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RISING ABOVE THE ADOBE CEILING: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MENTORING AND SOCIAL CAPITAL INFLUENCES AMONG CALIFORNIA LATINA NONPROFIT LEADERS

By

Belinda Hernandez

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University of the Pacific
Sacramento, California

2020

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By

Belinda Hernandez

APPROVED BY:

Dissertation Advisor: Laura Hallberg, Ed.D.

Committee Member: Delores McNair, Ed.D.

Committee Member: Inés Ruiz-Huston, Ed.D.

Committee Member: Marcia Hernandez, Ph.D.

Senior Associate Dean of Benerd College: Linda Webster, Ph.D.

RISING ABOVE THE ADOBE CEILING: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MENTORING AND SOCIAL CAPITAL INFLUENCES AMONG CALIFORNIA LATINA NONPROFIT LEADERS

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By

Belinda Hernandez

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family: past, present, and future. This journey would not have been fulfilled without the sacrifices and decisions that you have made. You helped create a space for me to cultivate and widen the opportunities that you began. You have been an anchor that reminds me of my values and my humility. I understand that it is now my responsibility to continue our work by planting seeds and being a bridge for others who will come after me.

I especially dedicate this dissertation to my beloved parents, Roberto and Rosa, whose words of wisdom have been my source of encouragement. You have instilled in me fortitude, to remain authentic to myself in everything that I do. You taught me that our experiences create stories that should be valued and shared with others. Mami, when you were told as a young child: “You don’t need an education to learn how to make tortillas,” you became one of my greatest sources of inspiration. I know you are with me every day. The stories from both of you have been my compass. I learned that mentorship and teaching come from sharing our experiences and stories. I keep you both always in my soul. I have always been listening.

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I offer my sincere appreciation to my family and friends for their continuous love and support. Thank you for understanding my commitment to this journey during my absence from you. I would not have completed this journey without knowing you had been supporting me from afar.

I am forever thankful to my parents for modeling good character and a strong work ethic. You taught me that opportunities are not always given, and we have the ability to create them for ourselves. You have shaped who I am by reminding me where I come from, and showing me that there is always more for us to learn.

I would also like to acknowledge the next generation of my family. Just as I have been honored to have strong people in my life, I will always be a guiding light for you whenever you need me. I promise to continue to always be your champion. Know that in any undesirable circumstance we always have a choice to let it keep us down or rise above it. That has been the nature of our family.

Lastly, thank you to the amazing women who participated in this study. Your experiences will benefit existing and future Latina leaders. They will help pave the way to

continue to explore our uniqueness and lift up voices that have historically been left off of pages in many books. The stories do not end here…

RISING ABOVE THE ADOBE CEILING: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MENTORING AND SOCIAL CAPITAL INFLUENCES AMONG CALIFORNIA LATINA NONPROFIT LEADERS

Abstract

By Belinda Hernandez

University of the Pacific
2020

Empirical research studies that focus on the experiences of Latinas in executive leadership are limited. In its entirety, workforce research has overlooked how social and cultural experiences influence this group's leadership development. This gap in research has failed to uplift the Latina executive voice and their achievements. Addressing this gap has the potential to influence distinctive workforce practices and future scholarship. Utilizing an asset-based perspective, this study presents counter narratives that intentionally focus on exploring Latina leaders' voices. The importance of intersectional experience and social identities illustrate non-monolithic, yet aligned, experiences among study participants.

This foundational dissertation explored mentoring phenomena through a qualitative study with Latina, nonprofit, chief executive officers (CEO) in the State of California as protégés. The nonprofit racial leadership gap provided context for the high number of Latinas/os in California relative to the minimal number of Latinas holding executive positions. This context warranted a necessary exploration into how mentoring experiences positively influenced Latina leadership development (LLD) so that findings may be replicated for future practice. A hermeneutic phenomenological research design maintained participant engagement which explored two key research questions:

1. What are the salient characteristics of quality mentoring relationships for Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California
2. How have quality mentoring relationships influenced Latina leaders' sense of self-efficacy and leadership development?

Data were collected via demographic questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and researcher field notes. Participants included 10 Latina CEOs of California nonprofit organizations. They represented all five regions of the state. Study findings demonstrated that:(a) mentoring relationship type evolved over time, b) a constellation of mentors were integral to leadership growth, c) mentors supported expressions of authenticity and LLD, d) mentor-protégé match suitability acted as a sphere of influence, and e) peer mentoring promoted a sense of openness and vulnerability. Findings revealed that quality mentoring relationships encouraged participant leadership development that positively impacted executive self-efficacy and retention. Recommendations are presented that further support Latina executive leaders' development. Four recommendations are presented for formal and informal mentoring practices, and two proposals are offered for future mentoring research that extends the foundational work of this study.

Furthermore, a researcher journal was maintained throughout the duration of this study. The journal led to the development of a researcher self-reflexivity process model. This model illustrated how researcher positionality evolved from insider-to-outsider, yet sustained researcher-participant engagement from pre-data collection through data analysis that reconciled pre-suppositions, interpretations, and meaning-making. This study represents the richness found in stories that have been minimally included in empirical literature. It offers implications for the value of uplifting voices to enhance leadership practice and future research.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The glass ceiling narrative metaphorically acknowledges invisible barriers to women's career advancement. It acknowledges subtle and covert "forms of bias and discrimination, [in which] women are less likely than men to have access to strong professional networks, social ties to elites, workplace support and insider information" (Glass & Cook, 2016, p. 51). The metaphor, "breaking the glass ceiling," describes high achieving women who have broken this barrier to successfully attain executive leadership positions. I assert that breaking the ceiling is insufficient, it is what occurs after this that determines whether women flourish and rise above the ceiling. Additionally, racial and ethnic minority women argue that the glass ceiling metaphor ignores intersectionality and its impact on career advancement.

The glass ceiling metaphor has been described differently depending on the racial and ethnic identity of different groups of women. Black women have adopted the term concrete ceiling (Holder et al., 2015), while Latinas adopted the term adobe ceiling (Alicea, 2003), to describe additional forces that suppress racial and ethnic minority female leaders. Stained glass, bamboo, and lavender ceilings are additional metaphors utilized by other underrepresented groups. The adobe ceiling illustrates the dense and muddy barriers that Latinas must navigate to attain leadership roles (Alicea, 2003). As opposed to glass, the muddiness of adobe makes it difficult to see through, know exactly what lays ahead, and know how much further is needed to go in attaining a leadership role. My study explored how Latina leaders have navigated their leadership trajectories with the support of mentors and how mentors have influenced these women's leadership development. Exploring these influences led to further understanding and development of strategies that support Latina executive leaders.

Approximately five years ago I became the CEO of a medium-sized nonprofit organization. Prior to that I experienced numerous leadership promotions and had been on the fast track to attaining a CEO role. I attribute my success to my work ethic and ability to always take on new opportunities. I had been working for a few years as a senior leader with my organization at the time, and was seeking a CEO position. A colleague serving as a board member for a nonprofit organization informed me of the CEO vacancy there and encouraged me to apply. I was offered the job and became the third CEO in that organization's 55-year history. Until that point I relied on my own instincts, drive, and decision-making abilities. But being a CEO required a leadership shift that I had never before had to navigate. Although I was able to break the adobe ceiling (Alicea, 2003), I was unaware of the glass cliff that awaited me, as I was recruited during a time the organization was struggling (Glass & Cook, 2016). In hindsight, I reminisce about whether having had a mentor at that time may have supported my retention at the organization. I left the position about a year later. I broke the adobe ceiling, but could not rise above it. That affected my self-efficacy as a leader that I had developed over several years. What had worked for me in the past had not worked in that role. Acquaintances could not provide the level of support or expertise I needed from a mentor who had already experienced what I was experiencing. A mentor may have provided the guidance I needed to overcome some of the barriers I was facing.

My experience is significant to this study because other Latinas may have had, or are having, similar experiences. The disparity between the Latina population in California and those who hold CEO positions is evident. Consequently, when a Latina leader becomes CEO it is important they are supported and given guidance in ways that are beneficial for them. Although disparities exist, there are Latina CEOs in California who have successfully navigated their

positions in the nonprofit sector. Exploring what has benefited them would be beneficial for others to help navigate their own leadership development and understand how these influences may assist in the development of more robust strategies for this group of leaders.

Mentoring has been shown to influence leaders in the pipeline and those new to their roles; however, it has been reported that Latinas lack mentors (Catalyst, 2003). Exploring mentoring experiences from the protégé's perspective revealed how quality mentoring relationships could assist current Latina leaders and those in the leadership pipeline. This study illustrates how diverse experiences may inspire aspiring leaders to seek mentorship, employers to develop better support systems, and educators to establish mentor development programs that address the needs of a diverse workforce. An asset-based perspective was integrated into the entire study.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) utilized critical race methodology (CRM) to integrate epistemologies grounded in the ethnic minority experience, rejecting deficit-based perspectives that further marginalize and oppresse underrepresented people. The authors described critical race theory (CRT) in this methodology to explain that various forms of marginalization are based on factors, such as race, class, and gender, which have become a foundation in legal studies, sociology, history, ethnic studies, and women's studies (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). CRM extends CRT into an actual approach containing multiple layers linked to everyday experiences of racial and ethnic minorities. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) asserted that counter stories must not only be told in response to neglectful, deficit-based *majoritarian* narratives that perpetuate negative stereotypes of marginalized groups; rather, scholars need to be mindful that counter stories be told in ways that disrupt dominate, deficit-based narratives. Stories and shared experiences need to be told through the participant's voice. Asset-based methodologies promote the sharing of

counter stories, such as personal narratives, others' stories told in third person, and composites of personal and third person stories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005). The benefits of counter stories include thematic discourse pertaining to building a sense of community and cultivating spaces for empowerment. For example, Espino (2014) highlighted counter stories illustrating how community cultural wealth was leveraged to form social networks as coping mechanisms leading toward educational persistence.

Population Figures

The Latina/o population is the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States (U.S.), steadily increasing to represent 55 million individuals, or 18% of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Between 1970 and 2016, the Latina/o population increased by approximately 48 million individuals, with a 35 million increase occurring since 1990 (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Projections indicate that the Latina/o population will grow to 128 million people by 2050 and represent 29% of total U.S. residents (Passel & Cohn, 2008). This represents over a 100% increase compared to 14% in 2005 (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Population estimates indicate that Latinas/os will account for 60% of total population growth in the U.S. from 2005 to 2050 (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Although these numbers are striking, state data illustrate an even more prominent Latina/o profile.

In California, where this study was conducted, Latinas/os represent approximately 39.4% of the state's population, accounting for about 15.5 million individuals (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). When comparing these state to national figures, California is home to the largest concentration of Latinas/os in the country. California's geographic proximity to Mexico and its ethnically diverse population has created a racial and ethnic mosaic. By 2044, more than half of the U.S. population will represent an ethnic minority group (Colby & Ortman, 2015). These

population figures and estimates are critical to understanding labor shifts in the U.S. workforce, as well as the relevance of ethnic minority presence and leadership.

Latinas/os have been one of the fastest growing and one of the most underrepresented ethnic groups in the U.S. workforce. Between 1990 and 2016, the number of Latina/o workers increased from 10.7 to 26.8 million (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016), comprising 17% of the total labor force (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). However, career mobility has not kept pace with these figures. Latina/o leadership representation continues to lag behind, with Latinas/os representing just over 3% of boardroom seats, while merely 2% of CEOs were of Latina/o ancestry (Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility [HACR], 2013). Although California possesses one of the most ethnically diverse populations and maintains a prominent Latina/o presence, disparities are even more striking for Latina leaders.

The economic status for Latinas in California is incongruous with its population growth. This group earns just 43 cents to every dollar earned by a non-Latino White man, and only 78 cents to that of a non-Latina White woman (Hispanas Organized for Political Equality, 2017). This economic reality emphasizes the compounded marginalization of the female members of this ethnic minority group. Further, this economic and racial/ethnic marginalization contributes to underrepresentation and discrimination within executive leadership (Avalos & Salgado, 2016; Martinez et al., 2017).

According to Kimball (2015), women accounted for only 12.3% of highest paid executives at the 400 largest public companies headquartered in California. A mere 191 of 1,823 executives are women, with only 17 of these women in the role of CEO (Kimball, 2015). Ethnic minority women experience the greatest disparity among executive leadership (HACR, 2013; Kimball, 2015), showing that Latinas represented merely 2.3% of female directors within

companies in California (Kimball, 2015). The disparity exemplifies a lack of equity and access. In 2013, Latinas held less than 1% (0.68) of boardroom seats at Fortune 500 companies, which has not improved since 2007 (Gándara, 2015; New America Alliance Institute, 2014). During 2014, only 4.3% of all female CEOs were Latina (Gándara, 2015). Latinas have not been named as women in the pipeline likely to acquire a CEO position in the coming years (Fortune, 2011; Rodriguez, 2012). As a result of these barriers, women often seek leadership positions within specific sectors.

The nonprofit sector tends to appeal to women seeking top executive positions, but attainment of these positions and further skill development often result in substantially lower salaries (Branson et al., 2013). Research shows that female leaders add significant economic and social value to an organization (Jones & Jones, 2017); however, limited scholarship exists focusing on female executives in the nonprofit industry (Branson et al., 2013). Existing studies show women have a firm presence in the nonprofit sector but minimally within executive ranks (Pynes, 2000). Compared to other sectors, 39.6% of nonprofit organizations had at least one female top executive versus 18% in Fortune 500 companies; it was usually the smaller nonprofits that had a female top executive (Branson et al., 2013). Additionally, studies tend to aggregate all women, or separate women from ethnic minorities (Hill et al., 2015), resulting in no, or limited, empirical research about Latina workplace executives. Researchers recommend further qualitative studies within the nonprofit sector that expand the exploration of career success to include intersectionality (Jones & Jones, 2017). This gap inspired this study's exploration into the perceptions of lived experiences among Latina nonprofit leaders.

Mentoring

Mentoring has been shown to support leadership development among underrepresented groups. It may vary by type, function, and source (Kram, 1985) and should be a reflective endeavor that is ongoing, iterative, and reciprocal between mentor and protégé (Hastings & Kane, 2018). The greater the reciprocity, the greater the potential for cultivating a quality mentoring relationship. Among high achievers, a mentor may help create a safe environment that reduces feelings of performance inadequacy (Clance & Imes, 1978; Fried-Buchalter, 1997; Neureiter & Traut-Matausch, 2016; Peteet et al., 2015; Vergauwe et al., 2015). Mentoring may be best understood through its salient characteristics, such as mode (face-to-face, online, conference call), and frequency (Crisp et al., 2017). In educational settings, mentoring has benefitted international students more than domestic students, and women more than men (Shalka, 2017), while ethnic minority students benefit more than White students (Komives et al., 2005). Protégés believe that their mentors encouraged and compelled them to "feel empowered, listened to, understood, capable, important, like they mattered, [and] challenged to do more…" (Kouzes & Posner, 2010, p. 69). Considering these findings, Latina leaders may benefit from mentoring relationships as protégés as this has been shown to positively affect an individual's retention and development in educational and workplace settings (Crisp & Alvarado-Young, 2018). However, existing scholarship pertaining to mentoring of ethnic minority women in the workplace is underdeveloped (Crisp et al., 2017).

Development of social networks is also illustrated in critical mentoring pedagogy (CMP). CMP as an asset-based approach that demands reciprocal mentoring relationships between protégés and mentors. The CMP model expects mentors to assist protégés in decision-making and guide them through systemic social inequality and power dynamics. Specific benefits

include; reduced alienation in school, increased resiliency, overcoming life challenges, school satisfaction, and retention and completion with their endeavors (Liou et al., 2016). Yosso's (2005) navigational and aspirational capital concepts were elucidated by Liou et al. (2016). The authors advocated for non-hierarchical, asset-based approaches that promote a protégé's reliance on their own human agency for transformation (Liou et al., 2016). It was my assertion in this study that mentors may support protégés to rely on their human agency, which in turn increases the protégé's leader self-efficacy.

Statement of the Problem

California's demographic trends illustrate the increasing and powerful presence of Latinas/os (Hayes-Bautista, 2004). As generations of Latinas/os have established themselves in the state, researchers have the opportunity to explore more specific lived experiences of Latinas/os that have historically been neglected in literature. Limited existing research has focused on the deficits of racial and ethnic minority groups, rather than highlighting their successes and how they have attained their success (Yosso, 2005).

With regard to professional development, research indicates that Latinas have reported the absence of a mentor as the primary barrier to their career success and difficulty accessing social networks that could help them attain promotional opportunities (Catalyst, 2003). For those who have been successful, mentors offer an objective perspective to help analyze a protégé's performance (Kouzes & Posner, 2010); however, little is known about the influence of mentoring on Latina leadership development (LLD). The lack of this exploration makes it difficult to replicate or utilize in supporting underrepresented, female leaders of color. This study specifically explored these gaps in research, produced findings, and offered recommendations for practice and research that are discussed in the forthcoming chapters.

Exploring the influence of mentoring assists with further development of support systems that promote Latina leaders' career and social mobility.

Purpose of the Inquiry

The purpose of this study was to explore how Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California leveraged existing social capital and mentoring relationships as protégés that influenced their self-efficacy and leadership development.

Key Inquiry Questions

To explore how Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California leveraged their social capital and mentoring relationships as protégés that influenced their self-efficacy and leadership development, the following key questions guided this study:

1. What are the salient characteristics of quality mentoring relationships for Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California?
2. How have quality mentoring relationships influenced Latina leaders' sense of self-efficacy and leadership development?

Significance of the Inquiry

California's geographic proximity to Mexico creates unique immigration patterns between the state and Mexico. For example, those with binational identities may commute between California and Mexico on a daily basis to work or for other personal reasons. Although U.S.-born Latinas/os have resided in the state longer than recent immigrants, they may still have limited access to social capital and networks as compared to non-ethnic, U.S.-born minority groups. Existing scholarship remains limited and does not focus on the exploration of mentoring experiences, specifically of Latina nonprofit leaders in California. My inquiry is significant because it revealed potential implications and improved strategies to support Latinas leaders in any sector, leaders in the pipeline, and those aspiring to transition between sectors.

Mentors play a significant role in influencing an individual's view of self and leadership (Crisp & Alvarado-Young, 2018; Komives et al., 2006). Affirmation of one's identity and feeling of belonging predict a greater sense of self-efficacy (Peteet et al., 2015). Studies have confirmed the benefits of mentoring, yet there is limited evidence about its influence among Latina leaders. The business community, practitioners, and educators have addressed the lack of diverse representation, but have relied on scant empirical information (Fortune, 2011; HACR, 2013; Kimball, 2015; Rodriguez, 2012). Limited existing scholarship tends to aggregate all women, separate women and ethnic minorities into two groups, or combine all ethnic minority groups together (Hill et al., 2015). This type of data analysis limits the ability to design improved and specific approaches conducive to Latina executive leaders because of its neglect in addressing intersectional identities and marginalization. An emphasis on the nonprofit sector strengthens existing research by examining this group in a specialized sector to enable the business community, practitioners, and educators to improve workforce pipeline strategies and increase executive retention.

This study contributes to scholarship as it explored mentoring relationships and how they support LLD. Crisp and Alvarado-Young (2018) stated that, "unfortunately, empirical research that is able to guide practice by offering evidence-based practices is appreciably underdeveloped relative to the expansion of mentoring relationships and programs" (p. 37). Not only are empirical studies limited, but historically, ethnic minority women have been studied from a deficit-based perspective, blaming them for failures and barriers that impede their success (Bernal, 2002; Delgado Bernal & Alemán, 2017; Yosso, 2005). This study adopted a critical asset-based perspective highlighting participants' assets: social and community capital. A more detailed description of asset-based perspectives is found in the theoretical framework of this

chapter and in Chapter 2. The goal of this study was attained by better understanding mentoring phenomenon through participant perceptions of their lived experiences. The purpose of this study was not to emphasize participants' barriers to success, but to highlight successful strategies that may be replicated within similar groups in a multitude of settings.

Description of the Study

This study utilized a qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenological approach utilizing demographic questionnaires, individual in-person interviews, and researcher field notes. Ten individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted ranging between 60 to 90 minutes that explored two key inquiry questions. The interviews were designed to explore participants' mentoring experiences and perceptions pertaining to how their experiences have influenced their career trajectories and LLD. The research design and methodology is detailed in Chapter 3. The eligibility requirements for participation included:

- Self-identifying as an U.S.-born Chicana, Latina, or person of Hispanic ancestry. This requirement addressed the gap in scholarship that has not focused specifically on Latina CEOs.
- Current CEOs of a California nonprofit organization. This study interviewed women throughout California to have an increased geographic sample distribution.
- Self-identified as having had, or having, a protégé experience with at least one mentor. Other terms such as supervisor, role model, instructor, advisor, coach, sponsor, protector, family member, and friend were also used.

Theoretical Framework

Social capital theory emphasizes that social relationships and networks exhibit the potential to facilitate the achievement of goals that otherwise may not have been attainable (Coleman, 1988; Yosso, 2005). It describes an individual's investment in social relations that enhance and provide key support to educational and professional development. These social relations facilitate actions that help individuals navigate social structures and institutions that

produce economic, political, and community benefit (Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Yosso, 2005). Social networks enrich social capital outcomes via; a) the flow of information providing opportunities and choices an individual otherwise would not have access to, b) the development of relationships that may exercise influence on organizational agents and decision makers, c) acknowledged relationships to important individuals that may be perceived as social credentials, and d) credibility for which one may receive recognition (Lin, 2001). According to Coleman (1988) and Lin (2001), informal social resources are carefully used in attaining occupational mobility. In this study, social capital theory addressed how mentors were found through or expanded existing social networks that influenced participants.

Social capital exists in different forms. These forms include obligations and expectations built on trust usually greatest in closed social networks, information flow of a social structure, and norms accompanied by sanctions if they are not followed (Coleman, 1988). Consequences of a closed network include how it may monitor behavior that may not necessarily benefit others in the network (Coleman, 1988). In some closely knit communities, it is ideal to request a favor, incur an obligation by withdrawing from the community's social capital fund, and then become obligated to contribute to the social capital pool for others (Coleman, 1988). This helps identify whether acquired social capital is increasing and being reinvested back into the community. Social capital theory aligns well with mentoring experiences of Latina nonprofit leaders because the nonprofit sector's mission is for community benefit where investment into a Latina CEO will ultimately become a community asset. In this study, social capital theory was emphasized along with community cultural wealth typology.

Community cultural wealth typology adheres to an asset-based perspective. The typology examines how deficit-based perspectives are grounded in race and racism that impact

social structures, practices, and narratives (Yosso, 2005). The typology debunks deficit-based thinking that tends to place blame for underperformance and success on ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups. Grounded in CRT and Latina/o critical theory, community cultural wealth responds with an asset-based perspective, stressing that ethnic minority communities retain various forms of capital that can create wealth and opportunity (Yosso, 2005). These forms tend to be overlooked. Social capital is one of six forms of capital in this typology. Yosso's framework expands Coleman's (1988) social capital theory by including capital held by ethnic minority communities that are routinely neglected in scholarship.

In this study, social capital theory was intertwined with community cultural wealth typology to elaborate on how Latina nonprofit leaders leveraged social capital with mentoring relationships. The framework's emphasis on investment in social relations that build professional development supported this study's key inquiry questions guiding the exploration of how mentoring relationships act as sources of influence and capital, and how they benefitted or hindered participants' LLD.

Researcher Positionality

As a Latina, I refer to myself as Latina and sometimes *Chicana*. I am strongly influenced by Chicana race feminista praxis (Delgado Bernal & Alemán, 2017) constructed from CRT and Chicana race feminista praxis. This praxis is grounded in race-gendered epistemology and braids scholarship into asset-based counter narratives to deficit-based thinking that have been institutionalized within multiple systems. Deficit-based perspectives have been detrimental to marginalized groups, often blaming them for failures and ignoring cultural assets and the value of self-interpretation. This study expanded this praxis into the Latina nonprofit leader workspace while addressing opportunities for systems change through the sharing of lived experiences. "An

education that is disconnected from one's lived experiences and history further excludes and marginalizes the lives and knowledge of Chican@Latin@..." (Delgado Bernal & Alemán, 2017, p. 39).

My position in relation to this study was as inside-outsider (Labaree, 2002). It began minimally as an insider because of my personal experience as a former Latina nonprofit CEO in California, but shifted to completely outsider because I did not interview anyone from my former or current workplaces and desired to utilize a self-reflexive process to maintain my role as researcher. Belzile and Öberg (2012) stated that: "Whether or not a moderator shares certain characteristic (gender, ethnic background, socio-economic status, etc.) in common with participants can impact how the group interacts and the kinds of discursive content they produce" (pp. 465–466). Although I shared characteristics with participants in this study, that did not guarantee participants were comfortable and honest with me. They may have provided responses that they believed I wanted to hear, or did not share responses by assuming I already knew what they wished to convey. Once I began the data collection process I completely held an outsider positionality. This is described in Chapter 3. The goal of this study was achieved because I produced empirical research that was collected by cultivating spaces for participants to share their lived experiences. The data were utilized as opportunities and extensions to learning. Chapter 3 provides a more detailed description about the methodology, data collection, and data analysis approach of this study.

Essential Definitions

I recognize that various terms are used to identify individuals of Latin American ancestry. The purpose of highlighting this study's definitions is to illustrate the value of lived experiences and how they shape the diverse lenses through which people from similar racial or ethnic

minority groups see the world. While the U.S. government created and utilizes the term *Hispanic* (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011) to refer to individuals of Latin American descent, *Latina/o* was used in this study to purposely represent a gender binary. A Latina/o may identify with any racial category and represent a multitude of Latin American ethnicities and countries (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Additionally, I acknowledge *Latinx* as used as a gender neutral term. *Latina* is used throughout this study to refer to an individual who self-identifies as a woman of Latin American ethnic ancestry. However, in this study the terms Latina and Latina/o are used. A further description of Latina/o social and cultural dynamics is described in Chapter 2. Additional essential definitions are included below.

Adobe ceiling: A term used in Latina leadership studies that highlights factors associated with culture and marginalization that impact Latina leaders (Alicea, 2003).

Chicana: A woman of Latina/o ancestry with a cultural and political social identity that recognizes a resistant and political consciousness. Not all Latinas embrace this identity (Bernal, 2002).

Community cultural wealth typology: An asset-based construct emphasizing social, aspirational, navigational, familial, linguistic, and resistant capital (Yosso, 2005).

Hermeneutic phenomenology: An interpretive approach using historical meanings and effects of experiences on an individual and social level. The researcher's biases and assumptions are not ignored but included as part of the interpretive process utilizing hermeneutic loops (Heidegger, 1953/2010; Laverty, 2003).

Leadership: The ability to establish direction, align, and inspire people (Kotter, 1990).

Majoritarian: The juxtaposition of dominate, deficit-based, monolithic discourse (Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Mentor: An individual who assists another individual in learning something they may not have known (Bell, 2000).

Mentoring: The process between two individuals where one shares experiences and provides guidance to the other with the goal of personal or professional development (Kram, 1985).

Nonprofit: A type of tax exempt entity under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)3; a public charity intended to provide a public benefit (National Council of Nonprofits, n.d.).

Protégé: An individual who receives guidance from a mentor (Kram, 1985).

Self-efficacy: The perception of one's own capability to perform. It determines how individuals feel, think, and motivate themselves to execute in given circumstances. It may affect how they coordinate skills to approach and engage in a task (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1982).

Social capital: Networks or relationships that may be leveraged to support the facilitation of an individual's actions for the better (Coleman, 1988; Yosso, 2005).

Summary

This chapter described the disparity between California population estimates and under representation of Latinas in executive leadership roles. The problem highlights the ethnic diversity of the state, yet the lack of preparation by systems to develop and support a diversity of leaders. The purpose of this study was to explore how Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California experienced mentoring relationships and the influences of these relationships on their self-efficacy and LLD. Through an asset-based perspective, the potential implications of mentoring relationships that can assist the protégé, business community, practitioner, and educator in understanding and improving strategies that support ethnic minority women's

transitions into leadership roles, were explored. Mentoring relationships leverage existing capital and strengthen leader role retention. Findings from this study provide a foundation to build relevant mentoring programs for ethnic minority female leaders who feel isolated in their roles and have a desire to build upon existing social capital. Chapter 2 presents a deeper exploration of the existing literature pertaining to cultural capital, Latina leadership, nonprofit leader diversity, and the influence of mentoring within an asset-based framework.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

California is a racially and ethnically diverse mosaic, yet disparities persist between its demographics and Latinas holding executive level positions (California Department of Finance, 2019; Kimball, 2015). Although Latina/os make up approximately 39% of California's total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019), nationally they represent approximately 3% of the nation's total nonprofit CEOs (Cornelius et al., 2011). These disparities may lead to exclusivity in decision-making affecting community interests the organization represents. For Latinas who have attained executive leadership positions, limited empirical data exist pertaining to how mentoring has influenced their leadership development. The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of mentoring of Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California. Using a qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenological approach, research questions pertaining to salient characteristics of mentoring and its influence on leadership development guided this study. Additionally, this study countered monolithic and deficit-based thinking which places blame on an individual for their lack of success (Bourdieu, 2011) and upheld an asset-based approach intended to recognize participants' intersectional identities (Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

An asset-based perspective was maintained throughout this study (Bernal, 2002; Gonzales, 2012; Menchaca et al., 2016; Murakami & Núñez, 2014; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005). My researcher perspective negated threats of monolithic and majoritarian narratives that have been standard stories used to continuously subjugate racial and ethnic minorities (Bernal, 2002; Delgado Bernal & Alemán, 2017; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001). The racial and ethnic minority experience written through the lens of privilege are often stereotypical,

unquestioned, and accepted as reality (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Counter stories and stories of resistance illustrate experiences that are often not discussed. This study presents experiences through the voices of the participants. Until recently, critical diversity studies shifted from employing sociological lenses that socially grouped gender and race inequality, to a more systemic view looking at spheres of influence and inequality institutionalized in the workplace (Rodriguez et al., 2016). This shift coincides with this study that explored workplace strategies through participant experiences taking intersectional narratives into account.

This chapter reviews the literature pertinent to the phenomenology of mentoring among Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California. It begins with a brief description of Latina/o history in California and how patterns of marginalization were established, leading to perceptions of deficit-based and monolithic experiences and further negating current Latina intersectionality and social capital. The review builds on that, describing how deficit and asset-based perspectives influence Latina leadership opportunities and the group's ability to lead. This then leads to an in-depth discussion of the mentoring phenomenon in the workplace among Latina nonprofit leaders. Mentoring relationships were taken into consideration as both a source and product of social capital following social capital theory (Coleman, 1988) and community cultural wealth typology (Yosso, 2005).

Latina/o Intersectionality

During the 1970s and 1980s, the U.S. Census Bureau did not utilize Latina/o ethnic categories (Cohn, 2010). Although it had altered choices for people of Spanish descent by including *Mexican* in 1930, it did not include Hispanic to denote Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and those of Spanish origin until 1980. The rise of Mexican American student resistance inspired the adoption of *Chicana/o* to signify individuals who chose

to exhibit a social and political consciousness about the marginalization they experienced (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001). The term Chicana/o may create familial rifts as older family members attempt to retain their cultural heritage, yet choose to not cause attention to themselves as a survival strategy, even while experiencing prejudice and discrimination (Hayes-Bautista, 2004). In 2000, Latino was appended. The 2010 Census included Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin response categories (Cohn, 2010; Ennis et al., 2011). Interestingly, it arbitrarily assigned almost 6% of responses based on responses found in other areas of the census survey (Ríos et al., 2014). As the U.S.-born Latina/o population continues to grow its roots established over generations, the Latina/o experience continues to diversify as a group with expanding and shifting worldviews and narratives.

History, immigration patterns, and non-monolithic experiences require Latinas/os to respond differently to non-Latina/o perceptions and social inequity (Hayes-Bautista, 2004). U.S.-born Latinas/os have different experiences than recent Latina/o immigrants, such as immigration status, language, and types and degrees of social capital. Although an individual retains unique experiences, majoritarian rhetoric often describes Latinas/os as a monolithic group. Similar to Hayes-Bautista, Bernal (2002) described the impact of monolithic ideology within the educational system indicating that it historically and continually oppresses those from marginalized communities. Bernal made connections between CRT and Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit) emphasizing the importance of intersectional identity based on race, ethnicity, and gender. *Chicana feminista praxis* (Delgado Bernal & Aleman, 2017) is anchored in CRT and LatCrit through the sharing of intersectional, Latina counter narratives that expose the oppressive nature of the monolithic.

Crenshaw (1991) pointed out the failure of legal studies and feminist theory by asserting they have ignored the intersection of race and gender. Racial and ethnic minority women suffer from unequal, inequitable, and discriminate ideologies on multiple fronts (Crenshaw, 1991). She asserted that: "The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite—that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). Therefore, to assume people of one culture are monolithic would generalize the uniqueness of that group. The sociocultural identities Latinas/os form may intersect with race, ethnicity, gender, class, orientation, disability, generational, immigration, and language experiences, to name a few. Intersectionality may be heuristic and analytical (Carbado et al., 2013). It has been accepted to account for race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, religion and other social differences as potentially linking or standing alone on individual, cultural, and societal levels (Ruiz Castro & Holvino, 2016). Empirical studies that integrate intersectionality advocate for further multidimensional studies especially related to social inequity (Rodriguez et al., 2016).

Carbado et al. (2013) asserted that intersectionality is not solely a static theory rooted in Crenshaw's (1989) Black feminism. The evolution of intersectional perspective within various disciplines has been neglected. Researchers must recognize intersectionality during exploration, its influence, and how it mobilizes individuals (Carbado et al., 2013). Scholars advocate for the integration of intersectionality, especially for racial and ethnic minority women aspiring to take positions in the leadership echelon (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). This study honored participant intersectionality by acknowledging the way in which participants identified themselves and their experiences.

Narratives built around race and ethnicity are complex, empowering, and sometimes alienating. For U.S.-born Latinas, they may experience an array of challenges, including internalized feelings of isolation from the traditional White American and Latino cultures, while actively navigating their intersectionality (Hayes-Bautista, 2004) that has not historically been validated. Despite diverse experiences, individuals react to another individual's most visible and situationally salient attributes (Hayes-Bautista, 2004; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Notwithstanding these challenges, steady increases among U.S.-born Latinas, their workforce participation, and their completion of higher education (McFarland et al., 2018; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017) augments Latinas' growth potential for leadership. However, Latinas without an identified mentor may feel isolated while navigating social identities within professional terrains.

Latina Leadership

Early perspectives of social mobility alluded to a meritocracy, asserting that it could be attained by anyone who aspired to pursue higher education (Bourdieu, 2011). However, critical theorists (Bernal, 2002; Crenshaw, 1989; Yosso, 2005) eventually categorized these assertions as deficit-based for ignoring factors associated with intersectional identities. Intersectional Latina identities must be be viewed as individual characteristics. As Sanchez-Hucles and Davis (2010) stated:

> Equally important are efforts to unpack intersectionality in order to reveal the variables and causal relationships among them that underlie it. Training in performance management and leadership development that emphasizes the intersectionality of multiple identities may produce acceptance of a wider range of acceptable leadership behavior. (p. 179)

Respecting multiple identity characteristics produces finer and greater appreciation of leadership diversity (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Intersectional identities offer complex mosaics of narrative opportunities. However, Carbado et al. (2013) asserted that the demand for group

solidarity may become unidimensional, limiting an individual within their own cultural group in which individuals may begin to negotiate between their needs and their group's acceptance. However, some studies have shown Latinas share positive feelings regarding the formation of identity, college and professional aspirations, and life transitions within Latino culture (Ayala & Contreras, 2019; Menchaca et al., 2016). They have been able to leverage forms of capital to empower themselves through leadership experiences (Ayala & Contreras, 2019; Yosso, 2005).

In one particular study, individual and group interviews were conducted with Latinas at a Hispanic serving institution that explored factors, patterns, and influences contributing to leadership identity development (LID) (Onorato & Musoba, 2015). Salient findings included: a) changing understandings of LID by levels of experience (emergent, intermediate, and experienced leadership); b) encouraging relationships developed through mentoring and networking often through family which counter a deficit narrative; c) meaningful experiences to be part of something bigger; d) self-development and self-awareness of themselves as leaders; and e) the significance of gender and ethnicity. Additional studies indicate that international students do not experience the same level of leadership development as domestic students, but that their adaptation is mediated through mentoring for personal development (Shalka, 2017). Onorato and Musoba (2015) declared that research investigating the influence of gender, race, and ethnicity on LID is almost nonexistent. This study intentionally recognized the significance of intersectionality, while addressing gaps in current mentoring scholarship of LLD.

Menchaca et al. (2016) gave a historical analysis of cultural and role expectations, employment, and educational profiles for Latina academic administrators. Utilizing LatCrit and feminist critical theories (Bernal, 2002), counter narratives assisted in examining support and barriers encountered by these women (Menchaca et al., 2016). Participants felt a lack of self-

efficacy, feelings of isolation, and cultural tension between fulfilling cultural and familial expectations and meeting their leadership obligations. They experienced a lack of formal mentoring as they attained leadership roles but reported that informal mentoring led to successful leadership identity. The lack of formal mentoring inspired them to become informal role models themselves. They leveraged their own networks to introduce and connect protégés to opportunities they did not yet have. Similarly, Solórzano and Bernal (2001) found that mentoring had a positive impact on Chicanas' individual leadership styles.

These studies illustrate that mentors may be viewed as more than just role models, and actually influence a protégé's social perspective and future growth. They assist in the formation of human agency reflected in a protégé's confidence and leader self-efficacy (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001). These examples demonstrate that Latina workplace leaders may be influenced by social capital through formal or informal avenues. The recognition of intersectionality is a starting point. This study, that addresses leadership attainment for women and racial and ethnic minority women in the nonprofit sector, strengthens the existing literature.

The Nonprofit Sector

Twenty-nine types of tax exempt organizations are found under the 501(c) status in the U.S. (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). A nonprofit organization is one such type of tax exempt entity falling under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)3, known as a public charity intended to provide a public benefit. The 501(c)3 is the only type that provides donors with a tax deduction. Nonprofit status is further complicated with 10 major categories with more than 600 different subcategories (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). Although nonprofit organizations are not necessarily profit generating, nonprofits reported $2.54 trillion in revenuesand $5.79 trillion in assets in 2015 (McKeever, 2018). These organizations respond to

community need, vitally connect communities to services and local government, and advocate for social change and equity on behalf of underrepresented and marginalized individuals (Lu, 2015).

Nonprofit organizations have existed before the formal government sector was institutionalized (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). Most individuals have been impacted by a nonprofit organization by being born in a public, nonprofit hospital; educating and registering people to vote; attending afterschool programs; receiving local scholarships when government grants do not sufficiently fund education; providing food from a local food bank; or receiving food and housing after a natural disaster or during economic instability. Nonprofit organizations fill gaps that other sectors cannot, uniting communities to solve life challenges. "Nonprofits are the safe place where people who share mutual interests and concerns find common ground and solve problems collaboratively. Through nonprofits, people deepen their connections with others and build community, creating 'banks' of social capital" (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019, p. 10). According to the California Association of Nonprofits (2014), California's city, county, and state governments heavily depend on nonprofit organizations to deliver and connect people to services (Lu, 2015). They have the capacity to build strong relationships and networks with those who live in the community in which the nonprofit is located.

Many of these organizations can be perceived as initiators of democracy by promoting civic engagement (California Association of Nonprofits, 2014), which are opportunities for individuals to cultivate their leadership skills (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). These skills are not necessarily an outgrowth of formalized positions, but occur through voluntarism with event organizing and volunteer training. Individuals affiliated with nonprofit organizations

exemplify service leadership while contributing to economic development. Economically, these organizations employ individuals who live in the communities that the nonprofit serves. Although 88% of nonprofit organizations have a budget of less than $500,000, they are perceived as economic generators collectively employing 12.3 million people, spending $826 billion on salaries, benefits, and payroll taxes (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). While nonprofit organizations are complex and intricate to manage, there are minimal differences in employment qualifications and background between people of color and White individuals; however, it has been reported that people of color are more interested in becoming nonprofit leaders than their White counterparts (Thomas-Breitfield & Kunreuther, 2017). Ultimately, relational nonprofit leaders are crucial to ensuring community wellbeing in organizations that have become teaching grounds for leadership (National Council of Nonprofits, n.d.; Thomas-Breitfeld & Kunreuther, 2017).

Nonprofits in California

The California Association of Nonprofits (2014) indicated that approximately 80% of the state's nonprofits are established as a 501(c)3 totaling 123,321 organizations that predominately represent human services; education; and mutual, public, and societal benefit. Nonprofits are ranked as the fourth largest industry in the state generating $208 billion in annual revenue and holding $328 billion in assets (California Association of Nonprofits, 2014). To offer perspective, California leads the nation with 12% of the U.S. population, 12% of U.S. nonprofit revenues, and 10% of U.S. nonprofit assets. There is greater racial/ethnic workforce diversity in the nonprofit sector when compared to the general workforce, with 34% of nonprofit leaders reporting that 50% or more of their paid workforce are racial and ethnic minorities (California Association of Nonprofits, 2014). The power of the nonprofit organization is undeniable; however, a disparity

continues to exist between these figures and women and ethnic minority individuals in the nonprofit executive suite.

Nonprofit Leadership

Although a greater number of women and racial and ethnic minorities are employed by nonprofit organizations, their presence in nonprofit executive leadership is disparate (Cornelius et al., 2011). Empirical findings demonstrate stark differences between for-profit and nonprofit organizations employing women and ethnic minorities in executive leadership. Top nonprofit executive leadership roles tend to be filled by White, non-Latino men (Branson et al., 2013; Cornelius et al., 2011; Thomas-Breitfeld & Kunreuther, 2017) with merely 3%-11% coming from Latina/o backgrounds (Cornelius et al., 2011; Thomas-Breitfeld & Kunreuther, 2017). Although there are significantly more women in nonprofit executive leadership roles than in the for-profit sector, research has been limited with seemingly less interest in studying women in this industry (Branson et al., 2013). Branson et al.'s (2013) study showed that 41.6% of nonprofit organizations possessed one or more women in top executive leadership, with most having at least two, versus 1.6% in Fortune 500 companies. However, as nonprofit organizations grow larger, there are fewer women in top executive roles (Branson et al., 2013; Jones & Jones, 2017). Women make up 40% of nonprofit managers, but there are fewer at the top positions (Jenkins, 2012). Jones and Jones (2017) indicated that research is needed pertaining to leadership style, behavior, and strategies that women in the pipeline utilize to overcome biases and stereotypes:

> Nonprofit leaders face stressful situations and emotional challenges to fulfill their community, state, or societal mission. The impact of local or widespread natural disasters, and increasing community and societal demands on nonprofit organizations creates a need for strong, yet empathetic leadership. (p. 40)

They asserted that successful female nonprofit leaders employ inspirational motivation behaviors that may influence their leadership success. Nonprofit, women, racial and ethnic minority leaders encounter further challenges as a result of multiple layers of marginalization.

Research shows that racial and ethnic minorities encounter invisible challenges impeding their trajectory to top leadership positions (Hill et al., 2015) and for those who attain this level, they may endure biased opinion, stereotyping, and disparate treatment (Hill et al., 2015). Although research shows that a diverse workforce benefits organizations economically and competitively (Adesaogun et al., 2015; Branson et al., 2013; Hill et al., 2015; Jones & Jones, 2017), inequitable treatment may motivate women and ethnic minorities to resign from for-profit corporate jobs and look for positions in spaces that may cultivate more equitable working environments (Branson et al., 2013; Hill et al., 2015). These push factors entice women, racial and ethnic minorities to choose to work in the nonprofit sector. However, a major gap in research is the aggregated data of women or racial and ethnic minorities that fail to address the nonprofit, female, racial and ethnic minority leader whose narrative is intersectional and non-monolithic.

Latina Nonprofit Leadership

In choosing the nonprofit environment, women and racial and ethnic minorities will opt for lower compensation for greater skill development opportunities (Pynes, 2000). Female nonprofit CEOs tend to lead smaller nonprofit organizations earning less pay than in larger organizations (Cornelius et al., 2011). In a 2011 national study of executive director leadership, 82% of executive directors were White, and just 3% were Latina/o (Cornelius et al., 2011). Adesaogun et al. (2015) explored gender, racial, and ethnic disparities among California nonprofit leaders:

> Understanding the overall ethnic composition of nonprofit organizations is integral to understanding the impact of racial and ethnic stratification at the leadership level within the industry. Researchers attempting to understand nonprofit organizations in California discovered that while minorities and women made up the majority of nonprofit employees in the state, only 25% of nonprofit organizations were minority-led. (p. 44)

Race and ethnic stratification within the nonprofit sector was explored on executive, management, and front line levels. A perception was that there is a lack of organizational interest to mentor ethnic minority employees. Although the study was conducted with Black women in the Midwest, it references California as a state that is perceived as a more progressive environment and diverse in comparison to other regions of the U.S. This perception alludes to California having a greater interest in mentoring of ethnic minorities. The study advised understanding regional ethnic distribution while exploring career success. Racial disparity among nonprofit leadership has led to the creation of ethnic-specific professional networks whereby racial and ethnic minority women seek support from fellow employees of similar cultural backgrounds who help acclimate them to the organization's culture (Adesaogun et al., 2015), similar to a peer mentor. These social networks are aligned with social capital theory and community cultural wealth typology which is further described in this chapter. Existing research tends to stratify all women or racial and ethnic minorities, with limited focused research on female racial and ethnic minority leaders within a regional or state boundary (Adesaogun et al., 2015). This study explored Latina nonprofit leadership in California to begin to fill gaps in this research as nonprofit employment data are incomplete.

Thus far this chapter has described the challenges of Latina intersectionality and its prominence in asset-based research. Upholding this perspective is critical when exploring how gender, race, and ethnicity impacts the Latina CEO's experience. LeRoux (2009) found that racial matching of an organization's leaders to its clients enhanced political and advocacy

awareness of the community's needs. She suggested additional studies be conducted with Latina/o leaders due to the population's growth and often under representation in decision-making arenas, as "it has important implications for the role nonprofits might play in restructuring the imbalance of influence in larger political and policy-making systems" (LeRoux, 2009, p. 758). With a growing competitive landscape among all sectors, nonprofits must look externally and form cooperative relationships (Lu, 2015). For nonprofit leaders, cooperative relationships are often formed by leveraging social networks. The leveraging of these networks may lead to the establishment of mentoring relationships which have been shown to mutually benefit the mentor and protégé.

Mentoring

Mentor describes a person, or an activity, used interchangeably with terms such as advisor, sponsor, coach, counselor, friend, family, peer, protector, role model, teacher, and confidante (Crisp & Alvarado-Young, 2018; Kram, 1985; Priest et al., 2018). This study utilized the term mentor while encompassing all of these terms. One of its most paternalistic descriptions indicates how the mentor is committed to developing a less experienced protégé (Crisp et al., 2017; Kao et al., 2014; Kram, 1985). However, generally, the philosophy of a mentor is that they assist another individual in learning something they may have not known (Bell, 2000).

Campbell et al. (2012) described shifts in the mentoring phenomenon. During the 1970s, workplace management placed a paternalistic view of it between mentor and protégé. The mentor-protégé dyad was usually man-to-man, with the older mentor serving in a higher status position teaching the younger man how to navigate his career. The 1980s adopted mentoring as a learning process between mentor and protégé (Kram 1985). Kram's (1985) work brought the role of mentoring relationships studies into an organizational context. She conducted an in depth

qualitative inquiry of mentoring and found variations of the role of mentoring in early, mid, and late career stages. Kram's foundational study began to categorize mentoring into career and psychosocial functions. She advocated for exploration of diversity within mentoring relationships. In recent years, mentoring research has begun to assert the importance of including race, ethnicity, gender, and match suitability as critical characteristics of these relationships (McArthur et al., 2017; Searby et al., 2015). Match suitability describes how the mentor is attuned to the needs of an engaged protégé (McArthur et al., 2017) and the match may be experienced differently in workplace, educational, or cultural spaces.

Mentoring has evolved into complex and ambiguous forms (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007). During its developmental stage, a mentor becomes committed to a larger purpose, accepts responsibility for others and organizations (Priest et al., 2018). Characteristics such as gender became a factor when comparing differences in career interest and aspirations between mentored men and women, emphasizing that, regardless of gender, an individual must be dedicated to benefiting from mentoring (Pârlea-Buzatu, 2010). One importance of my study explored how participants defined mentoring, highlighting its salient characteristics and influences. My study evolved these definitions and characteristics from the Latina leader perspective.

Workplace Mentoring

Mentoring, as a workplace phenomenon, was explored in Kram's (1985) foundational work of mentor-protégé career relationships. She comprehensively described career and psychosocial functions that support protégé development. These functions were studied in early, mid, and late career stages among adults. Her work described differences in perceptions of mentoring functions, the intensity of the relationship, and its possible exclusivity. Empirical findings included relevant background to consider in workplace mentoring. These aspects were

integrated into this study that explored the effects of mentoring among a sample group of Latina nonprofit CEOs.

Mentoring is common within the workplace, influencing a professional's personal and career development and leadership identity (Kram, 1985; Priest et al., 2018). Searby et al. (2015) stated that, "those who are mentored earn higher salaries, receive more promotions, and have greater career and job satisfaction than those who are not mentored" (p. 99). Highly successful mentoring relationships may help overcome workplace and career barriers for protégés who have specific professional goals (Pârlea-Buzatu, 2010). Over time, Kram (1985) extended her original work on mentoring that was initially viewed as a dyadic relationship to now having diverse sets of network relationships (Higgins & Kram, 2001), or *constellations*. The concept of constellations refers to the web and extensions of mentors a protégé has. Scholars indicate new and emerging mentoring constructs are departing from the traditional dyadic approach, of which have begun to integrate discourse related to diversity, cultural, racial, and ethnic influences (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007; Searby et al., 2015).

The number of network relationships a protégé has is not as important as the quality of relationships in her constellation (Hastings & Kane, 2018; Higgins & Thomas, 2001). These constellations are categorized as social networks whereby protégés rely on a diverse group of mentors that provide support (Searby et al., 2015). Constellations are critical extensions for Latinas who may rely on various mentors within their family, school, community, workplace, and peer groups. Constellations illustrate the potential growth of existing social capital through the social networks that assist in career building efforts. Constellations impact how individuals determine their needs at any given moment (Kram, 1985). Kram (1985) described how constellations affect quality mentorship:

> Diagnosing individuals' needs, attitudes, skills and organizational circumstances will point to the relationships that can provide critical developmental functions. The relationship constellation offers an important alternative to the search for a mentor; it highlights the range of significant others who might support development. (p. 155)

Expansion of an individual's social networks varies, is organized formally or informally, and exist within an organization, occupation, or community. While professional associations permit individuals to address career related trepidations, organizational mentoring may not be officially supported by an individual's organization (Kram, 1985). If an organization is not equipped to provide mentoring, external mentoring relationships may assist in serving career or psychosocial supportive functions by sharing information about careers, strategy, and supporting the protégé emotionally and with friendship (Kram, 1985). Two of the most salient mentoring functions are career (sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, challenging assignments) (see Table 1) and psychosocial (role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, friendship) (see Table 2). They may exist separately or simultaneously, and at different times.

Career Functions

Career functions are made possible by a mentor's position, experience, and influence, whereas, psychosocial functions are possible due to interpersonal relationships that foster mutual trust and intimacy (Hastings & Kane, 2018; Kram, 1985; Méndez-Morse, 2000). Kram (1985) stated that, "relationships that provide only career functions are characterized by less intimacy and are valued primarily for the instrumental ends that they serve in the organizational context" (p. 24). A protégé may determine the type and level of guidance she needs. Nonetheless, career functions are successful due to: a) a mentor's rank, role, and influence; b) the assistance provided to protégés to navigate the organization, gain exposure, and attain promotions; and c) they support senior leaders' building of respect by developing the talent on their team (Kram, 1985).

Allen et al. (2004) found that less career mentoring resulted in fewer positive outcomes in compensation and job satisfaction. Table 1 summarizes the career functional roles of mentors.

Table 1
Career Functional Roles of Mentors

Role	Description
Sponsorship	Occurs formally. Helps build reputation in which the protégé becomes known. Obtains job opportunities for the next level. May be more essential as protégés move up.
Exposure and Visibility Socializing Force	Prepares a protégé for positions of greater responsibility and authority. Introduces the protégé to others as a worthwhile candidate.
Coaching	Recommends strategies for the protégé to meet her work objectives. Protégé may need access to information via connections with mentors.
Protection	Involves the mentor to be accountable during controversial situations. Intervenes when protégé is inexperienced to achieve satisfactory outcomes. May be uncomfortable for cross-gender relationships.
Challenging Assignments	Prepares the protégé with skills to benefit from opportunities.

Note. Adapted from Kram (1985).

Psychosocial Functions

Psychosocial functions enhance a protégé's sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role (Kram, 1985). Contrary to career functions, psychosocial functions are dependent on the quality of interpersonal relationships, constellations, and not predicated on the mentor's position. Table 2 summarizes the psychosocial functional roles of mentors. The emphasis on quality of interpersonal relationships is significant.

Table 2
Psychosocial Functional Roles of Mentors

Role	Description
Role Modeling	Is the most frequently reported psychosocial function. Protégés take interest in their own development as they assess what interests them about their mentor. More challenging in cross-gender relationships.
Acceptance and Confirmation	Provides nurturance.
Counseling	Lessens anxiety, fear, and ambivalence.
Friendships	Social interactions with mutual understanding and enjoyable exchanges for personal and professional experiences.

Note. Adapted from Kram (1985).

Within these roles, protégés may be inclined to share personal and emotional challenges that negatively influence their ability to seek and attain higher level professional positions. Allen et al. (2004), Blackhurst (2000), and Block and Tietjen-Smith (2016) found the benefits of psychosocial mentoring were associated with decreased role conflict and ambiguity, increased career and job satisfaction, and stronger commitment to the organization as a result of satisfaction with the mentoring relationship. Although studies regarding formal mentoring among racial and ethnic minority women in the workplace is limited, psychosocial mentoring has been shown to support these women in the workplace. Psychological mentoring functions have been proven to be beneficial, even if career mentoring is nonexistent or limited. Findings in this study have been mapped to Kram's (1985) functions and are detailed in Chapter 4.

Those experiencing conflict or competition are more likely to seek a mentor, or become one (Kram, 1985). Holder et al. (2015) found that Black women experienced microaggressions and other discrimination in the corporate workplace. The authors described six coping strategies

utilized by these women, two of which are associated with support networking and seeking sponsorship and mentoring. These strategies assisted these women in breaking the concrete ceiling (Holder et al., 2015) and may assist Latinas in breaking the adobe ceiling (Alicea, 2003). Although racial and ethnic minority women are entering mid-level positions, the concrete and adobe ceilings make it difficult to reach the top executive level leadership positions (Blackhurst, 2000). Difficulty has been associated with limited access to role models and mentors (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016).

Types of Mentoring

Mentoring relationships develop and are conducted in various ways. Relationships evolve over time. For example, a formal sponsorship relationship may evolve into an informal friendship.

Formal mentoring. Marginalized groups may be isolated and excluded from social networks that could otherwise have assisted in their career advancement (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Corporate culture may impede the pace at which racial and ethnic minority women receive promotions and attain executive leadership roles (Holder et al., 2015). According to Holder et al. (2015): "Access to influential networks provides insights on informal and unwritten rules and values of an organization. These networks also lead to high visibility assignments that help employees cultivate key skills and increase exposure to key decision makers" (p. 176). Formal, structured programs may guarantee access to mentors that informal relationships do not provide (Campbell et al., 2012); however, mentoring programs must address barriers to success and incorporate cultural practitioners familiar with structured settings (Kuh et al., 2005) who are willing to mentor protégés if the relationship is to be mutually beneficial (McArthur et al., 2017).

Although organizations play a vital role in encouraging formal, supportive, and developmental relationships through educational and organizational mentoring interventions (Kuh et al., 2005; Kram, 1985), lack of individual capacity to mentor, and an organization's lack of encouragement, may render mentoring inaccessible. Informal peer relationships are an alternative. Peer mentoring is a viable alternative to formal mentoring, especially with a shortage of mentors that appeal to Latinas, and can provide guidance that influences leadership development.

Informal mentoring. Although formal mentoring may help navigate attainment of advanced leadership roles, a lack of formal professional networks exists. This lack of formal and informal mentoring networks helps explain the lack of women in upper level administration (Bynum, 2015). As a result of limited formal mentoring opportunities, women may rely on informal mentorship. It is less structured, more spontaneous and self-directed, forms by chance or availability, and can be more intentional (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016; Searby et al., 2015). The mentor may be unaware that mentoring is even taking place as protégés may not reveal the influence a mentor has had on their lives (Searby et al., 2015). An informal mentoring relationship may be as equally beneficial as formal mentoring for professional and personal improvement (Bynum, 2015). It has been asserted that protégés within informal mentoring relationships are more career-oriented than those in formal mentoring relationships (Pârlea-Buzatu, 2010), possibly due to it being considered more voluntary. There is also the perception that informal protégés are more dedicated and actively engaged in the relationship because they are not obligated to it.

Sources of mentoring. Mentoring studies have explored whether the attributes or characteristics of mentors and protégés in the mentor-protégé dyad impacts or influences the

outcomes of the relationship (Kao et al., 2014; McArthur et al., 2017). Linkages between career mentoring and resilience were more positive in cross-gender dyads and positive effects of psychosocial mentoring on resilience was stronger in same-gender dyads (Kao et al., 2014). This is evidence that cross or same-gender dyads influence functional outcomes of mentoring. Complexities of cross-gender mentoring relationships are related to role modeling, assumption of stereotypical roles, anxiety provocation within intimate relationships, and issues of public image (male mentors spending time with female protégés) (Kram, 1985). Women tended to seek female role models because they may experience limitations to identifying with mentors as role models in cross-gender relationships (Kram, 1985).

The reality is that mentoring constellations are often created by high achieving women who have had to stitch together their sources of mentoring (Searby et al., 2015). Women have generally received career support from men, whereas, psychosocial support is sought from women (Searby et al.). For racial and ethnic minority women, the importance of having a mentor with similar characteristics (Crisp et al., 2017) helps when issues related to racial stereotyping and microaggressions are experienced (Holder et al., 2015). The shortage of women, specifically ethnic minority women, in leadership roles results in the lack of same-gender mentor-protégé dyads, or what is referred to as "gender-specific guidance" (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016, p. 306).

The shortage of racial and ethnic minority women in key leadership roles has led to an absence of formal workplace mentoring (Blackhurst, 2000). Women need exposure to other women's perspectives who have already experienced similar leadership challenges (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016). However, scholars advocate for women to work with a variety of mentors within their constellation (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016). To contend with the shortage of

female leaders, Blackhurst (2000) advocated for commitment from men to mentor women who are in the early stages of their career. In these instances, psychosocial support may be limited. For Latinas, establishing mentorship with mentors that identify with similar intersectionality and experiences of marginalization may be important. According to Espino (2014), mentoring studies often lack factors associated with race, ethnicity, and gender. This study included these factors associated with race, ethnicity, and gender to address the Latina leader research gap.

Influences of mentoring. Career wellbeing is the positive feeling of one's career that influences decisions to become a mentor or protégé (Campbell et al., 2012; Kidd, 2008). Career functional roles affect career wellbeing (Kidd, 2008), especially during times of transition into new roles, and may reduce negative feelings of isolation, discomfort, and anxiety (Pârlea-Buzatu, 2010). Mentors may support a protégé needing to adjust during job or career transitions, which may influence job satisfaction. These findings are critical for leadership development, especially for novice leaders as they begin forming their leadership identities. Even if career mentoring is accessed, it may be insufficient for female, racial and ethnic minority leaders, with findings indicating racial and ethnic minority women are entering mid-level management but appear to remain there with very little promotion or movement into key leadership and chief executive positions (Holder et al., 2015). Although mentoring does not necessarily lead to an executive leadership position, it facilitates coping strategies for ethnic minority women who aspire to such a position.

There are several benefits of quality mentoring relationships. Hastings and Kane (2018) identified benefits associated with the protégé's developed understanding of their own leadership behavior. Mentoring may increase job and work setting satisfaction, increase organization commitment, assist in career planning and aspirations, and aid in professional advancement and

career mobility (Allen et al., 2004; Blackhurst, 2000; Quinn, 2012). Quality mentoring may decrease role ambiguity and role conflict (Blackhurst, 2000) and play a significant part in a protégé's development of self-esteem and work identity (Allen et al., 2004). Mentors who received mentor training experienced increased feelings of confidence and satisfaction and found relationships lasting longer than six months produced more positive outcomes with younger protégés (Martin & Sifers, 2012). Campbell et al. (2012) found that the type of mentor, and mentoring for leadership and personal development, were all significant predictors of leadership capacity. Personal development included role modeling, assistance with identifying areas of self-improvement, and supporting leadership ability to engage and empower others. Campbell et al. (2012) also found that psychosocial mentoring produced better leadership outcomes. They proposed that future research explore specific mentoring strategies that support personal development. Although the benefits of mentoring have been studied, research is limited that explores its benefits specifically for female, racial and ethnic minority leaders (Blackhurst, 2000). This study explored the benefits of mentoring for Latina leaders.

Mentoring is complex, warranting deeper exploration. Existing research has explored its types, functions, sources, and benefits. But very little research has involved racial and ethnic minority female workplace leaders as the target sample. This study examined mentoring functions, types, sources, and influences among Latina nonprofit CEOs in California. Researchers have suggested expanding scholarship that explores the constellation of relationships that protégés maintain during professional development (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Higgins & Thomas, 2001; Kram, 1985). As Latina educational attainment and readiness continues to grow, coupled with recent, greater societal expectations for equity, exploring key

mentoring strategies are essential to understanding how to support Latinas and other women of color who will take the helm of their organizations.

Mentoring Latina Leaders

Latina leaders may require empathetic and suitable mentor matches (McArthur et al., 2017). Mentoring helps minority groups counteract feelings of isolation within mainstream workplace settings (Ayala & Contreras, 2019; Holder et al., 2015; Menchaca et al., 2016; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015). Blackhurst (2000) found that, "women of color without mentors reported higher levels of role ambiguity and sex discrimination—and lower levels of organizational commitment—than White women with mentors" (p. 582). Gender discrimination was related to unequal pay, restricted advancement opportunities, and inequities in hours worked, support, and autonomy. Racial and ethnic minority women are at a disadvantage when there is an absence of a mentor (Blackhurst, 2000). A limitation to Blackhurst's (2000) study was that 82% of participants identified as White, with only 2% (n = 6) identifying as Hispanic/Latina. Although this limitation existed in that study, the conclusions were relevant considerations for this study.

Latina/o culture is generally perceived as communal (Hayes-Bautista, 2004). As a collective culture, mentorship is passed down through generations in the form of storytelling and anecdotes, which is akin to informal mentoring (Bernal, 2002; Delgado Bernal & Alemán, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Psychosocial mentoring derives from family, community, and peers through acceptance and confirmation of one's values (Kram, 1985). As a result of these perceptions, Latina executive leaders may feel the challenge of working in a male-dominated, non-Latino White, individualistic leadership culture while upholding and tapping into their own cultural capital (Searby et al., 2015). Gurvitch et al. (2008) indicated that family support is

essential for career success. The authors found that informal family mentors were just as valuable as formal mentors. Studies have also suggested that a mentor's personality characteristics may be of more importance to a protégé than the mentor's race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016). Crisp et al. (2017) advocated for recruitment of different types of mentors that possess different experiences and identities who will offer a diverse set of perspectives. This study identified mentor characteristics that have influenced the experiences of the Latina participants in this study.

Lack of professional networks and formal mentors posed barriers to Latina school principals ultimately creating feelings of isolation that required leaders to stitch together sources of mentorship through nonprofessional and informal spaces (Avalos & Salgado, 2016). Participants felt the presence of subtle racism while being assigned to schools with the greatest number of Latina/o children, feeling that administrators assumed they could only be effective in these schools. However, participants reported that cultural attributes, supportive systems, and identification of mentors and networks helped them learn the rules early on in their careers. They sought informal mentorship within the community, local colleges, and among peers. Mentors played a vital role in their LLD, but it was difficult finding a Latina mentor for those who sought one (Avalos & Salgado, 2016). The authors indicated that mentors are vital to navigating leadership opportunities within the dominant culture.

In a similar study, Latina school principals were interviewed about their school and position demographics, career paths, and leadership identity (Méndez-Morse et al., 2015). The authors advocated for studying the unique characteristics of marginalized groups for richer data within leadership studies. Respondents' leadership practices coincided with a community cultural wealth typology. Latina principals involved students' families during curriculum design,

which ultimately influenced their own leadership capacity. Literature has shown that school leaders from marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds tend to draw from informal and familiar experiences due to lack of formal sponsorship and mentorship (Blackhurst, 2000; Martinez et al., 2017; Méndez-Morse, 2000; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015). School leaders also tended to work at minority student-serving campuses, but continued to encounter racial, ethnic, and gender stereotyping and feelings of tokenism (Martinez et al., 2017).

Méndez-Morse et al. (2015) contended that the lack of mentors limits guidance and networking opportunities for racial and ethnic minority women. Their study found that over 60% of participants had twice as many years in lower level positions than others prior to attaining principal roles. Mentoring may have shortened the amount of time it took for these Latinas to become principals. Respondents reported that race and ethnicity were barriers when working with fellow administrators, parents, community members, or teachers (Méndez-Morse et al., 2015). Although research has revealed the impact of gender on women pursuing academic leadership roles, research on the impact of race and ethnicity is still limited. This study collected rich data pertaining to participant intersectional experiences as described in Chapter 4.

A metasynthesis pertaining to peer mentoring of Latina tenure-track faculty was conducted by Research for the Educational Advancement of Latin@s (REAL) located at a Hispanic serving institution (Murakami & Núñez, 2014). It synthesized autoethnographies, ethnographies, narratives*, testimonios*, and counter stories. Informed by CRT, the authors examined peer mentoring strategies. REAL was established in response to the limited existence of senior faculty mentors for protégés from similar ethnic backgrounds. With the orientation of a non-hierarchical and asset-based approach, REAL became a peer mentoring circle for Latinas lacking faculty mentoring relationships. Members shared feelings of invisibility, isolation, self-

doubt, and imposter syndrome coupled with covert racism, sexism, and classism. Members perceived that peer mentoring complemented their personal and cultural experiences as opposed to the more academic individualistic and competitive nature of the university. The group serves as a source of validation for member's research, reduces feelings of isolation and tokenism, and increases respect for research that may be personal to them (Martinez et al., 2017; Murakami & Nuñez, 2014). The circle also promotes mutual and collaborative research efforts. Murakami and Núñez (2014) referred to *muxerista* mentoring which appreciates the intersectionality of race, class, and gender that defines REAL. REAL nurtures a safe space for Latina faculty who encounter barriers hindering LLD (Murakami & Nuñez, 2014).

Mentoring is the central phenomenon in this study. The phenomenon is thoroughly described demonstrating the potential value and intricacies of mentoring relationships. For Latinas, it may build upon existing social capital and contribute to social and career mobility. This study incorporated social capital theory and community cultural wealth typology following an asset-based perspective. First, understanding cultural capital's historical deficit-based perspective emphasizes this study's grounding in asset-based thinking.

Theoretical Framework

Bourdieu's (2011) contribution to economic sociology and cultural capital discourse indicated that capital underlies the social world, providing the structure and social energy needed to normalize society. Without it, society would be unstructured and chaotic. The basis of this social reproduction theory argues that economic capital drives cultural and social capital. Bourdieu claimed that cultural and social capital may be converted to economic capital as long as individuals aspire to high educational attainment, which is a meritocratic perspective. He categorized cultural capital as an embodied, objectified, and institutionalized state. His

arguments are rooted in education and criticized as deficit-based by CRT scholars who have proposed a more positive, asset-based perspective (Bernal, 2002; Coleman, 1988; Gelles et al., 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Counter perspectives have argued that Bourdieu (2011) neglected the marginalization of people based on race, class, and gender, assuming that education alone leads to social mobility into the higher classes (Coleman, 1988; Yosso, 2005). The deficit places blame on individuals for their failure to attain educational and social success while ignoring oppressive forces and issues of marginalization.

Bourdieu's (2011) social reproduction theory indicates that education provides opportunities for people of lower-income classes to improve their situations. He argued that academic qualifications guarantee an individual's value. However, he also concluded that all capital does not necessarily produce economic capital. In his view, capitalism and economic capital are most important in society. He asserted that social capital could transform into economic value and illustrated how networks provide sponsorship. The assumption is that the greater an individual's network, the greater social capital they own. However, Coleman (1988) explained how network group members may act as custodians within closed or open systems. According to Coleman, they become protectors of group members who own less capital. Interestingly, Bourdieu (2011) argued that individuals may choose to hide and keep their networks closed, but that may hinder their social reproduction and capital opportunities if they do so. Sociological researchers asserted that historically there has been a lack of emphasis on experiences of marginalized groups. I refer to Bourdieu (2011) to acknowledge shortcomings in deficit-based research that asset-based thinking addresses.

Davies and Rizk (2018) described three generations of thought pertaining to Bourdieu's (2011) cultural capital construct, asserting that no one single definition of cultural capital exists, that it has evolved, and that the construct has been broadly conceptualized by researchers. The authors asserted that during the third generation (early 2000s) of cultural capital thought, three streams surfaced. The first stream included DiMaggio's concept rooted in conflict theory, which explains status attainment into society's elite if an individual aspired to and attained high academic credentials. DiMaggio employed quantitative approaches to examine cultural capital (Davies & Rizk, 2018). The second stream described Lareau's utilization of qualitative methodology to describe concerted efforts by families who desired rewards that would reduce their marginalized positions in society (Davies & Rizk, 2018). The third stream described Collins's concept of micro-level ritual chains among marginalized groups. Collins's perspective emphasized in-person and small group interactions. These interactions produce group energy and social confidence (Davies & Rizk, 2018). Davies and Rizk (2010) asserted that it was Collins who believed that interactions transform, and not merely reproduce, culture. This perspective aligns closest to Coleman's (1988) and Yosso's (2005) perspectives that assert that marginalized groups possess capital regardless of social status.

The primary weakness found in earlier cultural capital research is that it has been limited to traditional educational and classroom settings. Although Bourdieu's (2011) work was primarily quantitative, Davis and Rizk (2018) showed that cultural capital may be utilized in qualitative, phenomenological, and reflexive research. This study utilized a qualitative, phenomenological approach exploring the influences of capital among Latina nonprofit CEOs. A deeper discussion is presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

For example, Gonzales (2012) countered the deficit paradigm with Latina/o status and educational attainment research. She interviewed Latina university leaders, asserting that cultural deficit perspectives ignore system inequities, placing sole responsibility on the individual and/or family for their social mobility. Gonzales described the use of counter stories as a form of resistance to deficit paradigms, whereby stories and family advice become teaching and problem solving opportunities that align well with mentoring research. However, Gonzalez's study was also situated in academic settings. Gonzalez's implications may be strengthened by studying additional types of settings and sectors. This study utilized social capital theory and community cultural wealth typology as its framework within the nonprofit sector.

Social Capital Theory

Coleman (1988) discounted Bourdieu's (2011) rational choice as solely an individualistic concept, and integrated social structures into the rational action paradigm via social capital. He referred to the concept of embeddedness, which includes personal and relational networks important in social structures. He described three types of social capital; 1) obligations and expectations dependent on trustworthiness, 2) information channels within the social structure, and 3) social norms. Differentiation between sociological and economic streams were central to Coleman's construct. The sociological stream is described as being exogenous in which the individual is not influenced to take action and is shaped by the environment, whereas the economic stream is described as endogenous in which norms, trust, and social networks are important to the individual's functioning and the economy. Coleman chose to combine sociological and economic streams to explain social capital.

Social capital is defined by its functional nature consisting of social structures, and its facilitation of specific actions by individuals or organizations. It exists because of social relationships. Coleman (1988) asserted that closed social networks help enable certain forms of social capital, which lead to human capital in the next generation. However, human and social capital can have an inverse relationship, as one may be low and the other high. Ideally, human capital should be supplemented by social capital. Human capital is generated by individuals producing skills and capacity to behave differently, while social capital is generated between individuals that support action (Coleman, 1988). Coleman demonstrated the difference between human and social capital and also how they may supplement each other. Social capital theory framed this study's research questions exploring how social capital and mentoring mutually influence each other.

Lastly, Rogošic and Baranovic (2016) compared Bourdieu's (2011) and Coleman's (1988) theoretical frameworks. The authors distinguished between Bourdieu's social reproduction and Coleman's social mobility constructs. They asserted that the frameworks may be applied individually, or in combination, with advantages of both on social relationships. Bourdieu's (2011) construct represents a status group attainment, whereas Coleman's (1988) appears to align more closely to Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth typology emphasizing community capital regardless of social status. Rogošic and Baranovic (2016) expanded on Coleman's (1988) open and closed networks describing benefits of both types, and not simply that they exist. Although the authors criticized both frameworks as insufficiently articulated, they maintained that they are valid and useful.

Community Cultural Wealth Typology

Critical race theorists have indicated the shortcomings of Bourdieu's (2011) social reproduction theory; cultural capital neglects factors affecting social mobility, such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, orientation, immigration status, language, among others (Bernal, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Yosso, 2005). Bourdieu's (2011) cultural capital construct derived from deficit thinking that solely focuses on social reproduction of White, non-ethnic minorities, and middle and upper class individuals, negating ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups (Bernal, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Yosso, 2005). Bourdieu's (2011) construction may have assumed that ethnic minorities do not possess social and cultural capital necessary for social mobility (Yosso, 2005). Community cultural wealth typology purposely addressed this deficit thinking lens of cultural wealth. Additionally, critical race theorists have asserted that educational attainment alone will not produce social mobility for everyone.

Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth typology includes familial, navigational, aspirational, linguistic, resistant, and social capital. She argued that it is not the lack of capital, rather social injustices and inequity that impede social attainment for racial and ethnic minorities. For example, a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with faculty from racial and ethnic minority groups (Martinez et al., 2017). Faculty relied on various forms of capital to navigate the academy. They faced discrimination from staff, administration, and students. Authors incorporated counter narratives to legitimize the experiences of these faculty. Concepts of cultural and gender taxation are used to describe expectations felt by these faculty to engage in community service oriented work that goes over and beyond the job requirements of their universities. Taxation also includes the expectations universities have of racial and ethnic

minority faculty related to diversity and inclusion engagement as part of promotion into the tenure track. The experiences described in Martinez et al.'s (2017) study counter Bourdieu's (2011) construct that educational attainment leads to automatic social mobility and status. These faculty maintained integrity through times of hostility and marginalization, advocated for quality mentorship, and actively avoided taxation and tokenism. Martinez et al. (2017) interweaved mentoring and social capital as assets that challenge deficit thinking.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature and illustrated the need to explore how Latina leaders have leveraged mentoring relationships. An examination of the nonprofit sector shows the appeal it has for those seeking leadership roles as limited opportunity may exist in other sectors. However, research of the nonprofit sector confirms that racial and ethnic disparity continues to exist among its leadership. Mentorship in most settings have been shown to facilitate personal and professional transitions in many ways. Although mentoring and social capital research exists, it does not necessarily highlight how they mutually influence each other in workplace settings. Based on this discussion, the gaps in scholarship pertaining to social capital and mentoring among Latina nonprofit leaders in California were explored. This chapter showed how mentoring research has predominately explored whether it exists among Latina leaders, rather than deeply exploring its salient characteristics for quality relationships and influences on LLD.

In the following chapter, the methodology that supported the purpose of this study is explicated. Data collection and analysis sections include descriptions of the intricate methods employed to ensure that participants' voices were maintained throughout the study with a series of hermeneutic loops for clearer interpretation, understanding, and meaning-making.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Mentoring positively influences career and social mobility, especially for women and racial and ethnic minority groups (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016; Crisp et al., 2017). For Latinas, access to social capital and mentoring constellations may also influence their overall leadership development in varied ways (Avalos & Salgado, 2016; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015). However, Latinas reported that the lack of a mentor was the primary barrier to their career success and attainment of promotional opportunities (Catalyst, 2003). This is a powerful finding considering the structural, socioeconomic, and educational barriers they may already experience as members of marginalized groups. There is limited empirical data about the characteristics of quality mentoring experiences that influence LLD in the workplace (McArthur et al., 2017; Searby et al., 2015). The importance of this foundational study explored quality mentoring experiences that influence LLD in the nonprofit workplace.

This chapter presents an overview of this study's inquiry approach and methodology that I designed to explore mentoring experiences of Latina nonprofit CEOs in California. It describes a qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenological research design and its appropriateness for this study. This chapter describes the characteristics of the participants and the recruitment efforts conducted that led to their participation. It also provides an overview of the data collection and analysis processes, strategies utilized that demonstrate trustworthiness, ethical considerations for participant protection, and the limitations of this study.

Purpose of the Inquiry

The purpose of this study was to explore how Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California leveraged existing social capital and mentoring relationships as protégés that influenced their self-efficacy and leadership development.

Key Inquiry Questions

To explore how Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California leveraged their social capital and mentoring relationships as protégés that influenced their self-efficacy and leadership development, the following key questions guided this study:

1. What are the salient characteristics of quality mentoring relationships for Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California?
2. How have quality mentoring relationships influenced Latina leaders' sense of self-efficacy and leadership development?

Inquiry Approach

This study's inquiry was influenced by Heidegger's (1953/2010) hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy that evolved from Husserl's (1907/1999) idea of phenomenology as both a philosophical perspective and research methodology.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology, considered a philosophical perspective and methodological approach that has evolved over time, is credited to Husserl (1907/1999), referred to as the "father of phenomenology" (Laverty, 2003, p. 22). Husserlian phenomenology appeals to researchers who desire to inquire into the meaning of being human and human experience through participants' perceptions (Koch, 1995). These perceptions describe the experience through intentionality in one's consciousness, essence, and phenomenological reduction (Koch, 1995).

Phenomenological reduction requires excluding external factors to be able to focus on attaining knowledge that is found on a continuum (Husserl, 1907/1999). Husserl insisted that

reduction could bring the phenomenon into an objective state. It requires bracketing the inquirer's own experiences to do so. Bracketing the experience, referred to as *epoché*, removes or disconnects preconceived notions about the phenomenon (Husserl, 1907/1999). The Husserlian perspective is recognized as empirical in nature. To see a phenomenon clearly, "one need[s] to bracket out the outer world as well as individual biases in order to successfully achieve contact with essences" (Laverty, 2003, p. 23). Husserl's student, Martin Heidegger (1953/2010), further expanded upon Husserl's (1907/1999) view with hermeneutic phenomenology.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Heidegger (1953/2010) believed that a phenomenon is "mere appearance" (p. 29). He recognized that experiences and perceptions could not be objective, requiring inquirers to study individual parts, then go broader by looking at them in combination. He pushed for understanding and interpretation by the researcher. Hermeneutic phenomenology supplements with descriptive patterns (Polkinghorne, 1983) that may not necessarily be obtained through basic phenomenology. Central to hermeneutic phenomenology are the ideas of historicality of understanding (Heidegger 1953/2010; Koch, 1995) and hermeneutic loops (Koch, 1995; Laverty, 2003).

Historicality of understanding begins with a person's background and culture, pre-understanding of culture and its meaning, co-constitution between oneself and the world, and interpretation (Koch, 1995). It is thought to focus on historical meanings of experience and its developmental and cumulative effects at the individual and social levels (Polkinghorne, 1983). Heidegger (1953/2010) believed that interpretation requires our background and understanding, and without interpretation we could not have culture (Heidegger, 1953/2010; Koch, 1995;

Laverty, 2003). Basically, our consciousness cannot be separated from the outer world and hermeneutic phenomenology allows us to explore how understanding evolves and is shared by people (Polkinghorne, 1983). Heidegger (1953/2010) shifted away from Husserlian philosophy by asserting that the researcher brings their own pre-understanding of values and biases into the inquiry approach. Hence, co-constitution is produced from participant and researcher perspective through hermeneutic loops in which a series of checkpoints producing feedback could be integrated into the inquiry. Koch (1995) stated that, "hermeneutics locates the unit of analysis in the transaction between participant and interpreter" (p. 834). I intentionally integrated hermeneutic loops to gain feedback during member checking of my data analysis that is further described in the methodology section of this chapter.

Hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry aligns with CRT and the asset-based perspectives described in Chapters 1 and 2. Allen et al. (1995) argued that hermeneutic exploration is also critical whereby it has an allegiance to understanding and highlighting inequities of power and how misconceptions falsify interpretations. He asserted: "Similarly, groups who have been marginalized by dominant forces can reveal alternative interpretations and strategies for resisting domination" (Allen, 1995, p. 180). As previously examined, asset-based perspectives cultivate a space for marginalized groups to speak their truth and share their experiences that often are ignored or stereotyped as reality, evident of deficit-based thinking (Bernal, 2002; Delgado Bernal & Alemán, 2017; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Critical hermeneutic researchers are cautious to not contribute to deficit-based thinking that further marginalizes groups (Allen, 1995).

This study presented the experiences of participants from their own point of view. Participants shared their intersectional backgrounds, experiences as protégés, and how their

experiences influenced their leadership development. Their voices were preserved during the hermeneutic loop process to produce an authentic representation of who they are and how their perceptions have evolved. By doing so, this study upheld the asset-based perspective that defined my researcher perspective. This reflective process lent itself well to the qualitative approach supporting participant reflection (Hastings & Kane, 2018) during member checking as further detailed in Chapter 4. I leveraged a richly descriptive and interpretive framework illustrating the diverse realities of participants (Laverty, 2003) and through a personal researcher self-reflexivity process described in Chapter 6.

To address the purpose of this study and its key research questions I utilized a hermeneutic phenomenological research design. This type of inquiry approach assisted in exploring the participants' lived experiences of mentoring. The goal was to follow inductive and deductive logic that sought understanding, described participant experiences, and interpreted these experiences via researcher-participant co-constitution (Koch, 1995). As a Latina leader, my research positionality was included by upholding my personal authenticity and historicality that was not set aside (Heidegger, 1953/2010), bracketed, or reduced (Husserl, 1907/1999), and rather was examined in depth and reflected upon by me.

Methodology

A qualitative research methodology was developed to collect deeply rich data describing mentoring experiences from a small sample size of Latina nonprofit CEOs in California. These experiences have been limitedly explored, warranting a deeper exploration into the perceptions, meanings, and understanding of mentoring influences of this group. Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated that the use of qualitative research empowers participants to "share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exists between researcher and the

participants…" (p. 45). Qualitative research is well suited for the exploration of mentoring phenomena (Creswell, 2012), especially with an ontological assumption in which implications and findings derive from thematic analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Qualitative methods are referred to as naturalistic inquiries that capture individual participant experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researchers adhering to and appreciating naturalistic inquiry aim to collect stories and study experiences from specific individuals that are not generalizable to the broader society or cannot predict the experiences of others (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated: "If there is a 'true' generalization, it is that there can be no generalization" (p. 124). Instead, qualitative researchers examine contextual conditions in which experiences occur and recognize the uniqueness of every participant. It is this aim that makes it distinct from quantitative and rationalistic inquiry/generalization.

Naturalistic inquiry is indeterminate and contextual based on individual participant experience, and is free of reductionism (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The naturalistic, qualitative inquirer recognizes the experience and strives to describe and interpret its meaning accordingly. This type of inquiry is aligned with my asset-based researcher perspective because of the intentional respect for the non-monolithic intersectional experiences of each participant. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach is also well suited to be integrated within qualitative naturalistic studies with its intention to recognize the experiences of all participants as well as that of the researcher. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach was specifically selected to include hermeneutic loops. In this study, loops were opportunities for participants to provide validation and feedback during the data analysis process to ensure that their voices were maintained. That process supported the study's rigor and collection of thick, rich description for interpretation (Heidegger, 1953/2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

A process of data collection and analysis was developed that assisted me in conducting interviews, interpreting the findings, and producing a thematic analysis. The dialectic between data collection and data analysis produced meanings that were essential to the core hermeneutic strategy of interpretation and meaning-making (Allen, 1995). Participants and a circle of friends were engaged in the data analysis process during member checking by verifying their interview transcripts and providing feedback of preliminary thematic findings. A thorough review of this study's trustworthiness is presented later in this chapter.

This study recruited Latina nonprofit CEOs working within California from various organizations and all five regions of the state. Participants represented seven counties within the state. A statewide geographic boundary expanded the accessibility and likelihood for recruiting participants. Conducting a statewide study benefitted participant recruitment and encouraged participation by minimizing potential anxiety or perceived threats to anonymity. A diverse cross section of organizations are reflected regarding the type of services they offer, budget size, staff size, and geographic representation.

Research Design

The aim of the qualitative research design was met by capturing and exploring participant experiences, perceptions, and feelings. Participants were asked to recollect and share their experiences and feelings about their mentoring relationships. Hermeneutic research is interpretive and emphasizes historical meanings of experiences and how these meanings have culminated to produce effects on the individual and at group and societal levels (Laverty, 2003). A hermeneutic phenomenological study was designed to explore the shared experiences of Latina leaders with mentoring relationships as the central phenomenon. Based on hermeneutic phenomenology, I engaged in a self-reflective process that went beyond merely a

phenomenological study. My biases and assumptions were not bracketed or set aside, rather they were implanted and fundamental to the interpretive process (Laverty, 2003). I gave substantial consideration of my personal experiences and unambiguously questioned my positionality and how participants' experiences resonated with me (Laverty, 2003). This approach was suitable to this study because I self-identify as a Latina executive leader within California and have numerous years working in the nonprofit sector. Documenting my self-reflexivity was essential during the course of this study and is further presented in this chapter, with a detailed process described in Chapter 6.

Role of the Researcher

My role was as the primary research instrument. I coordinated, recruited, and conducted all in-person participant interviews; collected and analyzed the data; remained focused on exploring the phenomenon; and inductively and deductively interpreted the meaning of the data through participant experiences and data analysis. During the recruitment phase, I utilized language that avoided subjective attitudes, assumptions, and constructs related to gender, racial and ethnic group affiliation, sexual orientation, disability, or age (Creswell, 2012). I utilized follow up and probing techniques during interviews, processed information, and interacted with participants and my circle of friends. Participants were integrated as co-creators of their own stories and assisted me with data collection and accuracy of interpretation in my analysis. Co-creation included participants being offered opportunities to review their interview transcripts prior to coding as a form of member checking and providing initial feedback and reflections about preliminary research findings during data analysis. Because I possess similar characteristics as participants who were interviewed, I undertook a reflexive process in which I recognized my own biases and subjectivities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). If left unattended,

potential biases may have impacted data collection and analysis and it is "important to identify and monitor them in relation to the theoretical framework…to make clear how they may be shaping the collection and interpretation of data" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 16).

Methods

This study utilized demographic questionnaires; semi-structured, in-person one-on-one interviews; and researcher field notes. Demographic questionnaires collected demographic, organizational, and leadership information; while researcher field notes enabled me to notate observations during the interviews. Through interviews, I collected qualitative data related to perceptions of mentor relationships and leadership development. Interviews served as the primary mode of data collection because I did not witness the experiences described by the participants. The interviews allowed participants to recall experiences and perceptions to the best of their ability. Participants communicated in as much detail as they felt comfortable sharing that led to thick, rich, descriptive data collection.

The interview protocol began with a short script (see Appendix A) in which I explained the purpose and duration of the interview, reviewed information on the consent form (see Appendix B), and obtained consent. They were not given the interview questions in advance because I expected to collect authentic responses as questions were posed. Upon reviewing the consent form, a short demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) containing a brief set of demographic questions was collected from all participants. The demographic questionnaire required approximately 1-5 minutes to complete, which included confirmation of ethnic self-identification, age range, highest level of education completed, current role, duration (time) in current role, number of years in a leadership role, and confirmation of having received mentoring. The demographic questionnaire supplemented the interview. Participants were sent

the questionnaire in advance of the interview and had the choice to complete it in advance, or on the day of the interview with the requirement that it be handed to me prior to conducting the interview. I also carried hardcopies of the questionnaire with me on the day of each interview. I collected the questionnaire and consent form prior to turning the audio recording on and beginning each interview.

An interview protocol (see Appendix D) consisted of approximately 10 open-ended questions, with an additional set of follow-up questions, readily available as needed. These questions were aligned to this study's key research questions. Questions were flexible and not necessarily asked in any particular order. The interview protocol contained follow-up and probing questions that I occasionally asked to clarify information that was being shared. I skipped questions if participants had already provided information for them during the interview. I confirmed with the participant when I skipped a question to be certain that is was not applicable, or already answered. Interviews were conducted in a location that offered privacy and was comfortable to the participant and me. Most interviews were conducted in participants' offices, with a few in their home or in a private community meeting space. All interviews felt private and comfortable and led to engagement in an open and honest manner.

The interview protocol was utilized as a facilitator guide only and helped me pose semi-structured, exploratory questions. I positioned a copy of the guide near me to be reminded of questions to ask. As participants spoke I crossed out any question they had addressed, even those I had not directly asked because they had naturally responded to it. That assisted me in facilitating a smoother interview and ensured that all questions were asked. The protocol was not shared with anyone, including participants, which assisted in gathering authentic responses during the interview. The protocol was organized by key research question with interviews

lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The interview protocol produced a systematic and thorough interview by limiting the types and number of questions that could have been posed and would have detracted from the interview, and avoided asking questions that would be out of scope to the purpose of this study. The interview protocol served to introduce me and the project, build rapport with the participant, and explore their experiences through semi-structured, improvised, follow-up, and probing questions. Building rapport was essential and assisted me in gauging whether participants' responses would be robust or limited, and how to best draw information from them. The sequencing of the questions were intentional with more personal and thought provoking questions posed towards the middle and end of the protocol. The interviews culminated with a thank you for their time and to collect voluntary interest for future participation in a peer social network.

Qualitative interviews are potential spaces for interviewees to self-reflect, feel recognized, feel a sense of catharsis and empathy, and are opportunities to feel validated (Wolgemuth et al., 2015). I considered the risks and safeguards for participants, such as protecting anonymity, potential misinterpretation of quotations and statements, and sensitive topics that may arise (Wolgemuth et al., 2015). The value of conducting these interviews provided participants with an opportunity to share experiences that they may not have felt comfortable or safe sharing within other spaces.

Participants

Specific demographic and professional characteristics were required to participate in this study. Only those who self-identified as U.S.-born Chicana, Latina, or of Hispanic ancestry, regardless of race, were included. The study was limited to U.S.-born participants to have an

ability to better interpret and understand the experiences that were shared because I am U.S.-born.

All participants were current, nonprofit CEOs in California. They all identified as a current or former protégé with mentors being described as mentor, advisor, sponsor, coach, counselor, friend, family, peer, protector, role model, teacher, and/or confidante (Crisp & Alvarado-Young, 2018; Kram, 1985; Priest et al., 2018). These criteria were essential to explore the impact that mentoring has had on their occupational mobility and leadership development. The epistemology was guided by the premise that reality is socially constructed through multiple experiences and interpretations (Laverty, 2003; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For example, every experience was unique to each participant, and efforts were made to limit generalizing those experiences.

Ten participants were interviewed. I collaborated within my social networks, described the purpose of the interviews, and requested their support with distributing the participant recruitment letter (see Appendix E). Primary techniques included convenience sampling from my existing networks, and secondary techniques included purposive sampling in which I targeted and contacted organizations that had a Latina CEO based on suggestions that were given to me, or through targeted recruitment by contacting organizations directly. In person recruitment (see Appendix F) was unnecessary because I successfully recruited a sufficient number of participants through convenience and purposive sampling.

The recruitment and selection process proved successful with a few eligible individuals responding after the tenth interview was already scheduled. I thanked them for their interest but informed them that interview slots had been filled. Interviews resulted from four convenience and six purposive recruitment technique attempts. Convenience sampling appeared to produce a

higher level of participant trust earlier in the process, with purposive sampling developing rapport and trust during the interview process. Additionally, it took longer for participants recruited through purposive sampling to schedule an interview. I conducted continuous recruitment until the 10 interviews were completed and data saturation was achieved. I reviewed this study's inclusion criteria with all participants prior to scheduling each interview to ensure that all of the participants met the requirements of this study.

Circle of Friends

A circle of friends provided feedback throughout the study, beginning with interview question formulation and ending with review of preliminary thematic findings. The circle was included as part of the participant and peer feedback opportunities. They included individuals who did not participate in this study, nor worked in the same organization as study participants. The circle consisted of peers, individuals who hold leadership positions, and all were women from diverse racial and ethnic groups. The circle of friends assisted in identifying gaps in protocol, pinpointing interview questions that may be awkward or confusing, and identifying researcher bias during data analysis. Their participation is fully described in the data analysis section of this chapter, and in Chapter 6.

Data Collection

The in-person interview protocol contained the demographic questionnaire (1-5 minutes), and approximately 10 open-ended interview questions with occasional probing and follow-up questions, as needed. None of the interviews required a follow-up interview as all questions were posed and answered within the first interview. Duration of interviews ranged from approximately 60 to 90 minutes each. A total of 10 interviews were conducted, with achievement of data saturation. Saturation was achieved by asking all participants the same

questions, and through the utilization of probing questions, rich, thick data were collected. An aim was met whereby sufficient data and documentation were collected to facilitate study replication (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I developed a saturation grid during the coding and thematic analysis phase discussed further in the data analysis section of this chapter.

Open-ended questions fostered an opportunity for participants to share experiences that led to thick, rich data. Unlike closed-ended questions, open-ended questions allowed participants to share information in their own words while upholding an asset-based approach (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005) in which they discussed experiences that they chose to share. Questions were few and broad, designed to collect descriptive information aligned to the key research questions. Question types included experience and behavior questions related to mentoring relationships, career, and psychosocial support functions; opinion and value questions related to perceptions about mentoring's influence on LLD; and feeling questions related to how they felt as a protégé (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The demographic questionnaire and interview protocol were piloted with a circle of friends to test for appropriateness and clarity. Revisions were made based on this feedback prior to Institutional Review Board (IRB) final approval.

Interviews were scheduled once a participant attested to meeting the inclusion criteria and agreed to be interviewed. They were conducted in safe and comfortable locations for the participant and me and quiet enough to engage in unobtrusive conversation. These locations included private work offices, homes, and conference space in a community center. Participants chose the locations, especially if I was unfamiliar with the region I was traveling to. Due to this study's geographic distribution throughout California, I personally traveled to meet with all participants. During the interviews I included pauses, redirected questions, and reminded participants that their participation was completely voluntary. If triggers appeared to surface I

asked them if they would like to pause or take a break. One participant appeared to get teary-eyed as she spoke about her mother's guidance. No participants chose to discontinue their interviews. Respect for minimal risk to a participant and her professional reputation was upheld due to any possible sensitive information they shared. For instance, if participants shared a specific example that they verbally indicated they did not want publically shared I agreed to not include it with any specific detail. This reassurance was sufficient for them to continue with the interview.

As mentioned, I reviewed the consent form with them prior to the interview. They signed and handed it to me prior to turning on the audio recorder and smartphone device. I utilized both devices to have a backup copy in the event one of them had a recording malfunction. I provided as much information as possible to foster a level of comfort during the interview, and attested to strict confidentiality. Consent was collected to audio record all interviews and for use to transcribe the interviews. I took handwritten field notes during the interviews to supplement the audio recordings that were then typed into a document and saved on my secured laptop.

A conversational style interview was used that was conducive to freely sharing their most accurate experiences and perceptions (Laverty, 2003). Attention and respect was given to silent pauses and emotion. Often times, the short pauses allowed participants to better articulate their thoughts and feelings. Laverty (2003) explained that the "importance of paying attention to silence, the absence of speaking, the silence of the unspeakable and the silence of being or life itself, as it is herein that one may find the taken for granted or the self-evident" (p. 29). Silence helped understand the impact of the experiences that were being shared.

Notetaking was completed in the most unobtrusive manner possible. I listed numbers one through 10 on a small sheet of paper corresponding to each interview question in the protocol. I

crossed out each number when responses were given. That assisted me in tracking the questions that were already answered and focusing on those that needed to be asked. The audio recording devices were placed on the tabletop in between the participant and me. Audio recordings and notes were primary data collection instruments utilized for data analysis, in addition to the researcher. Pseudonyms were utilized to minimize the risk to confidentiality. Audio recordings were immediately saved as individual files on my laptop as a back up to the two audio devices. My laptop and smartphone were password protected with passwords that were known only by me. My recorder and recordings were securely stored and locked in my home office. Each transcript was printed as a hardcopy and organized in a binder, which helped in preparation for the data analysis described in the next section of this chapter. Transcripts were securely stored and locked in my home office.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously. Each participant was given a pseudonym to protect their identity. I chose a unique pseudonym for each participant representing various types of flowers to honor my late mother whose name was Rosa. For me, flowers symbolize the way in which people grow and bloom at different times, reinvent themselves, adapt to their environment, and bring beauty to others. Flowers decorate our surroundings and when the earth is well cultivated, they thrive. If taken metaphorically, mentors help cultivate the earth so that protégés grow at their own pace and to their full potential.

The data analysis included key components that demonstrate confidence in the rigor of my work while respecting participants and the hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Rigor is demonstrated through my coding, categorizing, and thematic analysis. Every decision and step in the data analysis began and concluded by examining whether I respected the intersectional and

non-monolithic experiences of every participant, included participant validation and peer feedback in the form of member checking, and remained authentic to my research perspective. My thematic analysis answered the two research questions. All of these processes were documented in a detailed manner and are available upon request.

Audio recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim immediately after they were collected. I transcribed the first interview to practice and understand the process of transcription. However, my limited experience resulted with spending more than 10 hours on the transcription. I chose to work with a professional transcriptionist to complete the remaining transcriptions. The transcriptionist's attestation to maintaining confidentiality and deletion of files after the transcriptions were accepted by me is documented in secured email correspondence between the two of us. Every transcribed interview was reviewed several times for accuracy. As a form of member checking and to maintain transparency while continuing to build rapport, participants were each provided a copy of their transcript and given an opportunity to review it prior to beginning the coding process. Providing participants with a copy of their transcript aligned with my respect for the process and keeping trust with them. Additionally, for marginalized communities who are often subject to deficit-based thinking in research, it was my intent to be as transparent as possible. My hope was that a positive research experience would interest the participants in engaging in research in the future.

Handwritten researcher field notes were documented as a text summary to recall nuances and observations about the participant and the interview that I reflected on at a later time (Chowdhury, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I noted when participants became excited, happy, pensive, or sad about any questions during the interview. I observed body movements and gestures too. Notes about particular questions that needed additional clarification or questions

that were responded to similarly within the actual interview and across participants, were also noted. My researcher field notes began pre-data analysis in which I began to discern development of similarities and differences in responses and themes. Once all 10 interviews were transcribed and reviewed twice for accuracy, formal data analysis began. Every transcribed interview was processed in the following manner and led to development of saturation grids and the thematic analysis described in Chapter 4.

Step 1. Pre-Coding

All transcripts were reviewed twice for accuracy. They ranged from 21 to 34 pages each, double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Double-spaced transcripts allowed for notetaking on the document during later stages of analysis. Each transcript was printed one-sided and 3-hole punched and placed in a large binder in chronological order when interviews were conducted (most current on top). The hardcopies were critical in performing pre-coding that consisted of highlighting every interview question from the interview guide and underlining meaningful phrases or quotations. A pencil was used to underline these phrases and quotations so that I could refer to them quickly during write up and/or erase those that were not used. This open coding process allowed me to be expansive and identify anything that may be useful (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

During the write up of the analysis and findings I placed check marks next to quotations used to ensure that I had not duplicated quotations in this manuscript. Interesting responses, quotations, and recurring responses were noted in a saturation grid (Creswell & Poth, 2018) using an Excel spreadsheet described later in this chapter. This stage affirmed or refuted my initial observations documented in my field notes. I recognized I recalled specific stories more vividly while also realizing that I had not paid attention to important statements during the first

two transcript reviews. During this step I began to feel a connection to the participants and their experiences. Ultimately, pre-coding concluded with reviewing transcripts for a third time.

Step 2. First Cycle Coding

Once I highlighted and underlined phrases and quotations I went through each transcript and wrote keywords and catchphrases in the right hand margin. I noticed more specific similarities and differences during this cycle and kept a list of potential codes and anything I noticed that was being repeated or in contradiction among participants. For the majority of transcripts I wrote keywords verbatim for later use as descriptive or *in vivo* coding for quotations (Saldaña, 2016). For those not written verbatim, I wrote closely similar codes for meanings or descriptions. This provided ease in coding that I continued performing in later stages. First cycle coding resulted with reviewing transcripts for a fourth time.

Step 3. Second Cycle Coding

Second cycle coding included transferring all keywords and phrases verbatim from the right hand margin of transcripts on to sticky notes. The first vertical column had each participant listed in order from one to 10. I color-coded their keywords by age range to visually determine if there were any similarities or differences by age. For example, lime represented under 40 years of age (Azalea, Daisy); pink represented 40–49 years of age (Lila, Camelia, Jasmine, Rosa); blue represented 50–59 years of age (Violeta, Dahlia, Iris); and yellow represented over 60 years of age (Zinnia). Once the sticky notes were created for each transcript they were affixed as a grid covering a 7.5 x 9-foot wall. Each interview question was written on colored construction paper and placed horizontally in the order found on the interview protocol from left to right. Then each participant's sticky note responses were placed horizontally accordingly. All participants' responses were placed on the wall under the question they responded to.

Understanding that interviews were conversational in nature, responses did not always follow the sequential order as listed in the interview protocol. Step 3 helped me to visually see which questions were more thought provoking and resonated with participants. I distinguished the more thought provoking questions based on the number of sticky notes that were placed on the wall for each participant. For example, the eldest participant did not identify current mentor needs as she was beginning to consider retirement. I placed a blank sheet of paper on the adjacent wall to quickly note observations or immediate reflections as I built the sticky wall. Notes from this sheet of paper became a part of the data analysis integrated in the findings in Chapter 4. This step began to demonstrate the rigor of the data analysis. Halfway through this step I was able to begin to hone in on potential categories that were developing.

Step 4. Codification

Codification, or arranging the data in a more systematic order (Saldaña, 2016), assisted in creating categories and themes later on in the process. The codification process included applying and reapplying codes that allowed me to regroup and categorize data until I reached better interpretation and meaning-making.

Codify 1. A saturation grid created as an Excel spreadsheet was created to track interview questions, responses, and codes. The Excel spreadsheet mimicked the wall grid verbatim. The horizontal row of the grid represented each interview question and the order it was asked from the interview guide. The vertical column represented the participant in the order interviewed. Digital software was never used for coding, sorting, categorizing, or data analysis (Chowdhury, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) because my intention was to keep responses as authentic as possible without overlooking nuances in speech or text. The wall grid was typed up directly on to this Excel spreadsheet. I typed every response verbatim

totaling 240 keywords and phrases. I began to codify the data which included rearranging sticky notes that better explained other interview questions. I then started to notice categories and themes beginning to emerge from this step. Additional *in vivo* codes ceased during this step, and solely descriptive codes were added to allow for the development of categories. I did my best to keep codes as authentic as possible by keeping some descriptive codes as *in vivo* used by participants from prior steps. However, Saldaña (2016) asserted that: "No one, including myself, can claim final authority on the utility of coding or the 'best' way to analyze qualitative data" (p. 2). I relied on my researcher and methodological perspective, theoretical framework, and research questions during the codification process.

Codify 2. The second codification process required that I begin to develop groupings. The groupings allowed me to see the categories specifically emerge. I went through all interview responses narrowing down codes. Similar codes were grouped together within the interview question they pertained to, totaling 113 keywords and phrases. I was cognizant about losing meaning and decided to cease further elimination of codes. I counted and documented the number of times a keyword/code was given by all participants. Then, I organized the codes vertically based on their frequency from highest on top to lowest on the bottom. This was performed for each interview question. Counts ranged from one to 10, with a few having a count of nine and 10 which meant categories could be created across participants.

Step 5. Categorization

Categories were created that were responsive to this study's purpose and key research questions. Categories organically grew from the coding process and were not forced into the subsequent thematic analysis. They are exhaustive, mutually exclusive, and conceptually congruent (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). During this particular step, categories not having a count

of at least three codes or responses, and not appearing mutually compatible, were not used and set aside. Codes with counts of at least three were moved into a column adjacent to it. This assisted for creation of categories, containing 65 codes. I chose a frequency of three because of the meaningfulness of the responses and intention to retain as many experiences as possible which is explained further in Chapters 4 and 5. Although I chose three counts, there were a few interview questions in which most participants responded similarly with code counts of nine or 10 indicating that all or most participants responded similarly. There were questions with codes of least four or five counts which represent approximately half of the participants.

I began to expand the data analysis by grouping codes across interview questions. The purpose of cross interview question analysis was to begin to answer the two research questions:

1. What are the salient characteristics of quality mentoring relationships for Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California?
2. How have quality mentoring relationships influenced Latina leaders' sense of self-efficacy and leadership development?

I color-coded similar codes regardless of the interview questions they pertained to. This visualization displayed threads throughout the data set with indication that categories were emerging. I recoded (Saldaña, 2016) to create a manageable set of categories for both research questions. Subcategories were also created for each category. Eventually these categories and subcategories assisted to outline the discussion in Chapter 4. The final step for organizing the raw data was the development of themes and concepts from all categories that were created.

Step 6. Thematic Analysis

Categories appearing similar were color-coded and grouped. Groupings containing at least two similar categories were developed into preliminary themes and those that were not as substantial were removed from consideration, or set aside. The final number of preliminary

themes were dependent on quality (rich) and quantity (thick) of categories, organized in the saturation grid by the number of categories from highest to lowest count. Finally, I reviewed all themes to evaluate whether they responded to the two key inquiry research questions. Preliminary themes appeared to be mutually exhaustive and exclusive. Conceptual maps for these preliminary themes were created based on Saldaña's (2016) thematic analysis process model. Saldaña's model illustrates how real and particular data evolves to more abstract and general themes. The model is a streamlined data-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry that evolves from data, codes and subcodes, categories and subcategories, themes and concepts, and to assertions and theories. I developed conceptual maps to follow Saldaña's model for each of the preliminary themes. The maps illustrated 10 preliminary themes showing codes, categories, subcategories, and themes. They represented the most meaningful codes with highest count that corresponded to a category. The individual concept maps assisted me to visually identify codes and categories that were redundant or could be integrated into another similar theme. A total of 10 preliminary themes were developed and reviewed by a circle of friends group for peer feedback during one of the member checking points.

Step 6 was critical because it helped me to further synthesize codes, categories, and subcategories. I began to recognize threads of information throughout the interviews and how they addressed each research question. That was useful to demonstrate the relevance and strength that a theme had during the data collection process. Steps 7 and 8 provide an overview of how circle of friends feedback and participant validation were incorporated in the data analysis relevant to member checking.

Step 7. Circle of Friends

A second circle of friends convening was included to share my initial preliminary findings and gauge whether my analysis missed or ignored data, or lacked clarity. Both circle of friends convenings increased my confidence as a researcher because they were my initial public presentations of my work. A fuller description of this convening is described in the member checking section later in this chapter.

Step 8. Participant Validation

A goal of the data collection was to collect rich and thick descriptive data. Data analysis was primarily inductive and strictly explored the lived experiences of participants through a rigorous coding, categorization, and thematic analysis process (Chowdhury, 2015; Saldaña, 2016). Data collection and analysis was continuous until saturation was achieved, which occurred when data collection no longer produced new information or insights into the study's central phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Ultimately, data analysis included involvement and co-construction with the participants and critical friends groups engaging in hermeneutic loops whereby "the researcher and participant work together to bring life to the experience being explored through the use of imagination, the hermeneutic loop and attention to language and writing" (Laverty, 2003, p. 30). Figure 1 illustrates part of the data analysis process that included circle of friends and participants. I developed this hermeneutic looping process for this study utilizing key ideas adapted from Allen (1995), Heidegger (1953/2010), Laverty (2003), and Polkinghorne (1983). Dates for each feedback and validation opportunity have been included in the figure to identify the timeliness and strategic implementation during the data collection and analysis processes. These four opportunities created the hermeneutic looping process that I integrated into the study as part of the member checking process.

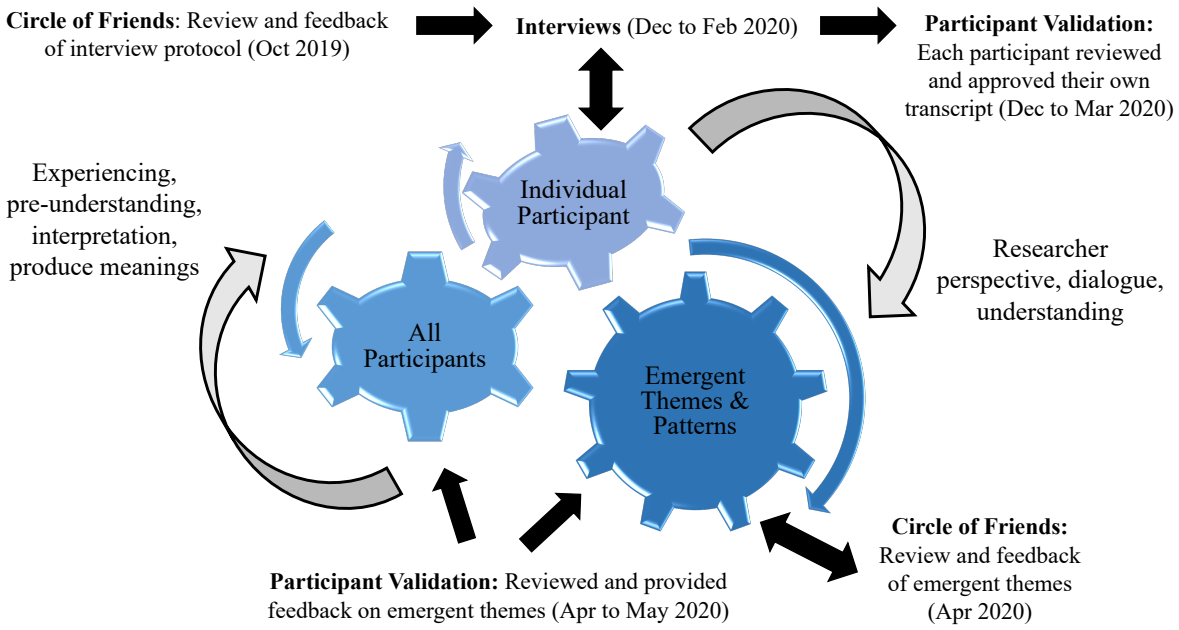

Figure 1. Hermeneutic loop inquiry and approach.

To respect the experiences shared by all participants I included quotations in Chapter 4 to maintain the authenticity of their experiences that they shared. Time in this research study was included that integrated participant co-construction and circle of friends feedback. This was primarily integrated as a form of member checking described in the trustworthiness section below. The timeline of this study is displayed in Table 3.

The timeline of this study was feasible and took into account academic and work calendars. I also considered the feasibility that potential participants may have a lighter schedule during the winter break. Prior to the proposal, I made the decision to receive IRB approval before winter break. I decided to begin conducting interviews during winter break because I would be completely on break from my academic program and from work. The decision to conduct data collection during winter break was a key factor that allowed me to travel and collect all 10 interviews a few weeks prior to the pandemic which resulted in

shelter in place with strict travel and social distancing regulations. I did not experience critical adjustments to the timeline, keeping the study on track. As a result of sustaining my timeline all trustworthiness techniques were also successfully accomplished.

Table 3
Study Timetable

Dates	Objectives
June 2018–December 2019	✓ Build relationships with Latina membership group ✓ Continue to maintain a self-reflexivity journal ✓ Develop a demographic questionnaire ✓ Develop an interview protocol
October 2019–November 2019	✓ Pilot and edit interview protocol with a circle of friends (member checking) ✓ Develop an informed consent form ✓ Develop researcher scripts ✓ Develop a participant recruitment letter
November 2019–December 2019	✓ Proposal presentation/approval ✓ IRB submission/approval
December 2019 –February 2020	✓ Data collection and completion ✓ Transcription of interviews began
December 2019–March2020	✓ Transcription of interviews ✓ Participant validation of transcripts (member checking)
March 2020–April 2020	✓ Data analysis began ✓ Circle of friends group peer feedback (member checking)
April 2020–June 2020	✓ Participant review of thematic findings (member checking) ✓ Data analysis completed
June 2020–August 2020	✓ Drafts and revisions of study findings, implications, and recommendations
August 2020–September 2020	✓ Work with Writing Center and editor
September–October 2020	✓ Project defense ✓ Final editing, publishing

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research seeks to describe and explore the world through the eyes of the participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I anticipated potentially having multiple interpretations based on varied and intersectional participant experiences. I planned and conducted rigorous research thorough data collection and analysis that assisted in my interpretation and meaning-making. I demonstrated trustworthiness in this qualitative study to produce useful research (Amankwaa, 2016). Lincoln and Guba's work is credited for proposing criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability) that increases trustworthiness (Amankwaa, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Trustworthiness was established in this study through techniques, such as triangulation; saturation; member checking; rich, thick descriptions; reflexive journaling; and audit trails.

Triangulation

I conducted 10 in person interviews. Responses were crosschecked with my observations, field notes, my researcher self-reflexivity journal, and the literature review presented in Chapter 2. Further triangulation occurred between my interpretations and during member checking, which Thompson (2018) described as "shared intelligibility" (p. 582), as an interplay between researcher interpretation and participant narratives. Field notes included documentation of nuances that occurred such as pausing for long periods of time prior to responding, comments about never being asked a specific question in her past, and responses that were shared with less detail versus those in greater detail by the same participant. I also noted specific interview questions in which the participants became more enthusiastic and spent a longer amount of time answering. There was an instance where a participant became teary eyed

while recollecting the fortitude of her mother. Triangulation increased credibility and quality of the data (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Saturation

All interviews were conducted until there was sufficient data and the likelihood of collecting additional new information was unlikely. My saturation grids visually depicted the recurrence of similar responses with production of coding counts. Throughout the data analysis process I ensured that every response and group of responses answered the key research questions. I incorporated these checkpoints at every step of the process to ensure no loss of meaning had occurred. A substantial amount of time was spent on triangulation of the data collected, which also increased saturation as evidence in the saturation grids. The creation of a process wall containing a multitude of ideas and phrases (Step 3 of data analysis), and Excel spreadsheets as saturation grids with various iterations and narrowing led to successful saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The study attained saturation when new coding and categories could no longer be produced.

Member Checks

Member checking was an in-depth approach to trustworthiness included throughout this study. As described earlier in this chapter it was a critical strategy to upholding the hermeneutic phenomenological research design and maintaining participant authenticity. Member checking was completed with co-constitution in the form of two participant validation opportunities, and two circle of friends convenings (peer feedback). These groups validated the initial review and interpretation process.

Participant validation. The first participant validation opportunity was after receiving their own transcript. They were asked to review it for accuracy, completeness, and give

feedback as a form of member checking. Miles et al. (2020) described how phenomenological studies that share transcripts with their participants become a foundation for shared reflection. I purposely shared their transcripts with them to demonstrate transparency and a desire for Latinas to understand how their voices become translated into empirical research. I anticipated that a greater understanding of the research process may influence the interest of a greater number of specific Latina research in the future. All participants who provided feedback indicated the transcript was accurate. The only change made was to one transcript that had misspelled a mentor's name.

The second participant validation opportunity occurred after the second circle of friends convening at which time I reduced the number of thematic findings down to the final five themes. I desired to maintain the participants' voices and ensure my interpretations were fair and representative (Creswell, 2012). Prior to finalizing the five thematic findings I shared an executive summary with all participants describing them. I requested feedback by posing the following three questions:

- Can your story relate to some of these macro level themes? If so, which ones and why?
- What thoughts do you have when you read these themes?
- Do you agree or disagree with any of these findings? If so, which ones and why?

Half of the participants provided feedback that was encouraging. The feedback indicated to clarify a few of the titles of the themes. Generally, their comments implied intrigue and interest in the final product. I informed them they would receive information about the final manuscript at a future date. Self-reflexive notetaking was collected referencing the need to be more specific and define terms such as "constellation" and whether it is in reference to the protégé or to their mentors. The feedback assisted me to be more deliberate in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 6 captures my researcher self-reflexivity process during member checking as well. Overall, no feedback was received that indicated that I had misinterpreted their experiences during the data analysis process.

Circle of friends feedback. The first circle of friends convening was incorporated during the development of the demographic questionnaire and researcher interview protocol. The materials were reviewed with an individual who was not interviewed for this study. She is a Black woman in a leadership position at a nonprofit organization who has had mentoring experiences as a protégé. During this meeting she provided feedback that was incorporated into the materials. This feedback included adding the option "some college" to educational level choices on the demographic questionnaire. She explained her experience of not having a college degree while being proud of having completed some college. She also pointed out questions that appeared similar that may yield similar responses, and questions that were confusing on the interview protocol. This feedback helped me to be more direct and purposeful with each interview question especially as I had 10 questions to pose within a 60 to 90 minute time period.

A second circle of friends group was conducted after data analysis was completed. An online meeting was convened with a group of six individuals who were not involved as study participants, representing five different California counties, and one individual working and residing outside of California. This group of all women represented three Latinas, one Asian, one Black, and one non-Latina White woman. Four women work in nonprofit leadership and two women in the government sector; all are senior leaders in their organizations but none are chief executives officers. Two women work in the social service and counseling fields. The group represented a cross section of race and ethnicities and work in environments similar to that of study participants. It was not required they have prior protégé or mentor experiences because

I expected that they would provide feedback as outsiders to this study. Prior to presenting my initial 10 themes I provided a brief overview of the research topic, key research questions, and descriptive statistics about the participants. I asked the group about their initial assumptions about mentoring relationships. Overwhelmingly, they indicated the best mentors provide psychosocial support; are non-judgmental; uninterested in molding the protégé into someone they think they should be; provide constructive criticism to help the protégé's growth; and see good qualities in the protégé. They also stated good mentor characteristics are associated with showing good leadership; sponsoring the protégé; sharing their own experiences; and developing trust with the protégé. After gathering these initial assumptions I presented the 10 preliminary themes I had developed during the data analysis process.

We reviewed these initial themes, how they emerged, and the process I conducted to develop them. They had opportunities to ask questions about the data analysis and provided feedback into my interpretation and meaning-making. Laverty (2003) stated that: "For a hermeneutic phenomenological project, the multiple stages of interpretation that allow patterns to emerge, the discussion of how interpretations arise from data, and the interpretive process itself are seen as critical" (p. 31). The group discussed surprising and interesting themes. Interestingly, the circle of friends group spent a fair amount of time discussing the special case/outlier that was found that is further presented in Chapter 4. The circle validated my interpretations while instilling confidence in my analysis. The circle of friends approach was utilized in the hermeneutic loop process of this study to assist in affirming interpretations and meanings.

Thick, Rich Descriptions

Thick, rich descriptions refer to quantity and quality of data, respectively (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Broad and specific, follow-up, and probing interview questions were posed to gather thicker, richer data. Thickness of data was determined by the depth and number of interviews that were conducted with 10 participants until saturation was achieved. Interviews had a duration of approximately 60 to 90 minutes to ensure that all interview questions were posed and responded to and that clarity was achieved. Rich data were attained with the varied and detailed level of experiences that were collected. The thickness and richness of descriptions assisted me in interpreting and make meaning of the data. The substantive nature of these data helped me during the thematic analysis.

Self-Reflexivity Journal

Hermeneutic phenomenological research requires researcher self-reflexivity (Laverty, 2003). I engaged in a self-reflexive and interpretive process (Laverty, 2003; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Ortlipp, 2008) throughout the study from pre-data collection through data analysis maintaining a reflexivity journal highlighting potential biases, assumptions, experiences, and evolving thoughts. Chapter 6 explicitly describes my researcher self-reflexivity experience during this study and the model that was created from it. According to Laverty (2003), "the researcher is called, on an ongoing basis, to give considerable thought of their own experience and to explicitly claim the ways in which their position or experience relates to the issues being researched" (p. 28). This was essential since I identified with participant characteristics required for this study, and possessed similar experiences as participants. My field notes were reflected upon in my journal which cultivated a safe space for me to recognize my values, biases, and assumptions. I did not expect to completely bracket or reduce them, and chose to deeply explore

them as I undertook this study. According to Ortlipp (2008), there is limited research on the use of reflexivity journals in research from a philosophical and methodological perspective. This study has produced empirical evidence demonstrating how hermeneutic phenomenology and reflexivity journals were completely relevant to my researcher perspective. Chapter 6 details the researcher self-reflexivity process model I developed after careful analysis of my journal. The model was not created prior to or during this study.

Audit Trail

I maintained a clearly detailed account of the data collection and analysis methods, procedures, and decision-making (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Sufficient documentation of data collection protocols and participant responses were kept so that this study may be replicated in the future. Detailed documentation and photos of my process wall describe and display all subsequent steps taken by me to conduct this study and became ideal for me to develop my interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

This study included safeguards to uphold participant confidentiality and informed consent. Prior to beginning each interview, I described my role and purpose of the interview. Participants were informed of their right to privacy, confidentiality, and ability to stop and/or withdrawal from the interview at any time (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979; Orb et al., 2000). I expressed my adherence to confidentiality, and documented and collected informed consent from all participants on paper forms and via audio recording prior to conducting the interviews. All paper questionnaires and consent forms were collected via hardcopy and placed in individual file folders, then locked in my home office. All field notes were shredded after being typed into an electronic file and saved on to a password protected

computer for which only I know the password. This electronic data will be kept for a minimum of three years and will be erased after the minimum 3-year timeframe expires. Audio recordings were saved on a separate audio recorder and smart phone, then transferred on to a password protected computer folder that requires log in with passwords that only I know. Both devices (audio recorder and smart phone) were utilized as backups to each other.

I did not assume that participants did not know of or about each other. Although statewide interviews were conducted and I had an expansive geographic distribution of interview sites, it was impossible to ascertain whether my participants knew one another from within their professional communities (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012). No snowball sampling was conducted which limited the possibility of participants knowing each other. I kept my adherence to confidentiality with all participants. I was cognizant if participants attempted to identify or refer anyone to this study. I did not receive recommendations from any participants.

To maintain the principle of beneficence, pseudonyms were created for all participants (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012; Orb et al., 2000). I received permission from all participants to circulate findings with the broader community such as peers, colleagues, and other researchers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Orb et al., 2000). Every effort was made to protect participants' identities and collect approvals as necessary. Co-construction of data with participants in the form of member checking was utilized whereby they had access to only their transcript prior to coding the data. That decreased potential or unforeseen harm to their professional and personal reputations (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012).

Limitations of the Study

First, small connected communities may be beneficial for participants and their social networks, but also pose challenges where complete anonymity is not guaranteed (Damianakis &

Woodford, 2012). Participants may not have revealed important features of their experiences out of fear or anxiety that participation and findings may reveal who they are or impact them negatively. I overcame this limitation by building rapport with participants prior to the interview that led to a feeling of comfort and a safe space before beginning the interview. I got to know participants by learning about the community they live and work in by leveraging responses from the demographic questionnaire to engage in small talk prior to beginning the interview. I began every interview asking about their nonprofit organization before moving into asking personal questions about mentoring.

Second, the study relied on the recollection of participant lived experiences Authenticity of experiences could not be validated. They may have provided responses that they believed I wanted to hear, especially since I share similar demographic characteristics with them. It was impossible to ascertain whether participants were being disingenuous, dishonest, or inaccurately recalled past events. Miles et al. (2020) described this as a possible research effect for bias in which participants describe what they think the researcher wants to hear. Researchers must integrate methods to check for this. Interview questions built on each other which reinforced the experiences and stories they shared. Chowdhury (2015) indicated that triangulation and saturation still may not generate robust and authentic interpretation. I minimized this limitation through the use of probing and follow up questions.

Lastly, I acknowledge my positionality which includes sharing similar profile characteristics with study participants. Participants may have incompletely shared an experience and assumed that I may already know about or understood it. I leveraged probing, follow-up, and clarifying questioning when general responses were given to explore more deeply what they articulated. I also asked them to define acronyms when they were used. I maintained a self-

reflexivity journal to check my own assumptions and reflections to ensure my interpretations were based on the data collected. Member checking minimized these limitations as well. The detailed data collection and analysis process I maintained strengthened data trustworthiness.

Although qualitative phenomenological studies contain limitations, this study's most noteworthy strength is the active engagement between participants and me via the hermeneutic loops that were incorporated. I maintained contact with participants to build rapport prior to and immediately following the study. I sent all participants a handwritten thank you card after all transcripts were verified by them. These efforts assisted in collecting thicker, richer data because they may have felt comfortable sharing more specific experiences with me (Rangarajan & Black, 2007).

Summary

This chapter presented an overview of this study's inquiry and methodological approach, research design, and data collection and analysis methods that were completed to conduct this study. The use of a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology was justified for its appropriateness for this study's purpose and key research questions. My role and the data collection and analysis processes attained adequate sample size and data trustworthiness. Ethical considerations were included assuring that participants were not harmed or faced potential risks due to their participation. Although limitations existed, I implemented strategies to overcome them and their potential impacts.

The research methodology was appropriate and aligned with my asset-based perspective. The participants' voices were maintained throughout the entire data collection and analysis processes. Data collection was planned to obtain a high degree of authenticity. The collection of thick, rick descriptions was essential to convey the emotions and perceptions of participants

leading to my interpretation and meaning-making. The maintenance of a researcher self-reflexivity journal and field notes produced thought provoking reflections and influenced decisions that were made in this study as discussed in Chapter 6. Findings are shared in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the experiences, thematic analysis, and key findings based on 10 participant demographic questionnaires, interviews, and researcher field notes collected throughout California between December 2019 and February 2020. Introductions to each participant and their non-monolithic and intersectional experiences is described, along with brief context into the interview setting to illustrate spaces in which they live and work. Through their shared experiences, a thematic analysis and key findings are presented responding to the research questions and theoretical frameworks. The findings produced five themes; two that respond to Research Question 1, and three that respond to Research Question 2.

Introduction to California Latina Nonprofit Chief Executive Officers

It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to meet with the participants and discuss their mentoring experiences as protégés. Their trust in me as the researcher, and their openness to share their successes and vulnerabilities, has been an honor to listen to and collect. Participant recruitment occurred through convenience and purposive sampling. Four participants were recruited as a convenience sample since I had prior interaction with them, while the remaining six participants were recruited using purposive sampling by directly contacting them or their organizations. Participants ranged in age from their thirties to almost 70 years of age. All participants self-identified as Chicana, Latina, or of Hispanic ancestry; U.S.-born; current CEOs of California nonprofit organizations; and identified prior or current mentoring experiences as protégés.

Geographic representation spanned throughout California. The sample group represented all five regions of California (Northern California, San Francisco Bay Area, Gold Country or

High Sierra, Central Coast or Central Valley, and Southern California) and seven counties (see Figure 2).

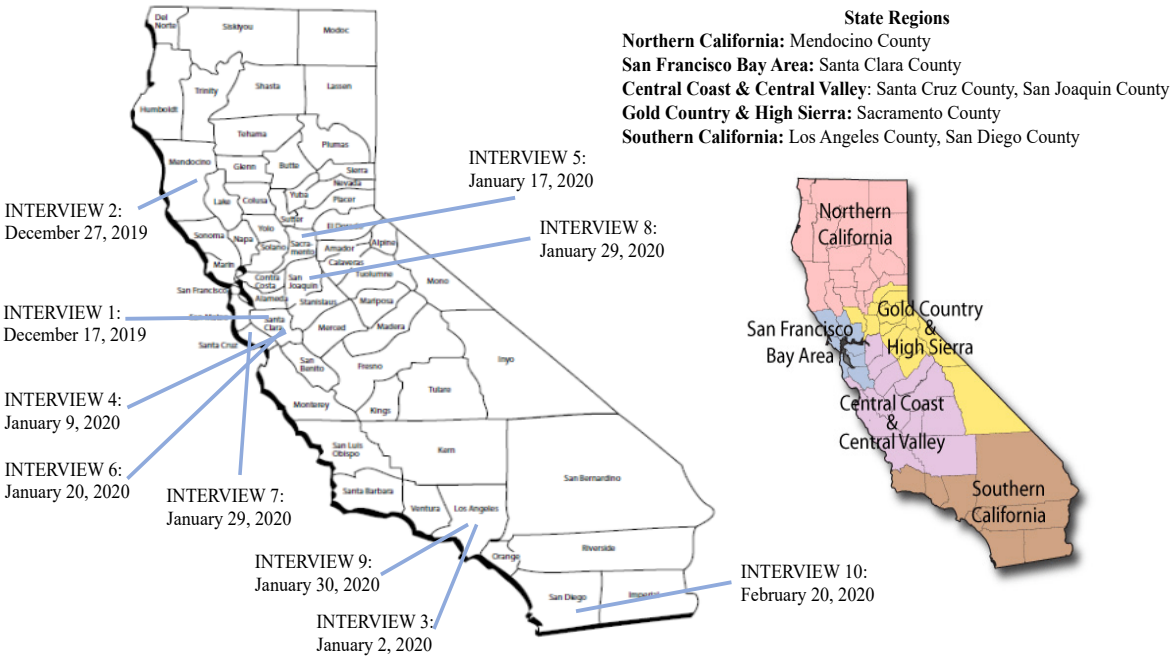

Figure 2. Geographic distribution of participants.

Although the original criteria included any senior level leadership role, I received sufficient interest from individuals and decided to limit this study to the CEO role. Since all participants were in the same role, this allowed me to examine the data in a more streamlined manner with a more keen focus on the challenges and successes of their experiences. It is important to mention that after the 10 participants were interviewed or scheduled for an interview, three additional individuals expressed interest in participating in this study but their interest was received after all interviews were scheduled. Two other individuals became aware of this study and expressed interest, but did not meet participant criteria. I attempted to include a

more diverse geographic distribution of participants from additional counties; however, after several attempts I was unsuccessful at recruiting participants from the Central Valley and Eastern California.

Table 4 displays participant demographic information for the final 10 participants who were interviewed for this study. This information was collected from the demographic questionnaire that was completed prior to conducting each interview.

Table 4
Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Age Range (in Years)	Highest Educational Level Completed	Total Years of Leadership Experience	Years in Current Leadership Role
Azalea	Under 40	Some college	10	2
Camelia	40–49	Some college	15	4
Dahlia	50–59	BA	27	3
Daisy	Under 40	Master's	5	4
Iris	50–59	BA	9	3.5
Jasmine	40–49	Master's	9	5
Lila	40–49	BA	20+	1.5
Rosa	40–49	Master's	4.5	4.5
Violeta	50–59	Master's	13	11
Zinnia	60+	BA	20+	20

Note. Pseudonyms have been assigned to protect participant confidentiality.

Participant Descriptions

Based on Table 4, there are no major comparisons between the participants when analyzed in the aggregate. Age ranges, educational levels, leadership experience, and current role tenure are broad. However, when aggregating for specific characteristics a few notable highlights include:

- Six participants (Azalea, Camelia, Dahlia, Iris, Jasmine, and Lila) have between nine to over 20 years of total leadership experience and have experienced a role transition in the past five years.
- Four participants (Daisy, Jasmine, Rosa, and Violeta) hold masters degrees and have transitioned into their current CEO roles quicker than others with some college or BA degrees.
- Three participants (Dahlia, Lila, and Zinnia) have at least 20 years of total leadership experience, with Lila and Dahlia recently transitioning into new CEO roles within the past three years.
- Three participants (Dahlia, Iris, and Lila) hold bachelor degrees, have between nine to 27 years of total leadership experience, and less than 3.5 years in their current role.
- Two participants (Azalea and Camelia) have some college and between 10 to 15 years of total leadership experience and have been in their current roles for less than four years.

The next section presents brief descriptions of each participant's background and leadership experience. The data were collected during the interview and was selected to describe each participant and contextualize the environment in which interviews were conducted. Additionally, the information offers a brief introduction into each participant's personality based on what they chose to share with me.

Lila

Lila was interviewed in her organization's board room. The backdrop was interesting as we sat at the table and I admired the traditional Mexican embroidered blouse she wore along with Indigenous-looking earrings that framed her face. Her curly hair was pulled back in a

ponytail which allowed me to observe her facial expressions as our conversations triggered experiences that deeply resonated with her. Her appearance was striking against this rigid looking board room, yet inspiring to see her sitting at the head of the table. She specifically referred to herself as Chicana, which was evident as she described her experiences usually through a social justice lens, speaking about women in leadership, injustices against women and people of color, and the importance of supporting people of color at all institutional levels. A year earlier Lila had transitioned from another CEO role she had held for over 20 years at a local nonprofit. Her transition into her current role included taking the helm at a philanthropic organization. Lila was talkative, energetic, and candid. Upon hearing about the purpose of this study she energetically apologized in advance stating, "*Yo tengo mucho witty witty*" (I have a lot to say). The transition from grassroots service to grant funding makes her feel guilty about not being as busy as she used to be, but she understood that her new role allows her to make a focused and economic investment to eradicate issues affecting the broader, local, cultural communities that she used to spend all of her time with.

Camelia

I met Camelia in a small office that appeared to have been converted from an old depot station. The parking lot is dirt paved adjacent to old, inoperable railroad tracks that you can see run through the town. Camelia has worked with her organization for 25 years and became CEO a few years ago. She began working there as a volunteer and continued being promoted up the organization through the years. She appeared to warm up to my questions a few minutes into the interview as she began recollecting her experiences. She shared how her confidence developed over time as she found herself in positions that required her decision-making and leadership. She expressed feelings of imposter syndrome early in her career stemming from not having had a

formal college education, discrimination her parents faced, and the desire they had for their children to acculturate into mainstream American culture. They felt that would lead to better opportunity and less discrimination experienced by their children. Camelia described herself as Latina and exuded a strong and astute presence. She shared challenges she has overcome during her career with the support of mentors she has had in her life.

Zinnia

Zinnia is a self-proclaimed Chicana who I had the privilege to interview one morning in her lovely dining room filled with Latino and Indigenous inspired artwork and family pictures. At almost 70 years of age, she was the oldest participant in this study. She had graciously prepared freshly cut fruit, baked homemade muffins, and café. As she handed me a can of condensed milk she explained that she did not have coffee creamer or Half ‘n Half, and was raised with putting condensed milk into her coffee. Her need to explain her milk choice versus how American culture uses coffee creamer felt apologetic. The use of condensed milk was familiar to my own upbringing and I let her know to not apologize as I prefer the condensed version anyway. A feeling of eagerness to interview Zinnia set in.

She gave me a tour of her living room while she beamed with pride describing accomplishments that her family and children have had. Several times she pointed to a framed picture of her mother which was on the wall behind where I sat in the dining room. She spoke about her mother’s partiality to red lipstick which she likes to wear as well. The red lipstick became symbolic and was further elaborated upon during the interview as she discussed the importance of having a persona as a leader. She described the need for a public persona so that others can take one seriously. She spoke about observing individual style of dress and later explained how that may be a factor for credibility since Latinas must work harder than White

women. We sat in her dining room next to big windows that looked into the front yard on a bright, winter morning. Her home sits at an intersection on a hill as we looked out. Zinnia's warm presence and calming attitude demonstrated assertiveness deriving from her decades of leadership experience. Zinnia founded her nonprofit and has been its leader for at least 20 years.

Jasmine

We sat in her small-sized office overlooking a parking lot adjacent to what appeared to be a trailer park on the other side of the fence. We sat around her desk which cultivated a cozy space allowing us to connect throughout the interview. Jasmine's essence is calming and inviting as she tended to smile throughout the interview. She is a nurse by training and shared a perception about her field in which nurses can be rigid in certain work settings, especially in hospitals; this is a style opposite to the more flexible and organic nature she embodies. She explained the rigidity is not a negative characteristic or stereotype but derives from the expectation that nurses and others in the medical field cannot afford to make mistakes. Her tone and demeanor exuded grace and intelligence. She refers to herself as Hispanic and grew up in a conservative state outside of California. Being married to a White man she shared her experiences of not feeling Latina enough and the need to prove how much of a Latina she is when she is among other Latinas especially since she does not speak Spanish. She admitted:

> So I have to prove that personally, depending on if it's a friend relationship or professionally. So I end up touting. I find myself, I'm like: "Oh, well my organization, we served 85% Hispanic, blah, blah, blah and we are in the barrio blah blah blah." Where I wouldn't do that with somebody else from another.

Having a German married name she feels others question her race and ethnicity. At times, she feels uncomfortable around other Latina women: "It might be just me, my own feeling guilty that I don't feel more Hispanic." Her intersectionality and story are not unique and were shared by other participants in this study as described throughout this chapter. Jasmine's

confidence has grown over time and she was promoted several times over her nine year tenure with her organization. She understands the competitive nature of being a CEO which can be overwhelming for her.

Violeta

Violeta and I met in her office suite located within a bank. There are three rooms in the entire suite. I was able to see into all three rooms at the same time as I had a vantage point where I sat while conducting the interview. Violeta and I sat in the front conference room which is open concept and meets you immediately once you enter the suite. The other two rooms were a small kitchen and back supply room where staff sat and ate their lunch. Although the suite is small its décor was eye catching and culturally symbolic with bright, Latino-inspired artwork. The interview was conducted in the front conference room where Violeta and I sat at 90-degree angles to each other.

She has a soft tone in her voice that required I ask her to speak louder even though we sat next to one another. She is second-generation, U.S.-born, and grew up in a mountainous area outside of California that she referred to as "the boonies." Her parents' first language was Spanish as Violeta detailed:

> They were taught to be acculturated. They were American born and therefore they had to have their children not learn Spanish. So I never learned Spanish. I didn't grow up in the Mexican culture. I didn't grow up with that. And I didn't know certain things were cultural until I came here.

She described her early mid-career experience in the marketing field working in the corporate sector within the male-dominated engineering field. She admitted her no nonsense personality was a good fit in that sector and to having a direct and honest approach which may be off putting and a barrier while working in the nonprofit sector which she perceived as more nurturing, primarily among women. She founded her current nonprofit organization and

described recruiting a team of staff who have more personable communication styles to coach others; this is admittedly a style unlike her own.

Azalea

Azalea was one of the youngest participants, under 40 years of age. We met at her organization housed in a suite off of a downtown street. Once the door opened, a string of bells hanging on the handle rang, grabbing the attention of staff. The suite is quaint with various open spaces that invite communal gatherings. I counted six rooms as I was given a tour. Most walls are painted in vivid purple or pink colors that showed off the artwork collected over the years from the community. The last space that was excitedly shown to me was a room at the back of the suite that was converted into a boutique. The boutique displays wigs, special bras, scarves, jewelry, and other accessories that are provided to clients free of charge who are undergoing or have completed cancer treatment. All boutique items are donated to the organization. As we settled into Azalea's office she pointed to an old printed paper sign that hangs on the wall behind her displaying a quote by Audre Lorde: "Caring for myself is not self-indulgent, it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare." Azalea stated that the quote symbolizes the vision the organization has to bring the services they offer at no cost to their clients and to the community.

Her presence is strong as she repeatedly shared experiences and thoughts through a systems oriented, social justice lens. Both her parents are Chicanos and her father also identifies as half Native American. She became a community organizer as a young teenager attributing her ability to navigate male-dominated politics as a result of having male mentors early in her life. Her career trajectory began as a grassroots community organizer, shifting into politics, then within the healthcare industry. She transitioned as CEO of her nonprofit organization

approximately two years ago. Azalea's background in grassroots organizing and politics are evident in her attitude and behavior. Occasionally, her responses to interview questions intended to reflect her own personal experiences were followed with connections to systems level inequities. She explained she prefers getting involved in system-level issues versus micro-level issues because of the inequity that individuals suffer from inequitable systems. During the interview she commented:

> We are still an organization of stories, of powerful stories of resilience in the face of grave, inhumane injustice...but we are more intentional about doing something to curb what we can only call an injustice that our community faces.

Her organization supports patients, survivors, and families impacted by cancer.

Interestingly, Azalea has feelings of imposter syndrome deriving from typically jumping into new roles and never initially feeling qualified for them. She learns how to navigate her role while she performs it. She shared her vulnerability during the interview in which she admitted to negative self-talk that she is not doing enough, nor seeing quicker results, or not meeting certain standards. But has overcome some of this negative self-talk with the encouragement from her mentors to whom she reaches out.

Rosa

I waited to interview Rosa in a meeting room at a community hall. The hall is part of a Latino community cultural center where she is affiliated, but where she does not work. Rosa has a kind-hearted spirit and a reflective personality. Her current CEO role is also her first ever formal leadership position. Rosa is pensive and commented several times when "interesting" questions were being posed which showed that reflective nature. Her mentor is her former boss. She mentioned several times about her mentor's tendency to share his own story and never giving her the answers she thought she needed to complete her work. The stories and anecdotes

her mentor shared with her during her early career now make sense to her because she is now experiencing them for herself. She identifies as half non-Latina White and half Latina. Her mother being non-Latina White. We discussed the decentralization of Whiteness in reference to codeswitching, and how it is predominately used to describe behaviors of people of color. She stated that codeswitching is performed by non-Latino Whites as well. She inherited a board of directors primarily consisting of non-Latino White individuals and became the first CEO of color for their organization. Rosa believes the board sought a new perspective especially in a county that most people consider progressive. The board's collective celebration that they recruited a person of color for the role was puzzling to her as she commented, "since 50% of the county's population is Latino." Rosa made several connections between her mentoring experiences and leadership as described later in this chapter.

Dahlia

Dahlia has a very large-sized office with a long conference table on one side and her desk on another. The table is used for her monthly board meetings. The wall behind the conference table is brick which depicts the age of the building and her organization dating back to the late 1800s. Although she has over 25 years of leadership experience, she transitioned as a CEO from a smaller nonprofit organization into her current role three years ago. Dahlia wore a classic suit, high heels, and brilliant jewelry portraying a stereotypical business-like demeanor. Her high energy was infectious as we became acquainted throughout the interview.

Her story begins as a second-generation, U.S.-born Latina whose parents taught her core values of respect and kindness to others. She learned to have a strong work ethic that she practiced since her early childhood which resulted in several academic achievements on the debate team. Dahlia spoke about her parents' bilingualism in English and Spanish yet never

teaching their children to speak Spanish. Dahlia and her siblings are the only family members on both sides of the family that do not speak Spanish. "My parents always had said, 'we didn't want you girls and your brother to ever experience any discrimination' that they had experienced," she stated. Her stereotypical perception of members of her ethnic community may be related to her upbringing. She described her surprise of gravitating toward working in the nonprofit sector by describing the strong, loving relationship her parents role modeled. She explained:

> It's interesting that I even ended up in nonprofit work because being probably so naïve because, and I know the statistics in Hispanic families, there is often domestic violence or sexual assault, substance abuse. That was never an instance in our family. I think I was fortunate, lucky, whatever you want to call it to grow up in such a simple, loving, fun family right.

She contextualized her career choice based on her upbringing which has been a positive force for her. I observed tension as she described her leadership in a nonprofit organization providing critical services for one of the community's most vulnerable populations while not having relational experiences to them. I included her words above to demonstrate that Latinas in this study have unique stories and ponder about the cultural complexities they grew up and live in. Even within this sample group, some participants felt insufficiently Latina using cultural stereotypes to describe their personal narratives. Her intersectionality is her compass. Without question, Dahlia's pride in her family and cultural history were evident during the interview. As others, she has utilized her pride as a compass to navigate her work and accepts responsibility of her role as CEO which is to look after the most vulnerable.

Daisy

Daisy is one of the youngest participants in this study. She is extremely energetic and speaks in a fast pace. Admittedly she described herself as hyperactive, "Because as a kid people

were like, 'You are hyperactive. Calm down.'…You question it rather than see it as an asset…I think it's a good thing now [giggles]. Being really passionate about something helps you stay motivated." We met in her office located within a high rise building in a metropolitan city with her office window overlooking a downtown intersection. Her office walls were decorated with artwork with variations of We the People posters. She ate her lunch during our interview since her schedule that day was full. Several folders and paperwork were piled on her desk and counter tops. As the interview took place it was evident that Daisy's work is personal and her commitment is undeniable.

Her organization was founded by two non-Latina White women more than 25 years ago. Daisy is the first CEO since these founders decided to retire. She understands the pressure that comes with being under the age of 40 and taking the helm as the first CEO, and woman of color, hired by the organization's founders. With just five years of total leadership experience, she has been the CEO of her current organization for the past four years.

Iris

One must sign in at the lobby, then take an elevator to travel up to the suite in which I interviewed Iris. The office can be found after following curvy hallways through the suite with branches of hallways that can lead you astray. The hallways are adorned with glass cases containing beautiful cultural artwork. I would have gotten lost if Iris had not met me near the elevator. She is friendly and goal-oriented, sharing a few of her ideas about future projects she is interested in pursuing.

Iris has been in her current CEO role for almost four years. As a Latina leading a Latino-serving organization she admitted to the struggle of reaching a comfortable balance between the expectations of the Latino community and those of the broader community who can assist, to

extend her ability to achieve the goals of the organization. An example she shared pertains to an expectation of speaking fluent Spanish and English in her role. Although she grew up speaking Spanish she stated that she commanded the English language very well and indicated:

> I don't have an accent….Growing up, people would say, well, you don't seem Hispanic or Latina. And so that to them is a compliment, but really, is it? It's like, well, yes I am. Just because I don't have an accent doesn't make me less of a Latina or a better person, whatever it is. So that's where I've been struggling.

Iris explained that her English and Spanish fluencies have been sufficient to perform the duties of her role that may require her to communicate in both languages at speaking engagements. Although she understands the role of the CEO can be greatly external facing and in the public eye, public speaking has taken time for her to adjust to.

I described the upbringing and space that these interviews were conducted in to illustrate the environment that these women work in every day. Glimpses into their background and intersectional identities and experiences are presented as an introduction to meet each participant in this narrative. This group of women have diverse backgrounds that have impacted their perspectives and influenced what they need from mentors. The contexts of their nonprofit organizations are described in the following section which shows how their intersectionality and organizations may be aligned.

Nonprofit Organizational Contexts

The experiences of female executives in nonprofit organizations is overlooked in empirical literature (Branson et al., 2013). Tomkin (2020) explained how the nonprofit industry generally continues to employ non-Latino Whites in organizations intended to serve lower income Black and Brown communities, "proving that it is more important to have gainfully employed White progressives with fulfilling careers, than it is to actually rectify systemic inequalities by putting the right people at the forefront" (p. 4). These observations critically

highlight the systemic barriers that Latina nonprofit CEOs encounter as gendered and ethnically marginalized leaders within the nonprofit sector. This study focused on Latina nonprofit leaders to explore how mentoring influenced their leadership development into this industry that is described as systemically oppressive within the leadership ranks as well.

Participants represented an array of organizations including those located in urban, rural, and coastal areas with 10 to 127-year organizational histories; annual budgets between $356K and $12M; staff counts ranging from three to 130 employees; and services related to education, healthcare, social and community services, advocacy, and training. These profiles illustrate the scope and diversity of responsibility that the participants of this study have. The nonprofit organizational contexts require leaders to possess varied skillsets and lead their organizations differently in response to their environment and stakeholders. The method in which these organizations are led is related to their perspectives and how their mentoring relationships have influenced their leadership self-efficacy. Table 5 summarizes organizational profiles that the participants represent.

Table 5
Participant Nonprofit Organizations

Participant	Geographical Area	Organization History (Years)	Budget	Staff Size (No. of Staff)	Services
Azalea	Urban	17	$356K	4	Community Services
Camelia	Rural	26	$12M	115	Healthcare
Dahlia	Rural	137	$10M	130	Social Services
Daisy	Urban	27	$3.2M	13	Advocacy
Iris	Urban	34	$850K	4	Education/Training
Jasmine	Urban	34	$4.2M	48	Healthcare
Lila	Urban	10	$2.5M	3	Education
Rosa	Coastal	16	$1M	10	Healthcare
Violeta	Urban	13	$757K	17	Social Services
Zinnia	Urban	20	$2M	60	Health and Social Services

Participants described their nonprofits as often addressing service gaps left by larger, institutionalized systems. They support clients and the community-at-large who are unable to be served by unresponsive systems. The nonprofit sector ultimately attempts to fill gaps that other sectors or institutions leave behind. Violeta illustrated that the intent of nonprofits should be to act as a bridge between systems, but ultimately the nonprofits have become *the* system itself. She stated: "If we are trying to be the bridge, but the other side of the bridge isn't developed, then we need to build that side too." This creates dependency by these systems and vulnerable people on the nonprofits that are not necessarily structured or resourced to be the core structure

of support. According to Azalea, the mission of her nonprofit is geared toward promoting equity through a social justice lens:

> I can say that in the two years I've been here that mission still rings true although there has been a lot of evolution I should say, maybe the opposite of that with regard to social inequities impacting the Latino community, particularly at the intersection between race and class, so we see that here every day in the office.

Essentially, as nonprofits provide basic services, they work in tandem on advocacy efforts to promote a more just and equitable distribution of power and wealth. For some participants their organizations integrate additional advocacy efforts on behalf of the communities that they serve, which has assisted them to grow community trust.

Participants discussed the relationship and community trust-building that is at the core of their organizations. Azalea depicted her organization as family and community oriented. She leads a Latino service organization that attracts Latinos as clients to their services. Azalea described how serving the community is not only defined by geographic area, but includes being actionable and accountable to community members in the face of social injustice. Azalea discussed how her organization has evolved from a service orientation to taking on more actionable social justice issues that impact services they provide to, and with, the community:

> We are still an organization of stories, of powerful stories of resilience in the face of grave, inhumane injustice in the healthcare system. What has changed is what we do about it, and evolving from an organization that has always, through the lens of justice, just provided services and opportunities for research in the cancer space for Latino communities, but we are more intentional about doing something to curb what we can only call an injustice that our community faces.

What resonates in Azalea's organization is how it could not function without the endless support of a great number of volunteers from the community who are clients, clients' friends and family members, or those who are committed to the organization's mission. Azalea expressed her gratitude for the community of volunteers by describing that the organization could not

function without them: “What it took to create this beautiful space, partnerships it took to fill this space with inventory, and the volunteer elbow grease that it took because we have no money to create this space—volunteer’s blood, sweat, and tears.” She further described that the organization does not want to have just one interaction with a client who needs services, but desires to build relationships with a community of people. Azalea asserted that they develop community trust and relationships to assist in “plugging people back into a system they’ve lost trust in. We are plugging people back into a system that has mistreated them and we are plugging people back into a system that they need.” Although the organization advocates on a larger scale for its clients, Azalea expressed her pride in the nonprofit’s nimbleness working through each client’s specific needs that are often unique and complex.

Rosa leads a member organization that consists of various nonprofit partners in the county. Her organization supports these partners who are on the ground working in and with community members. She asserted that much of what they do is built on community trust which requires building relationships on a daily basis. The organization works on supporting these partners that offer services based on the community’s needs. She shared an example about supporting partners whose clients require specific services in Spanish or in an Indigenous language. They assist in bridging these clients to those services:

> So whatever it is that they need, they can get it when they need it and that they have a dignified experience. And that the quality is there, the access is there, that they are not denied anything that anyone else in our community would be able to obtain. So that’s kind of the way I think about it is that our partners are all committed to that for everyone in our community.

Azalea and Rosa’s organizational descriptions emphasize the importance that relationship building and community trust play in their organizations. It was evident speaking with them that nonprofit organizations spend a tremendous amount of time and effort cultivating these

relationships while offering needed services. For some organizations, due to limited resources, they choose to form collaborative alliances.

Nonprofits also take a comprehensive and collaborative approach. Dahlia mentioned that nonprofits collaborate with each other to try to meet the needs for a mutual client with highly complex issues that one under-resourced nonprofit can not navigate on its own: "It's all a continuum. It's all an extension that's all connected. These kids have, they've been abused, they have been sexually assaulted, they are involved in trafficking, some become homeless. It's all the issues." This further demonstrates how relationship-forming among organizations is key in the nonprofit sector that cannot make as big of an impact conducting the work on their own. Daisy's advocacy organization represents Latino and undocumented communities in a large metropolitan area. It often translates the needs of the community to policy makers, and conversely, educates the community about existing and new policies that impact them. She indicated that nonprofits must function with predetermined bad policies that are not designed to improve the lives of the most vulnerable. She added that they do the heavy lifting that is also further burdened with inexorable amounts of paperwork to meet legislative and funding requirements.

The importance of the nonprofit was described by participants as serving the community in different ways. Iris believes that nonprofit organizations offer holistic approaches to meeting community need. Not only are they places that serve others, but they also mentor them. Iris discussed an annual Latina conference her organization hosts with approximately 500 women in attendance. Surveys are conducted on the last day as she stated:

> The feedback was one day is not enough. I'm a Latina professional. I want more resources, more training, more leadership development. Leadership development is always the top of what they want in every survey that we do. And so we are like okay, let's figure out how to help them.

Her organization has pivoted to support its community as best as they can. Iris' organization is an example of how nonprofits continually seek to respond to the community. Violeta described the nonprofit context as entities that meet the community's needs in a culturally appropriate way. In fact, the community guides the direction of the nonprofit while the organization must respond to the community. Jasmine described nonprofits as economic developers that train entry level staff who eventually may resign for better opportunities and higher salaries. However, she further stated that the family atmosphere, flexibility, organic and less rigid nature appeals to many job seekers. That is what appealed to Jasmine when she first began working for her organization. Daisy confidently stated: "This work in nonprofit, this mission oriented work, it's personal.…No, these are my family. I'm fighting for my family. There is no separating it which makes it kind of exhausting, but also keeps you going." Ultimately, community involvement is essential to the nonprofit organization. Being a nonprofit CEO brings tremendous responsibility to uphold values while supporting the mission of the organization. With the multitude of challenges, expectations, and limited resources, one wonders what makes the nonprofit sector appealing to potential leaders.

Branson et al. (2013) believed that many women seek leadership positions in the non-profit sector as a form of establishing a career in leadership; however, it tends to pay lower salaries. Although participants were not asked about their salaries, the perception of themselves as good leaders impacted their readiness to ask for adequate compensation that they felt they deserved. For example, Camelia has worked in her organization for more than 25 years beginning as a volunteer. She has fulfilled numerous positions and has been promoted several times resulting in her knowledge of the organization and how to best operate it. She described the perceptions she held of herself sometimes feeling as an imposter-because she does not

possess a college degree. Her mentor encouraged and reminded her of the experience she holds for the CEO position. Recently, she shared her experience of being in the CEO position for a few years and had been unfairly compensated:

> That had been one of the things that I think I had always been fighting with because I felt that I was always underpaid and undervalued. I finally had to fight for myself last year at the time of my evaluation. I made them delay it by another month because I was negotiating hard back on what my salary was…I got $1,000 more than I asked for, but I had to push and I'm still, according to the salary surveys, on the low end. I'm still on the low end, but I had never advocated for myself in the way that I did last year. That was a breakthrough for me.

Iris clearly spoke about the tendency that women have to minimize their abilities and how mentors have encouraged her to persist:

> Yeah. I need that push. And some of the…Like would come back and I would still need that push. It's like, okay, this sounds really great, but I'm really not qualified. And they are like, "Yes, you are. Go for it. You'll learn." It's like that. Again, women, we don't think that….Just because that job description, we don't have experience in every little bit of it, we shy away whereas men just go for it.

Similar to issues of nonprofit compensation, Azalea indicated her role as CEO is part-time. The only full-time staff person is a community health navigator who educates the community and helps connect them to additional resources. Azalea's compensation is due to limited funding:

> I'm at 60% now. My goal is to…I was at 50% two years ago. My goal is to get to 100% funding. Because [if] we want to be this nimble we need flexible funding and that's harder to come by.

She is a single mother of a toddler but dedicated to the mission of her organization. For that reason she was drawn to her organization regardless of her current role being part-time.

Branson et al. (2013) offered additional reasons that attract women to nonprofit leadership roles. They provide a stereotypical, gender normative perspective stating that nonprofit organizations promote a caring and nurturing environment that is usually associated

with women. Jasmine specifically mentioned the highly structured hospital settings that she had worked in were no longer appealing to her. The flexibility found in the nonprofit sector attracted her to transition to her nonprofit. Contrary to Jasmine, Iris believes the stereotype of the nonprofit's nurturing environment makes her role as an under-represented woman of color CEO tiring and intense. She stated there is an assumption that she must represent everyone: "It's an interesting situation to be Latina as a leader, especially for a Latina organization. There are a lot of expectations from me to be well versed for all Latinos and I should know." Participants described the trade off to nonprofit leadership requiring a commitment to serve everyone, and often working very long days and on weekends. The description of the nonprofit was important to this study to describe how mentor relationships assisted participants in navigating their leadership development as female, nonprofit CEOs of color in these type of organizations.

Description of the General Findings

The diverse experiences shared by these 10 women provided context into how their upbringings have influenced their perceptions of the world and of themselves. I included brief descriptions of each participant to illustrate the similarities and differences experienced by each individual. Their stories demonstrate unique spaces and how they shaped interactions with their mentors and pursued leadership. These women vividly recollect experiences and have drawn on them as a source of purpose that have become assets in forming their individual perspectives. Hill et al. (2015) found that researchers must be cautious to not group minorities into collective classes as such broadness hides the intricate relationships underlying the effects of different minority statuses. Although women and ethnically diverse minorities have similarities, findings suggest this is not always the case (Hill et al., 2015) and I was cognizant of that. This study supports Hill et al.'s (2015) assertion that the participants have significant differences among

them. Their stories are important, and as much as they are unique to each individual, there are threads of similarity among them as well. The findings represent participants' mentoring experiences and how they are influenced by their intersectionality. The mentor preferences they revealed and type of guidance they sought are aligned with vivid memories and what they learned to value as leaders. Although their intersectionality is a source of strength, their mentoring experiences have expanded the lens in which they perceive themselves and their leadership.

Obtaining CEO Roles With Community Cultural Wealth

Participants obtained their current CEO roles in varied and common ways via their mentors' social capital and through community networks. Lila and Dahlia were recruited by their mentors. They articulated experiences in which their mentors encouraged them to apply for the CEO role when they had not been aware that the vacancies existed. Dahlia's mentor had convened a group of reputable women from the community who told her: "'We are going to prep you for an interview. What you need to do, what you need to know.' And I was scared out of my wits to sit amongst these women who I had so much admiration for." Even though they were qualified for the position, their mentors assisted in reducing feelings of imposter syndrome (Clance & Imes, 1978) as they went through the interview process. In both instances, their mentors convened private meetings with other prominent women in the community and practiced posing interview questions as the participant responded. These women suggested ways to navigate potential questions and responses. Their examples illustrate the importance of social capital and mentor networks that cultivated opportunities for the participants' career advancement. They also demonstrate the utilization of navigational capital where community

cultural wealth helped to convene groups of well-respected community leaders who were also women of color acting as sponsors.

Camelia, Jasmine, and Iris worked their way up into their CEO roles and had several roles in the organization they were leading at the time of this study. The aspirational capital contributed to their learning of various roles within the organization, which led to obtaining their CEO position. Their mentors were aware of their aspirations and supported their growth. Camelia and Iris began as volunteers in their organizations which allowed them to learn about their organizations from a different vantage point other than as an employee. Camelia started as a volunteer Spanish translator when the organization was small. She became a receptionist, biller, office manager, clinic manager, operations director, and now CEO. Camelia has worked for her organization for 25 years. "My leadership role grew with the clinic growing…I started working there when I was 21 years old. I didn't know shit. I mean, I only knew what I knew," she shared. As a result of the organization being resource-limited, Camelia learned on the job and performed the work that needed to be completed. Others would ask her for advice and she received promotions as a result of her leadership. Jasmine began her tenure with her organization as a nurse, clinic manager, director, and then CEO. Iris has been with her organization for 25 years; as a volunteer and board member for 13 years, then as a staff member for 12 years.

Azalea and Daisy are the first CEOs hired since the organization's founders decided to retire. Azalea spoke about the challenge of succeeding the founding CEO who is a high profile individual in the community. One of her mentors has been helpful with her establishing herself as the CEO away from the shadows of the former CEO. That mentor happens to be one of her current board members and a Latina nonprofit CEO for another organization. This mentoring

relationship has been significant for Azalea. Daisy described how she was the first CEO hired after the two founding CEOs, both White women, retired. She expressed feelings of inadequacy, questioning whether she made the right decision and whether she could measure up to their legacy. Azalea and Daisy's stories were similar as they are both under the age of 40 and are in a CEO position for the first time. Their mentors were aware of their developmental needs as leaders and provided substantial navigational and social capital that has been critical in their careers. Azalea and Daisy both spoke about having an ability to contact their mentors to receive the encouragement that they need at any time.

Mentors were sources of motivation for other participants as well. Zinnia and Violeta are founders of their organizations. Zinnia created her nonprofit more than 20 years ago. Her organization trains local *promotoras* (health workers) based on role modeling that her mother demonstrated, who was a community health worker herself. Zinnia stated:

> And then what really moved it for me was it was such a rest on my mom and so my mom was the first *promotora* I knew. And when I understood that what I wanted was an environment like hers where she would bring information to the community. She would always share. She wasn't making decisions for folks, but it was really egalitarian and it was supportive.

Violeta founded her organization after briefly assisting a local group on a project. She was urged by a local community leader to formally organize the group into a nonprofit. This community leader eventually became Violeta's mentor. Violeta did not have prior nonprofit experience and was hesitant to create the organization but trusted her mentor to guide her through the community building process.

Rosa's first ever formal leadership role happens to be as CEO of her organization, bypassing typical mid-management trajectories. Although Rosa was not necessarily searching for a CEO position, the support she had from her mentor gave her inspiration to pursue it. She

described how her mentor supported her whole person based on the support he provided with life choices she had made outside of work, such as moving and purchasing a home in another county away from where they worked:

> He was like, "I get it. I get what you are doing. I want to support you. I get you need to work one day from home and you wanted to commute." And then he got it when I got another job because I wanted to be closer to the baby and the family. There was this support of the whole person.

The receiving of mentor and community support, while leveraging surrounding cultural wealth, has been a key source of encouragement for these women and their leadership development.

These experiences are described further in the next section. Based on participant experiences, five themes emerged from the in-person interviews; 1) evolution of mentoring relationship type, 2) constellation of mentors are integral to leadership growth, 3) support expressions of authenticity and LLD, 4) mentor-protégé match suitability acts as a sphere of influence, and 5) peer mentoring promotes a sense of openness and vulnerability.

Research Question 1 asked: What are the characteristics of quality mentoring relationships for Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California? Empirical phenomenological research specifically focused on the lived experience of mentoring among Latina nonprofit CEOs in California is, from my knowledge, nonexistent. As a result of this gap in scholarship I sought to explore the lived experiences of the participants as protégés. I collected data and produced findings that could be utilized to continue to explore mentoring phenomena among this and similar groups. Research Question 1 produced two significant themes that are aligned with existing literature, but that has not focused on Latinas.

Theme 1: Evolution of Mentoring Relationship Type

Kram (1985) described functions of mentoring that occur formally or informally, and may be categorized as career or psychosocial functioning. Her work informed the analysis of

Theme 1. In this study, formal mentoring referred to the environment, such as in workplace or academic settings in which a supervisor or advisor was considered a mentor. It also referred to more structured mentoring approaches or programs internal or external to the workplace. Informal mentoring can be found internally or externally to the workplace or academic setting as well, including in the community or family. It refers to less structured, casual mentoring encounters. However, it is not uncommon to have informal advising in the workplace or formal mentorship in the community. Mentoring phenomena are unique to every individual and is what makes this study significant.

Formal Versus Informal

For most participants quality mentoring relationships began formally in the workplace or educational environments many years prior to obtaining their current CEO roles. Although these significant relationships began formally, participants did not recall having a formal conversation that actually established the mentoring relationship. For the majority of women in this study, their mentors began as direct supervisors or academic advisors. It was assumed that these persons could provide some level of guidance to them. Over time, formal mentoring relationships became more informal after participants had established good rapport and mutual trust with their supervisors or advisors. Once that level in the relationship was attained, they also began feeling more comfortable discussing personal matters with their mentors.

Informal mentoring usually occurred in the family, community, and with supervisors or advisors with whom they had long-term mentoring relationships. Lila, Camelia, Zinnia, Jasmine, Azalea, and Dahlia also described family members as sources of mentoring who provided psychosocial support regarding childrearing, demonstrating hard work ethics, helping to establish

informal goals, role modeling a strong will and determination, and respect for others. Dahlia shared the ways in which her father encouraged his children:

> My dad was a farm labor contractor, so we saw through his really strong, hard work ethic, we learned the value of just being respectful and kind to people being generous. I say that I always think of him as a mentor because all throughout my childhood, and even when I went to college, and I was the first to go to college, my dad was... They always encouraged us to do things.

Zinnia and Camelia both described their mothers as strong women who they observed and learned from, especially about how to work with and in the community and to stand up for yourself. Camelia shared her parents' experience as "second class citizens" that Camelia leans on during challenging times. She expressed:

> Yeah, so obviously I just have to say my mom was also my mentor, but I can't describe her into two sentences, but she has always been supportive of me in life. Yeah, so that's complicated because my parents both grew up speaking Spanish as their primary language and coming from Northern New Mexico and from Northern Arizona and consciously decided not to teach us Spanish because they were discriminated against. It was a second class language. They were second class citizens. Both of them had darker skin tones than I do. There was just this discrimination that came along with their living in whatever level of poverty they lived in at different times of their childhood and lives.

As the researcher, I found that family and community mentors usually shared stories about their own experiences that acted as *consejos* (advice) to the protégé. Camelia's story was further explained in connection to her own leadership development. She explained that her mother was discriminated against throughout her working career in the form of always being underpaid and undervalued for her work, which she associates with her mother's ethnicity and appearance. Through these stories and her mother's advisement, Camelia has become more confident over the years to ask for pay equity even in her current CEO role.

Although protégés described family members as mentors, not all family members were described in detail. At times, family members were briefly mentioned. The majority of lived experiences with mentoring and leadership development were described outside of family; with

former or current supervisors, advisors, and peers. Ultimately, informal and psychosocial support was the preferred type of mentoring for all participants even if mentors were their supervisors or advisors.

Career Versus Psychosocial

Participant experiences with mentoring were categorized into career advice or psychosocial support as categorized by Kram (1985). Table 6 shows exact participant responses that became *in vivo* codes taken directly from all transcripts. In many instances, several participants recounted similar stories which strengthened the codes I subsequently developed.

Table 6
Types of Mentoring Support

Subcategory 1: Career Advice	Subcategory 2: Psychosocial Support
Code: Apply for the CEO job	Code: Confidence building
Code: Informal goal setting	Code: Helping to see the bigger picture
Code: Invited to meetings/networks	Code: CEO skill development
Code: Salary negotiation	Code: Professionalism
Code: Job transition	Code: Reinvention of leadership identity

These codes indicate the type of career advice and psychosocial mentoring support received. Participants received career advice, such as applying to their CEO jobs, helping to develop informal goals, receiving invitations to meetings and into social networks, coaching on salary negotiation, and supporting job transitions. Career advice in this study was mapped to Kram's (1985) career functions; sponsorship, exposure and visibility socializing force, coaching, and challenging assignments. Table 7 below summarizes career advice in this study.

Challenging assignments signified the mentor giving a protégé a project for which the protégé may not have felt prepared or fully confident in leading. For example, Jasmine's mentor was her boss who would give her challenging assignments. One project outside of her comfort zone and basic knowledge had a critical funding deadline. Jasmine lacked confidence to complete the project since she did not initially have the content expertise. Her mentor guided her through the assignment until it was successfully completed. Although it was a challenging assignment, her mentor had the confidence in her when Jasmine did not have it for herself.

Mentors protected participants in situations where protégés felt their authenticity was being questioned or infringed upon. In multiple instances, participants discussed being told by others to modify their appearance to look more professional. Lila spoke extensively about the comments she received from other professionals suggesting that she wax off her mustache and sideburns. A physical characteristic that she had never felt conscious about prior to these comments being made. Camelia was told her nose ring was unprofessional and that she should remove it so that others could take her seriously. Details to these stories are described in Theme 3. Mentors reassured these participants to be themselves and not to change their appearance. There were no disclosures in which their mentors protected them from any specific person as Kram (1985) discussed is common in mentoring relationships.

I found that functional roles can overlap and may occur simultaneously. Table 7 displays actual participant experiences aligned with Kram's (1885) functional roles of mentors. Career function was predominately expressed as exposure and visibility socializing forces and coaching; with sponsorship and challenging assignments as secondary. A more robust presentation of these experiences are included throughout this chapter.

Table 7
Roles of Mentors

Career Functional Roles	Description
Sponsorship	Occurred formally related to work and career; Helped build the protégé's reputation when invited to meetings; Obtained CEO job opportunities; and was essential for protégé's next leadership role.
Exposure and Visibility Socializing Force	Prepared protégés for CEO job interviews and positions requiring greater responsibility and authority; Introduced the protégé to others as a worthwhile candidate for state commissions, jobs, and career networks.
Coaching	Recommended strategies to the protégé for job interviews and volunteer opportunities, and staff supervision; Protégé accessed information about working with the community and navigating new CEO transition.
Protection	The mentor protected the protégé from negative comments and allegations pertaining to physical appearance, claims of nepotism, and authentic personality traits; Intervened when protégé was inexperienced to achieve satisfactory outcomes among staff and with educational goals.
Challenging Assignments	Prepared the protégé by assigning challenging projects that ultimately increased their ability to lead and benefit the workplace, and requested the protégé to lead meetings.
Psychosocial Functional Roles	**Description**
Role modeling	Was the most frequently reported psychosocial function related to wellness and networking behaviors; Protégés observed how mentors communicated and interacted with colleagues at events and in the community; Protégés did not broach personal or family challenges with male mentors.
Acceptance and Confirmation	Provided nurturance to protégés during times they felt their authenticity was being questioned; cultivated spaces for protégés to be vulnerable and themselves; and peer mentors demonstrated this function the most.
Counseling	Lessened anxiety, fear, and ambivalence as a new CEO or new CEO in a new organization; physical appearance; and leadership ability.
Friendships	Found more among peer mentors, social interactions with enjoyable exchanges for personal and professional experiences are shared in informal spaces.

Note. Participant experiences were mapped to mentor functions in Kram (1985).

Psychosocial support included confidence building, assisting participants to see the bigger picture, providing CEO skill development, advice about professionalism, and support in reinventing their leadership identity. Lila discussed her surprise when she learned her staff desired her to be a more assertive and a less egalitarian leader. Taken aback, and after working with her mentor, she accepted that she needed to establish a stronger leader identity as she asserted:

> I mean it wasn't like where I made an announcement but I just started shifting gears. And then in other places where it mattered, through my mentorship and that piece of authenticity, I was like: "No this part continues forward in this way. I'm sorry that you were not clear about my direction so now let me make it crystal clear. We are going in this direction and here are the reasons why."

Psychosocial support was acknowledged in the form of role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, and counseling, with friendships secondary. Role modeling primarily was shown through promotion of self-care and wellness. For these Latina leaders, their psychosocial supportive experiences have been mapped to Kram's (1985) psychosocial functional roles (see Table 7). Mentors displayed positive role modeling behavior associated with encouraging self-care, reminding protégés of their self-worth, and advising protégés to find balance with all their priorities and not feel they must take on everyone's issues. Rosa shared her reflection about her mentor's role modeling to find balance: "And it was kind of like, okay, you want to do all this stuff professionally, have you forsaken other aspects of your development that are just as important?" She reflected on her mentor's psychosocial support when she was considering to accept her nonprofit CEO role:

> Because I think in our day and age there is a little bit of like an achievement aspiration. I think, and maybe this is true of people color, or leaders of color too, is that like we figured out the school game, but yet we've got to figure out the capital investment game, we've got to figure out how do you create your own generational wealth game, and especially in nonprofits because we are not taking home pensions. So he was a really

> great mentor in that way. And maybe I'm getting a little off topic, but that's how it…it was sort of…what was beneficial was he supported us or supported me mentally.

Participants reflected upon these behaviors and how Latina/o culture and values in general expect Latinas to take on multiple responsibilities. For the participants, they are under an insurmountable amount of pressure to lead their organizations, be accountable to their communities, and be present in their families. Daisy described fear of the glass cliff when she initially transitioned into her current CEO role. She was fearful of not living up to standards that had been established by the prior founding directors. Mentors helped protégés navigate these pressures by advising them to take breaks, care for themselves, and understand they are doing their best.

Psychosocial support became more pronounced as mentoring relationships developed over time. As relationships gained longevity, the level of comfort and mutual trust increased. Experiences revealed that participants received career and psychosocial support in all functional areas categorized by Kram (1985). Although peer mentors provided the most acceptance and confirmation, few participants actually described having peer mentors. However, it was peer mentorship that the majority of participants indicated they desired even today. This is fully described in Theme 5 below.

Informal and Psychosocial

Participants' mentoring relationships for leadership development predominately began formally with supervisors or academic advisors in the form of career advisement. For the participants, LLD predominately originated in formal spaces, such as on the job, volunteering in the community, and in structured leadership programs. However, overwhelmingly, they preferred informal mentoring relationships that provide psychosocial support as they developed their individual leadership identity. Informal, psychosocial mentoring was organic and

meaningful. In fact, mentoring relationships that could not transition to an informal type were considered transactional and not vividly recalled. For these women, the evolution of mentoring type and support to an informal, psychosocial relationship was required to be considered significant and beneficial. Just as the type of mentoring relationship is important, the characteristics of the mentor and relationship were also critical to successful interactions for the participants.

Theme 2: Constellation of Mentors Integral to Leadership Growth

According to participants, one mentor type or individual is insufficient. In retrospect, participants recommended developing a mentor constellation that will expose one to diverse cultural backgrounds, intersectionalities, career expertise, and perspectives. They feel that exposure to diversity makes them develop into a better leader because constellations increase their capacity to work with different personalities and needs. Table 8 summarizes their mentors' characteristics. Participants may have had one or several mentors from these subcategories.

Table 8
Mentor Characteristics

Subcategory 1: Race/Ethnicity	Subcategory 2: Gender	*Subcategory 3: Title/Role*
Code: White	Code: Female	Code: Boss/Supervisor
Code: Latina	Code: Male	Code: Academic Advisor
Code: Black		Code: Family
Code: Asian		Code: Peers

Mentor Characteristics

In this study, the protégé is the reference point in the constellation with mentors networked to the protégé. Mentor configurations may reveal patterns of relationships to the protégé or among themselves if they are acquaintances. Participants thoroughly described their most significant mentor(s) throughout this study. Eight of the 10 participants described more than one mentor. This demonstrates that they had needs that one individual could not completely satisfy, needs evolved, relationships dwindled, etcetera. During data analysis, I considered the most significant mentor(s) to be the individual(s) that the participant identified and described throughout the interview or explicitly indicated were meaningful to them.

The majority of participants—Lila, Camelia, Jasmine, Violeta, Dahlia, and Iris—reported having White women and/or Latina mentors. Non-Latina White women and Latinas were the most discussed mentors by this sample group. Latina racial backgrounds were not examined in this study. When counted, the number of White women and Latina mentors was equal. Non-Latina, White female mentors were met in formal contexts and provided career advisement, while relationships with Latina mentors tended to be informal, familial, peer oriented, or were with reputable and experienced community leaders. This finding demonstrates an alignment with and value of community cultural wealth in which participants received support and guidance from Latinas found in their various communities and social networks. Latina mentors also included mothers and sisters who provided an informal level of mentorship in the home environment that was also associated with child rearing advisement. Men also were meaningful mentors for a few participants.

For Azalea, she described her father and a former supervisor as the first two mentors in her life. Her father of mixed heritage—Latino and Native American—was the first person she

clearly described as a mentor. She described his impact teaching her the softer skills about leadership: "My father [was] impactful just on helping me build the kind of person I am and my principles, and it's where I get my value system from." She spoke about him akin to a compass, navigating her decisions based on her value system, that he encouraged. Her second mentor was also a Latino man and was an elected official in the community. He was her work supervisor for six years. He leveraged his navigational capital to teach her about the importance of maintaining one's ethics in the local political landscape. She reflected on her first two mentors both being male and described how her two male mentors became role models, showing her how to navigate male-dominated spaces. She indicated that her male mentors were influential on her because she learned about relationships with men, not in the romantic sense, but as a Latina in leadership, and in relation to proximity to men in leadership and how she formed her approach to interacting with men. She shared:

> I've been involved in the community and in positions of leadership since I was a teenager. I've had some terrible interactions with men, yucky terrible interactions with men since I was 17 years old, big, important, powerful men. But because I had such strong male mentorship from my father and from this very powerful person at the time, me being able to navigate that world was so much easier.

Zinnia's mentors continue to be a group of Black women with whom she formed relationships as a young leader in her workplace. They worked in the state's correctional system that continues to be predominately White male dominated. She naturally gravitated to these women:

> I worked for the department of corrections during my twenties. I was a correctional officer and correctional lieutenant and parole agent. Who I was in my twenties was like a firecracker, just in there. And you know, very...I was a Chicana. It was during the 70s and I owned who that was and during that time. So it made it a little caustic to be in corrections when you were a former brown, UMAS, MEChA Brown Beret you know, and then you are working in an institution like that. It was my first job. I promoted very quickly in an era when we were the first women of, women in corrections.

At the time, Zinnia was the first Latina in her peer group there. Mentor relationships with her mentors was organic. Decades after meeting her mentors, Zinnia continues to reunite with them annually in their hometowns outside of California demonstrating how quality and significant mentor relationships have the potential for longevity throughout the years.

Rosa's mentor is a former supervisor and an Asian man over the age of 60. His experience in philanthropy and healthcare leadership was of interest to Rosa. She described how they began working together. Their organization had a major program to implement that they both were working on. Rosa's mentoring relationship still exists after meeting him many years ago: "I think he was very inclined for mentorship. Rather than let's say, dictating how he thought the program should go, he was more of a mentor, guide, of like asking questions and telling sort of parables." She continued to explain that his parables were similar to stories she could relate to that served as food for thought. She eventually appreciated his mentoring style, which has made the difference for her between having a manager and engaging with a mentor. He continues to serve as her mentor after she obtained her current CEO role. Their mentoring relationship continues even though they live in different counties. She indicated his dedication and history of social justice work makes him fully qualified to be her mentor and discuss pertinent issues affecting her as a leader of color.

Lila and Daisy had the most diverse mentor network with White women, White men, Latina/o women, and Black women. Their experiences were more varied and expansive of the sample group because of their diverse mentor constellations. As researcher, I noticed they were the most outgoing, energetic, and talkative participants in this study. Their personalities may have drawn this diverse mentor network to them, thus, creating the largest mentor constellations.

Few non-Latino White men were described as mentors. Non-Latino White men were all formal mentors as supervisors or academic advisors. This finding is unsurprising as many mentoring relationships began in formal settings where those in leadership positions tend to be non-Latina/o White. Additionally, informal male mentors who were briefly mentioned were family members (father, brother, husband).

These data indicate that the Latina nonprofit CEOs in this study have had diverse mentor constellations. Mentor constellations were integral to leadership growth and exposed participants to varying perspectives and different lenses in which to view the world. Iris mentioned: "It's also a balancing. When you're applying for jobs, you don't want to have five Latinas as your references [giggles]. You want to have a man and have different backgrounds, different colors, and careers." Although most described non-Latina White women or Latinas as mentors, analyzing their entire constellation as a group illustrated a diversity of race and ethnicities, gender, and mentor titles/roles. This sample group's non-monolithic and intersectional social identities have been shaped by a multitude of people and events, promoting mentor constellations that reflect the diversity of their intersectional identities and experiences as clearly described by participants.

Short- and Long-Term Mentors

Short-term mentoring usually occurred in formal contexts. As indicated earlier, formal mentoring relationships typically did not have longevity if they did not transition to a more informal type. Jasmine indicated that individuals may enter your life for a particular reason then a natural separation occurs. Although short-term mentors were beneficial and served a specific purpose, they did not have the longevity seen in longer term informal mentoring relationships.

In Dahlia's and Iris's experience, they recollected losing contact with a short-term mentor who eventually returned into her lives several years later. Iris stated:

> I lost track of her like. I moved on to another job after the television station, but then I came back to her a few years ago and she still remembered my eagerness back then. So we started to connect again and now she has been really instrumental with this job here. She helped me create an advisory council of non-Latinos that should believe in our mission to help us do fundraising and things like that.

These short-term mentors transitioned into long-term mentors after establishing informal relationships during this return. Participants explained how long-term mentorship can also lose its original intensity and develop into a friendship over time as the connection remains intact.

Themes 1 and 2 describe the characteristics of mentors that were significant for the participants. These characteristics provide a foundational understanding of who and how quality mentoring relationships occurred and evolved. These findings describe an evolution that took place for the mentoring relationship type that was initially established, and their preference which includes a mentor constellation. The characteristics of these relationships were vividly shared, indicating that they had a lasting impression on the participants. Although participants described non-monolithic and intersectional experiences, there were similarities in the salient characteristics that they identified. For these Latina nonprofit CEOs, mentoring influenced their sense of self-efficacy and leadership development in positive ways as described in Themes 3 to 5 below.

Research Question 2 asked: How have quality mentoring relationships influenced Latina leaders' sense of self-efficacy and leadership development? The opportunity to be involved in a quality mentoring relationship helped build confidence and expose participants to a diversity of perspectives. The following three thematic findings describe how mentoring influenced participants' self-efficacy and leadership development. They described experiences in which

mentors supported their expressions of authenticity and LLD and expressed the importance of match suitability and fit as a sphere of influence. Lastly, participants explained their current need to continue to evolve as Latina CEOs with peer mentorship that promotes a sense of openness and vulnerability.

Theme 3: Support Expressions of Authenticity and LLD

Participants articulated how mentors assisted them in understanding or being comfortable with their authenticity. In this study, authenticity was described by the participants themselves. Generally, it was described as feeling comfortable with oneself as a leader and proud of one's identity, attitudes, and behavior. The related interview question asked: "Describe how your mentor or the mentoring relationship has influenced your ability to navigate your own authenticity as a leader." Although the question created a targeted space to ponder and describe their authentic leadership, participants alluded to it throughout the entire interview. More detailed experiences are discussed with each sub-theme below. For some participants they had not previously considered how mentors had supported their authenticity and appreciated being asked this question. I found that mentors assisted participants in responding to environmental pressures and provided perspective to factors impacting authenticity. Table 9 displays specific responses.

Table 9
Authenticity and LLD

Subcategory 1: Environmental Pressure	Subcategory 2: Executive Perspective
Code: Women criticized, work harder	Code: Americanized upbringing
Code: Physical appearance generally questioned	Code: Constellation is needed for perspective, help to see blind spots
Code: Environment determines who/what you need as a leader	Code: Mentors give perspective when authenticity is questioned

Environmental Pressure

Stories were overwhelmingly told about how mentors helped participants overcome situations where they felt uncomfortable or had been criticized by others for being themselves. These criticisms continued to occur even as they held key leadership positions. The degree to which this influenced LLD varied, but all participants received affirmation from mentors to be themselves. An example of needing protection against environmental criticism was the extent that participants' physical appearance was pointed out as needing to change. Lila shared criticism she received from individuals who told her to change her appearance:

> "I don't think you're dressing professionally enough" or, you know how I looked to the degree of like I have a mustache. I've never gotten rid of it and a lot of, you know comments about, "Well you know you can groom yourself you know…" "Your sideburns are little long, and your mustache you might wanna like," from women. "You might wanna wax that…" So early on I got messages that I was poor. That I looked poor I guess, and I was hairy…I could tell when I lost a lot of weight I raised more money….Anyways all that to say that sometimes you need a mentor…and that person can validate you and say *estan locos* [they are crazy]. You keep it moving because part of who you are is everything that you bring to the table.

Lila has a strong and genuine personality. She speaks directly and candidly. Her ability to remain positive was evident but those experiences clearly bothered her. Her mentor urged her to be herself and not listen to others' misplaced comments.

Azalea had similar experiences where she was told her hair was too long and her heels were too high, when she claimed they were not. She strongly shared her stance about the criticism she received based on her appearance:

> So perspective is what I got from these mentors, perspective. Who is telling you this information? Some people are giving you valid information. The criticism may be a good one. Maybe what you are wearing is really hindering what you want, but the path I have chosen, means I make the decision to continue as myself anyway. That's not the path for everybody. Some people want to have positions where that appearance really does matter and they have to code-switch in that way to get ahead and that's the greater good for them, I'm not saying they shouldn't do that. That's the path they've chosen, the path that I have chosen for myself, is a different path. Where I don't want to do that, I would just assume not have the position than have to compromise that. That's my take and it is a harsh take. That's not the take for everybody.

Camelia spoke about feeling judged when she decided to get her nose pierced:

> Well, one of the examples of the mother figure thing is when I turned 40 I decided to pierce my nose. And so I got my nose pierced for my 40th birthday and she [boss] was pissed. I mean, that's the kind of weird mom vibe that came into it.

Her boss made comments after she returned to work wearing it.

Daisy's outgoing personality was disparaged when a community member pulled her aside and told her she smiled too much. When Daisy questioned whether she should stop smiling and take on a sterner attitude, her mentor defended her and uplifted her upbeat nature and advised her to never change her personality for anyone:

> I actually told [mentor] about that and she was like, "No." She was like, "No, don't say that." She goes, "You have far more experience and expertise behind that smile. Like let people think what they want to think." That does like two-fold. My mentor affirmed that that's my authentic self. This is me. I'm not smiling to make you happy. It's me being happy.

During the 1970s, Zinnia recalled taking on leadership roles beginning in her twenties working with the state department of corrections that has historically been a male-dominated field. She explained always having a fondness for wearing red lipstick and kept her hair long and voluminous. The wearing of red lipstick is symbolic to her because her mother always wore it. Although she feels her appearance did not impair her ability to take on leadership roles, years later she wished she was told she did not have "to do all that" which meant she could have toned it down. She described blowing out her long hair, wearing bright red lipstick, and walking in high heels into meetings:

> But I wish somebody would have just said you don't need to do all that…Obviously, that was me, but I didn't need to do all that. That was me because I was smart and articulate. But that was me. I wish somebody who would have just said tone it down. You don't need all that.

Years later when she met her husband who she described as an informal mentor with a counselor background, she felt comfortable to tone her appearance down. She felt more comfortable to be herself and continue being the great leader that she is. She feels it is important for leaders to have a strong public persona explaining that it is okay to look presentable and take pride in how you look, but that its important to be comfortable doing so. For all of these women, their mentors reminded them to dismiss negative attitudes and to be themselves.

As discussed earlier, Lila's perception of her authentic leadership shifted after receiving advice from a peer mentor about her leadership approach. She believed that leading in an egalitarian manner gave opportunities for staff to feel valued, take initiative, and occasionally lead meetings by making presentations directly to funders. She assumed staff wanted to be part of a collective until a peer mentor informed her that collectivism was what they wanted in public, but that they wanted her to sit at the head of the table in the room and command attention as their leader within the organization. She described her mentors helping her reframe her leadership

perspective from an egalitarian mindset to a more assertive leadership style. She began sitting at the head of the table and recalled thinking to herself, "Okay y'all want Manuel Noriega, I'm going to give it to you…Alright, days of Gandhi are over [giggling]." Lila described how her mentors pushed her to reflect on her own ego because she thought it was egotistical to assume the lead. When she realized she was not taking the lead that her staff needed, she began to shift her thinking about how she could be a better leader. Jones (2016) wrote about how intersectional identity and authentic leadership coincide, asserting how growing awareness of one's self, different roles, and responsibilities, influences how one constructs their identity over time. Lila recalled her thought process when she realized staff did not want her to be egalitarian: "Okay *pues que la chingada* (well what the fuck)…I shifted and I stepped into what now is also natural to me, a different approach." She has taken a more assertive leadership approach and she is comfortable with it. She was holding her leadership style back and assumed an approach she thought her staff wanted. Lila was able to discern when authentic leadership matters through her mentors' guidance. For Lila and others, they did not fully reflect on their own authenticity as a leader until they discussed it with their mentors.

According to Iris, women are criticized and must work harder than men as she recalled numerous meetings in which she has been the only woman in attendance, and a woman of color. She conveyed the courage it takes to ensure that her voice is heard and respected at the table, especially as a Latina. Her leadership self-efficacy has increased over time:

> It's like, okay, do I ask for feedback from the men around the table? Sometimes I've really had to learn how to speak up and have a voice because people will just take over and start talking just to talk. That's my biggest pet peeve. Don't repeat something that someone has said just because you want to say something. It's like, I want to have something to say, but make it meaningful. Over the years I've learned I have to say something.

Dahlia spoke about a similar incident where one of her board members crossed the line, and unbeknownst to her, met with a potential vendor and then proceeded to tell her to contact and hire that vendor. The board member was unaware that she had learned of this dealing and conducted her own background inquiry and found the vendor was not reputable in the community. Dahlia felt untrusted and in her board member's eyes, unqualified. She sought one of her mentors for advisement and responded to that board member accordingly:

> They give me the whole backstory and I said, "You need to let me do my job." But I had reached out before that to get the advice of how I should handle communicating with my board because I didn't want it to...I would not get emotional or angry, but I wanted to be strong and appropriate. It went very well based on the suggestions and the advice of how to approach it and what to say and what not to say. In the end, I remember after the meeting amongst other committee members, my board president said, after I said, "No, I'm not going to call him [vendor]. Here's why. This is what you need to know. You need to stop."

This board member's term expired soon after this occurred. For these women, they checked in with their mentors and received encouragement to follow their instincts and lead with authenticity. Their encouragement provided additional confidence as they continued to develop their leadership.

Notably, Rosa explained how the environmental context determines who you are or what you need as a leader. Rosa is biracial —half non-Latina White, half Latina—and takes pride in both cultural backgrounds. As a CEO she is accountable to various stakeholders and although she believes she is comfortable with her authenticity, she admitted to feeling more comfortable in certain settings. She is mindful about who she reaches out to and shares information with. For Rosa, she expressed the degree to which she feels Latina if she is meeting with her majority non-Latino White board members versus being among her more diverse friends. She believes that she does not purposely codeswitch, yet refrains from expressing certain feelings or attitudes rather than purposely portraying an inauthentic attitude. "Individuals with oppressed and non-

dominant identities are typically more aware of these identities, which are very salient to them. However, context makes a difference in how salient certain social identities are experienced" (Jones, 2016, p. 28). Her mentor helped her understand that not fitting into a mold or stereotype is okay, especially since her mentor is an Asian man who was her former boss.

Jasmine would agree that different environments prompt her to act differently. She expressed discomfort when being among other Latinas and prefers to be among a more diverse group. Her perception is that since she self-identifies as "Americanized," does not speak Spanish, and is married to a White man, that other Latinas perceive or may treat her differently or less than Latina. She recalls her mentor explaining to her that as an executive, and among different groups, individuals are not always accepting and will intentionally test your authenticity. She continues to remind herself of this advice. These were a few examples shared by the participants of the degree to which mentors supported expressions of authenticity. Mentors encouraged expressions of authenticity in all environments and supported the ways in which protégés perceive themselves as leaders.

Executive Perspective

Findings show that participants held perceptions of themselves that may not align with mainstream corporate culture. Most participants described reconciling initial assumptions of what being an executive was with their authenticity that derives from their intersectionality. As Latinas, participants described that they have to work harder to prove themselves. Azalea stated: "At least for me, as one Latina, I don't like to make mistakes because I feel like we don't have the luxury of making mistakes and in some cases we don't." Her mentor has helped her be comfortable with learning from her mistakes.

Although all women self-identify as Chicana, Latina, or of Hispanic ancestry, they each experienced different upbringings with some self-reporting being more Americanized than others. For participants who claimed they are Americanized, the notion of Americanization stemmed from their parents' intent on reducing discrimination for them. Half of the participants stated they are Americanized. Maintaining their own perceptions of themselves as Americanized Latinas, Camelia, Jasmine, Violeta, Dahlia, and Iris described intersectional experiences that included being immersed in mainstream American culture with expectations of only speaking English. Camelia, Dahlia, and Iris described their parents' guidance to speak English very well. Camelia indicated it was due to her parents' experiences of being discriminated against for having accents or not speaking perfect English that prompted them to desire their children speak perfect English. Camelia commented that it may have been easier for her because she has much fairer skin than her parents' darker skin. Colorism was not specifically described or examined in this study. Similarly, Iris shared push and pull cultural forces leading a Latina organization:

> Well, I think my authentic self…It's an interesting situation to be Latina as a leader, especially for a Latina organization. There are a lot of expectations from me to be well versed for all Latinos and I should know. I grew up speaking Spanish, but I was able to command the English language and so I don't have an accent. My Spanish now is not that great. So it's conversational, but it's not formal where I can write grant applications or presentations and stuff like that. I can get by with conversation and talking about our programs and communicating with people. So that has been an interesting, like me trying to find my way as a Latina leader within a Latina organization.

Four additional participants (Zinnia, Violeta, Azalea, Daisy) lead Latina/o-specific organizations and each experienced varying degrees of adjustments of being Latina within their organizations. There appeared to be a struggle for a few of these participants to adjust to the needs of the community, their organizations, and themselves; a struggle that requires the Latina leader to deeply reflect on her authenticity and how to lead with it. Their mentors have helped assess the struggle and coach them to affirm it in ways that only the protégé can determine.

Contrary to the Americanized experience, Lila, Zinnia, Azalea, Rosa, and Daisy were firmly exposed to their Latino cultures and urged to affirm and express them. However, it is important to state that Americanized and non-Americanized experiences are not better, preferred, or easier than one another. Multiple intersectional identities need to be taken into consideration when authenticity is included within context (Jones, 2016). For most participants, their mentors instilled confidence, provided encouragement, and advised their protégés to firmly be who they are. A few participants felt empowered to shift their perspective to be prouder of their intersectionality and leverage it as an asset of leadership development.

Mentor constellations are also related to expressions of authenticity. Lila, Zinnia, Azalea, Dahlia, Daisy, and Iris each described various mentors that became a part of their mentor network. They all stated or alluded to how their mentor constellations provided a diversity of perspectives and allowed them to see their blind spots more clearly than if they just had one significant mentor. The constellations may be able to assist the protégé to recognize the value and various facets of their authenticity. Exploring and analyzing participant experiences further, I found that participants who identified as Americanized also experienced smaller mentor constellations, sometimes describing only one meaningful mentor. For participants with fewer meaningful mentors, they described greater uneasiness and uncertainty in specific situations. This demonstrates that for this sample group, mentors and mentor constellations may have been key to uplifting authenticity that influenced stronger executive presence.

Theme 4: Mentor-Protégé Match Suitability Acts as a Sphere of Influence

The findings demonstrate how quality mentoring forms and evolves from formal career-advising relationships into more informal psychosocial-functioning relationships. Those findings are strongly aligned to all 10 participants in this study. Findings revealed that all together,

mentor characteristics were diverse in race, ethnicity, gender, and titles/roles. Although participants promoted a constellation of mentors from diverse backgrounds, they generally described non-Latina White women and Latinas as mentors, with a few having other people of color and non-Latino, White male mentors. After establishing these salient characteristics of mentors and their relationships, I explored how they influenced LLD. I found that participants articulated the importance of having a good fit and suitable mentor matches to experience a quality mentoring relationship. Although most participants did not recollect many negative mentoring experiences, they discussed some possible constraints of mentoring, which led to the theme of match suitability and fit as a sphere of influence to leadership development. Table 10 illustrates the subcategories and codes that led to this theme.

Table 10
Constraints of Mentoring

Subcategory 1: Right Fit	Subcategory 2: Mentor Willingness	Subcategory 3: Type of Advice
Code: Mentors that are bosses	Code: Mentors who are not network sponsors	Code: Mentors with bad advice
Code: Mentors with bad experiences as protégés	Code: Mentors who do not address blind spots	Code: Mentors who overstep their role
Code: Mentors who need mentors	Code: Mentors with no time to mentor	Code: Mentors with hidden agendas
Code: Need a good mentor to be a good mentor		

Right Fit

If a mentor or mentoring relationship is unsuccessful, it does not necessarily define the relationship as a negative experience; it simply may not be a suitable pairing or right fit (McArthur et al., 2017). For many participants, their mentors were their supervisors or advisors who they highly respected. However, Camelia's mentoring relationship with her mentor-boss dissolved after her mentor retired and Camelia took over as the CEO of the organization. At that point, the relationship changed and Camelia's needs as a protégé shifted, along with her social identity from director to CEO (Jones, 2016). Camelia felt that she had to establish her CEO presence in the organization and stopped asking for mentorship from her former boss. Fortunately, her mentor constellation remained available.

One of Azalea's mentors was her boss who she stopped contacting after he retired. She ceased reaching out to him because of his highly respected stature in the community and the lack of having a true friendship with him outside of work. Although she is able to contact him, she indicated that it would feel awkward for her if she reduced their mentoring relationship to an informal friendship. Interestingly, the mentoring relationship that most participants initially formed were in formal settings with their bosses. Fortunately for some, those relationships continued even after the working mentor relationship ended, which demonstrates the importance of having a good mentor-protégé fit that can transition into an informal, psychosocial connection. Other participants recounted that when the fit did not exist, the mentor relationship was short-term and eventually ended. A good mentor-protégé match was important for the longevity of the relationship.

Participants alluded to mentors who have had their own bad protégé experiences and who may carry dysfunctional perceptions about how to mentor another individual. Azalea indicated that mentors also need their own coaches:

> There are probably people who would say, oh, I mentored her and I didn't mention them right now because I either block them out because they were terrible [giggling] or they actually…I didn't consider them helpful and actually maybe in some ways sneakily adverse. That could be limiting if you have the wrong one. Or if the person being mentored is not truly open to mentorship.

Her comment emphasized that receiving mentoring does not end for the protégé or mentor once a position or role is obtained, but the type of mentorship may need to adjust to continue to benefit the relationship. If the protégé is unaware that advice is unrealistic or not beneficial, it may negatively influence the protégé's leadership development.

McArthur et al. (2017) explored the impact that relational experts, learners, and non-relational mentors had on quality mentoring relationships of socially disadvantaged individuals and found that mentors at any of these levels required standardized mentor training. Further, the non-relational mentor who prefers to only provide their expertise and not embrace the responsibilities of understanding social and cultural contexts, was not suitable to mentor. For most participants, they realized their needs as protégés shifted as they continued to develop their leadership (Jones, 2016). Rosa stated that: "If you haven't had good mentors, it's really hard to be a good mentor. So I feel fortunate and am grateful." In addition to being a right fit for their protégés, mentors must be willing to provide quality mentorship.

Mentor Willingness

Mentors who are willing to take the position and responsibility of a good mentor usually are considered more relational to the protégé (McArthur et al, 2017). Formal mentoring relationships may develop in structured settings, such as in school, the workplace, or within

leadership programs. Mentors may be recruited for varying reasons, including reputation, and have different attitudes about how to be a good mentor. Unfortunately, mentors who are not committed to their protégés will hinder their progress (McArthur et al., 2017). Multiple stories in this study described how mentors sponsored participants in different ways. Mentors acted as sponsors as they invited protégés to meetings and introduced them to key figures or holders of information. These connections exposed the protégé to personal networks and gave them exposure and visibility, which is a key function of mentoring according to Kram (1985). Participants indicated that mentors who are unwilling to support them by not sharing networking opportunities hindered their progress. In Jasmine's and Rosa's cases, they were not necessarily introduced to their mentor's network; however, they were invited to meetings that they otherwise would not have known about or attended without their mentor. Jasmine indicated:

> So it was virtue of her placing me in the positions to do the job I'm supposed to do that entailed going out working with others, and so in that sense, yes. But it wasn't like she took me to meetings and introduced me to everybody I needed to know or anything like that. It was less of that.

Similar to Jasmine, Rosa described being invited to dinner meetings at conferences with her mentor. Although work-related discussions were virtually nonexistent in those meetings, she realized later that her mentor wanted her to meet individuals who would later become allies. Being exposed to their mentor's own network constellation gave protégé's perspective and added to their possible sphere of influence. The expansion of social capital during networking opportunities was key for many participants' LLD.

Participants spoke about the mentor's willingness to address a protégé's blind spots. They felt that a mentor should be candid by addressing a protégé's blind spots to steer them away from making bad decisions. If these blind spots go unaddressed and the protégé makes a bad decision, the level of trust for the mentor potentially diminishes. The mentor becomes

unsuitable and ineffective for the protégé. Azalea spoke about nonprofit work and the need for mentors to help with blind spots: "I think yes, because it's still all hearkens back to trauma. How have my personal experiences impacted how I view this work? Not that those personal experiences aren't valid, but they can cause blind spots."

Participants indicated that it is the mentor's responsibility to hold the protégé accountable for their own actions. For Jasmine, her mentor identified areas in which she lacked confidence and purposely assigned projects to her to overcome this lack of confidence. Although this made Jasmine uneasy, she was proud to eventually have successfully completed these projects. Jasmine understood that her mentor was challenging her and helping build her confidence. Her mentor allowed her to make mistakes and learn from them.

Lastly, mentors need to have the time to mentor their protégés. Participants spoke about not feeling rushed when interacting with their mentors. Mentorship does not require hours of time and may take the form of a brief conversation. However, if mentors are unwilling to put in the time or effort to mentor, their protégés will not receive the attention that they may need to develop their leadership skills. Time is a crucial factor because the more time that is invested in the mentor-protégé relationship, the stronger the rapport will be developed, with more specific mentoring potentially occurring. Interestingly, when asked if their protégé experiences encouraged them to become mentors, all participants indicated they would provide mentorship, and some already do. Zinnia shared her experiences as a protégé and now as a mentor to young Latinas:

> Maybe our own perception of who that person is. I think that's how it affected me. They thought...because of what they saw exterior, they thought that's maybe not a direction they wanted to support not really understanding the potential that I had, but the ones who knew me understood it and supported it. I think for me, I love young Latinas. I love to support them. I unabashedly will move them forward. Often times we have young EDs

> who come to the house here and have coffee and they talk. So I've offered that. Not that I know everything, but sometimes they just need a place to vent.

However, all participants issued the caveat that if they were to become mentors, it has to be in the form of an informal relationship, citing their own limited availability and not wishing to take on formal mentoring understanding that they would not have the time to devote to their protégé. It was also shared that the limited access to Latina mentors may be due to these women being overworked and not having time to mentor protégés as they would like. Time and availability is key when considering mentor willingness.

Type of Advice

Bad advice was defined in situations where mentors overstepped their role by unnecessarily providing advice, or purposely guiding the protégé in the wrong direction to meet the mentor's hidden agenda. These instances may be felt more in formal, career functioning mentor relationships. As mentioned earlier, Dahlia shared her story about one of her board members who she regarded as an advisor early on in her new CEO role. Frustrated with the board member's overstep asking that she hire a particular vendor, she informed him of his error in judgement and he apologized acknowledging that error. She immediately disregarded him as a potential advisor that she could engage with for mentorship. Good advice is acknowledged when mutual trust and respect exist in the relationship, which may require time to grow. Multiple participants revealed how the mentoring relationship needs to be a reciprocal engagement in which the protégé feels comfortable expressing opinions while the mentor benefits from improving their mentoring abilities (Hastings & Kane, 2018). The importance of mutual benefit was most described by participants with peer mentor relationships.

Theme 5: Peer Mentoring Promotes a Sense of Openness and Vulnerability

Peer mentoring was not overwhelmingly shared among participants; however, it was the most discussed and desired by all participants. Table 11 shows specific peer mentoring support discussed during the interviews.

Table 11
LLD Challenges and Needs

Subcategory 1: Nonprofit Leadership	Subcategory 2: Female Mentors of Color in CEO Roles
Code: Navigating the nonprofit glass cliff	Code: Trauma triggers as a female nonprofit CEO of color
Code: Expectations being a nonprofit CEO	Code: Not taking things personal
Code: Balance between personal and professional life	Code: Need to know more female CEOs of color for reciprocal peer mentoring

One of Iris' mentors is a peer mentor who she met while participating in a leadership program. They are now close friends and part of an informal peer group. Iris meets with this peer group on a quarterly basis. They celebrate birthdays, discuss challenges at work, and also coach one another when interviewing for jobs. Iris stated that peer mentors are honest and direct when pointing out blind spots. Since her transition to her current CEO role, Lila has been mentored by peers of color who work in her field of philanthropy. She explained that there are very few Latina philanthropists; they can be counted on one hand. Jasmine occasionally contacts a peer who is the only person in the county that she is able to relate to and share similar experiences with as a young female CEO in her area. She feels that she is able to vent and gain feedback in an empathetic way. That peer is also a first-time CEO and can relate to many of

Jasmine's struggles. But the remaining participants did not describe having meaningful peer mentoring experiences. Although a handful of peer mentoring stories were collected in this study, the majority of participants expressed the need for peer mentorship. They feel that it would provide a safe space for women of color in the executive suite.

Peer Nonprofit Leaders

For a few participants who succeeded their organization's founding CEOs, they experienced added pressure to meet the expectations of staff, board, and the community at large. Those with fewer years of leadership experience who jumped into their first leadership role as CEO, and those who transitioned to a new organization after multiple years of experience, felt the pressure to overperform. Daisy spoke about the glass cliff phenomena (Glass & Cook, 2016) that she experienced when she transitioned into the CEO position:

> Not really recognizing that when you are an ED [executive director] and you are learning....It's my first nonprofit job by the way. So when you are learning all these different things the non-essential drops. So I don't have time to come in and chit chat with you. I don't have time to shoot the shit. I'm sorry I have to write this grant report, oh, I have to go...and not really realizing that that is dismissive or it comes off as dismissive and I'm just trying to stay above water so you can get paid and nobody knows that. You can't talk to anybody about that. So it's just so hard. I've cried so much. I could cry right now just talking…

She further described how she reaches out to one of her mentors for advice when she is feeling this way:

> I would really be like, did I do the right thing? Did I pick the right job? Am I set up? And especially because there is this stat that when White founders stepped down, they are very excited to bring on a person of color ED and they become the sacrificial lamb and they fail. And I'm like, I'm not going to be that.

Camelia spoke about the informal peer group she belongs to consisting of peer CEOs in her region. She contacts them when she needs specific support or expertise. They have developed a strong relationship and she expressed concern about a peer's upcoming retirement.

Camelia wondered if this person's replacement will become part of the peer group or fit in well. Her peer mentors are described as having different strengths and she knows who to call on: "Knowing your network and what strengths people have, it's nice to know who you can kind of bring up when you have a need."

Although Lila had been a CEO for another nonprofit for two decades, transitioning into a different type of nonprofit structure requires her to meet with a diverse group of individuals all with various needs. There are few people of color, and fewer women of color, in her nonprofit niche. After conducting an unsuccessful search of existing peer groups, Lila decided to convene her own group and hopes to invite others in. She coordinated a lunch and hopes to expand it into a quarterly convening for Latinas in her field. However, she is unaware of other female philanthropists of color to contact.

Most participants sought peer mentor support for struggles they experienced as Latina nonprofit CEOs. Evidence collected from the demographic questionnaire shows that all participants indicated interest in participating in a peer group formed with participants of this study. They expressed pressure as a nonprofit CEO, which requires accountability from many sources and management of several staff members and responsibilities. They indicated that nonprofit work requires working long hours, often on weekends, and even on holidays. At times, the participants have had to sacrifice time with their families. Peer mentors and peer groups promoted building rapport and community relationships more quickly, with feelings of becoming part of an informal extended family. The ability for greater mentor constellations can be found in peer mentors or peer groups that may be instrumental to leadership development. Iris is proud of her peer mentor group:

> When I first knew I was going to take the executive director position here, I got promoted I knew I was going to have to be the face of the organization and I was such a behind the

> scenes type person. I don't like public speaking, I don't like doing panels and things like that. But they would push me and they would help me prepare speeches and tell me what to look into to get ready to participate in these opportunities. And so it totally helped my confidence and I think I'm a better leader for it. Now I am more willing to do a seminar.

Their upbringing, passion for their work, and understanding that the community may depend on their leadership, inspires their strong work ethic, which makes an acceptable work-life balance challenging. Coupled with the glass cliff narrative, participants struggle with pleasing their stakeholders and finding a balance between their personal and professional obligations.

Rosa expressed her appreciation for her current peer mentor who has taught her to actively develop a comfortable work-life balance:

> I think it was the combination of the work and professional development and sort of guidance coupled with the life guidance…and I think there was a certain balancing that he demonstrated in the way that he lived his life and the decisions he had made in his life and sort of what he was teaching.

Peer mentors in similar roles can empathize with one another and show that they also experience similar leadership challenges. The peer mentor community in which Iris participates have encouraged her to work through her feelings of imposter syndrome and coached her as she searched for additional job opportunities. She discussed the anxiety she had about making public presentations on behalf of her organization. They coached her through it by sharing advice and strategies. Her anxiety has reduced, but she continues to work on it. The importance of peer mentors to nonprofit Latina CEOs is critical to having an informal and safe space to discuss challenges that may not be possible even with informal mentors who have not experienced similar struggles, or when the relationship's intensity has reduced or become infrequent.

Female Mentors of Color in CEO Roles

Participants expressed a strong interest in meeting peer women of color who are also in nonprofit CEO positions. Being a nonprofit CEO is a challenge on its own, triggering these

women to express interest in women of color peer groups. Literature indicates that mentoring relationships in which protégés and mentors engage and benefit each another's development, are reciprocal in nature (Hastings & Kane, 2018). For female peer mentors of color, this reciprocity may be more pronounced and immediate as they experience similar challenges and often are more willing to share their experiences.

Azalea revealed her vulnerability as she described how nonprofit work can be triggering for female CEOs of color. The nature of the work takes a toll on staff while community and client experiences may be parallel to what the Latina CEO experiences. These women's resilience is displayed as they take on such pressures while ignoring their own needs. When asked what type of mentoring they currently would like to receive, Azalea and Rosa both indicated that they seek "spiritual mentorship" that may help keep them mentally healthier. Azalea is in a stage of her life where she admits to carrying baggage that has negatively impacted her confidence:

> One thing I have learned as an ED of a non-profit is you show up with everything. You can't just check things out [at] the door, like you come in with every day. It's what is required to be so passionate. But if you're holding on to trauma, you need to heal that too. You can't expect people just to compartmentalize and you don't want to have blind spots that color your decision-making….You need to reflect on your life and have that, I call it spiritual mentorship…like mind and body mentorship…healing mentorship.

She explains that holding on to this baggage makes her vulnerable to political and policy blind spots. Having a peer mentor with whom she can feel safe and vulnerable is essential for her.

Azalea considers one of her board members, who is also a successful Latina CEO of a nonprofit organization in the same region, her peer mentor. Although their relationship began as a board member/formal mentor they have become friends and have an informal, psychosocial relationship now. She and Azalea participated in a mud run activity in which she described crawling through mud as symbolism of working through challenges and attaining one's goals

together. For Lila, her spiritual mentorship derives from her *calpulhi* (Aztec cultural dance group). Lila receives ritual life mentorship from her dance instructor, which helps her maintain more of a balance of life pressures. Although participants indicated they desire more female peer mentors of color, they also explained that they do not know many other Latina nonprofit CEOs. The demographic questionnaire completed by participants gauged their level of interest in participating in a Latina nonprofit CEO peer community. All women expressed interest in participating in such a group if it materializes.

The non-monolithic experiences and intersectional identities of female peer mentors of color bring additional benefit to potential sources of mentoring. Parker et al. (2008) utilized the term peer coaching due to the mutuality and reciprocity of the process where individuals (or groups) are learners and guides, as opposed to more traditional mentor relationship dyads. As discussed in this study, peer mentoring can be conducted in dyads or groups. Participants explained that peer mentoring assisted with confidence building as they learned that they are not experiencing challenges unique to them and are not somehow failing as leaders.

Mutual trust and respect is inherent in peer coaching relationships (Parker et al., 2008). It helps the protégé not take things personally, focusing on the most critical aspects of their challenges. Peer mentorship becomes further opportunity to expand the mentoring constellation. The peer mentor is met in formal or informal settings providing career and/or informal functional mentoring. However, the peer mentor is viewed as less informal, which enables greater trust to grow. That may be beneficial for Latina CEOs whose trusted circle may be limited to begin with.

Special Case/Outlier: Perceptions of Intragroup Competition

I concluded the interviews with opportunities for participants to discuss anything they wished without specific prompts. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, Camelia, Zinnia, Dahlia, Jasmine, Violeta, and Daisy specifically discussed the perception of intragroup competition among Latina leaders. My analysis produced further clarification that perceived intragroup competition creates an illusion of limited leadership space.

Among Latinas/os

Camelia and Zinnia described situations where they experienced or observed competition among Latinas/os. Camelia candidly described climbing the leadership ranks: "There are some Latinas who will try to keep you down. I experienced that over time. Either envy or jealousy or 'why should you get the chance if I don't have the chance.' And it can be ugly." She further asserted that she wishes never to replicate this feeling with other Latinas and will support anyone who needs support. Countering this competitive feeling, she had a situation where she was accused of nepotism by favoring Latinos during her organization's hiring process. However, according to her, living and working in a small town tends to create assumptions such as those. Observing Camelia describe her story it was clear that it had impacted her. With support from her mentors she was able to overcome these experiences:

> …that's one of the negative parts I think around trying to be a leader within an ethnic group, is that your own people can be your worst enemies. I found more of that in my experience than my mentors who have been non-Latino because they've been more supportive of my experience.

I was unable to ascertain whether non-Latina/o mentors are more supportive, or whether they could not relate to her experiences as a Latina leader and did not discuss those with her.

Zinnia witnessed an exchange between Latinas during a public meeting. The exchange was heated and uncomfortable for her to watch. She did not understand the specific cause of this

exchange, guessing it was the result of previous issues between the two women. However, it was evident to attendees there was lingering animosity between them. Articulated almost similarly as Camelia, Zinnia shared:

> I think there is so many, so much competition for leadership in the Latino world because there are so many of us now, that we forget that we are all in the same boat. That competition could be Latina or Latino and we forget that we are all working towards the same aim and sometimes your worst enemies are other Latinos or Latinas.

Zinnia is approaching retirement and when asked how she would mentor a protégé who is experiencing similar issues she indicated that Latinas/os must find common ground.

Among Women

Dahlia describes herself as a competitive individual by nature; she is equally competitive with women and men. Dahlia believes that women compete harder against each other and "we don't always play fair." She does not understand why women are not stronger allies, "…like when I'm hearing other women talking about how we tend to tear people down, question them instead of lifting them up and supporting them, giving them the benefit of the doubt." She feels that a perception exists that hinders women's ability to advance "because we don't have enough women supporting us and surrounding us. That breaks my heart." She assumed that insecurities prompt women to tear each other down so that they remain the minority in the room. Violeta mentioned this dynamic, revealing that egos among the group can be debilitating to Latina leadership.

Age-Based

Azalea, Jasmine, and Daisy became CEOs before the age of 40. Although this study did not focus on age as a mentoring factor for development, Jasmine felt that she is treated differently for being younger by the "legendary CEOs" in her area, meaning that they perceive her as not having the wherewithal, as elder CEOs may have. She understood that over time she

may become a legendary CEO with more experience. The legendary CEOs she referred to have worked in the field since the 1960s and it is difficult for them to relinquish the work to younger leaders.

Having a mentor is beneficial to support the younger protégé through career and psychosocial functional mentoring (Kram, 1985). Daisy wondered how others' perceptions of her based on gender and age play out in attaining her full leadership potential. Daisy is aware of these perceptions since she has had a total of five years of leadership experience, with four of those years as her current organization's CEO. Similarly, Zinnia, who is approaching retirement, indicated that she experiences ageism now as an older CEO and feels that the younger CEOs disregard her ideas as if they are insufficiently contemporary and not keeping up with current issues. She described her intentional style of dress:

> Now that I'm older, I'm really trying to be clear that age is not an issue. So I try not to dress older. I make a conscious effort to do that. It creates a stereotype that's unnecessary. And then with that stereotype you get a lot of reaction that I do find ageism. It's amazing. So I try to counter that by just dressing younger, more sophisticated, more trendy. I think that helps with people's perception about who you are and what you are able to do.

Summary

Demographic questionnaires, in person interviews, and researcher field notes were collected to produce the data analysis and findings described in this chapter. The analysis shows varied intersectional experiences that warranted specific participants' needs from their mentors. The mentoring relationships described in this chapter influenced LLD among Latina nonprofit CEOs in California in similar and unique ways. Five themes emerged from this study; a) evolution of mentoring relationship type, b) constellation of mentors integral to leadership growth, c) support expressions of authenticity and LLD, d) mentor-protégé match suitability acts as a sphere of influence, and e) peer mentoring promotes a sense of openness and vulnerability.

This study's findings are intended to answer the two research questions; however, the special case/outlier of intragroup competition creating an illusion of limited leadership space was also found.

Participants experienced similar initial mentoring relationships that began as formal, career-functional relationships. If the relationships were meaningful and became long-term, then they became informal and more psychosocial-functioning in nature. It was the informal, psychosocial relationships that were preferred by this study's participants. Mentor relationships became more specific and varied, with greater emphasis on protégés' intersectional experiences during transition in this preferred relationship type.

This chapter cannot capture all of the unique experiences of each participant. Although experiences are unique, data analysis produced significant thematic findings that are further discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 specifically discusses these findings in tandem with this study's research questions, the literature presented in Chapter 2, and the methodologies discussed in Chapter 3. Implications and recommendations for practice and research are presented that align with this analysis.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study was an exploration of how quality mentoring relationships positively influence the leadership development of Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California. Not having had a meaningful mentor support my own executive leadership transition as a CEO inspired me to explore the lived experiences of those who have had quality mentoring relationships. Additionally, the gap in mentoring research has not examined this topic specifically within the nonprofit sector, nor solely with Latina CEOs as the sample group. This foundational study explored two research questions:

1. What are the salient characteristics of quality mentoring relationships for Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California?
2. How have quality mentoring relationships influenced Latina leaders' sense of self-efficacy and leadership development?

The findings expand the existing literature with a deeper examination into mentoring phenomena among Latina leaders, including social identities as critical and relational factors for mentors to discuss while supporting their protégés (Jones, 2016; McArthur et al., 2017). This chapter discusses the findings, implications, and proposes several recommendations that may impact practice and future research to strengthen the Latina executive experience.

Discussion

Research has shown that protégés who participate in quality mentoring relationships are positively influenced in their educational and career pursuits (Allen et al., 2004; Blackhurst, 2000; Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016; Searby et al., 2015). Mentoring research highlights various types of mentoring, the need for female leaders to have mentors, and the difficulty of female leaders of color to obtain mentorship (Ayala & Contreras, 2019; Blackhurst, 2000; Holder et al.,

2015; Menchaca et al., 2016; Méndez-Morse et al., 2015). These studies provide a scholarly foundation to build upon, but I am unaware of phenomenological studies exploring the type of mentors and mentor relationships that positively influence Latina nonprofit CEOs' self-efficacy and leadership development. This study assumed that quality mentors are beneficial to a Latina executive; it moved beyond this basic premise to provide empirical data that describes what and how quality mentoring relationships can be cultivated and further developed for Latinas already in upper echelon positions.

Social capital theory and community cultural wealth typology provided the framework for this study. Findings demonstrate that a mentor's social capital was beneficial to the protégé when leveraged in the form of invitations into their personal and career networks, sharing engagement opportunities, active job recruitment, and preparation for transition into the CEO position. It was through the mentor's sponsorship and willingness to invest and share their social capital with their protégé that the participant was able to expand their own social capital. In cases of peer mentorship or peer mentor groups, the protégé also shared her capital with her peers. The ability to expand their social capital impacted their leadership development because participants could then leverage these additional relationships when they felt that they needed expertise in a given area to better lead their organizations. Over time, being exposed to additional expertise further developed their self-efficacy as Latina leaders. A greater sense of self-efficacy as a leader increased their confidence to pursue opportunities, such as attaining a CEO role. The data support Coleman's (1988) assertions that social capital shared with marginalized groups may lead to social mobility for the marginalized individual.

Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth typology was evident in the lived experiences of the participants. Participants described how various individuals within their workplace or

larger community became assets to their leadership development. Whether their mentor(s) were befriended in a formal workplace setting, existed in their family, or found in the larger cultural community, they received support and direction from those who they considered mentors. Participants displayed gratitude for the support they received from their communities that grounded their leadership. Participants with a stronger connection to their cultural communities appeared to exude more confidence in their leadership talents as they received comforting messages from various sources and had larger mentor constellations. This makes displays of authenticity comfortable.

Research Question 1 was meant to explore salient characteristics of quality mentoring relationships for Latina nonprofit CEOs as protégés in California. With the gap in this research I intentionally sought to produce scholarship that addressed it. Literature assisted in the development of focused questions pertaining to career wellbeing and executive transitions (Campbell et al., 2012; Holder et al., 2015; Kidd, 2008; Pârlea-Buzatu, 2011), as well as questions pertaining to psychosocial support (Allen et al., 2004; Blackhurst, 2000; Hastings & Kane, 2018; Martin & Sifers, 2012; Quinn, 2012). Two prominent themes were found addressing Research Question 1 that are aligned with the current literature pertaining to preference for informal and psychosocial relationships (Campbell et al., 2012; Kram, 1985) and the desire for a diverse set of mentors in their constellation (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Higgins & Thomas, 2001; Kram, 1985).

Theme 1: Evolution of Mentoring Relationship Type

As personal and career experiences evolve, so do mentoring needs and preferences. An overwhelming number of participants described meeting their mentors in formal workplace or school environments while initially receiving career guidance. However, over time, these

mentors became long-term, significant individuals in their lives as relationships transitioned into informal relationships that became psychosocial functioning. This finding aligns with the literature indicating that female leaders of color tend to have informal mentoring relationships (Campbell, et al., 2012) because of the inaccessibility to other female executives of color in their workplaces.

Participants gained insight into work-life balance, observed role modeling behaviors for self-care and wellness, and increased their self-efficacy as leaders through mutual trust with their mentors. These informal and psychosocial functions had more influence on leadership development than formal mentoring had, while encouraging affirmation of their authenticity. Latina CEOs must feel their authenticity is valued as they work through many of the challenges as a Latina nonprofit CEO. Latina CEOs possess intersectional identities and experiences where the informal and psychosocial mentor relationship allows them to emotionally transition more smoothly into the CEO role. With various challenges of being a woman of color in a male-dominated position, even in the nonprofit industry, it is pertinent that mentors seek to explore their protégé's needs and thought processes to have greater relational mentoring with their protégés (McArthur et al., 2017).

As participants overwhelmingly preferred informal relationships or settings that provide psychosocial mentoring functions, their significant relationships had to transition from formal career advising for further leadership development. This led me to ponder whether Latina leaders actively searched for mentorship outside of the workplace, felt mentors were inaccessible or did not exist, or they simply became more flexible to mentoring once they attained a certain level of leadership. These questions were not necessarily within the scope of this study, but it did prompt researcher self-reflection. However, participants articulated their desire and need for

a diverse mentor constellation, which demonstrated their understanding that formal, career-functional mentoring is insufficient and that larger constellations create additional mentor spaces to provide needed guidance.

Theme 2: Constellation of Mentors Integral to Leadership Growth

Cross-gender dyads between mentor and protégé are more positive in career mentoring, while same-gender dyads flourish more in psychosocial mentoring (Kao et al., 2014). The findings show that non-familial cross-gender dyads began in school or the workplace and did not transition outside of these formal settings. However, for two participants, they continued receiving mentorship from male mentors after their career relationship ceased. The intensity of those relationships did decrease, however. This suggests that if unrelated, cross-gender career mentoring relationships can shift to psychosocial supportive functioning, the relationship is likely to continue. Four participants deeply reflected upon their former male bosses who provided career mentoring, while other participants mentioned their father, husband, and brother providing psychosocial mentoring. The findings show that unrelated men provided career mentoring to participants in the early stages of their career (Blackhurst, 2000) while men who are related to the participants provided psychosocial support. Participants did not share deeply personal challenges with formal male mentors.

Female mentors provided both career and psychosocial support regardless of race and ethnicity. Among the four participants who had male mentors, three also had female mentors. This finding shows that for these participants, they still sought out female mentors possibly due to the need for additional psychosocial support that they did not receive from male mentors. Female mentors were not necessarily Latina, or women of color. The scant number of Latinas in executive positions has been a barrier for the participants in receiving mentor guidance earlier

than mid-career when their leadership potential became more obvious to others. I assert that Latina CEOs have had to stitch together sources of mentorship (Searby et al., 2015), and due to the shortage of female CEOS of color in their industry, they have not necessarily had access to mentors of similar intersectional identity, especially when enduring gender and/or race/ethnic-specific microaggressions (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016). These women initially experienced formal and career-functional mentorship from immediate supervisors due to the lack of female CEOs of color in their industry available to provide informal mentorship. This assertion is not based on whether these women are interested, but rather on the fact that female executives of color are under immense pressure to prove themselves, which may often result in working extra hours beyond a standard work week. As a result, they simply may not have the time necessary to mentor others. Unfortunately, for participants, it was not until they were underway in their careers and had networked with others that they received the mentorship that they preferred. However, as leadership is developed over time, Latina leaders may be missing critical mentorship earlier in their careers that may impact leadership self-efficacy.

Literature indicates that it is important to have mentors of similar background that relate to issues of racial stereotyping and microaggressions, as well as mentors with different experiences and identities (Crisp et al., 2017). However, the participants did not necessarily have mentors of similar background as their own. Although they indicated that it would be beneficial to have a Latina mentor, all participants asserted that it was not necessary for them to only have Latina mentors. They valued being exposed to different perspectives, which produce a broader lens through which to see the world. This finding resonated throughout the study and supports Block and Tietjen-Smith's (2016) assertion that women need exposure to other women's perspectives who have experienced similar leadership challenges. If issues of racial or

ethnic stereotyping occurred, the participants felt that having a mentor from a marginalized background would be beneficial. For two participants, their significant mentors were Black women and men, and an Asian man. Zinnia reported that as long as her mentor was politically progressive and held similar views as hers, that was sufficient. This study demonstrates that Latina leaders desire having a Latina mentor; however, she would be part of a larger gender and ethnically diverse mentor constellation. It is not always necessary to pair Latinas; this alludes to the potential for greater mentor possibilities.

Participants overwhelmingly valued and are interested in maintaining a diverse mentor constellation (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Higgins & Thomas, 2001; Kram, 1985). This constellation places the protégé as the central focus surrounded by multiple mentors. It is unnecessary for the constellation to provide mentorship to, or know, each other. The constellation could vary by race, ethnicity, gender, background, and career expertise. This finding expanded my view of how a protégé's social capital may significantly be expanded with a surrounding constellation. A protégé may choose what and when to leverage various social capital influences depending on their need or situation. Mentor functions might be assessed prior to any formal mentoring relationship, whereby mentors indicate the type of mentorship they are willing to provide, and protégés indicate what their needs are. That might help increase the relational mentoring described by McArthur et al. (2017). McArthur et al. described how relational mentors offer the most sustainable and longer term mentoring experiences that are aligned with informal and psychosocial mentoring. Mentor constellations are also beneficial due to cultural diversity that may expand leader perspective.

For Latinas who felt they had an Americanized upbringing and described feelings of disconnect from their ethnic group, they also described having fewer mentors with a smaller

circle of support. Participants who self-identified as Americanized shared feelings of isolation among other Latinas. As a researcher, this finding is significant, implying that a demographically similar racial, ethnic, and gender group will have varying perceptions about the levels of acceptance from within their own affinity group. These perceptions derive from their unique intersectional identities that have impacted the size of their mentor constellation. A more Americanized experience may be demonstrated as being more individualistic, competing with the more stereotypical collective nature of Latina/o culture (Hayes-Bautista, 2004). Although neither experience is better or worse than the other, participants who self-reported an Americanized upbringing had fewer mentors and a smaller constellations over time. The Americanized experience was striking in comparison to those who described a deeper connection to their Latino culture that led to a more expansive level of community cultural wealth and constellation.

Research Question 2 was intended to further explore how quality mentoring relationships influenced participants' sense of self-efficacy and leadership development. As subsequent interviews were conducted, the emergence of themes became more evident. After completion of all of the interviews, I found that the participants experienced and preferred informal mentoring relationships that provide psychosocial support from a diverse mentor constellation. Responses to Research Question 1 produced foundational information that is missing from the extant literature. Once I began exploring how these characteristics affected LLD, the data showed that specific influences were varied. Research Question 2 included more specific interview questions intended to explore these broader experiences. The data support Campbell et al.'s (2012) assertion that psychosocial mentoring is preferred and produce better leadership outcomes. Three major themes were found regarding Research Question 2: they include; how mentoring

supports expressions of authenticity and LLD, mentor-protégé match suitability acts as a sphere of influence, and peer mentoring promotes a sense of openness and vulnerability.

Theme 3: Support Expressions of Authenticity and LLD

Intersectionality and evolution of social identities were primary factors in this study due to their influence on each individual's sense of self and how these Latina leaders navigated the world. Social identities are not static and shift over time (Jones, 2016), depending on the needs of the individual and the contexts in which she finds herself. According to the experiences shared in this study, some participants did not always feel comfortable displaying their authenticity. Others indicated that they had never genuinely reflected on what being authentic meant to them or how it was reflected in their leadership. Protégés might be encouraged to reflect upon what it means to them to be authentic and how they display it in various spaces. Based on the findings, my assertion is aligned with Kouzes and Posner's (2010) work who indicated that the first step in leadership development is to find your true voice and choose your own values. Simultaneously, mentors could support their protégé's reflections and encourage them to lead authentically. Authentic leadership recognizes the power and privilege in oneself and how these are categorically constructed, such as in leadership (Jones, 2016). The findings from this study suggest that intersectional experiences formed social identities that became a privilege or a challenge for the participants. The primary challenge derived from oppressive, discriminatory, and systemically inequitable leadership social structures.

Several participants took pride in their ethnicity and socially constructed identities. Those who expressed pride in their socio-cultural identities felt connected to their cultural groups, which was exhibited in their style of dress and participation in cultural dance groups. It also was demonstrated in deciding to lead Latino-serving organizations, as half of the

participants do. Lila described her years-long participation and mentorship gained from her *Mexica* community that performs Aztec dance. Her instructor has been a mentor of hers while exposing her to ritual wellbeing for the past 20 years. This was an example of how community cultural wealth was present as a source of cultural capital and mentorship for participants. The cultural connectedness becomes an indirect source of leadership development in which authenticity and value systems are encouraged outside of workplace settings.

For some participants, their experience was quite opposite and they faced conflict between their ethnicity and socially constructed identities. Those who identified as being Americanized struggled with an uneasiness and almost expressed guilt about not fully accepting their ethnic cultural identity, which was expressed somewhat stereotypically. Camelia and Jasmine both illustrated their perception of not feeling Latina enough because they were raised with a lack of Spanish language fluency and were instructed to gain a high level of English proficiency. They do not feel accepted among Latina circles. Struggling with one's authenticity is critical and may be debilitating because of the high level of self-efficacy that is expected of the Latina CEO. These feelings of low self-efficacy can produce imposter syndrome (Clance & Imes, 1978) within the Latina CEO. Literature supports this study that indicates that there is a need to understand intersectional experiences in leadership:

> [Intersectionality] would not focus exclusively on the intersections of gender, culture, and ethnicity, but also on their experiences of resilience, sense of belonging, marginalization, and stereotyping that affect both their access to leadership roles and their sense of themselves as leaders and how others view them in these roles. (Jones, 2016, p. 29)

During her interview, Daisy explained how Latina leaders must also recognize that they have privilege as leaders and need to do what they can to ensure that they do not ignore this privilege within their own organizations. When an individual's authentic leadership is not encouraged, she may experience lower self-efficacy as she enters into an executive position.

Only two participants had been CEOs at another organization prior to their current role. Although two women each had over 20 years of leadership experience, they felt the need to continue to surround themselves with mentors. For the remaining eight participants, they are currently in their first CEO position either as founders of their organizations, succeeding the founders of their organization, or are new CEOs altogether. All participants sought mentors and were influenced by them in various ways. Mentors supported them as unique individuals and encouraged them to be themselves, to be proud of their intersectional experiences, and to deeply explore any emotional barriers that reduced their leader self-efficacy.

Mentors remained objective during these times of reflection. This helped participants feel confident and understand when they needed assistance. For participants who are fairly new CEOs, they learned that growth is inevitable. Several participants indicated their confidence to be authentic increased whether they described themselves as Americanized or not. This is important especially in roles in which they experience pressure to fit into a box. Supporting protégés to be comfortable with themselves, however they describe that, is important as a leader. Even as self-proclaimed social justice warriors, Lila and Azalea regularly seek their mentors' guidance. Mentors affirmed that authenticity is what makes them unique, and can provide perspective among others who may adhere to a corporate stereotype. Relational mentors affirm the contributions of Latina executives, which make them more inclined to lead more deliberately.

Owning one's authenticity and feeling confident was critical for these women. Through my observations, those who clearly described how their mentors supported their authenticity were clearer in describing their mentor relationships. Those with shorter-term mentors did not clearly realize how they were encouraged to be authentic and actually reflected about that during the course of their interview. This may have alluded to the value of having longer-term mentors

in which discussions like authentic leadership were integrated during mentor interactions, which have built more mutual trust. Taking into account the diverse intersectional identities and experiences of the women in this study illustrates that there is no standard approach to the mentor-protégé relationship.

Theme 4: Mentor-Protégé Match Suitability Acts as a Sphere of Influence

McArthur et al. (2017) explored the impact that relational expert mentors, learner mentors, and non-relational mentors had on quality mentoring relationships of socially disadvantaged individuals and found that mentors at any of these levels required standardized mentor training. Additionally, the non-relational mentor who prefers to only provide their expertise and not embrace the responsibilities of understanding social and cultural contexts, was not suitable to serve as a mentor. Although a few participants indicated they would have benefitted from a Latina mentor during their career trajectory, it is clear that the demographic profile based on race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation was not as important as the mentor's personality (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016). Participants accepted and developed relationships with mentors with whom they were comfortable, provided them with clear guidance, challenged them, and took them "under their wing." This study supports findings by Block and Tietjen-Smith (2016) and Searby et al. (2015) indicating that personality traits that female leaders can relate to in a male-dominated workplace environment is important. Female leaders need to be able to tap into the cultural capital of the organization. However, it is unclear in my data whether participants initially accepted the mentors that they spoke highly of based on their personality fit or because they were their supervisors at the time. In any case, they became significant mentors of theirs. For the majority of the participants, when asked how mentoring inhibits leadership development, they indicated that mentors need to be the right fit for them,

which supports McArthur et al.'s (2017) assertions that empathetic and suitable mentor matches are important.

I drew from Kram's (1985) earlier work to differentiate between formal and informal mentoring and the career and psychosocial functions that protégés received. My work supports Kram's assertion that psychosocial mentoring derives from family, community, and peers. However, this study supplements this assertion, adding that psychosocial mentoring may also occur with mentor-bosses in the workplace if the relationship has evolved into an informal and longer-term relationship. The transition from a formal to an informal relationship requires commitment and willingness by both the mentor and protégé. Psychosocial mentoring is produced once the relationship has developed mutual trust. Its functions are more prevalent in relationships that are longer-term. Once the relationship is informal and psychosocial functioning, the protégé has the ability to engage in deeper reflection, build more confidence, and increase self-efficacy to lead authentically. The mentor and protégé sense a better fit over time. Short-term mentorship can also produce a sense of fit if the goal of the mentor relationship is understood early on.

The data support Avalos and Salgado's (2016) assertion that it is difficult to find Latina mentors. Leaders of color will draw from informal and familiar experiences due to lack of formal sponsorship and mentorship (Blackhurst, 2000; Martinez et al., 2017; Méndez-Morse, 2000, Méndez-Morse et al., 2015). However, I further assert that Latina leaders accept mentoring from within the workplace or academic setting if the mentor is a good match and potentially suitable to offer guidance. The data show that Latina leaders of color accept mentorship from various sources, but prefer to engage in informal and psychosocial mentoring. A commitment of time by the mentor and protégé is essential for the cultivation of these

relationships. Mentor match suitability, or fit, based in relational mentoring was the most important influence to these Latinas' leadership growth and development, regardless of the race, ethnicity, and gender of the mentor. A mentor who could relate to the protégé was most important for the participants. Ultimately, the biggest relational factor for participants are peer mentors with similar backgrounds and leadership roles.

Theme 5: Peer Mentoring Promotes a Sense of Openness and Vulnerability

Although the Latina executive leaders in this study have attained high level positions and most were mentors themselves, they expressed a need for on-going mentorship. The source of mentoring evolves once one becomes a CEO. Latina nonprofit CEOs desired and engaged in peer mentoring relationships allowing greater opportunity to discuss specific challenges they face as Latina CEOs in the nonprofit sector. Peer mentors engage on similar levels, appear to be more flexible, and create a sense of openness and vulnerability. This is a level of mentorship that they would not necessarily have with their bosses, academic advisors, or others with whom they have not developed closer relationships; possibly including their family members. This type of mentorship removes hierarchical and/or maternalistic/paternalistic feelings in which no one individual is always in the role of protégé or mentor. Murakami and Nuñez (2014) would have supported the findings that participants seek non-hierarchical and asset-based approaches to mentorship. In this study, peer mentoring stood as the ideal for Latina executive leaders.

Peer mentoring is beneficial in many ways. Peers provide a sense of validation of one's experiences that can, in turn, reduce feelings associated with imposter syndrome, isolation, and tokenism (Martinez et al., 2017). There are opportunities within peer mentor groups in which Latina executives may bring collaborative opportunities and share ideas that may benefit others in their organizations. The influence of peer mentors on LLD is positive and establishes a sense

of comradery. Peer mentoring promotes an equal footing in which accessing informal and psychosocial mentoring may be attained quicker than in other types of mentor settings, such as formal or informal, career or psychosocial, and mentor-boss relationships. Peer mentorship is an ideal strategy where the mentor constellation can flourish as well. Rosa indicated that her environment or context determines who and what she needs from a mentor at any particular time. Thus, a constellation of peers, or that includes peers, may provide direct access to someone who female leaders of color can reach out to fairly quickly.

It is possible that peer mentoring may help to counteract perceptions of limited leadership space and sense of intragroup competition that was highlighted as a special case/outlier in Chapter 4. The perception of competition may be reduced or eliminated if Latina CEOs know more women of color who are experiencing similar challenges and successes as they are (Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016). The establishment of an informal peer community is ideal for women who are busy, pressed for time, and unable to participate in formal mentorship that may require advance scheduling time with a mentor. With virtual environments, peer mentoring may extend constellations even further.

Peer mentorship is aligned with community cultural wealth in which peers are part of a protégé's community. The potential of peer mentoring constellations can expand social networks and further influence leadership development for Latinas and other female leaders of color. Peers can provide formal and informal career and psychosocial mentorship while supporting authenticity as a leader because peers can empathize with them, promote the diverse constellation, and minimize the perception of intragroup competition or limited leadership space. Peer mentors may be essential sources for Latina executive leaders.

Implications

Becoming a CEO is not an end point, rather it is another beginning. This study demonstrated that obtaining a CEO position continued to warrant a desire and need for mentorship. It demonstrated that for Latina nonprofit CEOs, the need became more dire considering the challenge of leading a sector that is demanding, and may be essential, for a woman of color's personal and career growth. Mentor programs tend to focus on early or mid-career leaders with aspirations for skill development and/or obtaining executive positions. But these programs become limited or nonexistent once the individual becomes CEO. This study showed that mentorship can always be relevant to anyone, in any position, and surely once they have become a CEO. There needs to be a broader understanding that executives continue to benefit from mentoring regardless of their prior experience or skill level.

This study showed that Latina CEOs do not only have or are interested exclusively in Latina mentors. Although, they understood the value of having at least one Latina mentor with whom they have a cultural affinity. They were adamant about having a diverse constellation of mentors that include women and men from an array of racial and ethnic groups and professional backgrounds. Latina nonprofit CEOs do not function within a silo and are exposed to various perspectives at any given moment. They are interested in having a broad lens through which to view the world. The mentor constellation can offer even greater leadership opportunities to be collaborative and understanding of society.

Lastly, this study suggests that it does not require a formalized relationship or structured program to support Latina nonprofit CEOs. Developing structured programs do not necessarily benefit executive leaders that experience heavy work demands and unique protégé needs. The most appropriate approach are informal mentoring relationships that are geared towards

supporting the Latina executive especially during transition as a new CEO, or new CEO in a new organization. Informal relationships are opportunities to customize mentoring for the protégé who possesses unique needs. This implication is important as the resources to develop less structured programming are less costly, yet potentially more effective, for the Latina nonprofit CEO. The most important aspect is for the protégé and mentor to discuss what their needs and goals are and how best to achieve them together.

Recommendations for Practice

This study has illustrated pertinent findings that the researcher recommends be taken into consideration to improve existing mentor programs or to develop new strategies for supporting Latina executive leaders. A summary of recommendations for practice are captured in Table 12.

Table 12
Recommendations for Practice

Formal Mentoring Recommendations
1. Explore intersectionality prior to mentor-protégé match within leadership programs.
2. Assess mentoring programs utilizing formative evaluations and reflective checkpoints.
3. Institute investment strategies that fund CEO executive transitions.
Informal Mentoring Recommendation
4. Create peer-led communities of nonprofit practice for female CEOs of color.

Recommendations are included for formal and informal practice. Formal practice recommendations include three programmatic strategies and although one recommendation has been included for informal practice it is potentially the most efficient and effective strategy based

on this study's findings. Mentoring practices are varied and depend on the needs and experiences of protégés and mentors.

Formal Mentoring for Executive Leadership

The establishment of mentoring support can be intentional and structured. Whether it be a supervisor or academic advisor whose role is to provide guidance, or an organization that implements programs for whom they perceive are potentially high achieving staff, mentoring has proven to be beneficial. However, administrators of structured programs could benefit from continuous improvement and greater flexibility administering these programs. Mentoring programs tend to have minimal structure related to the process, or may have too much structure that limits the organic nature of the mentoring relationship. The common denominator may be that neither type of structure has included formative evaluation.

Recommendation 1: Explore intersectionality in leadership programs. On occasion, Latina executive leaders are recruited, or choose to apply, to participate in structured leadership programs. These may be internal or external programs to their workplace environment, most often requiring payment to participate. Occasionally, these leadership programs include access to a mentor or coach. However, access to a mentor or coach does not necessarily produce a quality mentor or mentoring relationship, as described by the participants. And while they may not necessarily be the right fit for the protégé, they potentially may be the only opportunity for the protégé to receive mentoring. Many leadership programs are structured in a manner in which it is anticipated that participants will benefit from an organized and structured approach. Based on the findings from this study, the relationships could recognize and address these women's intersectional experiences and how they influence their leadership perspectives. However, these conversations may be uncomfortable for mentors to broach if they do not have similar

experiences and cannot relate to them. Protégé experiences and context of the relationship with their mentor determines the type of mentor that will benefit them the most at a particular time (McArthur et al., 2017). One issue is that employers or program administrators assume completion of the program produces quality mentorship. I propose that programs integrate a component that is conducted prior to the match that explores prior experiences of mentoring of both protégé and mentor, their interests in mentoring, and how their backgrounds may be influential to the success of their participation.

Recommendation 2: Assessment of mentoring programs. It is recommended that a deeper assessment of mentoring programs be conducted to examine whether the protégé and mentor are receiving the intended benefits of their relationship. Leadership programs might conduct formative evaluations including reflective checkpoints in the form of brief surveys or informal interviewing throughout the mentoring process. These checkpoints would assist to ascertain whether there are areas that the protégé or mentor feel need to be addressed or further explored within the mentor relationship. Checkpoints may be conducted by program staff, or ideally, between the mentor and protégé. These checkpoints would allow necessary shifts to take place during the mentoring process rather than completing the process with minimal benefit. The surveys and interviews create the opportunity for the protégé and mentor to continue to refine priorities that they had not realized were important at the onset of establishing the mentorship. Coaching has become a behavioral growth approach that has been used in leadership to enhance problem-solving skills and assists with understanding one's leadership learning (Hastings & Kane, 2018). Formative evaluation checkpoints may assist in determining if this is occurring in a manner that is comfortable for the protégé and mentor. Additionally,

evaluative measures may lead to realizing that the protégé-mentor match is not a good fit and that a new match needs to be established.

Leadership programs that intend to include a mentoring component must make resources available in the form of funding and time to ensure that a thoughtful mentoring strategy is implemented. This begins with including time to recruit mentors who are appropriate and display a relational ability to mentor a protégé (McArthur et al., 2017). Mentors could also be open to training to become a better mentor. Relational mentors enable the protégé to feel connected and cultivate informal and psychosocial relationships that they most prefer. If the protégé prefers a more formalized relationship, the mentor-protégé dyad capable of developing more deeply is suggested. Potential leadership mentors, coaches, and advisors could be evaluated for fit (McArthur et al., 2017) and not solely on the basis of race, ethnicity, and gender. Additionally, program participants (protégés) could be included in the selection of their mentors rather than accepting an assigned individual selected by others that do not necessarily know them or understand her needs. Once mentors are evaluated and protégés are assessed, a mentor-protégé dyad assessment can be conducted based on the career or psychosocial needs of the protégé at the time. Formal programs must make resources available to establish these strategies that eventually could lead to reciprocity or mutual benefit to both individuals. These recommendations are meant for more formalized leadership and mentoring programs.

Recommendation 3: Executive investment. Latina executives could negotiate with their potential employers to fund executive coaching opportunities especially during the transition into their new roles. Brand new CEOs, especially those who had not received quality mentoring in the past, do not realize that they may negotiate for this type of support. Employers must fund resources as investments in their executive leadership and overall organization. These

investments have the potential to assist human resources during the recruitment process and could support executive retention. Executive coaching may be a significant support for underrepresented female executives of color to adjust to their new roles, especially as a first-time CEO. Due to the Latina executive leader's own experience, she could be given the opportunity to vet who and how she wishes to be coached. That would get her acclimated to expecting to be part of the process and take ownership. Despite incorporating these recommendations within formal mentoring spaces, the most influential opportunity is to develop opportunities for peer mentorship.

Informal Peer Mentoring for Executive Leadership

As explored in this study, informal mentoring and peer mentorship were the most meaningful types of relationships and of greatest interest among the participants. I recommend the creation of peer-led communities of nonprofit practice specifically for female CEOs of color.

Recommendation 4: Peer-led communities of nonprofit practice. Peer-led communities of nonprofit practice may be more cost efficient and more beneficial to the executive mentor and protégé than formal leadership programming. Everyone involved in peer-led mentoring may take the position of mentor or protégé at any given moment. Whether participants described their prior mentor experiences within formal or informal relationships, they also desired to belong to a peer group or community of practice. At this stage in an executive's life and career she is hopeful to connect with peers who have had, or are currently experiencing, similar leadership challenges. But many female nonprofit executive leaders of color may not be aware of other women in their immediate geographic area, or beyond, with whom they can connect (Adesaogun et al., 2015). Latina executives have protégé needs and may not know who or where to seek assistance. Peer-led mentoring communities of non-profit

practice could be developed that recruit participation from female executive leaders of color. Peer communities invoke the likelihood that those involved will be keen to the nuances of being a female CEO of color. These groups must intend to be shared spaces that are informal and cultivate mutual trust. I recommend these peer communities begin in early-mid career for women of color interested in executive leadership in any sector. The quicker these women feel confident to display their authenticity as leaders, the quicker their leader self-efficacy increases, and their leadership development needs can become more focused. However, I recommend that the woman of color, CEO, peer-led mentoring community include only CEOs as the challenges they face warrant specific advising or coaching.

Peer-led mentoring communities cultivate safe spaces to explore and affirm their authenticity as leaders. These communities are optimal to assist in supporting continued self-efficacy among female executive leaders of color. These spaces promote trust where female CEOs of color may be inclined to articulate the challenges of their role. The intent of peer mentoring is the mutuality and reciprocity of the relationship as opposed to the more traditional dyad relationship (Parker et al., 2008) that can be found in more formal spaces with others they have not yet built rapport. The peer-led mentor community may fast track the sense of belonging, expand social networks, and increase social capital quicker. This recommendation takes community cultural wealth into consideration as context to build additional capital for all women of color.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study has explored the diverse experiences of a group of participants that may be described as demographically similar: self-identification as Chicana, Latina, or of Hispanic ancestry; current nonprofit CEOs; U.S.-born; and have had or have at least one meaningful

mentor. Although the group demographically share similar characteristics, the data show that each have had non-monolithic experiences that may be further explored in ongoing research. Based on the results of the study, further research is recommended and captured in Table 13.

Table 13
Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for Future Research
1. Conduct similar studies exploring mentors' experiences with mentor-protégé relationships.
2. Conduct research focused in the nonprofit sector which also disaggregates executive demographic data by race, ethnicity, and gender.

Future Research with Underrepresented Groups and Sectors

This study has been foundational in that it has focused on a specific group that has not yet been emphasized in empirical research. The experiences of Latina nonprofit executive leaders has historically been diluted because they are aggregated within studies generally about all women, all women of color, or all people of color. The study has also delved into the mentoring phenomenon of Latina protégés and the nonprofit sector, which is also understudied. The following recommendations for future research extends the findings from this study.

Recommendation 1: Mentors' lived experiences. Exploring the executive mentoring experiences from the mentors' perspective would further assist in a greater holistic view of this phenomenon. Questions could be developed based on the five themes found in this study to produce deeper exploration into these lived experiences. This research may be utilized to compare mentor and protégé perspectives. Collecting data on what mentors believe make a good fit or suitable relationship may be compared to the data that have captured the protégé

perception. Further exploring these lived experiences may enhance mentoring programs as well. Additionally, exploring actual mentor-protégé dyads or peer mentor groups may produce richer information into the recommendations of practice discussed above.

Recommendation 2: Emphasis on the nonprofit sector and data disaggregation.

Nonprofit organizations do not receive the same attention that other sectors do in education and business research. As nonprofit organizations continue to try to meet the needs of communities in innovative ways with very limited resources, the nonprofit sector needs to be further studied, especially as they are resourceful and highly-connected, on-the-ground stewards for community economic development. As the sector experiences an unprecedented demand on its services due to global health disasters and a recent greater emphasis on racial and ethnic equity and social justice, more leaders of color will potentially become CEOs of these organizations and beyond. Executive leaders of color will require career and psychosocial support as they transition into their roles. Other sectors and industries will look to the nonprofit community for guidance as stalwarts of effective and efficient change. As the U.S. enters deeper into tumultuous times, systems that are not addressing or meeting the needs of their constituents will further look to the nonprofit sector for leadership as it has historically been successful in creating change during crises. Thus, the level and type of leadership of the nonprofit requires ongoing and empirical study. It begins with disaggregating the racial, ethnic, and gender composition of nonprofit executive leadership. I was unable to locate such data specific to California during this study.

Summary

This study began examining the disparity between California's population estimates indicating Latinas/os represent close to 40% of the state's population while the number of Latina CEOs in the state is miniscule. I did not locate disaggregated data that showed the number of

Latina nonprofit CEOs in California, or in the country; rather, the closest data I located showed either people of color, women, or Latinas/os combined into one group. Despite the lack of data and empirical literature, the data that do exist showed that people of color disproportionately hold CEO positions in the nonprofit sector that represent more people of color and other marginalized groups.

Along with my own personal experience as a nonprofit CEO, I sought to explore how quality mentoring influences Latinas who have successfully obtained nonprofit CEO roles. The significance of this exploration is directly connected to understanding how best to support the Latina nonprofit CEO to increase retention in their position as they are faced with a multitude of challenges stemming from the lack of support during executive transition, economic downturn during state and national crises, and personal and cultural navigation that impact their own perceptions of efficacy.

The current socio-political environment will change the way in which leaders are recruited and the expectations of them in all business environments and sectors. Many business environments are examining their recruitment and hiring processes, which is anticipated to attract a greater number of people of color to executive positions. The findings from this study illustrate that these individuals may request additional support that is meaningful for them to feel more capable in navigating their executive positions, especially as CEO. Quality mentorship can produce smoother transitions and ongoing support to individuals who may not have felt supported throughout their career trajectory.

This study is foundational because it began to explore some of the concepts that were introduced in mentoring research decades ago that failed to recognize the intersectional experiences and needs from a historically marginalized group of leaders. Although the

participants in this study each have unique experiences, key thematic findings are relevant and need to be taken into consideration by protégés, mentors, employers, and formal and informal groups that desire to support female nonprofit CEOs of color. Doing so could increase retention of this group in their leadership positions.

Although I collected thick and rich descriptive data, I recommend reducing the number of interview questions to delve deeper into leadership experiences within these five themes. However, as a foundational study, it has unveiled key information that is beneficial to many. I anticipate this study will invite future researchers to engage in similar approaches on this topic. This study has begun to peel the layers back and revealed experiences and benefits of mentoring that assist Latina leaders to rise above the adobe ceiling. The study has personally impacted me as a leader and a researcher. This process has validated my own intersectional experiences and increased my researcher self-efficacy by affirming that my experience, perspective, and voice is needed in academe. It has created space for me to engage in my own self-reflexive process as described in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCHER SELF-REFLEXIVITY

As presented in Chapter 1, my personal experience as a Latina nonprofit CEO in California may had been different if I felt I had an individual who I considered a mentor. I had a short tenure as a CEO because I felt I lacked the guidance I needed to successfully transition into the role. The intentional decision to maintain a self-reflexivity journal assisted me in reconciling my researcher pre-understandings (Heidegger, 1953/2010) and making key decisions regarding my research perspective, how it was integrated into the design, data collection methodology, and data analysis of this study. Additionally, selecting to utilize a hermeneutic phenomenological approach was deliberate in acknowledging my interpretations and mean-making as a researcher, especially as I possessed similar demographic characteristics as the participants. The member checking process was part of the hermeneutic loop approach. Member checking contributed to my engagement in my self-reflexivity described in this chapter. I developed the researcher self-reflexivity process model after I completed the data analysis, at which time I was able to examine the phases and stages I experienced as I engaged in this study. In this chapter, I discuss the process model and how informal mentoring from my networks, advisors, participants, and circle of friends were critical for me to assert my researcher perspective that recognized the non-monolithic experiences of participants and the researcher.

My researcher self-reflexivity process began prior to beginning my doctoral journey. I maintained a journal which helped me to capture what resonated with me throughout the process. The journal is 5x7-inch-sized and was carried in my bag on a daily basis. It assisted me to reflect on thoughts and decisions I was making. To prepare for writing this culminating chapter I went through my journal and organized my writing chronologically into pre-data collection, data

collection, and data analysis phases. I referenced key reflections as "leadership," "mentoring," and "observations." These references assisted me in determining whether my reflections pertained to my own thoughts on leadership, mentoring/advising that I felt I received, and general observations about participants' and peers' statements. The importance of self-reflexivity was a key strategy to demonstrate the trustworthiness of this study. It is important to note that I have gravitated to journaling for most of my life and that this was a personal practice for me, as researcher, to maintain my evolved inside-to-outsider researcher positionality.

What is Researcher Self-Reflexivity?

Self-reflexivity looks into the role of self as the researcher, the context, and process (Alley et al., 2015). Cunliffe (2016) described the self-reflexivity level as one's own beliefs and values, and the critical reflexive level as related to organizational practices and knowledge. Cunliffe explained the critical reflexive practice questions that individuals and researchers may take for granted both in spoken and unspoken formats, and explored the impacts that may have in our work. It was important for me to include a researcher self-reflexivity process into this study because of possible feelings and experiences that I may have shared with the participants. My goal was to acknowledge my biases, values, and assumptions, and interpret and understand the stories of those I interviewed.

Researcher Self-Reflexivity in Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research

It is hermeneutic phenomenology that introduces the ability for the researcher to not completely bracket herself and explore her own meaning-making (Polkinghorne, 1983; Thompson, 2018). As the researcher, that takes an asset-based approach (Bernal, 2002; Delgado Bernal & Alemán, 2017; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) hermeneutic phenomenology holds true for both the experiences of participants and that of the researcher,

especially since I shared similar demographic and social identity characteristics with the participants. Due to potential mutual experiences I had explored with the participants, I engaged in researcher and participant co-constitution (Koch, 1995) through member checking in the form of hermeneutic loops with participant feedback and circle of friends (peer review). My researcher self-reflexivity process was purposeful and intended to promote deeper thinking into pre-understanding, interpretation, and meaning-making of the data.

Self-reflexivity is beneficial in that it may be conducted with various research methodologies. It allows examination of pre-understanding of phenomena prior to interpretation especially for researchers who choose specific topics of inquiry that are braided with personal and professional interests (Thompson, 2018). Thompson (2018) discussed strategies when participants and researcher possess narratives that are ultimately joined, in what is referred to as *shared intelligibility*. Shared intelligibility may be useful to reduce the presence of various interpretations, arrange perspectives so that researchers that are immersed in social and cultural norms that may challenge them, and identify perceptions that do not surface and possibly are taken for granted. This is referred to as *backgrounding* (Thompson, 2018). Kohl and McCutcheon (2015) introduced the idea of kitchen table reflexivity as a strategy that creates a safe space for researchers that have been excluded from larger research spaces. The concept of discussing and being reflexive at the kitchen table was used as a safe and comfortable space to reflect on how research affects the researcher that may otherwise be ignored or taken for granted (Kohl & McCutcheon, 2015). Kohl and McCutcheon (2015) asserted that, “reflexivity is not a process that occurs only on a grounded level; how we engage with our identity is in part informed by our knowledge base” (p. 753). They pointed to how qualitative research rooted in

feminist and CRM encourages the researcher to further engage within their environments. That assertion fit well with this study.

Literature that highlighted the self-reflexivity process appeared to be dependent on the type of study and researcher perspective. My asset-based perspective is indicative of my principles that all individuals have stories to share and lessons to teach. However, if researchers fail to present those stories in an authentic manner (Kohl & McCutcheon, 2015) by bypassing critical steps to validate interpretations and understanding, then we do a disservice to our participants and people who have entrusted us to share their stories. In addition to respecting the stories of the participants, I sought to reflect upon my own growth and transformation during my research journey. Including self-reflexive strategies kept me grounded and became a tool that has assisted my personal mentoring relationships as a scholar.

Thompson (2018) illustrated opportunities when she included checkpoints that produced triangulation. Those checkpoints included the participant and researcher and how semantic knowledge is shared between them, which ultimately informs the researcher's narrative. She utilized this researcher narrative and continuous participant knowledge to eventually produce meanings and a shared intelligibility in her work. Later in this chapter I have reintroduced the illustration of hermeneutic loops I integrated with similar checkpoints and shared intelligibility. These checkpoints assisted my self-reflexivity process and became growth opportunities for me as a researcher. An example of my growth occurred as I reflected on the participants' adherence to their authentic leadership. I wrote:

> When I think about my authenticity, it is challenging when I am alone in a room full of "privilege." I can't stand my ground and it feels overwhelming being "the voice." Sometimes being authentic means working or existing in a culture that accepts and cultivates it.

I wrote this entry after exploring the concept of authentic leadership with an advisor prior to conducting the interviews. Having had pondered this concept in advance helped to be cognizant about cultivating spaces for participants to want to share their stories. Interestingly, my thoughts regarding authentic leadership was shared by the participants as well. This epitomized the importance of including a self-reflexive process that monitored my researcher insider-to-outsider researcher positionality.

Engaging in my own self-reflexivity was essential during my research process. I met several of my participant criteria: self-identify as Chicana, U.S.-born, and had been a nonprofit CEO in California. I recognized my positionality as an insider-outsider early on and understood that I could possibly identify with experiences shared by the participants. This was a pre-understanding I had considered. I made the decision to engage in a self-reflexive process to maintain my positionality and periodically assess my assumptions, decisions, and reflections throughout my research. Essentially, I may have easily been a participant in my own research study. For this reason I ultimately decided to solely be an outsider to be capable of reflexivity and review my work specifically beginning with data collection through data analysis phases (Finefter-Rosenbluh, 2017). It was my intent to be the vessel that shared my participant experiences while understanding my privilege and perceived power as a researcher. My goal was to acknowledge my pre-understandings and interpret participant experiences to the best of my ability. The pre-data collection phase was an exploration of the shifting relationship I had with my mentors and advisors during the decision-making process of this study.

Pre-Data Collection

My self-reflexive process is depicted in Figure 3 and is organized into phases: 1) pre-data collection that included the stages of topic exploration, developing my researcher perspective,

and transitioning into a scholar; 2) data collection, with the stage referred to as researcher reconciliation; and 3) data analysis, highlighting the stage in which I had my revelation as a researcher.

Research shows that journaling is a method of learning that increases sensitivity and helps us appreciate the world around us (Alley et al., 2015). I included journal entries in the remainder of this chapter to illustrate key reflections. I chose to document my reflections dated in an unstructured format to not limit my thoughts and keep my ideas free flowing. No planned prompts or questions were utilized. As the process continued, my reflections became more focused and built on the previous phase/stage. The pre-data collection phase was the most reflexive as it required an articulation of my perspective and acknowledgement of any biases I may have had prior to data collection.

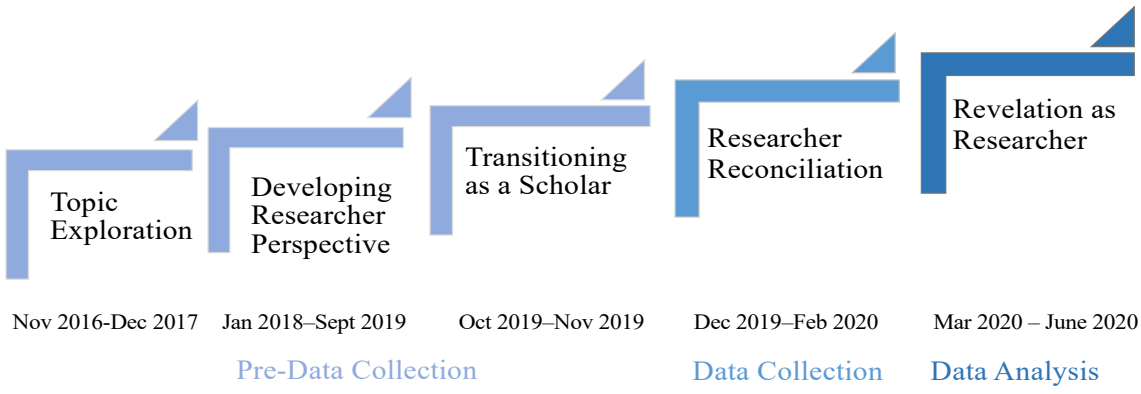

Figure 3. Researcher self-reflexivity process model.

Topic Exploration

Designing my research topic consisted of several iterations. Since its inception I was certain to recognize the intersectional experiences of Latina leaders and represent their stories as

authentically as possible. This was important because of how participants perceived the contexts that influenced their leadership experiences. As I considered what my research agenda would be during this journey I reflected on my definition of leadership and it shifted as I wrote, "[We] need to change our thinking about leadership from transactional approaches to value-based motivation." I pondered about what that motivation could be or derive from. Eventually, I realized the values-based motivation was aligned with mentoring phenomena because a quality mentor needs to encourage protégés to seek why and how their leadership is meaningful to them. I produced several journal entries regarding research topics of interest related to first-generation U.S.-born Latinas, possible negotiation or affirmation of socio-cultural identity during and after leadership transition, self-efficacy in leadership, perceptions of success, and imposter syndrome among Latina leaders. After conducting an extensive literature review on the topic of imposter syndrome among high achieving women (Clance & Imes, 1978) the literature indicated that mentors help reduce imposter syndrome experienced by high achieving women. Exploring my topic took over a year because the literature I examined was disjointed, which assisted me in understanding the gaps I saw in empirical research. Intersectional and non-monolithic experiences were recurring reflections and became my compass throughout my work. At the same time, I explored my researcher perspective, which was critical to selecting my official topic. I transitioned from exploring my topic to developing my perspective.

Developing Researcher Perspective

I spent approximately two years exploring and self-reflecting on how to articulate my researcher perspective. I met with peers, mentors, and nonprofit leaders not associated with this study to explore their experiences with mentoring relationships. Their stories were inspiring and possibly could benefit others, which affirmed the asset-based perspective described in Chapter 1.

The stories expanded my lens of mentoring from dyads to peer or group mentoring. This became a critical element prompting me to include the community cultural wealth typology (Yosso, 2005) in the theoretical framework, as peers and social groups are important considerations for Latinas' community context. After being invited to a peer mentor group in a county along the California coast I wrote:

> An informal group. [She] spoke about the need to feel connected with other Latinas in a region that continues to discriminate with workplace politics…I need to build a relationship with [her]. [She] spoke about the support from the [group]. That they understand the things they each deal with in the workplace—how to navigate the politics too. [They] both wore turquoise jewelry that reminded me of the older Chicanas back in the day. I noticed I felt an immediate calm and comfort when I met them…When I left the group they each stood up and gave me a hug and kiss on the cheek like most Latinas/os do. I feel accepted and welcomed even though it was my first meeting…I asked whether they mentor the younger women in the group or if they have mentors themselves. [She] mentioned it's not a formalized thing. They actually discourage talking about work during meetings…[She] said it was by chance when she met a [group] member at an event who invited her. [She] had just began her new ED role and has been attending since…They spoke about their families, pets, upcoming vacations. It felt like a family and a source of support among Latina leaders who encounter workplace situations that they can't really discuss with anyone else at work. [She] said, "at work you can't be a whiner."

Attending this get-together with Latina leaders influenced me to be mindful about informal, peer mentoring that takes place for many Latinas. It broadened my researcher lens to remind me that mentor-protégé relationships are not solely formal or paired as dyads. The interaction with the group introduced me to the idea of peer mentoring in group settings. Engaging and observing the group motivated me to review literature about peer mentoring in preparation for this study. In hindsight, the experience would allude to Theme 5 of this study's findings, that peer mentoring promotes a sense of openness and vulnerability. An interesting finding since the interview protocol did not specifically ask about peer mentorship.

Self-reflexivity is a deep thought provoking process that may influence the way in which we perceive our environments. The stronger and more confident I became with my research

perspective, the more I was prompted to reflect on other aspects of my life. A journal entry captured how my new experiences and learnings began to impact me in different workplace environments:

> It's clearer that systems-controlled environments affect me negatively when I don't have positive leadership around me. As I delve into my leadership topic things are so much more obvious….All this research that I do makes me see how unhealthy my environment is to my growth. And I can't verbalize that to anyone at work, so I keep burying it. And that makes me frustrated and powerless.

This reflection reinforced my intent to ensure transparency and that the voices of the study participants would be respected and authentically shared. My decision to provide them with a copy of their transcript derived from this time of reflection. The individuals and mentors involved in my self-reflexive process helped me to maintain the asset-based researcher perspective I intended and to feel confident about seeking guidance for myself.

As I began to narrow my research topic I sought to incorporate a second theory that demonstrated my desire to highlight Latina social identity. A journal entry states: "She suggested I look at critical feminist theory (CFT) as part of this study. That would mean I use social capital theory and CFT…But how? It makes sense but what about the 'Latina' part?" I felt CFT ignored the Latina socio-cultural identity. As a Latina researcher I could not relate and interpret the Latina experience with just CFT. I grappled with this for several months ultimately deciding to incorporate community cultural wealth typology to acknowledge a Latina asset-based perspective. I wrote about a conversation I had with an advisor: "I heard myself telling her that we have our own voices and many Latinas do not wish to be the voice of all Latinas." This became a pivotal point for me when I noticed my voice was becoming confident to almost question the validity of research. I wrote: "Latinas' experiences are ingrained. They don't just occur in higher education, or the workplace. They travel with us. Therefore, the influences impact every part of who we are." I reflected deeply about my positionality that was taking

shape as a researcher: “I have biases and they stem from how people have treated me. They make me feel inferior, or is it me that holds me back?” As a result of my own self-reflexive process and mentor’s advisement I decided that I had to emphasize any racial and ethnic marginalization of the participants with their own voice. I also had to be prepared for participants to state they never felt marginalized. That became a reflective moment as I grappled with participants possibly never feeling marginalized, plus the fact that empirical research has failed to consistently bring the voice of Latinas to the forefront.

Transitioning as a Scholar

Through mentoring, and equipped with this greater sense of self-efficacy as a scholar, I made more purposeful decisions with the direction I wished my research to go. I believe that my self-reflexive process positively impacted me. Miles et al. (2020) advised to stay self-aware and reflexive from development of research questions through verification techniques: “Only through such sustained reflexive awareness can regular self-correction occur—not just during specific analysis episodes over time, as the methods themselves iterate and develop” (p. 335). Thus, I decided to maintain a level of self-awareness throughout my journey. For example, during finalizing my interview protocol I wrote: “My research has had me reflecting and wondering how I would answer my own interview questions.”

Transitioning as a scholar meant having the knowledge and confidence to articulate the justification for my research design. An advisor suggested that I write about my own experience which was meaningful considering the asset-based perspective that I wanted to have guide my work. I believe that her guidance assisted me to better explain my work. At times, I questioned how I would describe my decision-making:

> I have to explain why I am excluding non U.S.-born Latinas from my study. I feel bad saying that their experiences may be different than mine. But why should I feel bad? Is

> it because I am U.S.-born and I'm making the argument that I am interpreting their experiences and I can't interpret an experience I do not have personal, pre-understanding, presuppositions about?....I am beginning to feel that I need to own my space and position as a scholar. I can't be so trepidatious about my assertions. Doctor told me to own my data and space. She said I'm the researcher and if I interpret, then I do. This is my study and my interpretations.

This was a meaningful reflection to have prior to data collection. In actuality, one of the participants asked me why I was only interviewing U.S.-born Latinas. My prior reflections helped me explain to her why that decision was made without trepidation.

As I moved closer to data collection, reflections on my personal experience became more pronounced: "Maybe I am doing this study because it's the way to share my voice. In hindsight, maybe I chose my topic because I wonder how my career and life may have turned out differently if I had more support." Maintaining my researcher positionality required checking in with myself: "I think about how being a researcher has a sense of power. We as researchers may not view it that way, we must demonstrate that participants are also facilitators of information too." This statement affirmed the hermeneutic phenomenological approach and perspective I purposely chose as researcher. Pre-data collection required the most journaling as I developed this study and became confident in articulating my perspective. Choosing a hermeneutic phenomenological approach compelled me to include additional steps in data collection and data analysis as already described in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

Data Collection

Taking the time to document my reflexive process prior to data collection assisted me with my pre-understanding (Heidegger, 1953/2010) of the research topic and prepared me to actively engage in my inquiry. The researcher reconciliation stage assisted with broadening my lens to be prepared to collect all experiences that would be shared with me.

Researcher Reconciliation

Researcher reconciliation defined my reflexive process during data collection. This step included focusing on specific biases that may have influenced my positionality prior to data analysis. A few points of reflection that arose pertained to the participants' concept of mentor, the surprising significance of non-Latina mentors, and the self-proclaimed Americanized experience.

First, I was surprised that only a few participants identified family members as mentors. I believe my parents had been role models of mine and I was prepared to hear more about that from participants. A few participants briefly described family members as mentors, but reverted back to describing a formal mentor. During my reflections I realized that participants identified mentors from formal environments who provided career advice. I reconciled that family members would not have been described in formal school or work environments that participants shared experiences about. It was natural and obvious for them to possibly separate family from leadership. Although family members were not deeply described as formal mentors, community cultural wealth was demonstrated as participants spoke about receiving informal psychosocial support from family and community. Through journaling it became clearer that family mentors were placed in separate contexts, but do exist as mentors.

Second, participants indicated that they did not necessarily have Latina mentors. Participants described non-Latina White women and men as mentors as equally as they did Latina mentors. These participants were compelled to explain that they did not have a Latina mentor. It felt as though they sought my approval. I thought about my own experience of not having had a meaningful Latina mentor in a formal setting during my personal leadership development. I recalled a meaningful academic advisor in college—a White British woman. I

realized that Latinas may believe their experiences are unique to them, and not share them with others. Hearing these participant stories validated that my experience is part of the norm. It showed the value of my research and the need to share these stories on a broader level. I began to believe that my participants became a source of peer support for myself as well, even as the researcher.

Third, bias creep set in as a few participants self-identified as Americanized. The Americanized identity conflicted with my self-identification as Chicana that influences my personal and social-political-cultural lens in which I express my attitudes and behavior. I had learned that the term Americanized could be misconstrued with an individual who chooses to assimilate versus acculturate, demonstrating a choice to hide one's culture versus incorporate or affirm it altogether. One example included a participant making stereotypical statements about Latino households experiencing alcoholism and domestic violence, and her experience of being raised in a Latino home that had been free of that. Another participant mentioned she did not feel comfortable around other Latinas which disappointed me because of possible negative treatment or stereotypes that she may have of Latinas.

Earlier chapters of this dissertation mentioned that a few individuals were interested in participating in this study, but were not selected or eligible. I thought about their participation on a case-by-case basis. One individual had initially scheduled an interview with me but appeared reluctant and squeezed me into a narrow window on her schedule. I wrote: "One person is making me feel like I am bothering her but did book a time with me in January. I don't want to feel rushed and want participants to be excited about supporting my work." Ultimately, I cancelled this interview because this individual indicated the interview would be scheduled the morning she was traveling to begin her vacation. The risk of a delayed flight or other

transportation issues were also present. In another instance, a woman did not meet the criteria, but expressed complete excitement about participating. After informing her that she did not meet the interview criteria I reflected: "When people are willing to participant in your research and then realize they don't meet your criteria, it's heartbreaking because it's like you put out an essence of, like, you don't value their stories or experiences."

Through numerous journal entries and mentorship I supported all participants' perspectives serving as a compass to their understanding of their social identities. The three researcher self-reflexive phases helped me to reconcile data that triggered me to explore myself even deeper. Although it felt uncomfortable, it was necessary to undertake this reflection prior to data analysis. Based on researcher reconciliation, a structured member checking process was planned during data analysis with participants and circles of friends. Every person involved in member checking—a process of participant validation and peer review (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016),—provided additional guidance and advisement. I purposely included structured member checking from participants (validation), circle of friends (peers), and others at different points in the study.

Data Analysis

Selecting a hermeneutic phenomenological approach was intentional. I understood my insider-to-outsider researcher positionality had to be actively managed, paying attention to any bias or judgements that surfaced during data analysis. Being open to constructive feedback was essential. Miles et al. (2020) asserted that researcher objectivity is increased when "the researcher has been explicit and self-aware as possible about bias and assumptions, values and biases, and affective states—and how they may have come into play during the study" (p. 305). Anticipating for possible bias and assumptions, I intentionally created a member checking

process represented in the form of hermeneutic loops. The process consisted of participant validation and peer review (see Figure 1). Chapter 3 described this member checking process more specifically. However, it is discussed in this chapter because of the self-reflection that the process created for me as the researcher. Although member checking and self-reflexive journaling are separate methods that demonstrate trustworthiness, I personally found that they can influence each other as well.

Although Heidegger (1953/2010) asserted that researcher objectivity cannot be fully attained, the use of my self-reflexivity journal with member checking helped me to remain reasonably unbiased. Miles et al. (2020) advised to consult with mentors with whom one trusts and develop additional peer support. Qualitative studies are potential opportunities for participants to engage in self-reflection; feel recognized; feel a sense of catharsis and empathy; and to feel validated (Wolgemuth et al., 2015). I purposely integrated advising from participants, peers, and advisors with the intent of receiving constructive feedback and validation during the qualitative research process. I considered all member checking as a form of advising, which was incorporated during data analysis.

Revelation as Researcher

Incorporating participant validation and circle of friends feedback assisted in increasing my confidence as a researcher. I received positive affirmation of the interpretations and meaning-making of the data I processed, which helped me to continue with my analysis. Once I reached this stage my confidence was evident. I began to meet with students who showed genuine interest in my work, and with colleagues who were interested in my study and wanted more information about it. This stage sparked my own researcher self-efficacy and inspiration to

begin to share my work. The information below demonstrates key occurrences influencing this revelation.

Participant validation was intended to ensure their voices remained authentic and that their experiences were accurately collected. Although it was provided, it also gave me additional opportunities to improve as a research scholar. The first feedback opportunity was incorporated to support transparency by providing every participant with a copy of their transcript. They were given an opportunity to share their immediate reactions to their own narrative. I felt it important that they receive a document containing their experiences especially since their voices are not normally uplifted in empirical research. In hindsight, I believe that I created a self-reflexive opportunity for them as well.

The second feedback opportunity occurred after the circle of friends' review of emergent themes. I wrote:

> I am glad I added this second participant member check into my data analysis. I may have felt hesitant later if I presented my data. I am even more confident now. Could it be that my participants and critical friends are somehow mentoring me?

While developing my thematic analysis I felt uncomfortable removing particular codes with a low count. In a journal entry I wrote: "Removing data codes makes me second guess if I'm ignoring something important. If I am still following an asset-based perspective, I need good explanations as to why I chose to keep what I do." Based on the second circle of friends feedback, participants received an executive summary of the five thematic findings that were included in the study. Their feedback was positive and demonstrated interest in the findings. Participants primarily requested clarification on how a few of the themes were labeled.

After receiving the executive summary, a participant stated that her sense of worth derives from her mentor. My immediate reaction was that she came across powerless:

> "My mentor gives me my self-worth." My immediate reaction is to call/say, "What the hell are you thinking?! You're a CEO!" But then after reflecting I thought, "Shit, I can feel the same way. But most people, leaders in fact, will never admit that."

I began to shift my thinking to acknowledge the comfort and/or trust she must have felt to share that with me. Her statement was a symbol of vulnerability that in fact shows her courage and high level of self-awareness. My self-reflexive process helped me to better understand and interpret the narrative that my participant conveyed. Participant and peer feedback cultivated intentional spaces to continue to engage in my researcher reflexivity.

Both circle of friends convenings provided peer feedback with initial interview questions that were formulated and with review of initial thematic findings. The first peer feedback occurred during the development of the demographic questionnaire and interview questions. The task focused on clarity of questions with suggestions on how to improve them. The feedback I received highlighted my neglect of including educational levels lower than a college degree on the questionnaire. This peer described her experience about having "some college" and although she was working on her college degree at the time, she was proud of having some college and being in a leadership role. This was thought provoking for me, to ensure that I had not neglected potential responses on the questionnaire. More broadly, I reflected about how I knew leaders have various educational backgrounds, but had missed including "some college" as a choice. I had two participants with "some college" and if I had neglected to offer that as a choice it may have impacted the interview or made them feel uncomfortable.

The second circle provided peer feedback on the initial emergent themes. The feedback gained instilled more confidence in my research ability. After facilitating a second circle of friends group and sharing my initial thematic findings, I wrote about my observation that psychosocial mentoring was critical for the participants: "They agreed that the psychosocial

mentoring type is the most significant…assumed participants would give responses that were psychosocial…When shown the 10 themes, they discussed the authenticity, psychosocial stuff, and the illusion of limited leadership space the most." Although most individuals in this circle of friends had been my peers for numerous years, one individual I had not seen in more than 25 years. Nonetheless, I trusted this group to provide candid feedback that would assist me in finalizing the findings (Parker et al., 2008). The peer group was critical and articulated their opinions in a manner that I understood (Kohl & McCutcheon, 2015). Trusting my peer mentors in this process was important to maintaining my vulnerability as I shared my research for the first time. As I completed data analysis I reflected on the entire process and came to the understanding that the rigor of my analysis demonstrated the respect I have for the participants' voices and for myself as the researcher—the conveyor of information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Summary

Qualitative research would benefit from the inclusion of a self-reflexive process, especially while conducting phenomenological studies in which the researcher may need to process pre-understandings, interpretations, and meanings. It helped me to navigate my biases and assumptions that surfaced. My self-reflexivity was an individualized process that began prior to selecting my research topic through the completion of data analysis. Self-reflexivity became easier and more focused over time. Its organic nature allowed me to learn when I needed to process my thoughts; usually occurring when a participant or peer awoke strong feelings in me, or during immediate thought-provoking moments that I felt I needed to reconcile. Being attuned to my asset-based perspective streamlined my reflexivity engagement process.

The researcher self-reflexivity process model is a 3-phase, 5-stage, self-reflexive process that was organically created and synthesized after data analysis was completed. It has become invaluable to adhering to an asset-based, hermeneutic phenomenological perspective. My process was unique to me but can be utilized by any qualitative researcher. It produced benefits and enlightened me to both the participants' and my own experiences. My journal clearly documented free flowing ideas, challenges, accomplishments, and key decision-making. It helped me articulate biases and challenges while contributing to organizing key issues that mentors and advisors assisted me to navigate. The process performed needs to be comfortable for the researcher because it requires dedicated time and commitment to integrate into the research process.

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APPENDIX A: PRE-INTERVIEW RESEARCHER SCRIPT

Hello, thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my study. My goal is to learn about your experiences with mentoring as a protégé. As you may already know mentoring may also be referred to as coaching, sponsoring, role modeling, counseling, advising, and teaching. A mentor may also be a friend or family member who has supported or influenced us in some way. I would like to create a space with you to feel comfortable sharing your experiences, feelings, and thoughts and it be the center of our conversation. In order to give you my fullest attention it will help if I can audio record this interview. Is it okay with you that I record our conversation?

There are no right or wrong answers, desirable or non-desirable responses. I just want to hear your story about your mentoring relationships and how it may have influenced your leadership development. Feel free to take pauses, or interrupt this interview at any time if you are feeling uncomfortable or need to take a break. The audio recording and my field notes will assist me to transcribe this interview and remember our conversation. Everything you say will remain confidential and anonymous. Pseudonyms will be used instead of your name in the write up of this study. You will have an opportunity to read your interview transcript and review this project's key findings before it is published.

Please take a minute to review the informed consent form and let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today.

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC

IRB Approval 12/3/19
Valid through 12/2/20

Research Title: Rising Above the Adobe Ceiling: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of Mentoring and Social Capital Influences Among California Latina Nonprofit Leaders

Lead Researcher: Belinda Hernandez

Faculty Advisor (if any): Laura Hallberg, Ed.D.

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION: Your consent is being requested to voluntarily participate in a research study regarding your mentoring experiences as a protégé/mentee. The purpose of this research study is to explore how Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California leverage mentoring relationships that may influence their leadership development. You will complete a 1-5 minute demographic questionnaire, and participate in a 60-90 minute in-person interview. If needed, a 30 minute follow up interview may be conducted. Interview questions will be open-ended to explore your thoughts and mentoring experiences.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation will take approximately 61 to 125 minutes, total.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are minimal psychological, sociological, and risks to loss of confidentiality for participating in this study. Your confidentiality can not be completely guaranteed. However, the researcher will utilize complete anonymity of all participants in oral and written contexts by utilizing pseudonyms. The researcher will securely store all documents that may identify participants. The interview may increase some anxiety among participants but the researcher will pause, take breaks, and assure confidentiality. The benefits of your participation include sharing your experiences in an open and valued manner. You will also have an opportunity to share the challenges and successes of your leadership experiences that may impact others. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your employment, or any other benefits to which you are entitled.

COMPENSATION: You will receive no compensation to participate in this study.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this research project, you understand that your participation is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right to refuse to answer any particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented in academic journals, at professional meetings or conferences, and with industry representatives. It may be possible that we may decide that your participation in this research is not appropriate. If that occurs, you will be dismissed from the study. However, we appreciate your willingness to participate in this research.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The following steps will be taken to protect confidentiality.

Prior to the interview, I will turn on an audio recorder or smartphone that will record our interview. The recording will assist me to transcribe and review our conversation, and capture relevant notes for the write up of this study. The audio recording, notes, and transcripts will be securely stored in my office, and on a password protected laptop that only I know. In the event a follow up interview is needed, it may be conducted in person or over the phone. Follow up interviews conducted over the phone will be audio recorded.

UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC

IRB Approval 12/3/19
Valid through 12/2/20

Actual transcripts and notes will not be included in journal articles or write up's, nor shown at meetings or conferences. However, the study's final write up will be published, and experiences will be utilized anonymously with pseudonyms, coded, and analyzed thematically. Anonymous data and information will be used in this study's write up and in public context. Your organization and personal identifying information will not be used in any public contexts.

ADDITIONAL COSTS TO SUBJECT: There is no additional costs to you for participating in this study.

DISCLOSURE OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: The researcher has no conflicts of interest in this study.

NOTIFICATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS: If interested, participants will have an opportunity to receive a copy of their interview transcript, review preliminary thematic findings prior to publishing, and be notified of the final research manuscript.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Lead Researcher, Belinda Hernandez, at [redacted] and/or the Faculty Research Advisor, Dr. Laura Hallberg at [redacted].

Independent Contact: If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact Office of Research and Sponsored Programs to speak to someone independent of the research team at (209)-946-3903 or *IRB@pacific.edu*.

Appointment Contact: If you need to change your interview appointment, please contact Belinda Hernandez at [redacted] or by email at [redacted]

I hereby consent: (Indicate ***Yes*** or ***No***)

- To be audio recorded during this study:
  ___Yes ___No
- For such audio records resulting from this study to be used for accurately producing data and information associated with this study:
  ___Yes ___No

The extra copy of this signed and dated consent form is for you to keep.

UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC

IRB Approval 12/3/19
Valid through 12/2/20

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you have been afforded the opportunity to ask, and have answered, any questions that you may have, that your participation is completely voluntary, that you understand that you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

SIGNATURE _____ **DATE** _____

Research Study Participant (Print Name): _____

Researcher Who Obtained Consent (Print Name): _____

APPENDIX C: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Do you identify as Latina/Chicana/Hispanic (of any race)? □ Yes □ No

Age range (years)

□ Less than 40 y.o. □ 40-49 y.o. □ 50-59 y.o. □ 60+

Highest education completed

□ No high school
□ GED
□ High school diploma
□ Some college
□ Bachelor degree
□ Master degree
□ Doctoral/Professional degree
□ Vocational/Certificate

Total time in a senior leadership position (Director or higher) _____

Title of **current** position _____

Length of time in **current** position _____

City and County of **current** employment _____

Name of **current** organization _____

Have you **ever** participated in a mentoring relationship? □ Yes □ No

Do you **currently** have a mentor/coach/sponsor/role model/counselor/friend/family member that you consider a mentor?
□ Yes □ No

If I must follow up with you to clarify anything in this interview, may I contact you?
□ Yes □ No □ Don't Know

Would you be interested in participating in a community network of Latina leaders if one is created as a product of this research?
□ Yes □ No □ Don't Know

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

INTRO: I asked you to be part of this study because you are a Latina leading a nonprofit organization with experience as a protégé in a mentoring relationship.

1. Can you briefly tell me about your **CURRENT NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION**? (Dare to Lead report, 2011).

   [This is a bridge between the Demo Questionnaire and interview – 2 minute maximum]

   (F/U) Size, # employees, budget $

Questions # 2-6 refer to RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What are the salient characteristics of quality mentoring relationships for Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California?

I am interested in many aspects of mentoring relationships.

2. Please describe your **MOST SIGNIFICANT MENTOR'S GENDER AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND** and **HOW YOUR MENTORING RELATIONSHIP FORMED?**

   (F/U) Did you know them prior?

   (F/U) What was it about that person that made you think they would be a good mentor for you?

3. Describe the **TYPE OF GUIDANCE OR SUPPORT** you were looking for from your mentor? (Career or psychosocial support re: Kram, 1985).

   (F/U) Tell me about a time when you received that type of guidance and support?

   (F/U) Did you work together on setting goals for yourself?

   (F/U) How (in person/phone/email) and how often did you meet with that person?

4. What was **MOST BENEFICIAL** about that relationship for you?

   (F/U) *Could you describe how a mentor has helped you to **EXPAND YOUR SOCIAL OR CAREER NETWORK**?*

(F/U) A mentoring relationship may be short- or long-term, can you describe whether you are still being mentored by this person, or when you felt confident to **MOVE ON**?

(F/U) Did they become more of a friend or colleague at that point?

Questions # 7-11 refer to RESEARCH QUESTION 2: How have quality mentoring relationships influenced Latina leaders' sense of self-efficacy and leadership development?

5. Describe how your mentor or the mentoring relationship has influenced your ability to navigate your own **AUTHENTICITY AS A LEADER**? [If needed, e.g. Shifting between languages - English/Spanish/Spanglish, code switching, feeling accepted to discuss cultural challenges, comfort].

   (F/U) How have they or how has it impacted your self-perception as a leader?

6. How do you believe your mentor's **BACKGROUND (gender, racial, ethnicity) MAY HAVE INFLUENCED OR IMPACTED** your leadership development?

7. From your own experiences or observations, in what ways can a mentoring relationship possibly **INHIBIT** a Latina leader's professional development?

8. Can you share your experience about any **LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES** that your mentorship experience has helped you navigate?

9. What type of mentoring support do you **WISH YOU CURRENTLY HAD** that might support your ongoing career development?

10. How has your own experience influenced your interest to **MENTOR OTHERS**?

WRAP UP: Thank you for your time and for sharing your experiences with me.

ASK: Is there anything you would like to add that we did not cover?

Is there something you wish I would have asked or that you wanted to talk about?

APPENDIX E: EMAIL AND PHONE PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear [Invitee],

My name is Belinda Hernandez. I am a doctoral student at the University of the Pacific's Educational and Organizational Leadership Program. You have been invited to participate in a doctoral research study that I am conducting tentatively titled: RISING ABOVE THE ADOBE CEILING: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMOLOGICAL STUDY OF MENTORING AND SOCIAL CAPITAL INFLUENCES AMONG CALIFORNIA LATINA NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP. The purpose of this study is to explore the mentoring experiences of Latina nonprofit executive leaders in California and how it may have influenced your leadership development.

The study involves completing a short 1-5 minute demographic form and participating in a 60 to 90 minute in-person interview. A 30-minute follow-up interview may be scheduled, if necessary. Total time to you would range from 60-125 minutes. As the principal investigator, I will travel to a location most convenient for you.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. There will be no effect to any of your existing relationships. The study is completely confidential and will utilize pseudonyms for all participants. You will have an opportunity to review your interview transcript and aggregated data findings prior to the publishing of this research.

Your participation in this study will assist to fill a gap in academic scholarship that focuses on the mentoring experiences of Latina nonprofit leaders in California. Findings from this project may assist in the developing or improving support systems to promoting retention among existing and future Latina leaders. Feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience at [redacted]

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

_____

Belinda Hernandez, MSW
Doctoral Student, University of the Pacific

APPENDIX F: IN-PERSON RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Introduction of Principal Investigator

Excuse me, Ms. [NAME]

My name is Belinda Hernandez. I am a doctoral student at the University of the Pacific in the Benerd College of Education. I am conducting a research project about mentoring experiences among Latina nonprofit leaders.

Do you have a minute?

Immediate Opportunity to Opt-Out / Opt-In

If [NAME] says "no" or "not interested" = Stop, say "Thank you for your time" and do not continue.

If [NAME] says "not right now" = Say, "May I follow up with you via email?" Collect their contact information and follow up with the email recruitment letter.

If [NAME] says "yes" = Continue or make plans to revisit at a more convenient time.

Brief Study Description

I would like to know if you would be interested in participating in my study. Participation would require that you self-identify as an U.S.-born Latina/Chicana/or of Hispanic ancestry; be a current senior or executive leader at a California-based nonprofit; and be fluent in English. Participation is strictly voluntary and will not have any effect on any of your existing relationships.

Would you qualify for this study?

If "no" = Stop and thank them for their time.

If "yes" = Continue

Follow-Up by Principal Investigator

May I have your email address so that I can email you more information and schedule an interview with you?

If "no" = Stop and thank them for their time.

If "yes" = Gather email details, thank them, and let [NAME] know I will be in touch.

Proceed to email APPENDIX D: Participant Recruitment Letter.

Ask: Do you have any questions?

If you have questions later, please contact me at [redacted]