

LATIN* LEADERSHIP MEANING MAKING USING CULTURAL PRACTICES OF GENERATIVITY IN STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Dr, Jennifer M. Batchelder (2021) Dissertation Summary of Findings
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Summarized Abstract

Leadership is founded through a western lens that denigrates cultural values. As the Latin* student population on college campuses grows, there is a demand for literature on Latin* leadership education. Using critical instrumental case study methodology, this research explored how Latin* students make meaning of leadership through cultural practices of generativity (process of guiding the next generation) within their campus organization engagements. With cultural connections to generativity, participants developed their leadership identity, capacity, and efficacy.

Problem Statements

- Leadership studies are founded on westernized perspectives and experiences (Yukl & Gardner, 2020).
- This excludes the experiences of minoritized populations
- There is little literature on Latin* leadership (Arminio et al., 2000; Dugan & Komives, 2011).
- Latin* students' views of leadership do not align with their cultural values (Acosta & Guthrie, 2020; Arminio, 2000; Lozano, 2015; Onorato & Musoba, 2015; Suarez, 2015; Torres, 2019).

Research Question

How do Latin* college students make meaning of leadership through their cultural practices of generativity within their student organizations?

Sub-Research Questions

- a) In what ways do Latin* students practice guiding the next cohort of students (**generativity**) in their **student organization(s)**?
- b) In what ways do Latin* students describe the relationship between their **generative behaviors and their culture**?
- c) In what ways do Latin* students make meaning of the relationship between **generativity and leadership**?

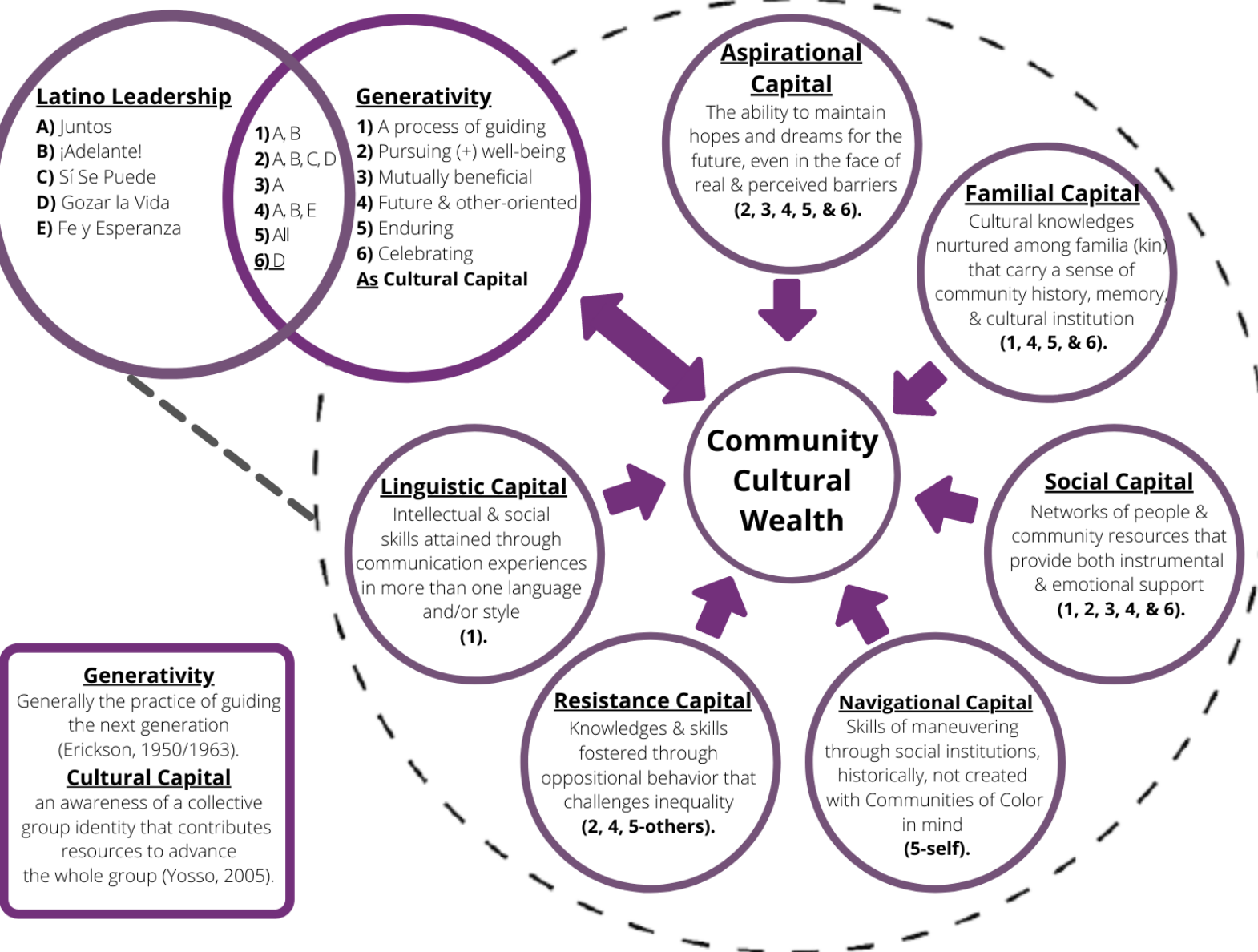
Operational Definitions

- **Active Involvement:** regular meeting attendance & contributions to their organization(s). Position not required.
- **Generativity:** (1) a process of guiding, (2) the pursuit of positive well-being, that is (3) mutually beneficial, (4) future and other-oriented, (5) enduring, and involves (6) celebrating.
- **Latin*** (pronounced Latin) is an all-inclusive ethnic identity referring to a group of people from the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and South America (Salinas, 2020).
- **Leadership** a relational process that is with and for the community and does not require a positional role.
- **Cultural Capital** is defined as an awareness of a collective group identity that contributes resources to advance the whole group (Yosso, 2005).

Conceptual Framework

Generativity as a Cultural Practice of Latin* Leadership

The conceptual framework for this study used generative practices as a link between Latin* culture and leadership. To demonstrate this, my conceptual framework drew upon Bordas' (2013) five principles of Latino leadership in action, the six components of generativity, and Latin* cultural capital together.



Methodology

With a primary focus on exploratory research, this study implemented a qualitative approach utilizing a **critical instrumental case study design** (Creswell, 2013; Johnson, & Christensen, 2008). Further, the importance of focusing on culture called for a critical lens to be applied in my methodology. To address this, **critical race theory** was the researcher paradigm used (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

Data Included

- 1 Qualtrics Survey
- 2 Journal Reflections
- 2 60-90 minute Interviews
- Researcher Reflexivity Journal
- Researcher Memos

Who Participated in the Study

Student Participants Identified as:

- Latin*
- 3+ year at the institution
- Active in at least 1 Student Organization
- 18+

9 Full Participants
+ 2 Partial Participants
= 11 total Participants

Summary of Findings

As the study explored multiple concepts, I present findings for the sub-research questions first, as they informed the overarching question.

Research Question 1A: Generativity and Student Organizations

While most participants shared challenges due to the pandemic, each were able to make connections between their generative behaviors and their organizations. The most common themes of how generativity showed up were through giving or receiving advice, professional development, and community orientation, and organization sustainability.

Giving and Receiving Advice

Generative behaviors showed up in organization advice and academic advice for/from peers.

Organization Sustainability

Generativity showed up in how they recruited, transitioning, and training members of their organization.

Community Orientation

Generative behaviors showed up *because* they cared for their community and wanted the collective organization to do better.

Organization Presentations

Generativity showed up in the organization meetings, presentations, and professional development opportunities.

"With the younger kids, like, a lot of them, you know, didn't know like how to register for or like how to really, like get advice or register for classes. And so, like me and the other older kids, or even our coach will, like, help them out..."

-JUPITER,
GIVING ADVICE

Research Question 1B: Generativity and Latin* Culture

The data showed all participants saw a clear relationship between generativity and their Latin* culture. The Latin* cultural values of serving others and community were the strongest themes associated to generative behaviors. The conceptual framework of this study positioned generativity as a form of cultural capital to help Latin* students to better relate to the concept of leadership. The consistency of cultural capital's representation in all participants' data, particularly in how participants described the relationship between their generative behaviors and their culture, was prominent. This resulted in the third sub-research question finding: generativity as cultural capital.

"In our culture... we want to show up for one another and we want to really care about each other and prepare ourselves for the future and do better in the future. And I think that's something our parents have always instilled in us, in our culture..."

-LUCA

Generativity & Serving Others

The pursuit of positive well-being and the concern for the future of others were the strongest generative practices represented in participants connections to serving others. Cultural capital, navigational capital, *fe y esperanza*, and *juntos* were also significant to this finding.

Generativity as Cultural Capital

These cultural values were strongly represented over other cultural values in relation to generativity. The presence of cultural capital showed up through parallel applications in both findings. Further, representations were comparable when exploring cultural capital behaviors across all data.

Generativity & Community Values

The generative practices of mutual benefit, concern for the future of others, and positive well-being were strongest in connections related to community values. Additionally, cultural capital, familial capital, and *juntos* were prevalent.

Summary of Findings -Continued

Research Question 1C: Generativity and Leadership

All full participants were able to make direct connections between their ideas of generativity and leadership. Participants described how generativity and leadership were specifically related through four themes: leader and follower roles, passing on knowledge, helping others, and transforming others into leaders were themes that showed up.

Leader and Follower Roles

Participants spoke about how it could be practiced no matter what role you played within the organization; both leaders and followers could practice leadership through generativity as the hierarchy structures were not as important. Further, Bambo shared how, in relation to leadership, generativity "helps to, for us to see us as equal."

Passing on Knowledge

Participants referred to this idea of knowledge and information as a part of their leadership practice after reflecting on generativity. Vanessa stated this plainly by sharing how "these generative behaviors are a practice of leadership because they are leading the next generation with knowledge."

Helping Others

As participants reflected on generativity, they found the process of guiding others relating to the notions of helping and serving others which they saw related to leadership. Orion shared similar thoughts as he described leadership relates to serving: "...using, like, serving and relating that to, like, leading other people or trying to influence or push for something that is better for everyone involved. And that's like a lot of what's in generativity..."

Transforming Others into Leaders

The relationship between generativity and leadership showed up in the ways participants described how they guided others with the intent to develop them into leaders themselves. When asked how generativity related to leadership, Bambo responded, "I really think that as a leader, it's not always about against demanding things. There's always an aspect of yesteryear, but a good leader always teaches the followers on how to become a leader someday."

Generative Practices Represented

- A process of guiding
- Mutually beneficial
- Future & other oriented

- A process of guiding
- Positive well-being
- Mutually beneficial
- Endurance

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Research Question 1: Leadership Meaning Making with Cultural Practices of Generativity

As full participants reflected on their culture and generative behaviors within their organizations, they demonstrated development in their own understandings of leadership, their leadership practices, and their belief in their ability to engage in leadership. With consideration of culture, I found myself relating these themes to Bertrand Jones et al. (2016) culturally relevant leadership learning model as they align with the three domains of leadership learning: identity, capacity, and efficacy.

Leadership identity

occurs as a student develops their understanding of who they are in relation to leadership and considers integrating leadership as a component of their social identity (Bertrand Jones et al., 2016).

Leadership capacity

is described as "the integration of students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills that collectively reflect their overall ability to behave effectively in the leadership process" (Bertrand Jones et al., 2016, p. 14).

Leadership efficacy

is defined as "one's internal belief in the likelihood that they will be successful when engaging in leadership (Dugan et al., 2013, p. 6).

Summary of Findings -Continued

Research Question 1: Leadership Meaning Making with Cultural Practices of Generativity -Continued

Leadership Identity Development

Participants demonstrated how recognition of their cultural practices of generativity helped develop their leadership identity further. For example, Maia described how she made meaning of leadership through her culture and generativity:

“...it just made it clear that it's something that is practice daily in regular life that we've been practicing since we were very young, that has essentially been instilled in us by our parents. So, even if they're not super-wealthy, super-powerful people, they've instilled this practice of leadership and leadership within community that isn't often recognized by society...”
-Maia

“... just having those [generativity] steps really, in a way, it's like a guidance for you, or an, how to actually implement it with others. It really helps out.”
-Bambo

Leadership Efficacy Development

All but one of the participants communicated how their reflections on their cultural practices of generativity contributed to their leadership efficacy. They described how having a name for something they have always been doing helped them relate to and see themselves engaging in leadership. Jupiter boldly took her leadership efficacy a step further in consideration of her Latin* community as she advocated for teaching generativity as a type of leadership.

“[Generativity] humanizes everybody involved... sometimes we're like, forced to be, into like leadership positions where it's literally like a hierarchy and... a lot of your identity is stripped away; and I don't like that. I really like this approach to leadership because I feel like it treats people with respect and like it humanizes everybody.”
-Jupiter

Leadership Capacity Development

As full participants described the relationship between generativity and leadership, they each demonstrated how generativity shifted their understanding of leadership. This revealed growth in their leadership knowledge which supported their development in their leadership capacity. Further, some participants described how reflecting on their cultural identities and generativity in relation to leadership informed their practice as they engaged with their peers during the study.

Significance of the Study

Filled literature gaps linking generative practices with the Latin* culture and Latin* leadership in the context of higher education.

Generativity in student organizations **demonstrated ways to develop sustainable communities of support.**

Cultural identity matters in leadership development!

Generativity serves as a **cultural practice of Latin* leadership.**

Answered the call for **contributing toward a culturally relevant approach to leadership** learning and education!

Implications

Update Conceptual Framework

- As there was not enough evidence to support the use of "Celebration," it is recommended that its use in the conceptual framework and definition of leadership be removed and further explored.

Student Organization Policies/Programs

- Apply the conceptual framework in organization trainings for members and officers
- Advisors can implement the frameworks in their students' leadership development year round

Cultural Considerations

- All leadership curriculum should include cultural identity development in learning outcomes
- Implement Latin* leadership development courses using an asset-based approach to validate and specifically address their unique practices of leadership.
- Leadership educator cultural identity training

Future Research

- Grounded Theory Model research to solidify generative leadership as an empirical theory
- Replicate similar studies with other community-oriented cultures to further establish the cultural foundations of the model
- Further explore how intersectionality considerations present in future studies

Conclusion

Overall, the findings from this study have demonstrated the presence of generativity within the Latin* culture and in leadership within the context of student organizations at an HSI. Acknowledging how participants saw relationships between generativity, their Latin* culture, and leadership, I answered the overarching research question: In what ways to Latin* college students make meaning of leadership through their cultural practices of generativity within their organizations? The data showed how participants' reflections on their cultural practices of generativity led them to make meaning of leadership by developing their leadership identity, efficacy, and capacity.

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