2019

Latina College Student Leadership Development at a Historically White College/university

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

LATINA COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AT A
HISTORICALLY WHITE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BY

KRISTINA C. ALCOZER GARCIA

CHICAGO, IL

MAY 2019
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, thank you to the Latina college students who participated in this study. These women graciously offered their time, dedication, and insights as a way to shed light on their own experiences and improve conditions for future Latinas. I offer my sincere gratitude and share that I took the responsibility of sharing their stories seriously throughout this work.

Thank you to my friends who have served as an unrelenting support throughout this academic journey. In particular, thank you to Veronica Rodriguez for answering my stressed phone calls during her commutes and being a thoughtful and compassionate friend and colleague. I would also like to recognize the women of Gamma Phi Omega International Sorority, Incorporated. Thank you to the women who have become my sisters and supported me throughout this process. Additionally, thank you to the women whom I have yet to meet but I know are doing incredible work on their campuses. A tremendous thank you to my colleague and line sister Cecilia Macias for your laughter, care, and positivity throughout this process.

With regard to my Loyola community, I have been fortunate to receive unimaginable support throughout this experience. Thank you to my dissertation team: my dissertation chair Dr. Bridget T. Kelly, and committee members Dra. Aurora Chang and Dra. Adele Lozano. Your support, advice, and guidance throughout this process helped me to grow as a scholar and I am so thankful to have had such inspiring women as supportive figures on this journey. Thank you to my cohort-mates and honorary cousins Joliana Yee and Carlos Ballinas. I could not imagine
this road without you. Thank you to Dr. Hiram Ramirez and Adam Patricoski, my mates from another cohort, who have consistently listened, supported, and laughed throughout this experience. And a special thank you to Dr. John P. Dugan. Thank you for believing in me and being among the first voices to encourage me to consider a future in research and doctoral study.

Additionally, I would like to thank my family. Words cannot accurately capture the amount of love and gratitude I feel for my immediate and extended family, all of whom offered their support in a variety of ways. Thank you to my mother Anita V. Alcozer who has been and continues to be an inspiration and support every day. Thank you to my sister Rosalinda Garcia and brother Hector Sanchez for keeping me grounded. Thank you to my husband Jonathan Schultz for being a patient and compassionate partner throughout the entirety of this process. I would like to thank my extended family and – in particular, my tias Dora Alcozer and Sandra Alcozer. You two have served as an incredible source of strength and inspiration and I thank you for loving me. I also wish to recognize the presence and support of my father, Carlos Santiago Garcia. Though my father is no longer with us, I undeniably sensed his love and presence throughout this process. And last but not least, a tremendous thank you to my grandparents, Alfredo and Guadalupe Alcozer. I recognize that the love and support I experienced throughout my life grew from the foundation they built. In moments of stress, doubt, and denial, I could feel the powerful love and support of my ancestors. Gracias por todo su apoyo.
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation study contributes to the dearth of research examining the leadership development of Latina college students. Using critical race feminism (CRF) as a guiding framework, this study centers the experiences of Latina college students, exploring how dominant cultural values, Latinx cultural values, and the context of the collegiate environment influence how this population experiences leadership development. Utilizing a qualitative research design, participants shared stories and insights related to how they conceptualized and experienced leadership development in the context of a historically White college/university. The data indicates that Latina college students experience leadership as a constant negotiation of dominant cultural values, institutional and peer ostracism, gender norms, and various states of visibility and invisibility within higher education. This study offers a foundational addition to leadership discourse, presenting the experiences of Latina college students as unique, intersectional, and multi-faceted.
She wakes early in the morning, the sun creeping through her weathered window at a snail’s pace. Her bones ache as she rocks forward, nestling her sore feet into the chanclas placed beside her bed. Her husband is asleep but will be up shortly as he prepares for his day. The woman hears the footsteps of other family members stirring throughout the house. Her daughter. Her nephews. Her grandchildren. A collection of people who are there because she is.

She quietly walks to the restroom, her steps cautious and measured. She begins her morning routine. Shower. Lotion. Medication. Teeth. She continues to the family room, stepping over drowsy grandchildren lazily splayed on the carpet. She wishes them good morning and reminds them not to put their feet on the couch. She enters the kitchen and prepares coffee. Soon she is joined by one of the youngest of her lineage - a 5-year-old girl who cannot stay still. The woman tells her to put push her bangs out of her eyes and hands her a loose hair tie abandoned on a nearby counter. The girl shrugs and the woman deftly clasps a clump of hair and makes a chongo, creating a small sprout of dark hair from her forehead. This is second
nature. She leans in close to the tiny human being and says: “An honest person shows their eyes. You are bien educada. Show them.”

The morning continues. The little girl enters and exits the room repeatedly. Eventually she remains at the breakfast table with the promise of food. The woman begins breakfast and soon the smell of frijoles, huevos, tortillas, and coffee fill the small home. She simultaneously starts a load of laundry and reviews her makeshift schedule near the fridge. She makes notes of repairs that need to be completed by her husband for clients and adds to her list of groceries and supplies for the week. She stares at her schedule. She used the same series of lines, lists, and notes when she was a young migrant worker. Her handwriting has not changed since her last official day in school as a third grader but the marks of her pen are different. They are less steady but still careful. They show her years. Years that include manual labor, marriage, motherhood, death, and loss.

She sighs and turns back toward the table. She prepares a small plate of food for the little one and finally sits down across from her. The girl picks at the food and the woman smiles. Soon her quiet kitchen bustles with people. The people who are there because she is. She surveys her small kitchen and smiles. This is the life she has built.

This is a familiar scene. A morning in a home full of people. A family elder wakes, prepares breakfast, and tends to a grandchild. This is how I first came to know and encounter leadership as a child - the presence of women who shared knowledge and care in everyday moments. However, the notion of leadership is often laced with expectations of grandeur. The belief that leaders and leadership are reserved for the chosen few permeates depictions of leadership in politics, film, and television. As a Latina, scholar, and higher education professional, I admit that these expectations were deeply embedded in my own upbringing and
have continued into my educational and professional navigation of higher education. Yet, it is not until adulthood that I have grown to personally and professionally consider the role of leadership in higher education and - in particular - the experiences of college students.

Often visible in the mission statements for many higher education institutions is the goal of leadership development. Colleges and universities around the United States are entrusted with preparing the leaders of tomorrow. Though this goal is steeped in ambiguity with regard as to how students will be developed and for what purpose, understanding whom universities aim to support - and how - is crucial. The study of leadership is interdisciplinary in nature and has gained prominence in associated professional fields including management and education (Ospina & Foldy, 2009). This linking of leadership development and the workforce is telling as it situates the study of leadership as a matter of skill development for future professionals. In a study of U.S. employers appraising workforce readiness of U.S. graduates, 68.4% of respondents stated that four-year institutions should be responsible for ensuring graduates acquire the appropriate applied skills and basic knowledge needed for their entry into the workforce (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006). This question of practicality urges institutions to work backward and examine leadership development not just in terms of “how” but also of “whom.”

Furthermore, the importance of leadership development for college graduates urges colleges and universities to consider how the changing demographic of college students can influence how leadership development is approached. As of 2011, Latinx students comprised the highest minoritized population within higher education (Fry & Lopez, 2012). Understanding how this population experiences leadership development is key to supporting colleges and universities in completing their missions: preparing the leaders of tomorrow. Taking this exploration one step further, there is a particular segment of the Latinx population that warrants
attention: Latinas. When examining degree conferrals of Latinx students in 2013, females account for 62% of degrees conferred at two-year institutions and 60% of degrees conferred at four-year institutions (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). However, there is a dearth of research examining how Latinas perceive and develop leadership in college (Onorato & Musoba, 2015). This desert of research in the presence of rising numbers of Latina college students calls us to consider how factors such as dominant cultural values, Latinx cultural values, and the collegiate climate influence Latinas’ leadership development.

Fueled by this curiosity, I explored how dominant cultural values interact with Latina college students’ values and influence their leadership development. This study is centered on the experiences of Latina college students and explored how this population experiences leadership development at a historically White college/university (HWCU). Throughout this chapter, I present an outline of this study’s components. I begin by defining key terminology guiding this work and then offer a problem statement providing a rationale for this inquiry. I then outline this study’s key research questions and present the significance of this exploration. Finally, I conclude by providing an overview of how this dissertation is organized.

**Terminology**

Throughout this dissertation, I utilize multiple terms that warrant definition: culture, Latinx cultural values, leadership theory, leadership development, and leadership research. Culture refers to the shared experience of human beings in a particular environment (Triandis, 1995). According to Probst, Carenevale, and Triandis (1999), culture helps us to identify behaviors that “are desirable or prescribed for members of the culture (norms) and for individuals in the social structure (roles), as well as the important goals and principles in one’s life (values)” (p. 174). Cultural values are the characteristics and conditions that reflect what a
particular group deems important (Hofstede, 1980). These values often reflect desired patterns of behavior for members of a particular group and signal desired outcomes of decision-making (Hofstede, 1980).

With regard to cultural values reflected in leadership research, I distinguish between two terms embedded within the study of leadership: leadership theory and leadership development. According to Bass (2008), leadership theory reflects both the formal and informal ventures to explain the experience of leadership. Leadership development involves improving “the capacity of teams and organizations to engage successfully in leadership tasks” (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009, p. 299). Though the aim of this larger work is to explore Latina college students’ leadership development, exploring theory is imperative. According to Dugan (2017), “how people approach the development of leadership is a function of their formal and informal theoretical understandings of the construct” (p. 12). In order to develop a foundational understanding of the approaches undergirding leadership development practices, I center this work’s focus on leadership theory. In doing so, I utilize the term leadership research when referring to literature exploring the study of leadership theories, models, and approaches. My aim in focusing on leadership research in this manner is to identify the cultural values this body of research deems admirable, necessary, and worthy of reproduction.

Throughout this work, I utilize two key identifiers that merit definition: Latinx and historically White college/university (HWCU). Much of existing research utilizes the term “Latino” and “Latino/a” when referring to individuals of Latin American descent. The identifier Latinx grew in popularity in 2004 in online queer communities as a way to recognize non-binary gender identities within the community (Ramirez & Blay, 2017). Throughout this work, I opted to utilize the identifier “Latinx” when referring to individuals of Latin American descent. I will
then shift to the identifier “Latina” when referring to research specific to individuals who identify as women and “Latino” when addressing literature specific to participants who identify as men. With regard to the term historically White college/university (HWCU), I will utilize this term when referring to colleges and universities where White-identified students make up the racial majority of the student population. This decision speaks to the pervasiveness of Whiteness within the origins of higher educations as colleges and universities were originally developed to serve White, male students (Gloria & Pope-Davis, 1997). As this study aims to center the experiences of Latina college students and explore the commonly ingrained yet rarely labeled assumptions of leadership research, by using HWCU, I aim to continuously acknowledge the historical pervasiveness within the institutions Latina college students attend. When referencing literature that directly utilizes the term predominantly White institution (PWI), I adopt the same identifier in order to honor the intention and usage of the term within their work. However, for all other references to colleges and universities where White-identified students make up the racial majority of enrollment, I utilize HWCU.

**Problem Statement**

As institutions of higher education continue to support leadership education, it is important to consider how approaches to leadership education may differ for various student populations. Although research on college student leadership development has increased in visibility since the 1990’s (Dugan & Komives, 2007), literature exploring the leadership experiences of Latina college students remains limited (Lozano, 2015). This narrow body of research coupled with the diverse approaches to college leadership programs paints an unclear picture of leadership development for Latina college students. Furthermore, this state of research in light of increasing numbers poses the question of whether traditional understandings of
leadership education often undergirding many college leadership programs, are sufficient to address the leadership development needs of Latina college students.

My passion for this topic stems from my own experiences as a leadership educator. My time as a program coordinator at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) proved to be an eye-opening experience. I worked directly with student organizations and students within our structured leadership program. Despite the proximity of these functional areas, I found little overlap between these two student populations. Though both groups developed similar skills, Latinas who were members of student organizations were reluctant to associate themselves with the title of “leader.” In my experience, students within the formalized leadership program more easily acknowledged their experiences as linked to leadership. This observation prompted me to seek out scholarly literature exploring this unique intersection of identity development and leadership development and to consider the values that inform leadership development across different populations.

In this search, I observed that available research on the leadership development experiences of Latina college students was incredibly limited. In reviewing our formalized leadership development program, I found that I had little empirical guidance as to how to address the observable gap in the experience we were providing the wider student population and the leadership development deemed valuable and accessible by Latina college students. After accepting a new role at a HWCU, I observed the experiences of Latina college students to exist in an entirely different context compared to what I was accustomed. For most of my professional and educational career, I had existed in spaces where I was rarely the only Latina or woman of color in a given meeting, lounge, or classroom. However, as a new staff member at a HWCU, the lack of shared cultural identity with other students and staff was palpable. This
prompted me to reflect on my earlier dilemma surrounding leadership research and how institutions can consider and reconsider how they serve students from underrepresented populations. The noted gap I observed between leadership development practices and Latina college students at an HSI indicated a pervasive tension between how leadership development was understood by practitioners and Latina college students alike. Applying this observation to an environment where Latina college students comprised an even smaller percentage signaled a potential disconnect in service to Latinas - in an environment where feelings of isolation are likely.

Additionally, my decision to center this study in the context of a HWCU stemmed from the historical underpinnings of colleges and universities in the United States. Colleges and universities within the United States were initially formed to serve White men (Gloria & Pope-Davis, 1997). However, who is going to college is steadily changing. According to the Hispanic Association of College and Universities (HACU), as of 2016 there were reportedly a total of 472 4-year colleges and universities with the HSI designation (HACU, 2017). Furthermore, an additional 323 institutions are designated as “emerging” HSIs with their populations of Latinx college students ranging between 15-20% (HACU, 2017). The growing number of Latinx students entering colleges and universities is promising but may also indicate that these students are entering an educational environment not built with them in mind. The understanding of Latinx students entering spaces where they are still a minority coupled with the lack of available research on the experiences of Latina college students marks the study of Latinas at HWCUs as an ideal starting point for reimagining how colleges and universities can foster the leadership development of this population. Sustained by this knowledge, I delved into this underexplored
terrain and garnered insight into the assumptions guiding larger leadership research and how this population experiences leadership development.

**Research Questions**

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do Latina college students at a HWCU define and interpret leadership development?
   a. How do dominant cultural values and Latinx cultural values influence Latina college students’ leadership development?
   b. How does the college environment influence Latina college students’ leadership development?

**Significance**

As previously shared, Latina college students account for a majority of degree conferrals among Latinx-identified college students within higher education (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). Despite Latinx being the largest minoritized population within colleges and universities in the United States (Fry & Lopez, 2012), there is minimal research exploring Latinx college students’ leadership development (Lozano, 2015) and an even smaller segment of research exploring Latina college students’ leadership development (Lozano, 2015; Onorato & Musoba, 2015). This lack of leadership development literature paired with the aim of higher education to support leadership development suggests a gap in empirical research that can guide leadership development practices within colleges and universities.

In addition to this lack of focus on Latina college students, expectations surrounding leadership development from U.S. employers suggests a need for thorough consideration. In a study of 400 U.S. employers gauging college graduates’ readiness for the workforce, employers
cited skills such as professionalism, communication, teamwork, and critical thinking as significantly important for graduates to succeed in the professional workplace (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006). A key finding of this study was that employers appraised two and four-year college graduates as deficient in the applied skill of “leadership,” lacking interpersonal skills and the ability to support and utilize others’ strengths to “achieve common goals” (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006, p. 16). However, in a study examining the reasons students pursue a college degree, researchers found that college students rank job acquisition, increased earning potential, professional preparedness, and specialized skill procurement as highly important in their decision (Cipriano & Riccardi, 2016). These findings by employers are troubling as they signal a significant disconnect between the reasons students attend college and the eventual outcomes of that education.

This study aims to address this gap in college student leadership development literature by giving language to the cultural values informing leadership development practices within colleges and universities. By centering the experiences of Latina college students, this study contributes to the dearth of research dedicated to Latina college students’ leadership development - a population that continues to enroll in colleges and universities in growing numbers.

**Organization of Dissertation**

In acknowledging the lack of examination of the experiences of Latinx individuals in the study of leadership development, I have included key family photos at the start of each chapter of this dissertation. This inclusion of the faces of my family is a step to further insert the experiences and perspectives of minoritized individuals in academic leadership discourse. Though this study and its findings already aim to contribute to this desert, these photos serve as
additional reminder of the collective communities from which these students are born. By including images of my family, I strive to honor a community that has been overlooked within wider leadership development discourse. At the start of this chapter, I have included two images of: (1) my grandparents and (2) four of the Alcozer grandchildren including myself. My grandparents Alfredo and Guadalupe Alcozer serve as my closest connection to my family ancestry, having set the foundation for the large, yet close-knit family in which I was raised. Similarly, the photo depicting me alongside my closest cousins introduces the reader to the family members alongside whom I have experienced my leadership journey. As this chapter is introductory in nature, I share these visual and written insights into the central figures who have shaped my leadership journey.

In this chapter, I presented an outline of this study including key terminology, a problem statement, guiding research questions, and this study’s significance. Chapter Two consists of a comprehensive literature review divided into two segments: cultural values and the college environment. This first section explores the role of cultural values in wider leadership theory, the cultural values present within the Latinx community, and how both these threads of cultural values can influence the leadership development of Latina college students. The second section examines how campus racial climate and college student leadership development programs at colleges and universities can influence the leadership development of Latina college students. Chapter Three presents this study’s methodological approach. This includes an overview of the qualitative approach bolstering this study, the researcher’s positionality within this work, and how data was collected, analyzed and distributed. Chapter Four includes an overview of this study’s findings and Chapter Five situates this study’s findings within existing research, explores this study’s limitations, and presents implication for future research and practice. In this work, I
explore how dominant cultural values interact with Latina college students’ values and influence their leadership development. This study centers the experiences of Latina college students and explores how this population within higher education experiences leadership development at a HWCU.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Latina College Students’ Leadership Development

The college experience is historically portrayed as a solitary journey. It typically begins with an unassuming White 18-year old leaving home for the first time, uneasily assessing their unfamiliar surroundings. They are forced to navigate the college terrain on their own. Anxiety is eased by new friends and homesickness quelled with brief trips home, scheduled phone calls, and the occasional care package. This portrayal of the college experience has become canon for most students entering college. U.S. higher education is steeped in individualistic and racist tradition (Medina & Posadas, 2012), stressing the need for students to abandon the familiar and embrace the allure of independence. However, this vision of the college experience is drastically different from the reality for many college students today. From working students residing with family to adult learners, the canonized depiction of college can be an ill-suited fit for the everyday lives of students. This disconnect can continue even further into the structural
underpinnings of higher education institutions. For instance, for a growing number of Latin
students entering higher education, the values in which institutions of higher learning are built
can serve as a strange and unfamiliar space of cultural dissonance (Sy & Brittian, 2008).
Previously, the separation of students and their community was believed to be an integral part of
college students’ development (Tinto, 1988). Tinto later expanded on his earlier belief that
students needed to break away from past associations in order to adapt to and succeed in
college. Tinto (2006) wrote that “for some if not many students the ability to remain connected
to their past communities, family, church, or tribe is essential to their persistence” (p. 4). This
shift in perspective regarding community connection highlights the mounting influences of one’s
community and cultural support systems on students’ educational experience.

The study of leadership and leadership development is steeped in a similar White and
individualistic tradition. Historically, models of leadership were derived from the examination
of White male experiences (Parker & Ogilvie, 1996). Bass (2008) found independence,
intelligence, self-confidence, and aggressiveness to be critical socialized traits for leadership
effectiveness in the United States. Looking specifically at colleges and universities, the
implementation of leadership education can vary by region, institution type, and in some cases,
even university department. Despite this multiplicity, institutional commitment to the
development of college students’ leadership capacity is clear. In a study examining the
leadership experiences of college students, Dugan and Komives (2007) found that “short,
moderate, and long-term experiences all had a significant effect” on their measure of leadership
efficacy among students who participated in leadership programs versus those who did not (p.
16).
Guiding this study is the understanding the potential for values clashing in students’ collegiate experiences and Latina college students’ leadership development. In this chapter, I examine literature relevant to the experiences of Latina college students’ leadership development in the context of higher education. Using critical race feminism (CRF) as a guiding framework, this review of literature is divided into two distinct sections: cultural values and the college environment. In section one, I explore the cultural values present in leadership theory using Hofstede’s cultural dimensions with critique from Latina/Latino critical race theory (LatCrit). I then expand this exploration to consider Latinx cultural values and examine how these values influence the leadership development of Latina college students. In section two, I examine the influence of campus racial climate and college student leadership programs on Latina college students’ leadership development. In setting the tone for this chapter, I selected two images of personal significance: (1) my grandfather speaking to a group of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren and (2) a photo of my mother and father dancing. I selected the image of my grandfather speaking to a collection of his grandchildren as this represents the close-knit and supportive relationship younger generations experienced with the elders of my family. My grandfather frequently spent time with his grandchildren, sharing stories and offering guidance. This image serves to illustrate the cultural values of familial connection and family support explored within this chapter. Similarly, I selected the second photo of my mother and father in the midst of a dance as it was taken during a period where my mother was completing her undergraduate study. By selecting an image depicting my parents in the gendered expression of dance, I serve to both honor my parents and visually connect to the experiences of gender role expectations explored within this chapter. This chapter concludes with an overview of the
research questions guiding this study and how they address a notable gap in research related to the leadership experiences of Latina college students.

**Critical Race Feminism and Latina/Latino Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory (CRT) emerged from scholars aiming to consider the interplay of race, racism, and power within the U.S. legal system (Martinez, 2014). This realm of scholarship eventually gave way to additional channels of criticism including but not limited to critical race feminism (CRF) (Berry, 2010) and Latina/Latino critical race theory (LatCrit) (Valdes, 2005). Critical race feminism (CRF) offers unique insight into exploring the intersection of race, gender and educational status within a specific context (Berry, 2010), in this case, leadership. According to Pratt-Clarke (2010), CRF examines the intersectional identities of race, gender, and class in the experiences of Women of Color (WOC) within legal systems. Similar to the study of leadership, CRF draws from multiple disciplines (Berry, 2010). This theoretical lens challenges individuals to acknowledge the experiences of WOC as uniquely different and worthy of examination (Pratt-Clarke, 2010). In this study, I utilize this collective work to center the experiences of Latina college students, exploring the literature reviewed for the influence of gender and race on their experience of leadership within the collegiate environment.

In exploring the cultural values present within dominant leadership research, I utilize Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory. In this review of cultural values, I use the critical framework of Latinx critical race theory (LatCrit) to aid in critiquing Hofstede’s dimensions. According to Valdes (2005), LatCrit theory first developed as a way to center the experiences of Latina/os and increase the visibility of Latina/os in public discourse. Additionally, LatCrit is posited as promoting four key functions: (1) the production of knowledge; (2) the advancement
of social transformation; (3) the expansion and connection of anti-subordination struggles; and
(4) the cultivation of community and coalition (p. 158). Similar to critical race theory, a central
tenet of LatCrit is the understanding that this fostering of community and action not be limited to
the realm of U.S. legal academia (Valdes, 2005). The work of LatCrit strives to challenge
widely held assumptions around race and gender within dominant educational discourse (Valdes,
2005). Similar to critical race theory, LatCrit strives to be interdisciplinary, seeking “to include
students and activists as well as scholars” (Valdes, 2005). In the exploration of Hofstede’s
cultural dimensions, the LatCrit practices of anti-essentialism and intersectionality aid in
problematizing this widely used cultural value framework.

**Cultural Values**

Cultural values provide unique insight into what a society views as ideal and worthy of
reproduction (Hofstede, 1980). How one engages with their community is shaped by these
expectations, often embedded into the messages of formal and informal education. Similar
messages can be found in the area of leadership development. Within this section of this
literature review, I begin by identifying cultural values present within dominant leadership
research and theory. I then examine key cultural values present within Latinx culture and
consider how these values influence Latina college students’ leadership development. In
exploring these research areas, I utilize a combination of critical race feminism (CRF),
Hofstede’s cultural dimension theory and aspects of LatCrit to explicate and interrogate the
relationship between leadership development and Latina college students.

**Cultural Values Reflected in Dominant Leadership Literature**

In order to identify cultural values present in extant leadership research, I use key
dimensions outlined within Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory. Using a survey database of
IBM subsidiary employees in more than 50 countries, social psychologist Geert Hofstede garnered insights into employees’ values based on their cultural and national backgrounds (Hofstede, 1980). As a result of extended research, Hofstede (1980, 2003) developed the cultural dimensions theory. This model included indexes to measure individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, masculinity-femininity, long term-short term orientation, and indulgence-restraint (Hofstede, 2011). Admittedly, the identities and experiences of IBM employees may not serve as a direct representation of today’s college students. Furthermore, drawing upon LatCrit’s stance of anti-essentialism, I recognize that Hofstede’s cultural dimensions strive to measure the presence of set cultural values within vastly different communities. According to Goldberg (2002), anti-essentialism emphasizes “that human identities lack an essence that would cause all people with the same trait … to coalesce as a predictable category with common interests or experiences” (p. 634). This understanding of anti-essentialism calls for the need to view experiences through an intersectional lens as factors such as social conditions and larger contexts can further influence and shape one’s experiences (Goldberg, 2002). With regard to Hofstede, the rigid measure of what values a particular culture reflects fails to capture the intersecting social conditions of individuals and runs the risk of essentializing the experiences of a particular culture. However, in attempting to establish a baseline of the cultural values embedded within traditional leadership research, I utilize aspects of Hofstede’s dimensions. My decision to utilize cultural dimensions theory is further bolstered by its wide acceptance and usage as a framework through which to view national cultures and cultural values (Steenkamp, Hofstede, & Wedel, 1999). Though cultural dimensions theory is often applied as a measurement to individuals of different cultures, I contend that examining
leadership theory through its dimensions will provide insight into the values produced and reproduced within leadership literature.

In this review, I center my focus on three dimensions of this model: individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity and power distance. This review is not intended to account for all the cultural values reflected in leadership literature, rather the cultural values that are most pronounced and recurring across multiple disciplines. As this is the case, I do not include the cultural dimensions of long term-short term orientation, indulgence-restraint, and uncertainty avoidance in this review as these dimensions speak to individuals’ context-specific responses (Hofstede, 2003) and would be difficult to determine by surveying literature. In this examination, I define the cultural value and then draw from literature within the field of leadership studies and leadership theory to explore each of the cultural values in-depth. After exploring the evident cultural values based on the framework provided by Hofstede, I argue the existence of an additional cultural value unearthed by this examination using the lens of CRF: color-blindness and assumption of Whiteness.

**Individualism versus Collectivism**

In exploring cultural value, I first begin by examining the values of individualism and collectivism. Individualism refers to the degree to which a person is defined as a separate character and expected to place the needs and concerns of themselves and immediate family above the needs of others (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989). Collectivism speaks to the degree in which individuals are connected to their extended community and are expected to prioritize the welfare of the larger whole (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989). According to Hofstede (1980), how societies promote individual and collective practices to its members indicate individualistic or collectivistic value alignment (IDV). Societies characterized as individualistic stress that
members place their own self-interest over the interests of the goals, needs, and concerns of the larger collective (Hofstede, 1980). Conversely, collectivistic societies are likely to expect conformity from its members and stress that members place the needs of the larger whole above their own self-interests (Hofstede, 1980).

Among the earliest considerations of individualism and collectivism in leadership research is the study of cross-cultural assessment of leadership styles. In a review of cross-cultural values in leaders, Bass (2008) examined world cultures in terms of clusters. Countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and South Africa were designated as part of the “Anglo Cluster” (p. 764). Bass found individuals within the Anglo cluster of the United States (referred to by Bass as the “Anglo-American” cluster) prioritized the value of individualism in their leadership approaches. These assessments were based on the findings of Hofstede’s study of IBM employees and supervisors. Hofstede (1980) found that supervisors and workers from the United States displayed among the highest connections to individualistic values compared to other countries’ workers. Similarly, researchers noted traditional leadership research heavily aligned with values of Anglo-American U.S. culture (House & Aditya, 1997; Lumby, 2006). This acknowledgement of individualism as being linked to both U.S. culture and the needs of the United States’ workforce situates early considerations of U.S. leadership approaches as having an individualistic alignment.

Similarly, the cultural value of individualism is particularly evident in early leadership research. Much of existing leadership literature falls into one of two paradigms: Industrial and Postindustrial (Rost, 1993). Models adhering to the industrial paradigm depict traditional understandings of leadership such as an emphasis on a leader-follower dynamic, leader-centric culture, and leadership as individual (e.g., great man, trait, situational; Northouse, 2015).
Conversely, models aligning with the postindustrial paradigm hold more contemporary understandings of leadership, emphasizing leadership as a relational, collaborative process (e.g., transformational, servant, authentic) (Rost, 1993). With the introduction of new models, postindustrial approaches aligning with a collectivistic value set grew in favor among leadership scholars across disciplines (Rost, 1993). Despite this broadening of leadership, House and Aditya (1997) found a majority of leadership literature to be grounded in the experiences of western culture and reflect individualistic values. This research indicates that traditional perspectives of leadership remain both well-known and embedded in assumptions of both leadership students and educators today (Schertzer & Schuh, 2004).

This understanding of leadership research as reflecting an individualistic value orientation holds key insights for how specific populations may perceive and experience leadership. According to Kezar and Moriarty (2000), early leadership approaches were developed based on the experiences of White men. Kezar (2000) found that women and WOC were more likely to favor leadership approaches reflecting a collective value orientation. When describing ideal leadership approaches, these populations viewed leadership as being process and team oriented and centered on fostering a collaborative environment. These findings contrast with the individualistic approaches widely reflected in leadership research. This divide suggests a potential disconnect between the experiences deemed worthy of study and the approaches deemed valuable by marginalized populations in leadership. Despite the expansion of leadership research, industrial approaches favoring individualistic values are still prominently represented. Given that cross cultural research has indicated U.S. leadership approaches to be highly individualistic, that the Anglo tradition emphasizes individualistic practices, and that many widely-used models of leadership have been developed based on a White male orientation, it is
reasonable to assess that the cultural value of individualism is both deeply embedded and widely expected within leadership research. By centering the leadership experiences of Latina college students within this study, I examine this potential incongruity and insert the perspective of this under researched population in the realm of leadership study.

**Masculinity versus Femininity**

In addition to individual and collective value orientations, Hofstede (1980) posited that how societies value and distribute the roles between men and women reflect either a masculine or feminine alignment. In approaching this next dimension, it is crucial to acknowledge the use of binary language within this framework. In examining leadership research using Hofstede's cultural dimensions, I will adopt the gendered language of “Masculinity” and “Femininity” as outlined by Hofstede. In the study of cultural values, Hofstede’s work is widely utilized and serves as an appropriate structure through which to unearth cultural values in this body of research. I recognize that the use of gendered language as it applies to wider leadership research may further contribute to the notion that leadership operates within the gender binary. As the purpose of this larger work is to examine and critique the cultural values embedded within leadership research, I contend that this examination of gender along this binary may further explicate the stories most often researched and promoted within leadership research.

Within the dimension of Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS), societies are designated as “masculine” or “feminine” (Hofstede, 1980). Countries are assessed according to a measurement index (MAS) where countries measuring lower on the index (closer to zero) reflect more feminine characteristics and countries measuring higher on this index (closer to 120) reflect more masculine characteristics (Hofstede, 2003). With a rating of 62, the United States reflects a masculine culture (Hofstede, 2003). Societies emphasizing masculine qualities tend to favor
clearly defined gender role expectations and view assertiveness, aggression, and material achievement as imperative to success (Hofstede, 1980). According to Hofstede (2001), within a masculine society, men are expected to be competitive, aggressive, and fixated on economic success while women are expected to be tender, caring, and dedicated to preserving quality of life. Conversely, societies with a stronger emphasis on feminine qualities tend to reflect overlapping gender role expectations and view relationships and collaboration as meaningful (Hofstede, 1980). Within what Hofstede (2011) deemed as a feminine society, qualities such as modesty and compassion are expected of both men and women.

Delving into leadership theory, researchers have found traditional leadership models to be developed based on the experiences of White males (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000). This population has historically held positions of authority within the United States and were placed at the center of early leadership study (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Parker & Ogilvie, 1996). This is particularly evident in the early stages of leadership research examining traits. The study of traits originated from the examination of significant male historical figures and their prominent traits - aptly referred to as great man theory (Carlyle, 2013). Prior to the mid twentieth century, a majority of leadership research examined the vital traits associated with leadership (Bass, 2008). This approach to leadership study centered the experiences of a designated leader and the leadership traits they embodied (Northouse, 2015). Trait-based approaches aimed to identify universal traits that separated leaders from followers (House & Aditya, 1997). Traits such as independence, self-reliance, and assertiveness were identified as being critical to effective leadership practice (Bass, 2008). This is consistent with the traits Hofstede designated as masculine cultures (Hofstede, 1980).
Researchers eventually grew to question the validity of searching for universal traits (House & Aditya, 1997). Stogdill (1948) argued that the study of traits could be useful in so far as exploring how leaders’ traits can interact with contextual and situational factors. The late 1970s denoted a paradigm shift where more relational and collective approaches to leadership were integrated into study (Dugan, 2017). The foundation of leadership study in trait-based approaches had lasting effects on how leadership is perceived and taught today (Schertzer & Schuh, 2004). Dugan (2017) stated that even great man theory continues “to influence conceptions of leadership study today as well as shape the type of traits considered worthy of study” (p. 89). This understanding of the origins of trait-based approaches and its long-standing influence on the field of leadership study highlights the masculine alignment of leadership research.

**Growing areas of research.** Expanding this further, it is imperative to acknowledge a growing body of research on the leadership experiences of other populations. There is significant research describing the leadership experiences of women (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Kezar, 2000; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000) and of individuals from underrepresented populations (Arminio, Carter, Jones, Kruger, Lucas, Washington, & Scott, 2000; Dugan, Komives, & Segar, 2008; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Renn & Ozaki, 2010). Though traditional perceptions of leadership fall within the industrial paradigm of leadership study, research found that women and individuals of Color align with more contemporary and collective approaches. According to Kezar (2000), “women and women of color tended to describe leadership as collective, collaborative, empowerment-based, non directive, process-oriented, facilitative, team-oriented, and characterized by equal power relations” (p. 8). These examinations of leadership through the perspectives of underrepresented populations signals a disconnect between the masculine values
widely reflected in traditional leadership literature and the leadership experiences of women and WOC.

Though it is fragmentary to catalogue all of leadership research into the binary of masculine and feminine alignments, examining leadership through Hofstede's cultural dimensions lens provides insight into the pervasive and often unnamed tension present in leadership research. Considering that industrial approaches are found to be widely embedded in the assumptions of leadership research, that White men have served as the focus population for theory generation, and research indicates that women and WOC are more likely to adopt leadership practices reflective of post-industrial approaches, I contend that leadership research has a storied compatibility with the cultural value of masculinity. The lens of CRF promotes a keen observation of this tension, centering the experiences and perspectives not represented in leadership literature. By acknowledging the widely held assumptions surrounding masculinity in leadership research, CRF can aid in bringing to light the potential incongruity between these perspectives and those of Latina college students.

**Power Distance**

In addition to the dimension of masculinity vs. femininity, how countries view the distribution of power can hold key insights into their cultural values. As previously explored, models within the industrial paradigm of leadership emphasize a distinct leader-follower relationship and focus attention on the needs, traits, and behaviors of the designated leader (Northouse, 2015). With respect to the most widely researched areas of leadership study - trait-based approaches - the differentiation between leader and follower was crucial to the identification of traits (Northouse, 2015). Language within trait-based research often utilizes clear “leader” and “follower” language when discussing leader traits (Bass, 2008). This is
further supported by Zaccaro (2007) who noted traits as being significant identifiers in differentiating leaders from the rest of the group. The use of traits to distinguish leaders from followers signals an expectation that one should expect a difference in power distribution based on individual characteristics.

According to Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions, the dimension of Power Distance Index (PDI) refers to the scale to which individuals accept unequal distributions of power in their society. Societies displaying higher power distance embrace strict differentiation between superior and subordinate roles (Hofstede, 1980). These societies are likely to value hierarchical structures and clear delineation between designated authority figures and followers (Hofstede, 2011). Conversely, societies presenting low power distance are more likely to equalize superior and subordinate relationships and accept members questioning authority (Hofstede, 1980). This society would be more likely to have a less hierarchical structure and provide opportunities for collective decision-making (Hofstede, 1980).

Examining leadership theory more closely, the distinction between positional leaders and followers is reflected in documented approaches to leadership. Leadership models such as situational, style, and path-goal examine how leaders are positioned to respond to the needs of followers (Northouse, 2015). A common thread across these models is how the individual leader is poised to identify the best approach to motivate and support followers or subordinates (Northouse, 2015). Similarly, contingency theory centers the responsibility of the leader to determine the best approach based on context and organization type (Northouse, 2015). Though different in motivation, transformational leadership tasks leaders with enlisting followers in an elevation of motivation and morality in order to benefit the larger organization (Northouse, 2015). Within these approaches, attention is paid to the designated leaders’ responses to the
needs of their followers, organization, and surrounding context. The authority or power to make decisions and assess organizational needs is placed primarily with the designated leader.

Similarly, other approaches with an expanded focus make a similar distinction. In leader-member exchange theory (LMX), the experiences of both leaders and designated followers are examined (Northouse, 2015). This approach is centered on understanding how motives, needs, and behaviors can influence the leader/follower relationship (Northouse, 2015). Servant leadership also tasks the leader with placing the needs of followers ahead of their own individual self-interests (Northouse, 2015). Team leadership offers a different perspective where a team member is tasked with identifying problems affecting the team and responding appropriately (Northouse, 2015). Within these approaches, attention is broadened to consider more directly the relationship between leader and followers or between those tasked with leadership and other organization members. This shift is notable as it represents a push to acknowledge the needs of followers, encouraging those in positions of authority to allow follower needs to aid in dictating leadership responses.

**Leadership versus management.** With regard to power, it is also significant to explore the difference between leadership and what is often referred to as management. As leadership studies emanate from a variety of different disciplines including professional fields such as business and education (Ospina & Foldy, 2009), it is necessary to clearly delineate how positional leadership roles have been defined in leadership literature. According to Portugal and Yukl (1994), individuals in positions of leadership are tasked with creating change within their organization with an emphasis on building consensus among members. Conversely, managers are charged with providing stability and ensuring that the organization and its members operate more efficiently (Portugal & Yukl, 1994). This distinction is significant as leadership models
may be utilized by managers in formalized positions of authority with designated power. Though the theories, models, and approaches mentioned in this section are intended to speak to leadership research more broadly, examples of how these approaches may be put into practice can resemble a traditional work organization environment.

**Concerns regarding authority.** In a survey of select paradigms of leadership, House and Aditya (1997) found that a commanding quantity of leadership study focuses largely on the leader and immediate follower relationship rather than other contextual factors within organizations. This scope depicts leadership study as existing in a narrow pathway and elevates the clearly defined roles of those in positions of authority and their subordinates. More recently, Alvesson and Spicer (2012) noted a rise in the number of critical theorists “pointing out how leadership works as an ideology that celebrates managers and reinforces passive followership and dependency on leaders” (p. 384). This conceptualization of leadership as a philosophy through which to bolster leader-centric behaviors aligns with traditional industrial approaches where leadership is perceived as highly individual and dependent on a leader-follower dynamic (Northouse, 2015).

Though varied, these approaches display a common thread centering the experience of designated leaders in positions of decision-making authority. Viewing leadership research through Hofstede’s Power Index dimension allows us to examine more closely the power dynamics embedded within leadership study and, in turn, highlight the perspectives most commonly espoused within wider research. CRF furthers this exploration by acknowledging how commonly-held assumptions of power within leadership may favor leader-centric approaches that negate the needs and perspectives of those not in designated leadership roles. Given that industrial leadership approaches are noted as having a significant influence on
leadership research, and that documented leadership approaches place substantial decision-making authority in positions of authority, it is reasonable to conclude that leadership research reflects characteristics of a high-power distance cultural value. Though this review of theory does not account for the multitude of approaches dubbed theories and models, the theories specifically mentioned in this review are reflected widely within larger leadership research.

**Color Blindness and Assumption of Whiteness**

Using Hofstede’s (1980) dimensions, I contend that leadership research reflects the cultural values of individualism, masculinity, and high power distance. However, in exploring these cultural values, I identified a fourth cultural element undergirding these values that merits discussion: color blindness and the assumption of Whiteness. Though this cultural value falls outside of the consideration of Hofstede’s dimensions, I argue that the lack of attention to race in leadership theories, models, and approaches reflects the cultural value of colorblindness and assumption of Whiteness in leadership research. As previously explored, models of leadership were derived from the examination of White male experiences (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Parker & Ogilvie, 1996). Research indicated that traditional leadership approaches are found to reflect highly western ideas of leadership (House & Aditya, 1997) and the highly individualistic alignment favored by U.S. culture (Bass, 2008; Hofstede, 1980). Understanding the heritage of traditional leadership research is crucial to exploring why the lack of consideration for race not only reflects an absence of race but a wider assumption of Whiteness surrounding racial identity.

**Exploration of race in leadership research.** Before delving into leadership theory specifically, I find it necessary to acknowledge how leadership research has approached race historically. The exploration of race was often set in the context of how race-ethnicity influences subordinates’ perspectives of leader effectiveness (Ospina & Foldy, 2009). This is evident in the
area of cross-cultural research where scholars examined leadership approaches based on national culture and ethnicity (Bass, 2008). More recently, pockets of research related to leader perception in the workforce across race found that People of Color in leadership positions are more likely to be viewed as less effective compared to their White counterparts (Knight, Hebl, Foster, & Mannix, 2003; Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008). This representation of race in the context of supervisor and supervisee relationships aids in calling attention to differences in leadership experience in professional environments in terms of race.

This misalignment in leadership performance coupled with research noting that women and WOC are more likely to favor a collectivist approach to leadership behavior (Kezar, 2000) depicts a cultural value misalignment between traditional leadership approaches adopted by U.S. culture and the perspectives of leadership from underrepresented populations. Hofstede’s cultural dimensions paired with the lens of critical race feminism point to this often unnamed lack of recognition of and appreciation for the experiences of People of Color within leadership research. In my study of the leadership experiences of Latina college students, I aim to center these perspectives and honor the experiences of this population.

**Leadership as colorblind.** Returning attention to leadership models, theories, and approaches, race is largely ignored. According to Ospina and Foldy (2009), leadership theory has a history of adopting a colorblind perspective. Factors such as race and ethnicity fail to be acknowledged or attended to in construction of leadership theory. Suarez (2015) argued that though “diversity” is discussed in the work of some leadership scholars, this exploration is often “surface level” and focuses attention on the diversity of skill sets rather than race or ethnicity (p. 37). This mindset expands beyond leadership theories housed within the industrial paradigm of leadership. Contemporary leadership approaches aimed at exploring collective leadership
practices are also found to ignore the factor of race (Ospina & Foldy, 2009). Recent scholars have begun to incorporate critical perspectives in examining leadership theory (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Collinson, 2011; Dugan, 2017; Ospina & Foldy, 2009; Western, 2008), however, this inclusion of critical perspectives in the examination of leadership is still developing, leading to traditional leadership perspectives maintaining prominence (Ospina & Foldy, 2009).

One reason for the sidelining of race in the study of leadership may be linked to the desire to translate experiences to wider populations. Researchers have noted a reluctance to study leadership through the experiences of marginalized groups based on the assumption that findings could fail to translate across populations (Ospina & Foldy, 2009; Tillman, 2004). In an examination of research on African American female principals, Tillman (2004) identified an aversion to publishing works centering these perspectives as hampering the growth of research on this population. Ospina and Foldy (2009) argued that in the study of leadership, “the experiences of people of color are often treated as a special case,” dismissing the potential of People of Color to serve as a foundation for theory generation (p. 877). These findings are troubling as they suggest that the experiences of White men, a population on which many widely embraced leadership models are based, have greater potential for generalization across populations. This aversion contributes to leadership research adopting automatic categorizations. Ospina and Foldy (2009) contend that the vast centering of highly western and Anglo-centered experiences “makes western perspectives and ‘whiteness’ the default categories to measure the leadership experience of people from any race–ethnicity” (p. 888). This documented reluctance to center the experiences of marginalized groups over concern of this transcription across experiences suggests that leadership research promotes a lack of consideration of race but also an assumption of Whiteness.
Leadership research is home to a multitude of theories, models, and approaches. Despite these variations, select recurring and prominent cultural values creep to the surface of this seemingly miscellaneous collection of ideas. Using Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory, I identified the following three cultural values reflected in dominant leadership literature: individualism, masculinity, and high power distance (Hofstede, 2011). These cultural values most prominently align with industrial approaches to leadership theory, which research indicates continues to maintain a foothold in the perspectives and expectations of leadership research today (Schertzer & Schuh, 2004). In addition to these dimensions, I offered a fourth cultural value outside of the dimensions provided by Hofstede (2011): colorblindness and the assumption of Whiteness. As previously explored, the cultural values of individualism, masculinity, and high power distance have a foothold in the foundation of leadership research. This reflection of highly-western and Anglo-centered cultural values coupled with leadership researchers’ lack of consideration of race signals a stark misalignment between the cultural values espoused by leadership research and the cultural values of Latinx culture. Though the phenomenon of leadership is broad and nuanced in its theories and approaches, this gap in research suggests that not only is there a potential for leadership literature to paint an incomplete picture of leadership but also highlights a glaring lack of value placed on the experiences of people from marginalized identities - including Latina college students.

Latinx Cultural Values and Latina College Students Leadership Development

With this exploration of the cultural values embedded within leadership research in mind, it is equally important to consider the influence of Latinx cultural values on Latina college students’ leadership development. Although research on college student leadership development has increased in visibility since the 1990’s (Dugan & Komives, 2007), literature exploring the
leadership experiences of Latina college students remains limited (Onorato & Musoba, 2015). This narrow body of research coupled with the diverse approaches to college leadership programs paints an unclear picture of leadership development for Latina college students.

Furthermore, this state of research in light of increasing numbers of Latinx college students poses the question of whether traditional understandings of leadership that often undergird many college leadership programs, are sufficient to address the leadership development needs of this group (Suarez, 2015). It is this understanding of the significance of community cultural values on the student experience and the lack of leadership development literature centering the experiences of Latina college students that guides this exploration.

Throughout this section, I consider: How do Latinx cultural values influence the leadership development of Latina college students? In exploring this topic, I expand on the significance of placing Latina college students at the center of this work. I examine existing literature related to Latinx cultural values across three distinct, yet interrelated areas of research: collectivistic and familistic value orientation, gender role expectations, and educación. These terms are all defined later in the chapter. Due to the scarcity of research on Latina college student leadership development, I draw from three capsules of literature exploring the following: Latina leadership experiences, WOC college student leadership experiences, and college leadership development education. In examining these three areas of leadership research, I make connections between the Latinx cultural values explored in the earlier review and share their implications for how Latinas experience leadership development.

**Collectivistic and Familistic Values Orientation**

A collectivistic value orientation is a central tenet of Latinx culture (Raeff, Greenfield, & Quiroz, 2000). The concepts of individualism and collectivism have been widely researched
within the realms of psychology and cross-cultural research. Generally, individualism speaks to the degree to which an individual is considered an independent agent, often with more importance being placed on their needs and the needs of their immediate family (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989). Conversely, collectivism reflects the degree to which individuals are connected to their extended community, often with greater importance being given to the welfare of the larger whole (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989). It is crucial to note that these differing perspectives do not reflect simplistic, opposing views of community, rather a more complex understanding of differing world views centered on individual and community values (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002).

Notable comparisons of culture have been made in the field of cross-cultural psychology. European American culture is widely viewed as individualistic, favoring self-reliance, independence, and self-interest (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Raeff, Greenfield, & Quiroz, 2000; Shkodriani & Gibbons, 1995; Triandis, 1989). Furthermore, while some cultures value cooperation among community members, the United States values competition among individuals (Shkodriani & Gibbons, 1995). House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman and Gupta (2004) conducted the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) research program where they examined differences in societal cultures of over 900 organizations. They grouped countries based on societal and cultural commonalities and developed cultural competencies related to what they observed. Of the nine competencies developed, two were dedicated to individualism: Institutional Collectivism and In-Group Collectivism (House et al., 2004). Using both Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory and GLOBE’s models for measurement, researchers have explored individualism and collectivism across cultures within the context of business management (Chen, Chen, & Meindl, 1998; Chen, Meindl, & Hunt,
When considering Latinx culture with respect to collectivism, similar conclusions have been reached. Descendants of Latin American countries tend to favor more collectivistic practices, emphasizing community-centeredness over individual needs (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Lisansky, 1981; Raeff et al., 2000). Shkodriani and Gibbons (1995) contended that “the Mexican ideal of interdependence between generations is in opposition to the U.S. ideal of self-reliance” (p. 766). In a study of over 800 U.S. high school students’ experiences with collectivism, Fuligni, Tseng, and Lam (1999) found that students of Latin American descent “possessed stronger values and greater expectations regarding their duty to assist, respect, and support their families than their peers with European backgrounds” (p. 1040). Furthermore, research has shown that components of collectivism are significantly more visible within immigrant communities (Raeff et al., 2000; Suárez-Orozco, 1991; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995).

**Familism and familismo.** The psychological concept of familism explores the levels of connectedness one feels for their nuclear and extended family (Sabogal, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, & Perez-Stable, 1987). According to Sabogal and associates, familism is a central value to Latinx populations and is comprised of three distinct elements: familial obligations, perceived support from family, and family as referents. Within this framework, Latinx individuals are encouraged to carry strong feelings of obligation to serve their family through emotional or material means, to view their family as sources of support, and to include family members’ perspectives in their decision-making (Sabogal et al., 1987). Similarly, the construct of familismo expands on the concept of familism, drawing clearer connections to the needs and
experiences of the Latinx community. Familismo speaks to the strong attachment Latinx individuals feel for immediate and extended family (Sabogal et al., 1987; Smith-Morris, Morales-Campos, Alvarez, & Turner, 2012). Familismo encourages Latinx individuals to respect and include the wishes and needs of family members in decision-making (Smith-Morris et al., 2012). Researchers have found the value of familismo to be a significant influence on Latinx individuals with regard to caring for elders (Ruiz, 2012) and navigating health care decisions (Ayón, Marsiglia, & Bermudez-Parsai, 2010).

With regard to education, there is a growing area of research exploring the influence of familismo on Latinx students’ academic persistence (Ojeda, Navarro, & Morales, 2011) and decisions surrounding school choice (Hernández, 2015; Martinez, 2013). Similarly, in a study of college student leaders at a predominantly White institution, Lozano (2015) found that students described their families as figures of support, even without family being knowledgeable of the day-to-day demands of college life. In a study of Latina college students, Onorato and Musoba (2015) found that students cited their family as being crucial supporters in their decisions to pursue college and engage with on-campus activities. This research indicates that Latinx students’ membership in family units serve as both sources of obligation and support throughout their college experience. Examining this research through the lens of critical race feminism, how Latina college students experience leadership development and on-campus engagement is intimately tied to their relationship with family and support networks. This understanding suggests that leadership development does not exist in the vacuum of college campus life; rather it may be directly influenced by the cultural values and home lives of students and their communities. In exploring the leadership development experiences of Latina college students,
this study aims to explore this interaction in more detail, further explicating how a collectivistic value orientation can inform their leadership development.

**Gender Roles in Latinx Culture**

In addition to collectivistic and familistic value orientations, there are pronounced expectations surrounding gender and gender performance within the Latinx community. Earlier in this work, I conveyed my rationale for utilizing the term “Latinx” rather than “Latino” or “Latino/a” in order to acknowledge and include individuals who fall outside of the traditional gender binary. In exploring the role of gender and gender performance expectations, I focus on two gender-related constructs that reflect the binary nature of Latinx language and culture: Machismo and Marianismo. This decision is intentional as it reflects the binary nature of gender expectation within Latinx culture and displays gender role behaviors embedded within cultural values. Similarly, gendered language remains consistent with the masculinity versus femininity (MAS) dimension as outlined by Hofstede (1980).

**Machismo.** Machismo outlines the set of positive and negative traits expected of Latino men (Arciniega et al., 2004; Mirandé, 1977). Early research on machismo highlighted the negative attributes expected of men in Latinx culture (Anders, 1993; Ingoldsby, 1991). These traits can often include aggression, dominance over women, sexual expertise, and violence (Arciniega, Anderson, Tovar-Blank & Tracey, 2008). Researchers Strong, McQuillen, and Hughey (1994) referred to men conceived within the machismo construct as living a paradoxical existence saying: “he is promiscuous, yet demands sexual fidelity from his women; he must emotionally and physically exhaust himself as he endeavors to conquer his world, yet he must not reveal that he is emotionally affected by life’s hardships” (p. 20). Additionally, Latino men
are often expected to serve as the head of the household and ensure the financial well-being of their family unit (Liang, Salcedo, & Miller, 2011).

However, some researchers contend that a more nuanced understanding of machismo is warranted, arguing that the depiction of machismo solely as negative to be restrictive (Arciniega et al., 2008; Félix-Ortiz, Abreu, Briano, & Bowen, 2001; Mirandé, 1977; Rodriguez, 1996). There is a burgeoning body of research attempting to broaden traditional understandings of machismo by highlighting similarities between machismo and the qualities associated with caballerismo (Arciniega et al., 2008). Emanating from the Spanish word “caballero,” meaning “horseman,” caballerismo refers to a “Spanish gentleman with proper, respectful manners, living by an ethical code of chivalry” (p. 20). With regard to educational attainment, the machismo attribute of seeking to financially provide for family has been linked to Latino males’ decisions to pursue college in the quest for social mobility (Schwartz, Donovan, & Guido-DiBrito, 2009). This finding suggests that the cultural value of machismo can factor into Latino males’ decision-making surrounding degree attainment, career, on-campus involvement and potentially leadership development.

**Marianismo.** Marianismo refers to the set of norms outlining the optimal feminine traits expected for Latina women (Murguia, 2001; Niemann, 2004). Viewed as the counterpart to machismo, marianismo is grounded in Christian ideals and portrays women as the spiritual figures of their families, with women expected to share attributes with the Virgin Mary (Gil & Vazquez, 1996). Traits associated with marianismo include submissiveness to men, self-sacrifice, family devotion, and sexual purity (Castillo & Cano, 2007). Strong et al. (1994) described the existence of marianismo as “the eternal cultural balance of opposites” (p. 20), contending that the existence of marianismo and machismo are inextricably bound. A
“marianista,” or woman living in accordance with marianismo ideals (Strong et al., 1994), is passive and embraces her role as a chaste nurturer within the home (Castillo & Cano, 2007). Though literature on marianismo is growing, research indicates that gender role beliefs have an influence on Latina students’ decisions to complete high school (Rodriguez, Castillo, Gandara, & Santiago-Rivera, 2013; Stearns & Glennie, 2006). This understanding of the effect gender role expectations on the decision-making of Latina students may provide insight into Latina college students’ decision-making surrounding college completion, on-campus engagement, and leadership development.

Educación

Educación refers to the moral education instilled in Latinx children by their family (Auerbach, 2006). According to Woolley, Kol, and Bowen (2009), Latinx parents who view educación as an imperative cultural value consider the non-academic element of their children’s education to be equally or even more important than their formalized academic study. In a study of immigrant Latinx parents’ views of educación, researchers found that parents “see their principal responsibility [as] the rearing of a moral and responsible child, a child who will become what is often referred to as a ‘persona de bien,’ a good person” (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995, p. 65). These moral educational messages are often delivered by parents in the home through consejos or supportive advice intended to shape children’s behavior (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994). These pieces of advice often take the shape of stories and are crafted to motivate and encourage children to succeed both inside and outside of the home (Auerbach, 2006). Despite the significance of moral development in the home of Latinx students, research indicates that educators may view families’ elevation of educación over formalized instruction as a devaluing of formal education (Auerbach, 2006). Educators may view parents’ lack of
involvement with homework and absence at school events as indicating a low value for formal schooling (Auerbach, 2006; Valdés, 1996). This perspective signals a misalignment between Latinx parents’ beliefs regarding their role in their children’s education and the expectations placed on them by external educational figures.

Understanding the unique influence of Latinx cultural values on the leadership development of Latina college students is vital to unearthing a nuanced perspective of leadership development. Within this study, I explore how Latina college students experience leadership and examine what cultural and environmental factors have informed these perspectives. This exploration may help to further complicate dominant leadership research perspectives to consider Latinas’ relationships with collectivistic value orientations, gender role expectations, and systems of education.

**Values and Latina College Students’ Leadership Development**

In the previous section, I explored key values embedded within Latinx culture. In the desert of literature exploring Latina college student leadership development, I explore three spheres of research that, when connected, share substantial insight into how Latina college students experience leadership. These areas of research are: college leadership development education, Latina leadership experiences and the leadership experiences of WOC college students. In the examination of each area, I revisit associated Latinx values in order to further investigate their influences on Latina college students’ leadership development.

**College Student Leadership Programs**

Among the first models specifically created for college student development is the social change model of leadership, widely used as part of college leadership initiatives today (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006). With the introduction of new models, postindustrial
models of leadership grew in favor among leadership scholars across disciplines (Rost, 1993). However, despite this broadening of leadership research, traditional perspectives of leadership remain both well-known and embedded in assumptions of students and practitioners alike (Schertzer & Schuh, 2004). With regard to leadership development programs on college campuses, educators charged with creating programs often lack specific training (Dugan, 2011) and may create interventions that reflect their individualized view of leadership based on their own educational experiences (Schertzer & Schuh, 2004).

A different kind of leadership education. This understanding of traditional leadership education indicates an expectation for prototypical approaches to leadership. As previously mentioned, traditional leadership education’s inclination to emphasize individualistic values clashes with a collective leadership mindset. A similar tension can be found between the formalized structures and values of educational institutions and the deeply valued and informal schema of educación. The clash is evident in designated leadership behaviors. As previously mentioned, many leadership programs are grounded in a traditional and individualistic mindset. Traditionally, models of leadership were derived from the examination of White male experiences (Parker & Ogilvie, 1996). Bass (2008) found independence and self-confidence to be critical socialized traits for leadership effectiveness in the United States. However, when examining the central tenets of educación, such behaviors are not promoted. Should individuals fail to consider the needs of their larger family or to behave immodestly, they run the risk of presenting themselves to be “maleducada” or “poorly educated” (Valenzuela, 2005, p. 91).

With regard to Latinx students’ on-campus involvement in leadership opportunities, the pull of family obligation poses a similar tension. According to Suarez (2015), “the intersectionality of Latina/o identity with familial obligations and college student identity is rarely explored, often
misunderstood, and perceived as a lack of commitment to education and as laziness” (p. 33). For Latinx students, a sense of collective responsibility is a central tenet of educación and has the potential to influence how students spend their time outside of classes. For Latinas engaging in leadership experiences on college campuses, this clashing of expectations surrounding proper educación, familial obligation, and the expected values within leadership education paints a duplicitous existence.

Critical race feminism (CRF) strives to center the multifaceted experiences of communities not reflected in wider research (Pratt-Clarke, 2010). As such, examining how cultural values embedded within leadership education and its educators and the living and breathing values of Latina college students converge can bring this population’s leadership development to the forefront of leadership study. By conducting a study centering the experiences of Latina college students, I explored the influence of cultural values on this population’s leadership development and worked to close the gap between the misconceptions of leadership education and the lived experiences of Latina college students.

Women of Color College Student Leadership Experiences

Although there is limited research on how WOC experience leadership development in college, there is significant research describing the leadership experiences of women (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Kezar, 2000; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000) and of individuals from underrepresented populations (Arminio et al., 2000; Dugan et al., 2008; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Renn & Ozaki, 2010). Though traditional perceptions of leadership fall within the industrial paradigm of leadership study, research found that women and Individuals of Color align with more contemporary mindsets. According to Kezar (2000), “women and women of color tended to describe leadership as collective, collaborative, empowerment-based, non-directive, process-
oriented, facilitative, team-oriented, and characterized by equal power relations” (p. 8).

Additionally, further research indicates that leadership identity development and individual identity development have the potential to intertwine (Renn & Ozaki, 2010). In a study exploring the leadership development of students in identity-based campus organizations, Renn and Ozaki posited that students “experienced both leadership identity and psychosocial identity in the relevant category (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity)” (p. 23). Moreover, Arminio et al. (2000) found that Student Leaders of Color were reluctant to embrace the title of leader. With this understanding of how individuals from these diverse backgrounds experience leadership, interventions favoring traditional leadership approaches and leader title designation have the potential to directly contradict the beliefs and values of these populations.

**Considering collectivism.** Traditional leadership literature cites independence as a key indicator of ideal leadership effectiveness (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). However, when considering that women and Individuals of Color perceive leadership to be a collaborative process rather than individual, programs shaped by traditional leadership approaches can contribute to an unsupportive and even contradictory leadership experience for WOC. As previously mentioned, a collective value orientation is a critical component of Latinx culture. With regard to Latina college students, the expectations surrounding collectivistic values are even more pronounced. In a study of multiple generations of Latina-identified students in the United States, Sy and Brittian (2008) found that Latinas demonstrated a stronger sense of family obligation compared to their White counterparts from the United States. Furthermore, this trait did not lessen in Latinas across generations (Sy & Brittian, 2008).

With regard to leadership development specifically, Lozano (2015) found that Latinx student leaders grappled with incongruent messages related to values. Students expressed that
the Latinx values of collaboration and collectivity clashed with the highly positional approaches valued by the hierarchical structure of higher education (Lozano, 2015). As such, students disclosed feeling an overwhelming disconnect between the leadership values of their culture and the college environment (Lozano, 2015). This recognition of collective cultural values coupled with research indicating that women and WOC gravitate toward collective approaches suggest that Latina college students exist in a unique intersection of leadership development.

The Latinx collective value orientation coupled with conflicting values of leadership research present a mismatched terrain in which to foster leadership. CRF centers the intersectional experiences of those underrepresented in research (Pratt-Clarke, 2010). As previously explored, an individualistic value orientation is woven into the fabric of leadership research in the United States. Similarly, these same foundational theories were generated based on the experiences of White men - a population more likely to adopt an individualistic value orientation (Hofstede, 2003). Logically, this has led to a notable shortage of attention to the leadership development experiences of those underrepresented in higher education. This lack of representation in extant literature cues a need to center the experiences of Latina college students and, more specifically, examine the role of collectivism, gender role expectations, and educación in this experience.

**Latina Leadership Experience**

Though there is a dearth of research related to the leadership experiences of Latina college students, there are pockets of research examining the leadership experiences of Latinas across disciplines. In a study examining the experiences of Latina leaders within the Los Angeles garment industry, researchers found that Latinas’ family units and home life were both a place of support and criticism. According to de Soldatenko (2002), many Latina leaders first
learned of social issues through interactions with their family. When it came to mobilizing and participating in labor organizing, Latinas faced resistance from community members. This often took the form of expecting Latinas to “fulfill their organizing duties … without modifications to family arrangements that included strict gender division of labor” (p. 50). Within this context, Latina leaders were expected to fulfill their domestic duties in the home in addition to their political participation.

In exploring the leadership experiences of Latinas in roles within educational administration, researchers found that spouse and family support played a crucial role in in Latinas’ pursuit of leadership positions (Avery, 1981; Colon, 1992). Additionally, decisions surrounding leadership are found to be made with one’s community in mind. In a study examining the relationship between leadership and spirituality among Latinas, Rodriguez (1999) found that “leadership does not operate above and/or against one’s community but rather draws from its roots, is ingrained in its roots, and continually connects Latinas to the cultural memory of their narrative experience” (p. 140). With this in mind, it is clear that Latinas continually experience leadership through a collective mindset and must negotiate the needs and considerations of their family unit. By centering the experiences of Latina college students in this study, I further explore this negotiation and how this population experiences the phenomena of leadership.

**Connections to marianismo.** Expanding on this consideration of a collective value-orientation, gender role expectations can add additional insight into the experiences of Latina leaders. According to traditional leadership literature, behaviors such as assertiveness and aggressiveness serve as key traits associated with ideal leadership practice (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). As previously mentioned, a collective value orientation centering the needs and
expectations of family can grow increasingly complex with the inclusion of the gender role expectations of marianismo. Within the schema of marianismo, Latinas are expected to serve as self-sacrificing nurturers devoted to family (Castillo & Cano, 2007). In a study of Latina college student leaders, Onorato and Musoba (2015) found that though participants stated their family encouraged their on-campus involvement, family simultaneously communicated that they do so while abiding by traditional gender roles including completing domestic chores, deferring decision-making to men, and taking on the role of wife and mother.

These gender role expectations are in direct conflict with traditional perceptions of leadership advocating for assertiveness, independence, and aggression as necessary traits for effective leadership practice (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Within this same study of Latina college students, students shared that they viewed their mother “as a leader and role model of perseverance and self-sacrifice” (Onorato & Musoba, 2015, p. 22). This dichotomous combination of marianismo values and attributes commonly associated with traditional perspectives of leadership suggest a more nuanced understanding of how Latina college student experience leadership is needed. Additionally, research supports the understanding that marianismo values can influence Latina college students’ decision to complete high school and pursue additional schooling (Stearns & Glennie, 2006).

This acknowledgement of the influence of traditional gender roles on young Latinas’ decision-making alongside culturally incongruent messages of leadership education can lead us to consider Latinas’ decision-making as being influenced by traditional gender role expectations both inside and outside of the home. CRF prompts scholars to consider phenomena through an intersectional lens (Pratt-Clarke, 2010). In the case of leadership development, the experiences of Latinas is largely absent from extant literature. Though research on Latinx student leadership
development is growing (Beatty, 2015; Lozano, 2015; Onorato & Musoba, 2015; Suarez, 2015) this examination of gender roles within the Latinx community prompts us to consider how Latinas specifically experience this phenomena and how their experiences differ from other Latinx students, and from other WOC college students. Centering Latinas will address this gap in research by viewing leadership development through an intersectional lens.

Throughout this section, I was guided by the question of how Latinx cultural values influence the leadership development of Latina college students. In reviewing existing literature, I explored the key elements of Latinx culture as they pertain to leadership development. These elements of Latinx culture were: foundations of collectivistic and familistic value orientation, traditional gender role expectations within the constructs of machismo and marianismo, and key motivations within educación. Due to limited research exploring the leadership development experiences of Latinas from the fields of educational administration and union organization, the experiences of Latinas from the fields of educational administration and union organization, the experiences of Latinas from the fields of educational administration and union organization, the experiences of WOC student leaders at college campuses, and the range of designated leadership education programs in colleges and universities today. Though industrial leadership perspectives may not reflect the experiences and beliefs of all leadership educators and programs, the interdisciplinary nature of leadership study coupled with minimal training in light of growing expectations may contribute to an uncertain and inconsistent landscape for the leadership development of Latina college students. This examination of Latinx cultural factors alongside these facets of leadership research help to paint a picture of the incongruent messages surrounding leadership, gender, and culture encountered by Latina college students every day.
The College Environment

As colleges and universities nationwide are tasked with shaping students to be leaders in their communities, understanding how leadership development occurs in these environments is crucial. Latina college students currently lack a wide body of research exploring their experiences with leadership development on college campuses (Lozano, 2015; Onorato & Musoba, 2015). Throughout this review I will center Latina college students in exploring how the college environment influences the leadership development of this population. In exploring this question, I will utilize a framework of campus racial climate developed by Hurtado and associates (Hurtado, Clayton-Pederson, Allen, & Milem, 1998; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005). Dimensions of this framework include: compositional diversity, historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion, psychological climate, behavioral climate, and organizational/structural diversity (Hurtado et al., 1998; Milem et al., 2005).

Within each dimension, I draw connections to extant literature examining the experience of Latinx and, when possible, Latina college students specifically. Additionally, I identify key observations each aspect of campus racial climate may have for Latina college students’ leadership development. As the role of cultural values has been a central focus throughout this collective work, the significance of cultural values and values clashing is explored within select dimensions. I conclude this work by sharing considerations for future research. I pause to recognize that the leadership development of Latina college students is not limited to the confines of the college environment. Rather, due to limited available research regarding the leadership development experiences of this specific population, I draw on available research related to Latinx college student leaders and draw connections to Latina college students when
possible. As a result, much of this available research centers its focus on leadership activities related to higher education and designated leadership programs within the college environment.

**Examining Campus Racial Climate**

When considering how the college landscape influences the leadership development of Latina college students, viewing the college environment through the lens of racial climate offers insight into the unique experiences of this population. In exploring this concept, I utilize a model of campus racial climate originally offered by Hurtado et al. (1998). Comprised of the four dimensions of compositional diversity, historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion, psychological climate, and behavioral climate (Hurtado et al., 1998), this work was later expanded to include the fifth dimension of organizational and structural diversity (Milem et al., 2005). This framework serves as a lens through which to examine the college environment with special attention paid to key influences on the leadership development of Latina college students.

**Compositional Diversity**

The dimension of compositional diversity speaks to the “numerical and proportional representation of various racial and ethnic groups on a campus” (Milem et al., 2005, p. 15). Though only one aspect of campus racial climate, this dimension often draws the most focus from higher education leadership due to its tangible ties to recruitment and programmatic efforts (Hurtado et al., 1998). However, simply increasing the numbers of students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups can offer both benefits and challenges for students and administrators alike. In exploring this aspect of campus racial climate, I will narrow my attention to campus climate research related to two unique contexts within higher education: predominantly White institutions (PWIs) and Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs).
**Predominantly White Institutions.** PWIs are institutions where a majority of the student population identifies as White or Caucasian (Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002). Researchers have found that Latinx students “tend to have more negative perceptions of the campus climate than White students” (Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996, p. 138). Similarly, Hurtado (1994) and Loo and Rolison (1986) posited that Latinx students were more likely to report negative perceptions of campus culture and weaker sense of connection. Hurtado (1994) found that Latinx students are more likely to experience tensions related to race and ethnicity on college campuses where they perceive a lack of support from university administration and faculty. Researchers also found that Latinx students with a working knowledge of White culture encountered less stress when in PWIs (Hurtado et al., 1996). This research suggests that communities where Latinx students comprise a smaller percentage of the population lead Latinx students to experience a lack of connection, support, and sense of belonging.

**Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).** In the case of HSIs, perceptions of campus culture are significantly different. According to U.S. Department of Education, HSIs are institutions with at least 25% Hispanic students enrolled including undergraduate, graduate, part-time, and full-time students (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities [HACU], 2018). The number of HSIs in the United States is expected to grow as a larger number of Latinx students enter colleges and universities (Medina & Posadas, 2012). In a study of Latinx student experience during their first and second year of college, Hurtado et al. (1996) found that students who attended colleges or universities with “higher Hispanic enrollments were more likely to report ease in academic adjustment in their second year of college” (p. 145). This ease of transition in Latinx college students’ experience is significant as researchers contend that university comfort can serve as an indicator for student success (Dayton, Gonzalez-Vasquez,
Martinez, & Plum, 2004). Dayton et al. found that “tight-knit communities with other Latino students help to create a supportive climate in which students can share similar experiences” (p. 38). This shared experience with students may speak to a closer alignment of cultural values, leading to a welcoming and supportive environment for Latinx students.

Involvement in leadership activities. With regard to on-campus involvement, an institution's compositional diversity can influence how Latinx students experience leadership activities. In the case of Latinx students at PWIs, Lozano (2015) found that students struggled with being one of the few Latinx students on their campus and chose to engage in leadership activities that allowed them to advocate for programs to support students sharing a similar cultural background. Beatty (2015) found that culturally based student organizations served as a space of community for Latinx students in PWIs, noting that many students “first experience leadership through their involvement on campus and specifically in Latin@ interest student organizations” (p. 51). This research suggests that for some Latinx students within PWIs, Latinx-specific student organizations serve both as communities of support and engagement for Latinx students.

With regard to student involvement in leadership activities, research indicates that HSIs yield contrasting perceptions of the college environment in Latinx students. In a case study exploring the experiences of Latina student leaders at a HSI, Onorato and Musoba (2015) found that Latina students viewed the HSI environment as culturally supportive and contributed to their decision to be involved in mainstream leadership opportunities. Furthermore, within the HSI context, Latina college students were found to be more likely to begin their leadership experiences in mainstream student organizations and continue their development throughout their college career (Onorato & Musoba, 2015). This finding is in stark contrast to the
experiences of Latinx students in PWIs who gravitate towards culturally-based students organizations as a support for their cultural experience (Beatty, 2015).

In an analysis of data derived from the Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students (BEAMS) research project, Bridges, Cambridge, Kuh, and Leegwater (2005) determined minority-serving institutions (MSIs) to be supportive, hospitable spaces for students underrepresented within higher education. Despite these benefits, it is still crucial to acknowledge that the environment of a HSI does not address all issues of race and racial climate for Latinx students. Onorato and Musoba (2015) aptly cautioned that “while an HSI is distinctive from a predominantly White institution, we cannot assume that it is not a part of the broader US society and subject to the same dominant Euro-American culture” (p. 16). Latina college students’ involvement beyond culturally-based student organizations within HSIs suggests that college environments with a higher composition of Latinx students provide nurturing and supportive spaces for engagement. Research found that the PWI may also thrust students into leadership roles in order to better advocate for support and services (Beatty, 2015).

**Historical Legacy of Inclusion or Exclusion**

In addition to the demographic composition of colleges and universities, the history of exclusion of Latinx students can offer insight into how Latina college students experience the college environment and leadership development. According to Milem et al. (2005), the historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion dimension refers to history of segregation in institutions of learning in the United States. Traces of racialized practices have lasting effects on institutions of higher learning, particularly “in the maintenance of policies that serve a homogeneous population on predominantly white campuses” (p. 16).
As previously explored within this collective work, cultural values offer key insight into what behaviors and practices a particular society deems desirable and worthy of replication (Hofstede, 1980). When considering the experiences of Latinx students in collegiate environments, there is a growing territory of research exploring values clashing. As colleges and universities were first created with a White male orientation (Gloria & Pope-Davis, 1997), the highly individualistic structures of scholastic achievement, evaluation, and independence are a stark contrast to the communal values espoused by cultures grounded in collectivism (Medina & Posadas, 2012). Within U.S. higher education, the rigor of academic competition and the expectation of social relationships with students and teachers are grounded in individualism (Vasquez-Salgado, Greenfield, & Burgos-Cienfuegos, 2014). As previously mentioned, Latinx students are more likely to maintain a collectivist value set, placing a greater emphasis on their extended community and obligation to family (Sy & Brittian, 2008; Vasquez-Salgado et al., 2014). Vasquez-Salgado et al. characterized this tension as a “conflict between internalized demands for family obligation behaviors and internalized demands for academic performance” (p. 272). This misalignment of competing value systems can lead to cultural incongruence (Gloria & Kurpius, 1996), negatively affecting students’ well-being and connection to campus (Vasquez-Salgado et al., 2014).

When surveying existing literature specific to cultural values clashing in college student transition, there is a notable desert of literature dedicated to Latinx college students. Pockets of research exploring collectivist perspectives within Asian (Choi, 2002; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Hui & Triandis, 1986) and African American (Carson, 2009; Gushue & Constantine, 2003) communities exist, finding that both populations’ strong collectivist orientations clash with European-American views of family dependence. According to Vasquez-Salgado et al. (2014),
there is a gap in research related to the cultural obstacles Latinx students face when entering college. Vasquez-Salgado and associates noted that “cross-cultural value conflicts may arise due to differing value systems between the individualism of U.S. educational institutions and the collectivism of Latino families” (p. 366). Cross-cultural value clash is often mentioned as a factor when examining Latinx college student experience (Gloria & Pope-Davis, 1997; Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000; Raeff et al., 2000; Sy & Brittian, 2008). This research suggests that the cultural values espoused within higher education as a whole in practice, exclude the needs, motivations, and values of Latinx college students.

This misalignment of values between Latinx students and the collegiate environment can offer unique insight into Latina college students’ leadership development. In a study of Latinx student leaders at a PWI, students perceived Latinx culture as not being highly regarded within their college community (Lozano, 2015). However, Suarez (2015) found that Latinx students expressed interest in leadership programming that acknowledged and incorporated facets of Latinx culture. Suarez noted that feeling connected with and supported by college programs, resources, and administrators were crucial to students’ decision to engage with leadership activities. This research indicated that the exclusive practices of college environments via cultural values coupled with Latinx college students’ need to feel supported and reflected within leadership development programming, presents an incongruent and inhospitable landscape for the leadership development of Latina college students.

**Psychological Climate**

In addition to recognizing the historical legacy of exclusion of Latinx students and culture within higher education, it also imperative to consider how campus racial climate can influence Latinx students’ psychological perceptions of the collegiate environment. The
psychological dimension of the campus racial climate framework refers to individuals’ perceptions of racial discrimination displayed by individuals or institutions (Hurtado et al., 1998). These views are shaped by the surrounding environment and contribute to individuals’ decisions to engage with the institution (Hurtado et al., 1998). As outlined in previous dimensions, research indicates that Latinx students perceive their institutions to lack an appreciation of and interest in Latinx culture (Lozano, 2015; Suarez, 2015). In a study of Chicano and Latinx students at a PWI, Smedley, Myers, and Harrell (1993) found that students displayed acute awareness of their minoritized identity within the campus climate. This is further supported in a study of Latinx student leaders at a PWI who reported exhausting “time and energy struggling to overcome the ‘lonely only’ phenomenon” (Lozano, 2015, p. 14).

With regard to Latinx college students’ leadership development, there are similar considerations. Lozano (2015) found that Latinx student leaders in PWIs opted to form close bonds with Latinx students. Similarly, these students chose to engage in leadership activities where they could “gain a voice on campus and initiate programs that reflect their backgrounds and cultures” (p. 23). Lozano noted that this decision to build community and advocate for the needs of Latinx students on campus, at times, took the place of traditional academic opportunities. This research indicated that Latinx students’ psychological tensions in response to campus racial climate have the potential to influence both their experience of and engagement with leadership activities in colleges and universities.

**Behavioral Climate**

In addition to perceptions of campus racial climate, Latina college students’ social interactions with individuals across different races and ethnicities can offer key insights into their leadership development. According to Milem and colleagues (2005), the behavioral dimension
of campus racial climate refers to the nature of interpersonal interactions on campus. Within this dimension, social interactions between individuals across race and ethnicity can influence how individuals’ perceive and respond to the college environment. In this portion of the review, I narrow my focus to examine literature related to Latinx students’ interactions with faculty, staff, and peers.

**Faculty and staff.** Interactions with supportive faculty and staff are positively linked to students’ feelings of connection and belonging to their college community (Dayton et al., 2004). In examining the role of diverse faculty in supporting Latinx students’ transition to college, Dayton et al. found that while “some students favored having Latino staff and faculty, for other students, it was important only that faculty and staff support them, regardless of race or ethnicity” (p. 38). This research did not indicate that percentage of Latinx students alone is a solution to better support students as they navigate individualistic systems of education. Rather, this research suggests a need for faculty and staff to adopt inclusive and student-centered practices in order to appropriately support the leadership development of Latinx college students.

**Peers.** In a study of conflict resolution in peer relationships, Vasquez-Salgado et al. (2014) found that approximately 57% of Latinx first-generation students experienced conflicts in values with peers demonstrating more individualistic values. This is further supported by Tseng (2004) who found that Latinx young adults demonstrated a significant alignment with family interdependence compared to their European-American peers. Despite this lack of connection with European American counterparts, peer relationships play a critical role in Latinx students’ transition to college life. Connections and information-sharing among Latinx peers and upperclassmen was also noted to aid in establishing Latinx students’ sense of community (Attinasi, 1989; Hurtado et al., 1996).
In research exploring the intersection of race and gender, peer connection and mentor figures are crucial for women’s experiences of leadership (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). In a study of Latina college student leaders, Onorato and Musoba (2015) found that peer role models served to motivate students to engage in leadership activities and served as figures of support when navigating issues. Within this same study, Latina college students indicated that they sought out single sex environments including sororities and athletic teams for engagement (Onorato & Musoba, 2015). According to Onorato and Musoba, students “described these organizations as empowering to women and emulating the values of sisterhood, service, and personal growth” (p. 27). This research suggests that positive peer relationships offer Latina college students inspiration and support to engage in leadership development activities. With regard to the possible intersection of Hispanic serving institutions that are also single sex environments, I was unable to locate significant research regarding institutions with this designation and the experiences of their student population.

**Organizational/Structural Diversity**

In addition to social interactions, the organizational and structural forms of colleges and universities can influence how Latinx college students experience the collegiate environment. According to Milem et al. (2005), the organizational and structural diversity dimension speaks to how the structure and organization of colleges and universities favor select populations and “become embedded into these organizational and structural processes” (p. 18). Structural aspects of the college landscape can reflect these aspects of campus racial climate in the development of curriculum, allocation of funds, and hiring of faculty and staff, and in campus-wide decision-making (Milem et al., 2005). As the scope of this work is centered on the leadership development of Latina college students, within this section I focus this exploration on
a specific aspect within higher education leadership development: designated college leadership development programs.

**College leadership development programs.** The 1990’s served as a time of expansion for leadership education on college campuses (Dugan & Komives, 2007). As previously explored, the 1970s noted a paradigm shift when postindustrial models of leadership grew in favor among leadership scholars across disciplines (Dugan, 2017). These interventions vary in structure, from four-year long programs based out of a single office to informal initiatives dispersed throughout campus. In a study examining the leadership experiences of college students, Dugan and Komives (2007) found that "short, moderate, and long-term experiences all had a significant effect” on their measure of leadership efficacy among students who participated in leadership programs versus those who did not (p. 16). Yet, as traditional perspectives still remain commonplace in leadership study (Schertzer & Schuh, 2004), it is crucial to consider how these assumptions may influence emerging student populations within higher education. The following sections will highlight key considerations regarding how Latinx college students experience leadership development programs on college campuses.

**Content and structure.** As previously explored, leadership development programs take on a variety of shapes and approaches with regard to leadership. As leadership experiences can be present in multiple realms of the college experience, I posit that examining designated leadership development instruction and programming can yield insight into how leadership development can be experienced at colleges and universities. In a study of leadership programs at two state institutions, Arminio et al. (2000) identified traditional notions of leadership as consistently incongruent with the leadership experiences of WOC college students. It also crucial to note the demographic composition of students who participate in leadership
programs. In a study of a flagship leadership development program in the Midwest, demographic data indicated Latinx students to be the smallest population represented in attendance (Suarez, 2015). This low level of engagement in the presence of growing numbers of Latinx students in higher education calls to question if designated leadership development programs are attracting and supporting Latinx college students.

As traditional leadership perspectives and theories often serve as a foundation for leadership development programs, these findings suggest that leadership programs, in their bedrock, have the potential to disengage Latina college students. While leadership research has grown to include approaches aligning with relational and collective perspectives, traditional industrial approaches to leadership continue to take premium space in literature (Ospina & Foldy, 2009) and the perspectives of learners and educators (Schertzer & Schuh, 2004). Similarly, there is a notable lack of discussion surrounding race and social identity in leadership theories and leadership development curriculum (Suarez, 2015). Suarez noted that within leadership, concepts of diversity typically refer to diversity in skills and team member needs, rather than the diversity with regard to racial ethnicity or acknowledging the presence of oppression, privilege, and discrimination linked with select social identities. As Latinx students have expressed interest in connecting with leadership programming that incorporates facets of their cultural identities (Suarez, 2015), this lack of consideration of race suggest a missed opportunity to include Latinx students in leadership programming.

**Leadership educators.** In addition to the diversity in structure and variance in program missions and student populations, the leadership education and individual values of practitioners can influence the leadership development of the students with whom they engage. As leadership education grows in significance in the missions of universities nationwide (Dugan & Komives,
many higher education professionals are charged with crafting leadership interventions in addition to other responsibilities they hold (Owen, 2011). As these initiatives are added to current professional staff members’ responsibilities, those charged with leadership interventions may have minimal specialized training in leadership education (Dugan, 2011), placing an added strain on program implementation. Owen (2011) expanded on this further, stating that in addition to exploring current and emerging leadership research, leadership educators may be “vulnerable to playing out their own privileges, preference, and patterns on the students they encounter” (p. 110). Schertzer and Schuh (2004) noted practitioners’ past student leader experiences in college as contributing to an industrial, more traditional leadership perspective. During these formative years, some professionals “developed in an environment that most likely was industrial and at the very least, traditional” (p. 128).

**A clash of perspectives.** Similarly, research indicated that fundamental differences exist in how students from marginalized identities experience leadership and can in turn influence engagement in leadership development activities. Eagly and Carli (2004) contend that many leadership development approaches often heavily favored hierarchical concepts of authority. This approach is in direct contrast with research that has found Latina college students as favoring more collective approaches to leadership and being reluctant to embrace the title of leader (Onorato & Musoba, 2015). This misalignment in leadership perspectives and structure places students from underrepresented populations at a disadvantage in connecting with culturally-relevant leadership curriculum. With regard to Latina college students specifically, there is a notable lack of research highlighting how Latina college students experience leadership (Onorato & Musoba, 2015). Onorato and Musoba argued for the inclusion of Latina women into
“leadership curriculum by stating that students’ worth needs to be validated in order to increase goal attainment at the college level” (p. 40).

According to Suarez (2015), the rigid structure of leadership programs often require participants to attend workshops, events, and classes taking place at times and locations that exclude students from marginalized identities. Students who work multiple jobs or maintain significant family obligations may find these time requirements inaccessible (Suarez, 2015). As such, this lack of diversity in programming structure calls for students to choose between leadership activities and the demands of family, work, and school. Suarez noted university staff’s lack of attention to the intersectional identities of Latinx students as college students and family members can be mistaken for this population failing to prioritize education. This negation of the intersecting identities of Latinx students is troubling as this research suggests designated leadership programs in their delivery, content, and mission commonly fail to reflect the needs and interests of Latinx college students.

The college environment is complex and ever-changing as a result of internal and external influences (Milem et al., 2005). As the number of Latinx student entering higher education rises across two and four-year institutions (Fry & Lopez, 2012), it is imperative to consider how colleges and universities are inclined to support the leadership development of this growing population. In this review, I explored how the college environment influences the leadership development of Latina college students. I utilized a model for campus racial climate to explore select dimensions including: compositional diversity, historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion, psychological climate, behavioral climate, and organizational and structural diversity (Milem et al., 2005). These dimensions allowed me to examine literature related to Latinx student experiences on college campuses and explore key implications for the leadership
development of Latina college students specifically. The number of Latinx students on campus have the potential shape how Latinas engage in and experience leadership activities. Furthermore, insights garnered from this review suggest that aspects of institutional culture have the potential to influence Latina college students’ leadership development. In order to better understand the influence of the college environment on Latina college students’ leadership development, additional research is needed to help chart this relatively unexplored terrain.

**Limitations**

As previously explored, literature exploring the leadership development of Latina college students is notably scarce (Lozano, 2015). As such, a limitation of this work is the sheer lack of dedicated research on the experiences of this selected population. Additionally, there is further lack of research examining cultural values clashing for Latina college students. This dearth of research posed both a significant challenge in piecing together the literature landscape of leadership research and an opportunity for future research exploring Latina college students’ leadership development.

**Conclusions and Implications for Future Research**

Throughout this collective work, I explored how dominant cultural values interact with Latina college students’ values and influence their leadership development. I began by examining leadership research to unearth recurring cultural values using Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions theory. This examination led me to conclude that mainstream leadership research reflects cultural values aligning with traditional industrial approaches to leadership. With this in mind, I proposed the existence of fourth cultural value outside of those outlined by Hofstede: colorblindness and the assumption of Whiteness. This came as a result of industrial approaches to leadership reflecting a highly U.S. and White value orientation along with a
glaring lack of consideration paid to race and ethnicity in dominant leadership research. I continued this examination by exploring select Latinx cultural values and their implications for Latina college students’ leadership development. This inquiry led me to determine that the Latinx cultural values of collectivism and moral development along with expectations surrounding traditional gender roles have the potential to influence how Latina college students perceive leadership and engage with leadership activities. I concluded this examination by considering how the college environment is poised to support Latina college students’ leadership development. Within this review, I utilized a framework for campus racial climate to explore how demographic composition, practices of exclusion, interpersonal connections, and organizational structure can influence leadership development for this group. In considering extant literature, I determined that values-clashing and incompatible leadership programming approaches fail to acknowledge and address the intersectional needs of Latina college students.

Similar to the term Latinx and Latina, this collective work does not aim to essentialize the experiences of Latina college students to a rigid list of values and ideals. Rather, only to provide a more nuanced understanding of the mosaic of expectations, influences, and motivations that shape Latinas’ experience of leadership. Despite approaches to leadership development growing substantially on college campuses, there is considerable work to be done to craft empirically-supported leadership interventions for Latina college students. In response, this study is guided by the following questions: How do Latina college students at a HWCU define and interpret leadership development? Furthermore, how do dominant cultural values and Latinx cultural values influence Latina college students’ leadership development? And finally, how does the college environment influence Latina college students’ leadership development? By further exploring this unique intersection of Latina college students and leadership development, this
study contributes to research that can aid campus administrators as they re-envision leadership programs with this population in mind.
CHAPTER THREE

STUDY METHODOLOGY

As explored in Chapter Two of this dissertation, the experiences of Latina college students are not often examined in terms of leadership and leadership development. This study centers the intersectional experiences of Latina college students to aid higher education practitioners and institutions in achieving their goals of developing future leaders. Above, I have included a photo of my aunt Dora Alcozer, grandfather Alfredo Alcozer, and mother Anita Alcozer. I selected this image as it visually represents the close relationship between my grandfather and his two eldest daughters. My grandfather was known as a meticulous and procedure-orientated craftsman, concerned with methodically building and refurbishing fixtures and structures. He was known for being practical and instilled a strong work ethic in his daughters. My mother and aunt were similarly practice-oriented and went on to both work within educational institutions professionally. As this chapter is designed to present the methodology and practical execution of this study’s design, I found it fitting to visually depict
the bridging of practical experiences across generations. In this chapter, I present the research questions guiding this study, offer insight into the methodological and epistemological influences bolstering this work, provide a rationale for the use of qualitative research in this study, and outline how data was collected and analyzed for this work.

**Research Questions**

This study is guided by the following research questions centered on the experiences of Latina college students and their leadership development: How do Latina college students at a historically White college/university (HWCU) define and interpret leadership development? How do dominant U.S. cultural values and Latinx cultural values influence Latina college students’ leadership development? How does the college environment influence Latina college students’ leadership development?

**Methodological Approach**

The aim of this study is to understand how Latina college students at a HWCU experience leadership and leadership development. As there currently exists a gap in research exploring the unique experiences of this population, the research paradigm of critical constructivism serves as a guiding epistemology for this work. According to Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) constructivism posits that reality is socially constructed and that multiple realities can exist. Similarly, a critical perspective acknowledges the interplay of power, privilege, and oppression in these realities (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). As previously explored, cultural values reflect traits and practices viewed as important by a given group or context (Hofstede, 1980). Critical constructivism is an ideal tool to examine how cultural values, often mirroring the power, privilege, and oppression present in the societies in which they are embedded, and can influence the leadership development of Latina college students.
Furthermore, research exploring the leadership development of college students is home to a notable gap in research on the experiences of Latina college students. Guided by critical constructivism, this study addresses this inequity by creating space to compose a multifaceted account of leadership not widely reflected in dominant research.

**Use of Qualitative Research**

According to Merriam (2009), qualitative approaches can provide a unique foundation for underexplored bodies of research. Qualitative research aims to understand “the meaning people have constructed … how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (p. 13). Though qualitative research can encompass a multitude of research practices, Merriam identified four key characteristics reflected within qualitative research: (1) process oriented and centered on the exploration of meaning, (2) the role of the researcher as the main mechanism for data collection and analysis, (3) inductive in nature, seeking to contribute to draw conclusions based on gathered data, and (4) richly descriptive. As the experiences of Latina college students have a minimal footprint within wider leadership research, I turned to select studies for guidance as to how to explore this topic. In a study exploring how Latinx college students experience and define leadership and leadership development at a public, historically White, large Midwest university, Lozano (2015) utilized qualitative research to gain insight into these students’ experiences. In particular, Lozano conducted two focus groups following a semi-structured interview format, allowing a definition of leadership to emerge from the students’ responses. Similarly, in a study of the leadership development of Latina college students at a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), Onorato and Musoba (2015) utilized both individual interviews and focus groups to explore the “essence” of Latina college students’ leadership identity development (p. 17). As research exploring the leadership experiences of Latinx college
students and Latina college students specifically is early in its expansion, the use of qualitative research is crucial to contributing to this budding area of research and drawing directly on the experiences of this population.

**Reflexivity and Positionality**

With this in mind, I recognize that my own intersectional identities can influence how I engage with the central questions of this study. In exploring my own positionality within this study, I find it necessary to explicate how my family membership has directly informed and fueled my pursuit of this research. The women in my family have been instrumental in shaping my identity as a community member, scholar, and student affairs professional. As a fifth-generation Tejana, I come from a long line of Texas natives with roots in Mexico and Spain. Many of the elders in my family, including my mother and grandmother, began their working lives as migrant workers throughout the state of Texas and much of the Midwest. It has been in the sharing of their experiences carving their own identities as Women of Color (WOC) that I learned how leadership can be present in areas often overlooked by U.S. society.

For instance, as a mother and laborer, my grandmother expertly planned her family’s travel routes, negotiated and managed payment with farmers, and coordinated all food and work supplies for the group. She had no formal schooling, and held no formal position or title but carried the heavy responsibility of ensuring the safety and success of her team. My grandmother’s story represents just a fraction of the varied experiences of women leaders within the United States. Although her narrative is so deeply ingrained in my own growth and development, I found that as I progressed through my education, similar depictions of leadership of women within communities of color were not present in most leadership literature. This awareness of the gap in research reflecting the experiences of WOC in leadership literature has
served as at the catalyst for my pursuit of this research. As a result, my identities as a family member and as a daughter and granddaughter were salient in my approach to this work.

In addition to my family membership, I also wish to highlight other key identities I hold and their implications for this study. I identify as a cisgender, heterosexual, fair-skinned Latina woman. I am a U.S. citizen who is college educated and able-bodied. I have directly experienced prejudice related to my identity as a woman. Simultaneously, my fair complexion has afforded me significant privilege in how I am perceived in predominantly White spaces. Along that same vein, I acknowledge that though I grew up aware of the central tenets of machismo, my direct experience with the cultural expectations of my collective family diverged from traditional gender norms. My family affirmed traditional gender role expectations to me at a young age. As I grew older and displayed interest in activities and clothing that departed from what was expected of a “little girl,” my parents supported this exploration. In addition to this support, I was also expected to pursue education and professional development past high school. However, clear expectations regarding my contribution to family and a collective value orientation were consistently present throughout my upbringing, leading me to make significant decisions around schooling and my professional career with respect to the needs of my immediate and extended family members.

More recently in my adulthood, I have grown keenly aware of the responsibility I have as both a daughter and caretaker. During the course of my graduate study, multiple members of my family have experienced significant health complications with our family having lost members along the way. Most notably, at the time of this study and written work, my mother survived a stroke and required extensive physical rehabilitation and care. Though my older sister and I shared caretaking responsibilities, she bore the brunt of around the clock care. My decisions
around how I choose to spend my time and my sense of responsibility to care for my mother are salient at the time of this study. Similarly, as I recently accepted a new professional role at a new institution, my thoughts with regard to how I navigate the higher education landscape as both a woman of color remains heavy on my mind. Most notably, as I approach the end of my doctoral study, I have reflected on how my decision to pursue a terminal degree is a departure from traditional gender norms within my cultural community. As such, I find that my relationship with family obligation and my own future within the realm of academia is influenced by my identity as a Latina.

Additionally, as I have worked professionally within leadership development and have continued my academic exploration of the field, I have grown more sensitive to the absence of non-dominant populations’ narratives in leadership study. With this in mind, I recognize that this study harbors personal ties to my own identities and experiences with leadership and leadership development. In hearing the experiences of other Latina women, I needed to regularly pause and reflect on how my own relationship with leadership, leadership development, and cultural values has transformed. This was completed through post focus group and individual interview journaling where I reflected on my own experiences related to the topics discussed during conversations. As part of these self-reflection journaling sessions, I was able to identify where my own thoughts, feelings, and experiences both aligned and diverged from those of participants.

**Research Methods**

As the aim of the study is to examine how Latina college students experience leadership development, a basic qualitative research approach is an appropriate vehicle to explore this phenomenon and contribute to the current body of leadership development literature. Within this
section, I provide an overview of how this specific qualitative study was conducted, granting particular attention to how participants were selected, how data was collected, and how analysis was completed.

Participants

Study participants were selected based on two distinct forms of sampling: purposeful sampling and snowball sampling. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), purposeful sampling (or purposive sampling) is beneficial for qualitative research where participants are chosen based on select criteria. In the case of this study, participants were selected based on three key criteria: (1) their identity as Latina; (2) their status as a currently enrolled undergraduate college student, and (3) their membership as a student at a selected HWCU. This criteria is significant as this study aimed to explore the intersection of participants’ gendered and cultural experiences as Latina women.

In exploring this rationale, I present each criterion in the order they were introduced above. (1) Latina identified: In this criterion, I sought to explore the experiences of students who identify as Latina. This specification of “Latina” is critical as it encompasses individuals with ancestry from multiple Latina American countries and allows for flexibility of students who identify as both Latina and another ethnic identity (such as “Chicana” or “Tejana”). (2) Currently enrolled undergraduate student: Though experiences of Latina-identified college graduates can prove useful, as the aim of this study is to provide practitioners with a more nuanced understanding of how currently-enrolled Latina college students experience leadership development, speaking to participants currently in the throes of this experience offered current and developmentally appropriate insight into how to properly support this population. (3) Enrollment at a HWCU: This criterion aligns with this study’s aim to center the experiences of
Latina college students in environments where they comprise the minority of the general population. As of 2018, Hispanic Serving Institutions comprise 14.9% of non-profit universities and colleges (HACU, 2018). This is a noted 492 HSIs total with 237 of these institutions being 2-year colleges and 255 categorized as four-year institutions (HACU, 2018). According to the Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities, HSIs are credited for serving 63% of all Hispanic students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), White-identified students comprised approximately 42% of fall undergraduate student enrollment within the United States in 2015 (2016). Though enrollment demographic can vary by region and institution type, it is important to note that this percentage drastically outweighs the presence of Students of Color. Similarly, in a study of Latinx student leadership development, Lozano (2015) centered her examination on a group of Latinx-identified students and how they defined and experienced leadership development at a HWCU. As research on the leadership development of Latina college student leadership is limited, grounding a study in the context of a HWCU offers unique insight into college student leadership development nationwide.

In addition to purposeful sampling, snowball sampling was utilized in the identification and selection of participants. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), snowball sampling allows researchers to identify additional participants through referrals from current study participants. This approach expands the network of potential participants beyond traditional forms of recruitment and aids in the identification of potential participants that meet the existing criteria. Within institutional environments where the number of Latina college students is significantly smaller, snowball sampling served as a beneficial tool for the study’s recruitment.
**Selected Institution**

For the purposes of this study, I limited my recruitment of participants to a single, religious, HWCU located in a major metropolitan city in the Midwest. This institution was selected based on its student enrollment being majority White-identified. Additionally, I was familiar with institutional staff and could serve to utilize those partnerships in participant recruitment and data collection. This HWCU had a total enrollment of approximately 16,000 students with an estimated 11,400 being undergraduate. As of 2017, an estimated 15.4% of undergraduates identified as Latinx. Until 2018, the institution hosted a designated co-curricular department dedicated to leadership development initiatives and an academic leadership minor for undergraduate students. The selected HWCU also provides diversity and inclusion services for first generation students, Students of Color, and students identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual.

**Recruitment**

Recruitment of study participants was completed using multiple avenues of communication: (1) E-mail announcement; (2) Social media posts; (3) Flyer distribution; and (4) Snowball sampling referral. After selecting a specific HWCU in which to set this study, I identified key campus departments linked to student involvement areas. In addition to these departments, I identified current higher education professionals with whom I had an existing relationship and sent an email requesting their assistance in circulating both the recruitment e-mail (see Appendix A) and recruitment flyer (see Appendix B). In addition to circulating these materials, I posted the recruitment messaging for social media directly to select institution-specific social media groups (see Appendix C) and requested campus partners’ assistance with circulating this social media announcement via their personal and departmental channels when
possible. As an incentive to encourage student participation, all recruitment materials highlighted that food would be provided to focus group participants and that participants could enter a drawing to receive a $40 Amazon gift card (two winners across both focus groups and supplemental interviews were selected and awarded).

All electronic and physical flyers included a direct link to an online participant interest form. Students who wished to be considered for the study completed the participant interest form (see Appendix D), sharing key information such as their name, contact information, availability, dietary restrictions, and specific cultural background. Once reviewed, participants were contacted and notified of their selection for the study (see Appendix E). With regard to the size of this participant sample, I aimed to secure a sample of size of approximately 10-15 students using focus group discussions. In a study examining leadership identity development of Latina college students at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Onorato and Musoba (2015) garnered insights from a sample size of 11 students. Similarly, in a study of Latinx college students at a Midwestern PWI, Lozano (2015) conducted two focus groups comprised of five participants each. Though I aimed to originally conduct two focus groups comprised of 5-10 participants in each group, I encountered significant difficulty with student scheduling which resulted in the inclusion of three virtual one-on-one interviews. As a result, I secured a total of 11 participants, eight of whom participated in one of two focus groups (three in one group and five in another) and three individual interviews.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study included the following: (1) Online Participant Interest Form; (2) focus group interviews, (3) individual interviews; (4) cultural artifacts. The participant interest form instructed students to provide important demographic information (related to the
study criteria) and also asked for additional information pertaining to students’ ideal method of communication as well as their general availability during a designated time frame. Participants were then prompted to indicate their reasons and interest in participating in this study.

**Focus group interviews.** For the purpose of this study, a focus group interview design was utilized to create space for Latina college students to convene and discuss their experiences with leadership. This interview structure was intended to allow students attending the same institution to convene and jointly respond and reflect upon their experiences with leadership and leadership development at a HWCU. Purposive and snowball sampling and the use of an online participant interest form were utilized to select study participants. In particular, the participant interest form requested interested students provide key information such as their contact information, availability, and dietary restrictions. Additionally, students were prompted to expand more on their identity as a Latina, listing specific cultural identifiers they utilize (e.g., Mexican, Ecuadorian, Cuban.). After the participant interest form, students participated in a focus group interview aligning with a constructivist epistemology as “data obtained from a focus group is socially constructed within the interaction of the group” (Merriam, 2009, pp. 93-94). In addition to interaction serving as a method to generate fruitful discussion, the role of community was another factor in my decision to gather data through focus groups. As this study took place within the context of a HWCU, a focus group structure created a unique space of community and support for participants.

Operating within this structure, participants were placed into one of two available focus groups (consisting of 5 to 10 participants each). Merriam (2009) noted this participant number as being ideal for focus group composition. Both focus groups took place on the selected institution’s campus and was designated based on a time fitting participants’ availability (as
provided on the Online Participant Interest Form). Additionally, prior to each focus group interview, all scheduled participants received a text message with a reminder on the focus group date, time, and location. Prior to the start of each focus group, participants were provided the study consent form for review. Participants were invited to sign two copies of their consent form – one for the researcher and one for their own records. Focus group interviews and individual interviews were video recorded and I served as the interviewer for all sessions. In the event that a participant was unable to attend the scheduled focus group due to an emergency or unexpected obligation, I arranged an individual interview with the participant in order to ensure that their experience was included in the data collection. Additionally, in the event that an in-person interview was not possible, virtual individual interviews were conducted. Participants meeting virtually were provided the study consent form prior to their scheduled interview in order to review, seek clarification, and sign. Virtual participants were required to return a signed PDF before the virtual interview could begin.

**Interview protocol.** A total of two focus groups and three virtual one-on-one interviews were conducted as part of this study. One focus group was comprised of five participants and one focus group was comprised of three participants. Both focus groups and virtual interviews lasted approximately 1-1.15 hours in length. With regard to how focus groups were conducted, each began with an overview of the Focus Group Consent form (see Appendix F). Participants reviewed and signed the form, returning the signed copy of the form to the facilitator and retaining a signed copy for their personal records. I proceeded with introducing myself as the facilitator for the focus group conversation and reviewed the introductory script of the Focus Group Protocol (see Appendix G). Participants were then instructed to select a pseudonym of their choice to be utilized throughout the discussion. Temporary name badges were provided as
a way for participants to acknowledge and refer to others by these names. Participants were then prompted to introduce themselves to the group by providing their pseudonym, major, and year. After providing this introductory information, participants were prompted to share their reasons for participating in this study. The focus groups followed a semi-structured interview design. According to Merriam (2009), a semi structured interview design “allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (p. 90). As the leadership experiences of Latina college students is underrepresented in leadership development research, a structure that affords this flexibility is ideal in helping researchers to understand and document this population’s experiences. Furthermore, this interview structure allowed the conversation to evolve based on the personal experiences of participants.

With regard to individual interviews, a similar process was followed with slight modifications (see Appendix H and Appendix I). Prior to the start of the virtual interview, I provided participants with an electronic copy of the consent form for their review. Participants were instructed to review the form and direct questions related to the interview to the facilitator at the start of the virtual conversation. For added measure, I once again reviewed the consent form with each participant to ensure that requirements were clear and that they understood the scope of the study and their rights as a participant. Before beginning the interview, participants were required to submit an electronic signed copy of the form via email. Once received, I instructed the participant to select a pseudonym of their choice for use throughout the interview if needed. Similar to the in-person focus groups, virtual interviews were video recorded and lasted approximately 1-1.15 hours.
**Cultural Artifacts**

In an effort to inspire discussion among group members and provide additional insight into how participants’ conceptualized their experience of leadership and leadership development, participants were instructed to bring a cultural artifact with them to their interview or focus group conversation. Participants were advised to bring an item that they felt reflected their relationship with leadership and leadership development and were encouraged to share details about the item and explore how this item reflects their experience with leadership development with the larger group. Participants shared details of their selected artifacts as they introduced themselves to other participants. The artifacts provided by participants included: a ring belonging to her mother signifying good luck; an empty picture frame; a journal given to her by a mentor; a Latina sorority membership pin; a framed photo of her parents; an award from an on-campus women of color organization; a photo of a former teacher and family friend; a Latina sorority membership folder; and a student leader cap from a campus-wide event. Two participants were unable to bring their artifact to the focus group discussion or individual interview.

**Data Analysis**

Data gathered during the focus group and individual interviews was transcribed within two to four weeks of each focus group or interview. Once completed, interview transcripts and field notes were reviewed and coded according to an open coding approach. According to Merriam (2009), open coding involves reviewing study materials for themes and insights based on potential connections to the study’s questions. Open codes were identified based on their connections to the research questions guiding this study. In particular, I selected specific sentences or concepts from focus group and interview transcripts that spoke to how participants
defined leadership with special attention paid to the influence of cultural values and the college environment. To ensure that codes were thoroughly considered, I completed an open code analysis of each transcript no less than three times across on three different days. This revisiting of transcripts aided in ensuring that I analyzed each transcript across different time frames, allowing additional insights from the review of other focus group and interview transcripts to inform the coding process.

Once open codes were completed, I utilized axial coding to group first order codes according to emergent themes and subthemes. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), axial coding is a vital step in the analysis of qualitative research as it can provide insight into recurring themes or patterns present in the data. For example, multiple participants shared insights from their family regarding how they will need to put forth more effort and may encounter more hardship as a Latina. Those codes were eventually grouped into a larger theme of “Inevitable Opposition.” Upon drafting preliminary findings, I shared the focus group transcripts with participants’ statements highlighted as well as a summative statement of said findings with participants as a strategy to ensure I accurately interpreted their stories. According to Merriam (2009), member checking is a routine and necessary step for researchers to ensure their work accurately reflects the perceived reality of their subjects. The participant pseudonyms were reflected in the provided transcripts. As focus group and individual interviews were the main source of data collection for this study, ensuring that findings accurately reflect what participants shared during discussion was crucial. Upon sharing the interview transcripts and summative findings with participants, three of the 11 participants responded and indicated that they perceived both the transcripts and summary to accurately reflect their experience.
Limitations

As the primary form of data collection for this work was through focus group discussion, one significant limitation of this study is confidentiality. Though I took steps as a researcher to ensure confidentiality with regard to identifying information, there was no guarantee that study participants would not disclose content discussed during the focus group. An additional limitation of this study stemmed from the use of individual interviews for three of the participants. With the inclusion of individual interviews, the sense of joint connection and community provided by a focus group was notably inaccessible. Furthermore, slight modifications to the interview protocol were necessary. These modifications included the omission of group-centered language (for example, “does anyone have a story about” to “do you have a story about”). Additionally, it is also crucial to recognize that this topic of study contains potential linkages to aspects of my own personal and professional identities. Furthermore, qualitative research can pose a unique challenge with regard to human interaction and the personal beliefs and biases of the researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In an effort to reflect upon my own relationship with leadership, leadership development, and cultural values, I engaged in post-focus group journaling. I completed a written reflection within one week after each focus group and individual interview. In this written reflection, I documented personal insights and responses to stories and themes shared in the discussion. I also prompted myself to explore personal links to this discussion and provided my own responses to the primary research questions guiding this study. These reflections aided in documenting my personal responses and feelings throughout the data collection process and provided a written account that assisted me in documenting any potential bias throughout data collection and analysis.
Trustworthiness

Given the personal nature of this topic of inquiry, it is crucial to consider how trustworthiness was ensured throughout all stages of this study. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) described the credibility and authenticity of a study as “trustworthiness.” According to Lincoln and Guba (1986), practices such as member checking, securing thick descriptive data, and maintaining an audit trail assist with producing rigorous and trustworthy research. With respect to this study, I utilized member checking to ensure that the stories, experiences, and insights of participants were accurately captured by the interview transcript and subsequent summary. This allowed participants the opportunity to review said documents and offer clarification or added insight on what was captured. With regard to this study’s transferability, I offer thick narrative description to provide additional insight into the context of this study. This description will aid others in determining if findings may be applied to other contexts. Finally, I utilized an audit trail in the form of field notes and post-interview journaling to provide insight into how the study was conducted as well as insights and reflections that emerged throughout all stages of the study.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I provided an overview of how I conducted this study examining how Latina college students experience leadership development at a HWCU. In this chapter, I provided a rationale for the use of qualitative research and explained the epistemological foundation guiding this work. I provided an overview of my own positionality as a researcher and its implications for this study. I presented an outline for the role focus groups and individual interviews had in data collection for this topic and highlighted how data was documented, coded, and interpreted. With this structure, I outlined a qualitative study that centered the experiences
of Latina college students as a way to acknowledge and attend to the leadership development needs of this population within higher education.
A newly-elected student government president gathers her belongings. Her first official meeting has ended and she prepares to join the rest of her team at the bonfire during this first night of their student government retreat. The young woman pauses to watch other students leave the space. Energized and buzzing. Ideas and questions about how to improve life on their campus filled their meeting. She is warm with excitement. This is what it will be like, she thinks.

After this long day of training, she looks forward to shedding the weight of this uncomfortable new title and roasting marshmallows with the rest of the senate. She drifts down the empty hallway to her hotel room, her bulky senate binder leaving painful white lines on her fingertips. As she approaches her door, she hears a whisper from a familiar voice just a few rooms down. It’s Daniel, the outgoing President. One of a large cluster of graduate and outgoing Latinx leaders in student government. He’s attending the retreat to offer his support
and reconnect with the senate one last time before graduation. “Hey Madam President. Could you come here for a moment?”

She spins around and offers a tired smile. “For sure.” As she approaches the door to his room, she hears the laughter and stirring of familiar voices. Alex. Karen. Sebastian. White members of the new senate. A member of her cabinet. She enters the room and sees their faces - a welcomed sight. But something is different. When she enters, their eyes dart away. Her Vice President Karen, a Latina, nervously fidgets and takes a seat on a nearby sofa. “What’s going on?” the young woman asks.

Daniel smirks, offering her a seat directly across from the bed. The young woman sits, nestling the heavy binder on her lap. The former president casually plants himself on the bed, exhales deeply, and loudly slams his palms on his knees. “I want to help,” he says sternly. “I don’t like what I saw in Senate today. We are worried.” Time slows down. The young woman scans the faces in the room. “Worried? About what?” Before others can answer, Daniel continues. “You didn’t take charge. You let your secretary butt in too much. He wants to take over and you’re letting him. You need to show them how to lead. Show them you’re the president!”

Time slows down further. Her heart races. What was this? She doesn’t understand. She musters a question. “What do you mean? I was asking for their ideas - their opinions. What’s wrong with that? I wanted to know what they thought.” Daniel scoffed. “That’s not what you’re supposed to do. YOU lead THEM. They need direction! I see you starting to lose control and I don’t want to see it. They all agree,” he says, motioning to members of the group. The young woman scans the room once more, seeking confirmation of Daniel’s statements. She receives some nods and, from her Vice President Karen - her running mate - she sees nothing but bangs
covering her eyes. In the minutes that followed, Daniel continues his soliloquy, sharing his concerns - his worry that his legacy has fallen into the wrong hands. His cutting words grow dull as she pushes his voice into the background, focusing instead on the hum of the air conditioner. During his next pause, she interjects.

She is measured. Her voice low and her words careful. “Daniel. Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I believe our approaches to this are ... different and I am glad you felt comfortable enough sharing your concern with me.” The young woman pauses and makes eye contact with Alex and Sebastian, the newest members of senate whom she only met earlier that afternoon. “I mean it. I want to hear from others and that’s how I do this. I ask questions. I get feedback.” She looks to her Vice-President whose eyes are still cast downward, hidden by her dark curtain of hair. She returns her eyes to her new senate members, saying: “I’m supposed to meet everyone at the bonfire. Let’s talk more there. I’ll be there in a bit.” Alex and Sebastian nod. Daniel opens his mouth to speak again but the young woman jumps to her feet and reaches for the door. “Have a good night,” she says and briskly exits. As the door shuts, she thinks she hears Daniel caution, “Make me proud!” Her stomach sinks and she darts to her room, taking extra care not to slam the door in her haste.

She casts her binder to the ground. She shakes. Livid. Hurt. Betrayed. The tears come. She was ambushed. Entrapped in a room where her reactions were being catalogued and judged. He called her weak because she ASKED her senate - she didn’t TELL them. If she lashed out at Daniel, she would have been labeled as unbalanced. If she had cried, she would be been deemed too emotional. She thought back to her campaign and the cruel comments from her opponents’ supporters. “She doesn’t look the part.” “She doesn’t have what it takes.” She narrowly evaded a planted sexist question during her presidential debate asking if a woman
could hold her own against University administration. It was meant to rattle her but she pushed through. She had worked so hard to be taken seriously by her peers. Today’s senate meeting felt like she had turned a corner. People were excited by the ideas they discussed in that meeting. It felt right. It felt like who she was supposed to be. What was wrong with that?

She changes her clothes and waits several minutes for the redness to leave her eyes. This is what it will be like, she knows. The young woman looks into the mirror, attempting to make sense of her thoughts. Incomplete, she is determined to go to the bonfire. The young woman exits her hotel room with new resolve. This is what it will be like. She will be ready next time. Next time she won’t be rattled. Next time, she’ll be unapologetic. Next time she’ll have the words. Next time, she’ll know who she is.

A young, Latina, student government president. Ambushed in a hotel room and faced with a choice regarding her identity as a student leader on her campus. This vignette represents the complexity of how Latinas can experience leadership development in college - the delicate balance of exploring one’s own approach to leadership while navigating the turbulence of others’ expectations. The purpose of this study was to explore how Latina college students at a historically White college/university perceive and experience leadership and leadership development. I organized the findings of this study into six distinct themes: (1) Family as Blueprint for Leadership, (2) Visibility as Leadership Engagement, (3) Inevitable Opposition in the Pursuit of Leadership, (4) the Enduring and Resisting Latina’s Experience of Leadership, (5) Leadership as a Collective Process, and (6) Influence of University Faculty, Staff, and Peers on Leadership Development. Each theme draws from the experiences and insights of participants in the sharing of their stories. I open this chapter with two family photos of personal significance: (1) my grandparents picking cotton in south Texas, and (2) my mother at a student-run event at
her university. My grandparents spent the majority of their working lives as migrant workers in the regions of south Texas and the Midwest. My grandmother and grandfather worked collectively with both immediate and extended family members to work and provide for their larger family network. The values they incorporated into their work remained present in the values they instilled in their children and grandchildren. I selected this second image as it depicts my mother during her college years. In this photo, she is at a student-organized event and dons a university sweatshirt. This photo is significant as it presents my mother in the throes of her pursuit of a collegiate degree and leadership engagement on-campus. These images presented side-by-side present both the foundation and the success of what my grandparents had envisioned for their children. These images both serve to honor my grandparents and mother and align with the theme of family influences on leadership engagement explored throughout this chapter.

**Theme One: Family as Blueprint for Leadership**

When I think about leadership I think about my father a lot because he was kind of the first blueprint for leadership I had seen. He’s the only person in his position who doesn’t have a college degree and he’s the only Latinx person in upper management at his job. So it’s kind of like the ‘American dream,’ right? – Sara

All participants of this study cited one or more family members as influencing their conceptualization of leadership as well as their decision to engage with leadership development throughout college. Participants referred to parents, siblings, and extended family members as figures of support in their pursuit of a college education and leadership development. In exploring this larger theme related to family serving as an underlying guide for participants’ experience of leadership, I identified two additional sub-themes related to this influence: (1) Family Sacrifice as Leadership and (2) Family Influence on Pursuit and Engagement with
Leadership.

**Sub-Theme: Family Sacrifice as Leadership**

Though I explore the concept of sacrifice in multiple themes within this chapter’s findings, the role of sacrifice in how participants conceived of leadership in relationship to their family warranted specific exploration. This is particularly unique as all participants identified as first generation college students and as members of an immigrant family. For participants, “sacrifice” took the shape of financial support and the steps family members took to ensure their overall wellbeing in the pursuit of a college education. This took the form of periodic words of encouragement and working to ensure that their children were able to financially afford school supplies or cover gaps in tuition. Though all women expressed that they were the first in their family to pursue a college degree, nearly all participants highlighted the role of their family members’ support in navigating this unfamiliar terrain. Nina recalled a common practice by her mother during her late night study sessions:

I remember growing up and by the time I reached fourth or fifth grade, my parents could no longer help me with my homework because they didn’t have that kind of education. But they still tried to help me go to school. If I was up until midnight studying, my mom would wake up at some point and make me hot chocolate and give me bread. She would be like, “Here - eat something.”

Though her parents were unable to support her academically, their support took the form of words of encouragement, lost sleep, and the occasional *un pan con chocolate* during a late-night study session. All participants cited their parents as offering similar expressions of support.

In addition to both financial and emotional support, a unique sacrifice in the face of immense risk emerged for seven of the 11 participants. With regard to sacrifice, these participants specifically referenced their family’s decision to immigrate to the United States as an act of leadership. Esperanza reflected on her family’s experience with immigrating to the
United States:

I see leadership as like sacrifice for the greater good. Like my parents are immigrants. Crossing the border here from Mexico - that's a form of leadership to me. That's what that is, you know. Sacrifice for the better good. They came here so I could have an education.

For Esperanza, her parents’ decision to immigrate to the United States stemmed from a desire to pursue a vision in the form of financial stability and education for their children. Similarly, Maria highlighted her own parents’ decision to immigrate, saying: “They had to give up a lot of things in order to give us a better life … I just think about a lot of the sacrifices and they didn't do it individually - they did it collectively.” Maria viewed her family’s decision to immigrate to the United States as a collective sacrifice, one that deeply resonated with her throughout her collegiate study. Similar to other participants, the pursuit of a better life in the face of risk demonstrated leadership capacity.

In addition to viewing the act of immigration as a demonstration of leadership, participants noted additional insights gained from their parents’ immigrant identity related to resilience and persistence. Esperanza shared:

Like when we first got here, it was really hard. They didn't know the language. They had to find a job – a place to stay. There were all these obstacles and every reason to go back but they stayed. Like they taught me - it's going to get hard and there's going to be bumps and barriers and you're going to get caught up in the smaller things but you need to keep the bigger picture in mind.

She reflected on her parents’ lessons of persisting in the presence of obstacles. For Esperanza, this translated to the understanding that though the pursuit of a vision may be marred with challenge, it is important to maintain perspective.

In addition to persistence, another participant expressed how negative perceptions of Latinx immigrants in U.S. society influenced her approach to leadership. She expressed the importance of “treating others the way you want to be treated,” noting how her family grappled
with the stigma of being viewed as “less than” in U.S. society. She noted that her family stressed the importance of treating others with dignity, compassion, and respect. She said, “We see how bad it is to be treated as less than and so we definitely don’t want others to feel that way. That’s how my family was raised.” For Emily, her family’s encounter with anti-immigrant and anti-Latinx sentiment in the United States prompted her family to espouse a message of compassion. This self-sacrifice denotes an understanding that leaders should serve as barricade for poor treatment. Leaders have the collective responsibility to foster a legacy of compassion and respect, despite how others treat them.

The influence of family sacrifice was evident throughout participants’ interviews. For the Latinas who participated in this study, family members demonstrated support financially and through caring actions. A majority of participants viewed their family’s sacrifice of abandoning the familiar in the pursuit of a better life for their children through immigration as not only a tremendous personal sacrifice but as an act of leadership in the pursuit of a shared vision. As such, this served as a substantial influence on participants’ view of leadership as being greater than one’s own personal needs and for the betterment of a larger whole.

**Sub-Theme: Family Influence on Pursuit and Engagement with Leadership**

Based on the experiences and insights shared by study participants, family members influenced the ways in which the women sought out and interacted with leadership. In exploring this influence, two distinct insights emerged from participants’ stories: (1) work ethic and (2) compulsion to act.

All participants expressed that family members stressed the importance of displaying a strong work ethic. Participants described parents, siblings, and extended family members as stressing the notion of “working hard” as linked to succeeding in life. Multiple participants cited
the importance of working diligently as influencing how they approached their on-campus involvement in student organizations and academic responsibilities in the classroom. These participants viewed the concept of leadership and success as intimately linked to the amount of effort and diligence they exerted on a consistent basis. Sara shared how her father’s experience as an immigrant in the United States served to inspire her “leadership blueprint,” acting as guide for how to navigate leadership roles in her own life. Sara shared that though her father’s experience navigating leadership positions as an immigrant in the United States felt “distant” to her, she cited her father’s experience as an inspiration for how she can and should approach leadership experiences in her life.

Expanding on the importance of maintaining a strong work ethic, nearly all participants either directly referenced or agreed with the sentiment of needing to exert more effort or having to work “twice as hard” in connection to leadership. Some participants perceived the need to work harder as stemming from the struggle to be taken seriously by peers, educators, and the public at large. Six of the participants specifically referenced moments in high school and college where they felt that peers and instructors perceived them as less intelligent or academically capable. In these examples, participants shared that this assumption motivated them to work harder to combat that perception. Though specific sources of what contributed to participants’ being viewed as less capable by others varied among the women, identifiers including ethnicity, gender, age, neighborhood, and immigration status emerged across their stories as possible reasons for why they believed they were viewed as less intelligent or capable.

In the case of Laura, her family espoused a message of hard work out of survival as a result of the negative perception of Latinx immigrants in the United States. She shared:

I've just been taught from my family that hard work is what will push you forward …
because if you're an immigrant you have to push twice as hard to get to the same place that you want. I think that my parents subconsciously planted that within me … that hard worker aspect and the fact that society views us as less. So we have to prove them wrong.

Although their reasons varied, messages of hard work from participants’ family members served as both a foundation and fuel to thrive academically and engage with leadership opportunities on campus.

In addition to work ethic, participants credited family members as influencing their compulsion to act and engage with leadership throughout their lives. Nearly all participants directly referenced parents, siblings, and extended family members as delivering a call to engage. This compulsion to act took different forms for participants - from advocating for oneself unapologetically to filling an unmet need to support others. Emily reflected on her mother’s guidance, saying “my mom always told me: ‘You need to take charge of your life and not let anybody bring you down. You can be the leader you need and want to be.’” Isabel noted a similar call to step in from her older sister. She shared: “One of the things that my older sister has taught me is to be that person you needed when you were younger.” Jasmine referenced the collective advice of her aunts as influencing her decisions to act as well, saying, “they're always telling me like: ‘be unapologetic and be who you want to be and don't be afraid to speak out.’” Participants directly linked familial messages of stepping in and engaging with advocacy and expression to their decisions to engage with leadership opportunities in college. These words go beyond the scope of general encouragement to instilling a sense of responsibility to act on behalf of either oneself or others.

The influence of family in the leadership development of this study’s participants is extensive and varied. Family members served as beacons of leadership inspiration in their
sacrifices towards participants’ pursuit of education and as foundational “blueprints” undergirding their leadership approaches and decisions to engage in leadership behavior.

**Theme Two: Visibility as Leadership Engagement**

*Whenever I walk into a space where I know that I'm one of few ... I like to be extra noticeable. So that people understand that, you know - there are Latinas on this campus. There are well-educated Latinas on this campus and they should be noticed.* – Jasmine

In the expression of their experiences, all participants shared insights related to the unique role of visibility in their pursuit and engagement with leadership. In exploring this larger theme of visibility as leading, I identified two sub-themes related to this focus: (1) Strategic Visibility and (2) Responsibility to be Visible for Others.

**Sub-Theme: Strategic Visibility**

The sub-theme of strategic visibility speaks to participants’ decisions to intentionally associate with peers and occupy spaces on their campus. For participants, their decisions to engage or be visible in select spaces directly connected to their Latina identity within the context of their historically White environment. Two distinct examples of strategic visibility emerged from participants’ interviews: (1) Intentional association with the identifier Latina; and (2) intentional occupation of spaces. All participants indicated that their connection to the term “Latina” emerged upon entering their collegiate institution. Multiple participants expressed that prior to entering college, they more closely connected with identifiers related to their specific country of origin or ancestry (e.g., Dominican, Mexican, Puerto Rican). Of the 11 participants, nine identified as Mexican-American, one identified as Dominican, and one identified as Ecuadorian-American. However, upon entering an environment where they comprised a smaller percentage of women from a similar background, these women chose to align themselves with the identifier of “Latina.” Sophia explained:
I feel like when I was younger, I think I did know I was Latina but I never said I was. I would say that I was Mexican American. I was focused on my culture ... so definitely coming to [college] and getting known as a Latina doing things - it helped. In like a predominately White institution, we can be the outcasts but we're also growing.

Jasmine expanded on this point of connection, noting the potential for shared experience among Latinas from different backgrounds. She said:

There's so many different and diverse cultural backgrounds but it's exclusive to the point where [Latinas] can identify with each other about similar things. You know, you may be from Mexico or Puerto Rico ... but there are a lot of things that we can identify with in terms of cultural similarities. You know, it's one thing to be a woman but it's another thing to be a Latina woman.

For nearly all participants, the identifier of “Latina” became a term of solidarity, forging a connection across women of different cultural backgrounds. In a collegiate environment where these women are among the few, this identifying label served to identify others and shine a light on the needs and accomplishments of this population.

In addition to connecting with the identifier of “Latina,” participants’ shared stories related to their decisions to intentionally enter and occupy spaces. Jasmine highlighted her own need to be visible in spaces on campus. She shared:

Being able to self-identify and like stand out in that sense is really important ... [Latinas] should be acknowledged ... their accomplishments should be recognized.

Laura shared a similar sentiment, exploring her drive to connect individuals and groups that may not otherwise connect. Laura said:

So I think for me, the way I lead is by just making sure that I have a good image on campus - that I have the connections that I need in order to network. I think that overall a leader makes sure to reach out to different groups that might not otherwise have come together in the first place.

For Laura, her identity as a Latina bolsters her drive to be visible and connected on campus.

Laura grounds her approach to leadership in the practice of intentional networking and creating
spaces of connection for others. This sentiment was further supported by participants when asked why they chose to participate in this very study. Three participants stated that though they were unfamiliar with academic research spaces such as interviews or focus groups, among their reasons for responding to recruitment messaging was the opportunity to connect with other Latinas on campus. Anna explained:

For me it's been kind of hard this past year because I haven't been able to connect with people in my classes who are Latina. So I thought it would be good to be part of this study so I could meet more Latinas.

Anna’s desire to identify and connect with Latina-identified college students influenced her decision to engage with this research project. Anna deliberately chose to enter this space as a way identify and connect with Latinas and expand her support network on campus. Additionally, though I took precautions to maintain participants’ privacy with pseudonyms, at the conclusion of both focus groups, multiple participants exchanged contact information with some even making plans to reconnect on campus later. I share this observation as it encapsulates the spirit of strategic visibility in how some participants relinquished anonymity as a way to strategically expand their social network on campus.

**Sub-Theme: Responsibility to be Visible for Others**

Extending on the notion of visibility further, multiple participants expressed feeling a sense of responsibility to occupy unfamiliar and inhospitable spaces in an attempt to be visible for other students with marginalized identities. Though I observed the motivations of some participants as being linked to strategic visibility (as explored earlier in this theme), a second layer emerged related to participants’ feelings of responsibility to others in the sharing of their experiences. When asked their motivation for participating in this study, nearly all participant responses indicated that they felt a sense of obligation or compulsion to make visible the
experiences of Latina college students. Multiple participants directly acknowledged the absence of Latina voices in wider leadership discourse. Maria stated, “I feel like that's often understudied and not really an area that people are very interested in.” Isabel shared:

There is not a lot of research done with Latinas in leadership development ... and that's something that I feel like a lot of us already have in the roles life has provided us. So just like putting it out there is something I think is very important to do so that others can know that we are really doing these things even though it's not being said in books.

Here, Isabel highlights the disconnect between the narratives reflected within larger leadership discourse and the lived experiences of Latinas. Laura acknowledged a similar disconnect, sharing her feeling of responsibility to support future Latina college students. She reflected on her experiences with the discussion of leadership and leadership development in college, saying “it was never like covering my own experiences. So I guess I was interested to help out with [this study] so that in the future, Latinas in college can see what that looks like. See themselves.” For multiple participants, the need to occupy spaces and contribute to empirical knowledge stems from a sense of responsibility to both shine a light on the lived experiences of Latina college students and make available resources for others.

Expanding beyond raising visibility of Latinas in leadership discourse, participants’ sense of responsibility to be visible for others extended to other aspects of their identities. Esperanza recalled an experience during her junior year of high school. As she prepared for her college application process, she confided in a teacher that she was an undocumented student. She shared:

That's when I realized that I had to share that part of me … and she wanted me to like talk about it more. There were other dreamers at our school and she wanted to organize us and form like this panel and for us to speak about it to the school administration. And when she asked me to be part of it, I freaked out because I had never shared that with anyone - not even my friends. And so in that moment … I really wanted to say no but I knew that it was enough staying quiet. So then I agreed. I was part of the panel and I
disclosed my experience with the whole school - like school administration and stuff. And that was a big part of my life because it pushed me to do something as well. And it was really significant and it completely changed the school. There's a dreamer's club now. There's a scholarship every year and they fundraise money. So it was a really eye opening moment.

Despite the overwhelming risk of disclosing her undocumented status, Esperanza felt compelled to share her narrative and provide visibility to the lived experiences of undocumented students at her institution. Sara similarly spoke of her own philosophy of being visible for others in unfamiliar and unsafe spaces. Sara shared:

It's also kind of empowering in a way because when I think about it like yes - those places don't feel safe for me. But that also means there's someone else that doesn't feel safe in those spaces … Sometimes by virtue of being there, you can make someone feel better.

For these women, deciding to engage with causes and spaces stemmed from a sense of responsibility to acknowledge and improve conditions for peers with marginalized identities.

Latina college students’ decisions to intentionally be visible on campus coupled with a sense of responsibility to be visible for others suggests that for Latina college students in historically White colleges and universities, visibility can be a matter of both tactic and compassion.

**Theme Three: Inevitable Opposition in the Pursuit of Leadership**

*Being first generation is hard. Being Latina is hard. Being Latina in higher education is hard. – Isabel*

Throughout focus groups and interviews, the theme of inevitable opposition emerged across participant responses. Nearly all participants indicated that they have grown to expect opposition from others in their pursuit of leadership and leadership development. In exploring this theme of inevitable opposition, I identified two sub-themes related to this concept: (1) Structural Opposition, and (2) Being Pushed Out.
**Sub-Theme: Structural Opposition**

Nearly all students indicated that they have grown to believe that they will encounter opposition to their needs, goals, and visions from individuals and systems. Women noted that they developed these insights from family members’ experiences and from their own experiences navigating systems of education. Laura noted her family’s experience with anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States as highlighting that dominant systems (i.e. educational systems and dominant wider society) will serve as spaces of opposition. She said, “society will look at you as less so you will need to prove them wrong and show them that you're just as good or even better.” Laura connected this notion to the lessons she learned from her parents around pursuing her personal and professional goals. For Laura, showing others that she is “just as good or even better” reflects her understanding that she would face the resistance and devaluation of her experiences from larger society based on her Latina identity.

Additionally, multiple women specifically referenced their challenges navigating educational systems as contributing to their understanding that their pursuit of leadership goals would be marred with resistance. In reflecting on her experiences finding community with White peers and navigating her institution with her multiple intersecting identities, Isabel said “Being first generation is hard. Being Latina is hard. Being Latina in higher education is hard.” Other participants expressed similar sentiments, recollecting their experiences with opposition during their college application process. Jasmine noted her interaction with a White-identified high school guidance counselor during her college selection process. She recalled her counselor commenting on her decision to apply to multiple selectively competitive institutions, advising her to focus on her list of moderate or less selective institutions in order to avoid disappointment. Jasmine expressed that she understood the need to have variety however she viewed her
counselor’s repeated caution to avoid selective institutions as deflating. She noted the danger of deterring a student’s pursuit of their dreams under the guise of protecting them from disappointment as damaging, saying that such a practice “could be the reason why someone decided not to apply and doesn’t go and do what they want.” Jasmine went on to share how she questioned her guidance counselor’s own experience in their pursuit of college choice, saying, “where did [she] get her encouragement to get to where [she] is now? Wouldn’t [she] want to do that for other people?” Jasmine eventually enrolled at one of her selective enrollment choices.

Sophia noted a similar experience where teachers questioned her decisions to pursue her college application choices. Upon sharing her decision to apply to a selective institution, her math teacher advised her to reconsider, saying she would be “better off” applying to other, less selective institutions. She was accepted and in a later conversation with that same Mexican-identified teacher, she shared that he concluded that her identity as a Latina contributed to her acceptance into the university. Sophia recalls rebuffing his comment and regularly shares updates with that same teacher, ensuring him that she is still enrolled and performing well academically. For multiple participants, their college application process was not simply a clerical task during their high school career but an intentional hurdle in their pursuit of a larger goal for themselves: a college degree. These pivotal interactions in their pursuit of this goal has left a lasting imprint on their view of opposition in their pursuit of leadership and leadership development.

Multiple participants’ opposition to their pursuit of personal and academic goals have become an expected and in some cases familiar obstacle in their experience of leadership engagement during college. They expressed how such experiences have influenced their pursuit of leadership due to one or more of their intersectional identities and that opposition is an
inevitable part of their leadership journeys.

**Sub-Theme: Being Pushed Out**

Additionally, participants described being ostracized by both dominant and marginalized communities as influential to their approach to leadership on their campuses. For participants, this related to one or more aspects of their marginalized identities. Nina shared her experience attending a national student leadership conference on behalf of her department. She shared:

> When I went there it was a lot of students from like [predominantly White institution] schools and I realized very quickly I did not feel supported in my leadership just being at that conference. Like all Students of Color - we were segregated from the rest of the conference. Like we were supposed to have our own panel. We were supposed to be seated at our own tables. But once we got there, they completely ignored us. We had to keep fighting for our own things … in like smaller groups we would talk about leadership at our individual schools and we were automatically shut out. No one would listen to us … and it was a big feeling of just like - 'yes, you might be a leader at your own school but right now - you're not important.'

Nina went on to describe having to work with other Students of Color to represent themselves at a networking session as part of the conference. Despite a promise of a table by conference planners, the team quickly learned that no such accommodation was made. She said, “we told someone about it and they ignored us so we actually had to go outside of the room, find our own tables, find our own chairs, bring them and set it up how we wanted … just to be able to talk about things.” Nina’s experience of being shunned by White peers and conference planners left a lasting imprint on her leadership journey. Though she described the experience as negative, she reflected fondly on bonding with other Students of Color and her ability to occupy space in an environment that had cast them aside.

In addition to some participants sharing experiences of being disregarded by White peers in their pursuit of leadership development, multiple women highlighted being ostracized by others within the Latinx community as contributing to their experience of opposition.
participants noted the perception of there being a “mold” for what it means to be a Latina on campus and expressed frustration around the limitations this view of identity can place on women. Esperanza shared:

There's a mold to being Latina ... I know a lot of people who felt like that. For example a friend of mine - she's Colombian and she doesn't speak Spanish. You could assume that she's White because she does look White … she's really self-conscious about that. She feels like she's not considered Latina because she doesn't fit that mold. And so I've met a lot of people that do struggle fitting that mold and it's frustrating because it shouldn't be like that.

For Esperanza, a peer’s experience of the “mold to being Latina” on her campus indicates a pressure to conform to rigid standards of what it means to be Latina based on language and skin tone. Sara shared her own take on the complexity of her multiple intersecting identities in her campus community. She shared:

Well I think when we talk about identity in general, it's always kind of important to emphasize that other identities you hold always influence each other. Right. Like I'm a Latina. But I'm also a queer woman and I'm also a Woman of Color and those things can't be separate from each other.

Sara went on to share an experience of being pushed out within the Latinx student leader community on her campus. She described feeling disconnected at the start of her sophomore year, expressing that she experienced a lack of acceptance by other members of the Latinx community. In particular, she referenced her experience of a Latinx student organization on her campus as contributing to the notion of a Latina mold, saying, “At least what I've seen is a lot of anti-Blackness and a lot of kind of homophobia. It's not necessarily blatant but you know - if you walk in the room and you're not what they expect a Latina to look like, you feel the coldness in the room.” She went on to share:

I think sometimes we expect our communities to be 100 percent supportive just by virtue of being our communities and sharing identities with us. But there are times when peers try to push us down or try to stall us, you know? And I've had moments where I felt like
people were trying to isolate me from the community. And it's very hard to come back from that and be like - 'I want to be a leader in this community' - when you know there are people looking at you like ‘hey we don't want you here.’

Sara’s account of her Latinx student leader community promoting a singular vision of Latina identity paints an unsettling picture of conformity to racial, gender, and sexual norms. For Sara, Latinx peers knowingly or unknowingly espoused messages of conformity, in turn signaling a dismissal of Black and queer experiences. This distinct message of conformity depicts Latinx student communities as spaces of both support and dissonance for Latinas.

The presence of opposition as an inevitable part of Latinas’ leadership journey was evident as part of participants’ interviews. Participants cited being disregarded by White peers, overlooked by educators and staff, and shunned by other Latinx students as contributing to their understanding that their leadership journey would most likely be lined by hardship and obstacles. For participants, difficulty in the pursuit of their leadership goals was to be expected, prompting some women to view this inevitable resistance not as an unforeseen adversary but an expected counterpart in their leadership pursuit.

Theme Four: The Enduring and Resisting Latina’s Experience of Leadership

*I think a lot of Latinas are expected to tolerate a lot of things. And I think that makes us all really tough ... but like I know that's important but sometimes - well, why am I the one who has to tough it out? Why aren't things changing for me to make it easier for me?* – *María*

Participants directly referenced their intersecting identities as women within the Latinx community as influencing their experience of leadership development throughout their lives. Participants cited gender role expectations within Latinx and wider culture as well as their identity misalignment with traditional leadership prototypes as salient in their conceptualization of leadership. In examining the larger theme of gender role expectations for Latina college
students’ leadership development, I identified two additional sub-themes related to this exploration: (1) The Latina’s Responsibility to Endure, and (2) Countering the Dominant Leadership Prototype.

Sub-Theme: The Latina’s Responsibility to Endure

As explored earlier in this chapter, multiple participants saw connection between the practice of leadership and the personal sacrifice of an individual or group in the pursuit of a larger vision or goal. Multiple participants shared insights related to how women within the Latinx community are expected to sacrifice and often demonstrate their strength as being able to endure pressure and adversity. Multiple participants viewed this as tied to their gender with four students outwardly expressing frustration about this role. Maria’s earlier insight of having to “tough it out” depicts a unique understanding of her identity as a Latina. For Maria, she came to view her identity as a Latina to be intimately connected to the concept of self-sacrifice and opposition in the pursuit of her goals. This comes in the form of a Latina being able to demonstrate her strength by her ability to withstand hardship. Though Maria spoke of these expectations generally in the contexts of her Latinx community, her college environment, and in society, her observation on the role gender plays in her leadership journey aligns aspects of “Marianismo” in the societal expectation of women to suffer and sacrifice for others.

Other participants made additional connections to Latinx gender role expectations in their experience with leadership. Emily described her first experiences with leadership related to taking on the responsibilities of caregiver as the eldest daughter within her family. She shared:

I was the eldest girl so my mom definitely taught me … the traditional way of being the caregiver of the house. Since I was like 12-11 … I was learning how to cook and clean. My mom was really big on saying: ‘Oh you need to take charge and be able to clean a house and take care of the family.’
For Emily, her first leadership role was bestowed on her by her mother. Emily reflected on this ongoing experience in her development positively, stressing that her mother served as an inspirational figure for how to be independent and pursue her goals. In the sharing of this experience, Emily highlighted the traditional gender role expectation of the Latinx family’s eldest daughter to contribute as a domestic caregiver. Emily went on to describe her approach to guiding her younger sister in learning the same responsibilities, acknowledging that she has stepped into the role of both older sister and additional parental figure. Among her first lessons is the understanding that as a Latina, one is responsible for upholding the sacred ideals of nurturing others and demonstrating a devotion to family. Maria noted a similar sentiment around her decision to attend a local college and her responsibility to care for her younger brother. She shared:

> It was more important for me to stay close to my family because my little brother. Well he's not that little but I call him my little brother. He's like 20 but he's still really dependent on me and my mom. We like to help him do things. I kind of felt like if I had left, he wouldn't have finished high school and maybe he wouldn't have gone to college. He's still very shy and needs the support. Doing that really helped me see like there are more important things besides just myself.

Similarly, Maria’s experience of the women in her family going to great lengths to support her younger brother aligns with expectations of Latinas to sacrifice and remain devoted to family. Maria views this decision to attend a local college and remain close to home as transformative, granting her perspective and allowing her the space to fulfill her duties as a family member.

Multiple participants also shared experiences of extended family and community members questioning their decisions to pursue college study. Multiple participants recalled their parents rebuffing inquiries from others questioning their decision to support their daughter’s drive to attend college. Isabel shared: “Like my parents did support me. But there were other
people that were like ‘why is she going to college in the first place?’” She noted that these interactions frustrated her, saying that she was confident to continue her pursuit of college with her parents’ support. She recalled saying:

You know like this is something that I want to do. And my parents support me 100%. So it doesn't matter what you say. I'm going to do it as long as I have my parents’ support.

For Isabel, her experience of pursuing college clashed with gender role expectations of select family and community members to work and pursue family and married life. Isabel cited her parents’ support as influencing her resolve to pursue college as a first generation college student.

Related to gender role expectations within Latinx culture, Esperanza expressed that though her University was predominantly White, the number of women pursuing careers in male dominated professions served as an affirming presence compared to her experience of Machismo culture. She recalled her uncles assuming that her interest in healthcare would automatically place her into the woman-dominated profession of nursing. When learning that she had plans to become a medical doctor, her uncles expressed shock. She shared:

Coming here - there's so many women. There's so many women that want to be doctors and that's totally fine. So I think like the sense of leadership of women here is a lot stronger than what I was experiencing back at home.

In the case of Esperanza, though her extended family members were supportive of her educational pursuit, traditional gender roles expectations led to strict assumptions around her ability to enter male-dominated professions.

For participants, leadership reflected their drive and engagement with advancing a vision or goal. Multiple participants within this study cited their identity as a woman in their Latinx community as directly influencing their approach to leadership. Gender role expectations including the responsibility to sacrifice, endure hardship, display devotion to family, and pursue
traditional life paths were present across multiple women’s experiences.

**Sub-Theme: Countering the Dominant Leadership Prototype**

In the sharing of their experiences during focus groups and interviews, most participants discussed lacking the intersecting identities often associated with dominant leadership prototypes: being White and male. Multiple women expressed this view is often at the forefront of their mind when navigating campus as they struggle with being viewed as legitimate or taken seriously in predominantly White spaces. Jasmine expressed that she has come to expect resistance from others in her leadership engagement based on her identity as a Latina, saying: “There’s always going to be people that are going to doubt you … whether it's because of the fact that you're identifying as a Latina or a woman or whatever it is.” Jasmine’s observation suggests a pervasive tension in her experience of leadership is due to her identity as a Latina.

Nina noted a similar tension, suggesting a direct clash between the values embedded within her Latina identity and the larger values reflected within dominant leadership discourse. She shared, “A lot of what's in Latina culture when you look into leadership either doesn't fit or it has a detrimental part to it.” Nina shared that her experiences of Latinas pushing through opposition and advocating for visibility and resources on campus, though positive, can be stalled as they lack the identities deemed legitimate by dominant society. “It’s a good skill to have but to have to push through all the time is a lot.” Sara expressed a similar sentiment, acknowledging bias in other’s perceptions of Latina leaders. She shared:

I think sometimes people's biases play into how they view you when you're in certain leadership roles. And that also plays into how you view yourself. I think it kind of is sometimes a struggle for me to feel like I'm being taken seriously - or I'm being taken as legitimate.
Most participants described an inherent tension between their lived experiences as Latina college students and the White male leadership prototype widely reflected within dominant leadership discourse.

Throughout this study, participants characterized the intersecting aspects of race and gender as salient in their exploration of leadership development during college. For some, this took the form of abiding by and also resisting Latinx gender role expectations. For others, this took the shape of counteracting the White male leadership prototype in their navigation of leadership engagement on and off campus. As such, gender plays a formidable role in Latina college students’ experience of leadership on their campus.

**Theme Five: Leadership as a Collective Process**

*I saw leadership as I was just taking charge - taking action and like directing people around. In college I got a better sense of what leadership is all about. It's not just being direct and authoritative. It’s more collaborative. It’s taking into account other people’s perspectives and trying to see what the best solution is. - Emily*

Leadership as a collective process emerged as a recurring theme in the leadership development experiences of this study’s participants. Nearly all participants described leadership as a collaborative process, noting an evolution or addition to their philosophy of leadership during their time in college. Students referenced their families and peer leaders’ positions as influencing their understanding of leadership being process-oriented and focused on collaborative decision-making over designated leadership roles. In exploring the scope of this theme, I identified two sub-themes related to this focus: (1) Leadership is Idea-Centered, and (2) Leadership is a Relational Process.
Sub-Theme: Leadership is Idea-Centered

Multiple participants described leadership as the practice of advancing an idea rather than being centered on a specific person or role. Participants conceptualized ideas as larger goals or visions guiding their group or organization. Reflecting on her experience as a peer leader in her university's leadership development department, Maria stressed the importance of leadership as being larger than a single person’s role or position. She shared:

I see [leadership] as something that moves change forward and not necessarily from one person or by one action. It's kind of like a collective thing that just like keeps happening ... something that needs to keep being worked on.

Maria reflected on her mother’s experience of pursuing a graduate degree in the United States. For her family, her mother’s decision to pursue this degree contributed to her family’s larger vision of a financially stable future for their children. She described this action as collective, saying of her parents:

They had to give up a lot of things in order to give us a better life … and my mom especially - like she came here and ended up being able to go to school. Most of my life I remember her studying … and like my dad working overtime or not working at all to be able to be at home with us … I just think about a lot of the sacrifices and they didn't do it individually - they did it collectively. That’s really shaped how I view leadership.

Maria viewed her parents’ immigration to the United States and her mother’s pursuit of a graduate degree not as isolated decisions to move or the pursuit of a single credential but as coordinated steps in their collective vision to secure a financially stable future for their family unit. She viewed her father’s shifting roles as financial provider and caretaker as demonstrative of her family’s collective approach in the pursuit of this larger vision of financial security.

Esperanza shared a similar insight undergirding her philosophy to leadership development on her campus. She stressed the need for ideas to live at the center of leadership, drawing on her experience at her university. Esperanza described her campus as a “little
bubble,” saying that it was possible to be consumed by the day-to-day realities of campus life that students can fail to consider the larger needs of outside and surrounding communities. She shared: “I realized that it's so important to be aware of all the issues going on … but also staying ... close to those issues and things going on around the world. I really take that to heart.” Esperanza shared feeling compelled to remain cognizant of larger issues in the surrounding community and intentionally engaging in conversations with peers to battle negative perceptions of her own neighborhood she regularly heard from other students. For Esperanza, this notion of having larger ideas and issues related to her home and extended communities informed her decision to engage with peers and pursue leadership development.

Nina observed a challenge associated with viewing leadership in terms of position over a larger idea or vision. Speaking of her experience as a student leader on her campus, she shared:

I see Latina culture as very much like a community thing. Yes, you can start something but you're doing it with everyone in some aspect. But at like [the university], I see leadership … but you have this one person who is like the head of everything and then they're expected to keep everything going. And there isn't another person who is there to support that movement.

Here, Nina notes the disconnect between the cultural values of community and connectedness embedded within Latinx culture and how leadership is practiced by student leaders on her campus. She noted that, despite the acknowledgement of community and collective values within the larger Latinx community being deemed as crucial, when engaging with leadership on her campus, some student leaders adopt a position-focused perspective. Her description of peer leaders portrayed the image of an organization’s leader bearing the weight and responsibility of executing a shared vision, decreasing the likelihood of including others and ensuring that the larger vision continues.
Sub-Theme: Leadership is a Relational Process

In addition to participants viewing leadership as being centered on larger ideas rather than select individuals, participants overwhelmingly described leadership as relational and process-oriented. Six of the 11 participants directly referenced how their views had transformed after starting college, shifting from conceptualizing leadership as an individual’s actions to a collaborative process grounded in the needs and perspectives of the larger group. Five of the 11 participants indicated that they had long believed leadership to be collective and that their experiences as student leaders on campus served to reinforce these ideals.

In her role as a peer leader, Emily’s peer team was tasked with creating and hosting community-building events to support students’ connection to campus. She described her team’s deliberation process when identifying ideas and planning events. She shared:

It's not just being direct and authoritative. It’s more collaborative. It’s taking into account other people’s perspectives and trying to see what the best solution is.

Similar to Emily’s experience, multiple participants expressed that they preferred leadership approaches that were consensus-driven and collaborative in nature. Two participants noted how their preference for collective approaches emerged when they came to view leadership in terms of everyday interactions with others. Maria shared:

I think for me, I never saw myself as a leader. I guess I never gave it that much thought. And I think now I'm more open to like seeing small acts of leadership not just like grand movements of like - moving across borders and which are obviously still acts of leadership. But I think now I kind of see that there are small things that you can do to move change forward.

Maria noted how the daily interactions with others including her family and other peers on campus influenced her understanding of leadership not being exclusive to national televised movements or political parties, but present in her everyday life. She shared, “Whether it's just
saying something bothers you or making a point of doing something - I think that's really important.”

Nina shared a similar sentiment, reflecting on her involvement in Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC) during high school. She described the military style program as stressing the need to practice discipline and encourage peers. Nina described seeing the “snowball effect” of working with newer students and training them on new techniques. She shared:

It's like, ‘I'm going to teach you how to do this and then you teach someone else.’ I just kind of slowly saw people growing in their own leadership styles - like being more confident in themselves to be able to do things because someone else taught them something ... so it's like - we're moving forward by continuing to teach people.

Despite her organization being grounded in rigid hierarchical structure, Nina’s lasting take away from her high school experience was centered on the relational nature of leadership. For Nina, her experience with JROTC taught her to treat leadership opportunities as a relational process to educate others and ensure that the work continues after their time together concluded.

Across participants’ focus group discussions and individual interviews, the concept of leadership as collective and relational in nature was clear. Participants expressed the importance of centering a group’s decision in the pursuit of a shared idea or goal rather than the advancement of a single individual’s agenda. Similarly, most participants conceptualized leadership as relational in nature, stressing the importance of accounting for the ideas and needs of others. These findings indicate that for Latina college students at a historically White college/university, leadership extends beyond the mere completion of tasks and includes the relational connection in the support of others.
Theme Six: Influence of University Faculty, Staff, and Peers on Leadership Development

*I think that people who have really supported my leadership are the people who actually take the time to know me as a whole person.* - Esperanza

All participants of this study cited one or more members of their university community as positively supporting their engagement with leadership on their campuses. Before exploring participants’ relationships with faculty, staff, and peers, I provide a general overview of participants’ on-campus affiliations and leadership positions. Seven participants were mentees or peer leaders in college success programs for first generation college students and/or Students of Color. Five of the 11 participants were involved in a department initiative for Women of Color at their institution with three of them participating in that program’s mentorship program. Two of the 11 participants also participated in programmatic scholar positions that provided research opportunities around select subjects. Five of the study’s participants were members of Greek-lettered organizations: (1) Panhellenic sorority, (3) Latina-orientated sorority, and (1) co-ed Latinx fraternity. Five women reported holding other peer leader positions in various departmental areas including campus housing, commuter services, student leadership development, and student conduct. Participants referred to faculty, staff and peers as figures of support in their pursuit of involvement opportunities and leadership development on campus. In exploring the influence of faculty, staff and peers on participants’ leadership development, I divide this section into two additional sub-themes related to this influence: (1) Influence of Faculty and Staff Encouragement on Leadership Engagement and (2) Peer Influence on Leadership Engagement.
Sub-Theme: Influence of Faculty and Staff Encouragement on Leadership Engagement

Multiple participants cited faculty members’ encouragement and direction toward opportunities as influencing their decisions to engage with leadership opportunities on campus. This took the form of both White faculty and Faculty of Color directly sharing research opportunities, providing letters of recommendation, and participating in structural mentorship programs designed to connect students with faculty and staff. Though multiple participants described their interactions with faculty as smaller in number compared to staff and students, they noted their contributions as positively influencing their decisions to opt into opportunities on and off campus. Similarly, nearly all participants directly referenced the encouragement of university staff as supporting their decisions to engage with leadership development opportunities. Mary directly referenced the crucial role her staff mentor played in encouraging her leadership development. As part of mentorship program for Women of Color at the university, Mary was paired with a Pakistani-identified staff member tasked with conducting regular check-ins throughout the academic year. She shared:

For me I just think about my mentor ... she is the one who gave me that push. So I think because of her I was not afraid to take on leadership roles on campus. Because of her I was connected with other campus departments and faculty … just from that I have learned to reach out to others and not be afraid to take on an unofficial mentor. She ... really helped me develop [into] who I am today.

Emily shared a similar sentiment, reflecting on her interaction with a Latina staff supervisor who encouraged her to take on the responsibility of serving as her peer leader team’s liaison to her institution’s student government. She recalled feeling reluctant, believing that others would be “more suited for that leadership” position. However, she came to describe the encouragement as positive, saying “just having others to give me that little kick, that push that I need - that really helps.”
Maria recalled a staff member who directly supported her leadership during her first year in college. She noted an instance where a Latina staff member invited her to serve on a panel to share her experience transitioning to college. From that point on, the staff member continued to stay in touch, connecting her to scholarship and leadership opportunities on campus. She said:

[She] followed up with me. [She was] like ‘Hey how's it going? Do you want to have some coffee or something?’ And it felt really nice to like have [her] support and see that [she] was genuinely interested in how I was doing and like supporting me going to school and trying to stick it out … and just helping me find different options for everything.

For Maria, a staff member’s encouragement helped to bolster her feeling of connection to her institution and demonstrated that she had a supportive figure on campus. Sara noted similar feelings of support from staff members on campus. Specifically, Staff of Color associated with diversity and inclusion programs who encouraged and applauded her pursuit of peer leadership positions supporting other students with marginalized identities. She recalled receiving encouragement during early stages of her peer leader position, recalling their words of encouragement as being a turning point. She shared, “and that’s when I was like - you know, maybe I can do this.” For Sara, words of encouragement from staff bolstered her confidence to both engage in and pursue future leadership positions on campus.

Esperanza noted a similar view of encouragement and understanding, speaking generally about the role of faculty and staff in the support of her leadership development. She shared:

I think that people that have really supported my leadership are the people who actually take the time to know you as a whole person. That can be like a professor or someone in like administration. People who really are invested in knowing why you're doing certain things or your own struggles and understanding where those come from.

For Esperanza, the investment of university faculty and staff in her experience served as a positive influence on her decisions to engage with leadership opportunities on campus. Beyond traditional encouragement, Esperanza stressed the importance of faculty and staff taking the time
to both acknowledge and understand the unique needs and challenges facing students with marginalized identities.

**Sub-Theme: Peer Influence on Leadership Engagement**

Participants characterized the role of peers in designated support programs and student organizations as influencing their decisions to engage in leadership experiences on campus. In particular, organizations dedicated to the pursuit of social justice, Women of Color, and the exploration of Latinx identity were noted as significant spaces of peer support. Sara shared:

> I think a lot a lot of my peers have been incredibly supportive and a lot of them have become lifetime friends through that … peers are a bit more personal in that way, you know. We don't just work together. We have fun together. We cry together. You know. We do things outside of the college campus.

Emily shared a similar opinion, reflecting on the role of her peer mentor and fellow mentees in a formal college success program for first generation college students and Students of Color. She said of her program peers:

> That was definitely like a group that helped me my first year since … my first year was kind of very hard in college. I wasn't making very many friends and having them helped me, you know? My mentor was very involved with that, saying ‘have you [sought] out opportunities?’ She would always give me resources.

Anna cited her involvement in her Latina Greek-lettered organization as also serving as a space of support within the larger campus community. She noted:

> It's cool being part of a community. I think that through those experiences in different organizations in communities on campus and outside of campus … you learn how to be the leader you want to be.

For Anna, being in a close-knit Latina Greek-lettered organization provided her the opportunity to take on leadership positions while simultaneously experiencing encouragement and navigational support from peers. Jasmine shared a similar insight about community with regard to her co-ed Latinx Greek-lettered organization and relayed:
A Greek organization is an added layer of support because you have people that feel similar values and things that you join because you want that family away from home … Being able to identify with other people and have similar struggles but be resources for each other you know - different members are different ages and different strengths and taking on leadership positions - that was important.

For participants, peers served as supportive figures in their navigation of the larger campus community and in their awareness of and decision to engage with leadership opportunities on campus. Across participant experiences, this support took the form of emotional support, information-sharing, advice, and encouragement to engage with on and off campus involvement opportunities.

In students’ pursuit of their goals at varying points of their college careers, faculty, staff, and peers can serve as a positive influence on Latina students’ experience of leadership and leadership development on their campus. Participants cited faculty and staff encouragement and the support of peers as necessary fuel in their pursuit of leadership opportunities and on-campus engagement.

**Summary**

The findings of this study represent the varied experiences of how Latina college students at a historically White college/university experience leadership development. Participants described their family as the foundation of their leadership development and engagement in college, noting the function of sacrifice and obligation to advocate in their pursuit and engagement with leadership on their campus. Additionally, participants recognized the role of visibility in their conceptualization of and engagement with leadership, expressing both their compulsion to be visible as Latinas on their campus and sense of responsibility to remain visible for others with marginalized identities. Study participants also characterized their pursuit of leadership development as facing substantial and recurring opposition, both in the structural
navigation of their college campus and their experiences with ostracism by members of White and Latinx communities. Participants also explored the role of gender in their experience of leadership, noting the expectation for Latinas to demonstrate their strength through their ability to endure hardship and their duty to counter a dominant leadership prototype. Additionally, participants highlighted how they conceptualized leadership as a collective process, being centered on ideas rather than position and being relational in nature. Lastly, when discussing the role of the college environment on their leadership development, participants cited the influence of faculty, staff, and peer relationships on their leadership engagement in college.

**Conclusion**

This study’s findings center and expand on the ways in which leadership and leadership development can be conceptualized and experienced on college campuses. The college students in this study described the distinct messages they received regarding leadership during their upbringing and disclosed how their experience of leadership and leadership development were shaped, influenced, and transformed by their identities as Latinas. This study aimed to provide a foundational understanding of how this population experienced leadership development within the context of an HWCU and it is clear that the work of centering and elevating the experience of Latinas in wider leadership discourse is necessary. The next and final chapter explores how this study’s findings exist within and apart from existing research dedicated to leadership development, Latina college student experience, Latinx cultural values, dominant cultural values within dominant leadership literature, and campus racial climate. The chapter concludes with this study’s implications for practice, limitations, and directions for future research.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

I open this final chapter with two images of personal significance: (1) my grandparents and (2) a group photo containing a sample of the Alcozer family lineage. As previously shared, my grandparents served as a source of guidance for how to construct a strong support network in the pursuit of a shared vision. The second image depicts some of Alfredo and Guadalupe’s children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. This image was taken at one of our many family gatherings and reflects the future of what my grandparents had established – a strong, compassionate collective. Presenting these images side-by-side serves as a way to not only honor my family, but to acknowledge the foundation and fruits of my grandparents’ efforts.

Similarly, this dissertation chapter serves to look backward, exploring the content examined throughout this study and drawing connections to the future. Chapter one offered context for the study of Latina college students at a historically White college/university. The experiences of Latina college students are largely absent from leadership development literature. This chapter introduced facets of this study, providing an overview of key terminology utilized,
the problem statement and research questions guiding this study, and the significance of this line of inquiry in larger leadership discourse.

Chapter Two presented a comprehensive review of literature grounded in the conceptual framework of critical race feminism (CRF). This framework served to guide my exploration in examining the intersection of race and gender on Latina college students’ experience of leadership and leadership development. In this review of literature, I divided my inquiry into two segments: cultural values and the college environment. Section one explored the role of cultural values in wider leadership theory, the cultural values present within the Latinx community, and their potential influence on the leadership development of Latina college students. In examining the cultural values present within dominant leadership research, I utilized Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions theory as a foundation along with a critique of Hofstede’s dimensions using pillars of Latina/Latino critical race theory (LatCrit). Section two examined the influence of campus racial climate and college student leadership development programs on the leadership development of Latina college students.

Chapter Three outlined this study’s methodology. The central research questions guiding this inquiry were:

1. How do Latina college students at a HWCU define and interpret leadership development?

   a. How do dominant cultural values and Latinx cultural values influence Latina college students’ leadership development?

   b. How does the college environment influence Latina college students’ leadership development?
Chapter Three included a framework of the qualitative approach underpinning this study, my own positionality within this work as the researcher, and the strategy for how data was collected, analyzed and presented.

Chapter Four presented an overview of themes and subthemes that emerged from the data as integral components of Latina college students’ experience of leadership development at a HWCU. These findings present a nuanced examination of the influence of gender, race, cultural values, and campus racial climate on Latina college students’ leadership development. Figure 1 is a visual illustration of this study’s themes and subthemes.

Figure 1. Visual depiction of themes and sub-themes of study data

This figure depicts the study’s findings by arranging them according to three distinct layers with one exterior casing in the shape of a flame. The shape and structure of a flame is
significant to this illustration as fire can be both a destructive and transformative force. I argue that the same comparison is appropriate for the experiences of Latina college students in their negotiation of leadership development. The innermost part of a flame is what burns hottest yet the extended layers of a flame can grow large and luminous. As Latina college students experience the collegiate environment, their ability to shine and illuminate the world around them is shaped by their environment, reflecting the variables that can fan their leadership flame or snuff it out entirely. This visual serves as a hybrid of both the findings of the study as well as two guiding sections referenced within chapter two: cultural values and campus racial climate. The finding of Family as Leadership Blueprint emerged as a central theme of this study as participants expressed that their deep connections to family continuously served to influence their leadership development throughout college. As such, Family as Blueprint resides at the center of the flame, with arrows at its base signifying movement from the interior of the diagram outward. The subsequent layers of “Influence of Cultural Values” and “College Environment” serve to group the study’s findings as additional layers through which participants navigate and experience leadership development. Within these layers, findings related to cultural values and how participants navigate their college campus and racial climate are presented. The final layer or casing in the exterior of the flame serves to provide language to the experience reflected within: Latina College Student Leadership Development. Though the layers of this figure are presented using varying sized circles, this depiction does not reflect varying degrees of importance but serves as a visual tool to demonstrate that all findings are connected but are distinct from one another.

Chapter Five provides an overview of how findings of this study align, counter, and contribute to existing literature and the conceptual framework that guided this inquiry. As the
central research questions of this study stemmed from the dearth of dedicated research related to the leadership development of Latina college students, this study’s findings served to inhabit this significant gap in larger leadership discourse.

**Discussion**

Participants’ insights of how they conceptualized and experienced leadership and leadership development aligned, expanded, and countered leadership development narratives within the higher education landscape. In exploring how this study’s findings are positioned within extant research, I examine each of the study’s themes, draw connections to how they respond to one or more of this study’s guiding research questions, consider linkages to the study’s conceptual framework, and highlight their positionality within wider leadership discourse.

**Family as Blueprint for Leadership**

The influence of family on the leadership development of participants was a pronounced and reoccurring theme within this study. Key insights related to the role of family divided into two sub-themes: Family Sacrifice as Leadership and Family Influence on the Pursuit and Engagement with Leadership. These two sub-themes served to address the guiding research question of this study grounded in the exploration of cultural values: How do dominant U.S. cultural values and Latinx cultural values influence Latina college students’ leadership development? This study’s findings indicate that dominant cultural values were not pronounced in Latina college students’ conceptualizations and experience of leadership development. Furthermore, this study found that cultural values reflected within Latinx culture were emphasized and influential in these students’ experiences of leadership.
Multiple participants expressed that they perceived sacrifices made by one or more members of their family for others as demonstrating leadership capacity. This could include their family’s decision to immigrate to the United States or an elder’s decision to work extended hours to financially support another’s education. For many participants, these sacrificial decisions were grounded in the collective pursuit of a vision, reinforcing the notion that the pursuit of leadership is intimately linked to the needs of a larger collective. The role of family in participants’ conceptualization of leadership development aligns with existing research related to familismo and the cultural value of collectivism within Latinx culture (Raeff et al., 2000; Sabogal et al., 1987). Researchers have perceived the cultural value of familism as influencing Latinx individuals to experience feelings of obligation to provide for their family emotionally and financially as well as a need to view their family network as figures of support in their decision-making processes (Sabogal et al., 1987; Smith-Morris et al., 2012). The Latinas in this study repeatedly utilized language related to sacrifice and the significance of family in their conceptualization of leadership and leadership development.

It is also crucial to note that though participants’ perceptions of their family’s sacrifice as leadership aligns with aspects of familism within extant research, the narrative of collective sacrifice through immigration is a severe departure from traditional leadership narratives reflected within wider research. Research indicated that a majority of leadership literature is grounded in the experiences of western culture (reflecting an individualistic value orientation) (House & Aditya, 1997) with early leadership approaches developed based on the experiences of White men (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000). The fact that multiple study participants viewed their individual family’s narrative of immigration to the United States as being linked to leadership
enactment counters the Anglo-centered and individualistic narratives within the roots and foliage of dominant leadership discourse.

Looking more closely at participants’ sense of responsibility to serve others, participants noted their family’s teachings as inspiring them to engage with and advocate on behalf of others while in college. Though research related to the leadership development of Latina college students is incredibly limited at the time of this study, Lozano (2015) found that Latinx student leaders characterized their family members as supportive figures, inspiring students to engage on campus even if their family members lacked an intimate knowledge of their college student experience. Similarly, this finding aligns with the work of Onorato and Musoba (2015) who found that Latina college students at a Hispanic Serving Institution directly referenced their family members’ insights and support as positively influencing their decision to become involved on campus. In the absence of additional research, this finding also aligns with literature examining the role of familismo on Latinx college students’ academic engagement. Research indicates that messages embedded within the psychological concept of familismo directly influence Latinx college students’ academic persistence (Ojeda et al., 2011), and college choice (Hernández, 2015; Martinez, 2013). These segments of literature paired with the findings of this study emphasize the role of family in Latina college students’ pursuit of and engagement in leadership development.

With regard to this study’s conceptual framework, this finding aligns with the aim of critical race feminism (CRF) to examine the experiences of Women of Color in the context of race, gender, and class (Pratt-Clarke, 2010). Within this finding, the role of family is elevated and serves to acknowledge individuals not reflected within common leadership discourse: immigrant family members. With regard to class, this is particularly clear in the participants’
expression of their family’s experience of immigration as an example of and foundation for leadership. CRF contends that the experiences of Women of Color are valuable and worthy of examination (Pratt-Clarke, 2010). This finding situates both the experiences of the Latina participants as well as the influence of their family members as similarly valuable and worthy of consideration within larger leadership discourse.

**Visibility as Leadership Engagement**

In addition to the influence of family on participants’ conceptualization and engagement with leadership, the function of visibility in participants’ leadership development emerged as a substantial finding of this study. The role of visibility in these findings fell into two key sub-themes: Strategic Visibility and Responsibility to be Visible for Others. These sub-themes addressed the guiding research question of: How does the college environment influence Latina college students’ leadership development? The findings of this study suggest that the environment of a HWCU contributed to Latinas’ conceptualization of visibility as an essential component of leadership due to their minoritized status on their campus.

With regard to strategic visibility, nearly all participants described their decision to adopt the identifier of “Latina” as a way to connect with peers and build community in college. These women directly referenced being visible as a Latina on campus, choosing to occupy spaces as a way to highlight their own experiences. Additionally, participants communicated that they selected engagement opportunities on campus as a way to further connect with Latinas and network across difference. These findings are consistent with extant research dedicated to how Latinx student leaders choose engagement opportunities on their campus. According to Lozano (2015), Latinx student leaders at a predominantly White institution opted to form bonds and associations with Latinx peers and Latinx student leaders as a way to combat feelings of
isolation. This is further supported by research dedicated to the positive influence of close
relational bonds among Latinx students through information sharing among peers and upper
classmen (Attinasi, 1989; Hurtado et al., 1996). This study’s findings around strategic visibility
expand on growing research on the leadership development experiences of Latinx students
(Beatty, 2015; Lozano, 2015; Onorato & Musoba, 2015; Suarez, 2015), highlighting the strategic
function of visibility in the leadership development of Latinas in historically White
environments.

With regard to being visible for others, participants’ decisions to occupy unfamiliar
spaces emanated from a sense of responsibility to highlight the lived experiences of Latina
college students. Deciding to opt into opportunities arose from a sense of responsibility to
acknowledge and improve conditions for others with marginalized identities. This finding aligns
with a growing area of research dedicated to the leadership development experiences of Latinx
college students. Lozano (2015) found that Latinx student leaders at a predominantly White
institution chose to participate in leadership activities as a way to secure visibility on campus and
“initiate programs that reflect their backgrounds and cultures” (p. 23). Additionally,
participants’ decisions to aid with this study aligned with additional research calling attention to
the lack of consideration to race and the leadership experiences of minoritized groups within
dominant leadership discourse (Ospina & Foldy, 2009; Suarez, 2015). Study participants cited
that among their reasons for responding to recruitment messaging was a sense of responsibility to
document their experiences in order to improve conditions for future Latina college students.
The acknowledgement of the omission of Latina voices in leadership discourse is consistent with
the work of scholars highlighting the negation of race and ethnicity within leadership
development research (Ospina & Foldy, 2009) and researchers actively incorporating critical
perspectives in the examination of leadership theory (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Collinson, 2011; Dugan, 2017; Ospina & Foldy, 2009; Western, 2008). With this in mind, Latina college students exist in a space of meta-invisibility, choosing to be visible on their campuses while recognizing their invisibility in the larger leadership discourse.

Additionally, this study in its topic and exploration aligns with the aim of critical race feminism (CRF) in its purpose to center and elevate the experiences of Women of Color within leadership discourse - a discourse that has historically omitted their experiences from research and practice. According to Pratt-Clarke (2010), CRF contends that the experiences of Women of Color are unique and worthy of examination. This research advances this understanding by highlighting the experiences of Latinas who acknowledge this omission and strategically maneuver to elevate their own experiences. Latina college students’ decisions to intentionally be visible on campus coupled with a sense of responsibility to be visible for others suggests that for Latina college students in historically White colleges and universities, visibility can be a matter of both tactic and compassion.

**Inevitable Opposition in the Pursuit of Leadership**

In addition to visibility, opposition in the leadership development experiences of Latina college students surfaced as a notable finding of this study. The experience of opposition in this study’s findings is divided into two sub-themes: Structural Opposition and Being Pushed Out. These sub-themes addressed the guiding research question of: How does the college environment influence Latina college students’ leadership development? This study’s findings illustrate Latina college students’ experience of leadership and leadership development at a historically White college/university as replete with opposition. This study found that factors such as difficulty navigating educational systems, exclusion by White peers, and rejection by Latinx
peers contribute to Latina college students’ understanding of opposition being a recurring and expected presence in their experience of leadership development.

With regard to structural opposition, participants expressed that their expectations of opposition in their experience of leadership emanated from their own challenges navigating systems of education and negotiating campus racial climate. This finding is consistent with research centered on Latinx student experiences of campus climate at colleges and universities. Researchers have noted that Latinx students are more likely to convey negative perceptions of campus culture and report lack of connection to their campus community (Hurtado, 1994; Loo & Rolison, 1986) and experience tensions related to race and ethnicity where they perceive scarce support from faculty and administration (Hurtado, 1994). In a study of Latinx student leaders, Lozano (2015) documented a similar tension, and noted that student leaders perceived Latinx culture as overlooked within their campus community. Adding the specific context of leadership development education, Suarez (2015) found Latinx students expressed that feeling connected with and supported by college programs, resources, and administrators were crucial to their decisions to participate in leadership activities. With regard to leadership development programs specifically, in a study of a flagship leadership development program, Suarez found that Latinx students comprised the smallest population among student participants, and stated that students expressed a desire for structural leadership programming to acknowledge and incorporate aspects of their cultural identities. This finding expands on extant research by drawing connections between the influence of campus racial climate and Latina college students’ experiences of opposition in their pursuit and engagement with leadership. As such, this study resides alongside existing research on the experiences of Latinx college students at predominantly White
institutions while calling attention to the intersecting identities of race and gender in the context of leadership development.

In considering the sub-theme of being pushed out, participants shared experiences of being shunned by White peers and ostracized by Latinx peers as shaping their experiences of leadership and leadership development. This finding is consistent with research examining peer relations between Latinx students and their White peers on college campuses. Vasquez-Salgado et al. (2014) found that more than half of Latinx first-generation college students experienced value-clashing conflicts with peers demonstrating an individualistic values alignment. Similarly, Tseng (2004) noted that Latinx young adults experienced further values clashing conflict with their European American peers. Related to ostracism of Latinas by Latinx peers, the circumstances of their isolation were grounded in expectations of what it meant to be Latinx, effectively casting aside those who did not fit the mold of gender role performance. This finding aligns with existing research related to gender role performance expectations within Latinx communities - particularly around pronounced gender role performance expectations abiding by a strict gender binary within Latinx culture (Castillo & Cano, 2007; Onorato & Musoba, 2015; Stearns & Glennie, 2006). These can include the gender-related constructs of Machismo and Marianismo. Within both constructs, there are clear expectations regarding gender role performance for women (i.e., submissiveness to men, self-sacrifice, family devotion, and sexual purity) (Castillo & Cano, 2007) and men (i.e., aggression, dominance over women, and sexual prowess) (Arciniega et al., 2008). The finding of this study related to rejection of Latinas by other Latinx student leaders aligns with and contributes to extant research by situating the psychological influence of gender role performance within the Latinx community in the context of college student leadership development.
With regard to critical race feminism, this study abides by CRF’s aim to center and consider the experiences of Women of Color as worthy of exploration (Pratt-Clarke, 2010). As the leadership and leadership development experiences of Latina college students remains limited within general leadership discourse, the findings of this study related to opposition within the college landscape both align with and contribute to existing research by situating the study of Latina college students in the context of leadership development.

**The Enduring and Resisting Latina’s Experience of Leadership**

In addition to the function of opposition in participants’ experience of leadership development, the influence of gender role expectations in the leadership development of Latina college students emerged as a notable finding within this study. The experience of gender within this study’s findings appear in two sub-themes: The Latina’s Responsibility to Endure and Countering the Dominant Leadership Prototype. These sub-themes addressed the guiding research questions of: (1) How do Latina college students at a historically White college/university (HWCU) define and interpret leadership development? and (2) How do dominant U.S. cultural values and Latinx cultural values influence Latina college students’ leadership development? The findings of this study suggest that Latinx gender role expectations have a pronounced influence on how Latina college students conceptualize and engage with leadership and leadership development. Similarly, this study demonstrates that Latina college students acknowledge the presence of prototypical leadership behaviors and view dominant depictions of leadership to exist in direct contrast to their own lived experiences.

With regard to the Latina’s responsibility to endure, participants noted their identities as women as significant in their experience of leadership development. Participants referenced the pressure to conform and abide by gender role expectations espoused by Latinx culture as
influential in their conceptualization of and engagement with leadership. Participants described sacrifice as central to their experience of leadership as well as the implication that they as Latinas are expected to demonstrate their strength as a leader by their ability to endure. This finding aligns with existing research exploring the influence of gender role expectations on the decision-making processes of Latina students. Researchers have found gender role beliefs to influence Latina students’ decisions to complete high school (Rodriguez et al., 2013; Stearns & Glennie, 2006). Similarly, with regard to leadership development, in a study of Latina college students at a Hispanic Serving Institution, Onorato and Musoba (2015) found that participants viewed their mothers as leadership figures and as a “role model of perseverance and self-sacrifice” (p. 22).

This connection to gender role expectations depicts Latina college students’ view of leadership as intimately linked to one’s own sacrifice for the larger whole not merely a matter of leadership approach but as a byproduct of gender role socialization for Latina women.

In addition to gender role expectations from within Latinx culture, participants noted a severe disconnect between prototypical leadership characteristics and their own lived experiences as Latinas. Research indicated that throughout history, leadership approaches were grounded in the examination of White male experiences (Parker & Ogilvie, 1996). As previously explored, wider leadership discourse espouses values aligning with an Anglo-centered value set. Highly traditional leadership approaches conceptualize traits such as assertiveness, independence, and aggression as ideal for leadership engagement (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). However, this study’s findings suggest that Latina college students are aware of and subject to dominant leadership prototypes and view the conscious push against such expectations as a necessary and unavoidable part of their leadership journeys. In countering this dominant leadership prototype, this study’s findings further align with growing research indicating that
Women of Color tend to perceive leadership as collective, collaborative, and process-oriented (Kezar, 2000) while also contributing to wider leadership discourse by producing research on the experiences of Latina college students. Furthermore, in considering the influence of Latinx cultural values as well as leadership approaches unique to Women of Color, this finding further aligns with the central framework of critical race feminism (CRF) in its centering of the experiences of Women of Color through the intersecting identities of race and gender (Berry, 2010).

**Leadership as a Collective Process**

In addition to the unique influence of gender role expectations on Latinas’ engagement with leadership development, participants’ views of leadership as a collective and relational process emerged as a significant finding of this study. In exploring this finding, I present the larger theme of leadership as a collective process in two distinct sub-themes: Leadership is Idea-Centered and Leadership is a Relational Process. These sub-themes addressed the guiding research question of: How do dominant U.S. cultural values and Latinx cultural values influence Latina college students’ leadership development? This study’s findings indicate that Latina college students’ perceptions of leadership contrast greatly with the cultural values and approaches espoused by traditional and dominant leadership research.

Participants indicated that they perceived leadership to be idea-centered and preferred approaches that were collective, process-oriented, and relational in nature. With regard to collectivism, this study coincides with extensive research noting Latinx culture as having a collectivistic value alignment, espousing messaging of family obligation, support, and responsibility to others (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Lisansky, 1981; Raeff et al., 2000; Sy & Brittian, 2008). With regard to the leadership development of Latinx college students, in a study of
Latinx student leaders at a predominantly White institution, Lozano (2015) found that students noted that the Latinx values of collaboration and collectivism directly conflicted with the cultural values of individualism valued by the wider institution of higher education.

With regard to the participants’ conceptualization of leadership being idea-centered rather than person or position centered, this finding both contradicts and aligns with extant research. More than half of the Latinas in this study referenced how their perceptions of leadership had transformed throughout college, shifting from prototypical highly individualistic and leader-centric expectations of leadership to more collaborative and process-oriented approaches. Participants characterized leadership as the process of advancing an idea or vision rather than being centered on a specific person or role. These findings counter early leadership research favoring approaches centered on the individual needs and traits of leaders (Bass, 2008). Though collective leadership approaches emerged within leadership study since the 1970s, traditional approaches such as trait-based leadership are noted to have a lasting influence on contemporary leadership study (Dugan, 2017; Ospina & Foldy, 2009) and leadership educators today (Schertzer & Schuh, 2004). As such, these findings denote an inherent tension in the leadership development experience of Latinas as their preferred approaches to leadership education directly clash with the pedigree of leadership study.

The experience of Latina college students conceptualizing leadership as a collective, idea-centered, and relational process also coincides with growing pockets of research centered on the experiences of underrepresented populations. As previously mentioned, Kezar (2000) found that “women and women of color tended to describe leadership as collective, collaborative, empowerment-based, non directive, process-oriented, facilitative, team-oriented, and characterized by equal power relations” (p. 8). Furthermore, this finding aligns with the aim of
critical race feminism (CRF) to consider the perspectives and lived experiences of Women of Color as valuable and worthy of examination (Pratt-Clarke, 2010). In its centering of the experiences of Latina college students, this finding highlights and produces knowledge that counters traditional perspectives of leadership reflected in dominant discourse.

Influence of University Faculty, Staff, and Peers on Leadership Development

The role of University faculty, staff, and peers on Latina college students’ leadership development also emerged as a significant finding of this study. In exploring this inquiry, this finding is in two sub-themes: Influence of Faculty and Staff Encouragement on Leadership Engagement and Peer Influence on Leadership Engagement. These sub-themes addressed the guiding research question of: How does the college environment influence Latina college students’ leadership development? This study’s findings indicate that encouragement from University faculty, staff, and peers can positively influence Latina college students’ engagement with leadership development experiences.

Participants referenced the encouragement of faculty and staff as pivotal in shaping their decisions to engage with leadership opportunities on campus. This encouragement from both faculty and staff took many forms including: sharing campus resources, sharing research opportunities, providing letters of recommendation, offering emotional support, and participating as mentors in structural mentorship programs. Though multiple participants characterized their interaction with faculty as fewer compared to staff, they noted their interactions as positively influencing their decisions to engage in on and off campus opportunities. This finding coincides with existing research related to the positive influence of faculty and staff on student engagement. According to Dayton et al. (2004), Latinx students noted supportive faculty and staff as positively influencing their feelings of connectedness to their college campus.
Conversely, Hurtado (1994) contended that Latinx students are likely to experience tension and discomfort related to their race and ethnicity in collegiate environments where they experience a lack of support from university faculty and staff. This finding in the context of extant research demonstrates the crucial role of faculty and staff in the leadership engagement and development of Latina college students.

In addition to faculty and staff, the influence of peer engagement emerged as a positive influence on Latina college students’ leadership engagement. Participants noted that positive relationships with peers forged through structured peer-support programs and student organizations directly influenced their decisions to opt into leadership experiences on campus. For the Latinas of this study, these supportive spaces took the form of social justice oriented organizations, Women of Color communities, and student organizations specifically centered on exploring Latinx identity. This finding aligns with existing research exploring the influence of peer connection and mentorship on leadership engagement. Onorato and Musoba (2015) found that Latina college students viewed peer role models as inspirational figures encouraging them to engage in leadership activities and navigate the collegiate landscape. Similarly, in studies exploring the leadership development of Latinx students, Beatty (2015) found that involvement in peer-based Latinx-focused student organizations served as a space of support for students and in some cases, served as an entry point to other forms of on-campus engagement. Similarly, Lozano (2015) found that Latinx student leaders in a predominantly White environment prioritized forging close relationships with Latinx students in order to share resources and advocate for the needs of Latinx peers on campus. This finding both aligns with and extends upon existing research by centering the experiences of Latina college students within the context of leadership development on college campuses.
With regard to the conceptual framework of critical race feminism (CRF) guiding this study, this finding aligns with the CRF’s call to consider the lives of Women of Color as worthy of examination and explores their experiences through the intersecting identities of race, gender and class (Berry, 2010). Study participants concretely spoke of their experiences as Latinas on their college campuses as unique and sought out spaces of community with Latinas and individuals with marginalized identities. Similarly, the function of community building and information sharing among participants was especially relevant, as participants’ identities as first-generation college students proved to further shape their navigation of the collegiate environment. This finding highlights the value of this unique consideration to race and gender, both abiding by CRF’s call to attend to these intersecting influences and centering the experiences of Women of Color.

**Implications for Practice**

In considering the potential for this study’s findings on the work of college and university professionals, I observe multiple points of connection to practice. By contributing research dedicated to the experiences of Latina college students, this study aims to provide a foundation from which leadership educators can pull to deliver empirically-based leadership development interventions with this population in mind. With regard to institutional support of leadership development, I present tangible considerations for practice.

Based on the findings of this study, Latina college students acknowledge the lack of attention paid to their own experiences of leadership and do not see themselves reflected within wider leadership discourse. This study could prove useful to practitioners seeking to recruit and support Latina college students for targeted leadership development initiatives. This may take the form of crafting leadership interventions that reflect aspects of Latinx cultural values and
collective leadership approaches. This can be achieved by including students with identities often underrepresented within institutional leadership development initiatives (including Latina and Latinx student leaders) in the development and marketing of leadership development initiatives.

Similarly, study data suggests that college student leadership development can and should attend to the influence and interaction of social identities and cultural values in the college environment. This study’s data indicates the need for colleges and universities to consider how intersecting factors including social identities, cultural values, and campus racial climate can influence students’ perception of and engagement with leadership development on their campuses. Colleges and universities can attend to this by properly supporting those tasked with leadership development initiatives with education to improve their cultural competency. Similarly, creating spaces for students to engage in dialogue around prototypical leadership behaviors and the dominant social identities often associated with leadership can aid in deconstructing the story most often told in leadership development. Similarly, incorporating pedagogical tools such as storytelling and deconstruction can aid in supporting students’ exploration of leadership and leadership development as both a personal and structural phenomenon, seeing how leadership is present in their everyday experiences.

With regard to role of community building in leadership development, the data demonstrated that Latina student leaders seek spaces of connection with other Latinas in the context of a historically White college/university. This finding is crucial as it calls colleges and universities to identify ways to support both formal and informal spaces of affinity on college campuses. For practitioners supporting this community building, providing a space for Latina college students to engage and connect over their experiences of leadership development through
their intersecting identities of race, gender, and class can provide much needed support and community in their navigation of collegiate study. This type of community building can take the shape of student organization leader summit providing a space for Latina student leaders to connect and engage in dialogue around their experiences of leadership. Furthermore, the data suggests that Latinx student leaders can acknowledge and enforce distinct standards associated with what they deem to align with prototypical Latinx characteristics related to race and gender role performance. This strict promotion of a Latinx mold of sorts essentializes characteristics of Latinx culture and serves to exclude Latinx members that fall outside of this perceived mold. In addition to creating space for Latinx students to engage around the discussion of leadership and leadership development, it is equally important to create opportunities for Latinx student leaders to explore these essentialized assumptions around Latinx identity and examine how these exclusive and damaging racialized practices can be present at the individual, organizational, and institutional levels. Similarly, this step could provide additional points of networking and collaboration among student organizations with members from underrepresented identities.

Finally, the data emphasizes the significance of faculty, staff, and peers in encouraging Latina college students’ leadership engagement on campus. This finding calls institutions to further bolster the support of faculty, staff, and peer mentorship programs within higher education. This can include creating intergenerational mentorship spaces where undergraduate students can connect with peers, faculty, and staff with both dominant and marginalized identities. This space-making for Latina students can not only serve as a step toward community building but can further expand Latinas’ network across campus and support their navigation of the college environment.
Future Research

Admittedly, this study on the experiences of Latina college students at a historically White college/university is among the initial inquiries into this area of exploration. As this study is foundational in nature, the scope of this work was merely to capture and introduce empirical research centered on the leadership development experiences of Latinas in college. Additional research dedicated to the leadership experiences of Latina college students is needed to better understand how colleges and university can support future leaders. Specific research examining the individualistic nature of traditional college environments is needed to better understand and give language to the unspoken values and practices endorsed by colleges and universities (Hurtado, 1994; Hurtado et al., 1996; Hurtado et al., 1998; Milem et al., 2005). Furthermore, additional research dedicated to the effects of institutional structures’ (e.g., policies, language, and procedures) impact on the Latinx student experience of leadership development would further illuminate the influence of the higher education structure on Latina college students. This research would aid in expanding our consideration of this population’s leadership development beyond designated leadership programs.

With regard to college environment, this study examined the singular context of a historically White college/university. Additional research on how Latina college students experience leadership development in a wider variety of collegiate environments (for example, additionally historically White colleges/universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, emerging Hispanic Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and more) can provide additional insights into how leadership development and campus navigation is experienced by these students. Additionally, further research examining how Hispanic serving institutions support leadership development of Latinx students would be useful in identifying
how organizations with higher numbers of students from collectivist backgrounds approach supporting this population. Moreover, exploring how specific components of campus climate (e.g., racial diversity, selectivity, college size) align or misalign with Latinx cultural values can further aid in identifying factors associated with Latina college students’ leadership development. Finally, research considering additional intersecting identities (i.e., trans women, queer-identified Latinas, afro-Latinas, and multiracial Latinas) would further contribute to this body of research and provide a more nuanced understanding of how Latinas experience leadership development in college.
APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT E-MAIL
E-mail Subject: Seeking Study Participants: Latina College Students at [Institution]

Dear [CAMPUS PARTNER],

I am seeking to connect with currently-enrolled, Latina-identified undergraduate students at [Institution]. I was wondering if you would be open to sharing the following call for participants to students you believe could meet this criteria and be interested in participating in this study.

Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Best,
Kristina Garcia
PhD Student - Higher Education
Loyola University Chicago
224.392.5800
kgarcia3@luc.edu

Message to Possible Participants:
Are you a Hispanic/Latina-identified woman at [Institution]?

My name is Kristina Garcia and I am a Latina PhD student in the Higher Education Program at Loyola University Chicago. I write as I am seeking participants for an upcoming study exploring how Latina college students experience leadership and leadership development while in college.

Eligibility
I am seeking currently-enrolled, undergraduate Latina college students at [INSTITUTION]. Participants do NOT need to have held a formalized leadership position on campus to participate.

What You Can Expect
If selected, participants would attend a single 60 minute focus group interview to take place at [CAMPUS]. This study would provide insight into how colleges and universities can support the leadership development of Latina college students.

Availability and Compensation
If selected, a focus group time and date would be set based on your availability during the weeks of [DATE] and [DATE]. Food will be provided based on dietary needs and all participants will be entered into a drawing to receive a $40 Amazon gift card. This drawing will be completed at the conclusion of the focus group session. The winner of the $40 gift card will be notified within 3-5 days of the focus group.
Interested? Complete the Interest Form!
If you are interested, please complete the following form by [DATE]. A link to this Participant Interest Form is available here: [LINK TO GOOGLE FORM]

Note: Completing this form does not guarantee your participation in the study. It simply provides me your information so that I can determine if you would qualify to participate in the study. Further information regarding this study will be communicated via e-mail after completing this form.

Should you have any additional questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at: kgarcia3@luc.edu or 224.392.5800.

Best,

Kristina Garcia
PhD Student - Higher Education
Loyola University Chicago
224.392.5800
kgarcia3@luc.edu
APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT FLYER
LATINA COLLEGE STUDENTS

PARTICIPANTS WANTED

Seeking currently-enrolled, undergraduate Latina college students at [Institution]. This study would provide insight into how colleges and universities can support the leadership development of Latina college students. Participants do NOT need to have held a formalized leadership position on campus to participate.

If selected, participants will:
- Attend a single 60 minute focus group interview
- Receive a FREE MEAL during interview
- Enter a drawing to receive a $40 AMAZON GIFT CARD.

If you are interested, please complete the following form by DATE. A link to this Participant Interest Form is available below. Please contact researcher Kristina Garcia with any questions: kgarcia3@luc.edu.
APPENDIX C

SOCIAL MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT
Announcement for Social Media Post

Are you a Hispanic/Latina-identified woman at [Institution]?

My name is Kristina Garcia and I am a Latina PhD student in the Higher Education Program here at [Institution]. I write as I am seeking participants for an upcoming study exploring how Latina college students experience leadership and leadership development while in college.

Eligibility
I am seeking currently-enrolled, undergraduate Latina college students at [SPECIFIC INSTITUTION]. Participants do NOT need to have held a formalized leadership position on campus to participate.

What You Can Expect
If selected, participants would attend a single 60 minute focus group interview to take place at [SPECIFIC INSTITUTION CAMPUS]. This study would provide insight into how colleges and universities can support the leadership development of Latina college students.

Availability and Compensation
If selected, a focus group time and date would be set based on your availability during the weeks of [DATE] and [DATE]. Food will be provided based on dietary needs and all participants will be entered into a drawing to receive a $40 Amazon gift card. This drawing will be completed at the conclusion of the focus group.

Interested? Complete the Interest Form!
If you are interested, please complete the following form by [DATE]. A link to this Participant Interest Form is available here: [Google Form Link]

Note: Completing this form does not guarantee your participation in the study. It simply provides me your information so that I can determine if you would qualify to participate in the study. Further information regarding this study will be communicated via e-mail after completing this form.

Should you have any additional questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at: kgarcia3@luc.edu or 224.392.5800.
APPENDIX D

ONLINE PARTICIPANT INTEREST FORM
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Latina College Student Leadership Development - Online Participant Interest Form
[to be hosted via a Google Form]

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. As the scope of this study is specific in nature, I ask that all interested participants complete the following form in order to gauge your interest and eligibility.

1. Do you identify as Latina or hispanic?
   a. Yes
   b. No
2. Please share what ethnicities you identity as below: (i.e. Mexican, Cuban, Dominican …)
3. Do you identify as a woman?
   a. Yes
   b. No
4. Were you assigned the sex of “female” at birth?
   a. Yes
   b. No
5. Are you currently enrolled as an undergraduate student at [Institution]?
   a. Yes
   b. No
6. Do you have any dietary needs or preferences? Please check all that apply.
   a. Vegetarian
   b. Vegan
   c. Gluten-Free
   d. Allergy: ______
   e. Other: ______
7. Please provide the following information:
   a. First and Last Name
   b. Current Year in College
   c. Major
   d. Preferred e-mail address
   e. Preferred phone number
   f. General availability during the following dates: ________ - ________.
APPENDIX E

SELECTION OF PARTICIPATION COMMUNICATION
E-mail Subject: You Have Been Selected- Latina College Students at [Institution]

Message to Selected Participants:

Hello [Participant Name]. I hope this message finds you well.

Thank you for completing the Participant Interest Form for the study on Latina College Students’ Leadership Development. I am pleased to share that you meet the criteria for this study and have been selected to participate.

**What You Can Expect**

Participants will attend a single 60 minute focus group interview to take place at [SPECIFIC INSTITUTION CAMPUS]. This study would provide insight into how colleges and universities can support the leadership development of Latina college students.

**Availability and Compensation**

A focus group time and date would be set based on your availability during the weeks of [DATE] and [DATE]. Please provide your availability via the following link: [DOODLE LINK]. I ask that you provide your availability no later than [DATE]. You will receive a text message and e-mail confirmation of the selected focus group date by [DATE].

Food will be provided based on dietary needs and all participants will be entered into a drawing to receive a $40 Amazon gift card. This drawing will be completed at the conclusion of the focus group session. The winner of the $40 gift card will be notified within 3-5 days of the focus group.

Should you have any additional questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at: kgarcia3@luc.edu or 224.392.5800.

Best,

Kristina Garcia
PhD Student - Higher Education
Loyola University Chicago
224.392.5800
garcia3@luc.edu
APPENDIX F

FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM
Focus Group Consent Form

Project Title: Latina College Student Leadership Development
Researcher: Kristina Garcia
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Bridget Kelly

INTRODUCTION:
You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Kristina Garcia for a dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Bridget Kelly in the School of Education at Loyola University of Chicago. You are being asked to participate because you are a Latina-identified, undergraduate student currently enrolled at [Institution]. Approximately 16-20 students are selected to participate. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

PURPOSE:
The purpose of this focus group is to provide the researcher with critical information related to how you experience leadership and leadership development at [Institution]. The purpose of this consent form is to outline the purpose of our discussion today and clarify specific pieces of information related to structure and compensation for this study.

PROCEDURES:
If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to:
- Respond to a series of questions about your experiences at [Institution]. Please keep in mind that you are under no pressure to respond to any questions you do not feel comfortable answering. You are also welcome to leave at any time during the focus group conversation. However, you are encouraged to stay until it concludes.
- Provide additional written feedback on these themes via e-mail should there be any concerns related to accuracy.

RISKS/BENEFITS:
This study aims to contribute to an area of study not largely explored in leadership development research. In the sharing of their stories, participants will provide insight into this phenomenon and further an understanding of Latina college students’ leadership development in wider leadership development research. Additionally, this focus group discussion can provide participants with an opportunity to reflect upon and explore their own experiences with leadership development. With regard to risks, the potential for risk to participants is minimal outside of any discomfort participants may experience in the sharing of personal stories or observations.

COMPENSATION:
Food will be provided based on dietary needs and all participants will be entered into a drawing to receive a $40 Amazon gift card. This drawing will be completed at the conclusion of the focus group. You understand that no further compensation beyond food and drink is guaranteed as a result of participating in this study.
CONFIDENTIALITY:

- After completing this form, participants will be prompted to create a pseudonym - a name intended to conceal their identity - to be utilized during the focus group discussion. These pseudonyms will be displayed on temporary name badges and participants will be encouraged to refer to other participants by their selected names.

- Upon drafting preliminary findings from the focus group discussion, a summative statement will be shared with participants to ensure stories were accurately interpreted by the researcher. Similarly, the focus group discussion will be video recorded to ensure that the researcher accurately documents participants’ stories.

- Any interview notes, video recordings, and preliminary findings will be maintained by the researcher on a password protected hard drive. Video recordings will be destroyed once transcription is completed. Transcripts and field notes will be destroyed at the end of the study. Though confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, the steps outlined above reflect the researcher’s commitment to maintaining participants’ privacy.

- You understand that the facilitator of today’s focus group will take written notes and that this conversation will be video recorded. However, know that you will NOT be personally identified in any written document or publication as a result of this study and that no direct statements will be linked to your identity.

- After this focus group conversation concludes, the video recording will be transcribed and notes will be analyzed to identify pertinent themes. Prior to continuing with analysis, the identified themes will be written and shared with focus group participants for your review.

- The Principal Investigator cannot guarantee that information discussed in focus groups will remain confidential because participants may repeat what is discussed to others.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS:
If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Kristina Garcia at 224.392.5800 or kgarcia3@luc.edu or the faculty sponsor Dr. Bridget Kelly at bkelly4@luc.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT:
By signing below, you indicate that you agree that you have read and had the opportunities to ask questions about the research study and this consent form, agree to be video recorded, and consent to participate in this focus group.

PRINTED NAME                                  SIGNATURE                                  DATE
________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX G

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL
Latina College Student Leadership Development at a Historically White Institution
Focus Group Interview Protocol

Preparatory Instructions

● Begin by greeting study participants as they arrive and direct participants to food and refreshments.
● After confirming that all scheduled participants have arrived, complete the following:
  ○ Have participants review and sign the Consent Form.
  ○ Notify participants of intention to video record the focus group discussion and provide overview of expectations surrounding participants’ privacy.
    ■ With regard to privacy: The facilitator will explain that participants are requested to acknowledge and respect the privacy of other participants’ responses shared throughout the discussion. The facilitator will further note that the researcher will take precautions to maintain confidentiality of the participants. However, there is no guarantee that other group participants will not disclose content discussed during the discussion.
  ○ Have students create their own “Pseudonym” to be utilized throughout the discussion. Then instruct participants to create an identifying name badge using the materials provided.
● Ask participants if they have any questions prior to beginning the discussion.

Focus Group Discussion Instructions

● “Thank you for your willingness to participate today. The purpose of this focus group is to help provide an understanding of how Latina-identified college students experience leadership development here at [Institution].
● As the primary goal of this focus group is to gain a better understanding of how you define and experience leadership development, this conversation will be guided by questions focused on your definition of leadership and leadership development, the role of cultural values in your leadership development, and the influence of the college environment on your leadership development.
● Throughout our conversation, I will directly refer to you by your selected pseudonym and encourage you all to refer to one another by their preferred pseudonyms as well.
● To be clear, there are no right or wrong answers in this discussion and the majority of this conversation will guided by your comments and conversation regarding your stories.”

Guiding Questions:
The facilitator will introduce herself and then prompt participants to introduce themselves using their pseudonyms.

● “To get things started, let’s take a moment and introduce ourselves. Could each of you share your pseudonym, your year in college, and your major.
● Thank you for sharing. Next I will ask a few questions. Please know that should you need any additional clarification, please feel free to ask.”
1. To get things started, what drew you to participate in this study? What interested you about leadership? Leadership development?

2. A central part of this study is considering how Latina college students experience leadership development. What does being a Latina mean to you?
   a. Where did this definition come from?
   b. Has your understanding of what a Latina is changed during your time in college? How so? Anyone else want to share something different? What story can you recall about what it means for you to be a Latina? On campus? At home?

3. How do you define leadership?
   a. Where do you think your definition of leadership came from? Is there a time you can tell us about where you thought about what leadership means? At home? In School? Growing up?
   b. Has your definition of leadership changed since beginning college? If so, what story can you recall about when or how it changed? Anyone else who has not shared yet want to add something?
   c. What points in your life have you been encouraged to take charge? Organize events or activities? Lead or guide a discussion? Growing up? With family? Friends? At school?

4. Think about a time when you felt that your leadership development was being supported.
   a. When and where did this happen? Teachers, neighbors, family friends or others who were a part of supporting your development? What happened? What did they say? How did you feel?
   b. Who was with you and what role did they play?
   c. What about stories of times you were not supported? What did that feel like? What did you do?

5. Cultural values are defined as characteristics and conditions that reflect what a particular group considers important. With regard to leadership development:
   a. How, if at all, have values from school, media, religious institutions or other big forces in society shaped your thinking about leadership?
   b. How, if at all, have values from your family or larger values from identifying as a Latina affected your leadership development?
   c. Who has a story to share about being a Latina and developing leadership?
   d. Others who have not had a chance to share?

6. Connecting it back to campus - describe how your leadership developed or emerged while in college.
   a. Who was involved and what role did they play?
   b. Any critical moments you can recall where your development was stalled or made more difficult? How so?
   c. What, if at all, student organizations, departments, or programs supported you in this development?
   d. Can you recall any faculty, friends or classmates shaping your development?
e. If you were involved on campus, what do you think prompted you to be involved?

f. What am I missing about your identity as a Latina and leadership development?

Closing Discussion

• “This brings us to the end of our discussion. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. I hope you enjoyed our meal and refreshments. After preliminary findings have been reached, I will connect with the group once more to share a summary to ensure that it accurately reflects what was shared during today’s discussion. Until then, please feel free to contact me should you have any additional questions.”
APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM
Interview Consent Form

**Project Title:** Latina College Student Leadership Development  
**Researcher:** Kristina Garcia  
**Faculty Sponsor:** Dr. Bridget Kelly

**INTRODUCTION:**
You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Kristina Garcia for a dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Bridget Kelly in the School of Education at Loyola University of Chicago. You are being asked to participate because you are a Latina-identified, undergraduate student currently enrolled at [Institution]. Approximately 16-20 students are selected to participate. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

**PURPOSE:**
The purpose of this interview is to provide the researcher with critical information related to how you experience leadership and leadership development at [Institution]. The purpose of this consent form is to outline the purpose of our discussion today and clarify specific pieces of information related to structure and compensation for this study.

**PROCEDURES:**
If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to:
- Respond to a series of questions about your experiences at [Institution]. Please keep in mind that you are under no pressure to respond to any questions you do not feel comfortable answering. You are also welcome to leave at any time during the conversation. However, you are encouraged to stay until it concludes.
- Provide additional written feedback on these themes via e-mail should there be any concerns related to accuracy.

**RISKS/BENEFITS:**
This study aims to contribute to an area of study not largely explored in leadership development research. In the sharing of their stories, participants will provide insight into this phenomenon and further an understanding of Latina college students’ leadership development in wider leadership development research. Additionally, this interview discussion can provide participants with an opportunity to reflect upon and explore their own experiences with leadership development. With regard to risks, the potential for risk to participants is minimal outside of any discomfort participants may experience in the sharing of personal stories or observations.

**COMPENSATION:**
Food will be provided based on dietary needs and all participants will be entered into a drawing to receive a $40 Amazon gift card. This drawing will be completed at the conclusion of the interview. You understand that no further compensation beyond food and drink is guaranteed as a result of participating in this study.
CONFIDENTIALITY:
- After completing this form, you will be prompted to create a pseudonym - a name intended to conceal your identity during the conversation.
- Upon drafting preliminary findings from the discussion, a summative statement will be shared with participants to ensure stories were accurately interpreted by the researcher. Similarly, the interview will be video recorded to ensure that the researcher accurately documents participants’ stories.
- Any interview notes, video recordings, and preliminary findings will be maintained by the researcher on a password protected hard drive. Video recordings will be destroyed once transcription is completed. Transcripts and field notes will be destroyed at the end of the study. The steps outlined above reflect the researcher’s commitment to maintaining participants’ privacy.
- You understand that the facilitator of today’s interview will take written notes and that this conversation will be video recorded. However, know that you will NOT be personally identified in any written document or publication as a result of this study and that no direct statements will be linked to your identity.
- After this conversation concludes, the video recording will be transcribed and notes will be analyzed to identify pertinent themes. Prior to continuing with analysis, the identified themes will be written and shared with study participants for your review.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS:
If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Kristina Garcia at 224.392.5800 or kgarcia3@luc.edu or the faculty sponsor Dr. Bridget Kelly at bkelly4@luc.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT:
By signing below, you indicate that you agree that you have read and had the opportunities to ask questions about the research study and this consent form, agree to be video recorded, and consent to participate in this interview.

PRINTED NAME SIGNATURE DATE
APPENDIX I

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Latina College Student Leadership Development at a Historically White Institution
Interview Protocol

Preparatory Instructions
● Begin by greeting the study participant as they arrive and direct participants to food and refreshments.
● Complete the following:
  ○ Have the participant review and sign the Consent Form.
  ○ Notify the participant of the intention to video record the discussion and provide overview of expectations surrounding participants’ privacy.
    ■ With regard to privacy: The facilitator will note that the researcher will take precautions to maintain confidentiality of the participants.
  ○ Have student create their own “Pseudonym” to be utilized throughout the discussion.
● Ask the participant if they have any questions prior to beginning the discussion.

Interview Discussion Instructions
● “Thank you for your willingness to participate today. The purpose of this interview is to help provide an understanding of how Latina-identified college students experience leadership development here at [Institution].
● As the primary goal of this interview is to gain a better understanding of how you define and experience leadership development, this conversation will be guided by questions focused on your definition of leadership and leadership development, the role of cultural values in your leadership development, and the influence of the college environment on your leadership development.
● Throughout our conversation, I will directly refer to you by your selected pseudonym.
● To be clear, there are no right or wrong answers in this discussion and the majority of this conversation will guided by your comments and conversation regarding your stories.”

Guiding Questions:
The facilitator will introduce herself and then prompt participants to introduce themself using their pseudonym.
● “To get things started, let’s take a moment and introduce ourselves. Could you share your pseudonym, your year in college, and your major.
● Thank you for sharing. Next I will ask a few questions. Please know that should you need any additional clarification, please feel free to ask.”

1. To get things started, what drew you to participate in this study? What interested you about leadership? Leadership development?
2. A central part of this study is considering how Latina college students experience leadership development. What does being a Latina mean to you?
   a. Where did this definition come from?
b. Has your understanding of what a Latina is changed during your time in college? How so? Anyone else want to share something different? What story can you recall about what it means for you to be a Latina? On campus? At home?

3. How do you define leadership?
   a. Where do you think your definition of leadership came from? Is there a time you can tell us about where you thought about what leadership means? At home? In school? Growing up?
   b. Has your definition of leadership changed since beginning college? If so, what story can you recall about when or how it changed? Anyone else who has not shared yet want to add something?
   c. What points in your life have you been encouraged to take charge? Organize events or activities? Lead or guide a discussion? Growing up? With family? Friends? At school?

4. Think about a time when you felt that your leadership development was being supported.
   a. When and where did this happen? Teachers, neighbors, family friends or others who were a part of supporting your development? What happened? What did they say? How did you feel?
   b. Who was with you and what role did they play?
   c. What about stories of times you were not supported? What did that feel like? What did you do?

5. Cultural values are defined as characteristics and conditions that reflect what a particular group considers important. With regard to leadership development:
   a. How, if at all, have values from school, media, religious institutions or other big forces in society shaped your thinking about leadership?
   b. How, if at all, have values from your family or larger values from identifying as a Latina affected your leadership development?
   c. Who has a story to share about being a Latina and developing leadership?
   d. Others who have not had a chance to share?

6. Connecting it back to campus - describe how your leadership developed or emerged while in college.
   a. Who was involved and what role did they play?
   b. Any critical moments you can recall where your development was stalled or made more difficult? How so?
   c. What, if at all, student organizations, departments, or programs supported you in this development?
   d. Can you recall any faculty, friends or classmates shaping your development?
   e. If you were involved on campus, what do you think prompted you to be involved?
   f. What am I missing about your identity as a Latina and leadership development?
Closing Discussion

- “This brings us to the end of our discussion. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. After preliminary findings have been reached, I will connect with participants once more to share a summary to ensure that it accurately reflects what was shared during interviews. Until then, please feel free to contact me should you have any additional questions.”
REFERENCES


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VITA

Kristina C. Alcozer Garcia was born and raised in the Chicagoland area. Prior to attending Loyola University Chicago, she earned an Associate of Arts degree from Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, Illinois and went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts in English from Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago, Illinois. From 2012-2014, she also attended Loyola University Chicago where she earned a Master of Education in Higher Education Administration.

Throughout her doctoral study, Kristina served as the Coordinator for Off-Campus Student Life within Loyola’s Division of Student Affairs. In addition to her professional role, she served on numerous University-wide committees and contributed to multiple research projects related women of color student experience and leadership development. Additionally, she is serves as the instructor for multiple leadership certificate courses for the Leadership Pathways Program at Northeastern Illinois University.

Currently, Kristina is the Associate Director for Commuter and Off-Campus Programs at the University of Illinois at Chicago and is the founding national co-chair for the Off-Campus and Commuter Student Services Knowledge Community for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). She currently resides in Skokie, Illinois.