Even though there have been significant theoretical and practical advancements towards culturally responsive evaluation in the past decades, analysis of how Latinos (a, e, x) have been involved in these narratives is still nascent. With projections indicating Latinos (a, e, x) will become one of the largest race/ethnicities in the USA by 2060 and an extremely nuanced and complex cultural diversity, there is a great need for evaluators and researchers to be knowledgeable about the current literature on how to effectively work with this population, and an urgent need for the development and implementation of evaluation efforts that are consistent with the diverse needs and ways of being of Latinos (a, e, x). In this dissertation, I attempted to broaden and deepen understanding of how the culture and identity of Latinos (a, e, x) have been addressed in program evaluation and educational research efforts. This included both when Latinos (a, e, x) are the population programs aim to serve and when they are the ones conducting evaluation and/or research. Therefore, in the first paper, I did a critical review of how and in what ways Latinos (a, e, x) are included in seminal culturally responsive evaluation literature. In the second paper, I explored how Latinos (a, e, x) evaluators' identities and culture influence and shape their practice in program evaluation. Finally, in the third paper, I examined how educational research and evaluation are conducted when working with Latino (a, e, x) communities.

LATINOS (A, E, X) IN PROGRAM EVALUATION THEORY AND PRACTICE: AN

EXAMINATION OF THE GENERAL LANDSCAPE

by

Grettel Mariana Arias Orozco

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

What is culture?

There is a prevalent body of research in different fields of study that aims to define and characterize culture. Despite its centrality and relevance in many areas of human life, the term culture does not have one accepted and customary definition yet (Ginzberg, 2017). Culture is polysemic, mutable, and multilevel (Arciniegas Rodríguez & Peña, 2015). According to Rieger (2020) culture is a complex and nuanced topic. For Bocock (1992), culture is also a complex term that carries particular meanings in different disciplines, and that changes over time. Even though culture has several definitions, scholars such as Rieger (2020) consider that there are commonalities between these definitions. Culture, together with identity, can be understood as cohesive or intertwined elements that connect individuals within a social group, grounding their feeling of belonging (Comellys, 2010). Following a similar line of thought, Arciniegas Rodríguez & Peña (2015) consider that frequently when thinking about culture, associations are made with certain characteristic features of a group of people who inhabit a certain space, such as the way of speaking, dressing, establishing social relationships, among others. Similarly, the American Evaluation Association (AEA, 2011) has defined culture as the experiences shared by groups of people, this includes languages, values, customs, beliefs, worldviews, ways of knowing, and ways of communicating. In addition, culturally significant factors (e.g., race/ethnicity, religion, social class, language, disability, sexual orientation, age, and gender), and contextual dimensions (e.g., geographic region and socioeconomic circumstances) are also considered to be essential to shaping someone's culture. Boyce & Chouinard (2017) highlight how culture also encompasses several associated factors like language, sexual orientation, age, gender, social class, geographic location, among others. From Riede's (2011) point of view, culture is a bottom-up phenomenon since it emerges with individual actions, building on a system of social information transmission. Rieger (2020) argues that developing awareness and sensitivity to

other cultures help avoid stereotypical thoughts/actions that fail to acknowledge the complexities of others. Given its relevance, complexity, and implications, it is easy to understand why culture is frequently studied in several fields, including program evaluation.

Growing recognition of culture in program evaluation & ethical implications

Program evaluation is not an exception regarding the growing body of empirical, conceptual and theoretical research and literature around the role of culture and context in the profession (Bowen & Tillman, 2014). To address and attend to complex cultural boundaries and realities, and to avoid negative unintended consequences in populations that evaluators serve, scholars in the field have called for greater attention to the several ways in which culture plays out a significant role in program evaluation (AEA, 2018; Boyce, 2017; Chouinard, 2016; Hood, 2004; Patton, 1994; Stake, 1991). This examination has resulted in the proliferation of frameworks, approaches, and models as guides for practitioners that attend to culture throughout the evaluation process (Acree & Chouinard, 2020). Terms such as cultural responsiveness and cultural competence have also become omnipresent in the last decades in many fields of social inquiry such as program evaluation (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017; Hood et al, 2015). Consequently, literature in the field has been heavily focused during the past years in Culturally Responsive Evaluation (CRE) discourses, which is further explained in the next section, and other methodological approaches that are culture centered. Such narratives reflect aims associated with providing equitable evaluation practices in both evaluation processes and outcomes (Ghanbarpour et al., 2020); reflecting local values and encouraging democratic practices such as equity and social justice (Hood et al., 2015); bridging cultural differences to produce evaluative findings which are valid based on local ways of knowing and making meaning (Hood et al., 2015); and revealing and attending to structural injustices by the promotion of social change and social justice, while being reflective about evaluators' own culture, prejudices, assumptions, and biases (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017). Therefore, many of

the efforts of scholars and practitioners in the field have centered evaluation theorization and practice around culture in recent years.

In recognition of how evaluations reflect culture and culture itself is an integral part of evaluation at all its stages, the AEA has promoted during the last decades the development of cultural competence in practioners and the implementation of culturally appropriate practices and methods (AEA, 2011). In addition, the AEA Guiding Principles for Evaluators (2018), that aim to guide the ethical conduct of professionals in the field, includes one principle that is solemnly associated with the respect for people. This principle states that evaluators must honor "the dignity, well-being, and self-worth of individuals and acknowledge the influence of culture within and across groups (para. 10)." The AEA Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation (2011) clearly states that evaluations cannot be culture free because evaluators engage from "perspectives that reflect their values, their ways of viewing the world, and their culture" (para. 15). Consequently, culture shapes the various ways in which evaluation questions are conceptualized, which in turn determines how data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted (AEA, 2011). Additionally, culture also impacts the selection of data sources, data gathering methods, data analysis techniques, and strategies for communicating evaluation findings (Kirkhart, 2005). For these reasons, the implementation of program evaluation that does not attempt to reflect and honor the culture and context of its evaluands, without paying attention to complexity, accurate interpretation, and respect for diversity, can arrive at flawed findings with potentially devastating consequences (AEA, 2011). This is especially important when working with minorities, underrepresented populations, and vulnerable sectors of society.

Research on minorities can present multiple methodological and conceptual challenges (Okazaki & Sue, 2016); as such, vulnerability of minorities in research have been well documented (Beattie & VandenBosch, 2007; Bracken-Roche, 2017; Hurst, 2008; George et al., 2014; Grady, 2009; Lange et al., 2013; Rogers & Lange, 2013). The same happens with

program evaluation. The construction of discourses and narratives derived from ill-adapted, instrumental, and reductionist evaluation perspectives that do not place culture at the center not only fail to recognize other forms of knowledge, pushing people from the center to the margins, but also subjugating their realities. As stated by Letiecq & Bailey (2004), the implementation of evaluations that does not place the interaction of social class, culture, ethnicity, and race at the core, result in insensitive, inappropriate, exploitative, and harmful evaluative research practices. For this reason, the AEA Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation (2011) states that inaccurate or incomplete understandings of culture introduce systematic error, which threatens validity, promoting error grounded in cultural stereotypes, biases, and lack of shared worldviews among stakeholders. Such discourses set inaccurate and arbitrary boundaries and fail to understand the pivotal role of culture as the core of the evaluation professional practice. Benz et al. (2011), for example, argue that traditional program evaluation methods are often ill-suited and therefore fail to capture the dynamic nature of community coalitions. As a consequence, the AEA (2011) requires professionals in the field to accurately portray the life experiences and perspectives of participants; to establish trustworthy relationships that promote transparent communication; to employ culturally relevant and culturally specific theory that guides the interpretation of findings; to utilize methodological design options and strategies that are compatible with the cultural context of the evaluation; and to consider intended and unintended social consequences.

Culturally Responsive Evaluation

CRE is one of the many approaches to evaluation that have been used in the past years in evaluation to conduct responsive evaluative inquiry that meaningfully attends to and addresses the cultural context of the communities it intends to serve (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017). CRE approaches situate culture as the central guiding element in evaluation practice (Hood et al., 2015), explicitly attending and reflecting on how data collection and use of

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evaluation results encourage a practice that is responsive to local communities and programs where evaluation occurs (Acree & Chouinard, 2020). Following a similar line of thought, Chouinard (2014) argues that CRE approaches actively positions culture as a key construct in the evaluation of programs, recognizing that context and culture are multidimensional and multifaceted notions, including demographic descriptions of communities and programs, diversity in values and power, racism, economics, class, and gender issues that define each particular community.

Aspirational goals and aims of CRE are associated with providing equitable evaluation practices in both evaluation processes and outcomes (Ghanbarpour et al., 2020); in addition to honoring cultural norms, being respectful and attentive, revealing structural injustices and promoting action to redress them, and being reflective about our own culture, prejudices, assumptions, and biases (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017); reflecting local values and encouraging democratic practices such as equity and social justice (Hood et al., 2015); and bridging cultural differences to produce evaluative findings which are valid based on local ways of knowing and making meaning (Hood et al., 2015). In the quest for these aims, scholars often utilized CRE and collaborative methodologies together to encourage "the inclusion of the voices and perspectives of historically marginalized people through their active participation in the evaluation process" (Acree & Chouinard, 2020, p. 202). Such responsiveness can also be perceived in how more evaluators nowadays are explicit and intentional in their aims to "anchoring their work in inclusive, democratic, and culturally responsive ideals" (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017, p. 268).

Another form of responsiveness in the evaluation field can be seen in how some evaluators rely on "cultural facilitators" to navigate unfamiliar contexts and how many seek to be culturally competent when they do not share an ethnic or cultural identity with the program staff or participants they are working with (Acree & Chouinard, 2020). In this sense, cultural

competence in the evaluation field plays an important role in promoting cultural understanding and diversity in authentic and respectful ways. Given the dynamic and ever-changing nature of culture, cultural competence can be understood as a stance taken toward culture and a continuous process of learning, unlearning, and relearning (AEA, 2011), that encourages evaluators to continuously seek to understand the culture, context, historical perspective, power, oppression, and privilege in each new evaluation context (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017). Therefore, a culturally competent evaluator is someone who has specific knowledge of the people and place in which the evaluation is being conducted—including local history and culturally determined mores, values, and ways of knowing— and respects the cultures represented in the evaluation and who is prepared to engage with diverse segments of communities to include cultural and contextual dimensions important to the evaluation (AEA, 2011). Such cultural competence requires awareness of self, reflection on one's cultural position, awareness of others' positions, the ability to interact genuinely and respectfully with others (AEA, 2011), and ultimately being responsive to the needs of the communities of focus (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017).

Cultural diversity also must be explicitly addressed in evaluation efforts in order to ensure multicultural validity (Kirkhart, 2005). According to Kirkhart (2005), multicultural validity refers to the correctness and authenticity of understandings across multiple, intersecting cultural contexts, placing attention especially in how well evaluation captures diversity, and scrutinizes the trustworthiness of the judgements being made. For these reasons, cultural competence and multicultural validity have become pivotal for evaluators and research practitioners who aim to promote equitable, socially just, and culturally relevant practices. According to Symonette (2004), becoming culturally competent and multicultural is in fact a lifetime process given the dynamic and ever-changing nature of culture.

Ghanbarpour (2020) considers that in an effort to give language more attention, evaluators from or working with Native and Indigenous communities have applied approaches such as CRE, decolonizing methodologies, and Indigenous Evaluation. According to Ghanbarpour (2020), this has allowed for highlighting how language suppression and erasure have historically been used by colonizers as a tool of oppression against these communities, such as imposing unfamiliar and poorly fitting colonialist concepts and languages when working with Native and Indigenous communities. As such, some indigenous evaluators have opted for alternative forms of culturally relevant evaluations. Cram & Mertens (2016), for example, consider transformative evaluation provides opportunities for the inclusion of indigenous populations in their full diversity, and respecting their multiple cultural identities. From this point of view, evaluators explore aspects of culture within its specific context, spirituality and forms of historical oppression experienced by marginalized populations (Cram & Mertens, 2016).

Now, it is of particular interest for this study to reflect on what we know about Latinos (a, e, x) in Program Evaluation and the implementation of CRE practices when working with them. As populations grow in number and become more assertive in developing social programs and policies suited to their communities, the evaluation initiatives with and of diverse cultural populations also increase (Conner, 2004). According to the literature, CRE pays special attention to the implementation of evaluation efforts in traditionally vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized communities with the purpose of achieving balance, equity and fairness in the process (Hood et al., 2015; Hopson, 2009). Nonetheless, while conversations about CRE practices with Latinos (a, e, x) at community and practitioner level are increasing, within the evaluation and educational research literature further reflections are needed. Until today, conversations about this population in the literature have centered on the terminologies used (e.g., Guajardo et al., 2020; Lemos & García, 2020; and Salinas Jr., 2020); their intersectional, transnational and pan ethnic lived experiences (e.g., Hurtado, 2018; Guajardo et al., 2020); the

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use of new and alternative frameworks for conducting evaluation and research with this

populations (e.g., Bermudez et al., 2016; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Delgado Bernal, 2002;

Fernández, 2002; Freire et al., 2017; Guajardo et al., 2020; Harding, 2016; Huber, 2009;

Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001); the identification of cultural and identity traits (e.g., Calzada

et al., 2010; Clayson et al, 2002; Conner, 2004; Guajardo et al., 2020; Lemos & García, 2020);

and reflections on empowerment, history, growing emergence and institutionalization of

evaluation in Latin America (e.g., Cunill-Grau et al., 2012; Guendel, 2012; Martinic, 2012;

Neirotti, 2012). A key part of empirical research on Latinos (a, e, x) is centered mainly on the

dissemination of evaluation and research findings (e.g., Calzada et al., 2010; Clayson et al.,

2002; García-Iriarte et al., 2011; Lemos & Garcia, 2020; Martinic, 2012; Nesman et al., 2007;

Rotondo, 2012). Therefore, even though there has been a significant increase in the use of

evaluation models, frameworks, approaches, and overall efforts that are open to the central

importance of culture, when evaluators work with and within communities of color (Hood, 2001),

such attempts at cultural responsiveness lack the inputs of Latino (a, e, x) communities and

evaluators. In fact, few scholars have consciously sought to understand Latinos' (a, e, x) culture,

diverse contexts, historical perspectives, power dynamics, forms of oppression, and privilege

experienced in evaluation contexts.

Who exactly are Latinos (a, e, x)?

In this section, I discuss what terminology is used to name this population. I also

describe a linguistic approach to associated terms, the use of inclusive language, the

researcher positionality and the selection of terms for this dissertation.

Terminology used in evaluation and research to define this population

Let us start by pointing out that grouping people may not accurately represent the true

diversity that exists (AEA, 2011). In the case of Latino (a, e, x) populations, navigating cultural

categorizations might be especially challenging since this population encompasses an

extremely heterogeneous group of people. According to Guajardo et al. (2020), in the USA

Latinos (a, e, x) are the largest ethnic/racial minority, reaching a record of 59.9 million US

Hispanic population in 2018 (Flores et al, 2019). This large population in the USA has provided

rapid growth and continued presence throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, resulting in rich

cultural and socioeconomic contributions to the USA (Kirkegaard & Huertas, 2019; Holmes &

Smith, 2016; Johnson & Lichter, 2016). As a result, Latino (a, e, x) populations have been

involved in program evaluation efforts in the USA and other countries of the hemisphere. Terms

such as Latino, Latina, Latine, Latin@, Latin American, Hispanoamerican, Iberoamerican, Latin

*, Latinx, Chicano and Hispanic are often used interchangeably in program evaluation and

research literature to describe people from Latin America or Latin American descendants.

Nonetheless, there are semantic, ideological, and political differences to each term; as such,

until today there seems to be no agreement among scholars about how to refer to members of

this population.

Very few scholars in the evaluation literature include a definition referring to the Latino

(a, e, x) population. A number of scholars employ Latino(s), Latina(s), and Latin American(s) to

refer to this population (Clayson et al., 2002; Conner, 2004; García-Iriarte et al., 2011). Clayson

et al. (2002), for example, indicates "Latinos" is a political term used to designate the

heterogeneous Caribbean and Latin American population sharing a historical background and

cultural perspectives. More recently, the term Latinx has gained a significant space in academia.

There is a group of US scholars who prefer the use of Latinx as a gender-neutral neologism.

Guajardo et al. (2020), for example, define Latinx as a person, or descendent of a person, who

originates from the various countries in the Western hemisphere extending from Mexico to the

southernmost tip of South America, including Puerto Rico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, and the

US Virgin Islands. Guajardo et al. (2020) also discuss the recent growing use of the term

"Latinx", which addresses the evolving notions of gender as a binary construct, and how it

relates to the complexities of race, ethnicity, and intersectional Latinx identities. Lemos & García (2020) also use the term Latinx as a gender-neutral or non-binary term with an intent of inclusivity from the broader cultural or racial identity. Also, Lemos & García (2020) highlight that the diversity of race and country of origin among Latinx in the USA present nuances that must be considered when serving this community since it can create specific barriers and facilitators among distinct sub-populations.

Scholars such as Salinas Jr. (2020) argue that even though the term Latinx has gained popularity in higher education settings, one should consider using the term Latin * instead. Salinas's Jr. (2020) main arguments are associated with how a study with USA Latino (a, e, x) students revealed that participants perceive higher education as a privileged space where they use the term Latinx, but once they return to their communities, they do not use the term anymore. This author also considers that despite receiving a considerable amount of attention in academic and activist spaces, "the term Latinx has created (dis)comfort, ambiguity, and disingenuous arguments related to language, grammar, phonetics, religion, and identity politics" (p. 150). Instead, he proposes the use of the term Latin * arguing that introducing the * (asterisk) in Latin* is intended to serve as a deliberate intervention—a pause for readers to consider the various ways in which people of Latin American origin and diaspora in the USA may identify.

Other associated terms found in the program evaluation and research literature are Latinidad, Hispanic, and Chicano/a/x. Guajardo et al. (2020) define the term Latinidad in association to Latinx, acknowledging these are complex and dynamic nuances to the Latinx identity that requires a more in-depth exploration of the history and evolution of these terms that could include Hispanic or Chicano/a/x as well. They also indicate their definition of Latinidad and Latinx highlights the need for sophisticated evaluation methods and frameworks to address pan ethnic Latinx populations. Guajardo et al. (2020) also refers to fluid intersectional Latinx identities. Based on Hurtado's (2018) work on intersectionality and intersectional identities,

these scholars clarify Latinos (a, e, x) have intersectional personal and social identities, and their lived realities cross social, psychological, and economic borders, constituted by sexuality, gender, class, race, ethnicity, and physical ability (Guajardo et al., 2020).

Use of terminology for this dissertation

From a strictly linguistic point of view, the term Latino is a hyperonym (a word whose meaning includes the meanings of other words) of Latin America, Hispanoamerica, and Iberoamerica (Del Olmo, 2014). These three terms nonetheless have a vastly different meaning. According to the Real Academia Española (n.d.), while Hispanoamerica refers exclusively to American countries that were part of the kingdom of Spain, Iberoamerica refers to the group of American countries that were part of the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal, and Latin America is the group of American countries whose language and culture are primarily Latin; in other words, countries of America that were colonized by Latin nations, that is, Spain, Portugal, or France. Due to its complexity, and the interest for this dissertation, I will expand discussions and reflections on these terms.

According to Del Olmo (2014), terms Latino can be structured through the succession of four circles. A first circle, Hispanoamerica, would bring together the nineteen countries that have Spanish as their official language in America (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and Venezuela). By adding the South American lusophone country (Brazil) to this list, we would obtain a second circle: Iberoamerica. By adding the francophone countries (that is, Haiti, French Guiana, Martinique and Guadeloupe), we will have the third circle: Latin American. Finally, the fourth block or circle encompasses communities of Latinos (a, e, x) that due to historical causes or recent migratory movements reside in English-speaking Caribbean states (such as Belize, Antigua, and Barbuda,

Curaçao, Bonaire and Aruba etc.), in the United States or in Canada, as described in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Associated terms encompassed in the hyperonym Latino, Adapted from Del Olmo (2014)

**Communities of
Latinas & Latinas**
that reside in
Caribbean states, the
USA and Canada.

Latin America
(American countries
that were colonized by
Spain, Portugal and
France)

Iberoamerica
(American countries
that were part of Spain
and Portugal)

Hispanoamerica
(American
countries that
were part of
Spain)
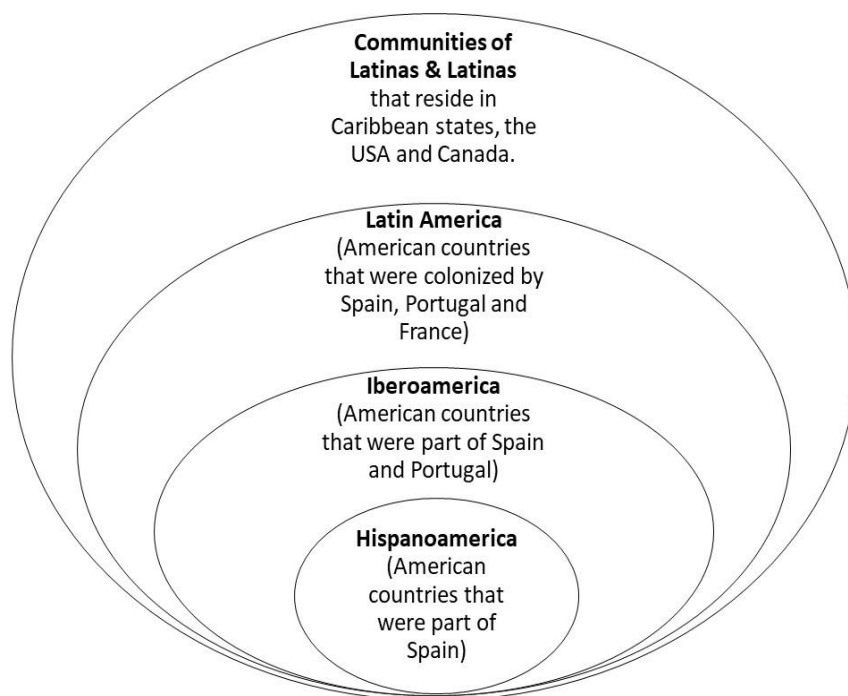
Given the geographical, political, ethnic, ideological, religious, economic, social differences of the many countries and regions that are part of Latin America, it would be incorrect to imply the existence of a monolingualism. On the contrary, this region encompasses a rich diversity of languages, dialects, and other variations (Lipski, 2014; Lopez, 2016; Von Gleich, 2003). The three neo-Latin languages (Spanish, Portuguese and French), which are spoken by the majority of the population between the Rio Grande and the Strait of Magellan, coexist with the indigenous languages of the ancestral peoples, the Creole languages (spoken mainly by Afro-descendant populations), and variations of Neo-Latin languages (transplanted to the American territory during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries), which have led to the creation of hybrid codes such as Spanglish, Portunhol, Jopará or the Lunfardo (Del Olmo, 2014).

Therefore, even though it is true Spanish is spoken by the great majority of Latinos (a, e, x), the assumption that all of them speak Spanish is incorrect.

Overall, reflection on the terminology used to name Latino (a, e, x) populations is important because language can be conceived as a living organism, in constant transformation and development, which functions as an instrument for the social construction of reality, communication, and as a transmission vehicle (Lopez, 1997). For this reason, there have been recent discussions and reflections associated with promoting inclusivity through language. According to Rivera Alfaro (2019), inclusive language is the name used to designate certain linguistic strategies carried out by language users in order to make explicit their political and ideological position of not discriminating by different reasons –such as disability, gender and race–, seeking equitable representation at the textual and discursive level. In the case of Spanish, the use of an inclusive language is particularly challenging. As stated by Rojas Blanco & Rojas Porras (2015), given that in Spanish gender is a property of nouns that modify articles, pronouns, determiners, quantifiers, adjectives, and sometimes other kinds of words, the gender runs through the entire text (either written or spoken). Therefore, the use of an inclusive language in Spanish is particularly complex and challenging since the relations of agreement determined by the nouns and pronouns with those parts that modify them extend like a thread that ties the senses throughout the speech.

For these reasons, Blanco & Rojas Porras (2015) consider that the decision to opt for the use of a respectful language that does not make any group of a society invisible is, in some cases, complex, since it affects all these connections that allow the construction of coherent and cohesive messages. Evaluators and researchers who work with this population should be knowledgeable about intrinsic dynamics of inclusive language in Spanish and should be careful with the labels used to define this diverse population. In the case of this dissertation, I recognize the importance of using inclusive language in academic and vernacular language, and I

acknowledge current trends in the US academia prefer the use of Latinx to include the broader cultural, racial and gender identity diversity of this population (Lemos & García, 2020). Nonetheless, as a Latina born and raised in Costa Rica, whose first language is Spanish, the use of 'x' to identify people of my community is foreign to me. Also, as a Spanish philologist I consider the use of the grammatical particle 'x' as gender morpheme is foreign to Spanish's morphology, and therefore impractical and impossible to pronounce in Spanish, which is the language spoken by the great majority of Latinos (a, e, x), when nouns modify articles, adjectives, etc. (e.g., 'lxs Latinxs'). This is why academia from Spanish speaking countries has been actively seeking constant inclusivity in different ways.

The Universidad de Costa Rica, for example, has promoted the implementation of the following linguistic strategies: 1) the use of certain generic, epicene (that is, nouns that use one unique forms to designate individuals of both sexes, and regardless of the grammatical gender of the noun, like in gorila), abstract and collective nouns (e.g., person instead of man or woman) to promote collectivization and non-specification; 2) the use of double forms (reduplication) to highlight all genders (e.g., Latinas and Latinos); 3) the use of appositions (which are explanations after the use of the masculine); 4) the use of verbal periphrasis (e.g., instead of saying "los alumnos de esta escuela", using "quienes estudian en esta escuela"); 5) the substitution of definite articles; and 6) the substitution of direct masculine object for indirect objects (Rivera Alfaro, 2019). Other organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees / Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados (2018), recommends to avoid the use the masculine with generic value when referring to persons of interest (e.g., La persona refugiada); 2) the use of the word person or the use of collective nouns when referring to groups with diverse people or referring to different genders in an inclusive way (e.g., Las personas sobrevivientes de violencia); 3) it is advised to use girls and boys or childhood (e.g., Las niñas y los niños); 4) avoiding the use of the masculine to designate professions, careers,

or prestigious positions that have their corresponding feminine form (e.g., directora, jefa, abogada, médica, la oficial de programa, etc.), among many others.

Clearly, language is not homogeneous nor static; instead, it is a tool for communication and, therefore, it is not exempt from all the transformations that arise in society, in terms of verbal customs, technological innovations and, even, changes in the social awareness (Rojas Blanco & Rojas Porras, 2015). For this reason, and as stated above, evaluators and researchers need to be careful when using labels to define diverse populations such as ours. Instead, practitioners and scholars should acknowledge the vast spectrum of identities and forms of identification that are embedded in Latinos (a, e, x). In this sense, allowing members of this community to identify as they feel is more appropriate for themselves is the least we can do to show respect for their culture and identity. In my case, as a Latina, born, raised and that lives in Costa Rica, Central America, I have identified myself since childhood as 'Costa Rican', 'Central American', and 'Latina'. I am fully aware of how the search for linguistic innovations for inclusivity, and the power struggle between alternative and hegemonic ideologies of the grammatical gender in Spanish will remain for a long time (Sancha Vázquez, 2020). In this sense, I decided to employ "the systematic repetition of phonological material within a word for semantic or grammatical purposes" (p. 11), also known as reduplication. By employing the linguistic strategy of reduplication, I aim to include all persons that are part of this population. To be more precise, the reduplication forms I use in this study are Latino, Latina, Latine, and Latinx, from now represented in the simplified form 'Latino (a, e, x)'. I recognize the use of this linguistic strategy is imperfect by itself; for this reason, researchers and evaluators such as myself should make explicit their language selection, intentionality, and the rationale behind it. I also recognize my use of language can be perceived as not the best option for some scholars and activists. Nonetheless, I have decided to use reduplications instead of the use of these alternative letters as gender morphemes ("x", "*", "@", "e", among others), recognizing all

alternatives present deficiencies, and that this represents an effort to provide inclusivity for different groups within this population, while not excluding the part of Spanish native speakers who, like myself, do not identify with those letters.

Therefore, for the purpose of this dissertation, I employ the term Latino (a, e, x) to refer to Latin American or Latin American descent populations from all countries and communities that speak Spanish, Portuguese and French, which encompasses people from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Honduras, French Guiana, Martinique, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and Venezuela. These terms also include all indigenous languages of the ancestral peoples, the Creole languages, and hybrid codes (e.g., Spanglish, Portunhol, Jopará or the Lunfardo) that are spoken within these countries. Communities of Latin American and Latin American descent that have migrated to English-speaking countries in the Caribbean, the United States and Canada are also encompassed within the defined term of Latinas (a, e, x). Finally, the terms Latinas (a, e, x) embrace all genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities, and races of people from these communities.

Cultural background, values, immigration & discrimination, and considerations for evaluation and research

The great number of Latinos (a, e, x) located around all over the world makes this population culturally diverse and complex (López, 1997; Trigos-Carrillo & Rogers, 2017). Despite this great diversity, scholars point out there are common factors or traits that are particularly relevant in this population (Cervantes & Peña, 1998). In this section, I briefly discuss a significant number of cultural background characteristics, identity traits and overall considerations researchers and evaluators have discussed in program evaluation and research literature when working with Latinos (a, e, x).

Diversity

      Clayson et al. (2002) aimed to typify Latinos' (a, e, x) identity complexities. In his attempt, he highlighted four main characteristics of this population. First, he stated their great diversity. The arguments for this statement were Latinos (a, e, x) are from various countries; they are the heirs to mestizaje and hybrid cultures, and that each of their countries has different levels of development, wealth, and racial mixtures. Second, patterns of settlement and migration are important for understanding these communities. Third, there are significant differences between Latinos (a, e, x) who were born in the USA, others who migrated years ago, and those who recently crossed the border (Latinos (a, e, x) who live in Latin America and the Caribbean were not included in his study since his research focused on a specific geographical area in California, USA). Fourth, language is a common symbol among them.

Values

      Guajardo et al. (2020) call for attention to four culturally significant values: familismo (the role the family and extended family as a cohesive unit Latinos (a, e, x) tend to rely on in time of need and celebration), respeto (the use of appropriate titles, formal communications styles, manner of dress and presentation, and levels of comfort with interacting with persons in positions of power or who perceive the evaluator to be in a position of power), simpatía (how the evaluation team demonstrate kindness, politeness, good manners, and friendliness) and the Marianismo/machismo dichotomy (while Marianismo is a gender construct that defines the feminine attributes of purity, motherhood, and virginity as qualities consistent with a prototypically ideal young woman, machismo describes male behavior and expectations). In addition to this, Calzada et al. (2010) also found that respeto (manifested in several domains, including obedience to authority, deference, decorum, and public behavior), family, and religion are some of the most important values for this population. According to results from this empirical study, the most salient values were familia (family) or familismo (direct family and

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extended family serving a primary role in providing social and emotional support), religion

(Virgin Mary and the Virgen de Guadalupe), and respeto (respect for their parents and respect

for others). Clayson et al. (2002) also indicate familismo (familism in English) is considered to

be one of the most important cultural values in Latinos (a, e, x). Clayson et al (2002) defines

familism as an attachment and interdependence of individuals with their nuclear and extended

families and strong feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, solidarity, support and trust among family

members, compadres, godparents, and adopted tíos and tías (uncles and aunts) who play an

important role in family life.

Immigration & Discrimination

Members of minority and marginalized populations experience oppression and

discrimination (Cram & Mertens, 2016). According to Martin (2015) most US citizens are

dissatisfied with US immigration policies since the mid-1990s due to the continued presence of

millions of unauthorized foreigners in the country, and foreign-born residents. According to

Vespa et al. (2018), the majority of foreign born in the United States come from Latin America

and the Caribbean. With a population of 6 million in 1960 (Gutiérrez, 2016) and current

demographic projections indicating that Latinos (a, e, x) will become one of the largest

ethnic/races in the US by 2060 (Colby & Ortman, 2015; Johnson, 2020; Passel & Cohn, 2008;

Vespa et al., 2018), this population is destined to continue to impact economic, social, cultural

and political life in the USA. Nonetheless, there is a long history of Latinos (a, e, x) facing

discrimination and racial attacks in the US (Feagin & Cobas, 2015). Findling et al. (2019)

indicate research points out that 48 percent of Latino (a, e, x) adults in the US are foreign-born,

and that these groups have significant cultural differences related to "ethnic identity, nativity,

accent, and language that may be important correlates of discrimination" (p. 1410). This way,

this population has faced experience everyday discrimination and increased depression

symptoms due to their ethnic identity (Cobb et al., 2017). They have also suffered from

restrictive immigration political policies and laws that seek to reduce their access to education, health care, and employment opportunities by criminalizing immigrants, which results in hate crimes and threats of deportation that jeopardize the ties within (parent and children) and among families (Ayón et al., 2017). Also, there are immigration patterns and sociodemographic differences in education, income, and acculturation and integration to U.S. culture that create group differences among Latinos (a, e, x) (Arellano-Morales et al., 2015), creating tension among Latinos (a, e, x) themselves.

Despite the vast repertoire of discrimination experienced by Latinos (a, e, x) in the US, immigration of Latin Americans will not stop. In fact, it will most likely increase during the coming years. Even before the COVID-19 global pandemic, the world was already facing a crisis, as the poverty rate in low- and middle-income countries was 53% (Grupo Banco Mundial Educacion, 2020). However, the COVID-19 global pandemic has come to only deepen and broaden the instability of Latin American countries. According to Seusan & Maradiegue (2020), the prolonged closure of schools has meant that approximately 137 million children in Latin America and the Caribbean continue without receiving face-to-face education, which will have serious implications for the future of these populations, shaping a generational catastrophe that will have profound consequences for society as a whole. In addition to this, Countries such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Uruguay face great challenges regarding fiscal policies in the transformative recovery post-COVID-19. According to the Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (2021), known as CEPAL for its initial in Spanish, Latin America and the Caribbean face an unprecedented fiscal panorama due to the historical contraction of economic activity, the historically high levels that public spending has reached, the continuing upward trend in public debt and fiscal deficits, the deficient tax regimes that prevail in the region, the creation of new taxes, and the persistent inequality of income and

wealth. As such, it is easy to anticipate that challenges will only increase in Latin American countries resulting in higher levels of immigration to the USA in the coming years.

Considerations for evaluators and researchers

According to Guajardo et al. (2020), four core considerations foster contextually and culturally relevant evaluation practices when working with Latinos (a, e, x). These are (1) produce knowledge for and about Latino (a, e, x) people, culture, voices, and communities, (2) advance transformation and incite change in and for Latino (a, e, x) communities, (3) expand and connect diverse Latino (a, e, x) experiences, and (4) cultivate community and coalition. According to this group of evaluators and scholars, the implementation of these four functions help to provide evaluation and evaluators with an understanding of the great complexity and interconnectedness of the historical, ethnoracial identity, language, cultural values, traditional gender roles, oppression, marginalization, and immigration legacies that shaped modern experiences of Latinos (a, e, x), at an individual and community level. In addition, Guajardo et al. (2020) highlight these considerations are important in selecting and implementing appropriate paradigms, designs, and methods that explicitly incite change, build community, coalition, and equity; promote individual and collective reflective processes, and facilitate collective discourse about Latino (a, e, x) people and their lived experiences.

Clayson et al. (2002) also provide considerations that evaluators need to understand when working with these communities: (1) the globalization of economic and political constructs, along with the growing migration of groups across national borders; (2) the necessity for cultural and linguistic competency to attend nuances of languages used among those from different geographic areas, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, and age groups; (3) evaluation methods should be particularly sensitive to la familia in these communities; (4) community evaluation practice with these communities requires methodologies and instrumentation capable of evaluating with depth and breadth over the short- and long-term; (5) even though all the

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stakeholders are vulnerable in some respects, communities outside of the dominant European

Diaspora, face the challenge of having their stories told without accuracy, as a result of lack of

context-sensitive approach or culturally and linguistically competent evaluation practices.

Conner (2004) also refers to important considerations in attending to multicultural issues

when working with this population. Conner (2004) indicates evaluators cannot rely only on the

methodological, statistical, or technical adjustments that can be used for other validity concerns;

instead, he considers evaluators must learn about and respond to the context of the evaluation

and its culturally related components, as well as to the participants in the evaluation and the

cultural issues relevant to them. To do that, he proposes awareness about five factors that can

help foster a culturally sensitive evaluation when working with Latinos (a, e, x), which increases

multicultural validity: (1) involving participants in the evaluation study planning; (2) speaking the

literal language of the participants (e.g., Spanish, English, Spanglish or any other linguistic

variations); 3) speaking the figurative language of the participants (the content and style of

communication, both oral and written); 4) working collaboratively with participants during the

implementation phase of the evaluation; and 5) sharing the benefits (e.g., resource distribution,

recognition, appreciation, etc.) among the partners further strengthens the partnership so that it

can continue to confront and overcome challenges so that both the program and its evaluation

procedures.

Lemos & García (2020) explore relevant factors of Latino (a, e, x) communities that can

influence the design of, as well as the level of stakeholder participation and engagement in

evaluation studies. Individual factors include demographics, socioeconomic status, health

status, quality of life, and immigration status. Interpersonal factors include influences related to

social networks and social support usually embedded in the immediate settings the individual is

a direct part of (home, school, and workplace). Community-level influences include factors that

are inherent to a certain environment or region like a neighborhood, school, workplace, or

healthcare center. Lemos & García (2020) argue that, given these contexts, evaluators should ensure evaluation tools must be translated and piloted in Spanish; keep Spanish language terms simple to increase comprehension among diverse these communities; if asking about immigration status, ensure information is kept confidential and de-identified from other sources of identifiable information; ensure community participation throughout all stages of the evaluation; create partnerships with community-based organizations that are aware of the local enforcement context in the community of interest; and use qualitative methods to capture additional insights about unintended consequences of such policies on families, communities and institutions.

What does Latin America have to do in all of this?

To understand the complexity of the population under study, it is necessary to reflect on the roots of its people. Latin America, also known as América Latina in Spanish and as Abiayala by indigenous activists of the region (Keme & Coon, 2018), should be understood as a diverse space that, beyond geographical and political borders, combines particular cultural, literary, historical and identity traits of its people. As indicated in the previous section, geographically, this region includes all the territory between the Rio Grande and the Strait of Magellan, as well as other nearby territories and islands. This region of the American continent have historically been characterized by economic, social and political instability, causing different forms of struggles associated with the deficient water management practices (Castro, 2008), dependent and underdeveloped economies (Girvan & Girvan, 1973; Prebisch, 2016), socio-economic confrontations (McNeish, 2018; O'Donnell et al., 2013), privatization of public resources (Estrin & Pelletier, 2018), unstable democratization process (Gibson, 2010; Mazzuca, 2010), poverty (Lavinas, 2015), underdevelopment of public infrastructure (Calderón & Servén, 2010), etc.

Scholars like Del Olmo (2014) consider that Latin America is defined by not being the United States, a global hegemon, and by not speaking English. Del Olmo (2014) clarifies that

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the opposition between Latin America and the Anglo-Saxon America goes back to the same

origins of the term 'América Latina' in 1856. Year when the Colombian poet José María Torres

Caicedo wrote *Las dos Américas* (the two Americas), a poem in which the race of Latin America

was confronted against the Saxon race, which was considered the "mortal enemy" and a latent

"threat." A few years later, in 1891, about seventy years after the American Republics achieved

their independence, the Cuban politician, writer, teacher, thinker, journalist, and combatant José

Martí warned the world about Americans' suffering in *Nuestra América* (our America). In

Nuestra América (1891) Martí made an urgent call to the union between the Latin American

countries and aimed to vindicate the culture of the oppressed, the black and the indigenous

populations. Martí pointed out America was the result of a painful juxtaposition between the

discordant and hostile elements that it inherited from the despotic and vicious colonizer, and the

imported ideas and forms that prevented, due to their lack of local reality, an authentic

government. Martí, nonetheless, also provided the solution "To know is to solve', he said. From

his point of view, knowing the country, and governing it according to this knowledge was the

only way to free it from external and internal tyrannies. To him, the European university was to

give way to the American university, and the world had to be added to our republics, instead of

the other way around.

About eighty years later, in 1971, the Uruguayan journalist, writer, and novelist Eduardo

Galeano (2004) called out the world's attention again with his book *Las Venas Abiertas de*

América Latina (Open veins of Latin America). He not only grieved in the fact that in the

vicissitudes of history non-Anglo-Saxon peoples had lost the right to call themselves Americans,

but he also lamented that the backwardness and misery of Latin America were nothing more

than the result of its failure. According to the Uruguayan, history can be conceived as a

competition. In this sense, Latin America had lost against the project of imperialism and

capitalism. From Galeano's point of view, those who won, won because Latin America lost; in

other words, the history of underdevelopment in Latin America integrates, as he said, the history of the development of the capitalist world. As a result, Latin America remains immersed in continuous economic and social instability, poverty, struggles, and misery, while the rest of the world also remains indifferent to its pain. América Latina continues to exist at the service of the needs of others, as a source and reserve of oil and iron, copper and meat, fruits and coffee, raw materials and food destined for the rich countries that earn, consuming them, much more of what Latin America earns producing them (Galeano, 2004). For this reason, America is, for the whole world, only the United States; the rest of the inhabitants of the American continent inhabit what he calls a sub-America or a second-class America. Sadly, the asymmetric power relations and dependence of Latin American countries on the powerful neighbor to the north, the United States, have only strengthened over the last decades, widening the gap between the two Americas.

Now in 2021, after fifty years of losing the right of calling ourselves Americans, we are not in any better position. In fact, according to Quijano (2007), the 'Western' European dominators and their Euro-North American descendants are still the principal beneficiaries and ruling classes that have exploited and dominated Latin America and Africa until today. Unfortunately, in the global imaginary, Latin America is still the Banana Republics, as the USA ex-president George W. Bush indicated when he was referring to the sad events that took place in the US Capitol on January 6th, 2021, ignoring or simply refusing to acknowledge all the pain, dark history, and trauma behind the term.

The Banana Republics is a denigrating and pejorative term use to refer to Latin American countries that have an unstable economy based merely on the production of fruits, and corrupt governments that hand over the wealth of their countries to large transnational companies (Bernal Alanis, 2014). Since the end of the 19th century until today, the exportation of bananas has been a profitable business and an important source of resources for Latin

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American countries, especially in Central American and the Caribbean. However, also since the beginning, this market has been controlled by US companies that became a determining political and economic force in the region during the 20th century (Bucheli & Read, 2001). The United Fruit Company, known as Chiquita Brands International in 1970 and currently as Chiquita Banana, was the most prominent foreign company in the region. Alberti & Bignotti (n.d.) indicate that this company focused on banana exploitation as they did a savage use of the land and abused workers of those plantations who lacked any rights. The framework of the United Fruit Company impositions on the governments of Central America is found in the hard line of foreign policy that President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) used with Latin America and that was known as "la política del gran garrote" (the politics of the big stick) whose motto was "habla suavemente y lleva un gran garrote, así llegarás lejos" (Speak softly and carry a big stick, so you will go far) (Alberti & Bignotti, n.d.). The unequal distribution of the wealth produced by this company was the least of the problems in these Latin American countries. Some of the problems the so-called Banana Republics had to deal with and still today suffer from its legacy were far more profound. During those years, companies like the United Fruit Company bought large amounts of land at low prices, and these regions experienced a generalized situation of poverty and dependence on rich countries (Bernal Alanis, 2014). In addition, there were violent events in all countries, such as the death of 3,000 Colombian laborers who manifested for better working conditions (an event known today as "la Masacre de las Bananeras", the Banana Massacre) by company authorities; there was a historical railroad monopoly and constant threats to local or state authorities that showed little cooperation with the company (Alberti & Bignotti, n.d.). All of these come to prove that an US ex-president, who was once associated with the United Fruit Company in 1970, using this analogy in the XXI century only means Latin America has not freed itself from the oppressor colonizer. Latin American history has engendered and embraced the backwardness, misery, immigration, poverty, wars, coups,

economic and social instability that our countries inhabit, and our descendants inherited. Latinos (a, e, x) are the inheritors of these peculiar and unfortunate circumstances. Knowing about historical and cultural legacies of Latinos (a, e, x) will help evaluators and researcher open the door to better understanding who they are, where they come from, and how to address passed traumas and injustices.

Problem Statement

Even though there have been significant theoretical and practical advancements towards culturally responsive evaluation in the past decades, analysis of how Latinos (a, e, x) have been involved in these narratives is still nascent. With a current population of 664,058,277 Latinos (a, e, x) in the world (O'Neill, 2022; Worldometer, consulted on March 15th, 2022), and projections indicating Latinos (a, e, x) will become one of the largest race/ethnicities in the USA by 2060 (Colby & Ortman, 2015; Johnson, 2020; Passel & Cohn, 2008; Vespa et al., 2018), there is a great need for evaluators and researchers to be knowledgeable about the current literature on how to effectively work with this population. Latinos (a, e, x) are extremely complex for several reasons, such as a history marked by episodes of violence, political repression, internal wars, poverty, social and economic inequality, the exodus of thousands of people (Galeano, 2004), and the diverse and heterogeneous cultural realities of Latinos (a, e, x) (Guajardo et al., 2020). Research also indicates 48% of Latino (a, e, x) adults in the US are foreign-born (Findling et al., 2019). To add to these complexities, Latino (a, e, x) groups have several cultural differences related to ethnic identity, country of birth, accent, and language that may be important correlates of discrimination experiences across multiple institutions or policy domains (Findling et al., 2019). This confluence of factors creates the exigence for the challenging and urgent development and implementation of evaluation efforts that are consistent with the diverse needs and ways of being of Latinos (a, e, x). For these reasons, scholars such as Guajardo et al.

(2020) have called professionals in the field to reflect on the need for sophisticated evaluation methods and frameworks to address pan ethnic Latino (a, e, x) populations.

The current stage of literature reveals that despite its great significance, minimal attention in evaluation literature has been given to examining how Latinos' (a, e, x) culture and identity shapes and influences evaluation praxis. In this sense, the discrepancy between the importance of conducting culturally responsive evaluation with Latinos (a, e, x), given their growing numbers, the lack of research and gaps of knowledge about this population is alarming. This provides opportunities for greater attention and exploration in finding out ways to perform evaluation and research using inquiry tools that lead to collective reflection and action, decolonizing, liberating, and freeing those held in a powerful and invisible institutionalized inequality (Hall, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to examine Latinos' (a, e, x) lived experiences in the evaluation and research fields based on their own culture, identities and diverse contexts. Focusing attention upon the epistemological and ontological pluralities of Latinos (a, e, x), acknowledging ideas emanating from this population has been historically misunderstood, ignored, or erased (Lund, 2001), and recognizing how little is known empirically about evaluators and communities of Latinos (a, e, x) is of utmost importance moving forward. Now, to understand Latinos (a, e, x), it is necessary to first unpack their experiences, examine their current states and contributions in the evaluation and research fields, to figure out how to best serve this population in the near future. Through this course of action, this study aims to advance cultural responsiveness across evaluation and research inquiry settings that have remained unexplored.

Overview of the Three Papers

In this dissertation, I attempted to broaden and deepen understandings on how the culture and identity of Latinos (a, e, x) have been addressed in program evaluation and educational research efforts. This included both when Latinos (a, e, x) are the population

programs aim to serve and when they are the ones conducting evaluation and/or research. Therefore, in the first paper, I did a critical review of how and in what ways Latinos (a, e, x) are included in seminal culturally responsive evaluation literature. In the second paper, I explored how Latinos (a, e, x) evaluators' identities and culture influence and shape their practice in program evaluation. Finally, in the third paper, I examined how educational research and evaluation is conducted when working with Latino (a, e, x) communities.

Table 1. Purposes, Research Questions, and Methods for the Three Papers

	Purpose(s)	Research questions	Methods
Paper 1	To examine how and in what ways Latinos (a, e, x) are included in the evaluation literature.	What are conceptualizations and definitions of Latinos' (a, e, x) culture, identities, voices, and perspectives in evaluation literature? What is the role Latino (a, e, x) scholars have played in seminal culturally responsive evaluation literature? What are the contributions of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators to current culturally responsive evaluation discussions and reflections?	Critical review of a corpus of literature from the evaluation field that incorporates programs that work with Latino (a, e, x) communities and/or is carried out by Latinos (a, e, x).

	Purpose(s)	Research questions	Methods
Paper 2	To explore how Latino (a, e, x) evaluators' identities and culture influence and shape their practice in program evaluation.	How do Latino (a, e, x) evaluators define themselves in terminology, personal and professional, cultural factors, and values? In what ways do Latino (a, e, x) evaluators reflect the influence of their own culture and identity in their professional role and practice?	Interviews with Latino (a, e, x) evaluators who are diverse in race, age, gender, sector of employment, nation of origin, and years of experience.
Paper 3	To explore how evaluation and research is conducted when working with Latino (a, e, x) communities.	Within the evaluation and educational research praxis, what approaches, designs, methodologies, methods and instruments are being used to work in programs that serve Latino (a, e, x) communities? What cultural and contextual considerations are being made when conducting evaluation and research in programs that serve Latino (a, e, x) communities?	A survey aimed at evaluators and researchers who are diverse in ethnicity, race, age, gender, sector of employment, nation of origin, and years of experience.

Significance

Latinos (a, e, x) are the largest, youngest, and fastest-growing minority in the USA (Gonzalez et al., 2005). The rapid growth of Latino (a, e, x) populations in the USA represents a need for enhancing evaluation and research conducted on and by Latinos (a, e, x). Even though there is increasing recognition on how identity and culture play a huge role in program evaluation, social research, education, and many other fields, Latinos (a, e, x) cultural and epistemological pluralities have remained largely unaddressed in the literature. Together, the three papers in this dissertation aimed to inform past and current conversations, and reflections about how and in what ways Latinos (a, e, x) have been included in culturally responsive approaches to evaluation. This dissertation also aimed to contribute to initial critical and constructive discussions on the diverse set of pluralities that represent this population. In this sense, I hoped to contribute to the advancement of cultural responsiveness narratives about Latinos (a, e, x) across evaluation and research inquiry settings.

Specifically, the first paper contributed to initial discussions on how Latinos (a, e, x) have been included and represented in the seminal culturally responsive evaluation literature, building an understanding around how knowledge of Latinos (a, e, x) has been constructed and what this entails in the program evaluation field. Thus, the first paper provided a critical landscape of how and in what ways Latinos (a, e, x) are included in the evaluation literature, examining seminal literature, and looking at contributions, narratives and discourses associated with Latinos (a, e, x).

The second paper contributed to exploring how Latino' (a, e, x) culture and identities play a role in their professional practice. This paper then focused on disentangling and unpacking cultural identities of program evaluators who identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x), placing a focus on how this shape or influences their professional practice.

Finally, the third paper shed light on current research and evaluation practice, exploring what are methodologies, methods, approaches, theoretical frameworks, tools, processes, and

sources that are used to conduct evaluation and research with Latino (a, e, x) populations. The third paper therefore contributed to drawing a general landscape on what methodological approaches prevail or are employed by researchers and evaluators from different ethnicities when conducting research and evaluation with Latino (a, e, x) populations. Overall, this study provided one of the first empirical studies that explores and reflects on the different ways in which Latinos (a, e, x) contribute to the program evaluation profession, either as Latinos (a, e, x) conducting evaluations or as Latinos (a, e, x) being part of the communities that are evaluated. This examination, together with others from scholars in the field, will likely continue to expand over the next few decades.

Researcher Positionality

According to Bettez (2015), a researcher positionality involves the combination of the social status groups to which one belongs (e.g., race, class, gender, and sexuality) and one's personal experience in relation to a certain topic (encompassing how we see ourselves, how we are perceived by others, and how we perceive our experiences). In this sense, the researcher positionality influences decisions about the approach of knowledge (what we know, what we believe we know, how we produce and understand knowledge (Bettez, 2015). Given that the focus of this study is to build an understanding around the experiences of Latinos (a, e, x) in the program evaluation field, both when they are the evaluators and when they are the population being evaluated, I consider it is critical to clarify my positionality as a Latina and as an evaluator. For this reason, in this section I will briefly share some information about my positionality regarding my personal background, and how I relate with the topic of study.

Let me start with my name. My name is Grettel Mariana Arias Orozco. In our culture, it is common for people to have four (sometimes even more words make up our names). In my case, Grettel is my first name; Mariana is my Middle name; and Arias Orozco, both, are my last names (the first one corresponds to my father's last name, and the second to my mother's last

name). I am a cisgender female, and I am the youngest child out of three children (two boys and a girl). I come from a low-income family, and so I was the first person in my family to get a high school degree and later on a college degree in the Universidad de Costa Rica; my parents did not finish middle school education. I live in a rural area in my home country, called Cataluña which is located in Grecia, where the great majority of the population works in farms that cultivate sugar cane, coffee, onions, tomatoes, and other sorts of agricultural crops. In these kinds of places, it is very common that the farms' owners provide very humble houses for the several employees that work their lands. Most of the time, these places are in extremely bad conditions. Water, electricity, and garbage services are free for people who live in these places as well. In exchange, at least one member of the family must be actively working for them. Current average wages can be around $350 per month. Some of the most common problems in these places are associated with poverty, low levels of education, machismo, alcoholism, drugs, geographic isolation, few sources of employment, lack of application of community programs in accordance with the real needs of the habitants, deficient public transportation after the COVID-19 pandemic, among many other. Given their small population, these kinds of places have a strong sense of community also, where children grow up together under the care of the entire neighborhood, and most people know everyone who lives around them. It is still also common to share some of the crops produced with friends, family members, and neighbors. My family is one of these families. When I was in 11th grade in primary school, my family was able to buy a small piece of land nearby the farm (called Hacienda Pinto) where my father worked since he was 12 years old.

I identify myself as a Latina who was born, raised and lives in Costa Rica, Central America. Spanish is my native language; I learned English as a second language when I was a teenager in the public high school I went to. I was able to attend high quality high school and college institutions thanks to the strong public educational system in Costa Rica (although there

are multiple past and current problems that make our educational system failing and lacking in many aspects). My undergraduate studies were in Spanish Philology, and in Teaching Castilian Spanish and Literature, both degrees were from the Universidad de Costa Rica, which is one of the most important public universities in Central America. I came to the USA for the first time in fall 2017 to start my studies at UNCG in the MS/PhD in Educational Research Methodology, in the program evaluation track, thanks to a Laspau-Fulbright scholarship. With no experience in research or evaluation at the moment, I started my education at UNCG, and as an international student from Latin America, my motivation for undertaking this project was associated with the underrepresentation of Latinos (a, e, x) I experienced during these past years. Almost none of the articles or books we read were from practitioners or scholars who identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x). In addition, only one faculty member in the department was a Latina, and even though there are many international students in our department I was the only Latina at that time. For these reasons, after reiterative discussions with my advisor, I decided I was interested in learning more about the voices, representation, and contributions of other Latinos (a, e, x) in my field of professional practice.

During my dissertation, I anticipated my positionalities were going to shape and inform my experiences as a researcher. My specific background allowed me to expect my perspectives were going to be different from other Latinos (a, e, x) who live in other countries or regions in Latin America, and from those that were born in the USA or those who have migrated to the USA many years ago or even just recently. I also anticipated having differences regarding socioeconomic background, professional training, years of experience, values, among many other factors, with Latinos (a, e, x) who participated and engaged in this study. I believe having awareness about these differences is important because it reflects to some extent the diversity within our population. I consider knowledge produced by our population or about our population has been historically misunderstood, ignored, or erased (Gordon et al., 1990; Lund, 2001).

Additionally, and similarly to indigenous peoples, knowledge emanating from Latinos (a, e, x) have been "discovered, extracted, appropriated and distributed" (Smith, 2012). Therefore, for me, it is important to challenge the narratives, and the way knowledge about Latinos (a, e, x) is constructed. Contributing to current reflections and literature by including and validating the inputs of Latinos (a, e, x) from all the vast spectrum of experiences they have, and by letting them speak for themselves, is of great relevance for me as a Latina researcher. Also, as a researcher, I recognize the impact of my own background and experiences on the study; for this reason, I kept checking on my assumptions, interests, and biases through the process of the dissertation.

CHAPTER II. PAPER I: BUILDING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE REPRESENTATIVENESS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF LATINO (A, E, X) S IN THE PROGRAM EVALUATION LITERATURE

Many scholars and practitioners in the evaluation field acknowledge the importance of conducting culturally responsive evaluation (American Evaluation Association, 2011; American Evaluation Association, 2018; Boyce & Chouinard, 2017; Hood et al., 2015; Bryan & Lewis, 2019). Also, as research and evaluation efforts move beyond the use of traditional approaches to include more inclusive, culturally responsive, and interconnected approaches, scholarship also aims for the presence of voices and contexts that historically have been absent or under-represented. To date, evaluators and researchers are encouraged to recognize the importance of conducting culture-centered practices when working with persons from ethnic, linguistic, and racial minority backgrounds (AEA, 2018; AEA; 2011; APA, 2002) to ensure "recognition, accurate interpretation, and respect for diversity" (AEA, 2011, para. 3). In this sense, reflections about the different ways in which culture influences scientific and academic research "are especially necessary when the goal is to effectively include the voices of populations that are typically underrepresented" (Chu et al., 2020, p. 42). In the program evaluation field, only a few scholars and practitioners have taken a stance on exploring how underrepresented voices are included and represented in the field. Here is where this study aims to contribute. This article is based on a review of the international evaluation literature with a critical perspective. The main objective is to help current efforts in building a better understanding of one of the voices that have been underrepresented and marginalized historically: the Latino (a, e, x) population. More specifically, this review looks at how members of this population have been included and represented within the program evaluation literature. To determine this, the analysis centered on looking at what role have Latinos (a, e, x) voices played in seminal CRE literature, what narratives and discourses have been associated with this population in empirical and

conceptual works, how are members of this population conceptualized or defined in the literature, what methodologies have been implemented to conduct evaluation with this population and what are existing gaps in the theory. By critically analyzing how this population is constructed in the literature, one of the aims of this study was to engage in reflection and inclusion of a demographic group that will become the largest race/ethnicity in the USA by 2060 (Colby & Ortman, 2015; Johnson, 2020; Passel & Cohn, 2008; Vespa et al., 2018). In the next section, I provide information about the sample selection and characteristics, which is followed by the main results of the literature review and conclusions on the topic.

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Literature Review Methodology

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According to Snyder (2019), a literature review can broadly be described as a systematic way of collecting and synthesizing previous research and literature that helps create a firm foundation for advancing knowledge and facilitating theory development by integrating findings and perspectives from many empirical findings. What follows is a brief description of the sample selection, sample characteristics, the review strategy and analysis used for conducting this literature review. In this study, a semi-systematic review approach was utilized to analyze the selected corpus of evaluation literature. This type of literature review can be considered a good strategy to map theoretical approaches, identify knowledge gaps within the literature, synthesize the state of knowledge, provide a historical overview or timeline of a specific topic, identify themes or theoretical perspectives and concepts in literature, and create an agenda for further research (Snyder, 2019). The semi-systematic review method documents the research process establishing criteria for inclusion and exclusion of selected articles (Tranfield et al., 2003). Besides overviewing a topic, a semi-systematic review looks at how a topic within a field has developed across research using meta-narratives, which provides an understanding of complex areas (Snyder, 2019; Wong et al, 2013).

Additionally, a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was conducted to analyze and synthesize findings from a semi-systematic review. After the 39 articles were identified, I read first each one of the articles, without much notetaking, to get an overview of the topic presented in each document. I reviewed a sample of 10 of the selected articles multiple times to gain a sense of the context and main ideas being discussed. Themes and subthemes were initially generated inductively from the raw data of this sample. As stated by Lowell et al. (2017), inductive analysis is a data-driven process of coding where the researcher does not try to fit themes into preexisting coding frames or the researcher's analytic preconceptions. Then, I categorized codes and subcodes inductively utilizing the software Atlas.ti. A codebook was developed to keep track of identified codes and subcodes. Next, I read the complete corpus of data applying the codes I created for the sample. I created additional codes and subcodes when data did not fit into the codebook initially created. I also took note on those occasions when codes did not match or when additional codes were needed. Disconfirming or divergent data (Antin et al., 2015) were not analyzed in this study. In the following section, more details about the review process are outlined.

Sample Selection

As commented above, the purpose of the current literature review was to explore the inclusion and representation of Latinos (a, e, x) in evaluation literature through examining evaluation literature from North America and Latin America. Initially, the literature search was intended to be limited to foundational CRE literature to determine how this population is represented and included in it. Nonetheless, the search criteria were expanded to include empirical and conceptual works of evaluation conducted with populations defined as Latino (a, e, x) to explore how evaluation is practiced and theorized when working with this specific population. The main reason for expanding the selection criteria was that only two studies focused on the use of CRE approaches in the context of Latino (a, e, x) populations.

To ensure that relevant articles were included, a broad search strategy was used. Search terms for this study included "culturally responsive evaluation," "program evaluation in Latin America," "Latino/Latina/Latinx/Latine evaluation," "culturally competent evaluation and Latinos/Latinas/Latinx/Latines," and "Latino(s)/Latinx/Latine/Latin/Latin@/Latin America." These same terms were searched in Spanish as well. The keywords were used in isolation and in combination to search online databases such as Google Scholar, Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), ProQuest Education Database, JSTOR, and ERIC. In addition, evaluation journals such as the American Journal of Evaluation, Evaluation and Program Planning, Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, Revista Iberoamericana de Evaluación Educativa, and New Directions for Evaluation were closely examined using these terms. The inclusion criteria included peer-reviewed articles and conceptual works in evaluation in the North American and Latin American contexts that involved the use/conceptualization of CRE approaches or evaluation conducted in Latino (a, e, x) populations. This search strategy produced more than 50 references to studies. I examined the abstracts of the publications to determine whether they fulfilled the established criteria. In the end, 39 studies met all requirements. Although this sample is not exhaustive, it is intended to be sufficiently extensive to broadly represent the current state of evaluation literature of the Latino (a, e, x) population.

Sample Characteristics

The literature search and inclusion criteria resulted in a total of 17 empirical articles and 22 conceptual works written between 1998 and 2021. The literature selected included 12 documents in Spanish and 17 in English. The evaluation work encompassed in this corpus took place in the USA (n = 19) and in other various countries in the American continent including Colombia (n = 2), Brazil (n = 2), Costa Rica (n = 1), Mexico (n = 1), Argentina (n = 1), and Latin America in general (n = 13). The programs evaluated in these publications were based on community development (e.g., youth crime prevention, quilombos quality of life improvement,

economic development for indigenous populations), education (e.g., leader training, e-learning, museum exposition, evaluation and assessment), health (e.g., HIV/AIDS education and prevention, reproductive health and education, public health intervention), agriculture (e.g., land management and conservation), and environmental sectors (e.g., conservation, natural and biodiversity resource management). Table 1 below includes a summary of the sample's characteristics in chronological order.

Table 2. Sample Characteristics

Author(s)	Year	Journal/Editorial	Category	Language	Country/Region
Cervantes & Pena	1998	Alcoholism Treatment Quartely	Empirical	English	USA
Segone	1998	UNICEF	Conceptual	Spanish	Colombia
Clayson et al.	2002	American Journal of Evaluation	Empirical	English	USA
Frierson et al.	2002	Book chapter	Conceptual	English	USA
Hopson	2003	Book chapter	Conceptual	English	USA
Conner	2004	New Directions for Evaluation	Empirical	English	USA
Hood	2004	New Directions for Evaluation	Conceptual	English	USA
SenGupta et al.	2004	New Directions for Evaluation	Conceptual	English	USA
Symonette	2004	New Directions for Evaluation	Conceptual	English	USA
Kirkhart	2005	Book chapter	Conceptual	English	USA

Nesman et al.	2007	Evaluation and Program Planning	Empirical	English	USA
Ravela et al.	2008	Revista Iberoamericana de Evaluacion Educativa	Conceptual	Spanish	Latin America
Cardoso Espinosa et al.	2009	Revista Universidad EAFIT	Empirical	Spanish	Colombia
Hopson	2009	Book chapter	Conceptual	English	USA
Perassi	2009	Revista Iberoamericana de Evaluacion Educativa	Empirical	Spanish	Argentina
Murillo & Roman	2010	Revista Iberoamericana de Educacion	Conceptual	Spanish	Latin America
AEA	2011	AEA	Conceptual	English	USA
Brandão et al.	2012	New Directions for Evaluation	Empirical	English	Brazil
Cunill-Grau & Ospina	2012	New Directions for Evaluation	Empirical	English	Latin America
Faúndez Meléndez	2012	New Directions for Evaluation	Conceptual	English	Latin America
Guendel	2012	New Directions for Evaluation	Conceptual	English	Latin America
Martinic	2012	New Directions for Evaluation	Conceptual	English	Latin America
Neirotti	2012	New Directions for	Conceptual	English	Latin America

		Evaluation			
Rotondo	2012	New Directions for Evaluation	Empirical	English	Latin America
Bowen & Tillman	2014	American Journal of Evaluation	Empirical	English	Brazil
Segovia Lagos& Mira Cabrera	2014	Revista de Ciencias Sociales	Empirical	Spanish	Latin America
Hood et al.	2015	Book chapter	Conceptual	English	USA
Rodríguez Bilella et al.	2016	DEval	Empirical	Spanish	Latin America
Mendoza et al.	2016	Revista de Estudios y Experiencias en Educación	Empirical	Spanish	Mexico
Boyce	2017	Evaluation and Program Planning	Empirical	English	USA
Boyce & Chouinard	2017	Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation	conceptual	English	North American
AEA	2018	AEA	conceptual	English	USA
Rodríguez Bilella & Tapella	2018	Editorial UNSJ	Empirical	Spanish	Latin America
Zamora- Serrano & González-	2018	Revista Electrónica Calidad en la Educación Superior	Empirical	Spanish	Costa Rica

Rodríguez

Caal et al.	2019	Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences	Empirical	English	USA
Pichardo Muñiz	2019	Revista Perspectivas de Políticas Públicas	conceptual	Spanish	Latin America
Stickl Haugen & Chouinard	2019	American Journal of Evaluation	conceptual	English	North American
Guajardo et al.	2020	New Directions for Evaluation	conceptual	English	USA
Lemos & Garcia	2020	New Directions for Evaluation	conceptual	English	USA
Tapella et al.	2021	DEval	Empirical	Spanish	Latin America

Review of the Literature

What follows is a description of the literature review conducted. First, I provide a review of the CRE seminal literature. Second, I provide a review of evaluation literature that includes Latinos (a, e, x). This is followed by a section with findings from the overall search conducted.

Review of the seminal CRE literature

The exponential growth of cultural responsiveness practices in social science research, including program evaluation (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017; Hood et al., 2015), in recent decades, has stimulated complex and numerous theoretical and methodological crossovers, as well as the consolidation of new ways of conducting evaluation and research (Acree & Chouinard, 2020). It is in this landscape that Culturally Responsive Evaluation (CRE) has advanced as one of the many approaches to evaluation that have been used in the field to do responsive evaluative inquiry that meaningfully attends to and addresses the cultural context of the

community (Boyce & Chouinard, 2017). According to Hood et al. (2015), what is particular about CRE approaches is that it situates culture as the central guiding element in evaluation practice. Led by social justice premises and the implementation of democratic, responsive, and equitable evaluation practices (Hood et al., 2015), CRE practitioners propose a new way of approaching the evaluation of culture, remaking past schemes of interpretation of matters such as identity, race, sexuality, ethnicity, cultural hybridism, etc. Parallel to the development of approaches similar to CRE, there have been recent public statements and the creation of guidelines for practitioners, such as the AEA Statement on Cultural Competence (2011), and the AEA's Guiding Principles for Evaluators (American Evaluation Association, 2018). These types of initiatives seek to promote continued recognition in scholars and practitioners about the need for acknowledging the pivotal role culture plays in diverse communities. It is in this context that the literature review conducted focused on identifying the role Latinos (a, e, x) had played in the development of CRE. Nonetheless, information found about the contributions and/or role of evaluators who identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x) is very little. Latinos (a, e, x) are almost invisible in this landscape, which does not mean members of this population have not actively contributed to the development and implementation of CRE theory and practice. To better understand how evaluators from this population have been involved in the development and implementation of CRE practices, I provide a summary of the CRE foundation and the main contributions of scholars from the evaluation field.

According to Hopson (2009) the theoretical roots of CRE are associated with "indigenous, minoritized, and subjugated ways of knowing, appropriating, collecting, and interpreting knowledges that challenge the dominant, Western, and colonizing information and knowledges" (p. 8). Hood et al. (2015) indicates that "CRE marries theories of culturally responsive assessment and responsive evaluation to bring program evaluation into alignment with the lived experiences of stakeholders of color" (p. 283). Hood et al. (2015) also suggests

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that the early roots of CRE began in education with culturally responsive pedagogy and that its foundation is largely framed in the scholarship of Stafford Hood. He provides a summary of the contributions of many scholars in the field who provided the foundations for CRE. This includes the contributions of Reid E. Jackson in the 1930's and 1940's, identified as "one of the earlier African American pioneers in educational evaluation" (p. 286) who provided clarity in the articulation of CRE; Messick's definition of validity in 1989; Madison challenging evaluation to address race and culture in 1992; Kirkhart's conceptualization of multicultural validity in 1995; Hood's advancement to culturally responsive assessment, and culturally responsive evaluation in 1998 (same year when he used the term "culturally responsive evaluation"), and on "deliberative democratic evaluation" on 2000. A year later, in 2001, Hood also denounced that the contributions of African American evaluators have not been duly recognized in the field. In the following years, more and more scholars in the field contributed to the theorization and practice of CRE by providing guidelines and frameworks (e.g., Frierson et al., 2002, and Hood et al., 2015), expanding on associated notions such as cultural competence in evaluation (e.g., in SenGupta et al., 2004, and Symonette, 2004) and democratic evaluation (Segone, 1998), and statements on the overall relevance of culture and cultural competence in evaluation (e.g., AEA, 2011 and 2018).

The literature review conducted also revealed that during the next following, there has been a special interest in highlighting the value of the "lived" experiences of evaluators. Hood (1998) first discussed the topic by highlighting the value of shared experiences between observers and observed when discussing the Amistad case, which resulted in the Africans being set free, and the participation of African Americans as experts in evaluation of educational programs that could decide the fate of the stakeholders of color. Later on, Hood (2004) argued that too many evaluations failed to address culture as an important consideration in the design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of evaluative data because there were too few

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trained evaluators with lived experience among racial minorities or the poor. Hopson (2003), for example, argued that an evaluator's "lived" experiences are determined by class background, racial and ethnic identity, educational background, among other components, which shape the assumptions, frames of reference, and constructs of knowledge that they bring to the evaluation. For this reason, Hopson (2003) advises evaluators to be aware of the influence of race, culture, and social location. Hood (2004) also contended that having more evaluators who shared a lived experience with those who have been traditionally disenfranchised could make a valuable contribution to evaluative thinking and practice. Hopson (2009) also argued that recognizing demographic, sociopolitical, and contextual dimensions of culture is fundamental in evaluation. Additionally, he stated that "by privileging notions of lived experiences and especially regarding communities and populations of color or indigenous groups, new explanations and understandings of evaluands, programs, and phenomena of study emerge" (p. 4). In this sense, during these years, CRE literature expanded on the need to implement culturally responsive practices to integrate the value of evaluators "lived" experiences of evaluators of color.

In 2011, the American Evaluation Association (AEA) pronounced a statement on Cultural Competence In Evaluation, reaffirming the importance of cultural competence in evaluation' theory and practice. This statement states that cultural competence is a stance taken toward culture; a culturally competent evaluator therefore is someone "prepared to engage with diverse segments of communities to include cultural and contextual dimensions important to the evaluation" (para. 4). This position is consistent with the AEA Guiding Principles Principle published later on in 2018. Two of these guiding principles explicitly state that evaluators must "Ensure that the evaluation team collectively possesses or seeks out the competencies necessary to work in the cultural context of the evaluation" (para. 8), and that "Evaluators honor the dignity, well-being, and self-worth of individuals and acknowledge the influence of culture within and across groups" (para. 10). This position is reaffirmed also in the 2018 Evaluator

Competencies (King & Stevahn, 2020), which describes a competent evaluator as someone who acts ethically, demonstrates integrity, collects and analyzes data using credible, feasible, and culturally appropriate procedures, respecting people from different cultural backgrounds (p. 2). Therefore, during these years the positionality of the AEA, scholars and practioners is clear regarding the centrality culture, cultural competence and culturally responsive practices play in evaluation practice and theory.

Up to this point, the literature consulted revealed that no Latino (a, e, x) voice had been involved in any of these discussions or the development of these statements. In case there were Latino (a, e, x) evaluators engaged in these reflections, there is no evidence in the seminal evaluation literature. There are empirical articles, nonetheless, that uncover the voices of a few Latinos (a, e, x) in the evaluation field. In the next section, I briefly describe evaluation empirical articles that have been conducted in Latino (a, e, x) populations. Additionally, I provide information regarding a few theoretical and empirical articles that have been written by evaluators that identified themselves as Latinos (a, e, x).

Review of Evaluation Literature that includes Latinos (a, e, x)

Cervantes & Peña (1998) provide general guidelines for evaluating prevention and treatment programs, which includes the development of course materials specific to communities; providing training in Hispanic/Latino cultural issues for program and evaluation staffs; understanding social and demographic characteristics of the population studied and taking into consideration the language of the participants in all aspects of the evaluation (among many more). Their study is based on a review of the literature, a compendium of instruments, and a survey from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. In their study, the authors recognize "the tremendous heterogeneity that exists within the Hispanic/Latino population" (p. 127) and recommend evaluators to be especially sensitive to individual variability. Their position

regarding the role and importance of cultural factors within the evaluation process is clear within the next quote:

> Effective evaluation of prevention and treatment programs for Hispanics/ Latinos depends heavily on our understanding of the role which culture plays in the development of AODA use, misuse, and abuse. Understanding cultural factors is not only important in the development of effective prevention and treatment programs but plays an equally critical role in the evaluation of such programs. The ability of evaluators to incorporate cultural factors such as language, acculturation, family values, and community attitudes into evaluation designs has been termed "cultural competence" (Orlandi, 1992). The use of culturally relevant instrumentation is an important component of culturally competent research and evaluation for Hispanics (Cervantes & Acosta, 1992). Failure to consider important demographic, socio-cultural, and psychological factors specific to Hispanic/Latino populations can result in inappropriate conclusions about the effectiveness of programs. (p. 114)

Guided by a critical theory social science perspective, utilizing constructivist methods, and a context-sensitive lens framework, Clayson et al. (2002) analyze dynamic interactions between major stakeholder groups including funders, community-based organization staff, community members, and evaluators. With more than five years of experience evaluating community initiatives located in several low-income, California Latino communities, these evaluators examined the contextual dimensions (historical, political, and economic conditions) and the challenges of diversity (the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the particular community) in the interactions between stakeholders. Also, they argue that evaluators' role in these types of multi-cultural settings is to act as interpreters, translators, mediators, and storytellers since "these particular roles are central when operating in multi-cultural settings emphasizing a context-sensitive approach." (p. 34) Overall, they Clayson et al. recognized the

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importance of 1) structuring an international-context perspective for community evaluations, 2) the need for cultural-linguistic competency, 3) evaluation methods should be consisted with la familia, 4) Latino (a, e, x) populations are vulnerable 5) the evaluation occurs within a particular context, at a particular period of history. The results they present correspond to three evaluations of Latino communities in California that used a theory of change approach along with a variety of data collection methods (e.g., written and telephone surveys, open-ended and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, photography, and historical archives), and diverse culturally and linguistically appropriate mechanisms were established for continuous review, analyses and interpretation by stakeholders. Finally, Clayson et al. (2002) urge evaluators to be particularly aware of language and la familia as a common symbol of great importance when working with Latinos.

Conner (2004) argues evaluators must learn about and respond to the context of the evaluation and its culturally related components, as well as to the participants in the evaluation and the cultural issues relevant to them. As an example, Conner (2004) describes an evaluation project focused on HIV prevention among Latinos. Conner (2004) indicates that the educational message of the project (promoting the use of condoms and preventing Latino farmers to get HIV) was disseminated using a fotonovela, an eight-page picture comic book that tells the story of three farmworkers who cross the U.S.-Mexico border to work in the agricultural fields. The story follows the three lead characters, Marco, Sergio, and Victor, as they are introduced to after-work temptations, such as the sex workers who are typically and regularly brought into migrant labor camps. Formative evaluation of the fotonovela indicated a need for a supplemental brochure, so the evaluator used the same picture-book approach to create a special supplemental mini-fotonovela. Conner (2004) also proposes five factors to increase multicultural validity in Latino (a, e, x) populations: 1) involving participants in the evaluation study planning, 2) speaking the literal language of the participants, 3) speaking the figurative

language of the participants, 4) working collaboratively with participants during implementation, and 5) sharing the benefits.

Nesman et al. (2007) argue the use of a theory-based evaluation is a good fit when working with Latin American communities, Latino students, and their families because it allows revealing linkages between challenges faced and culturally relevant values. The program evaluated was a nationwide initiative known as ENLACE-HC (Engaging Latino Communities for Education, located in Hillsborough County, Florida). This initiative is sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to increase Latino student access to higher education. According to Nesman et al. (2007), a theory-based evaluation approach was chosen because of its efficacy with comprehensive community initiatives that aim to create social change rooted in the communities they serve. Additionally, the evaluation had a participatory focus bringing together educational institutions and other stakeholders in the community to increase the educational success of Latino students. The evaluation team conducted case studies and used mixed methods, following a developmental approach. Case studies were designed to test key components of the theory of change, assess attainment of intermediate outcomes, and test relationships between processes and outcomes.

Cardoso Espinosa et al. (2009) proposed the use of Systems Methodology (SSM), proposed by Peter Checkland in 1981, to verify the achievements in the educational institution in social and productive fields. According to them, such methodology puts forward seven flexible stages, and the overall purpose is to observe the social problems and to work on them through holistic thinking that allows integrating all elements involved with data can be qualitative and/or quantitative, all this under the precept of a systemic transformation. They argue this methodological approach enables a better decision-making process for the restructuring educational processes in Colombia. Their study also includes an analysis of the mechanism for evaluation in the country: Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP), Comités Interinstitucionales

para la Evaluación de la Educación Superior (CIEES), Consejo para la Acreditación de la Educación Superior (COPAES), Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencias y la Cultura (UNESCO), Organización para la Cooperación and Desarrollo Económico (OCDE). They indicate that even though evaluation of educational programs is systematic and includes well-planned work models that help to audit and recommend corrective actions, the parameters used are very lax and incongruous. This is mainly because each agency has its own evaluation model.

Calzada et al. (2010) explored, through focus groups with 48 Dominican and Mexican mothers of preschoolers, what were Latino core values and cultural elements as related to their parenting role. In addition to focus groups, participants completed the Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AMAS). The AMAS is a measure of cultural adaptation that can be used with any ethnic group, by measuring domains such as cultural knowledge, language use, and identity. All domains were measured for the culture of origin (enculturation) and the U.S. American culture (acculturation), allowing for an examination of cultural adaptation as a bi-dimensional construct. The AMAS was standardized in English and Spanish with Latino university students from various countries of origin and showed adequate psychometric properties. Results from the study revealed all immigrant participants had high levels of enculturation and lower levels of acculturations. In contrast, US-born Dominican mothers were highly acculturated and highly enculturated. During the same year, Murillo & Roman (2010), argued at that time there was a need to assume a global and integrating approach to evaluation in education in Latin America, promoting the development of evaluation principles and criteria consistent with the principles of lifelong learning, and raising the need for social participation in the design of evaluation policies.

Iriarte-García et al. (2011) report the evaluation capacity-building process for helping community-based organizations using a catalyst-for-change approach. The authors analyzed

the role of the catalyst in diffusing evaluation knowledge and skills within an employment

program community-based organization, located in a Latino neighborhood in Chicago, that

provides a wide array of services—from early intervention to adult programs—to people with

intellectual disabilities. Evaluators partnered with one of the program team members to share

and clarify motivations, assumptions, and expectations for the evaluation and to share

knowledge about the program. The role of the project team member, the program coordinator,

who partnered with the evaluation team, the catalyst, was to identify when and how to transfer

her evaluation capacity to other members of the staff. Also, the evaluation capacity building

process was based on (1) the collaborative immersion Approach; (2) strategies from the

evaluation capacity building model (teaching and learning strategies of brainstorming meetings,

training, technical assistance, and coaching/mentoring); and (3) constructivist adult learning

theory. To document the ECB process they used direct observations, document reviews, activity

logs, entry and exit interviews with the program coordinator, a series of interviews, a case study,

observation of competencies, review of program processes, practices, previous evaluation

reports, and other documents.

Rotondo (2012) recognizes an increased interest in governments across Latin America

in the use of planning, monitoring, and evaluation (PME) systems as a strategic information tool

for public management and policy. As a result, there are significant efforts into evaluation

capacity development. Rotondo (2012) states that the Regional Platform for Evaluation Capacity

Building in Latin America and the Caribbean (PREVAL) seeks to enhance efficiency and

effectiveness in rural development programs, through strengthening PME systems at local and

decentralized levels. To ensure that principal actors are involved in designing and implementing

M&E systems (government managers, communities, and government evaluation units),

participatory evaluation and Learning-Oriented Evaluation Approaches (the evaluation is based

on negotiation and consensus across stakeholder groups, to achieve shared responsibility for

interventions) are being implemented. In this sense, participation in evaluation seeks to engage participants in program decision-making. Rotondo (2012) argues participatory evaluation methodologies are historically and widely used in the Latin American region because it provides procedures, tools, and methodologies attuned to local cultures.

Martinic (2012) describes the educational reforms in Latin America and the way they reflect the role, method, and use of evaluation processes. The study provides a summary of how in the last three decades evaluative studies in Latin America have shifted from analysis of external factors to giving greater importance to internal processes, including the interactions and subjectivities of the actors inside schools and classroom contexts. According to Martinic (2012), these changes are translated into the design of more complex models of analysis. In Latin America, educational reforms have decentered policymaking with countries evolving toward decentralized and participatory decision-making systems. The region is experiencing a shift from a society that passively receives benefits to a more active one with a strong expression of its demands and with greater power to exert control over school-related decisions. All of these changes in society and the organization of educational systems have had repercussions for the development of evaluation, providing evaluation with a new function and forms of use. However, some variables do not necessarily translate to contexts in Latin America. Therefore, a strong challenge to the adaptation and validation of new models exists in the region.

Given the sociopolitical context of Brazil, where urban violence is one of the most serious problems among African Brazilians youngsters, Brandão et al. (2012) conducted a participatory evaluation where they invited young people who had been involved in crimes to be part of the evaluation team of the Pró-Menino Program, which aims at decreasing crime rate in adolescents. The authors implemented a qualitative methodology, for mediating dialogue, exclusively created for this evaluation, called QUADROS (FRAMES). FRAMES consists of 27 drawings, and two "joker" pictures, that show different situations young people who experience

social exclusion might be encountered. According to Brandão et al. (2012), these pictures were the result of a series of debates with youngsters, and educators. The scenes selected allow multiple interpretations and have the power to trigger dialogue.

In 2014, Bowen and Tillman discussed lessons learned from the development, implementation, and analysis of three culturally responsive surveys conducted in Brazil. The three oral surveys were used to evaluate the struggle of Brazil's quilombos (former fugitive slave communities) for land rights and livelihood. Throughout the paper, the authors argued for the necessity of implementing surveys that are culturally responsive within contexts such as this, and they shared their efforts to be culturally responsive and the challenges they encountered along the way. The authors finalize providing lessons learned for culturally responsive survey inquirers, such as how in the development phase, "considerable preliminary fieldwork is critical to carefully contextualize marginalized communities and to increase the researchers' sensitivity to cultural norms and nuances" (p. 37), the necessity for providing intensive training workshops to insiders who assist during the evaluation, and "the potential tension between conventional methods of quantitative instrument development, data collection, and analysis, and the desire to be CRE centered" (p. 38). The authors finalize encouraging evaluators and researchers to employ CRE approaches and share their results to ignite reflection among the field.

Boyce (2017) discussed the relevance of bringing attention to issues of culture, race, diversity, power, and equity within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) educational programming. The purpose of her study is to shared lessons learned from the implementation of a values-engaged, educative evaluation within a multi-year STEM education program. Findings from her study revealed that "explicit attention to culture, diversity, and equity was initially challenged by organizational culture and underdeveloped evaluator–stakeholder professional relationship and evidence of successful engagement of culture, diversity, and equity emerged from formal and informal evaluation settings. Among other lessons learned and

implications for practice, the paper finalizes with recommendations such as how evaluators must be respectfully patient when attending to culture, diversity, and equity. During the same year, Boyce and Chouinard (2017) provided a conceptual framework for understanding pedagogy as it relates to teaching culturally responsive approaches to evaluation. In this article, they reflect and discuss the challenges of novice evaluators to translate theoretical constructs of CRE to practice. Their framework for teaching culturally responsive approaches to evaluation includes two domains: one conceptual (including locating self and social inquiry as a cultural product) and the other one methodological (including formal and informal applications in evaluation practice). Each of the dimensions they provide is also linked to multiple domains of the Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice. Additionally, they provide suggestions for activities that align with each of these dimensions.

Caal et al. (2019) shared evaluation results of the program Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD), which is an education program specifically developed for increasing parenting skills in Latino parents of children under 5 years of age. According to the authors, to assess the impact of the program, a multisite randomized control trial (RCT) was conducted across 23 schools with a sample of 922 low-income Latino parents. All materials were available in both languages, and all procedures and materials were tested in a pilot study at one school during the previous school year. Also, the overall evaluation was designed in collaboration with the program developer to assess "the extent to which AP/OD changes the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of Latino parents in ways that will enhance the school readiness of their children." (p. 234) Results of the evaluation suggest that the program was successful in increasing parents' educational engagement with their young children and also provides evidence regarding how "alignment between programmatic messages and participants' values and beliefs" (p. 245) facilitated behavioral changes in this sample.

Pichardo Muñiz (2019) reflects on the development of evaluation during the last

decades, in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the author, in the Latin American

context, evaluation was first derived from planning initiatives under the influence of CEPAL

(Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, of the ONU) in the '50s. As of 1961, the

evaluation is associated with the national planning experiences of the Alliance for Progress (in

particular in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean.). Starting in the 1980s,

evaluation is inspired by humanitarian aid and development cooperation. From the mid-1990s

onwards, evaluation is placed under the umbrella of social protection programs, and finally,

during the 21st century, the so-called movement for the institutionalization of Monitoring and

Evaluation Systems begins, taking place evaluation as an integral part of public management.

Pichardo Muñiz (2019) also argues that the conceptualization of evaluation, as well as the

approaches, methods, and indicators, come, in general, from the evaluation of educational

practices. The author concludes by affirming that even though the evaluation in the 21st century

has undergone a highly positive and promising evolution, there are theoretical-methodological

tensions between different orientations and approaches, often juxtaposed, assumed as a kind of

"fashion", and repetition of conceptual schemes that come from contexts with dissimilar

characteristics. In the following quote, the author reflects on current gaps in program evaluation

in the Latin American context:

Hablar hoy en día de evaluación está de moda, junto a la política pública y al Estado.

Sin embargo, muchos vacíos están presentes, en particular las formas de entenderla y

practicarla desde la complejidad del mundo de hoy: una tarea pendiente, apenas

iniciada. América Latina y el Caribe cuentan con una extraordinaria capacidad para

aportar en   esa tarea. En particular, porque la evaluación se desarrolla en y desde la

práctica. No obstante, el gran reto es descolonizar los métodos de evaluación. El

desafío está en dar el salto de la evaluación que genera temor, porque busca control;

desde propósitos de mejoras en la eficacia, la rendición de cuentas y la transparencia

en la utilización de los fondos públicos, a iniciativas de intervención que den muestras

de procesos globales y sostenibles como expresión de una cultura de evaluación en el

marco del fortalecimiento y profundización de los espacios democráticos, en procura de

mejoras sostenibles en la calidad de vida humana, pues al fin de cuentas de lo que se

trata es que ahora que la gente vive más, viva mejor (p. 464).

Guajardo et al. (2020), all of them self-identified as Latinas, introduce the use of Latino

Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) as a framework for inciting change through Social Justice

Evaluation while providing considerations for evaluators and evaluation practice. These scholars

provide an overview of the theory, synthesize related literature, and describe a guiding

framework anchored in four functions of LatCrit, detailing cultural values and methodological

implications for evaluators. According to Guajardo et al. (2020), LatCrit is a new approach,

within the transformative evaluation paradigm, that has the potential to be used as a framework

that guides responsive, social justice evaluation with diverse multinational, racial, cultural, and

ethnic Latino (a, e, x) communities. Even though LatCrit is new in the program evaluation field, it

is a sub-discipline or an extension within the larger field of Critical Race Theory (Huber, 2009;

Freire et al., 2017). Scholars in the educational research field have been implemented LatCrit

since many years ago (Solórzano and Delgado Bernal, 2001; Fernández, 2002; Huber, 2009;)

as a way to reveal the ways Latinos (a, e, x) experience race, class, gender, and sexuality,

while also acknowledging experiences related to issues of immigration status, language,

ethnicity, and culture (Solórzano and Delgado Bernal, 2001; Guajardo et al., 2020). In this

sense, LatCrit enables researchers to better articulate the experiences of Latinos (a, e, x) by

addressing issues often overlooked by CRT such as immigration status, language, ethnicity,

culture, identity, and phenotype (Solórzano and Delgado Bernal, 2001; Fernández, 2002).

LatCrit is also concerned with a coalitional pan-ethnic identity and community memory that

seeks the empowerment of this population (Solórzano and Delgado Bernal, 2001), placing

marginalized participants at the center of analysis (Fernández, 2002). Back to Guajardo et al.

(2020), these scholars call for attention to four culturally significant values: familismo, respeto,

simpatía and Marianismo/machismo dichotomy. According to them familismo refers to the role

of the family and extended family as a cohesive unit Latinos tend to rely on in times of need and

celebration. Respeto refers to the use of appropriate titles, formal communications styles,

manner of dress and presentation, and levels of comfort with interacting with persons in

positions of power or who perceive the evaluator to be in a position of power. Simpatía refers to

how the evaluation and team demonstrate kindness, politeness, good manners, and

friendliness. Marianismo/machismo refers to how the evaluation and team address gender roles

and expectations. Most recently, the growing use of the term "Latinx" addresses the evolving

notions of gender as a binary construct. Marianismo is a gender construct that defines the

feminine attributes of purity, motherhood, and virginity as qualities consistent with a

prototypically ideal young woman while machismo describes male behavior and expectations

and is the alternative narrative to marianismo. Finally, Guajardo et at. (2020) call out evaluators

for the need to implement sophisticated evaluation methods and frameworks to address pan-

ethnic Latino (a, e, x) populations.

Lemos & Garcia (2020) also provide recommendations for evaluators who work with

Latino (a, e, x) populations and who implement Culturally Responsive and/or Equitable

Evaluation. Some of the considerations the authors provide are associated with the need to

address biases toward Latino (a, e, x) immigrants in the USA; paying attention to intergroup

diversity; increasing knowledge of the evaluation team about the existing social-ecological

environment of the participants; and the influence of individual factors (e.g., immigration status,

language spoken, country of origin, socioeconomic status, gender, etc.) and interpersonal

factors (social networks and social support embedded in settings such as home, school,

workplace), among others. The authors argue evaluators should align their understanding, expectations, and strategies during the design phase, and procure collaboration with diverse Latinx if they want to make sure their perspectives are integrated throughout the process. They finalize motivating evaluators who are positioned at the forefront of the movement to incite change in our communities.

<div align="center">

Findings

</div>

Definitions and/or Conceptualizations of Latinos (a, e, x)

Out of all the literature consulted, only three articles included a definition of Latino (a, e, x), and five included a conceptualization or characterization of this population. I will start by commenting on the definitions found in the literature. First, Clayson et al. (2002) define the term Latinos as a is a political word used to designate the heterogeneous Caribbean and Latin American population that shares a cultural and historical background. In this study, the Latino identity is described as people who come from various countries and are the heirs to mestizaje or hybrid cultures. The author also indicates that Latinos' significant differences emerged from the multiple levels of development, wealth, and racial mixtures that coexist in each country of origin. Parallel to this, patterns of settlement, immigration, media, tourism, and transnational networks play a role in the configuration of Latino identities. The author also considers that there are differences "between Latinos who were born in the U.S., others who migrated 20 years ago, and those who recently crossed the border and may follow a pendulum pattern of migration" (p. 36). Second, Lemos & Garcia (2020) define the term Latinx as a gender-neutral or non-binary term. Their aim in using the term Latinx is to promote "inclusivity from the broader cultural or racial identity" (p. 91). They further explain that Latinx is a multiethnic and multiracial population. Third, Guajardo et al. (2020) provide a more detailed definition. The definition is the following:

> We define Latinx as a person, or descendent of a person, originating from the various
>
> countries in the Western hemisphere extending from Mexico to the southernmost tip of

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South America. Puerto Rico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, and the US Virgin Islands are

also included. We acknowledge that it may fall short in describing complex and dynamic

nuances of Latinx identity. A more in-depth exploration of the history and evolution of

these terms could also include Hispanic or Chicano/a/x. (p. 68)

Although no other article includes a definition of this population, some of them include a

brief characterization of the Latino (a, e, x) population. Cervantes & Peña (1998) do not define

this population, but it is noticeable that they utilized the terms Hispanic and Latino

interchangeably. In addition, this study was the first to talk about how "the growth of the

Hispanic/Latino population exceeds that of any other ethnic group in the United States" (p. 110).

According to the authors, during those years, this community represented 9% of the total

population in the USA (approximately 22 million) with Mexican Americans being the largest

Hispanic group (accounting for 60% of the population). They also described this population as a

heterogeneous group that shares communalities and distinctions. They noted that these

communalities are the "Hispanic" cultural heritage, which includes language, religion, personal

and family beliefs, and attitudes. Distinctions were described as based on historical, political,

economic, and immigration factors. This study indicates that educational attainment for this

population is lower than for non-Hispanics and that 1 in four Hispanics was considered to be

living in poverty. They also comment that the annual average family income for White non-

Hispanics was almost double that of Hispanics and that a contributing factor was the average

family size for Hispanics, which was larger in comparison to other ethnic groups.

In the study of Clayson et al. (2002), some of the cultural factors of this population are

further explored. These authors provide a brief description of regional and local conditions that

affected Latinos in California at the time of the evaluation, including the globalization of

economic and political constructs; the growing migration of groups across national borders; the

past and present treatment of Latinos in California (migration restrictions, employment, and

housing discrimination). They also advocated for the necessity for cultural and linguistic competency when conducting evaluation with Latino populations given that "Evaluations should be conducted in a linguistically appropriate manner attending to the nuances of languages used among those from different geographic areas, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, and age groups" (p. 41). In addition, this study highlights the role of family and extended family (uncles, aunts, cousins, godparents, etc.) within Latino populations; for this reason, the authors argue that "as the most important social institution among Latinos, evaluation methods should be particularly sensitive to la familia in those communities" (p. 41).

In the Theory-based evaluation of a comprehensive Latino education initiative, Nesman et al. (2007) include a brief comment about the challenge to identify strategies effective in "working with a heterogeneous group of individuals whose needs vary by the nation of origin, level of acculturation, and geographic location in the US" (p. 267). This is the only statement in which a description of the overall Latino (a, e, x) is included.

Lemos & Garcia (2020) indicate that the fastest-growing racial/ethnic minority group in the USA is the Latinx. They also indicate that the second largest Latinx population in the world is located in the USA. The authors attribute the increase in Latinx population growth to foreign-born Latinx and to Latinx who have immigrated to the USA. They highlight that understanding the role of immigration and cultural diversity among Latinx is crucial when working with this population in evaluation because "these subtle differences among Latinx in the United States create specific barriers and facilitators among distinct sub-populations (e.g., Mexican, Dominican, Puerto Rican) that would not be present, when analyzing data among the Hispanic/Latino population as a whole" (p. 92).

Also in 2020, Guajardo et al. provided what is the most detailed description of the Latino (a, e, x) population in all literature consulted. First, they included demographic information about this population in the USA. According to them, this ethnic/racial group is the largest minority in

the USA, comprising 17.8% of the US population (increasing to 28.6% by 2060). They note that

the Latinx identity is more complex than the ethnoracial categories used by the US Census.

They indicate that "self-identification is a deeply personal choice for Latinx" (p. 68). The authors

also refer to associated terms such as Latino, Hispanic, and Latinidad. They comment that

Latino and Hispanic are terms used to refer to people descendent from Latin American

countries. According to them, both terms are widely used and accepted, and they can also be

associated to the ability to speak Spanish or to the use of a Spanish surname. The term Latino,

according to the authors, first appeared in the 1800s in the writings of Colombian and Chilean

writers who were aimed to amplified indigenous perspectives instead of colonialism. In this

sense, the word Latino embodied the "symbolic unification of people in countries that had been

previously occupied by France, Spain, and Portugal" (p. 68), and by the twentieth century, it was

widely used to refer to all Latin American. Guajardo et al. (2020) refer to Latinidad as associated

with maintaining a connection with the Latin American cultural customs and traditions.

Methodologies implemented in the evaluation literature

To determine what methodological designs have been used to conduct evaluation with

Latino (a, e, x) populations, I looked for specifications regarding methodological designs,

approaches, methodologies, theoretical frameworks, and data collection methods used to

conduct evaluation within the corpus of articles. The literature review consulted revealed that 18

of the articles included different approaches, methodological designs, frameworks, and data

collections methods that have been implemented to evaluate this population. The evaluations

utilized a wide repertoire of methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks such as

mixed methods, participatory, collaborative, developmental, action research, CRE, Soft System

methods, appreciative inquiry, constructivism, quasi-experimental studies, among many others.

The same can be said about the use of data collection methods. Some of the traditional data

collection methods included surveys, reviews of literature and documentation, interviews, focus

groups, and observations, and some of the less common or frequently used methods included

debates, bibliographical analysis, image-based evaluation methods (fotonovela, FRAMES,

talking picture, photographic records, etc.), testimonies, among many more. Table 2 below

includes a description of all the methodological designs and data collection methods found in

the literature consulted. It is worth noting that some of the articles consulted did not include a

description of the data collection methods implemented during the evaluation.

Table 3. Methodological Designs to Work with Latino (a, e, x) Populations

Author(s) (Year)	Methodological Design	Data Collection Methods
Cervantes & Peña (1998)	Culturally competent evaluation	Review of the literature, a compendium of instruments, and a survey.
Clayson et al. (2002)	Critical theory social science perspective, utilizing constructivist methods, theory of change approach, and a context-sensitive lens framework.	Written and telephone surveys, open-ended and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, photography, and historical archives.
Conner (2004)	Culturally competent evaluation framework, and quasi-experimental study.	Small-group, oral-and-written survey, interviews, and fotonovela.
Nesman et al. (2007)	Theory-based evaluation, participatory focus, a developmental approach, and	Case studies, surveys, and interviews.

	mixed methods.	
Cardoso Espinosa et al. (2009)	Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)	No description of data collection methods is provided.
Iriarte-García et al. (2011)	Evaluation capacity-building, collaborative immersion approach, and constructivist adult learning theory.	Direct observations, document reviews, activity logs, entry and exit interviews with the program coordinator, a series of interviews, a case study, observation of competencies, review of program processes, practices, previous evaluation reports, and other documents.
Brandão et al. (2012)	Participatory evaluation, and the FRAMES (QUADROS) method.	Interviews, debates, and bibliographical analysis.
Cunill-Grau & Ospina (2012)	Results-based performance measurement and evaluation (PME) systems.	Case studies using primary documents, interviews, and case validation.
Rotondo (2012)	Planning, monitoring, and evaluation (PME) systems, participatory evaluation, learning-oriented evaluation approaches, and appreciative inquiry method.	Baseline studies, and outcome, impact evaluations; systematization of good practice in PME; innovative, image-based evaluation methods; and self-appraisals and organizational capacity-building plans in PME.

Bowen & Tillman (2014)	Culturally Responsive Evaluation	Oral surveys.
Mendoza et al. (2016)	Soft Systems Methodology	Case study and survey.
Rodríguez Bilella & Tapella (2018)	Qualitative methodology and participatory evaluation.	Focus groups, in depth-interviews, and semistructured interviews.
Zamora-Serrano & González-Rodríguez (2018)	Evaluación de gestión por resultados (Evaluation of management by results), and evaluación de gestión por procesos (Evaluation of management by Processes)	No description of data collection methods is provided.
Caal et al. (2019)	Randomized Control Trial (RCT)	Survey.
Lemos & Garcia (2020)	Culturally Responsive and Equitable Evaluation	No description of data collection methods is provided.
Guajardo et al. (2020)	Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit)	No description of data collection methods is provided.
Tapella et al. (2021)	Participatory evaluation, collaboratory evaluation, action-research and sistematización de experiencias (systematization of experiences)	Foto parlante (talking picture); registro fotográfico (Photographic record); audio foro (audio forum); video debate (video discussion); video documental (documentary video); rompecabezas (Puzzle); mapa comunal (communal map); in-

depth interviews; focus groups; refranes (sayings); testimonios (testimonies); cuento dramatizado (Dramatized story). (See more in Tapella et al., 2021)

Challenges faced when evaluating Latinos (a, e, x) populations and/or communities

Some of the empirical articles consulted included a detailed description of challenges faced when implementing evaluation approaches that were either CRE or evaluations conducted in communities encompassing Latinos (a, e, x). In Brazil, Brandão et al. (2012) reported challenges experienced in a participatory evaluation with youngsters whose lives were marked by involvement in crimes. Brandão et al. (2012) reported difficulties in incorporating the youth into the evaluation process due to social exclusion and stigmatized for their involvement in crime, and an associated technical-ethical challenge "that had profound consequences for the quality of the work" (p. 51). According to Brandão et al. (2012), the evaluation required interviews with adolescents who had been previously identified by their involvement in crime. This generated concerns regarding how "an interviewer detached from the adolescent's universe might reinforce the likelihood of inauthentic answers from youth in order not to expose him or herself to delicate situations, such as revealing that the youth had committed a new offense" (p. 51). To address these challenges, they established a team of interviewers composed of youngsters. The purpose was to generate a "quasihorizontal relationship" between the interviewer and interviewee, which was characterized by a "shared language and stories potentially developed through complicity, the dialogue presented in the interview allowed the sharing of memories, information, and feelings, with an authenticity that might be difficult to achieve otherwise" (p. 52).

Also in Brazil, Bowen & Tillman (2014) reported a set of barriers faced when conducting a culturally responsive evaluation in quilombos' communities in Brazil. Issues experienced during the evaluation included 1) the lack of CRE training, interviewing skills, and efficient strategies to establish rapport with participants of cultural insiders of these communities (community residents who provided support to the evaluation team in data collection and eliciting responses from participants); 2) obstacles to culturally adapt/reduce extensive quantitative instruments due to lack of time and financial resources; 3) problems associated with incorrect translation and misinterpretation of the concepts asked in the instruments utilized during data collection; and 4) the use of nonstandard metrics, scores, measures and quantities employed within these communities that were perceived as "difficult for those without their shared lived experiences" (p. 37). The authors also reflect about ways to address these types of challenges when implementing culturally responsive evaluations in similar contexts. Among the reflections, they note that "using a culturally responsive data collection instrument is not sufficient; the administration of the survey plays an equally important role in being culturally responsive" (p. 37). They expand on this and further explain that attention to the quality of the instrument design should include also the sampling procedure, definitions, coverage, and overall questionnaire design. The authors also recommend administering a pilot study of the instruments, including a pause after having administered a few surveys to translate/verify responses and to assess the training of the interviewers. These evaluators also recommend providing intensive training workshops to 'insiders' who assist during the evaluation process, and conforming teams integrated by insiders and outsiders. Finally, Bowen & Tillman (2014) note how there is a "potential tension between conventional methods of quantitative instrument development, data collection, and analysis, and the desire to be CRE centered" (p. 38). In this sense, the authors explain that the purpose of their surveys aimed to combat stereotypes of quilombos and to advocate for resources. They tried to meet the goals of validity, reliability, and

CRE even though the evaluation included the collection of standardized measurements that were not sensitive to the cultural aspects of the community or the socioeconomic characteristics of Brazil.

Conner (2004) also shared challenges faced during the evaluation of HIV prevention programs for Latinos (a, e, x). Reported challenges were related to a lack of participation. According to the author, there were retreats where Latino farm workers received information about HIV prevention. These men were assigned a retreat date approximately two-month prior. Nonetheless, the number of men that registered to attend retreats did not match the number of men who showed up on the day of the retreat. Some of the participants who did not attend the retreat, but initially planned to, were asked for the reasons for their lack of participation. According to participants' feedback, the reason was not related to a lack of interest in the program but changes in work schedules and unexpected personal situations. Adjustments in the evaluation design were made to accommodate the workers' situations, which allowed participants more flexibility in attending the retreats.

Rodríguez Bilella & Tapella (2018) also report challenges faced during the qualitative evaluation of the Oportunidades Programme in Mexico. This program has been implemented since 1997, and its main goal is to decrease the poverty that typifies many rural and indigenous communities in eleven indigenous intercultural regions in the states of Chiapas, Chihuahua, Oaxaca, and Sonora. To analyzed overall program coverage and operations, the evaluation identified the main obstacles to implementation activities. They placed special attention on the relationship between the Oportunidades extensionists (promotores) and the women representing the indigenous communities (the vocales). They found that there were serious communication problems with language because almost none of the promotores and only a few of the vocales were bilingual. Therefore, most of the indigenous women had limited Spanish which did not allow them to accurately understand the Oportunidades employees (the

promotores) nor the information they were providing. According to the authors, the language barrier was so profound that in some areas, "the majority of indigenous women did not understand what the programme was for. They couldn't understand what good it did to spend hours listening to medical specialists who spoke about issues they did not understand in a language they could barely comprehend" (p. 41). In addition, cultural barriers were limiting the access to information to these women. The authors explain that when the promotores were providing information about how to prevent breast cancer, for example, they encourage women to conduct a physical examination. This represented a conflict with some of the traditional customs of these indigenous populations where women do not allow strangers to touch private parts of their bodies; therefore, "a practice intended to save their lives was totally unacceptable for cultural reasons" (p. 42). To address both challenges, the evaluation team suggested the recruitment of bilingual promotores who were from the indigenous youth alumni. This would allow for better communication and operations within the indigenous communities.

Existing gaps in the evaluation theory & practice

In addition to providing a review of what we know about the Latino (a, e, x) population in the evaluation field, I considered it important also to track the gaps or underexplored topics scholars in the field have called out attention to in their studies. I found that the articles consulted denounce gaps associated with the culture in the evaluation field, the use of CRE approaches, and the implementation of evaluations with Latino (a, e, x) communities. The topics and areas described in this section represent not only insufficient scholarship but also are opportunities for further enhanced current evaluation theory and practice.

Regarding gaps associated with culture in evaluation and CRE approaches, Hopson (2003) argues that multicultural and culturally competent approaches to evaluation have not been received the same kind of attention as they have in other disciplines. In addition, he considers that knowledge about the application of multiculturalism and cultural competence is

limited, which is unfortunate taking into consideration the increasing cultural diversity within the USA. The author also argues that discussions, conference meetings, and requests for proposals centered on multicultural and culturally competent evaluation are not sufficient. Universities, training programs, and professional development programs that teach approaches and methods that address issues of culture and diversity are needed. Another compounding factor cited in this study is that program evaluation journals for the practitioner and the academic are "either skeptical of cultural competence in evaluation or silent about it" (p. 1). He further explains that as a result "the potential benefits of using cultural competence and multicultural awareness in programs involving differences in race, culture, and power in this country remain largely unfulfilled" (p. 1). Following a similar line of though, SenGupta et al. (2004) argue that despite the increased discussion about issues of culture and cultural context in a significant number of fields of study, the theory and application of these components in the evaluation field has fallen behind. Finally, Hood et al. (2015) note that even though during the last two decades the evaluation literature has placed especial attention to the role of culture, cultural contexts and CRE concepts and frameworks, literature on the practice, practical application, and ways maximize the use of such frameworks is scarce.

Since the early 2000s, Cervantes & Peña (1998) had brought out awareness on how little attention there had been to issues and challenges faced when evaluating programs for culturally and linguistically distinct groups. This is associated with the second gap found in the literature regarding conducting evaluations with the specific population of Latinos (a, e, x). Also during the 2000s, Clayson et al. (2002) denounced that little attention has been focused on examining the role of evaluators in multi-cultural settings within the macro-level context, especially when working with Latino (a, e, x) communities. More than a decade later, Bowen & Tillman (2014) argued one of the underexplored areas within the CRE literature was "the development, implementation, and analysis of culturally responsive surveys, especially within

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the context of international evaluation" (p. 35). A few years later, Rodríguez Bilella & Tapella (2018) indicated that the literature about evaluation quality is insufficient. For this reason, they gathered and analyzed a collection of stories about evaluations in Latin America and the Caribbean that contributed to the current body of knowledge of evaluations aimed at social betterment. Finally, Guajardo et al. (2020) denounced that "evaluation literature includes minimal attention to Latinx issues in evaluation" (p. 67); for this reason, they encouraged other professionals in the evaluation field to engage in reflection and to evaluate the implementation of alternative evaluation approaches such as LatCrit.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore the overall inclusion and representativeness of Latinos (a, e, x) in empirical and theoretical studies of program evaluation. More broadly, the goal was to better understand what narratives aim to conceptualize and capture Latinos (a, e, x) in evaluation literature that aims at cultural responsiveness. The truth is that we continue to know very little about Latinos (a, e, x) in the program evaluation field. The scarce literature that shares results from evaluations conducted with this population provides insufficient data on how to define this culturally diverse population, and what cultural components influence their identities. According to Kirkhart (2005), evaluation theory and culture influence and impact each other. Following a similar line of thought, the AEA (2011), stated that evaluation is based on theories (evaluation theories, social science theories, program theories, and theories of change) that come from academic research, practice experience, and community conversations; these theories shape our understandings of culture and are themselves shaped by cultural values and perspectives. In this sense, it is of vital importance to further scrutinize evaluation theory and practice to better understand the culture of Latinos (a, e, x).

In this sense, the lack of literature on evaluation in the Latin American context is even more evident and it makes even more challenging understanding the theories and practices that

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guide evaluation within Latino (a, e, x) contexts in Latin American countries. As Faúndez

Meléndez (2012) indicates, Latin America and the Caribbean have very distinct characteristics

like the presence of Afro-descendant populations, indigenous peoples, and a nuanced civil

society, which represents challenges for evaluation in regard to "documenting exclusion,

historical discrimination against certain groups including the denial of language, and the

geopolitical shifts taking place as indigenous peoples are successfully politicized" (p. 42). For

this reason, evaluation in the Latin American context needs further development and sustained

support to enhance current evaluation practices in the region. The lack of academic journals in

evaluation in the Latin American region is a contributing factor for the lack of literature on what

are past and current theories and practices. This is important because journals not only provide

a platform for scholars to disseminate their research, but it would also help document what is

being done in Latin America, successes, challenges, methodological designs implemented,

recommendations and lessons learned, and overall experiences of evaluators and the work they

do in this part of the world. The literature that journals disseminate would also help build and

sustain a network of professionals, and it would help promote better standards for

professionalization in the evaluation field in Latin America. Also, evaluation practices in this

region have a great focused on accountability and performance, which have been used mainly

by public and governmental institutions. According to Cunill-Grau & Ospina (2012), this

emphasis on results through performance measurement in the Latin American context serves

as a vehicle for greater transparency and efficiency of government action, which might explain

the preponderance of this types of evaluation practices in the region.

In recent years, there have been also explicit and continuous efforts to promote and

expand evaluation in this region of the world. There are different projects and program that seek

to increase and strengthen evaluation efforts in the region such as FOCELAC (Fomento de la

cultura de evaluacion y aprendizaje en America Latina con proyeccion global - Promotion of the

culture of evaluation and learning in Latin America with global projection), PETAS (Programas del studio de trabajo, el ambiente y la sociedad - Programs of the study of work, the environment and the Society), Deval (Instituto aleman de evaluacion de la cooperacion para el Desarrollo - German Institute for Evaluation of Development Cooperation), International Organization for Co-operation on Evaluation (IOCE), ReLAC (Evaluation Network for Latin America), Network for Monitoring and Evaluation in Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLACME), among many other. In addition, the evaluation standards for Latin America and the Caribbean, developed by a task force of ReLAC, represents an important effort to promote the use of evaluation standards in evaluation associations and organizations in Latin American countries. These evaluation efforts that have begun to come together during recent years are important because Latin America presents different nuances that should been taken into account to promote better evaluation.

This study presented limitations in regard to the difficulties encountered to find literature about the development, implementation, and/or analysis of CRE practices and theory within the Latinos (a, e, x) context. In this sense, the corpus of literature was centered on either the theory and/or practice of CRE or in the implementation of evaluations conducted within Latinos (a, e, x) populations and/or communities. The same can be said about the seminal CRE literature that is included in the corpus analyzed. It was challenging looking for seminal CRE literature that encompassed the population under study. Another limitation is that even though the corpus of literature reviewed is extensive, given evaluation conducted with Latino (a, e, x) communities is so large, it is hard to generalize results to the overall population or to overall evaluation efforts that have taken place throughout the last decades.

For these reasons, the literature conducted in this study represents an initial effort towards scrutinizing evaluation works (seminal, empirical, and conceptual) to better understand where Latino (a, e, x) evaluators and populations stand in. From the literature consulted, we

know that different methodologies (e.g., culturally sensitive evaluation, participatory collaborative approaches, etc.), theories (e.g., critical theory social science perspective, theory of change, theory-based approach, LatCrit, etc.), and methods (e.g., case studies, written and telephone surveys, open-ended and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, photography, historical archives, constructivist methods, fotonovelas, pre-post surveys) have been employed working with Latino (a, e, x) populations. The articles consulted also revealed reflection on empowerment, history, identity development, equity, a growing emergence and institutionalization of evaluation in Latin America, and the complex characteristics of Latin America contexts which represent challenges for evaluation (Cunill-Grau et al., 2012; Guendel, 2012; Martinic, 2012; Neirotti, 2012; Bowen & Tilman, 2014). Therefore, we can argue that, overall, the literature consulted shows there has been reflection and exploration on the use and implementation of methodological approaches to evaluation when working with this population. Nonetheless, the literature review conducted also reveals that there exists a very small body of literature related to the evaluation of programs that serve Latino (a, e, x) populations and communities, there are reports on challenges experienced when conducting evaluation with this population, and there are many unexplored areas and gaps that persist until today. In addition, the literature review reveals that sustained research and reflections on how to address the diverse and nuanced cultural identity of Latino (a, e, x) is very little and sporadic. In addition, the corpus of articles consulted lacked information about overall successes experienced in the evaluation field when working in Latino (a, e, x) context.

Furthermore, even though there is significant literature on the CRE theory, the literature review conducted revealed that further studies need to address the implementation, challenges, and successes of this approach to evaluating Latinos (a, e, x) communities. CRE literature encourages the inclusion of underrepresented voices, but this does not seem to be the case with this population in particular. It is alarming that there is so little information about the

implementation of CRE approaches when conducting evaluation in Latino (a, e, x) contexts. Even though the AEA (2011 and 2018) emphasize the pivotal role of culture within evaluation and cultural competence, the literature review conducted reveals that this is still a gray area within the Latino (a, e, x) context. In addition, the literature consulted does not refer to what are the contributions of Latino (a, e, x) scholars and practitioners in the field. It is noticeable, however, that a very small but growing number of studies explore how to evaluate Latino (a, e, x) in a culturally responsive manner. Studies such as those of Lemos & Garcia (2020) and Guajardo et al. (2020) also provide guidance and recommendations about the use of innovative frameworks and methodological designs that aim at better representing this population. The inclusion of Latino (a, e, x) voices is also increasing. The literature review conducted revealed that since 2014 there have been more publications associated with the evaluation of this ethnic/racial group. Unfortunately, up to today, these studies have been scarce, and peripheral to centers of reflection and discussion. For these reasons, there also needs to be more research regarding the implementation of innovative methodological designs and the dissemination of recommendations and lessons learned should be a priority to robust the current corpus of literature that sustains the theorization and practice of evaluation within Latino (a, e, x) contexts. Also, there is a need for understanding how to incorporate cultural components of Latino (a, e, x) communities into evaluation theory and practice. Finally, studies that explore the lived experiences of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators are in great need to incorporate their insights into evaluation. Unfortunately, from this literature review we can argue that there does not seem to be a continued interest but a scattered focus on topics associated with evaluation in hand with Latino (a, e, x). Thus, there is a critical need for more research on the implementation of evaluation within the Latino (a, e, x) population. In this sense, the development of critical voices representing, expressing, and promoting an agenda associated with Latino (a, e, x) evaluation in the coming year is urgent.

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As mentioned above, in this study, which corresponds to paper 1 of my dissertation, I explored evaluation literature to determine the overall inclusion and representativeness of Latinos (a, e, x) in the field. Given the concerning results obtained from the literature review conducted and the little we know about the lived experiences of evaluators who identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x), in the following section, which corresponds to paper 2 of my dissertation, I engaged in reflections about the lived experiences of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators with the purpose of getting a better understanding of how they define themselves, their cultural identity and values, and the extent to which their culture influence their professional practice.

CHAPTER III. PAPER II: PERSPECTIVES AND REFLECTIONS FROM LATINO (A, E, X)
EVALUATORS: BREAKING DOWN THEIR CULTURE, IDENTITY, CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
FIELD & PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Like all people, we perceive the version of reality that our culture communicates.

Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing

messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incomparable

frames of reference causes un choque, a cultural collision.

(Gloria Anzaldúa, 2012)

Current literature highlights the critical role evaluators' play in dismantling discourses of

power and inequity rooted in politics, programs, and policies by raising what is known as

oppositional consciousness, which can be understood as an empowering mental state that

prepares members of an oppressed group to act towards changing a system of domination

(Reid et al., 2020). Hall (2020) indicates social consciousness impacts the way evaluators

conceive and conduct their work. He further explains that when an evaluator's worldview does

not match the context of the evaluation adequately, there are critical threats to validity (Hall,

2020). From his perspective, when evaluators from oppressed communities share a social

consciousness, a form of advocacy chronicled (e.g., CRE, Indigenous Evaluation, LatCrit, etc.)

emerges that creates clearer views of mechanisms of domination involved and increases

collective forms of legitimacy. This evolving recognition about how social inquirers (evaluators in

the case of this study) are products of their environment, and that the research and evaluation

they do is influenced by their life experiences, values, and personal biographies (Ford, 2011) is

more and more common nowadays. As a consequence, during the past decades, there have

been a great number of studies that aim to acknowledge the role culture plays in research and

evaluation (Acree & Chouinard, 2020; AEA, 2011; Baldwin et al., 2006; Boyce & Chouinard,

2017). More recently, there has been also significant literature on the role identity plays in evaluation and research (Calzada et al., 2010; Castelló et al., 2020; Frost & Holt, 2014; Harvey, 2013; Muhammad et al., 2015; Rahimpour et al., 2018; Reid et al., 2020; Sturges, 2014). A small pool of literature also explores the lived experiences of Black evaluators (Boyce et al., under review; Reid et al., 2020). Nonetheless, we continue to know very little about how evaluators' culture and identity influence and shape their professional practice, and we know even less about evaluators of color.

As evaluators who come from the minoritized communities are the fiercest advocates for change (Reid et al., 2020), it is of vital importance to expand the literature on how the culture and identity evaluators who come from historically marginalized and underrepresented populations influence their professional practice. The underrepresentation of Black, Latino (a, e, x), and Native American scholars among contributors to knowledge production has been a concern over the past decades (Gordon et al., 1990). Evaluators from minoritized communities must face challenges associated with experiencing "violence, marginalization, oppression, exploitation, erasure, and injustice in the United States of America" (Boyce et al., under review, p.1). The need for highly qualified African American or Latino (a, e, x) evaluators who serve historically marginalized populations is paramount (Reid et al., 2020). For these reasons, analyzing the underlying dimensions of evaluators who identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x) is especially necessary today. By exploring Latino (a, e, x) evaluators' experiences, this paper aimed to contribute to current literature that decenters whiteness as the owners of knowledge (Cram & Mertens, 2016). In this sense, the purpose of this paper was to describe the culture of this group of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators, which in turn aimed at exploring how their culture and identity shape their professional practice.

As a Latina evaluator myself, I had two main goals when I started this study. The first objective was to get a better sense of how Latino (a, e, x) evaluators define themselves in terms

of the terminology employed, personal and professional lived experiences, cultural factors, and values. The second objective was to determine in what ways do Latino (a, e, x) evaluators reflect on the influence of their own culture and identity in their professional role and practice. In this paper, I present findings from a study examining the lived experiences of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators. I begin by describing the research methodology employed. Then, I present findings as a thematic discussion. Finally, I present conclusions and implications for the field of program evaluation.

Methods

The data presented in this article corresponds to a qualitative research study that explored the lived experiences of 17 evaluators who identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x). Given that the semi-structured interview method allows us to obtain a broad understanding of the attitudes and behaviors of the participants (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015), I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews, recruiting participants who were diverse in their country of origin, gender, years of experience, sector of employment, training, among other factors. Boyce et al. (under review) argue that when little is known about the lived experiences of participants, the use of an in-depth qualitative approach facilitates a deeper understanding of participants' experiences across multiple and intersecting identities. The implementation of a qualitative design also allows capturing the perspectives that participants use as a basis for their actions in specific social contexts (Hatch, 2002) and promotes a socio-historical self-assessment and reflection on the researchers (Choy, 2014). Therefore, as evaluation requires practitioners to constantly reflect on how their cultural identity as closely related to their positionality, assumptions, and biases (Arias Orozco et al., 2021), in this study I emphasized the use of description, analysis, and interpretation of data (Hatch, 2002) while using my personal experiences in making these interpretations (Stake, 2010). This approach provided the research process with the necessary framework to understand the perceptions and lived experiences of

the diverse spectrum of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators concerning how their culture and identity influence their professional praxis.

Sample

For this paper, I used purposive sampling (Etikan et al., 2016) and snowball sampling (Naderifar et al., 2017). I purposely selected evaluators who identify themselves as Latino (a, e, x). Then, I requested these evaluators to share information about the study and the researcher. Email invitations to participate in the study were sent to a total of 35 Latino (a, e, x) evaluators diverse in race, years of professional experience, country of residence, language spoken, age, gender, sector of employment, and nation of origin. 17 of them agreed to participate in one 60-minutes interview. Table 1 describes the sample by cultural/ethnic identification, gender, country/region of origin, sector of employment, position/job title, and years of experience. While 11 of the interviewees were born and raised in the USA (including Puerto Rico), the remaining six were born and raised in Latin America (Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia, Peru, and Paraguay). In addition, out of these six participants, three immigrated to the USA at some point in their lives (one as a child and two as adults). The interviews were conducted both in English and Spanish, as evaluators were told to choose the language, they felt most comfortable with. Interviews were carried out via Zoom within the timeframe of September 1st, 2021, to October 14th, 2021. Participants were provided with an information sheet form that included information about the research topic, the purpose of the study, confidentiality procedures, and intended use of data collected. Using a semi-structured interview, Latino (a, e, x) evaluators were asked to share information about their culture, identity, and professional practice.

Data analysis procedure

All 17 interviews were fully transcribed utilizing a professional transcriptionist (Otter for English interviews, and Trint for Spanish), identifying information was removed before analysis, and audio recordings were destroyed once the transcriptions were finalized. All transcriptions

were coded by the researcher looking for common keywords, themes, or patterns in the data. The inductive and deductive thematic analysis approach (Nowell et al., 2017) was used to code similarities, differences, and relevant inputs provided by the 17 participants. All activities for this study were conducted with Institutional Review Board approval (#IRB-FY22-48) from the University of North Carolina Greensboro.

Data Quality

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the qualitative interview, I used member checks to informally test the data and the interpretations that emerged while conducting the interviews. Members checking corresponds to soliciting feedback from the interviewees about the credibility of the researcher's interpretations of the data being collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Raskind et al., 2019). This way, it was possible to clarify and review the statements provided by the participants, while ensuring accurate and valid interpretations. In addition, peer debriefing and audit trials were employed. While peer debriefing refers to the external review of interpretation, results, and findings by a person who is familiar with the topic of study, audit trials refer to maintaining records of all steps taken throughout the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Raskind et al., 2019). Finally, as a Latina evaluator myself, I procured recognition and awareness about how my perspective and position shape every step of the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015; Raskind et al., 2019).

There limitations associated with this study. Even though 17 interviews represent a sufficiently large and varied sample to draw a general landscape regarding the lived experiences of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators, I recognized this sample is not large enough for generalizing the findings of this study to the overall population. In addition, this study is entirely based on the self-reported lived experiences of these 17 evaluators; no additional data sources or data collection methods were included to determine if what they share during interview conversations is also reflected on their professional practice.

Table 4. Interviews Participants' Sample Characteristics

Participants' characteristic	Cultural/Ethnic identification	Gender identity	Country/Region of origin	Sector of employment	Position/Job title	Years of experience
Participant 1	Afro-Latina Black American Panamanian American	Cisgender female	USA, North America	Higher education STEM education	Associate Professor	15 years
Participant 2	American Latino Latinx	Cisgender male	USA, North America	Higher education	Associate Professor	36 years
Participant 3	Latina Colombian USA immigrant	Cisgender female	USA, North America	Health Education	Program manager	1 year
Participant 4	Paraguayan	Cisgender	Paraguay, South	Education	Evaluator consultant	10 years

Participants' characteristic	Cultural/Ethnic identification	Gender identity	Country/Region of origin	Sector of employment	Position/Job title	Years of experience
		female	America	Agriculture Public health Territorial development		
Participant 5	Spanish Hispanic Latino	Gay Male	USA, North America	Health education Bilingual education	Independent evaluation consultant	22 years
Participant 6	Latino Chicano Angelino	Queer male	USA, North America	Technology	Director of evaluation	25 years
Participant 7	Mexican USA immigrant	Queer male	USA, North America	Education	Senior fellow evaluator & visiting	12 years

Participants' characteristic	Cultural/Ethnic identification	Gender identity	Country/Region of origin	Sector of employment	Position/Job title	Years of experience
	Latine				professor lecturer	
Participant 8	American Latina Hispanic	Queer female	Mexico, North America	Public health	Research project coordinator	11/2 years
Participant 9	Costa Rican Mixed race Latina	cisgender female	Costa Rica, Central America	Education Economics	Coordinator of Academic Program	20 years
Participant 10	Mexican Guatemalan Latina American	cisgender female	USA, North America	STEM education	Evaluator Advocate	11 years
Participant 11	Peruvian	cisgender	USA, North	Education	Graduate Assistant	1 year

Participants' characteristic	Cultural/Ethnic identification	Gender identity	Country/Region of origin	Sector of employment	Position/Job title	Years of experience
	USA immigrant Latina	female	America			
Participant 12	Costa Rican Mixed race Latino	Cisgender male	Costa Rican, Central America	Public health Education	Evaluation Assessor	13 years
Participant 13	Mexican American Latina Chicana	Cisgender female	USA, North America	Education	Senior evaluation manager	15 years
Participant 14	Puerto Rican Latin American Afrolatina	Cisgender female	USA, North America	Education	Graduate Assistant	1 year

Participants' characteristic	Cultural/Ethnic identification	Gender identity	Country/Region of origin	Sector of employment	Position/Job title	Years of experience
Participant 15	Mixed race Mexican American Latina	Cisgender female	USA, North America	Public health	Independent evaluation consultant	15 years
Participant 16	Peruvian American Latina	Cisgender female	USA, North America	Agriculture	Director of evaluation	15 years
Participant 17	Mexican American Latina	Cisgender female	USA, North America	Education Agriculture Social policies	Associate research professor	15 years

Findings and Discussion

I identified seven overall recurring themes: nuanced Latino (a, e, x) identity, language as a cultural factor, a Latin American's heritage, constant exploration of terminology, cultural values, challenges, and cultural professional identity. It is worth noting that to honor the experiences of those evaluators who used Spanish during the interviews, quotes are included in their original language with brief explanations in English. Furthermore, headings in this section are presented in both languages to reflect the richness of their cultural backgrounds. Therefore, in the section below I provide a detailed description of the findings, which is followed by overall conclusions of the study.

Nuanced Latino (a, e, x) Identity / Identidad Latina de gran matiz

The evaluators who participated in the interviews were diverse regarding their gender identity, country/region of origin, race, language spoken, and overall lived experiences, and yet they all identified themselves as Latinos (a, e, x). As one of the participants indicated "there is no one Latino experience," referring to how assumptions about the population being homogenous fail to truly represent people within our culture. The sample of participants of this study provides an example of the diversity of people within the Latino (a, e, x) culture. Some of these individuals are different in several ways; nonetheless, all this only represents layers of what being Latino (a, e, x) means. For this reason, some of these evaluators experienced not fitting into the 'stereotypical' Latino (a, e, x) image. For example, some of the evaluators interviewed shared questioning their identities in the past because they did not feel "Latino enough" because they don't speak Spanish, they do not practice traditional Latin American celebrations/customs/beliefs, nor do they have the physical appearance of the stereotypical Latino (a, e, x). One participant shared "So, now as an adult, when I'm around other Mexicans, including my partner, I feel less Mexican, whatever that means." An Afro-Latina evaluator also shared that she has experienced people assuming she is not a Latina because she is Black and

also because she is not fluent in Spanish, which has caused a sense of exclusion, as is shown in the quote below.

> This idea of exclusion for Afro Latinas. I remember I was at one of the [AEA TIG] La RED meetings. And it was when they were first starting, and I was interested in joining, and they were like, 'oh, we're so grateful'. I don't look like traditional looking Latinas and Latinos. And they were kind of 'come in;' they're like, 'oh, we're so glad to have allies here too'. You know? I was like, you know, there's this assumption that I wasn't Latina, because of the way I look. And maybe it's because I don't speak as much Spanish. But there are others who have talked about this, this idea of not speaking Spanish and being Latina. And what that means, and that's a whole interesting thing as well.

Race and ethnicity are only two components of our culture that come into play when understanding the multifaceted identity of people. As one evaluator indicated economics, history, politics, and racism also play an important role into the Latino (a, e, x) culture as described in the following quote.

> Latino definitely is not a monolithic group, and I would say our culture includes but is not limited to our race and ethnicity. I think that there's economics, racism, there's politics. I mean, I'm just fascinated that, one quick example, Cuban Americans are such a different group of Latinos. Like, you know, they're more republican to say the least, right? And if you think about the idea that if you can get from Cuba to Florida, then open arms, right? I think they come in and adopt that mentality. And yet, if you try to cross the Rio Grande, you know, you're a wetback or you're Mexican. When the reality is, like, you know, we created this border that didn't exist, right? New Mexico was part of all Mexico as it also was this whole part of the Southwest. So, I think that there's a different history and it's not a monolithic one.

Language as a cultural factor / El lenguaje como un factor cultural

Language was a relevant component of the cultural identification of this group of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators. As indicated in the methods section, all 17 evaluators who participated in the interviews were offered the option of being interviewed in whatever language they felt most comfortable with (English or Spanish). Eleven evaluators chose English, five preferred to use Spanish, and one participant used both English and Spanish. Throughout these interviews, there were multiple references to language as a cultural factor. The main scenario in which language was perceived as a cultural factor was on Latinos (a, e, x) living in the USA. Some of the evaluators that were born and raised in the USA indicated that they were fluent in both languages, some of them speak Spanish with family members and in informal settings, and some evaluators do not speak Spanish at all.

A part of the evaluators shared growing up in an environment where Spanish was not often spoken. As one of them commented, "So, I grew up speaking Spanish at home and we still have this tradition with my parents, that they speak to me in Spanish, and I sometimes answer them in Spanish but often answer them in English even now." A part of the evaluators who were not fluent in Spanish expressed an interest in getting back the language of their ancestors because "You try to do better than the last generation; so, my son is in a dual immersion Spanish program now because language comes with so much, like your pride and all that." Other evaluators experienced being raised with the perception of the Spanish language as a valued gift given by their previous generations (the parents and grandparents of these evaluators). One evaluator, for example, commented that her parent always reinforced the idea of speaking Spanish in the family because it represented the connection to what her parents had left behind, and because they knew it would help them professionally in the future, which has allowed her to have access to people who only speak Spanish in evaluation work she has conducted. The quote below describes her experience with the Spanish language:

El mantener el idioma era bastante importante porque para ellos [referring to her parents] era su conexión con lo que ellos crecieron. Sí. Y mi papá me inculcó por allá en los años 60-70 que nunca se nos olvidara, que en alguna ocasión nos iba a servir en el trabajo. Eso de mantener el idioma, eso nos inculcó. Así que crecí con eso y eso me ha permitido entonces poder llegar a personas que solamente hablan español.

A Latin American' Heritage / Una herencia latinoamericana

Reflections about the Latin American heritage of these evaluators were common during the interviews conducted. Evaluators shared celebrations, traditions, and rituals that are common in their culture during the conversations. The stories and perspectives of the celebrations shared in the interviews were extremely diverse. For those evaluators that were born in the USA, they referred to connections to Latin American celebrations that were built and carried over through family members such as grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. One evaluator, for example, commented she used to celebrate El Día de Los Tres Reyes Magos (Day of the Three Wise Kings) with her Panamanian grandparents as a child, and that her family still gets together when somebody passes away to celebrate their life. Other evaluators commented celebrating the Independence Day of their ancestors' countries and meeting with other people from those countries (even if they are not family or friends) just to celebrate on these special occasions.

A process of acculturation was highlighted as a barrier by some of the evaluators who were born in the USA. One of the participants indicated that her family was very strict with her as a child since they aimed to acculturate to the USA. According to this evaluator, to get accustomed to the USA, her parents "let go of everything that they came with in order to belong here." As a result, many of the practices their parents grew up with, these Latinos (a, e, x) didn't get to grow up with. Similarly, other evaluators indicated not having a 'traditional' upbringing in the sense that some traditions got lost in the generation of their parents or grandparents. Another participant noted:

We weren't as traditional. Even though my mom was born in Mexico and a lot of that had

to do with the way my parents were brought up. They were brought up in a time that if

you spoke Spanish in school, you were beaten with the ruler. Like your teachers, your

principal had permission to literally hit you if you spoke Spanish ever in the classroom

settings. And so, you know, those kinds of environments led my parents to really want to

bring us up as more American in their minds and their eyes than anything else.

Some of these participants that indicated experiencing a sense of 'lost' regarding the

Latin American culture of their ancestors, shared experiencing also a process of self-exploration

that aspired to make a reconnection to their Latin American heritage. This exploration of the self

and their cultural heritage can be perceived in the following quote.

So, now I'm trying to tap more into those traditions (…) really kind of exploring their

meanings and what do they mean and the origins of the traditions because I got kids

now. So, I want them to be aware and knowledgeable about all these traditions, but also

to reflect on what do they mean and what does it mean to you? And then how can we

find ways to celebrate these traditions?

Constant exploration of terminology / Exploración constante sobre la terminología

Latinos (a, e, x) are often bucketed in one group. This was considered a challenge by

some of the participants. Member of this population are in reality extremely diverse and not

homogenous at all. This represents a big challenge because it requires awareness from

evaluators about how although we may share a cultural identity and some lived experiences, we

are not the same by any means. As other evaluators indicated, many members of this

population preferred to be identified with their countries of origin instead of being grouped

because they find pride in their heritage. This group of evaluators agreed on how there are

multiple lived experiences. As one evaluator shared:

When I go to the Bronx, when I go to LA, to talk to people in Santa Ana, California, I

need to walk in knowing that although we share culture, and we share some

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experiences, I am not Chicano; I don't know what it feels like to not be from here either

nor the feeling of being considered a gringo in Mexico and being considered a Mexican

in the US. I think that's sometimes a challenge for us to grasp the difference, to not paint

everybody with the same brush, and really try to attend to the different experiences of

people that just moved to the country and are very focused on immigration, and

language and access versus people that have been here for decades and align more

with the black liberation movement.

Another participant problematized this assumption by bringing awareness to how people

(in general) feel the need to be recognized by their own identity, not by using the intrusive

categories society assigns to us. As this evaluator argued there is no monolithic culture or

homogeneous culture in the Latino (a, e, x) context; therefore, trying to categorize people

always comes with a risk, and no matter how accurate our analysis might be, we always run into

the risk of being inauthentic. This evaluator also commented that people should always be able

to talk themselves about what they want, and about who they are. Authenticity was highlighted

as the primary goal of evaluation as "you can't be authentic if you are being inaccurate."

Such cultural diversity and richness have presented challenges over the last decades

associated with the use of terminology used to define this population. Spanish language, like

many other languages, is the result of highly complex processes of colonization, invasions,

political and cultural changes, immigration, acculturation, and globalization. This romance

language is the heritage of the Spaniard Kingdom to the American continent. For these reasons,

many evaluators found problematic the use of traditional and more conventional forms of

describing members of this cultural group (such as Hispanic and Latinos) that are the legacy of

the invasion and colonization on Latin American countries. As one evaluator indicated "I don't

love the term Hispanic because it refers to Spanish speaking people. And, you know, people

from Brazil are excluded. And then people from Spain are included". Among evaluators born

and raised in the USA, Latinx was the preferred term since it was considered "more useful, and

more accurate" by these participants. Nonetheless, some of these evaluators expressed feeling confused about the wide range of possibilities there are to refer to members of our community.

And I think when you talk about the similarity among groups, depending upon what it is that you're trying to convey, I think that sometimes can be confusing. So, I think the term Latinx with an X is probably more useful, or more accurate, but I don't know, in this day and age, terms are evolving, always evolving. I mean, I don't have a strong feeling about the term Latin x versus Latino/Latina. It's interesting, I find that people who are from like, not from the US prefer the terms, Latino/Latina. For example, like my dad, he always wants to correct me when I write Latinx and he says, 'you've spelled it incorrectly and I'm like, 'no, it has purposely an x'. But I also do understand that those who don't necessarily, like identify with a gender, or have multiple gender identities, or who don't feel like if there's 100 women in the room and one-man room, that they have concerns about the term Latino and how it's used. So, you know, I'm, usually when I'm writing I use an X just for those reasons, but, you know, I recognize that different people have different reasons for wanting to use different terminology.

Also, some evaluators referred to how much the landscape is changing in regard to the constant exploration of terminology that is experienced within the Latino (a, e, x) community. One participant felt that "t's beautiful. It's great that we're changing how we think and how our language talks about who we are really, and how we're changing as a community". Another participant shared a similar perspective regarding the exploration of terminology within the population. This evaluator reflects on how terminology used to identify members of this population is positive, diverse, and even confusing on some occasions:

I mean, I would say that it's good, because I think we're trying to better identify ourselves, right? I think sometimes it's a little confusing, just as an evaluator not knowing where the community is, right? So, especially when I'm like doing some community conversations, a lot of folks still refer to themselves as Hispanic or Latinos. Right? And

so, I'm always curious about how all the different terms that are being used represents

community members, especially I think, the older generation. So, I think it's good, I think,

more needs to be done to communicate, I guess, like, what is the purpose of trying to

continuously change it? I do tend to use Latinx. I think there's another term coming up

that I heard from a colleague, I think Latine, is it? And so, I'm like, I just wonder, I'm like,

where are these terms coming from and who's like, who's you know, coming up with

these terms? And like, who's being involved in and represented; so, I think it's good, but

I think there's a lot and I personally, like I said, I tend to identify myself as Latinx but

Latina more than anything because I would say my pronouns are she her hers. So, I

know that's also something else that it's little by little becoming more common, like the

use of pronouns. So, I'm sure that has to do a lot with the terms but yeah, I like I said, I

think it's good, but I think we need to slow down on like, all these terms that are coming

up, and because I know there's also like Chicana and Chicano from California. I'm sure

there's a couple of other ones. But yeah, there's so many different ways to identify

yourself. Yeah.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Cultural values / Valores culturales</h2>

During the conducted interviews, participants shared many of the values that they

considered are central to their culture. In the following section, I describe each of the cultural

values that this group of evaluators shared with me.

Family & Respect / Familia & Respeto

Familia (family) was a common cultural value among the evaluators who participated in

the interviews. These individuals commented familia plays a pivotal role in their lives. Some of

them indicated that, together with the importance of respect for elders, familia was the most

important value to them. One participant shared that "I would say definitely the value of familia is

like something really important to me. I think it was instilled in me from when I was small," and

one participant said that "we really take care of our family." Another evaluator commented

talking with her mother every day and another participant mentioned talking at least every two weeks with close family members and extended family (such as parents, grandparents, cousins, uncles, aunts). This same participant commented an important factor for changing her job and relocating back to her place of birth, was to be closer to the family because spending time together with family members is perceived as culturally positive and normal. Another participant said that when it comes to Latinos' (a, e, x) values "it's all about spending time with the family and helping out each other". A young evaluator who immigrated to the USA as a child commented that "I think the one that comes to me the most is family. I think we are still family. We are so close to one another. You know, in so many ways, I still hold that value". Another evaluator shared "I think that one of the strongest one is that we really value family; we really value prioritizing family and being there for one another, no matter the circumstances".

The participant that immigrated from Mexico also commented about the importance of biological and "one's chosen family," as shown in the quote below.

It is family, you know, and it's the importance of family, not just one's biological family, but really one's chosen family. You know, I'm also a gay man, and the importance of those people who you choose to surround yourself with, who function as your support system. It's more important than anything. And I'm very fortunate that I have quite a bit of overlap between my biological family and my chosen family. But not everyone does. And I think just carrying that with me really plays itself out in my evaluation practice. In terms of the issue of giving voice, really, I think back to kind of my social justice evaluation training, that this could be somebody in my family, program participants who are marginalized, who just don't have a voice, can be somebody I know, that'd be somebody I love. And it's important for me to make sure that in some small way, I can give them the opportunity to share what they're thinking and make sure that that they're protected, that they that they feel like they can open up to me so that I get as accurate of data as I possibly can. But there's a lot there that you have to do to build trust. And so, I think for

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me, just that connection to family, however we define it, it is something that's really

important.

One participant also expressed that respeto comes along with familia because both are about how you treat your elders and your parents. One participant also provided an example of how children within the Latino (a, e, x) community are thought that they must wait to be able to talk. The next quote describes the value of respect for elders, and how children can only speak when elders give them the right to do so.

Cuando uno está chiquito le dicen a uno, usted no habla porque usted está muy

pequeño, muy chiquito; cállese y escucha al abuelo, ¿cierto? Si. Y después a uno le

daban la palabra y eso era muy importante. Entonces no venimos como con ese

entendimiento de que yo hablo cuando se le da la idea, no, sino que es cuando le dan la

palabra a uno.

Strong Sense of Community / Un fuerte sentido de comunidad

One of the cultural values highlighted by the participants was a strong sense of community. According to some of these evaluators, helping others is common among the Latino (a, e, x) culture. One evaluator that immigrated to the USA as an adult indicated feeling proud about coming from a small town in Mexico, where he was able to see how a community with very few financial resources joined hands together to build a Casa de velación (which is a funeral home located in the cemetery and that is used to pray, grief together and say goodbye to those that passed away) to celebrate the lives of those gone and grieve in a very communal sense where the poorest families in town were side by side next to the wealthiest families, praying, suffering and rejoicing together. As indicated by this participant, the Casa de velación:

At that moment of suffering, there was only one place and the two people were there, at

the same time, at the same level, and the whole town and both their families will come

together and celebrate their life and be there for each other.

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Another evaluator indicated that the value of reciprocity and being there for each other is very strong within the Latino (a, e, x) community. The evaluator that shared the story about the Casa de velación, also commented that in his town in Mexico "el panadero (the baker) will bring bread, and the guy that sells coffee next door, he'll get you some coffee." Another evaluator commented "I guess the other thing would be like that we have a very close, like community ties and ties with one another. And you know, like being a collectivist culture, whereas the United States is an individualistic culture". The participant from Paraguay shared a similar perspective. As shown in the quote below, she considered that people in our communities are very supportive, friendly and like to make people feel at home:

> Bueno, yo creo que como pueblo nosotros nos interesamos por ser muy solidarios. Creo que, bueno, de la experiencia que he tenido, la gente que llega se siente al primer momento muy en casa, la gente se siente bien, con gusto. Somos así, muy de arroparle, de vení acá, somos muy pero muy muy amigueros, muy solidarios también.

Working hard / El Trabajo Duro

The value of working hard was recurrent among the evaluators interviewed. Some of the evaluators expressed they felt they were constantly working, trying to stay on top of things, and always doing their best. This is shown in the following quote "The value of hard working, just constantly working. And always like I have to work. Like, I have to stay on top of things and always do my best, right? And I don't ease up on myself." This same evaluator defined this value as "the value of hard-working means that you're always working so you can get what you need and what you want". Another evaluator argued that "El trabajo; con nuestros mayores vemos que no paran, porque eso dignifica, esa relación que tienen con la Tierra, con la memoria de todos los elementos básicos," which refers to the relationship of the elders who work the land hard, and how that provides dignity to people.

Similarly, another evaluator commented how her parents had instilled in her to be a brave woman, and a dreamer, and to hold onto her dreams. This evaluator highlighted

especially how her mother had embodied a lot of those beliefs in her. She was named after the stars thanks to a dream that her mother had where her ancestor spoke to her about naming the child that was to be born. As the evaluator indicated

> She was very much spiritual, connected to her ancestors, to her past, but also really big on dreaming and being brave. So those values, I think, are instilled in me now. So, I'm very much big on Okay, things can be better, and we know they can be better. Like, let's hold on to that dream. Let's do everything we can to work towards that. Sometimes we need to be brave. And you know, sometimes I allow some time for, you know, maybe the ancestors to talk to me if they have something to say.

One young evaluator that immigrated to the USA from Peru as a child commented that education and hard work were the two main values, she was constantly told by her parents ever since she was small. This can be perceived in the following quote "my family has, at least my mom and my dad, they've always been like your education is the first thing, you need to finish your education". This participant expressed that her parent always emphasized the importance of getting an education to be able to achieve whatever she wanted in the future, and that along with that was hard work. As she said "Like nothing comes easy. You have to work hard for what you have, for what you want and also for what you want to get". This young evaluator also shared that for her education was "your education is not only for you but for your family and your community". She further explained that a lot of times, people from underrepresented populations want to serve their communities and that they are very passionate about being able to provide something better for their communities. So, she considered this was the case for the Latino (a, e, x) community as well.

One of the evaluators who was born and raised in the USA also highlighted the role of working hard and education to her family. This participant also stressed the struggles, resilience, grit, and the desire to always want to do better for people of her lineage. As she commented, "that's just part of like who you are; we're very resilient people". This same

individual explained this influenced a lot of the work that she does. The following quote shows how her professional practice has been influenced by her cultural identity:

> I'm very social justice-oriented, and I think that's really fueled by my own experiences and understanding that you know, there were maybe some unfortunate situations but maybe you know, I ensure that I'm putting my children in a situation where they are more aware and exposed and knowledgeable and that sort of thing. So, I think a lot of it kind of lies in education.

The participant from Paraguay commented that in addition to honesty, responsibility, amiability, courtesy, and treating others well, she values punctuality, being tidy, disciplined, and working hard; people doing a good job, and her children trying to do the best they can. This information is described in the following quote:

> Bueno, se aprecia mucho la honestidad, la responsabilidad; se valora la amabilidad, la cortesía y el buen trato. En lo personal, yo aprecio la puntualidad, aunque no es un valor muy apreciado a nivel latino. Pero yo sí lo aprecio y lo expreso. Personalmente, también aprecio el orden, la disciplina. Aprecio la eficiencia personal y la de los demás. A mí me gustaría que, pues que la gente, por ejemplo, en el trabajo, que trabajen bien, que lo hagan bien, ¿verdad? Este, que mis hijos también aspiren a hacer bien lo que hacen, ¿verdad? Es el dar lo mejor de sí mismo.

The evaluator that immigrated from Mexico to the USA as an adult also referred to the value of hard work in the Latino (a, e, x) culture:

> I think there's also a culture of hard work, I think that we were not necessarily the most privileged group. And we've had to pick ourselves up and do for ourselves almost twice as much as those in more privileged positions, because people aren't necessarily looking at us as contributors or as knowledgeable. And I think that has also played into my work as well. And it's not just about familia and giving others a voice, it's also making

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sure that I have that voice and working really hard to make sure that I have a place at the table.

Education / Educación

Many of the evaluators that shared their experiences during the interviews highlighted the role of education within their families. As commented in the section above, on many occasions, evaluators referred to the value of hard work parallel to the value of education. A participant commented education is pivotal in her family because this was the key factor that allowed her family to "break the cycle" of poverty and to achieve a better quality of life. In the quote below, this evaluator shared what education and hard work mean for her family:

I always introduce myself like, I'm [name of the participant]; my family is from Peru, and not the pretty part of Peru. So, my parents are not from like the wealthy areas of Peru, they worked really hard. And so, you know, for them going to university was the how you broke that cycle. And so, they're definitely, I mean, they were educated, they went to college; so, they weren't like uneducated poor people, right? They were educated people that had a little bit of a way to get out of their situation. And luckily, they immigrated to the US, but still, you know, for them, it was a university that was the key.

This evaluator continued explaining that for her parents' education was so important that when she decided to take a 1-year gap before going to college to find herself (a year that she used to travel to Peru and other countries in Latin America to find herself), her parents were very concerned and could not understand the reason for not starting college immediately, which made them take this into their hands, as it is described in the quote below.

I remember that when I turned 17; I remember I did go into school when I was 18. I remember saying, I think I'm gonna just take a gap year and just, you know, find myself. And they were like, what, what is this thing? You know, what are you talking about? And they were very stressed, they were like, 'oh, my goodness, like, what is she thinking?' You know, and my mother ended up, after they let me take my gap year, I went to Peru

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and other countries for a little bit of it, I was finding myself. And, you know, the next year, my mom went, and she filled out an application herself. And, mailed it herself. And she's like, you're going to go to school, and then, you know, I was accepted, and I got sent away to university.

Another participant also commented that she had always been very focused on her education mainly because of her father. This participant explained that her father had experienced different economical struggles himself, which made him encourage the education of his children so they could have a better quality of life for themselves.

I'm also very, like, education focused because of my dad. So, for my dad education is everything and it's because he had to grow up, you know, very, he knows what it means to, you know, maybe not have a vacation, not being great, like in terms of the economic situation. And so, for him, it's always been about us finishing our careers. It's always been about us obtaining our, you know, higher degrees as a way to provide a better life for ourselves. And so, and he believes that education is the most important thing, like, that's how people progress and people, you know, move on.

Religious beliefs / Creencias religiosas

Religious celebrations were noted as still commonly practiced within the homes of most evaluators, whether they were born and raised in the USA or not. Some of them commented about several religious traditions, such as dressing the Christ Child (in Mexico and Guatemala), the traditional parades and other related activities held during Holy Week (Peru, Guatemala, and Costa Rica), El Día de la Candelaria (Puerto Rico), Christmas (all countries), praying to the Virgin Mary (Mexico), the rituals to celebrate the lives of those gone (Panama), the celebrations of San Juan (Puerto Rico), la Virgen de Guadalupe (Mexico), and building ofrendas during Día de Muertos (Mexico), la Virgen de los pescadores (the Virgin of the fishers, Puerto Rico), la Virgen del Carmen (Puerto Rico), the celebrations of El Festival Santiago Apóstol with the

colorful vejigantes that represent the defeat of the Morros (Puerto Rico), and el rezo del niño (the child's prayer, Costa Rica).

Stories shared by these evaluators revealed that religious beliefs were very intimate to them, linked to their familias, and deeply rooted within their Latino (a, e, x) identity. One evaluator commented that there were always Catholic altars with pictures of family members that had passed away, and images of the Virgin Mary, el niñito Dios (the Child Christ), Santos (Saints), and dead ancestors in their grandparents' house that the family used to pray to those that were already gone. Another evaluator from Peru said that "Catholic culture was just so close to Peruvian culture that it just kind of helped to better understand our relationship to God, our relationship to earth and our like historical past".

The sense of devotion to religion was described as having negative consequences for the community as well. While most evaluators said they have strong religious beliefs, a few of the evaluators considered these religious practices as mere superstitions that negatively impact conservative gender roles, as a Mexican evaluator expressed. Some of these evaluators also highlighted that these religious beliefs were not always innocent or harmless. On some occasions, these beliefs were considered "creencias irracionales derivadas de la práctica religiosa" (irrational beliefs derived from religious practices), as one of the evaluators from Costa Rica indicated. This evaluator provided a specific example about how in the Costa Rican context these religious beliefs have opposed and negatively affected the reproductive and sexual rights of women in the country.

Food, Music, & Dance / Comida, música & baile

More than half of the evaluators that participated in the interviews indicated that food, music, dance, fútbol, and even piñatas were also a significant part of their culture. Some of these evaluators also indicated some specific meals were part of traditional celebrations, such as Mbejú (which means cake in guaraní, and it is a traditional dish of Paraguay commonly prepared for the San Juan celebrations), the tostones made with pana or panapen (breadfruit) in

Puerto Rico, el tequila, fruit punch, atoles, tamales at Christmas and piñatas full of candies for birthday parties were common in several of these countries, and a plain love for food in evaluators from Peru, for example, who indicated that "we love food; we consider ourselves to be the gastro center of South America and so food plays a central role". Another evaluator who was born and raised in the USA commented that food was a big part of their culture. This individual indicated that she enjoys "eating green plantains, smash them and frying them or even sweet coconut rice, which is something I'm working on perfecting my recipe. I made it this past weekend and messed it up, I added too much coconut milk".

In addition to these expressions around food as a cultural component, music was also highlighted as essential in the Latino (a, e, x) culture. Even though evaluators referred to music on parties and as an overall sense of happiness, some participants also commented music is an integral part of religious ceremonies, strikes, family meetings, and informal conversations. One evaluator even said that "se caen las fiestas, se caen las reuniones sin la música", meaning that any party or meeting without music is destined to be a failure. One of the evaluators indicated that the characteristic jolgorio, fiesta y alegría (merriment, party, and happiness) in Latinos (a, e, x) is a form of catharsis due to the violence, pain, austerity, precariousness, and overall injustice that these populations have gone through over history. An evaluator from Puerto Rico, for example, highlighted people on the island have turned their suffering into great creativity and invention as a coping mechanism to deal with the current sociopolitical context in the USA. Below is one quote of what this evaluator shared during the interview about the Latino (a, e, x) culture within the Puerto Rican context:

Para nosotros muchas cosas son un relajo. Entonces, pasan situaciones en la isla y como que nuestra gente también tiene una inventiva bien brutal y una creatividad bien brutal, y yo creo que pasa algo en la isla, entonces como que a los minutos está corriendo un meme del gobernador con la persona que haya tenido la discusión. Yo creo que también es como una forma de catarsis ante toda la violencia que nosotros

estamos viviendo, porque no sé si sabe un poco de nuestro contexto político, pero

nosotros somos un territorio, una de las colonias de los Estados Unidos y últimamente

la violencia que hemos estado viviendo en el país ha sido indescriptible.

Another Mexican American evaluator had a similar perspective about food and music. She commented that food and music are important in the form they experience life and that both can be associated with family and community:

I think the other things are, you know, it's kind of hard to articulate but food. I don't know how exactly to position it in the Mexican culture. But food is just such an important part of how we experience life. You know, the having my mole on Sundays and the big meals around the holidays; it is very important. And it's something that we still use as a way of representing community and our family, and with my kids and my husband. And I also think music, and dance were a big part of the way that communities, Mexican American communities, expressed love and community and family and it's something that we still hold dear a lot.

A Colombian evaluator considered that no matter where you go if people get to eat something there, everything is better. She also commented that food (a tamal, some fruits, a tropical juice, or coffee) can work as an icebreaker, and that food even opens the heart of individuals. The quote below shows her perception of food in our culture.

La comida, no importa donde uno vaya, si a uno le dan alguito a comer, ya se arregló la cosa. Entonces, por lo general, una conversación se puede romper el hielo con un tamal, se puede romper el hielo con unas frutas, con un buen jugo de frutas tropicales, se puede romper el hielo con un cafecito. Cierto, nosotros siempre que necesitamos hablar con seguridad vamos a tomarnos un café. Si, siempre tiene que haber algo, uno no puede hablar así a palo seco, un traguito, un coctel o un atole. Si haces chocolate caliente, entonces la comida es otra. Como que nos dora la píldora, digo yo. Como que abre el corazón.

An evaluator that immigrated to the USA as an adult also considered music is essential in the Latino (a, e, x) culture. This evaluator commented that members of this population use music to express emotions, to ventilate themselves, to seek relieve, to teach others about suffering, or about being happy. The quote below reflects her thinking about music as a cultural value.

Díganme si no es la música, independientemente del tipo que sea. Nosotros como latinos utilizamos la música para expresar nuestras emociones, para ventilarnos, para desahogarnos, para también enseñarnos sobre el sufrir o el estar felices. Son las expresiones de la música y es un valor muy, muy importante en nuestras comunidades latinas. Y cuando nos reunimos es el pensar de que, si no hay música, está aburrida la cosa. Entonces, siempre va a haber música y casi que a todo volumen.

Challenges experienced / Retos experimentados

Participants shared a significant number of challenges they had experienced during their professional practice. In this section, I describe all the challenges these evaluators experienced.

Racism against the Latino (a, e, x) population remains strong and alive / El racismo contra la población latina (a, e, x) persiste

Some of the evaluators who shared their experiences during the interviews commented facing discrimination within the USA context. A female Latina who immigrated to the USA from South America as an adult explained she had felt discriminated against on several occasions. She commented she had suffered discrimination against her because of her race, gender, accent, and the way that she looks. She also indicated she knows more than anyone else what it is like to live in the USA as an immigrant, to live here with an accent, with English as a second language, and how challenging it is to decipher the system to be able to access help and resources. This evaluator indicated that going through this experience and being in a privilege position now (she has a job, she can speak English and also knows how to navigate the system now) are her source of motivation to help other Latinos (a, e, x). She further explained that she

uses her evaluation work to know if programs work well and to determine what is their

professional ethic. In the following quote she describes her experience in the USA as a Latina

immigrant.

> También he sufrido discriminación. Es que me han discriminado por mi raza, por mi
>
> género, por mi acento, por como luzco. Muchas veces no me han dado el beneficio la
>
> duda. No tengo privilegios como el salir y entrar cuando quiera [referring to being able to
>
> travel outside of the USA and coming back]. Entonces, realmente, pues sí, yo más que
>
> nadie sé cómo es vivir acá como un inmigrante, yo más que nadie sé cómo es vivir acá
>
> con un acento, con inglés como segunda lengua. Yo más que nadie sé cómo es
>
> descifrar el sistema para poder acceder a las ayudas y los recursos. También esa es mi
>
> motivación. Ahora que sé que me encuentro en un lugar más privilegiado porque tengo
>
> trabajo, hablo el inglés y tengo la capacidad de navegar el sistema. Pues eso es lo que
>
> quiero y me motiva también para saber si esta clase de programas funciona y que
>
> también existe una ética profesional.

This evaluator also explained what she considered the reason why Latinos (a, e, x)

experience discrimination in the USA. This female Latina indicated that many US citizens do not

want to accept the fact that she, like many other Latinos (a, e, x), is in the USA because of the

situation that this country created with the impact of its foreign policies in Latin America. She

also commented that Latinos (a, e, x) are always going to be different, which means that we are

always going to be discriminated against and exploited against. Nonetheless, she saw her

experience as an opportunity to help others navigate how to have a better quality of life, to

create opportunities and resources for our communities that will eventually bring us a little closer

to what human dignity should look like. Dignity that she considers many Latinos (a, e, x) lose

when they arrive to the USA. The quote below describes her thinking about the discrimination

faced in the US:

La discriminación viene de que somos diferentes y que ellos no quieren aceptar que

este es los Estados Unidos de América. América significa América. No quieren aceptar

que yo estoy acá por una situación que este país creó, que me tocó migrar. Ellos son

los responsables de eso por la política externa. Entonces siempre vamos a ser

diferentes, y siempre vamos a ser discriminados. Siempre vamos a ser explotados. Y lo

que toca saber es esa diferencia. Mirar cómo podemos navegar para tener una mejor

calidad de vida, para crear oportunidades, recursos que nos aproximen un poquito a lo

que es la dignidad humana. Que se pierde cuando uno llega acá. La humanidad. Los

derechos humanos, los derechos de vivienda, de seguro, de un lugar seguro, de

igualdad de oportunidades.

Another form of discrimination found among three of these participants was associated

with feelings of exclusion within their own Latino (a, e, x) community. One evaluator, for

example, indicated that "So, now as an adult, when I'm around other Mexicans, including my

partner, I feel less Mexican, whatever that means." Similarly, another participant expressed

feeling discriminated when working in the Latin American context. This evaluator was born and

raised in the USA and is fluent in both languages. This participant commented feeling a strong

distinction in economic statuses and being discriminated against because "no era yo

suficientemente mexicana" (I was not Mexican enough) when working with colleagues from

Mexico. This evaluator then commented that they were right in a way because she did not study

Mexican history and she did not grow up with everything being completely Mexican. Instead,

this participant grew up with a little bit of the Mexican culture, which she learned through the

traditions and customs of her parents, mostly with what she had learned in the USA, as the

following quote reveals:

De hecho, es cierto. Yo no estudié la historia mexicana. Yo no crecí con todo

completamente mexicano. Crecí con un poquito de lo mexicano, por medio de las

tradiciones y costumbres de mis papás. Pero también quizá mayormente con lo que he

aprendido aquí en este país.

Another evaluator indicated feeling a sense of exclusion because of the color of her skin. This Afro-Latina evaluator indicated that she has experienced people assuming she is not a Latina because she is Black and also because she is not fluent in Spanish, which has caused a sense of exclusion, as is shown in the quote below.

This idea of exclusion for Afro Latinas. I remember I was at one of the [AEA TIG] La

RED meetings. And it was when they were first starting, and I was interested in joining,

and they were like, 'oh, we're so grateful'. I don't look like traditional looking Latinas and

Latinos. And they were kind of 'come in;' they're like, 'oh, we're so glad to have allies

here too'. You know? I was like, you know, there's this assumption that I wasn't Latina,

because of the way I look. And maybe it's because I don't speak as much Spanish. But

there are others who have talked about this, this idea of not speaking Spanish and being

Latina. And what that means, and that's a whole interesting thing as well.

According to Santana (2018), ethnoracial minorities are susceptible to three main forms of discrimination: 1) consumer discrimination, 2) police discrimination and 3) workplace discrimination. The group of evaluators that participated in the interviews, shared experiencing discrimination in all these three areas as well. One male participant who was born and raised in the USA expressed feeling discriminated against when receiving unfair treatment as a customer. This type of discrimination corresponds to consumer discrimination, which is when there are evident differences in customer experiences due to their race or ethnicity (Santana, 2018). This evaluator commented that "There are lots of times when I've been discriminated against." He further explained "I had the experience of going into a store, not being waited on a restaurant or waiting for a long time. It's kind of amazing that even after all this time, that's still the case". Santana (2018) argues other types of customer discrimination experienced among populations of color are being followed or looked at suspiciously in a store, being steered away

or toward an item or property due to the person's background, receiving lack of attentiveness from workers, charging a customer more than necessary, and receiving verbal or physical attacks, making racist comments behind a customer's back, among many others.

Santana (2018) highlights there is an emerging body of literature on discriminatory interactions between the police and Latinos (a, e, x), in which it is common for members of this population to feel targeted by the police because they receive unfair treatment (including excessive manhandling, mocking, and being stopped or arrested for little to no reason), or the police are unreasonably suspicious of their citizenship. One evaluator that immigrated to the USA as an adult shared experiences regarding feeling policeman discrimination. This evaluator commented feeling that policemen in the USA have the right to stop them, to take their car, to insult them, to make them pay a big fine, and to put them in jail away because they do not look "American," because the car they own is old or because they learned to drive a just a few months ago. Her experience is described in the following quote:

Un policía tiene todo el derecho de pararme, quitarme el carro, porque no luzco americana, porque mi carro destartalado no es un Audi, porque aprendí a manejar hace poquito. Pero realmente, pues sí el policía tiene toda la razón de quitarme el carro, de insultarme, de meterme a la cárcel. Ahora tengo que pagar una gran multa. Ahora sí que tengo que quedarme a trabajar para pagar los dos mil quinientos dólares de multa.

This evaluator also shared that there is a double discourse regarding accessibility and equal opportunities for Latinos (a, e, x). She provided the example of learning how to drive: "Cuando voy a tomar el traffic school, porque me dijeron que puedo hacerlo, pero no hay en español" (Referring to how when Latinos (a, e, x) go to the traffic school, Spanish is not an option). This participant further explained that as part of the Latino (a, e, x) community, we are in a country that is not ours. This will always make us keep our heads down, and it will make us always afraid because we are in "la boca del lobo" (the wolf's mouth). Even under these circumstances, Latinos (a, e, x) are going to do *"lo mejor que podamos"* (we are going to work

as best we can) because we will always long to return to our land triumphant; we will always

want to buy a little ranch, to have a land, to be able to help our family. This reflection is depicted

in the quote below:

> Pues realmente no es erróneo, porque pues estoy en un país que no es el mío. Así lo
>
> vemos nosotros. Siempre vamos a tener la cabeza agachada, siempre vamos a tener
>
> miedo, siempre vamos a saber que nos metimos en la boca del lobo y que bueno, acá
>
> vamos a funcionar lo mejor que podamos. Porque siempre vamos a anhelar volver a
>
> nuestra tierra triunfante. Cierto, tener una plática para comprar un ranchito, para tener
>
> una tierra, para poder ayudar a mi familia.

The third category of perceived discrimination corresponds to workplace discrimination.

Santana argues there is well-documented evidence that ethnoracial groups experience the

workplace differently, and that discrimination in the workplace can include ethnoracial inequality

when looking for employment and unequal earnings. Subtle forms of workplace discrimination

can also be associated with nonverbal behaviors that give minority members an unwelcoming

feeling or when they have to prove themselves more than others (Schaafsma, 2011). About half

of the Latinos (a, e, x) interviewed expressed feeling they had to prove their worth in

professional settings on more than one occasion. In the next section, I further explored the

stories of these evaluators shared at the moment of the interviews about feeling that they had to

prove themselves on multiple occasions while knowing they hadn't had the same professional

opportunities as many of their peers.

Having to prove their worth constantly while having fewer opportunities / Tener que

demostrar su valía constantemente mientras se tienen menos oportunidades

Evaluators expressed facing challenging situations where they were implicitly required to

prove they were competent, knowledgeable, and had the expertise of doing certain jobs. These

evaluators indicated experiencing being underestimated and discriminated against due to

assumptions made because they are Latinos (a, e, x). This led them to deal with burdensome

patterns of proving themselves before people could take them seriously, as one participant indicated. A Mexican evaluator commented that he had to deal with assumptions about the motives for practicing evaluation as a profession. This individual expressed that he had met people who considered Latinos (a, e, x) are more passionate, more irrational, more visceral, and less intelligent. He commented that he had experienced this in his work as well when some clients unvalidated findings of the effectiveness of a program that employed technology to improve ESL language proficiency. So, this client questioned the validity of the data and the evaluation this participant conducted arguing that since he was a Latino and the evaluand was Latinos (a, e, x), he was not neutral in his work. This is shown in the quote below:

> I actually had that happen at work. And I think this happens, this might relate to other
> communities of color as well. I was working with this client in Texas. They were
> transitioning, a lot of the work in the classroom to computers, and a lot of the work had to
> be done at the participants' homes. And the data that I was collecting was clearly saying
> that English language learners were not only not benefiting from the technology, but they
> were regressing because they didn't have the technology at home, and they had to go to
> the library, they didn't understand the assignments and parents could not help them (…).
> So, I was presenting that as something that was very important for them to know and fix.
> And they took it very, like personal. Oh, you're saying my work is not working. And they
> said, well, of course you care about this. And I was like, oh, you mean to say that I care
> because these kids because they are Latino. I was like, well, I like to think of myself as
> I'm a neutral advocate. So yeah, I care about the kids. This is why I do this work. But I'm
> neutral with the data. And this is what the data is showing. And I don't think you would
> have said that if a white person told you this, you would just say 'Oh'. So, I think there is
> also that misconception sometimes that we're working with Latino communities, we're
> acting out of either charity or love, and of course, some things are sometimes in the mix.
> But we are primarily evaluators. And we are trained in the same way that other people

are. And we interpret the data in ways that sometimes are more valuable. Maybe others would not have seen it. But I didn't twist the questions. I asked the right questions. I asked the questions because I was suspicious, which is good. But I didn't twist the questions to get their program not to work for Latinos. I wanted to know. So, my curiosity is different because I have the lived experience.

Another evaluator indicated people in her field of work people are sometimes very surprised because she doesn't have an accent speaking English (which is her native language). She also commented that these types of comments were even more common about 20 years ago when she started working in the evaluation field and that people considered not having an accent as a compliment for her. The quote below reflects her experience:

Sí, la sorpresa de algunas personas al escuchar que en inglés no tengo el acento que ellos esperan. Y cuando era yo 20 más joven, entonces sí escuchaba yo ese tipo de comentarios muy seguido. Era como para ellos un halago, como que me estaban halagando porque me decían que no tenía acento.

Having to prove your worth on different occasions becomes even more challenging when you know you have not had the same opportunities as your peers. Many of these evaluators shared during the interviews that their families had a low-income background, and many others identified themselves as first-generation college students. One participant shared feeling underprepared, in comparison to white colleagues, when started formal college studies. This Latina described having to work twice as hard because she was underprepared compared to her peers. In addition, this person commented that even though education was considered pivotal in their house, her parents were not aware of how to make their children succeed in college. They did not know the role extracurricular activities or SAT play in their children's education so they could have a more comprehensive application. In the words of this evaluator, "they knew it was important [referring to education], but they just didn't know how to help me". The quote below describes the experience of this evaluator when initiating college:

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I realized soon that I didn't receive the same education as them [white peers]. Like I was super-duper underprepared. There was a language barrier. I have very little experience with writing and reading comprehension. I definitely had a different educational experience and one that was more, you know, not as competitive. So, then I was like, oh shoot, like what's going on here? Like I thought I was, you know, ready to go [to college], right? Like because I was, relatively good in my school, I was like a good student but then you get to college and you're like, oh no, something's not right here. So, you have to play catch up right? So, like, then you realize like it's not equal opportunities. The easy part is getting into college. The hard part is staying.

Nonetheless, one participant highlighted that there have been significant events that are producing a paradigm shift. To be precise, one of the Afro-Latina evaluators who participated in the interview considered that the murder of George Floyd has placed popular attention on the lived experiences and the struggles people of color (black and brown) experience within the USA. This individual noted that although things have not truly changed, it is harder for people to say that the injustice, inequity, and violence people of color experience are not real, validating the perspective of individuals like herself.

After since the murder of George Floyd there has been a bit of a paradigm shift, or there has been a bit of more attention to the struggles of people who are black and brown. When you are kind of like trying to explain why it's important to take additional time to be culture responsive, or that there is such a thing like people are having various experiences when it comes to interactions with police or teachers or loan officers. But making the case that there are these different lived experiences, that these kind of, like, different ontologies, epistemologies; it felt oftentimes, like the uphill battle. But I think that I don't know, I'm not saying it's changed, I just say that I think that it's harder for others to kind of look away or say that these issues are not happening, or these issues are not important. And not just with respect to police brutality, but with respect to like in the

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public school system in disaggregating data and seeing how different groups are doing

like there's been a little bit of a resurgence of wanting to look at that. And so, I think in

terms of what it has meant for me, it has meant a bit of validation of my own perspective,

my own epistemology and I don't know I guess it's kind of like these ideas of equity,

diversity, and inclusion are more interesting or they're kind of like hot topics right now.

So, people are looking for people who are experts, they are looking for people who've

been doing this work. I would say I still think this is the case for now. So that's what it's

been like. I think it's almost been like these two different experiences. You know, we

have to like to demarcate like pre-George, the murder of George Floyd and post the

murder of George Floyd. I think it has really changed what it means to be someone like

this in our field.

Language spoken by evaluators and by the communities / Idioma hablado por los evaluadores y por las comunidades

Language was considered a barrier for many of the evaluators that participated in the

interviews. As one evaluator highlighted, as with any population that has been minoritized, or

that has been historically excluded, there is a whole set of things that need to be navigated to

make sure we are culturally sensitive. This evaluator commented that not being fluent in the

Spanish language is a huge barrier for her. But even if the evaluator is fluent in the other

language, we still need to make sure that we have a "complete understanding, making sure that

the language isn't offensive, being very aware of their culture and understanding their culture".

This evaluator further explained that language is especially important because as evaluators we

do not want "to come across as offensive or maybe if you're not understanding something

correctly, then you will take it in a different way and what they might actually be referring to

might be lost". Another evaluator commented that his work has been with immigrants from

Mexico and other countries in Latin America, who have a limited English proficiency, and some

of them have learned English from their children when they start school, or when the males start working.

Evaluators who were born and raised in the USA expressed feeling that not speaking Spanish was a barrier "even though I am part of this group, and I do understand Spanish better than I speak it, there is still a language barrier for not being able to talk to people in conversational Spanish". Another evaluator expressed that "personally, my biggest challenge is language because my Spanish is I want to say maybe at about a three-year-old level, four-year-old maybe. So, I'm not always the best person to get data in Spanish". To address this challenge, this evaluator indicated that when working with the Latino (a, e, x) population, they make sure to get translations, making sure that "things are translated well, not just kind of a word for word translation, because as we know, so much gets lost in the translation when you're not paying attention to cultural cues". This evaluator also employs "interviewers with Spanish language experience, who can really get at making people feel more comfortable, and who can help get the most accurate data that is needed to generate the findings". Finally, this evaluator also commented using members' checking by picking groups of participants as they are collecting the data and asking them if what the evaluators are starting to see/find resonates with them.

Interpretation and translation of data collection instruments and translating information to participants during formal and informal conversations were also considered a challenge. One evaluator highlighted how language doesn't translate easily sometimes "So, I would say like language and translation has been one of the challenges, a good challenge, right? Because it pushes us to be mindful and respectful of what is common in other places". Two bilingual speakers described Spanish as a highly emotional language. One of these evaluators commented that "In Spanish, there's a lot more emotion to the way that we speak versus in English. There is just much more emotion in the language in Spanish versus in English. Yeah, it's easier to also be professional in English versus in Spanish". Another evaluator also referred

to the Spanish language as a language highly sentimental, allocating to how it is a romance language and it is more frequently spoken in the tropical areas, so it centers around feelings. In the quote below this participant shared her perspective:

> El español, por ser lengua romance, es un idioma que habla de sentimientos, que uno siempre encuentra las palabras como sea, porque realmente las lenguas romances hablan de los sentimientos. El inglés por lo general viene de países que son de estaciones. Son muy prácticos, es como al punto y chao. Sí, porque ya se nos vino el invierno y nos vamos a morir acá con la nieve, mientras que nosotros somos tropicales, no tenemos estaciones, siempre tenemos mango, tenemos la pera, tenemos lo que sea, estación de lluvia y uno se pone el poncho y salió igual. Todo eso afecta el lenguaje.

An evaluator from South America also expressed experiencing difficulties when working with indigenous communities because she can understand Guarani, but she cannot speak this South American dialect. She comments that she can even use Jopara (which is a colloquial form of Guarani spoken in Paraguay that uses a number of Spanish loan words) but lacks overall confident. According to this evaluator, language often issues might arise when working in rural communities, where people speak Guarani a lot. To address this challenge, they try to have at least one member of the evaluation team that speaks the language of the community. The quote below describes her experience and challenges in regard to the language spoken.

> Después en lo personal, por ejemplo, cuestiones de idioma en si vos trabajas, por ejemplo, en las comunidades rurales, la gente usa mucho el guaraní. Entonces, de repente una forma de tener mayor confianza, de que yo entré en confianza contigo porque al menos alguien del equipo evaluador hable el idioma. Me ha tocado trabajar de repente y decirles que yo no hablo, pero les entiendo. O sea, no tengan problema a hablarme en guaraní porque yo les entiendo. Quizás yo no les voy a poder responder en guaraní. Capaz nosotros le decimos jopara que una mezcla de español y guaraní, pero no el guaraní puro, digamos tú sabes, y cuando te vas a trabajar con las comunidades

hay como que romper esa primera barrera habla de que ellos, porque a ellos también,

así como a mí de repente me daría vergüenza tratar de hablar en guaraní o en jopara. A

ellos también les genera como cierta vergüenza hablar en español porque bueno,

tampoco se quieren equivocar y tampoco quieren equivocarse. Entonces, bueno, hay

quizás ese desafío de idioma también, ¿verdad?

Breaking Traditional Roles and Assumptions / Rompiendo roles y nociones tradicionales

Some of the evaluators experienced challenges associated with the roles that are

traditionally assigned to males and females within the Latino (a, e, x) culture or assumptions

people make about our culture. For example, one female evaluator who was born and raised in

the USA, and whose parents were from Mexico and Guatemala, expressed being raised with

expectations to fulfill the traditional women's role of being a mother, taking care of the family,

and the house. In this sense, being a working mother instead of the 'typical' housewife has

come into conflict on some occasions since this evaluator grew up watching and hearing the

woman's role and the man's role in the Mexican culture. In her words:

> "I was raised with that, but that's generally what I saw, like my dad was working, my
>
> mom would come home, she stayed home, she quit her job, right when I was younger to
>
> take care of me. So, I think I've always struggled with stepping out of that expectation of
>
> what it means to be a woman, and like, a mom and a wife. And I was also the first one to
>
> go to college, the first one to fortunately have a career".

Another evaluator whose family is from Peru commented that she broke the culture of

women who "typically stay with their family household until they get married" when she left for

college as a 17-year-old female. She continued explaining that "you know, most people in the

US go to university at 17 but in Latin America, most people stay. Because the home is

considered, you know, very important". This evaluator also shared that being an only child

allowed her to break other traditional roles and restrictions. She further explained that her family

broke traditional tasks such as doing cleaning, serving males, or leaving her house only after

marriage, which she considered are more usual in Latin American families. As she was an only child, she was expected to focus on her education. The quote below shows what this participant shared during the interview:

The way or social structure set up in Latin American families, as you probably are familiar with, it's a patriarch. And so, it all kind of rises to the head of the household who's typically the father. And so, my father would want to eat with us, my father would, you know, and I, as a female would need to be able to kind of serve him, you know, and so we also broke that value here in the US, because my mom, I was an only child. And so, I was somewhat brought up as both the male and the female child and so I didn't have those same restrictions that I would have if I had a sibling, and I were either the older child or the sister of a brother. And so, you know, while my dad did expect me to help him with things like, you know, like washing dishes and stuff like that, I did get a little bit of leeway because I was supposed to be focusing on the education. So, it did help to negotiate my connections and relations to my parents who would have otherwise you know, wanted me to stay home until I was married. Definitely just go to college only study and basically leave the home you know, once I started my own family.

A Mexican male evaluator shared experiencing challenges also because people make assumptions about people who are Latinos (a, e, x). For example, this participant expressed that he has met people that assume Latinos (a, e, x) are more irrational, and less intellectual. His thoughts are shown in the quote below:

This idea that we're like, that idea that because we're passionate, we're irrational, particularly when it comes to relationships and loss. I actually think when it comes to love, I'm very rational. So, sometimes when I meet people, they are like 'Oh, you're Latino'; or like, 'oh, I dated a Latino, and he was all about telenovelas.' I was like, man, I mean, it can be true. And we were indoctrinated in telenovelas and stuff like that. I mean, there might be a bad cultural component there because of the colony or

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whatever, but I think that's one misconception about us being more visceral, less intellectual.

Another participant who is Mexican American commented that she has experienced different misconceptions about the Mexican culture in different areas of the USA. The quote below includes a part of her experiences:

I think a lot of you know, there are a lot of misconceptions depending on where you are. So, I've lived all over the country, I lived in the south, I've lived in the northeast, I've lived in the West, I've lived pretty much everywhere except the Midwest. And people had different ideas about Mexicans and Mexican Americans in those communities. And some of them were that you didn't speak English. Regardless of you know, the fact that you were born in the US and raised in the US, they would still assume that you didn't speak English, if you have a different colored skin or dark hair. The idea that all immigrants are illegal, even when you come here, you know, my mom came in legally and she had dual citizenship. But it was still assumed that if you were an immigrant, you were illegal. There were other like really awful stereotypes like all Mexicans are lazy, Mexicans don't eat well, they don't exercise, like just these weird things that people would say back to me.

Another Mexican-descent evaluator commented that there were two main misconceptions he had encountered throughout the years, that Latinos (a, e, x) are lazy and that people within our community are joined only by language, as the quote below shows:

That we are lazy. I don't think I know a lazy Latinx person. We are very hardworking. And I see it everywhere. I'm, you know, whether we're an evaluator or a CEO, you're a striver. I think we really are very hardworking. And, and it's nice to be able to show people that that's a stereotype that really doesn't belong. Another one, I think, for me, is that we're united by only language. As somebody who grew up not speaking Spanish, as somebody who doesn't speak Spanish regularly, I can sometimes pass as white

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because people are like, well, you don't speak Spanish, so you can't really be Mexican,

can you? Like, yeah, there's more to our culture than just having a common language.

The Latino (a, e, x) Community within the Evaluation Field / La comunidad latina en el

campo de la evaluación

Even though some evaluators expressed having a strong community of Latinos (a, e, x)

in the field, many evaluators experienced a disconnection and a sense of loneliness in the field.

Some of the evaluators that indicated feeling there is a strong sense of community commented

that "I think one of the things that have helped tremendously between when I started and now is

that there are a lot more of us". Similarly, other evaluators felt a rewarding and deep connection

that makes them proud because "It's a small group, but it's a mighty group of people".

Nonetheless, there was a consensus on how there are still not enough Latinos (a, e, x) in the

evaluation field. As one participant shared that "It is a little bit lonely, because there are not

many of us in the spaces that I occupy. I am for sure, the first and only director of evaluation

that is a queer-Mexican-immigrant, in any foundation at any time". Other evaluators also shared

a similar perception regarding feeling lonely in the field because they do not work with other

Latinos (a, e, x), which made them experienced a lack of "cultural connection", as one of them

claimed.

Other evaluators highlighted there is a general lack of representation and awareness

about the needs and contributions of Latinos (a, e, x) within and outside the field of evaluation.

One evaluator commented the support for black-owned businesses, for example, should be

black and brown own to bring light into the needs and struggles of Latinos (a, e, x) as well.

According to another participant, "there is a lot of focus on African American and Black, like on

what they need, and I feel sometimes as Latinos, we are kind of left out". This evaluator

considered the feeling of loneness and disconnection is related to the lack of leaders in the

evaluation field that identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x). In her words:

It is also kind of dealing with the fact that there isn't like leaders' in evaluation field that identify as Latino. So, thinking of people like Jennifer Green, Stafford Hood, or Rodney Hopson, right? There isn't that like Latino leaders. So, I think we're missing some of that in the field. But yeah, I would say I'm definitely lonely and disconnected. And I think we have a lot that we can accomplish.

One participant also indicated that besides the AEA group (La RED), there is no other connection. This individual expressed she wishes there were more spaces for the Latino (a, e, x) community to reflect on their professional practice, where evaluators can come together and share what they are working on, the challenges they have experienced, and build a real networking community for Latinos (a, e, x) in the field. Some evaluators considered there has been a recent shift to incorporate different kinds of perspectives and different voices that often have been left out in the field. Some examples provided by these evaluators to describe how "the landscape is changing," as described by one participant, were that there are more multiethnic issues, there are more spaces that incorporate Latino (a, e, x) voices in conferences and other professional settings, people of color are getting more awards, there are more Latinos (a, e, x) in leadership positions, the space of La RED, and the incoming president of AEA identifying herself as a Latina. As one participant highlighted this is an important, needed, and exciting time because, "now there's people who are like, you have a panel about equity, or about the pandemic. Why is there not a Latinx person on this panel? I think that those conversations are being had". Another participant commented that there are a lot of contributions, especially on culture responsive approaches to evaluation, language justice, and bilingual evaluation concerning what these types of evaluation offer and should look like.

Perceptions about the current landscape were diverse. One individual, for example, had a positive perception about the representation of Latinos (a, e, x) in the field but considered there is still so much to do. This evaluator also commented that the purpose of this study will likely help raise the voices and perspectives of this population, as shown in the quote below:

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So, I think it's a time to be excited. And I think more and more that representation is

being shown. But I think there's still a long way to go, which is likely why you're doing

this, you know, part of the purpose of your dissertation is to kind of raise those voices

and raise those perspectives.

Another evaluator commented that many evaluators are feeling overwhelmed because

many want the perspectives of someone like her that is an evaluator of color, a woman, and a

Latina. According to this participant, this is due to the current context, which is leading towards

equity, as it is depicted in the quote below.

Being an evaluator, a woman of color, Latina, in the current context, I think, it is also

becoming more demanding. So, you know, everybody's running toward the equity train

right now. And everybody wants to do evaluation equitably. And from a perspective that

supports people of color and so now all people of color who practice evaluation are like

overwhelmed, because everybody wants our perspective or so they say they do.

Lack of trust of participants and difficulties to build rapport

Evaluators indicated experiencing challenges associated with lack of trust and difficulties

in establish rapport when working with communities of Latinos (a, e, x). One of the participants

shared experiencing difficulties to making meaningful connections in a community she was

working in at the time of the interview. This person highlighted a feeling of wanting to ask the

right questions, trying to get the information, navigating a context where participants were

already in a lot of pain and suffering, but allowing people the space to share what they had to

share.

You don't want to rush people sharing but that's something different that I experienced in

the Spanish community conversations versus when talking to white or African

Americans. There is disconnect between like what they're sharing and their experiences.

There was not a lot of trust or comfortableness. So, that was a little bit of a challenge

because you as an evaluator, the researcher, you have the questions that you want to ask but also, you want to make sure that you're not rushing or disregarding them.

As one participant indicated, "there's suspicious foundations and nonprofits because they come and go, they promise a bunch of things, they open a bunch of programs. And then five years, three years later, they go out and leave, and nothing changed". Sometimes working with Latino (a, e, x) communities require a significant investment in time spent in the communities to get to know them, so they can know evaluators as people as well. Some of the evaluators who participated in the interviews indicated they try to arrive a few days earlier to the communities so they can establish connections before the evaluation starts.

It is very hard to be part of communities and build relationships and trust and let people know that you're there to help. And, you know, some communities don't trust data collection, they don't trust your intentions. They don't know why you're there. They don't believe you. When they say that you're, you know, part of a community or that you care about equity or things like that. It can be hard to connect to communities, but it can also it's also because when you do it right, it takes a lot of effort and a lot of emotional investment, you have to, you know, really be a person, not just a professional and it can be really hard to draw lines between your professional life and your personal life.

Evaluators interviewed also referred to how the characteristic 'being nice' of Latinos (a, e, x) can become a barrier when doing data collection.

We sacrifice sometimes truth, to not make people feel bad. So, we have to be very careful as evaluators to make sure we ask questions that allow people to tell us their experiences without feeling like they're blaming somebody for what happened, because many of our community members feel they do not deserve getting help unfortunately. So, the fact that they're being helped, even if it's not the right help, criticizing that help feels bad for them.

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An evaluator that has worked across multiple countries in Central America had a similar perspective. This evaluator commented that, in some cases, people in Central America have a very basic level of education, and they "no conversan, no se expresan, no desarrollan bien las ideas y esto hacen que sea un reto" (They don't talk, they don't express themselves, they don't develop ideas well and this makes it a challenge). This evaluator also commented that sometimes people "se dispersa" (they ramble) because the evaluator can ask them something and people can talk about that topic but also can ramble a lot about many other topics. This evaluator commented this is not a bad characteristic in these populations necessarily because it helps them to reflect on what is being discussed. From her point of view, this also implies that the evaluator has to re-direct the interview as necessary and go back to the main point of the conversation. Therefore, the evaluator must know not only how to ask questions (and how not to ask questions), but also evaluators must know how to *"conversar"* (to converse) to obtain the information depending on the sociocultural context where the data collection is taking place.

Current Sociopolitical context in Latin America / Contexto sociopolítico actual en América Latina

Some of the evaluators from Latin America referred to challenges associated with the current struggles of the Latin American countries. The participant from Paraguay, for example, shared concerns related to corruption, poverty, indigenous populations leaving their lands to seek help in the cities, and the inequity and educational gap COVID-19 has come only to increase, among other problems the country is experiencing. The following quote describes her concerns:

> Lastimosamente hay mucha corrupción, hay mucha pobreza que, bueno, que eso lleva
> también a que bueno, vos ves en las calles gente pidiendo plata. Ahora se ve
> lastimosamente a muchas familias indígenas que están saliendo de sus tierras por
> porque se ven obligadas a salir; se están viniendo a la ciudad. Verá que esas
> cuestiones todavía existen y son notorias, digamos acá en Paraguay la pobreza es

todavía algo que existe hoy bastante. Y bueno, y por ejemplo en el tema educativo

también, sobre todo el COVID yo creo que demostró ahora las desigualdades que

existen entre la ciudad y el campo, en temas de conexión, en temas de acceso. Que

uno sabía, digamos, pero creo que el COVID acentuó esta desigualdad en que ahora

pensamos que vamos a hacer el año que viene, si es que volvemos a la normalidad con

estos alumnos, con estos chicos que prácticamente perdieron dos años de estudio

porque no se pudo hacer prácticamente nada con ellos. Además de trabajar con el

WhatsApp y tener cosas como que se acentúan más estas cuestiones de igualdad que

sabíamos que teníamos, pero que ahora es como que el COVID demostró o mostró

más realmente veraz.

The participant from Puerto Rico shared similar concerns about people in her country.

She commented people on the island have been hardly beaten up since violence in the state

country is very strong and constant. There is the privatization of public services such as

electricity, water, and the internet. There have been constant power outages since the María

Hurricane; internet connection is unstable; salaries are not enough to have an adequate quality

of life; and roads are in bad conditions. This evaluator also commented about how living under

these conditions has made many Puerto Ricans leave the island, but others want to resist and

remain in their country putting their hearts first. In the quote below this participant shared what

was described above.

A nosotros nos dan bien duro. La violencia en el país estatal es bien fuerte y la violencia

no tiene que ser tan solo física. O sea que hay una violencia ahora mismo del Estado

hacia la gente que es constante. Básicamente se ha privatizado de servicio de la luz y

entonces ahora ha venido esta corporación de los Estados Unidos a manejar el servicio

de la luz. Y desde que ellos llegaron todos los días se va la luz unas cuantas horas al

día y es esto antes que no pasaba. Y entonces en estos días, hablo con mi familia y es

como que ya hace un calor brutal, se siente sobre 100 grados, se ha acabado el agua,

el servicio de Internet desde que nosotros tuvimos al huracán María, la Internet es bien

inestable en el país. Y entonces es como que tengo amistades que trabajan desde su

casa. Hace calor y se nos acaba de ir la luz; o sea que no puedo trabajar. El salario que

uno recibe no está a la par para el costo de la calidad de vida. La calidad de las

carreteras es una mierda. O sea que ahí hay como que no sé si ya vas viendo a que me

refiero, como que la violencia del Estado y está tan presente. Sin embargo, hay gente

que sigue ahí y hay gente que no se quiere ir del país. Nosotros tenemos el privilegio, el

beneficio entre comillas, de poder venir a los Estados Unidos porque tenemos la

ciudadanía y con todo y eso hay gente que no quiere. Yo no me quiero ir de aquí o me

quiero quedar aquí, pues porque este es mi país, tú sabes, ¡y es como que guau! No

culpamos tampoco a la gente que se va porque es lógico que cualquiera quiere una

calidad de vida para su familia, ¿no? Así que no se culpa a quien se va, pero yo creo

que el asunto es resistir, el estar ahí haciendo como nosotros decimos, de tripas

corazón, y yo creo que eso es algo que yo valoro mucho.

Cultural professional identity / Identidad profesional cultural

Across all interviews conducted, there were several occasions in which these groups of

evaluators implicitly or explicitly made references to how their cultural identity impacts or

influences their professional practice. Some participants indicated that their identity impacts

their role as evaluators. One of them expressed that:

I think my identity impacts what I believe my role as the evaluator should be. So that it is

my duty, and my ethical responsibility to do certain things, to ask certain questions. And

to raise certain issues. And so that ultimately impacts my practice. So, and I think a lot of

that is coming from the foundation of just who I am as a person, and the fact that I'm Afro

Latina, right? So, like, the fact that I see things differently (…) If you ask me if it is my

role, my place to raise certain issues, then I will say, absolutely, that is part of our job.

How could you not do this? And so that impacts my practice.

Similarly, another evaluator expressed that her cultural identity plays a big role in determining what she wanted to do professionally. She further explained that knowing the struggles of Latinos (a, e, x), the situation in her home country, and the background of her family, make her try to address some of the needs of people of her community. In her words:

Kind of it [referring to her cultural identity] has carved out basically what I wanted to be able to do. Like I've seen, and I've experienced the hardships that my community goes through. It's even when I think about my own country, like, for example, when I started out college I wanted to study psychology and be able to work with people on the spectrum because, and I put my nephew as example because he has autism. And so, he's still living in Peru, and there's a lot of lack of resources, there's a lot of lack of understanding. And so, I think when I first started, I was thinking like, oh, you know, like, I would love to be able to go back to my country and be able to like, not create programs, but be able to help schools, like at least develop tools and have resources to help students on the spectrum, for example, especially in rural areas. So, I think I've always kind of been, in my mind, it's always been about my community, what does my community need?

Another participant discussed the relationship between professional practice and somebody's identity. He stated that it is simply impossible to take away someone's identity and experiences because this is who we are. This individual also highlighted that how Latino (a, e, x) evaluators see the world, and their lived experiences, affect who they are, which in turn impacts the types of questions evaluators from this community ask and how they report back the information that they collect. His thinking is reflected in the quote below:

I refer back to Octavia Butler, the writer. When she was asked about her practice, her writing, being influenced by (she wrote a bunch of books, and they were all about very powerful, boundless black woman). And when she was asked about how her identities affect her writing, she always would talk about how it's impossible to believe that you can

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just take away your identities and your experiences. And I feel in the social sector, we like to think that it is possible. And I actually think it's not. And this is also something like a sentiment that I've heard on Octavia, it's not like we intentionally write like she says, I don't intentionally write about this. Black, powerful women that are they're not walking around saying I'm a black woman, I'm a black, they're just like that, they just are. So, I think in the same way, the way in which we conduct evaluation it's not like we say, it's not like all the time, we say, well, this is Latino wisdom that I'm applying here. This is just our lived experiences, the way in which we see the world affects the questions that we ask, the way that we ask them, how we inform back. So, I think it does affect any practice, and particularly, our practice.

Other participants shared a similar perspective about how identity and professional practice *"van de la mano"* (they are inseparable) as one evaluator said, and there is no line between them as another participant commented in the quote below:

Completely, there's no difference between my professional practice and my identity as a woman of color, a woman, a Latina, a woman who grew up poor, a woman who grew up without resources, there's no line between those things and the work that I do. There can't be. Otherwise, I wouldn't care about my job very much. So, for me, I can't tear those things apart.

One individual considered that being Latino (a, e, x) is also about the lived experiences you have had. This evaluator had the opportunity of visiting and living in many countries of Latin America, so from her point of view, living within the Latin American culture allowed her to gain a better understanding of the struggles and injustice people experience. She also commented that her profession as an evaluator has allowed her to surface how someone's decision-making can affect whole communities and that having the lived experiences she has, is what makes her passionate about being an evaluator. The quote below includes her comments on the topic.

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It's not just about being Latina; it's also about having the experience of having studied

and lived, you know, in a pretty deep culture, the Latino culture, that comes from a

particular class of people in Latin America. And so, I think that, you know, eventually, like

I said, like, I did speak about my, like, overall career and growth path. Eventually, I

realized how unique that was for me, and how, what an asset it was. And so, in my

evaluation profession, not only did I turn to becoming an evaluator because I was really,

really, really upset and traumatized by the injustices that I had experienced, not me

personally, but people that I loved, people that I would meet, you know, throughout, like

all these travels, you meet a lot of people and you're just like, to get on a plane and

leave, and you get to go on, struggling with your life. And so, realizing that that was

because of bad decision making. That's about distribution of resources, and political

perspectives. For me, evaluation became the way to surface, you know, how people's

decisions were actually playing out on other communities and people in Latin America,

like it was rooted, but it became a global quest. And so, I think being Latina, and having

lived and having these experiences really shaped, ultimately, what makes me

passionate about being an evaluator.

One evaluator commented that there had been a shift of perspective. This individual

expressed that when he started working as an evaluator, he thought he should be treated as an

evaluator. Cultural identities such as being male, gay, Latinx, Chicano, and Angelino were not

relevant from his point of view. As time passed and he got "seasoned" in the field, he changed

his perspective. He understands now that he brings all of these identities into his professional

practice, bringing more awareness and desires to "lift stories, and tell the most accurate story

possible". He finalized indicating that denying the link between these elements makes for a

weaker evaluation. His thinking is reflected in the quote below.

Yeah, I think it's something that's always there. But I think when I was earlier in my

career, I tried to really be an evaluator. Yes, I'm male. Yes, I am gay. Yes, I am Latinx, I

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am Chicano. Yes, I am Angelino. Yes, I am all these other things. But I am an evaluator. And so, treat me as an evaluator, none of this other stuff really matters. Thankfully, as I've gotten more seasoned with my practice, and as I've been working for a longer amount of time. I realized that, no, I am also all of these things, I bring them into the work that I do. And while certain people may not see that, as being part of a privilege, it is because it hopefully gives me more awareness, and more of a desire to lift up stories, and tell the most accurate story possible. Of course, my story is with data, but still trying to raise things up and to be able to understand that ethnicity, race, class, gender identity, that they're linked. And to deny that I think it makes for weaker evaluation.

Discussing the impact of cultural identity on her professional practice, another participant shared that cultural identity gives value to people, it guides them, providing them with a sense of rootedness, and enriching the spaces that we inhabit. She also indicated that her cultural identity represents richness in the research and evaluation fields; for this reason, she "la Boricua", "la afro puertorriqueña" has a lot to offer and a lot to share about what is happening in Puerto Rico, and about what is the value of its people. In the quote below she reflects on the importance of cultural identity in her profession as an evaluator:

Yo creo que emerge como un sentido de arraigo, pero me da enfoque. Mira, esto es lo que tú traes después de lo que tú estás hecha. Esto es lo que te va a guiar. Y me da también como un sentido de yo valorar quién yo soy, de donde yo vengo. No importa que tú seas latina, que tú vengas del Caribe, que viva en alguna colonia, yo can do it. Tú puedes hacerlo, tú estás hecha de madera, de mucho valor. Y pienso también que mi identidad cultural es una riqueza para este espacio. Yo tengo mucho que ofrecerle a este espacio. Yo quiero hablar de Puerto Rico y quiero que la gente sepa de Puerto Rico y que conozca qué es lo que hay allá y que conozca cuáles son las problemáticas también, pero que conozca también cuál es nuestro valor. Y eso yo lo enseño con mi práctica diaria. Entonces, yo pienso que al final del día es [name of the participant] quien

hizo esto; la investigadora hizo esto, la boricua hizo esto, la afro puertorriqueña hizo

esto y mi trabajo habla de mi calidad profesional, pero también dice mucho de quién yo

soy, de dónde yo vengo; así que mi identidad cultural me da valor y me invita a

enriquecer el espacio donde yo estoy, desde mi práctica cotidiana hasta mi práctica

profesional y mi práctica comunitaria y demás.

Conclusion

Seidman (2013) argues that living between two worlds but not belonging entirely to

either gives intellectuals a distinctive social perspective. Given the complexity and diversity of

Latinas (a, e, x) evaluators, one could argue this is the case for evaluators who belong to this

population. Evaluators who identified themselves as Latinas (a, e, x) in this study revealed living

among dichotomies and multifaceted realities. For this reason, there is no single label that can

capture the richness and diversity of the people within this population. These participants, as

many more Latinos (a, e, x) in other fields, have come to realize "there is no one Latino

experience", as one evaluator indicated during the interviews. Anzaldúa (2012), as many more

scholars, had previously highlighted this multifaceted and ambivalent nature of Latinos (a, e, x).

In this sense, bucketing such a diverse and vast group of people under one category creates

confusion in the population. For this reason, many evaluators indicated that had questioned

their own identity because they do not speak Spanish, they do not look like the stereotypical

Latino (a, e, x), or because they did not grow up in Latin America. This helps build, maintain and

reproduce assumptions others have about Latinos (a, e, x), such as us being more passional,

more irrational, more visceral, and less intellectual like another evaluator indicated.

Contradictorily, these stereotypes also create division. Evaluators who were born and raised in

the USA shared feeling 'less Latinos (a, e, x)' in comparison to those born in Latin America. And

evaluators born and raised in Latin America that later migrated to the USA experienced feeling

different, being afraid, and living in a land that is not theirs, where they do not belong. The truth

is, in both cases, Latinos (a, e, x) expressed feeling excluded and discriminated against. As a

Latina born, raised, and that lives in Central America, I have felt this exclusion and division as well. My broken English, physical appearance and lived experiences give me away. I have experienced Latinos (a, e, x) born and raised in the USA telling me I should not consider myself a Latina because this category belongs only to those who reside in the USA, creating division and dichotomies among us.

To add to this, Latin American heritage plays a huge role in the cultural and professional identity of these participants. Even evaluators who are third or fourth Latino (a, e, x) generation in the USA indicated that they still carried out traditional celebrations, rituals, and customs of their ancestors' home countries. For this reason, Latino (a, e, x) music, food, dance, religion, hard work, *familia*, *respeto*, sense of community, and value for education remain present in almost all participants that took part in this study, except for those who sadly had to let go what their grandparents and parent came with to be able to fit into the USA worldview of that time. In addition, Latin American's legacy is also present in the past and current forms of oppression, racism, marginalization, traditional gender roles, economical struggles, having unequal educational opportunities and having to prove yourself constantly. This heritage has come to fuel an increased awareness or consciousness in Latino (a, e, x) evaluators that goes in hand with the desire for asking the right questions, conducting an evaluation that is culturally responsive and that has a positive impact on their communities. Given the current panorama in Latin America, with data indicating that there are worrying regional inequalities, more than 60 million hungry people, and food insecure increasing every day (FAO, FIDA, OMS, PMA & UNICEF, 2021), it does not seem like the hardships of Latinos (a, e, x) who reside in Latin American countries are going to end soon.

Nonetheless, as many of the participants in this study emphasized, the people of our communities are brave, resilient, and persistent. *La fiesta de las poblaciones Latinas* (the party of the Latina (a, e, x) population) will not come to an end that easily. The cultural identity of these evaluators reveals this. The Latinos, Latinas, Latines and Latinx that participated in this

study displayed how their culture highly impacts their professional practice. As many of them indicated, their work matters because they want to do better; they want to collaborate towards a more justice-oriented society where the voices of populations that have been historically marginalized can be heard. For this reason, many of these participants work while remembering who their ancestors are, where they come from, how much they have struggled to survive, and what needs to be done to address the necessities of members of their communities and the overall population. As one participant expressed, for them education is not for the induvial person, but for their families and their communities. However, in the evaluation field specifically, there is still a lot that needs to be done. There is a noticeable underrepresentation of Latinos (a, e, x) in the field, and many of their contributions remain silenced and forgotten. This group of evaluators highlighted, for example, that even though there are Latinos (a, e, x) making contributions, those contributions are not always recognized. For these reasons, scholars and evaluators such as Reid et al. (2020) had fought for increasing awareness about the current need for understanding how the identities of evaluators of color impact their perceived role and evaluation praxis.

When I started this study, I wanted to contribute to the increasing conversations in the program evaluation field that center on how the culture and identity of evaluators of color influence their professional practice. My principal motivation was that Latinos (a, e, x) belong to a vulnerable population that has been historically underrepresented in western academia and in the evaluation professionalization. For this reason, during my professional studies in program evaluation, I didn't get to hear much about others like me. I conducted this study because I was interested in learning about other Latinos (a, e, x). Nonetheless, I ended up learning about myself instead. One of the participants I interviewed commented by the end of her interview that she had learned so much about herself during the interview. I feel this was also the case for myself. After engaging in these conversations with Latinas (a, e, x) from so different backgrounds and with so distinct lived experiences, allowed me to see there are deeper links

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that connect us, at deeper levels. There are common pathways we have crossed even if we are so different. As a first-generation myself, many of the experiences of these evaluators resonated with mine. Especially in those occasions in which they talked about "breaking the cycle", aspiring for a better quality of life, centering education and hard work as core values together with *familia*, respect, and believing in God, and transforming the historical oppression of Latinos (a, e, x) into the agency we need to build discourses and narratives about ourselves, which in turn will help dismantling structures of power and inequality our population has been subjected to for the longest time. In this sense, I hope this study will help expand the little literature there is about Latino (a, e, x) evaluators, contributing to nascent studies that aim to better understand the experiences of evaluators who belong to historically marginalized populations such as ours.

In regard to what all of this means for professionals in the field, I would say that evaluators should be primarily responsive, humble, patient and they should always seek to educate themselves in an ongoing manner. When working with Latino (a, e, x) populations, and evaluators are not from that population or they don't speak the language, they should be mindful of the role of language plays and make sure that somebody within the evaluation team does. Other recommendations are to include the perspectives of consultants, and if budget and time allows, ask community members to work with the evaluation team in the development and implementation of the evaluation. Furthermore, evaluators should really take the time to think about their experiences and the background of the individuals that you they are dealing with and working for. There is also a dire need for evaluators to be more aware of different cultures, different ways of knowing, different norms and different values that prevail within Latino (a, e, x) populations, and how all these components interact in the evaluations they conduct.

Information obtained from these interviews, altogether with results from the literature conducted, were employed to develop survey-based research where I asked evaluators and researchers who work with Latino (a, e, x) populations about the methodological designs and

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approaches they employ. In the next section, which corresponds to paper three, I further share

results and reflections from this study.

CHAPTER IV. PAPER III: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES USED IN PROGRAM

EVALUATION & EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH WHEN WORKING WITH LATINOS (A, E, X)

La interpretación de nuestra realidad con esquemas ajenos sólo

contribuye a hacernos cada vez más desconocidos, cada vez menos

libres, cada vez más solitarios. — The interpretation of our reality based

on foreign schemes only contributes to making us every time more

unknown, less free, and lonelier. (Gabriel García Márquez, 1982)

Given the growing demand for evaluation in Latin America (Conner, 2004; Rodríguez et

al., 2016), current demographic projections indicating that Latinos (a, e, x) will become one of

the largest ethnic/race in the US by 2060 (Colby & Ortman, 2015; Johnson, 2020; Passel &

Cohn, 2008; Vespa et al., 2018), and the diverse realities of Latinos (a, e, x) (Guajardo et al.,

2020), it is urgent to develop and implement evaluation and research efforts that are consistent

with the needs and ways of being of this complex population. According to Smith (2012), the

term 'research' is inextricably linked to imperialism, colonialism, and the ways of knowing of the

West. Similarly, evaluation is considered to be founded on principles of Western modernity,

rationality, and progress (Arias Orozco et al., 2021; Bhola, 2003). Thus, given that research and

evaluation are based on westernized conceptualizations, the implementation of culturally

responsive practices is fundamental since the lack of attention to culture, personal habit, and

situational context can arrive at flawed findings with potentially devastating consequences (AEA,

2011). Therefore, evaluators and researchers must avoid the use of ill-adapted methods and

approaches that do not achieve understanding complex contexts where multiple realities and

deeply meaningful cultural practices coexist. This is especially important in historically

marginalized, underrepresented, minority populations, such as Latinos (a, e, x), African

Americans, indigenous communities, among others, since "there is a history of inappropriate

use of research or evaluation in ways that violated basic human rights" (AEA, 2011, para. 22).

Exploring and understanding what methods are being used when conducting research and evaluation with Latino (a, e, x) communities is especially important for evaluators who aim to attend to the AEA Guiding Principles (2018) and be culturally competent. AEA Guiding Principles (2018) are associated with the responsibility of evaluators for implementing a contextually-relevant process of inquiry; possessing the necessary competencies to work in the cultural context of the evaluation; communicating truthfully and in a transparent way; honoring the dignity, well-being, and self-worth of individuals and acknowledge the influence of culture within and across groups; and striving to contribute to the common good and advancement of an equitable and just society. The ability of evaluators to incorporate cultural factors such as language, acculturation, family values, and community attitudes into evaluation designs is what we understand as cultural competence (Orlandi et al., 1992). Thus, by ensuring evaluation approaches are context/culturally relevant, evaluators also guarantee the populations they work with are being respected and that evaluation outcomes will contribute to their common good and equity. In this sense, the incorporation of frameworks and approaches that are culturally relevant can help better articulate the experiences of Latinos (a, e, x) by addressing issues often overlooked, such as immigration, language rights, colonialism, imperialism, multi-identity, etc. (Guajardo et al., 2020). The use of these culturally appropriate methodological approaches can also give evaluators and researchers a more focused lens on what are more authentic and culturally responsive forms of data collection, analysis, interpretation, and data dissemination when working with Latinos (a, e, x).

To meaningfully assess and engage Latinos (a, e, x), evaluators need to develop and implement evaluations sensitive to the cultural issues that characterize and are important to this particular population (Conner, 2004). The use of culturally relevant instrumentation is an important component of culturally competent research and evaluation for Latinos (a, e, x). Failure to consider important demographic, socio-cultural, and psychological factors specific to this population can result in inappropriate conclusions about the effectiveness of programs

(Cervantes & Peña, 1998). As a result, it is worth exploring what methods better capture the diverse and complex lived experiences of this population from their own culture and context, instead of using imported frameworks that often fail to honor the cultural norms, reveal structural injustices, and promote socially just empowerment and equity. Otherwise, evaluators and researchers will only add to the immeasurable violence and pain Latinos (a, e, x) have suffered due to age-old inequities, oppression, plundering, and abandonment. Therefore, the overall goal of this study is to depict approaches, designs, methodologies, methods, and instruments used when working with communities who identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x). There are three main objectives associated with this research: 1) to determine what methodological designs and methods are being used to conduct research and/or evaluation within Latino (a, e, x) contexts; 2) to explore what cultural and contextual considerations are being made when conducting evaluation and research in programs that serve Latino (a, e, x) communities; and 3) to determine in what ways do the culture and identity of Latino and Latina communities influence and shape the evaluation and research praxis.

Methodology of the study

A survey research methodology was used for this study. According to Kraemer (1991, quoted in Glasow, 2005), survey research 1) is used to quantitatively describe specific aspects of a given population; 2) the data is collected from people which makes it subjective, and 3) it uses a selected portion of the population from which the findings can later be generalized back to the population. A cross-sectional survey design was used for this purpose. According to Krosnick et al. (2014), a cross-sectional survey involves "the collection of data at a single point in time from a sample drawn from a specified population" (p. 406), and it can be used either for documenting the prevalence of particular characteristics in a population or to measure correlational evidence about the directions and magnitudes of associations between pairs of variables. In this sense, the implementation of a cross-sectional survey allowed me to capture a general picture of the methodological approaches and designs used to conduct research and

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evaluation when working with Latino (a, e, x) populations. An online questionnaire was employed to answer the proposed objectives. The questionnaire included 16 open-ended and closed-ended items. All open-ended items allowed multiple answers. The development of the survey was based on a search of the literature on evaluation and/or research with populations and communities that identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x) (Guajardo et al., 2020; Clayson et al., 2002; Conner, 2004), specialized literature on evaluation and/or research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; O'Leary, 2021.), and the results of paper 2 of my dissertation study, which provided rich insights about the cultural identity of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators. Recognizing a great part of evaluators and researchers who work with this population live in Latin American countries, the questionnaire was made available both in English and in Spanish.

Sampling and Distribution Mode

A nonprobability sampling strategy (Kohler et al., 2019) was employed in this study. Snowball sampling involves asking members of the subpopulation to suggest other members of the subpopulation contact the researcher (Krosnick et al., 2014). Given the characteristics of respondents of this survey (professional evaluators and researchers with computer skills, high reading, and writing skills, and motivation to cooperate in the research study), an Internet or online self-administered approach to data collection was employed. According to Fowler (2009), this type of data collection strategy provides the advantage that if the contact and survey information is correct, the questions will get to the respondents, which participants can respond to at any time that is convenient for them. Robinson & Leonard (2018) indicate online or web-based surveys are often distributed to potential respondents via a link in an email or embedded on a website, with semi-automated administration options (e.g., automatic email reminders to nonrespondents) which make online surveys "the most time-efficient administration mode" (p. 197).

The distribution of the survey was achieved through the implementation of different strategies. First, I reach out to professional associations and groups (e.g., La RED in AEA,

ALIMM Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigación en Métodos Mixtos, Red Argentina de

Evaluacion) to distribute the online survey. Second, snowball sampling was used to reach out to

evaluators and researchers I know to ask them to share survey information with other

evaluators and researchers that might be interested in the study. Third, the study information

was shared in Facebook private groups that are destined for professionals in research and

evaluation (e.g., Latinas Completing Doctoral Degrees, Investigación en Educación y Docencia,

Wise Latinas Linked, Chicanx/Latinx Ph.D. & Ed.D. Scholars of Education, Metodología de la

Investigación, etc.), Twitter and LinkedIn. The survey was launched on December 13th, 2021,

and it was closed on January 21st, 2022.

Data Analysis and Data Quality

The analysis of data for this study consisted of descriptive statistics for closed-ended

questions using SPSS, and inductive thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017) for open-ended

questions. To avoid items that respondents find ambiguous or difficult to comprehend, and

ensure data collected was useful, a cognitive interview and expert review were employed.

According to Krosnick et al. (2014), cognitive interviewing involves administering a

questionnaire or survey to a small number of people who are asked to "think aloud"; in other

words, participants of cognitive interviews are asked to verbalize whatever considerations come

to their minds as they formulate the responses to the survey. Krosnick et al. (2014) also indicate

cognitive interviews provide the researcher an insight into the way each item is comprehended

by the participants, the strategies people use to answer and to ask respondents about particular

elements of a survey question (e.g., interpretations of a specific word or phrase or overall

impressions of what a question was designed to assess). Additionally, input from two experts in

the development of survey designs who have worked with the population under study was

solicited to ensure that questions were appropriate. According to Robinson & Leonard (2018),

some of the advantages of having an expert review the questionnaire are that they provide a

'fresh' look at the drafted survey; they can ask questions about the language used, and challenge assumptions we might not realize we are making.

There were limitations associated with this survey research. Even though the survey was open to respondents for more than a month, and it was distributed via several social media channels, the number of responses is not large enough to generalize findings of this study to the overall population of evaluators and researchers who work with Latino (a, e, x) populations. It is noticeable that the overall population of evaluators and/or researchers who work with Latinos (a, e, x) populations is unknown. Therefore, even though the results obtained from the current sample of 61 respondents cannot be generalized, this study provides an initial insight into the topic under study. A second limitation is the global pandemic COVID-19 and time constraints, which represent a limitation for the data collection process of this research since evaluators and professionals are living an unprecedented time that limits personal interaction and has increased individual's stress and quality of time, which may have affected the number of responses obtained.

Participants Demographics

A total of 29 participants completed 100% of the online survey, and the remaining 32 completed more than 50% of the survey (N = 61). Most of the completers were Latino (a, e, x) (47%) females (63%) who reported having a doctorate degree (47%) and conducting research and/or evaluation in the United States (52%) in higher education settings (26%). The demographic distribution of participants' demographic information is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 5. Survey Participants' Demographic Information

Demographic Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Race / Ethnicity (N = 47)		
Latino/Latinx/Hispanic	33	47%
White/Eastern European	13	19%

Mixed race	10	14%
Caribbean	6	9%
Black/ African-American /African	4	6%
Native American/Alaskan Native	2	3%
Asian/East Asian/Indian	1	1%
Other[1]	1	1%
Gender (N = 49)		
Female	31	63%
Male	17	35%
Non-binary/non-conforming	1	1%
Activity they conduct (N = 61)		
I do research	32	53%
I do both	25	40%
I do evaluation	4	6%
Country where they conduct evaluation and/or research (N = 49)		
United States	33	52%
Mexico	10	16%
Other[2]	7	11%
Peru	4	6%
Colombia	3	5%
Uruguay	1	2%
Panama	1	2%
Guatemala	1	2%

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[1] My partner is Latinx so my children are bicultural/bilingual, and thus I identify with being in a mixed family.
[2] Suriname, Puerto Rico, and 'Many other non-Spanish speaking countries.'

Ecuador	1	2%
Dominican Republic	1	2%
Chile	1	2%
Argentina	1	2%
Level of education (N = 49)		
Doctorate	23	47%
Master's	19	39%
Bachelor's	4	8%
Other[3]	3	6%
Sector of employment (N = 49)		
Higher education	31	26%
Social Sciences	18	15%
Non-Profit / Philanthropic/ Not-for-Profit	17	15%
K-12 education	15	13%
Health	9	8%
Government	7	6%
Public health	7	6%
STEM	7	6%
For profit	3	3%
Other[4]	3	3%

Results

This section includes results from quantitative and qualitative responses that were

provided by evaluators and researchers who completed the survey. These results are

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[3] Licenciatura, and Título profesional.

[4] Ciencias Economicas, Management and Advertising agencies for national and global brands.

associated with the methodologies, designs, and data collection methods they implement when

working with the population under study. Additionally, some of the results below are related to

challenges and cultural values and components that participants take into consideration when

working with Latino (a, e, x) communities.

Methodologies Used by Respondents to Conduct Evaluation and/or Research

Survey results revealed that 55% (n=37) of participants indicated that the methodology

they use more frequently to conduct evaluation and/or research with populations that comprise

Latino (a, e, x) corresponded to mixed methods, which was followed by qualitative represented

by 30% (n=20) of participants' responses. Quantitative methodologies had the lowest frequency

among all methodological approaches to evaluation and research since only 15% (n=10) of the

evaluators and/or researchers indicating to prefer this methodology.

Table 6. Methodologies Used by Participants

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Mixed-Methods	37	55%
Qualitative	20	30%
Quantitative	10	15%

According to participants' qualitative responses, mixed methods "paints a more complete

picture;" it "allows one to capture a holistic picture and draws upon the strengths of both

qualitative and quantitative approaches;" it "affords gaining global perspectives among a

population through quantifiable data and also insights on individual interpretations or

operationalizations of the research's or evaluation's key topics;" it "allows for reporting of data in

an easily digestible component for academia and general consumption;" and it allows the

evaluator and/or researcher to "dive deeper and provide further context on the findings".

Participants also highlighted how data that emerges from mixed methods provides a voice to

this community, and how it is important that evaluators and researchers attempt to capture

those voices as accurately as possible. As one respondent indicated "I also think that mixed methods is particularly important when researching Latino populations because of the inherent heterogeneity of the population, which quantitative approaches often overlook". In the following quote one participant indicated the use of mixed methods help provide a more complete understanding of this population in the state of North Carolina in particular, where there is little data on immigrant communities.

There is relatively little data on Latino immigrant communities in [name of the community of the evaluator], so trying to collect a good mix of quantitative and qualitative data helps provide a more complete snapshot of the population. We often collect qualitative data after analyzing quantitative results to help inform what we should ask about and learn more about.

Respondents also commented on what data collection methods they use when conducting evaluation and research that use mixed methods. Some of the data collection methods reported in the survey were pláticas (a form of informal conversation), consejos (similar to councils), focus groups, testimonios, surveys, and large-scale datasets. The four following quotes revealed participants' perspectives regarding the value of using mixed methods when working with Latino (a, e, x), and the data collection methods that they employ to better understand this complex and diverse population.

In particular including pláticas or consejos alongside survey data ensure that the research process is not one-sided or overly skewed to the researcher's or evaluator's perspectives alone. For example, language is incredibly rich with nuance and alternative meanings which can be difficult to navigate through one-way research/evaluation like with surveys. In conversational data collection, I encourage participants to convey their interpretations, knowledge, and wisdom related to the key concepts."

"We tend to use mixed methods when working with any group that has diverse levels of English speaking/reading/writing ability. We have found that it tends to make the

evaluation more accessible. For any in-person data collection we hold Spanish-only

focus groups and have translators available at any groups with mixed language levels.

We try to engage in proactive methods of monitoring and equalizing power during data

collection as well.

I find that testimonios framed by quantitative data allows our story to not just be told but

understood by others.

If there is existing data available, e.g., from the US Census, health department, schools,

law enforcement, and other organizations, I like to start there but there are often

limitations with these datasets, and they are often inaccurate/not fully reliable. Or

sometimes the data isn't available. I have used a variety of methods when conducting

research and evaluations with Latinos/as/x, including surveys, focus groups/listening

sessions, interviews, Photovoice, forums, and other participatory methods. I find that

overall, more personalized and in-person engagements work better due to cultural

preferences, trust, and sometimes limited literacy.

In the second order of preference, qualitative evaluation and research were considered

valuable because this methodology "provide deeper, more fleshed out information that helps

interpret the data;" it "allows to explore deeper and interrogate relationships better;" and "it also

provides the necessary context for understanding". Some of the responses provided in the

survey revealed that some evaluators and researchers consider qualitative methods an

adequate method to promote the inclusion of Latino (a, e, x) voices, as it "allows for the

exploration/discovery of themes as Latinos/os/x has not been represented historically in studies

or assessment". The following three quotes show a similar line of thought regarding the

usefulness of using qualitative methods when working with this population.

I think it [qualitative methods] helps platform Latinx voices in their own words, revealing

a perspective which has not traditionally been privileged.

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I use qualitative research to better understand lived experiences of Latinxs, as I find that quantitative research often ignores the historical nuances and differences among Latinx communities.

With adult Latinos/as, I think a written quantitative survey in English could be intimidating and not very accessible to some, so I have used translated surveys in Spanish, and have also had a researcher read the items out loud for folks who don't read very fluently in Spanish. We also changed the response set to include visuals (thumbs up for agree, thumbs down for disagree). I definitely leaned on Spanish language qualitative interviews to get a fuller picture with adult participants. With families or with youth, there is less of a concern with written English fluency, so brief surveys are possible. Our research team always checks to be sure that surveys have been validated with Latinx populations in the past and are culturally relevant.

When sharing their perspectives about the implementation of quantitative methods with this population, opinions were divided. Some of the survey respondents argued, "quantitative information is limited and can be limiting, but can be useful in answering specific, narrow questions". One participant noted that in fact most organizations in the country where this individual resides (Peru) require the use of this methodology and that they "exigen evidencias cuantitativas como resultados" (require quantitative evidence as results). Another participant (see quote below) noted that the current lack of knowledge on the Latino (a, e, x) experience impedes the use of quantitative methodologies.

In my research field there is not enough foundational theory in understanding the experiences of Latino/x/e populations to warrant the shift to quantitative research yet. Also, the current frameworks and empirical methods used in my field have been normed with other populations and may not be valid anyway.

On the other hand, there were also a few respondents that also saw value in the implementation of purely quantitative methodologies when working with this population. One of

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the responses provided in the survey (see quote below) argued that the use of quantitative

methods can help build foundational theory on Latino (a, e, x) communities, and to promote the

implementation of better social policies that address the needs of this population in particular.

> The use of large-scale data that are nationally representative are imperative for
> evidence-based policies that allocate resources to various Latina/o/xs in need. Given the
> increasing recognition of differences within the Latina/o/x population, these large-scale
> data are necessary to get insights of population-level needs for various ethnic origin
> groups.

Evaluation and Research Designs Implemented by Respondents

Percentages and frequencies corresponding to evaluation and research designs

implemented when working with communities of Latinos (a, e, x) are detailed in Table 3 below. It

is noticeable that there is a diverse set of designs used by this group of respondents. Even

though culturally responsive approaches, cross-sectional and non-experimental designs were

the top three designs selected by respondents, their responses revealed most of these designs

are employed frequently. Emancipatory approaches, explanatory sequential mixed methods,

and complex designs with embedded core designs were reported with the least frequency. This

is congruent with some of the qualitative responses, in which respondents highlighted that the

selection of a design relies heavily on the context, the nature of the inquiry, the specific

characteristics of participants, topics under study, and the research questions.

Most of the qualitative responses provided by the participants regarding the designs they

use revealed an interest in bringing out the stories, experiences, and voices of the Latino (a, e,

x) population. When answering why they use these designs to evaluate and/or research when

working with these communities, one individual indicated that "I want the stories and

experiences to come through in the research and be in the voices of the participants". Another

respondent noted that the goal was to "center them as knowledge producers," and another

participant stated that she uses narrative inquiry "to connect with the Latinx population and

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target the interview to uncover their unique perspectives". Similarly, somebody else commented that their preference for action research is based on its usefulness for defining strategies that can be implemented as a form of prevention and improvement in their quality of life. The two following quotes reflect the preference of culturally responsive designs when working with Latino (a, e, x):

> Participatory, collaborative, and culturally responsive designs take into account that most research projects are embedded in cultures of whiteness (colleges, schools, theories, assumptions). Thus, they involve and include members of Latinx communities as key stakeholders with unique perspectives whose voices and knowledge are worth recording.

> All research should be culturally responsive and informed. In general, I prefer mixed methods because the data complements and makes up for some of the limitations of each method. All my research is equity-oriented and especially with people/groups who have been marginalized and oppressed, this is essential because without this lens we cannot fully understand their experiences. Longer term and participatory or action-research is preferred because investment is needed to build trust and so you're not simply using people to extract information from them. It needs to be mutually beneficial. Your liberation is tied up with mine.

Table 7. Designs Used by Participants (N=61)

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Culturally responsive approaches	22	8%
Cross-sectional designs	21	7%
Non-Experimental designs	20	7%
Social justice-oriented approaches	19	7%
Case study	19	7%

Narrative research	18	6%
Experimental designs	18	6%
Participatory approaches	17	6%
Collaborative approaches	17	6%
Action research	16	6%
Phenomenology	16	6%
Ethnographies	15	5%
Longitudinal designs	14	5%
Grounded theory	13	5%
Exploratory sequential mixed methods	11	4%
Discourse analysis	8	3%
Feminist approaches	7	2%
Convergent mixed methods	6	2%
Emancipatory approaches	3	1%
Explanatory sequential mixed methods	3	1%
Other	3	1%
Complex designs with embedded core designs	1	0%

Note: Other included historical; legal; in program evaluation general inductive qualitative research; critical race theory, LatCrit, and Chicana feminist epistemology.

Overall, qualitative responses revealed an explicit interest in understanding and validating the experiences of Latinos (a, e, x). In the three following quotes, respondents noted ethical implications associated with their selection of evaluation/or research designs since they argued these designs allow them to explore colonial legacies and racism, while supporting social justice and equity efforts, and providing soundness of the findings.

I use critical race theory, LatCrit, and Chicana feminist epistemology to guide my work. These lenses highlight the racialized realities Latinx folks experience in their day to day

lives and centers them when colonial legacies try to keep them to the margins. Especially with qualitative work, I can center their voices verbatim.

All of my research is action research of some kind. It may be more or less participatory or collaborative, but it's always aimed at supporting social justice initiatives and movements.

All of my methodological decision making pursues groundedness in equity and social justice as well as the reality that racism shapes contemporary American society, whether individuals choose to acknowledge it or not. Therefore, my most preferred methodologies are paradigmatically aligned with criticality and transformation in general and mitigation of racialized, classed, gendered, or oriented inequity specifically.

Data Collection Methods Preferred by Evaluators and/or Researchers who work with Latinos (a, e, x)

As Table 4 depicts, the top three data collection methods were interviews (20%), surveys (17%), and focus groups (14%). Other data collection methods also used by this group of researchers and evaluators when working with Latino (a, e, x) populations were documents reviews, observation, informal conversation, storytelling, SWOT analysis, audiovisual-digital materials, artifacts, photovoice, and policy Delphi.

Table 8. Data Collection Methods Used by Participants

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Interviews	42	20%
Surveys	36	17%
Focus groups	30	14%
Document review	24	12%
Observations	23	11%
Informal conversations	15	7%

Storytelling	10	5%
SWOT analysis	8	4%
Audiovisual-digital materials	7	3%
Artifacts	6	3%
Photovoice	4	2%
Other	2	1%

Note: Other included Policy Delphi

Previously, some respondents indicated that the selection of certain designs to research and evaluation relies heavenly on the topic under study, the context, the specific characteristics of the sample/population, and the research question. This was the case for their selection of the data collection methods. Some of them further explained that time, funding, and accessibility to data were three key factors in determining the data collection methods as well. One individual indicated that the data collection methods are "Son la base para explorar las realidades y contextos para intervenir" (They are the basis for exploring the realities and contexts to intervene). Another respondent noted that she is interested in the used of different data collection methods, but her training has been only in traditional methods. One participant indicated that translation of data plays an important role in the data collection methods they use. Somebody else noted that "bringing the voice of the participants forward is even more important when they are under-represented in research in general and in my community's demographics in particular. So, methods that center the experiences and perceptions of Latinx folks are important". The following quotes below include the perceptions of other participants regarding the use of narraciones (narratives), trabajo de campo (field work), entrevistas (interviews), sistematización (systematization), focus groups, and many other data collection methods.

Las narraciones ayudan a otros latinos a reflexionar sobre sus propias experiencias y aprende como mejorar en el futuro. Es como escuchar a un familiar.

Lo ideal siempre es hacer trabajo de campo. No obstante, en mi experiencia como

investigadora me ha enseñado que no siempre es factible realizarlo tanto por cuestiones

financieras como de tiempo. Por ello, he recurrido a entrevistas virtuales, análisis de

documentos en función de variables y búsqueda y sistematización de materiales

audiovisuales por lo que implica en términos de reducción de costos logísticos y

financieros.

I like the conversational nature of focus groups, informal conversations, and interviews

when working with groups experiencing oppression and/or where English is an additional

language. I think these formats allow for better rapport building and power balancing as

well as allowing for probing to ensure meaning is understood in both questions and

responses. We also use surveys often, but always offer them in multiple languages and

pilot test with various groups.

Allowing participants to express themselves visually as through photovoice has been

very effective at understanding the concerns of the Latinx youth being worked with.

Additionally, being less formal about exploration methods tends to be more effective with

the youth being worked with and get more genuine and real responses. Observations

have been useful to see how the youth interact in the respective programs as well as

develop areas to probe when engaging in direct data collection methods.

I have used many different methods, depending on the project. More informal and

active/engaged methods have worked better with Latinos/as/x. I've also worked in

collaboration with coalitions, non-profits, schools, and churches that have existing

relationships with people so you can build on that trust they already have with that

organization when you engage people in research or evaluations there.

Latino (a, e, x) Cultural Nuances in Methodological Approaches the Evaluation and/or
Research

Survey respondents were asked to share their perceptions about Latino (a, e, x) cultural components and values. To be more precise, they were asked to indicate cultural components of Latino (a, e, x) communities they take into consideration before conducting evaluations and/or research. As Table 5 shows, the age of participants, educational level, socioeconomic status, language spoken, and cultural values were among the most common components this group of individuals take into consideration when conducting evaluation and/or research on this population. On the other hand, the role of the family, traditional gender roles, religious beliefs, and patriarchy were among the least frequent components they take into consideration when working with Latinos (a, e, x).

Table 9. Cultural Components Considered Before Conducting Evaluation and/or Research

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age of the participants	36	11%
Educational level	32	10%
Socioeconomic status	29	9%
Language spoken	28	9%
Cultural values	27	8%
Historical and political context	25	8%
Ethnoracial identity	23	7%
Immigration status	22	7%
Strategies for building trust and rapport	21	6%
Legacies of oppression and marginalization	19	6%
Role of the family	18	6%

Traditional gender roles	17	5%
Religious beliefs	14	4%
Patriarchy	11	3%
Other	4	1%

Note: Other included "the context and setting in which the research/evaluation is being conducted (school, church, after-school programming, juvenile justice system, etc.)", and "Resultados de instrumentos que evalúan determinada categoría".

In addition, survey respondents were asked to rank in order of importance (from 1 to 12) cultural values that they consider are significant within the Latino (a, e, x) culture. Figure 1 below contains information regarding the results of the ranking of the top 10 positions. Figure 2, on the other hand, contains detailed scores for the top four cultural values these evaluators and researchers associated with the population under study. Family, hard work, education, and respect were located among the highest positions. Food, sympathy, music, and dance were among the lowest positions of the ranking. In addition to these cultural values, three respondents considered other cultural values were important among Latinos (a, e, x), including "maintaining a connection to culture," "solidaridad (solidarity)," "personalismo (personalism)," and "trust and close connection with people in your network"

.

Figure 2. Overall Ranking of Latino (a, e, x) Cultural Values

Ranking of Latino (a, e, x) Cultural Values
According to Participants' Perceptions (N = 42)

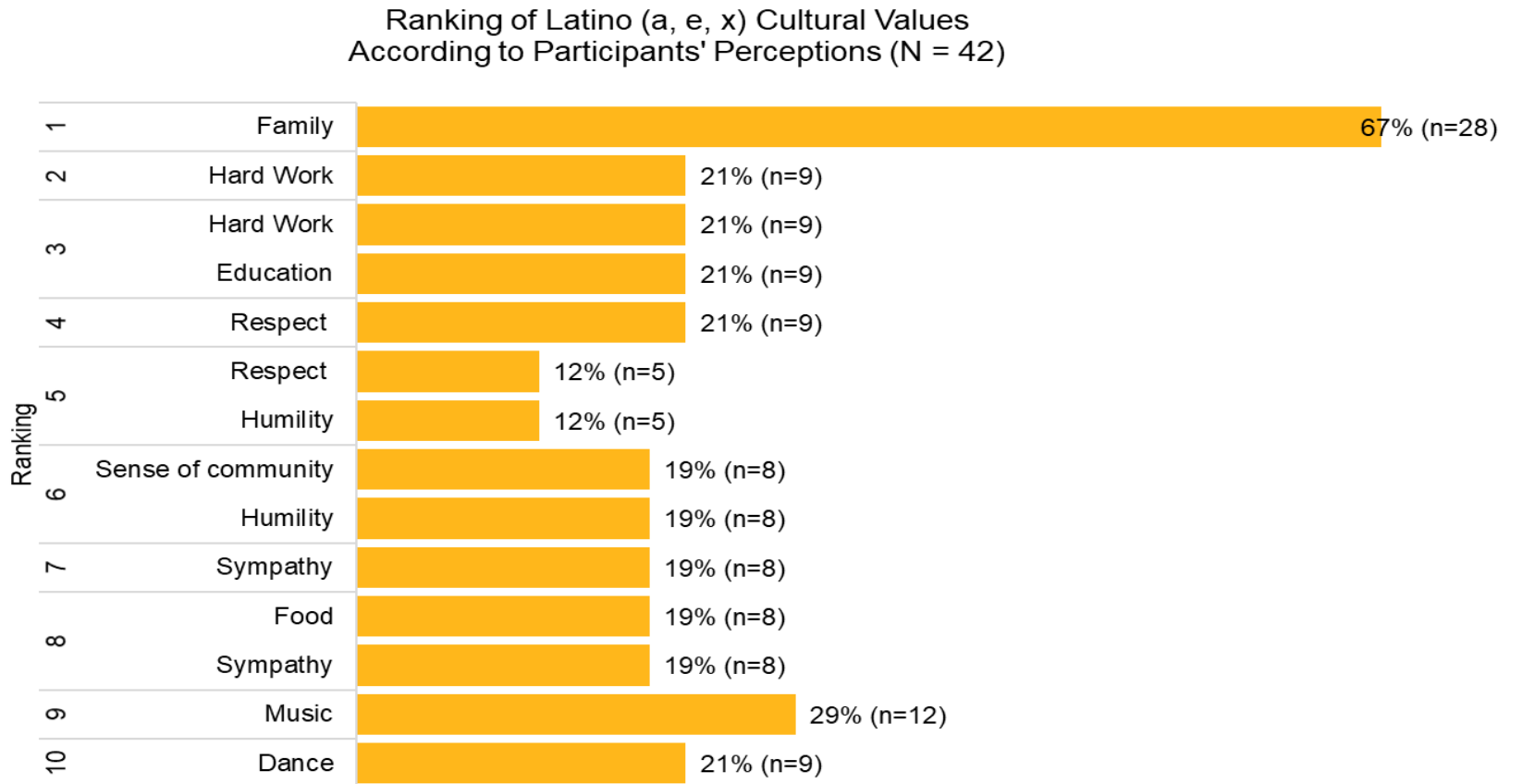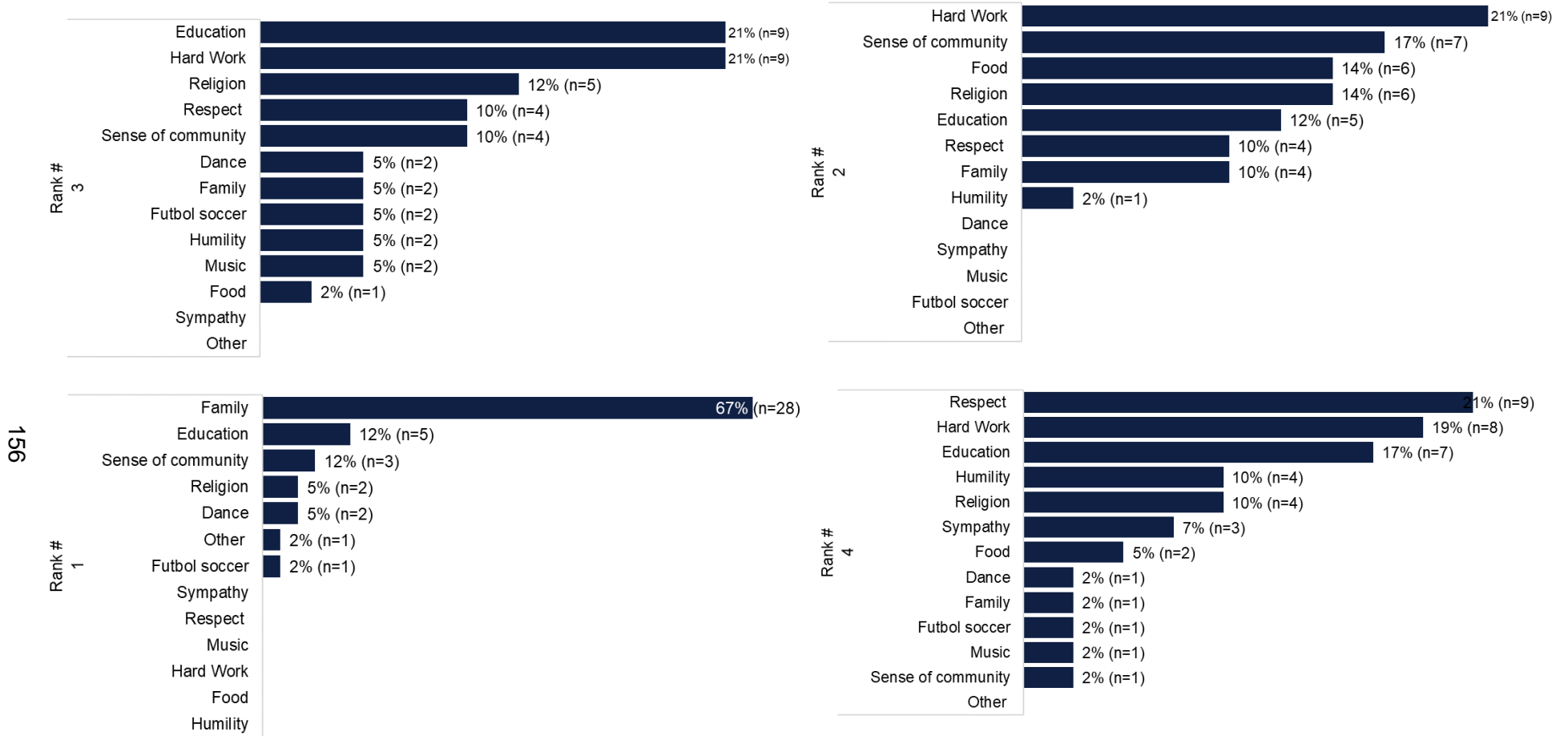| Ranking	Value	Percentage
1	Family	67% (n=28)
2	Hard Work	21% (n=9)
3	Hard Work	21% (n=9)
3	Education	21% (n=9)
4	Respect	21% (n=9)
5	Respect	12% (n=5)
5	Humility	12% (n=5)
6	Sense of community	19% (n=8)
6	Humility	19% (n=8)
7	Sympathy	19% (n=8)
8	Food	19% (n=8)
8	Sympathy	19% (n=8)
9	Music	29% (n=12)
10	Dance	21% (n=9)

Figure 3. Detailed Ranking of the Top Four Latino (a, e, x) Cultural Values (N = 42)

Challenges experienced when working with Latino (a, e, x) populations

Individuals who completed the survey were asked to indicate what were some of the most frequent challenges they had encountered when conducting evaluation and/or research with participants who belong to the population under study. According to their responses, lack of trust of the participants, lack of personnel with culturally sensitive training, and language barriers were the top three challenges experienced by this group of professionals. Translation and the need for interpreters were also reported as challenges experienced by these professionals.

Table 10. Challenges Experienced (N = 61)

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of trust of participants	21	25%
Lack of personnel with culturally sensitive training	17	20%
Language barrier	14	17%
Translation	13	16%
Other	10	12%
Need for interpreters	8	10%

Note: Other was not specified.

Qualitative responses highlighted difficulties associated with the translation of instruments that are appropriate for all dialects in Spanish; the lack of knowledge of human rights, participatory, intercultural, gender, territorial, and life cycle approaches; the low-quality standards of some investigations; and that some countries are mainly results-oriented. One respondent noted that there is a great need for more studies with Latino (a, e, x) and its subpopulations such as blacks, low-income, immigrants, and the like. And another respondent shared experiencing difficulties when participants do not consider her/him as a Latino (a, e, x) because of the color of the skin. Some of the respondents also indicated that there is a need for researching more on this population and that some of these challenges affect the life of Latinos

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(a, e, x) and their communities. The following quotes relate to some of the challenges experienced by this group of evaluators and researchers.

Desde mi experiencia como investigadora emergente, una de las dificultades para realizar estudios es el desconocimiento de enfoques de derechos humanos, participativos, interculturales, género, territoriales y de ciclo de vida. Uno de los retos que también he identificado es la calidad de las investigaciones. Los sistemas de investigación en países, como México, están orientados a los resultados (cantidad de artículos/libros/ capítulos de libros publicados). Esta situación influye en que no siempre se le da seguimiento al efecto de las investigaciones en la vida de las personas y de las comunidades.

Hacen falta más estudios con Latinx y sus subpoblaciones como los negros, de bajo perfil económico, inmigrantes. Cada grupo tiene sus particularidades y siempre nos unen como uno solo.

As an Afro-Latine, I find that it takes a minute for participants to settle in with the idea that I am also Latine. I also find that Blackness is a difficult topic to talk about because either most folks don't have a racial understanding of their Latine identity or harbor some anti-Black sentiment.

Another difficulty we encounter is trying to come up with a Spanish survey that is understandable to all dialects. We try to keep the Spanish as simple as possible, but we learned that some countries might have different words or phrases for some things.

Conclusion

This study provides an initial exploration of what evaluators and researchers currently consider to be adequate and authentic methodological approaches and designs to better understand and represent Latinos' (a, e, x) culture and identity in evaluation and research. From the results of this study, we know that mixed methods, together with culturally responsive, case

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studies, non-experimental designs are preferred among survey respondents to capture the experiences and perspectives of Latinos (a, e, x). This is congruent with scholars in the field, such as Frierson et al. (2010), who consider mixed method designs as more capable of addressing complexities of cultural diversity. We also know that hand in hand with these methodologies and designs, there is a diverse set of data collection methods that frame the voices of this population. Results from this survey also revealed there is a shared interest in this group of evaluators and researchers for the inclusion of these sub alternative narratives. The evaluators and researchers who took part in the study indicated placing special interest in implementing methodological approaches that are consistent with the culture of this community. It is noticeable that many of the evaluators and researchers who participated in this survey based the selection of their methodological designs in ways parallel to promoting socially just, empowerment and equity among these populations. Many of the participants of this study also claimed for increasing evaluators/researchers' cultural and contextual competence, linguistic competency, and the use of methodological approaches that are consisted with cultural values such as family, hard work, education, and other components these evaluators and researchers considered pivotal within the Latino (a, e, x) culture.

Even though practice and theory that is culturally responsive have advanced in the last years, there is still a great need to explore how program evaluation is theorized and implemented in Latino (a, e, x) contexts. As Cervantes & Peña (2008) argue "program evaluation is a rapidly growing discipline that draws on research design approaches and methods found in the social and behavioral sciences" (p. 109). For this reason, evaluators and researchers have increasingly begun to use methodological approaches such as CRT, Chicana epistemology, decolonial theory and LatCrit in their studies. Nonetheless, according to results from this survey, only a few participants reported using these methodological approaches. Instead, results from this survey reveal that for the most part data collection methods and

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methodological designs employed by this group of professionals are western forms of knowing. Thus, there is still a need for program evaluation practice and research to promote the inclusion of approaches, methods, and frameworks that draw upon Latinos' (a, e, x) culture, lived experiences, beliefs, values, customs, while also aiming at recognizing their epistemological diversity. Furthermore, there is a need for research that further explores what are alternative ways of knowing that might better include and represent populations such as the one under study.

Inattention to culture, personal habit, and situational context, can make evaluations arrive at flawed findings with potentially devastating consequences (AEA, 2011). The AEA's Statement on Cultural Competence (2011) on Evaluation further explains the data collection methods and tools evaluators use, reflect the cultures in which they were developed; for this reason, to develop and carry out an evaluation that is optimally matched to the context, evaluators should draw on a wide range of evaluation theories and methods, and employ methodologies that best reflects the varied values and viewpoints of stakeholders. In this sense, it is important to use methodologies, designs, and data collection methods that are appropriate for the culture programs are attending to. Therefore, evaluators and researchers must avoid the use of rigid and set parameters, linear, and ill-adapted methodological approaches that do not achieve to understand complex contexts where there are multiple realities and where cultural practices are deeply meaningful (Whitehead, 2002). As many of the respondents of this survey indicated, the methodological approaches should emerge from the context of the evaluation and/or research, the characteristics of the population, the research/evaluation questions being asked, and other cultural components that ground the foundation of the evaluation and/or research. Certainly, there is no design, data collection method, or methodology that will guarantee the achievement of these aims, but there is a need for reflection on what is the foundation for the methodological approaches we use. This is especially important when

working with historically marginalized populations such as Latinos (a, e, x), whose culture is at the same time so nuanced and rich.

Even though this study only achieves to capture the perspectives of a small group of evaluators and researchers who work with Latino (a, e, x) populations, it provides an initial space for reflection on the topic. Future research is necessary to continue to document the emerging methodologies and frameworks used to conduct evaluation and/or research with this population, such as CRT, LatCrit, Chicana epistemology, decolonial epistemology, and many more, that are being used, as well as their impact, obstacles, and potential in practical ways. In this sense, the incorporation of research theoretical frameworks and approaches to evaluation may help enable evaluators and researchers to better articulate the experiences of Latinos (a, e, x) by addressing issues often overlooked. Also, the use of emerging and alternative research methodologies can give evaluators a more focused lens on what are more authentic and culturally responsive forms of data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting when working with this population. Thus, it is worth further exploring and reflecting on what methods better capture Latinos' (a, e, x) lived experiences while respecting their own culture and context, instead of using theoretical frameworks of interpretation that often fail to honor the cultural norms and reveal structural injustices.

Now that I have reviewed past and current evaluation literature on the topic under study, explored the lived experiences of Latino (a, e, x), and collected information about methodological designs used to conduct evaluation and/or research when working with this population in particular, in the next section, which corresponds to the conclusion chapter, I further reflect on how all these pieces merge together and draw the general landscape of Latinos (a, e, x) in the evaluation and research fields.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

> *Me gustaría tener manos enormes,*
>
> *Violentas y salvajes,*
>
> *Para arrancar fronteras una a una*
>
> *Y dejar de frontera sólo el aire.*
>
> (*I would like to have huge hands,*
>
> *Violent and wild,*
>
> *To rip borders apart one by one*
>
> *And to let only the air as border*).
>
> Jorge Debravo (1966)

This study aimed to contribute to current reflections and discussions on Latinos' (a, e, x) lived experiences in the evaluation and research based on their own culture, identities, and diverse contexts. Chapter 1 provided an introduction to program evaluation within the Latino (a, e, x) context. Chapter 2 explored the inclusion and representation of Latinos' (a, e, x) in seminal CRE literature in the evaluation field and included a detailed description of evaluations conducted on Latinos' (a, e, x) populations and communities. Chapter 3 provided rich and abundant information about the lived experiences of scholars and practitioners in the evaluation field who identify as Latinos' (a, e, x). Chapter 3 also provided abundant information about cultural values, challenges, and other important cultural characteristics of this racial/ethnic population. Chapter 4 provided insights about the current methodological designs and approaches evaluators and researchers use when working with Latino (a, e, x) communities, which promotes reflection on culturally responsive ways to conduct evaluation and research with this population. This final chapter begins with a summary of findings and conclusions associated with the three main objectives of this research. Second, the chapter provides a discussion and reflection on the overall landscape of Latinos (a, e, x) in program evaluation theory and practice.

The chapter concludes with implications for the field, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Key Findings

This section provides a summary of the key findings for each of the proposed objectives of the study, which are organized by the three research questions that guided this inquiry.

Objective 1: To examine how and in what ways Latinos (a, e, x) are included in the evaluation literature.

Research Question 1: What are conceptualizations and definitions of Latinos' (a, e, x) culture, identities, voices, and perspectives in evaluation literature?

Paper 1 provides a summary of definitions of Latinos (a, e, x) included in the evaluation literature and conceptualizations of Latino (a, e, x) culture and identity. However, the literature that provides these types of information is very little in the evaluation field. Few studies among the corpus consulted include information that allows building an understanding of how to conceptualize the culture and identity of this complex population. Even fewer studies include a definition of the term(s) Latinos (a, e, x) and its semantic/pragmatic implications. Providing these types of information is important when working with Latinos (a, e, x) because this population is extremely diverse and heterogeneous. For example, evaluating third-generation Mexican Americans cannot be the same as evaluating a program that serves Central American immigrants. The context, culture, and identities of all Latino (a, e, x) subgroups should always be at the forefront. In this sense, the use of specific terminology to define members of this population should be a focus of reflection as well since it reflects the cultural diversity within the population.

This study reveals that there has been reflection and exploration on the use and implementation of methodological approaches to evaluation when working with this population. For this reason, different methodologies, theories, and methods have been employed when

working with Latino (a, e, x) populations. However, little, and sporadic information was found about methodological designs employed to conduct culturally centered evaluation, and the rationale behind those decisions. Even though a few studies reflected on challenges experienced when working with this population and existing gaps that need to be address, there is still so much to learn about how to conduct evaluation in a culturally responsive manner within Latino (a, e, x) contexts.

The cultural identity of members of this population is so nuanced and complex that it makes it necessary to further explore how to better understand them. Unfortunately, the corpus of literature reveals there is not much information about what are the voices and perspectives of Latinos (a, e, x). Only a few of these studies included the population these programs serve as something more than a mere data collection source at a given point in time. Nonetheless, there seems to be an increase in the number of publications that explore issues related to Latinos (a, e, x) in the program evaluation field. The emergence of conceptual works and empirical studies that provide recommendations, share reflections and promote the use of methodological designs that are authentic with the way of living of this population is inspiring. This represents a significant improvement given the current landscape where there is an urgent need to understand how to better work with a population that is growing so rapidly, and that is facing difficulties in several areas.

Research Question 2: What is the role Latino (a, e, x) scholars have played in seminal culturally responsive evaluation literature?

Among the corpus of evaluation literature, no evidence was found about the role of Latinos (a, e, x) in the development of CRE theory and practice. However, there are a few studies in which Latino (a, e, x) evaluators shared their experiences in conducting evaluation that is culturally competent or responsive. These studies are nascent initiatives that should be encouraged within the next years. The perspective of these Latino (a, e, x) evaluators should

also be taken into account when theorizing how evaluation is implemented in these types of culturally and linguistically diverse contexts.

Research Question 3: What are the contributions of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators to current culturally responsive evaluation discussions and reflections?

Even though there is little information about the contribution of Latinos (a, e, x) to the CRE literature, this literature review revealed that more and more scholars and practitioners who identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x) are disseminating the results from their experiences and their perspectives about how to evaluate Latino (a, e, x) populations. These efforts are promising, but much more needs to be done. The voices and perspectives of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators should take a central role moving forward.

Objective 2: To explore how Latino (a, e, x) evaluators' identities and culture influence and shape their practice in program evaluation.

Research Question 1: How do Latino (a, e, x) evaluators define themselves in terminology, personal and professional, cultural factors, and values?

The interviews conducted for paper 2 revealed that Latino (a, e, x) evaluators use different terms to define themselves. Some of these terms were Latino, Latina, Latine, Latinx, and Hispanic. This is also common among the general population. For this reason, it is important to provide a space for communities and members of this population to indicate how they prefer to be called and identified. These terms have a different meaning and for some individuals, the use of this terminology is also linked to cultural norms and cultural identity as well. Thus, it is of vital importance to not make assumptions about the terminology employed and its meaning. In addition to these reflections about terminology, interviews proved to be a rich source of information regarding what are cultural values for this group of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators. In this sense, values such as education, family, hard work, respect, among others, were pivotal within conversations established with these professionals. This study also includes

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information about cultural components important within the Latino (a, e, x) culture (e.g., language, Latin American heritage, etc.) and challenges professionals have encountered when working with this racial/ethnic population. This information should help to build a better understanding about the lived experiences of evaluators from this historically marginalized population.

Research Question 2: In what ways do Latino (a, e, x) evaluators reflect the influence of their own culture and identity in their professional role and practice?

Paper 2 also revealed the extent to which the culture and identity of this group of professionals' influence the work they do. Latino (a, e, x) evaluators shared personal insights regarding the motivation for practicing culturally responsive and socially just practices when conducting evaluation. Some evaluators noted that the reason for conducting evaluation is associated with their families, and their communities. There is a shared desire for providing resources and helping those in need. This motivation emerges from the lived experiences of members of this population that has been historically marginalized and underrepresented in western academia and many other areas of society. From this study, we also learned that even though the majority of the interviewees indicated Latino (a, e, x) culture is deeply rooted in them, a few of these evaluators also shared a sense of loss. This was mainly due to acculturation processes experienced by the parents or grandparents of these evaluators. As a result, some of these Latino (a, e, x) evaluators have engaged in a self-exploration process intending to take back some of the richness of their cultural identity.

Objective 3: To explore how evaluation and research are conducted when working with Latino (a, e, x) communities.

Research Question 1: Within the evaluation and educational research praxis, what approaches, designs, methodologies, methods, and instruments are being used to work in programs that serve Latino (a, e, x) communities?

Paper 3 provided information about a sample of 61 evaluators and researchers who work with Latino (a, e, x) populations. Results from this survey revealed that a vast repertoire of methodological designs and data collection methods are employed to conduct evaluation and/or research within Latino (a, e, x) contexts. Many of these designs were mixed methods, qualitative studies, and culturally responsive approaches. Furthermore, interviews together with surveys, and focus groups were among the data collection methods most frequently used. In addition, these professionals provided qualitative insights about the reasons why they prefer to employ certain methodological designs when working with members of this population.

Research Question 2: What cultural and contextual considerations are being made when conducting evaluation and research in programs that serve Latino (a, e, x) communities?

This paper also provided information about researchers' and evaluators' perceptions about the role of cultural components (e.g., family) within Latino (a, e, x) contexts, and what challenges they most frequently encountered when working with this population. Understanding how these cultural values and components play a role in conducting evaluation and research with Latinos (a, e, x) should help improve culturally responsive inquiry. Additionally, challenges experienced by these professionals should serve as a way of anticipating potential barriers and facilitators.

The general landscape of Latinos (a, e, x) in the evaluation field

This study began with reflections on culture and the role of culture in the field of evaluation. As stated, culture is such a polysemic, mutable, and multilevel construct that is intrinsically linked to individuals' identities and their sense of belonging within a specific social group. This final chapter includes reflections on how the extreme complex nature of culture and identity require the development of cultural awareness and sensitivity. For this reason, there has been a proliferation of empirical, conceptual, and theoretical research and literature, parallel to frameworks, approaches, and models that aim at centering culture in the field of program

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evaluation. In this context, cultural responsiveness, cultural competence and CRE approaches also became predominant in the field. Some of the most important lessons from this inquiry process were that such attempts at cultural responsiveness lack the overall inputs of Latino (a, e, x) communities and evaluators.

The literature reviewed in paper 1 proves how little we know about the population under study. We are in dire need to better serve members of this population when we are conducting evaluation and research, but we lack a general understanding about the central role their cultural identity should play in the design and implementation of evaluation efforts. In addition, we do not only lack knowledge about the culture and identity of the overall Latino (a, e, x) population, but we also know almost nothing about the lived experiences of evaluators who belong to this community.

The study further highlights that we have little to no knowledge about the contributions of Latinos (a, e, x) to the field and to what extent they have been involved in important reflections and discussions that helped theorized and guide the evaluation work that we do. Given the little we know about Latinos (a, e, x), paper 2 represented an important effort for further understanding the culture, and diverse historical and socioeconomical contexts of members of this population. Likewise, Paper 3 provides an initial understanding on the selection and rationale to employ particular methodological designs and data collection methods when working with this population. Therefore, thanks to the literature consulted, the interviews conducted, and the inputs from researchers and evaluators who work with this population, this study represents an important effort to know a little more about the lived experiences of members of my community, the challenges encountered when conducting evaluation and research, and the several forms of oppression and marginalization members of this community have been exposed to in different occasions and in different contexts.

Most importantly, insights from this inquiry should bring awareness to better understand how highly resilient, committed, and hardworking Latinos (a, e, x) are. From the results of the three papers, we know the diverse and nuanced culture and identity of members of this population. The terminology employed to define themselves is only one example, although it is highly important, of how multiple and divergent realities coexist within this population. This is an effect of the vast convergence of factors that influence who we are and how we perceive ourselves as members of our community. This inquiry also served as a space to bring awareness about the contributions of Latinos (a, e, x), that aimed to validate our experiences and perspectives, and that demonstrated that members of our population are producers of knowledge as well. For these reasons, we deserve a place at the table because we are highly talented, competent, and committed individuals that have been underrepresented in western academia for the longest time. The lack of Latino (a, e, x) participation in high level decision-making processes must be addressed soon. The voices and perspectives of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators should take a central role moving forward. From this point of view, future research should focus on highlighting the lived experiences and contributions of practitioners and scholars who identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x). Further research is also needed regarding the struggles, barriers and facilitators evaluators encountered when conducting evaluation with Latinos (a, e, x). Exploration of methodological designs, models, and data collection methods that ensure culturally sensitive approaches to evaluation with this population should be encouraged as well.

This study also highlights that, as researchers and evaluators, we must be extremely careful about how we seek to better understand and represent populations such as Latinos (a, e, x) and others who have been historically marginalized. We should respect individuals' full diversity, and their multiple cultural identities. Most importantly, we must acknowledge there are multiple forms of being and knowing. We must practice humility and remember that we do not

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hold the power to define others. As evaluators and researchers, we are part of a privileged group that can create meaning and knowledge based on the discourses that emerge from our work. Nonetheless, when we fall into misinterpretation, unauthenticity and/or misrepresentation, this has real implications for people's life.

The methodological designs we employ to conduct evaluation and research are pivotal to achieve the implementation of just and culture centered practices. As culturally responsive practitioners and scholars, culture is at the core of evaluation and/or research, which means that liminal spaces, ambiguity, contradiction and conflict is also at the core of evaluation and/or research. Thus, with such great complexities and diversities at the core, practitioners must be aware there is no recipe to follow when doing research and/or evaluation, and that applying similar methods for dissimilar conditions will only result in lack of subjectivity, contextualization, ethics and overall trustworthiness and validity. Garcia Marquez (1982) states "The interpretation of our reality based on foreign schemes only contributes to making us every time more unknown, less free, and lonelier" (p. 135). Moreover, the American Evaluation Association (2011), admonishes effective and ethical use and practice of evaluation requires respecting different worldviews. To do that, experts in the field should understand they must be prepared to engage with diverse segments of communities to include cultural and contextual dimensions to the research and evaluation. SenGupta et al. (2004), for example, argue evaluators need to consider and understand not only demographic issues of gender, race, and language if they seek to be culturally responsive, but also, they must account for other dimensions of culture that can often be ignored, like power differences, class, sociopolitical status, immigration status, etc. So, recognition, accurate interpretation, and respect for diversity and culture must be at the core of our practice. Most importantly, this means that further research is needed to explore what methodological designs and approaches best represent the cultural diversity of this population. In this sense, further research should focus on understanding how to better represent minority

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populations such as Latinos (a, e, x) in a way that is authentic and coherent with the different

needs and ways of knowing and being of individuals within this population.

Implications of this Study

In this section, I describe the main implications of this study for practitioners and

scholars in the field of evaluation. First, I will start by highlighting that the literature on Latinos (a,

e, x) in our field is so scarce, sporadic and peripheral that this study represents an important

contribution to the little literature there is on evaluating Latino (a, e, x) populations. This study

not only provides a revision of the seminal and empirical literature, but also incorporates the

perspectives of evaluators who are Latinos (a, e, x) on what they consider are important

components of the diverse, complex, and nuanced culture and the identity of Latinos (a, e, x). In

addition, it provides insights from evaluators and researchers who work with this racial/ethnic

population about the methodological designs and approaches they consider are most authentic

and effective to work with the population under study. This means scholars should further

research the cultural identity of Latinos (a, e, x), and practitioners who work with this population

should be encouraged to publish empirical works. Furthermore, evaluators who identify

themselves as Latinos (a, e, x), should share their lived experiences within the field. This way,

there will be more empirical knowledge and theoretical foundations about this population that

will help build a better understanding about how to better address their diverse needs and ways

of being.

Second, the literature review conducted, the perceptions of the Latinos (a, e, x)

evaluators interviewed, and the information provided by professionals who work with Latinos (a,

e, x), revealed that Latinos (a, e, x) do not belong to one unique category concerning

geographical location, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language spoken, religious

beliefs, socioeconomic status or country of origin. Assuming all Latinos (a, e, x) speak Spanish,

are immigrants, and look similarly are some of the biggest assumptions we can make as

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professionals who aim to be culturally responsive. This is also associated with the comprehensive summary of the terminology used to define this complex population, and how this is linked to cultural identity. Linguistic and social reflections should be included in evaluation development and implementation to provide a comprehensive, historical, and semantic route of morphological forms to identify members of this population in different contexts. In this sense, this study sheds light into how problematic it is to make assumptions when conducting evaluation and research, especially with members of historically marginalized and underrepresented populations. What this means for professionals in the field is that evaluators and researchers should recognize that people own their own identity, and that trying to categorize individuals always comes with risk. In the case of Latinos (a, e, x), members of this population should be able to speak for themselves not only about what they want to do, but most importantly about who they are.

This study demonstrated that the Latino (a, e, x) is not monolithic nor a homogenous culture. For professionals in the field, this implies that even though it is very convenient to organize people in traditional categorizations, to conduct evaluation in a culturally sensitive manner requires breaking these labels apart and engaging in deep and meaningful interactions with members of this population. For this reason, professionals in the field should include members in their evaluation team that belong to this population.

Third, as a Latin American female who has been questioned about my identity as a Latina by someone in a position of power in a university in the USA, it was important to me to include the voices of Latinos (a, e, x) from Latin America in the general landscape of the Latino (a, e, x) population. This was possible via the inclusion of literature from Latin American countries for paper 1, the participation of evaluators from Latin America for interviews conducted for paper 2, and the inclusion of professionals who conduct research and evaluation with populations of Latinos (a, e, x) that reside in Latin American countries. Therefore, I was able to

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incorporate the perspectives of Latinos (a, e, x) who reside in Latin American countries, in the USA, and individuals who have immigrated to North America due to different challenging situations encountered in their home countries. Therefore, this study promotes a sense of community and unity among Latinos (a, e, x) by demonstrating that we share a cultural background that transcends time and scape, and all our perspectives hold value. Moreover, it implies that scholars and practitioners from North, Central and South America should join efforts in exploring ways to better serve Latinos (a, e, x). Working together will also provide better foundations about how to better understand and represent members of this population that is so culturally and linguistically diverse. Incorporating the experiences of the evaluators who work with this population or evaluators who identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x) within the entire American continent will provide a richer, deeper, and more nuanced understanding of this population. Also, learning from one another, practitioners and scholars from North, Central and South America can promote the implementation of methodological designs and approaches that are more accurate and authentic with the highly diverse ways of being of Latinos (a, e, x).

Even though seminal and empirical literature does not include information about the contributions of Latinos (a, e, x) into the evaluation field, this study should be considered as an initial exploration of the work of Latinos (a, e, x) scholars and practitioners are doing. From this inquiry, we know that Latinos (a, e, x) are committed to their professional practice and are contributing to the field in different and emerging ways. This, nonetheless, should be further expanded. The efforts of Latinos (a, e, x) in the evaluation and research fields should be acknowledged and their voices should be included in central discussions and reflections. There should be Latinos (a, e, x) in positions of leadership and decision making as well because their perspectives provide rich and abundant insight on the lived experiences of people of color. This implies professionals in the field should consciously seek the participation of members of this community and encourage the incorporation of their inputs and perspectives.

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Limitations

This study presented several limitations. First, literature about the development, implementation, and/or analysis of CRE practices and theory within the Latinos (a, e, x) context is very limited. In this sense, literature centered on either the theory and/or practice of CRE or in the implementation of evaluations conducted within Latinos (a, e, x) populations and/or communities in the American context is scarce and sporadic. Therefore, this study includes the few conceptual works and empirical articles that were available to date.

Another limitation is that given that the Latino (a, e, x) population is so large, diverse and nuanced, it is hard to generalize results to the overall population or to overall evaluation efforts that have taken place throughout the last decades. There are also limitations associated with the participants and the sample size. Even though 17 interviews represent a large and varied sample to draw a general landscape regarding the lived experiences of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators, this sample is not large enough for generalizing findings of this study to the overall population. Similarly, the sample 61 evaluators and researchers who participated in the survey are not representative of the population and, therefore, statistical results cannot be generalized to the larger population. There were also limitations associated with the distribution of the survey. Even though the survey was open to respondents for more than a month, and it was distributed via several social media channels, the number of responses was not large enough. It is noticeable, nonetheless, that the overall population of evaluators and/or researchers who work with Latinos (a, e, x) populations is unknown. Therefore, even though the results obtained from the current sample of 61 respondents cannot be generalized to the entire population, this study provides an initial insight into the topic under study.

This study is entirely based on the self-reported lived experiences of the evaluators and researchers, which can be considered effective data sources (Chan, 2009) The final limitation was the COVID-19 global pandemic and time constraints, which represent a limitation for the

data collection process of this research since evaluators and professionals were living in an unprecedented time at the time of this study which inadvertently limited personal interaction and increased individuals' stress and quality of time, which may have affected the number of responses obtained.

Recommendations for Future Research

This section includes recommendations for continuing the work associated with this study. First, there is a need to further explore how Latinos' (a, e, x) voices are included and represented in the field of program evaluation. Further research should expand on how members of this population are included and represented within the evaluation literature; and how they are defined and conceptualized when they are the evaluands. There is also a need to understand to what extent they have been involved in evaluation efforts and what are recommendations for fostering trust and rapport among Latino (a, e, x) participants.

Second, a future area for research could be based on exploring the evaluation knowledge about Latino (a, e, x) evaluators in the evaluation field through the analysis of gray literature, conference proposals, etc. This study proved that Latino (a, e, x) evaluators' contributions have not been recognized in the past nor in the present. Nonetheless, this does not mean that members from this population are not knowledge creators or that they have not contributed to the theorization and practice to the field. Therefore, more research should be conducted on this topic to bring awareness to their contributions and epistemologies.

Third, there is a need also to know more about Latinos (a, e, x) in general. Current literature that describes and analyzes the culture and identity of Latinos (a, e, x) is scarce. Given that this is such a diverse population, and that projections indicate a significant demographic growth within the next several decades, it is urgent to know more about Latinos (a, e, x) in general. Cultural identity, values and other components that were highlighted in this

study should be further explored, and further research should explore how to incorporate these components within the development and implementation of evaluation efforts.

Fourth, further research is needed to explore what methodological designs and approaches better represent the cultural diversity of this population. In this sense, further research should focus on understanding how to represent minority populations such as Latinos (a, e, x) in a way that is authentic and coherent with the different needs and ways of knowing and being of individuals within this population. In this sense, further research should focus on understanding how to improve methodological tools employed to represent minority populations such as Latinos (a, e, x). Results from this study revealed that, for the most part, data collection methods and methodological designs employed by this group of professionals are western forms of knowing. Thus, there is still a need for program evaluation practice and research to promote the inclusion of approaches, methods, and frameworks that draw upon Latinos' (a, e, x) culture, lived experiences, beliefs, values, customs, while also aiming at recognizing their epistemological diversity.

Furthermore, there is a need for research that further explores what are alternative ways of knowing that might better include and represent populations such as the one under study, and that seek to understand why traditional Eurocentric designs are more preponderant when conducting evaluation and research within Latino populations. Associated with this, further research should explore the teaching of alternative ways of knowing to western academia. This goes in hand with practical experiences that prepare evaluators and researchers in these types of methodological designs and approaches outside of the classroom settings.

Fifth, there is a dire need to promote collaboration and integration between Latinos (a, e, x) who reside in North, Central and South America, as well as in other parts of the world. Dissemination of learned experiences, methodological designs, and data collection methods that are used with Latino (a, e, x) populations could promote a rich dialogue among Latino (a, e,

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x) communities. Division and exclusion have prevailed for too long in the American continent. Latinos (a, e, x) might be the key to forget about borders and things that set us apart, focusing on what unite us instead. Establishing networks and dialogical spaces within the American context can help build a better understanding of who Latinos (a, e, x) are, what is their culture, what are their needs, and what are their ways of knowing. For this reason, the voices and perspectives of Latino (a, e, x) evaluators should take a central role moving forward. From this point of view, future research should focus on highlighting the lived experiences and contributions of practitioners and scholars who identify themselves as Latinos (a, e, x). Further research is also needed regarding the struggles, barriers and facilitators evaluators encountered when conducting evaluation with Latinos (a, e, x). In the case of Latinos (a, e, x), I would argue that we share a common cultural background that transcends historical struggles, physical borders, races, geographical locations, religious beliefs, languages spoken, physical features, traditional gender roles and overall lived experiences. We are people who highly value family, respect, education, and hard work. This was demonstrated especially well in paper 2 and 3 where these cultural values were pointed as predominant within our culture.

I opened this concluding chapter of this dissertation with a fragment of the poem *Nocturno sin patria* (1966) of the Costa Rican writer Jorge Debravo. In this poem, the writer expresses an anguished desire to rip all borders apart one by one, to leave only air as border. My reason for including this fragment is that with this dissertation I want to encourage Latino (a, e, x) evaluators, researchers, and the general population of Latinos (a, e, x) to come together as one. Many of the evaluators who participated in this study expressed experiencing exclusion and division among our own communities. This is a sad reality most of us have faced. Diversity within our population should not be perceived as negative; it should not create divisions nor exclusions. Instead, we should join hands and efforts to learn more from one another and show the world the richness of our nuanced culture. So, as Jorge Debravo, I wish I could have huge

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hands, wild and violent, to rip apart all assumptions, biases, notions, and barriers that bring us apart.

Sixth, there needs to be further reflections and research about language justice, multicultural validity and cultural responsiveness in linguistically diverse populations such as Latinos (a, e, x). Some of the most common barriers participants shared in this study were associated with language barriers, interpretation, translation, and overall multicultural communication. Therefore, more studies should explore how to navigate culturally diverse context and how to address such challenges. This is important because evaluation and research should make sure that there is a social justice component, especially with people who are black and brown. So, additional questions should be asked about equity and inclusion when working with this populations.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is important to remember that even though in the last decades thare have been significant efforts in the evaluation and research fields to acknowledge differences associated with cultural identity and what are best evaluation/research practices that have promoted theoretical and practical advancements towards culturally responsive practices, there is still a lot to do in relation with underrepresented populations such as Latinos (a, e, x). This study reveals that members of this specific population have been poorly involved and represented in these narratives. Given that projections indicate Latinos (a, e, x) will become one of the largest race/ethnicities in the USA by 2060 (Colby & Ortman, 2015; Johnson, 2020; Passel & Cohn, 2008; Vespa et al., 2018), that the United States is one of the countries with the largest migratory movement from Latin American countries (Pellegrino, 2000; Donato & Sisk, 2015), and that Latinos(a, e, x) cultural identity is so extremely nuanced and complex, there is a great need for evaluators and researchers to be knowledgeable about the current literature on how to effectively work with this population, and an urgent need for the development and

implementation of evaluation efforts that are consistent with the diverse needs and ways of

being of Latinos (a, e, x). For these reasons, this study aimed to broaden and deepen

understanding of the culture and identity of Latinos (a, e, x); and the different forms their culture

have been addressed in program evaluation and educational research efforts. Hopefully, this

study will be only one of the first efforts to further explore the impact of culture on evaluation and

research in an effort to include the inputs of Latino (a, e, x) communities and evaluators to the

overall cultural responsiveness theorization and practice.

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