for advancement, expectations

about fit, assessments about effectiveness, and so forth. (p. 3)

This is the path Latinas must navigate and it gives rise to pivotal questions. How does

the Latina identity impact our leadership styles? And, more importantly, how can we

leverage our strengths to add to the organizational value rather than find ways to

assimilate or revoke what we naturally know so we can conform? These pieces of

research suggest that there are in fact ways in which Latinas can advocate and embrace

their strengths. If we combine this with efforts by the organization to adopt a broader

view on leadership, we can in fact see further opportunities for Latinas to attain and

remain in leadership.

SECTION THREE: METHODOLOGY

I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining that not only has produced both a

creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the

definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings.

— Gloria E. Anzaldúa (n.d.)

Summary of Approach

The purpose of this research is to determine how Latina identity impacts

leadership styles. I primarily focused on the central question, "How does race and gender

of Latinas influence their leadership style?" Through this central question, I examined

the impact of identity on Latinas' ability to communicate, encourage, and manage. I also

explored the tension between conforming to a traditional leadership style and using

strengths to capture and lead with authenticity.

To begin this research, I spent a significant amount of time looking for data on

Latina leaders. As previously mentioned, there was not much readily available research.

This drove me further to give a voice to Latina leaders who were not acknowledged in

data. I began to piece information together and came upon research done by several

doctoral students who were also researching Latina school leaders. Therefore, I decided

to take on a qualitative approach to get to the root of how the experiences of identified

Latina leaders, and my own experience, shape how we educate, empower, and lead. "The

strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of

how people experience a given research issue" (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, &

Namey, 2005, p. 1) and thereby lends a voice to Latinas' experiences.

I combined aspects of ethnography and case study. Ethnographic research provided me with the opportunity to look deeper into the cultural practices of Latinos (Mertens, 2010). In my research, I looked at the larger context of how ethnicity and gender impact leadership as well as drew inward on my own experiences. I focused on a single group and studied the participants in the context of their leadership to further breathe life into this ethnography (Genzuk, 2003).

Along with ethnography, I also employed the case study approach because I endeavored to analyze Latinas within a leadership context. According to Mertens (2010), "case studies focus on a particular instance (object or case) and reteaching an understanding within a complex context" (p. 233). I took an in-depth look at how identity impacts leadership by interviewing specific Latina leaders. By narrowing this research down to two participants, I explored how the race and gender of these women influenced their experience as a leader. In combining ethnography and case study approach, I provided a larger context supported by individual cases, stories, and experiences, including my own.

As a Latina leader, I recognize that my experiences influence how I work. Although she is not an "official" leader, my mother is a key influencer in who I am and, therefore, I give voice to her stories as well. The interviews conducted were part of the larger goal of giving voice to Latinas who have been omitted from data and literature on leadership. I included quotations from various authors and poets who have found creative avenues to give voice to the Latina experience; these women and their work are equally impactful to the research I conducted.

Readings

I spent a significant amount of time unpacking which leadership styles to target. I anchored some of my understanding using Nogales' (2003) book. In addition, I examined Goleman's (2000) theories on emotional intelligence and the six main leadership styles. I reviewed how Goleman's work linked directly to women, and then made the connection to Latinas. Throughout this process, I made sure that I gave voice to Latinas who identify Latina strengths and styles instead of looking solely at leading trends on leadership styles. Although various leadership styles may transcend beyond race and gender, I ensured that in this research, I recognized the strengths Latinas already bring. They do not have to solely conform, but rather identify similarities to make them contenders in effective leadership.

Participants

As part of this case study approach, I interviewed two Latinas who were involved in school leadership. I struggled with determining which Latina leaders to focus on for this research. I carefully selected a few participants with whom I would move in depth into their experiences, which Patton (1990) identified as purposeful sampling. According to Patton, "The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases for study in depth.* Information-rich cases are those which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (p. 169). Limiting my interviews to these select Latinas allowed me to address my research question in depth. To address the current status of Latinas within the organization, each woman selected for this study maintained a leadership position within a school, although they were not in fact principals. One interviewee represented her leadership team and one

held various leadership positions within education. I focused on their leadership styles, but for the purpose of this study, the specific leadership role was not as important. I decided to choose one Latina in her in her 30s, and one in her 40s. I wanted to narrow the pool but still gather a range of experiences. I chose to interview Latinas representing different countries of origin—Nicaragua and Dominican Republic. By choosing different regions and age ranges, I had the opportunity to explore potential differences as well as any trends that transcended age and ethnic allegiance.

Process of Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to the interviews, participants completed a consent form agreeing to contribute to this research (see Appendix A). I created a set of open-ended interview questions for these participant leaders, and also adjusted questions accordingly, depending on the stories they told (see Appendix). I wanted to make sure to ask my targeted questions on identity, experience, and leadership styles while simultaneously allowing them to fully explain their untold stories. Again, it was important for me to ensure that I gave voice and space for them to share their story because identity is at the core of this work. The questions focused on their upbringing, the impact of their upbringing on their education, their path towards education and leadership, and their experiences as a leader.

I conducted these interviews one-on-one and recorded each conversation with their permission. I recorded their stories so as to capture every word, every pause, and every change in inflection which gave more life to their story. I transcribed each of the interviews. I submitted the transcribed portions to the individual participant to ensure that each was comfortable with the information shared. As part of the data collection, I

also asked participants to submit any reviews or surveys they have regarding their leadership. Not all participants submitted these data points, but I utilized whatever components necessary for the participant. This helped me validate any trends as well as the perception of their leadership.

After transcribing the interviews, I assessed any patterns between their stories and my own. I also connected this to the literature I analyzed. Through an in-depth interview process, the participants gave me insight into their identity, experiences in education, upbringing, experiences as a leader, and their leadership styles. Throughout the process, I also connected elements of my own story to those of these other Latina stories.

In addition, I also use observation as a data collection method (Mertens, 2010). I not only observed the participants, but also the context in which each worked. I gathered information about how they navigated meetings as well as school-based activities so as to gain a greater understanding of their context. Throughout my research, I also used reflective memos such as the journaling of my own experiences. This reflectivity appears throughout my writing and contributes to the ethnographic component of my writing.

Summary

In choosing ethnography and case study as my methodology and research process, I remained true to the core of my purpose. Not only was it important to provide a well-rounded and in-depth approach to exploring how Latina identity impacts leadership styles, but it was also important to give a voice to an unexplored group. By exploring my own story and the story of other Latina leaders, I was able to gather existing patterns that led to future recommendations.

SECTION FOUR: ANALYSIS

The Bridge Poem

— Donna Kate Rushin (1983)

I've had enough

I'm sick of seeing and touching

Both sides of things

Sick of being the damn bridge for everybody

Nobody

Can talk to anybody

Without me Right?

I explain my mother to my father my father to my little sister

My little sister to my brother my brother to the White feminists

The White feminists to the Black church folks the Black church folks

To the Ex-hippies the ex-hippies to the Black separatists the

Black separatists to the artists the artists to my friends' parents . . .

Then

I've got the explain myself

To everybody

I do more translating

Than the Gawdamn U.N.

Forget it

I'm sick of it

I'm sick of filling in your gaps

Sick of being your insurance against

The isolation of your self-imposed limitations

Sick of being the crazy at your holiday dinners

Sick of being the odd one at your Sunday Brunches

Sick of being the sole Black friend to 34 individual white people

Find another connection to the rest of the world

Find something else to make you legitimate

Find some other way to be political and hip

I will not be the bridge to your womanhood

Your manhood

Your human-ness

I'm sick of reminding you not to

Close off too tight for too long

I'm sick of mediating with your worst self

On behalf you your better selves

I am sick

Of having to remind you

To breathe

Before you suffocate

Your own fool self

Forget it

Stretch or drown

Evolve or die

The bridge I must be

Is the bridge to my own power

I must translate

My own fears

Mediate

My own weaknesses

I must be the bridge to nowhere

But my true self

And then

I will be useful

Through this research, I had set out to explore how the Latina identity impacts the leadership styles of school-based leaders. How does the Latina identity impact our ability to communicate, motivate, and lead? In addition, it was important for me to uncover whether or not Latinas adapt leadership styles to conform to the White male dominant structure or whether they embrace their authentic selves. This research posed a challenge because minimal research has been done on the specifics of this topic. Consequently, I began to break down the work into key components: Latinas and their identity, Latinas' strengths, various leadership styles which aligned with Latinas strengths, and research on women and leadership. I interviewed two women in leadership positions within education who were at different stages in their career. I generally trended toward questions about upbringing and leadership styles. They spoke more about their identity as a strength in their work rather than a hindrance. Through this work, I gave voice to stories lived yet frequently untold.

Findings

The Bridge Poem highlighted at the beginning of this chapter represents the struggle many Latinas face as they navigate a world in which they play multiple roles at all times. Although none of the subjects expressed this same "sickness" Rushin speaks of, they do speak of the tension in serving others while simultaneously seeking their own voice and power. For the women interviewed, the leadership experience forced them to reflect on their style. In finding a balance and fulfillment in their work, they seek, in Rushin's words, to "be the bridge to their own true self." In my research and through my interviews, I saw the following common trends and patterns echoed in Rushin's poem:

- o Translating through worlds/navigating between worlds

- o Playing multiple roles

- o The need to produce results so as to "prove myself"

- o Relying on their interpersonal skills and their ability to build relationships

- o Using maternal instincts as a strength

- o Pushing to be authentic selves and advocating for the space for it

These are general patterns that appeared in the participants' stories which also impacted their leadership styles. Evident in these trends, are common cultural scripts Holvino (2010) identified such as family *familismo* (close family), *machismo-marianismo* (gender roles), *personalismo* (personal relationships), *simpatía* (positive relationships), and *colectivismo* (community).

The women I interviewed also recognized these strategies as assets rather than hindrances in their leadership. They also acknowledged that they needed to balance these with the ability to make decisions, lead during a time of chaos/confusion, and take a firm

stance. Similar to Goleman's (2000) stance, they noted the importance of varying their leadership styles to get results. When we leverage and sharpen these instinctive approaches as strengths, we begin to reconsider the notion that stereotypes limit us.

<center>Participants' Backgrounds</center>

For my qualitative data, I surveyed two Latinas in different stages of their career in educational leadership. Their experiences and upbringing helped shape their identity prior to entering leadership. It is important to give a brief overview of their lived experiences. At the time of the interview, Esperanza was in her third year of leadership in her school as a dean of middle school students. As former teachers in Central America, her parents heavily emphasized the importance of education. Yet, after immigrating to the United States, they struggled to make ends meet and could only afford to send their children to local public schools that were overrun by violence and provided minimal instruction. Her schools academically tracked Esperanza and placed her in higher performing classes.

Esperanza

With her parents support, Esperanza made her way to an elite IV league school. While at school, she finally realized class and race difference because she confronted it daily. Esperanza reflected on her feelings at this time:

> It was in college when I felt like I was out of place. My introduction to college was a roommate who made me feel badly. She was a middle class White girl but she who would say subtle things like "I don't think it's your kind of party." And other subtle implications of "you're poor and you don't fit in." I just didn't get anybody. I just didn't hear the sounds of my country—the music, the language. I

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struggled not just academically because my school didn't prepare me, but also socially.

There were minimal visible levels of support from her university or the student body. She joined a Latino organization and became heavily involved in making it more prominent and present on campus. Admittedly, Esperanza made race her battle and ensured that she represent for Latinos. This led Esperanza to go onto education. "I wanted to do something for my community; I still felt tied to the cause of trying to bring other Latinos up." Throughout this journey it was her parents' insistence on education and family which made the difference and still impacts how Esperanza interacts with students and staff.

Fé

Fé (Faith) has worked in the field of education since 1990. She grew up in northern Manhattan as the oldest of five children. Her parents emigrated from the Dominican Republic and wanted to provide educational opportunities for their children. Fé attended parochial school and graduated from a Jesuit university in 1990. After graduating, she secured a teaching position in NYC as a Teach for America Corp Member. After committing three years to her placement school, she attended Columbia University's School of Social Work for graduate studies in Social Work Administration. Fé knew that she was drawn to serve in any capacity in education. She worked for a nonprofit organization which, through the contributions of individual sponsors, provided financial resources and mentoring for public school students placed in parochial high schools. Recognizing her good fortune in gaining opportunities through her parents' *esfuerzos,* Fé committed to providing the same for students. At the time of this study, she

served as the Executive Director of an alumni program for graduates from a group of middle schools in New York City. The program then served over 900 alumni and Fé managed a staff of 17 professionals who provided high school guidance, academic tutoring, paid summer internships, college guidance, counseling, and social activities to the participants of the program.

In their different capacities, both of these Latina leaders were serving our students through both direct work as well as in managerial and supervisory roles. They had to translate vision into action, move a staff towards a common goal, and simultaneously provide support for the students and family. In this study, Esperanza and Fé shared how their upbringing and identity impacted the way in which they were able to lead a group of staff and students.

<center>Impact of Identity on Leadership Styles</center>

Through the interviews and literature research, I sought to identify the leadership styles of Latina leaders and explored how identity impacted their style. The leaders interviewed mentioned that they listened, heard, validated, valued, encouraged, supported and guided others. They took on a caretaker's role to guide their students and staff to produce results. At times, they called on a more maternal instinct to assess the needs of an individual. Rosener (1990) described this style as transformational leadership in which women "ascribe their power to personal characteristics, like charisma, interpersonal skills, hard work, or personal contacts rather than organizational stature" (p. 4). They seek to energize and encourage participation. There are three main ways in which the Latinas participants described their leadership styles: (1) creating community and family, (2) relying on maternal instincts, and (3) exploring and valuing relationships.

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Latinas incorporate these dynamics in their leadership styles to create a balanced approach.

Mi Comunidad, Mi Familia—My Community, My Family

Holvino (2010) posited the script of *colectivismo* in which Latinas prioritize the needs of the group. Esperanza highlighted the sense of community within her classrooms and staff.

> I ran my classroom like a family; the ideals were we are family, we stick together, we will help each other, we will support each other. I am getting to a point where everybody appreciates this idea of family. I treat my teachers here like they are part of family. I can go up to them sincerely and they trust me.

This leadership style allows all participants to build *confianza* (trust) and create an environment in which all encourage and support one another. This also lends itself to what Goleman (2000) described as the affiliative style in which leaders build strong emotional bonds to build trust and loyalty (p. 84).

Soy Madre—I Am Mother

As an extension of this *familia*, the Latinas interviewed in this study felt this natural inclination to assume the role of mother. Fé spoke of taking care of others' children and the staff as if they were her own when she stated, "I am basically taking care of someone's children. In some ways, I am the perfect person to do that; but in some ways, and this is some internal thing, not some self-imposed thing." Esperanza transitioned into her dean of students role after replacing a male staff member. She thought about her approach. At times she thought about her discipline through

"motherly" eyes. To redirect students, Esperanza took on a warm and understanding approach rather than an authoritative and assertive stance.

> There is no confrontation. There is a comfort level I can bring. In many ways, I am unexpected because I can go there, but I hold it to when I need it, which I think most people should do. It is important to have them see me as a strong woman.

Latinas have definitely found benefits in relying on a maternal approach and use it when needed.

Relaciones son Importantes—Relationships Matter

Inherent in building a community and a family is focusing on building relationships. This idea of *personalismo* (Holvino, 2010) breathes life into the ways in which Latinas communicate with staff members. Rather than transactional meetings, the transformational approach builds momentum towards achieving goals by focusing on development (Rosener, 1990). Embedded in the relationship with their staff and students is the idea that the Latina leader's main purpose is to help them develop and progress towards their goals. In a recent survey to gauge the performance of staff, one of Esperanza's staff members highlighted Esperanza's "positivity, level-headedness, taking immediate action to address issues, making others feel appreciated, modeling good practice and mindset." The approach towards staff and student development is not in fact rooted in a dictatorial style, but rather in a collective effort.

Aplicar los Estilos—Applying the Styles

Esperanza's methods aligned with Goleman's mixed model approach on varying leadership styles. Under Goleman's notion of four capabilities—self-awareness, self-

management, social awareness, and social skill—Latinas exhibit traits related to social awareness annopd social skill (Goleman, 2000). They use *service orientation* to meet customer's needs, *empathy* to sense and understand others' perspectives, *influence* to persuade, *communication* to listen and send messages, and *build relationships* and bonds with others. These traits lend themselves to a more affiliative style in which people come first and leaders are more inclusive in their leadership approach. Esperenza utilized this affiliative style as she created a sense of community.

Similarly, with these traits, leaders can use the coaching style in which they seek to develop others by taking a closer look at goals, strengths, and areas of growth (Goleman, 2000). Fé used this coaching style when she checked in with her staff members to measure their progress towards their goals. Fé acknowledged: "I have the capacity to understand people and their motive and play to their strengths and figure out how to support them in their areas of growth." Fé's leadership style supports align to Goleman's notion of coaching style in which leaders "help employees identify unique strengths and weaknesses and help tie them to personal and career aspirations" (p. 87). Leaders who use the coaching style focus on developing individuals towards long-term goals in a supportive manner.

Goleman's (2000), Rosener's (1990), and IWF's research suggested that these transformational traits are effective tools to lead. Holvino (2010) and Nogales (2003) both asserted that these traits are in fact a living component for Latinas—it is part of our identity, our cultural scripts. The voices of the Latinas who participated in this study echo these sentiments. We can incorporate that which we know into our leadership,

rather than solely adjust. Latinas' experiences do in fact positively impact the way in which we can and do lead.

<p style="text-align:center">Impact on Ability to Communicate, Motivate, and Lead</p>

By leveraging their ability to build relationships, Latinas have found ways in which to communicate, motivate, and lead team members to action. We are able to use various leadership styles to encourage and develop our team members to action. Goleman (2000) emphasized the importance of using multiple leadership styles. However, Rosener (1990) pointed out that navigating participatory management is not without its challenges:

> Like most who are familiar with participatory management, these women are
> aware that being inclusive also has its disadvantages. Soliciting ideas and
> information from others takes time, often requires giving up some control, opens
> the door to criticism, and exposes personal and turf conflicts. In addition, asking
> for ideas and information can be interpreted as not having answers. (p. 6).

There needs to be a balance between producing results and building results by using a more transformational approach to leadership.

As leaders, we are accountable for producing results; we have metrics and targets to gauge our performance. When I asked Fé to reflect on how she approached this balance between producing results and building results, she stated:

> Being in this role, I have often said, because of the way we have marketed our
> organization and the mission, I am basically taking care of someone's children.
> In some ways, I am the perfect person to do that. But in some ways, and this is
> some internal thing, not some self-imposed thing, am I managing a process and

helping people to do the work, or am I really resonating with this notion that I am

the mother? I take care of people. I take care of the children. I take care of the

people taking care of children. But to be able to turn that around into it is great to

be able to do both because it is such a unique position, has enabled me to grow

within this role. It is ok if I do it this way; I don't have to do it anybody else's

way . . . I need to learn the rules of engagement on all different levels.

I asked further about these "rules of engagement" and Fé continued:

There are very clear goals. The relationships are really valued, but what is really

rewarded are the numbers and the data. When the numbers went up, I recognized

that immersing myself in the relationships with my students and my teams yielded

results and came when relationships became operationalized.

We must apply the need to produce results without minimizing the way in which we do

our work. Latinas can balance their innate styles—maternal, empathetic, community-

focused—to make decisions and hold others accountable.

We should not misunderstand the transformational style as one in which authority

does not exist. Goleman (2000) asserted that one of the most effective leadership styles

is an authoritative one in which a leader confidently and clearly leads her team to an end

goal with empathy and flexibility. A teacher wrote the following about Esperanza's

leadership style:

You strike the perfect balance of serving as a real role model, friend, and

confidante for our kids and families and being a diligent and stern school

administrator who takes consequences seriously and strongly establishes the

character/culture of our school.

The Latinas interviewed in this study recognized the importance of complementing their transformational style with the ability to lead with clarity and make clear decisions. It is important to note that the presence of empathy and collaboration does not mean an absence of execution and successful implementation. Fé and Esperanza are living examples of this.

Conforming Versus Owning

Translating My Grandfather's House /Traduciendo la casa de mi abuelo

— E .J. Vega (1994)

According to my sketch,	*En mi dibujo*
Rows of lemon & mango	*Arboles de limón y mango*
Trees frame the courtyard	*Enmarcan el patio*
Of grandfather's stone	*De la casa de madera y piedra*
And clapboard home;	*De mi abuelo;*
The shadow of a palomino	*La sombra de un palomino*
Gallops on the lip	*Galopa sobre el labio*
Of the horizon.	*Del horizonte.*
The teacher says	*La maestra dice que*
The house is from	*La casa es de*
Some Zorro	*Alguna película del*
Movie I've seen.	*Zorro que he visto.*
"Ask my mom," I protest.	*"Pregúntele a mi mamá," protesto.*
"She was born there—	*"Ella nació ahí—*
right there on the second floor!"	*¡Ahí mismo en el segundo piso!"*
crossing her arms she moves on.	*Con los brazos cruzados, ella sigue.*
Memories once certain as rivets	*Recuerdos que fueron una vez*
Become confused as awakenings	*Tan seguros como remaches*
In strange places and I question	*Se confunden con despertares*

The house, the horse, the wrens

Perched on the slate roof—

The roof Oscar Jartín

Tumbled from one hot Tuesday,

Installing a new weather vane;

(He broke a shin and two

fingers).

Classmates finish drawings of

N.Y.C

Housing projects on Navy Street.

I draw one too, with wild grass

Rising from the sidewalk cracks

like widows.

In big round letters I title it:

GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE

Beaming the teacher scrawls

An A+ in the corner and tapes

It to the green blackboard.

To the green blackboard.

En sitios extraños y cuestiono

La casa, el caballo, los reyezuelos

El techo del cual Oscar Jartín

Se cayó un martes caluroso

Mientras trataba de instalar

una veleta nueva;

(Se quebró la espinilla y dos dedos).

Mis compañeros de clase terminan sus dibujos de

Nueva York,

Viviendas populares en la calle Navy.

Yo también dibujo uno,

con hierbas silvestres

Que crecen en las veredas rotas

como viudas.

Con letras grandes y redondas lo titulo''

LA CASA DE MI ABUELO

Radiante, la maestra garabatea

Una A+ en el margen y lo pega

En la pizarra verde-la pizarra verde.

This poem by Vega speaks to the experience of having to make choices about conforming to other standards of acceptance. The narrator clearly sees her grandfather's house in her own image; this is her reality. Yet, the teacher does not understand or experience this. In order to gain her acceptance and ultimately a higher grade, she must change the image to fit that of her teacher's. Arguably, Latinas in leadership struggle with this same concept. Must I conform to others' standards of acceptance to achieve it or do I have the space to embrace my culture and identity?

Harris-Perry (2011) explored the idea that women of color have a need to adjust to fit into a warped image of reality. Do Latinas feel the need to stand upright in a crooked room? Stereotypes limit women and Latinas. Méndez-Morse's (2000) research on Latinas and leadership stated that stereotypes prevent Latinas from assuming educational administrative positions and highlighted three general stereotypes which make them unfit to lead: tending to the relationships with the males in her life, assuming domestic roles and responsibilities, and limitations outside of the home to tend to family duties (p. 585). These stereotypes impact Latina performance and at times, limit their presence in the field. Fé echoed these sentiments as she reflected on her upbringing:

> I am going to go back to something my father used to always talk about. . . . I am the oldest of five and am a girl, and there was something my parents instilled in me, especially my father. I was very much raised as a boy . . . as someone who is supposed to be successful, as someone who is supposed to have a career and to conquer the world. And it was clear when my affirmation happened, that in my day-to-day, even after having graduated from college and having a career, it wasn't complete until I was a wife and a mother.

It is important to highlight this struggle Latinas combat before assuming a leadership position. We must navigate through a culture in which our role as mother and wife are primary. It was my father's message to me as I grew up; being a female meant you tended to the home first. Latinas are then conflicted with having to take care of family and their home responsibilities, or taking care of their personal, educational, and professional needs. This struggle does not disappear once Latinas decide to pursue their education and career. Instead, we are left to transfer the struggle to the professional field.

How do Latinas balance the stereotypes with Holvino's notion of cultural scripts? Do Latinas feel the need to adjust and assimilate to conform? Holvino (2010) encouraged Latinas to use biculturalism in which two cultural approaches are combined. In this way, you are not renouncing one culture for another but instead embracing elements of both. Holvino (2010) quoted one Latina as saying:

> I have been in [the USA] for fourteen years and I can be concise, clear; I can get to the point. But I also have that Latino warmth and if I see that you are having a bad day, I'll go and hug you. (p. 4)

We hear these sentiments echoed by the interviewees who participated in this study as well; there is a need to allow both styles to coexist.

<center>Summary</center>

I posed the question of adjusting to the mainstream to Esperanza who immediately equated conformity to how she adapted her style of dress. Esperanza stated that in the beginning, she was "inappropriately" dressed for teaching middle school children. Then she went to the other extreme of completely covering up. Then she "reached this intermediary." She added, "I can be trendy and still represent myself as a

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professional." This shift was symbolic of her transition to a place of acceptance. Esperanza reflected:

> I know that there are moments when I may be going too hard with something but I feel this obligation that voice must be heard. [My voice] has sunken to the netherworld. For many years I was trying to fit in and then I realized, maybe I don't fit in, and maybe that's not what the school needs and maybe that's okay.

Esperanza was coming to a place of self-acceptance, pride, and advocacy for herself and for her community. The notion of standing upright in a crooked room did not "feel right" to her, and she was making adjustments to embrace the culture that lived within. This process of self-discovery and affirmation is a common theme as we seek to acclimate to our environment.

There is a theme of existing tensions as we assume leadership positions, such as speaking formally versus speaking Spanglish, empathizing with others' situations versus holding them accountable without excuses, playing the motherly role versus exercising tough love, tending to our family versus tending to our work. To denounce that which is part of your culture presumes shame (Harris-Perry, 2011). Yet, if we embrace our culture with immense pride, it is empowering.

As Fé progressed in her career, this notion of self-love and self-acceptance crystallized.

> Saying to myself it is okay to be vulnerable. When you can own your own vulnerability it actually makes you more empowered. Because of all the "isms" . . . being a woman, being a person of color, being a brown woman, not being in the language of power whether that is English or the business language, you are

almost taught that it is not okay to be vulnerable. Once you own that and
empower yourself with it, you're not afraid of anything. Being very secure in
what's most important. For me it's my family and my spouse, and after that it is
my birth family. My affirmation is no longer coming from my professional
identity. It's really coming from the security of knowing that I am loved and
knowing that I am supported.

This state of vulnerability led Fé to empowerment and pride.

When we begin to accept these experiences that shape our identity—Latina,
woman, educator, working class member, wife, mother—we pave the way for pride and
acceptance in our personal and professional lives. Nogales (2003) encouraged us to look
at our strengths and embrace the elements of being a Latina. Permission to do that is
empowering. According to Nogales,

Latina Power isn't about changing who you are; it's about acknowledging and
developing an inherited power you already have. You were bequeathed this
power by the women around you—members of your family, extended family, and
community—as well as your female ancestors. These became *creativas,*
aguantadoras, comadres, diplomáticas, atrevidas, malabaristas and *reinas*
because the cultural and political environments of which they were part of
demanded those qualities of them. As their cultural daughter you have inherited
their courage, creativity, passionate determination, and skillful sense of balance.
You carry within you their confidence, diplomacy, and connection to other
women. (p. 217)

As the participants in this study noted, it is a challenge; yet, it is one that yields amazing results when we tap in and allow for the authentic side to shine. Fé confided to me: "You can't wait for permission or affirmation; we have to do it." By honoring and celebrating the strengths in our identity and richness in our culture, we are in fact giving voice to our experience and identity. This voice then translates to our leadership style and it impacts the way in which we communicate and lead.

SECTION FIVE: SUMMARY

I write for those women who do not speak, for those who do not have a voice

because they were so terrified, because we are taught to respect fear more than

ourselves. We've been taught that silence would save us, but it won't.

─ Audre Lorde (n.d.)

I had a moment as I thought about doctoral work with two kids under three . . .

But I will do it . . . I can do it . . . And it will be important to Xiomara's future as a

Black Latina (however she identifies herself).

─ Blanca Ruiz: Journal entry 10/12/12

Interpretation of Findings

Having a lived experience in which I struggled to find my authentic leadership

style, I embarked on a research study in which I explored how the Latina identity impacts

leadership styles. I recognize that for me, my challenges related to my experience, but

also to my identity as a woman and as a Latina. The way in which my mother raised me

and my belief systems also impacted me. Over the years, I began to gain comfort with

leading in the way in which I knew best—through relationships, through collaboration,

and through encouragement. Oftentimes, as a principal, I questioned this approach. I

also made tough decisions when needed. I made unpopular decisions with the best

interest of students, families, and staff in mind. I had to mobilize, invest, and rally others

behind these decisions. Yet, I often wondered, should I not be more forceful and

authoritative? This led to my question: How does the Latina identity impact leadership

styles? Do we begin to conform to a general standard and compromise our authentic

self? As I talked with other Latina leaders, I found that I was not alone. The impact of

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the research work on emotional intelligence in which individuals can lead in a non-traditional dictatorial manner also helped with creating a space in which Latinas can effectively lead with their strengths in mind. It is this shift to using what is innate and within that allows Latinas to comfortably lead and thereby yield positive results.

The absence of research on Latinas in leadership does not mean that we are nonexistent. The Latino population is growing as is the number of Latinas in the workforce. More researchers are beginning to explore the presence of Latinas in leadership, which is promising. In addition, the exploration of various leadership styles, including the work on emotional intelligence, allows for various leaders to comfortably emerge. Rosener (1990) and study participants Fé and Esperanza all spoke of the need to produce and counterbalance with directness and direction-setting. This creates a dynamic picture of leadership and includes the multiple styles Goleman (2000) highlighted, including authoritative style, affiliative style, democratic style, and coaching style.

As we see an increase in Latinas in leadership positions within schools, the permission and option to lead in a way that is more instinctual creates an environment in which leaders can lead with greater ease. The Latinas interviewed in this study and the research on women suggests that Latinas lean on their ability to build and leverage relationships, and encourage and support others as a leadership style. By focusing on their innate strengths and building upon them, Latinas can explore leadership that is more authentic to their style

<div align="center">Implications for Social Change</div>

Although Latinas suffer from misrecognition (Harris-Perry, 2010) and are absent from many data points, this does not mean that there are not qualified and successful

Latinas in leadership positions within education. In fact, the Latino population is increasingly growing. "According to the 2010 Census, 308.7 million people resided in the United States on April 1, 2010, of which 50.5 million, or 16%, were of Hispanic or Latino origin. The Hispanic population increased from 35.3 million in 2000 when this group made up 13% of the total population" (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011, p. 2). Our hope is that we will have our students go to high school, graduate, and then go onto and graduate from college. Inevitably, some will return to education to teach or lead. How can we begin to create a space for them to teach and lead using the very strengths they have relied on to succeed? This is the larger challenge. One of the motivational aims of this study is that other researchers will extend this research to not only recognize that Latina leaders exist, but they also bring with them a set of strengths to lead and manage a team of people. If we in fact begin to create this comfortable space as the norm, we may see an increase in Latinas in leadership.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

This study is the beginning of ongoing research on how to recognize Latina leadership within schools. Latinas are present to lead; our identity gives us the foundational tools to develop into promising and successful leaders. There are deliberate steps that organizations and districts must take to pave the way for Latinas to lead openly and with ease. I make five recommendations for shifts in how to encourage and acknowledge Latina leadership:

1. Expand our idea of leadership to include transformational and interactive leadership.
2. Celebrate authenticity.

3. Create and seek data on Latina leaders and make it available.

4. Create mentorship and fellowship opportunities for Latina leaders.

5. Take on a strengths-based approach.

While these recommendations are not new, they do encourage a more deliberate approach to how we are facilitating the development and recognition of Latinas.

The first recommendation is to embrace the broader notion of leadership styles. By expanding our perspective on what characteristics and styles a leader should adopt, we increase the applicant pool of leaders. Holvino (2010) encouraged us to be more inclusive and flexible with our leadership models to include the cultural scripts of *personalismo, colectivismo* and *simpatia*.

Second, we must create an environment where authenticity is celebrated rather than thwarted (Catalyst, 2003). By expanding our lenses, we are not asking Latinas to assimilate and adjust, but rather respecting and honoring differences.

Third, we must seek and find the data on Latina leaders. We can no longer allow a group to remain silenced and unrecognized. With the growing Latina population and women in education, we can certainly find and train leaders. It is also important to consciously recognize the presence of Latinas in the data on national statistics sites.

The fourth recommendation is to encourage a community of mentorship and fellowship amongst Latinas. Latinas find strength in community and relationship. As recommended by in the research conducted by Catalyst (2003) on developing Latinas in the workforce, seeking mentors will help Latinas stay connected and feel supported as leaders.

Fifth, schools and organizations can refocus development using a strengths-based approach. As schools, districts, and organizations focus on success, we often look at areas in which we need to improve. We must begin to look at the strengths-based approach which helps people focus on what they do best (Rath, 2007). According to Rath, focusing on strengths boosts confidence, fulfillment, and general kindness towards others. If Latinas embrace the strengths Nogales (2003) highlighted and the scripts Holvino (2010) emphasized, we have a greater chance of succeeding, feeling included, and establishing our norm. An inherent shift is the way in which we recognize the strengths of people. As organizational leaders, our job is to coach and develop people to a higher self. Part of this process is recognizing the strengths they already have and helping to build upon and use them as an advantage.

Qualitative Summary

I began this research because there was a need. I became frustrated by the limited amount of information available on Latina leaders; however, this further fueled the need to do this research. I did not follow direct paths. There were various pieces of research focusing on Latino students, Latinos in education, and the growing presence of Latinas in educational leadership. Alongside these research areas, there were various pieces of research focusing on a newer approach to leadership. I decided to marry multiple paths to get to how Latina identity impacts leadership styles. I felt further enriched as I listened to the stories told as they echoed sentiments untold. I knew this had to be a focus. Admittedly, this leads to a bias; I am speaking my story and validating it through evidence and research.

I narrowed my research down to emotional intelligence because I knew this would allow for an entry point in a new and growingly popular leadership style. As I interviewed the participants, I made sure to ask more general questions about educational background and leadership styles as well as probing questions on their statements. The commonalities between their experiences wove together and themes of *familia*, maternal instincts, *personalismo*/building relationships, and *comunidad*/community emerged. These comprise the elements of the Latina identity, and our leaders embrace it and use it.

<center>Limitations</center>

This research has limitations because I narrowed my lenses and targeted the leadership styles of Latinas and the impact of their experience. I narrowed my interviews and, therefore, have a limited perspective. There may be regional differences for Latinas depending on the state in which they serve. I also did not fully explore how others felt about the participants' leadership. In an attempt to capture their voice, I was only able to portray the self-reflection piece and not fully explore the impact on others. For the purpose of narrowing my lenses, I focused on Goleman's theory on emotional intelligence which lent itself to the leadership styles Latinas seemed to innately possess.

<center>Choice of Voice</center>

It is important to note that I made a purposeful choice to give the Latina experience through the Spanish language and through storytelling. I intentionally opted to incorporate an unconventional form of writing in this research to further extend this notion of pride in the Latino/Latina voice. I wanted to keep my commitment to the experiences and sentiments Esperanza, Fé, and I have experienced. Like the delicate balance the interviewers spoke of, I too have and continue to straddle multiple worlds,

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even when considering writing for a larger audience. Even though I made a conscious decision to vacillate between Spanish and English, it was also a struggle. Will my writing and presentation be judged differently? Should I stick with all conventions and navigate that path with great care? Or, should I honor elements of culture to truly express the ideas I experience and am researching? I wanted to respect the necessary conventions for our program evaluation while explicitly remaining grounded in my authenticity, my experience, *mi vida* (my life) because this too is our reality. My writing became another avenue to speak to this concept of straddling multiple worlds.

Conclusion

Women are increasing their presence in leadership. In my research work, I wanted to explore the added layer of the impact of race/ethnicity on leadership styles. My goal for this work is to give further voice to a silenced group who suffers from misrecognition and shame (Harris-Perry, 2011), not because we are not present, but rather we are not spoken about or researched. I watched as my mother literally and figuratively struggled to make her voice heard and vowed that I would do my part to ensure that I made my voice heard. Latinas are present and engaged in the education of our children and the leadership of adults. As we recognize our growing numbers, it is also important for us to focus on making a commitment to ensure success and accessibility for Latinas in leadership positions.

By leveraging and accessing our strengths, balancing our approach to leadership, and reframing what is in fact effective leadership to include various styles, we are indeed allowing for a silenced group to begin gaining a voice. Esperanza ended our interview with the following:

I looked around and thought, "Why am one of six Latinas in this leadership

program?' It was so heartbreaking. I was really struggling with that. I realized

that I just need to speak up and stop hiding who you are. This is who you are and

it's a beautiful thing. This is my real experience. I do feel isolated at times. But

more reason to be here and can only imagine how our kids feel not to have that as

adults.

This is our reality; the reality for the 23.9% Latino students enrolled in our public schools

in pre-kindergarten–12th grade (Fry & Lopez, 2012). We must overcome this tradition of

silence and embrace the beauty and authenticity of who we are as a people, which gives

permission for our students to do the same. There is strength and power in our identity as

Latina leaders—we must find a way to make a standard.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

I consent to participate in a research study conducted by Blanca Ruiz, doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Department at National Louis University, Chicago, Illinois. The study is entitled "Impact of Latina identity on Leadership Styles" and will take place from September 2012 through August 2013.

This study will focus on gaining insights regarding what impact identity has on Latinas and African American women's leadership styles, and how this impacts student achievement and overall longevity of these subjects.

I understand that my participation will consist of an audiotaped interview with the researcher approximately one hour in length at a time and location convenient to me. In addition, I will participate in focus groups with peers for approximately 1–2 hours based on our collective schedule.

I understand that I am being invited to participate in this study to assist in the research on ways in which my identity impacts my leadership style.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without penalty until the completion of the research project. My identity will be kept confidential by the researcher and will not be attached to the data. Only the researcher will have access to all transcripts, audiotaped recordings, field notes from the interviews and classroom observations, as well as written classroom assignments and these will be secured.

I understand that the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, and that my identity will in no way be revealed.

In the event I have questions or require additional information I may contact the researcher Blanca Ruiz; ****@****.***; cell (***) ***-****.

_____
Participant Name (Please Print)

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date

_____   _____
Researcher Signature   Date

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

1. What is your story?

2. What is effective leadership?

3. What do you love about leadership?

4. What are your challenges in leadership?

5. How would you define your leadership style? How would your boss define your leadership style? How would your direct reports define your leadership style?

6. How would you define identity? How do you define your identity?

7. Has your gender impacted leadership? If so, how?

8. Has your race impacted leadership? If so, how?

9. Do you feel any limitations based on your gender? Race?

10. How does working in a white male dominant impact your leadership?

11. Do you feel like you have to be a chameleon and straddle many lines?

12. Talk about a time when you have had to compromise yourself/assimilate as an educator/leader.