Cross-Cultural Competencies in Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI): A Primer for Business Instructors

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Graduates from Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Business (STEMB) schools are in high demand, driven by technological advancements and expanding industries. While these graduates excel in quantitative and empirical skills, there's a recognized need for improved interpersonal abilities. This paper responds by introducing culturally sensitive elements to enhance pedagogical approaches in academic settings, focusing on business schools in Hispanic Serving Institutions. Unlike some diversity training programs, which may employ shame-oriented methods, our research prioritizes understanding cultural nuances. Specifically tailored to enrich the educational experience of Hispanic students, this approach aims to bridge skill gaps and foster inclusivity, contributing to the overall proficiency and adaptability of STEMB graduates in a dynamic labor market.

Keywords: language, culture, Hispanic serving institution (HIS), andragogy, pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Business (STEMB) school graduates are highly sought after in today's job market. With technological advancements and growing industries heavily relying on these fields, STEMB graduates possess valuable skills for innovation, problem-solving, and data-driven decision-making. They play a crucial role in driving economic growth, meeting global demands, and adapting to the dynamic nature of the modern economy. However, the one item missing from my engineering and business background was an awareness of the impact of culture on business. Many businesses in the Fortune 500 are large multinational corporations with a global presence. Hence, learning about culture is important. Unfortunately, multiculturalism has given way to a critical race theory (CRT) obsession with the 'oppressor versus oppressed' ideology that is divisive and leads to a narrow focus on racial identity and group differences, while overshadowing individual experiences and merit.

The paper was prompted by a workshop that claimed Hispanic students learn differently from Caucasian students. The premise of the workshop was unlike many biased Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) classes that try to shame the majority for their ancestral complicity in historical atrocities. Instead, it focused on culture and the nuances of culture for Hispanic students. As a lighter-skinned, Irish-Hispanic-African mestizo who grew up in a Black ghetto, learning about culture answered many of my questions. Now, as a professor in a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), the concept of using culture to improve performance has become intriguing.

DISCUSSION

This study explores how cultural dimensions influence teaching and educational outcomes in a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Utilizing mixed methods, it integrates qualitative insights, critical analyses, narratives, and historical elements, fostering a nuanced understanding for cross-cultural education in an HSI. Therefore, this research question (RQ) is our primary focus: How do cultural dimensions impact teaching methodologies and educational outcomes, particularly in the context of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and what strategies can be employed to enhance cross-cultural understanding in educational settings?

While researching students' cultures within Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), we initially analyze Baker's (2018) five domains in part influenced by Hall's theory of High Context vs. Low Context (HC/LC) cultures (Hall, 1959, 1966, 1976, 1983; Hall & Hall, 1990); and then focus upon and attempt to analyze characteristics using four of Hofstede's (1980; 2008; 2023) classifications. The discussion is divided into two parts: The Five Domain Cultural Model followed by Hispanic-American Culture as defined by the Ten Cultural Domains. We conclude with recommendations for academics at Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI).

The Five-Domain Cultural Model

In a study conducted by Baker (2018), an examination of cultural aspects yielded the identification of five overarching domains: the physical, economic, social, political, and value-belief-symbols domains. The subsequent sections will expound upon each domain individually. Figure 1 presents a representative model utilizing dotted lines, metaphorically denoting a permeable membrane to enhance comprehension of the intricate interrelations among these domains. This visual depiction underscores the notion that alterations or influences within one domain inevitably impose pressure on the other domains (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
FIVE DOMAIN CULTURAL MODEL
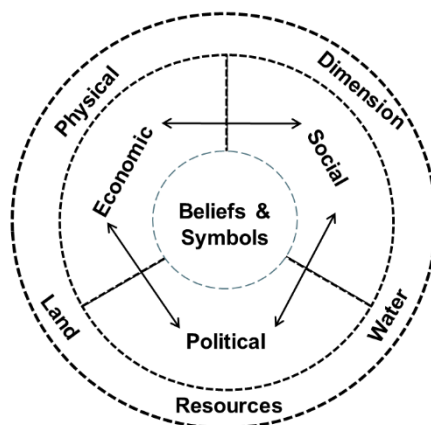
Source: Baker, B. (2018). On-Line Education – Our Future or a Fad? A Short Case Study. Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice, 18(4).

The Physical Domain

The physical domain encompasses various fundamental elements, such as water, land, food, shelter, climate, fuel, and power. In this context, two intriguing questions arise:

  – Why do the Ngäbe and Buglé people residing in Panama abstain from consuming whale meat?
  – Why might an Inuit tribe that is in northern Canada refrain from consuming elephant meat?

These questions may appear rhetorical, but they hold significant value as they direct attention to the influence of the physical domain. The answers to these questions are not solely based on cultural practices;

instead, they are closely tied to the physical attributes of their respective habitats. For instance, the absence of whales in the Congo and elephants in Canada's Northwest Territories elucidates the practical reasons behind these dietary choices. Throughout history, various communities have placed immense value on vital physical resources like water and land due to their scarcity and essential role in sustaining life. The significance of shelter also varies depending on the environmental conditions, as evident in the quest for shelter from the scorching sun in desert regions, protection from the harsh snow in tundra landscapes, or refuge from the rain in densely forested areas.

Land and physical resource control have frequently engendered conflicts, driven not only by pragmatic considerations but also by culturally unique symbolic meanings. For certain groups worldwide, the concept of land ownership, as illustrated by Native American communal land practices, remains foreign. Native American cultures traditionally viewed land as a communal resource held collectively by the tribe or community rather than as individual property. In some political systems like socialist, communist, or monarchial societies, the state may own land rather than individuals, although access and usage are theoretically open to all. Consequently, educators must comprehensively understand local land ownership, utilization practices, and legal status, as these factors can significantly impact teaching dynamics.

It is important to note that while conflicts may have multifaceted drivers, land ownership and control can emerge as primary contributors to societal tensions. As such, educators and researchers should approach the analysis of such conflicts with a holistic perspective that recognizes the underlying significance of the physical domain and its intersection with cultural and socio-political dimensions. Examples from a handful of historical land conflicts included:

− The claim that the United States stole land from Mexico is rooted in historical events surrounding the Mexican-American War and the subsequent Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. While the war resulted in U. S. military victories and Mexico's defeat, the treaty established new borders and ceded a significant amount of territory to the United States. Some perspectives contend that Mexico was coerced into signing the treaty under duress; but didn't the Spaniards steal the land from Incas, Aztecs,and Mayans? Yes. And that was the norm for millennia of human history.

− Panama separated from Colombia in 1903 to pursue the construction of the Panama Canal, which connected the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Disagreements over the canal project and growing Panamanian nationalism led to the desire for self-determination. With U.S. gunboat diplomacy, Panama gained independence from Colombia, and the United States secured control over the Panama Canal Zone through the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty. The canal's construction was completed in 1914, becoming a crucial maritime passage for global trade and geopolitics.

− Belize and Guatemala continued to have disagreements over the delineation of their southern boundary between the two countries after independence from Britain in 1981. Guatemala claimed that the border drawn by the British during colonial times is invalid and had a rightful claim to parts of Belize's territory. Belize asserts that its borders are well-established and internationally recognized.

− Columbia became entangled in a narco-trafficking conflict or a 'drug war' in part driven by the utilization of land by narcotics growers and traffickers. The government's anti-drug defoliation efforts inadvertently led to the destruction of crops unrelated to narcotics, thus resulting in tensions between government personnel involved in drug eradication and neighboring farmers whose livelihoods depended on legitimate crop cultivation.

These conflicts over land and resources underscore the critical importance of comprehending the intricate interplay between geographical factors, socio-economic interests, and cultural beliefs. Analyzing such conflicts through an academic lens allows for a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted dynamics driving these protracted struggles, offering valuable insights for conflict resolution and policy formulation.

Latino history and culture are rife with conflicts due to Spanish and Portuguese colonization in the Americas. Conquistadors clashed with Incas, Aztecs, Mayans, and other native tribes over land for hundreds of years. The Spanish and Portuguese sought new territories to expand their empires, leading to conflicts with indigenous communities who considered land communal and used it for subsistence. Disparities in cultural perspectives on land ownership fueled these disputes. Spanish Conquistadors brought violent confrontations, conquests, and the imposition of new political structures, marginalizing native populations. The pursuit of wealth and resources, like land, gold, and silver, intensified conflicts, leading to forced labor, slavery, and exploitation. These disputes impacted the social, cultural, and economic dimensions that left a negative legacy on indigenous populations.

The Social Domain

The interplay between a culture's relationship with the environment and its economic structure has profound implications for social structures. People within societies are often categorized based on key factors, notably **r**eligious membership, **a**ge, **n**ationality, **g**ender, **e**thnicity or **r**ace, and **t**ribal affiliation, abbreviated as RANGERT.

- <u>Religious membership</u> entails individuals united by shared religious beliefs, often characterized by distinct attire, special traditions, rituals, and observance of specific occasions. Unique languages or connections to sacred places may further distinguish religious groups. Although most people in Latin America are Catholic, during the past few decades Protestantism, Evangelical Christianity, and even Islam have gained significant followings; and the share of Latinos who are religiously unaffiliated now stands at 30% (Krogstad, et.al., 2023).
- <u>Age-related roles</u> and norms vary across cultures, with some societies allowing children to work from a young age or enter early marriages. In certain societies, engaging in military or insurgent activities may be perceived as a rite of passage into manhood. In general, Latin America has a younger population as compared to North America. Many countries in Latin America experienced higher birth rates, contributing to a larger proportion of young people in their populations; and nearly six-in-ten Hispanic-Americans are Millennials or younger (Patten, 2016).
- <u>Nationalism</u> remains significant, even in the context of global economics, with nationality conveying various meanings in different regions. National identity can be closely associated with political ideologies or historical alliances; and nationalism can instill a sense of patriotism and civic pride, encouraging citizens to contribute positively to their society and work towards its betterment. Latin American countries experienced a resurgence of resource nationalism and heightened government intervention, adversely affecting American investors. This 'nationalism' is coupled with subtler forms of intervention, including regulatory overreach and higher taxation (Jones, 2022). Chávez's Bolivarian Republic combined nationalism, anti-American rhetoric, and over-spending which led to economic collapse and repression (Baker, 2021).
- <u>Gender roles</u> are influenced by both biological and cultural factors. While women have traditionally played nurturing roles within families, historical instances and contemporary examples, such as female combatants in armed conflicts, have challenged traditional gender norms. Machismo is a cultural belief system in Latin America glorifying traditional masculinity, perpetuating gender inequalities and rigid roles. It impacts gender roles by reinforcing traditional expectations, contributing at times to gender-based violence, limiting women's opportunities, enforcing restrictive norms, and is perceived to hinder gender equality efforts (Zinn, 1982).
- <u>Ethnicity & Race</u> are distinct, yet interconnected concepts used to classify human populations, occasionally leading to misconceptions. They represent different facets of human identity and social classification. Hispanic Americans predominantly identify as White (Noe-Bustamante, 2021); however, Latinos in the U.S. possess an average of 65.1% Latin-European DNA, 18.0%

Native American DNA, and 6.2% African DNA (Bryce, 2015). Race classification relies on physical attributes like skin color, hair texture, and facial features, whereas ethnicity encompasses cultural identity, heritage, language, religion, customs, and traditions. This often correlates with shared historical backgrounds and a sense of affiliation within social groups. In Latin America, race and ethnicity give rise to significant social issues. Racial discrimination and prejudice affect individuals of African or indigenous ancestry, leading to social disadvantages and limited opportunities. Indigenous communities struggle for land rights, cultural preservation, and political representation due to historical marginalization, rooted in the former importation of 10 to 12 million African slaves into Latin America (Sowell, 1994; Gates, 2017; Hayes, 2020; Baker, 2023d). In Latin America, people of African descent still face discrimination, and experience poverty, with disproportionate access to education and healthcare – colorism prevails favoring lighter-skinned people. Preserving ethnic diversity remains challenging, with numerous indigenous groups and their distinct languages, cultures, and traditions (Koop, 2023).

- <u>Tribal Kinship</u>: There are 826 different indigenous peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, with an estimated population of 58 million people (FILAC, 2023). Tribes and kinship hold particular importance in the more rural areas, as tribes often possess a corporate identity with a common ancestor. Key individuals within tribes may assume essential roles according to their lineage, while formal leaders represent the collective voice of the group. Spanish Conquistadors disrupted indigenous kinship structures and tribal affiliations causing the breakdown of traditional social bonds. In some cases, indigenous communities were dispersed and scattered, leading to the loss of their ancestral territories, and weakening their collective identity. Also, the introduction of European diseases to which the native populations had no immunity resulted in devastating epidemics, decimating indigenous populations, and further destabilizing their societies. The Conquistadors' conquest and colonization legacy is still felt throughout Latin America today (Burkholder, et.al., 2019).

Understanding the nuances of these categories and their intricate relationships to political, economic, and social structures is essential for comprehending the complexities of societies and their interactions within the broader regional context. So, whether you are visiting Latin America, or have a student in class who has recently immigrated, understanding the social dimension improves our connections with students.

The Economic Domain

The economic structures of indigenous cultures are significantly influenced by their relationship with the environment, which dictates their means of livelihood. While some hunter-gatherer societies persist, they are scarce in the modern era, even within the Amazon basin. A few isolated groups, such as the Yanomamo of remote South America, have retained some hunter-gatherer traits while incorporating limited gardening practices (Chagnon, 1992). Consequently, three principal economic modes predominate across every nation-state: pastoralism, agriculture, and industry.

- Pastoralism revolves around animal husbandry and often involves nomadic lifestyles. Due to their nomadic nature, pastoral groups tend to disregard state boundaries, making regulation of their movements and economic activities, including taxation, particularly challenging. This renders an informal economy well-suited to pastoralists, who might exploit their mobility for activities that circumvent state regulations, such as smuggling legal and illegal goods, including drugs, firearms, and human trafficking, across borders.
- On the other hand, agricultural societies primarily focus on cultivating crops, which they exchange for their essential needs like food, clothing, shelter, and other material goods.
- Industrial societies are characterized by specialized skills and tasks, often resembling factory settings found in automobile manufacturing and similar industries.
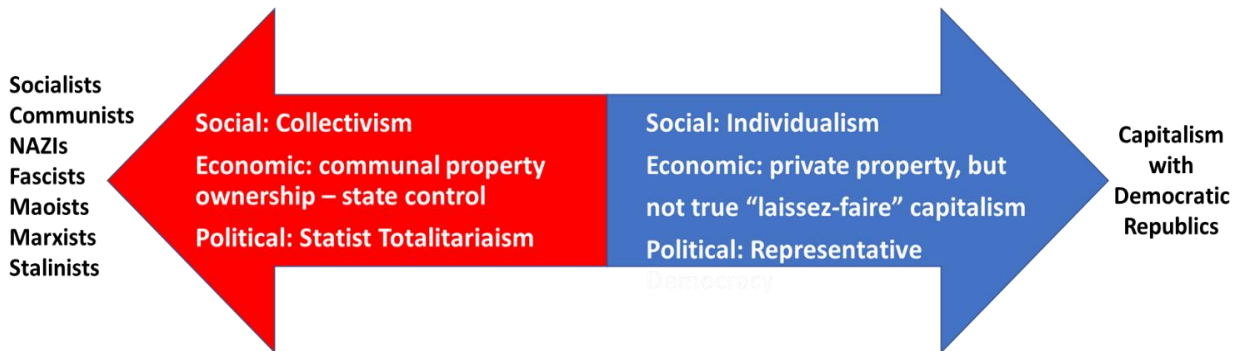
Geographically larger countries, including the United States and Brazil, demonstrate a blend of all three economic modes. Moreover, certain nation-states rely heavily on the sale of natural resources, such as

Venezuelan oil and gas, for their economic sustenance. Understanding these diverse economic modes allows for a more comprehensive analysis of societal structures and economic dynamics, providing insight into the foundations of various communities' livelihoods and the varying degrees of economic development across nations.

From the nation-state level, economics boils down to a singular albeit complex question: "Who controls the money and other resources?" In command economies, much is controlled by the government, whereas capitalism is focused on private property and individual control (Figure 2); socialism always fails economically, because of its lack of markets – a reality that destroyed Venezuela's once vibrant economy (Mises, 1944, 1961; Reisman, 2012; Baker, 2021; Baker, 2023a).

Hugo Chávez attempted to align himself with the legendary persona of Simón Bolívar, yet his governance fell short of Bolívar's historic achievements. Rather, Chávez's policies bore a resemblance to those of former President Carlos Andrés Pérez Rodríguez, who also presided over surging oil prices during the 1970s. Like Pérez, Chávez pursued policies marked by massive increases in government debt, the establishment of new state-owned enterprises, and the nationalization of key industries, including petroleum.

FIGURE 2
GOVERNMENT VERSUS INDIVIDUAL CONTROL

Socialists Communists NAZIs Fascists Maoists Marxists Stalinists

Social: Collectivism
Economic: communal property ownership – state control
Political: Statist Totalitariaism

Social: Individualism
Economic: private property, but not true "laissez-faire" capitalism
Political: Representative Democracy

Capitalism with Democratic Republics

Source: Baker, B. (2023). Anti-Fascist (Antifa) Fallacies: A Primer for Businesses. Journal of Applied Business and Economics, 25(1).

Predictably, Chávez's actions had lasting detrimental effects on the nation's economy, shifting Venezuela's economy from the top 10% of the world to 176 out of 178 just above Cuba and North Korea! Echoing the experiences of other Latin American countries that ventured into socialism without success, Chávez's policies destroyed Venezuela's economy (Acevedo, et.al., 2017; Baker, 2021). Economic freedoms can be quantified using indices developed by institutions like the Heritage Foundation (USA) or Canada's Fraser Institute (Figure 3). As documented in the 2023 Index, economic freedom also correlates significantly with overall well-being, including health, education, the environment, innovation, societal progress, and democratic governance (Kim, 2023).

FIGURE 3
**HERITAGE'S INDEX OF ECONOMIC FREEDOM**
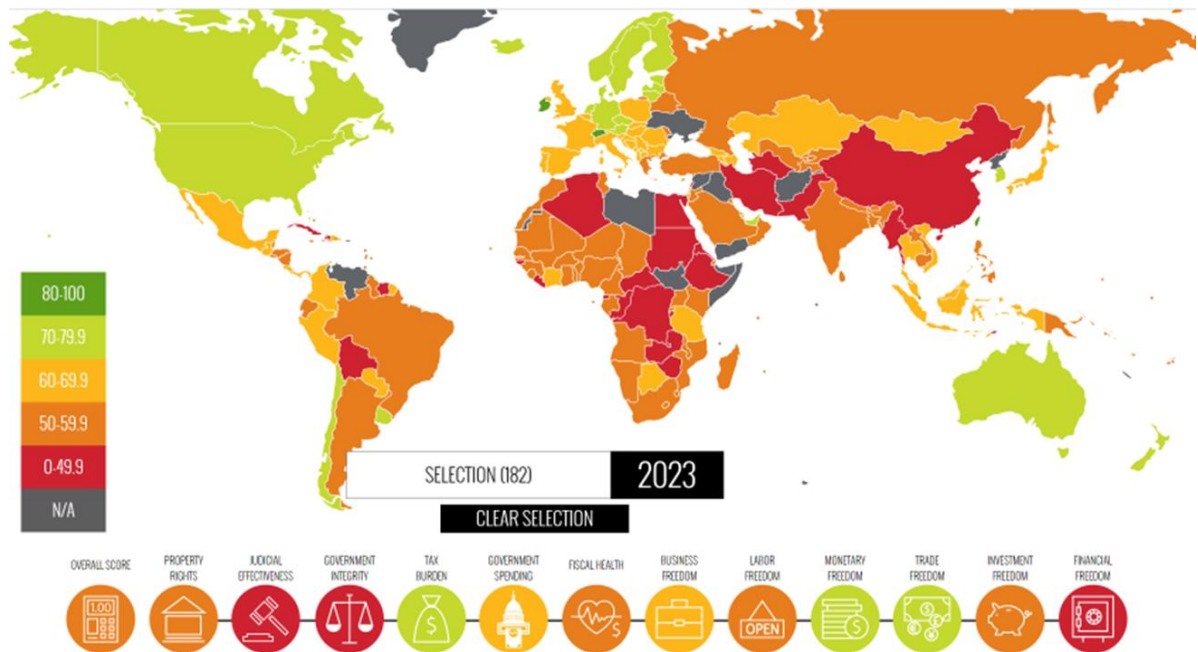
Economics and politics are separate domains, each with principles, theories, and methodologies addressing different aspects of human life and society. Economics deals with allocating resources, production, trade, and the functioning of markets, whereas politics deals with governance, leadership, laws, policies, and the exercise of power. So, we now shift to the political domain.

The Political Domain

The interplay between a culture's relationship to the environment, economic structure, and social structure, as well as their intersection in determining the prevailing political structure, holds significant importance. In the context of international politics, academics, students, and business professionals should approach analysis by considering essential questions about economic and social freedom. Economic freedom pertains to the capacity to earn and utilize money, while social freedom encompasses the ability to make personal life choices regarding education, profession, residence, religion, and associations. North Americans value retaining both economic and social freedoms. They are averse to centralized decision-making bodies that suppress such liberties, as was evident in historical examples like Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, and Maoist China, or more recent cases in Cuba, Venezuela, and North Korea. If we view the Soviet or Venezuelan regimes as experiments, they've shown capitalism's superiority and socialism's inferiority (Mises, 1957; Baker, 2021).

Countries severely restricting citizens' freedoms tend to score poorly on freedom indices. Notably, there exists a correlation between economic and social freedom, exemplified by the National Socialists (NAZI) of Germany, who controlled both aspects, leading to totalitarianism, confiscation of wealth from certain groups, and severe limitations on social liberties. As President George Washington astutely observed, the government possesses the potential for both great utility and peril, demanding careful consideration of social and economic freedom indices when preparing for overseas travel. Visualizing social and economic freedoms on a chart (Figure 4) demonstrates that a totalitarian environment, with an authoritarian regime represents the lowest levels of both personal and economic freedom as in Venezuela (Vasquez, et.al., 2022).

FIGURE 4
CATO'S HUMAN FREEDOM INDEX
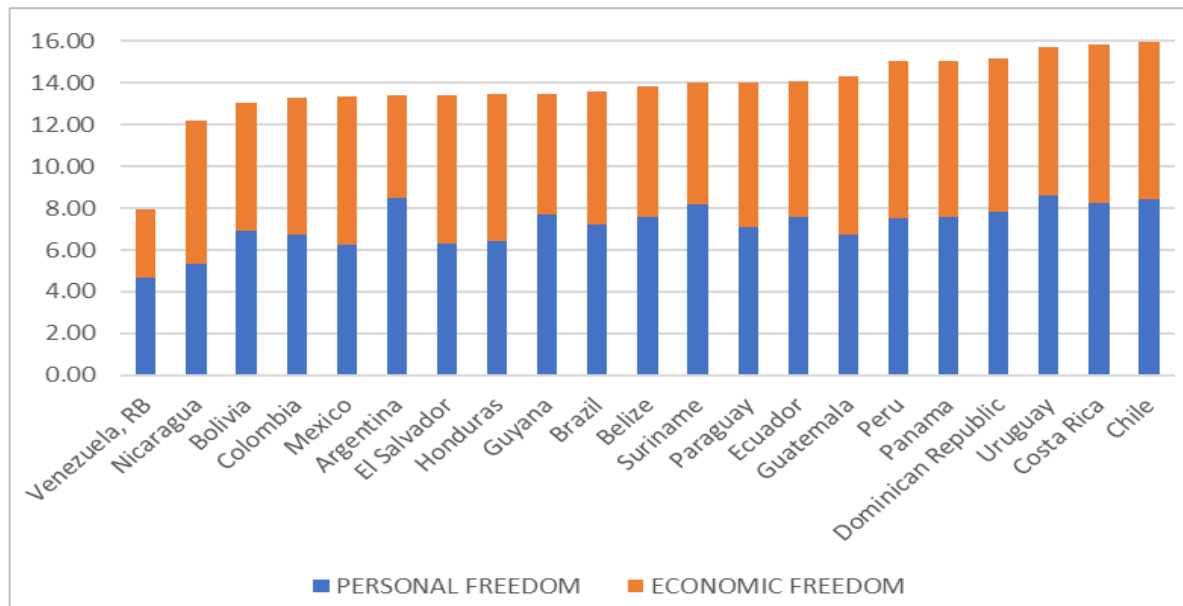
CATO's eighth annual *Index of Human Freedom* uses 83 distinct indicators of personal and economic freedom in the following areas: rule of law, security & safety, movement, religion, association, assembly, & civil society, expression and information, relationships, size of government, legal system and property rights, sound money, freedom to trade internationally and regulations. Striking a balance between limited government and ungoverned areas, where Cartels can operate illicitly, is crucial. Today, Chile, Columbia, and Peru rank among the highest in human freedom, while Venezuela ranks last. Recognizing the potential for oppressive governance, it is evident that a reasonable approach to government is indispensable for promoting societal well-being and protecting individual liberties.

The legacy of authoritarian and oppressive dictators in Latin America is often linked to the 'strong man' or 'caudillo' philosophy, characterized by charismatic and authoritarian leaders wielding significant power and control over institutions and governance, often backed by the military. This philosophy's roots lie in the region's history of political instability and struggles for power during colonial and post-independence eras. Traits of the 'strong man' philosophy include personalistic rule, political repression, a cult of personality, limited institutional development, and questionable economic policies. While not all Latin American countries experienced prolonged strong-man rule, understanding this historical context is vital for addressing political stability, human rights, and democratization issues. Efforts toward accountable and inclusive governance are crucial for fostering sustainable development and social progress in the region.

Latin America has had its share of authoritarian and oppressive dictators throughout its history. Some of the most notable dictators in the region include:

- Augusto Pinochet (Chile, 1973-1990): Pinochet came to power through a military coup that overthrew the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende. His regime was marked by human rights abuses, including widespread torture, forced disappearances, and political repression. It is estimated that thousands of Chileans were killed or disappeared under Pinochet's rule.

- Rafael Trujillo (Dominican Republic, 1930-1961): Trujillo ruled the Dominican Republic for over three decades with an iron fist. His regime was characterized by brutality, political repression, and corruption. Numerous human rights violations marked Trujillo's rule, and he was responsible for the massacre of thousands of Haitian immigrants living in the Dominican Republic.

- Alfredo Stroessner (Paraguay, 1954-1989): Stroessner came to power through a military coup and ruled Paraguay for over three decades. His regime was marked by political repression, censorship, and human rights abuses. Stroessner's rule was also characterized by rampant corruption and the suppression of political opposition.
- Jorge Rafael Videla (Argentina, 1976-1981): Videla was part of a military junta that came to power through a coup in Argentina. His regime implemented a campaign of state terrorism known as the "Dirty War," during which thousands of people, including political dissidents, activists, and suspected leftists, were forcibly disappeared and killed.
- Hugo Banzer (Bolivia, 1971-1978): Banzer came to power through a military coup in Bolivia and ruled as a military dictator. Political repression and human rights abuses, including torture and arbitrary detentions, characterized his regime.

These are just a few examples of dictators in Latin America. Each of these authoritarian leaders left a legacy of human rights abuses, political repression, and suffering for their respective citizens. Today, due to the failed socialist policies of Hugo Chavez and subsequently Nicolás Maduro, millions of Venezuelan refugees are crossing into the United States, Brazil, and other countries (Baker, 2021).

The Belief Domain

Beliefs and symbols constitute a significant cultural domain, encompassing history, memory, folklore, icons, rituals, symbols, communication, mores, norms, taboos, and religious beliefs. To comprehend this domain, scholars often refer to a culture's values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms (VBBN). Values denote the principles of right and wrong, while beliefs represent a shared worldview within a group, often rooted in religion, and deeply ingrained. Behaviors manifest as observable patterns of action, and norms delineate permissible behaviors established by a community, often codified in laws. Educators can readily observe behaviors and norms, enabling them to infer any culture's underlying values and beliefs. For instance, witnessing an individual praying five times a day in a Mosque while facing Mecca would indicate adherence to the Islamic faith.

This example describes the cultural dynamics within the Pashtun Tribe of Afghanistan, focusing on their adherence to 'Pashtunwali' values. Pashtunwali prioritizes safeguarding property, homes, and the honor of women. Instances of potential conflict arise during military incursions, where the intrusion of uninvited individuals may compromise these values, particularly by exposing unveiled female household members. Retribution may ensue, especially in cases of injury. Moreover, Pashtunwali dictates a norm of proportional retaliation, where the death of one tribal member necessitates the targeting of ten adversaries. These elements underscore the complex interplay of cultural values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms within the Pashtun community in Afghanistan.

However, please note that the Pashtun VBBN does <u>not</u> apply to the Ahmadiyya in Suriname, which is the only country in South America with a significant Muslim population. Although both are Muslim, the VBBN of the Ahmadiyya is distinctly different from the Pashtun Tribes of Afghanistan. Nonetheless, these cultural concepts can be applied to any society; therefore, learning about VBBN is essential to successfully interacting with students or employees who were not raised in the United States. Figure 5 illustrates a scenario wherein a foreign man converses with a woman from the United States. The depiction involves a cultural lens encompassing the five previously identified domains (physical, economic, social, political, and beliefs) that profoundly influence individuals' worldviews. These domains are symbolically represented inside the heads of both individuals.

As the American woman speaks, she encodes her words through the filter of her distinct cultural lens. Conversely, the foreign man listens and decodes her speech using his unique cultural lens. Similarly, when the foreign man speaks, he encodes his message based on his cultural perspective, and the woman decodes his words through her cultural lens. The potential for misalignment arises, akin to a 3-speed foreign sprocket not synchronizing with a 10-speed domestic sprocket. To win hearts and minds effectively, educators must synchronize their messages with foreign-born students or audiences by attempting to comprehend the students' thought processes and cultural frameworks.

FIGURE 5
THE FIVE-DOMAIN CULTURAL MODEL IN CONVERSATION
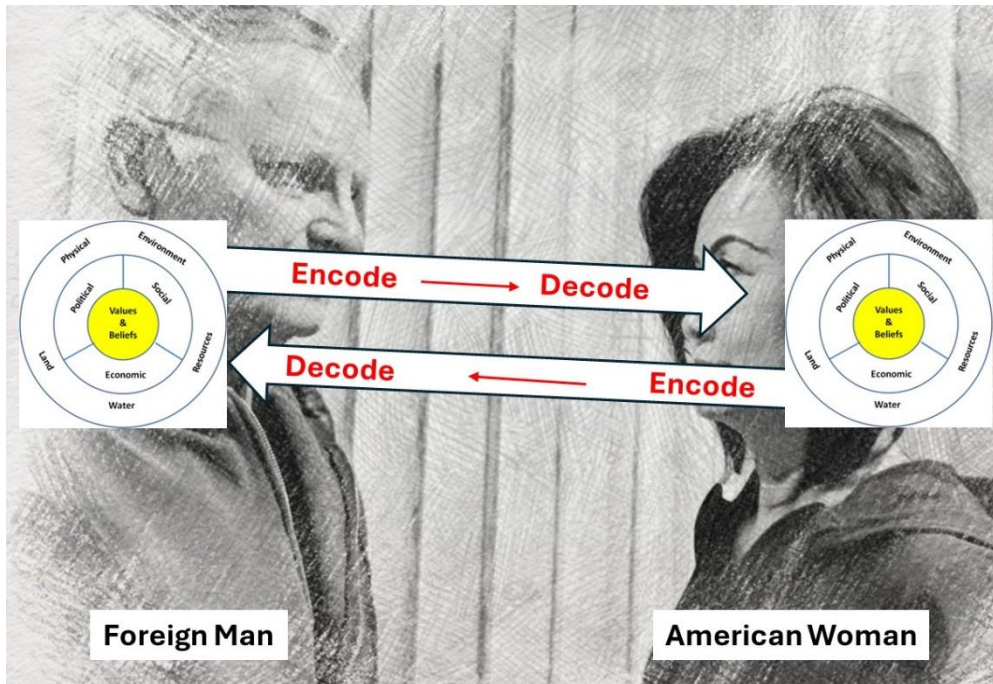
The Hispanic-American Cultural Interface

The significance of culture lies in its profound impact on the efficacy of our teaching mission. Unlike prescriptive approaches, cultural competence demands adaptability to varying situations, acknowledging that no fixed checklist, such as engaging in a man-hug, sharing tea, then proceeding to teach a class, suffices. Instead, cultural competencies in business or in the classroom center on honing one's ability to navigate new scenarios, fostering comfort amidst discomfort, and eschewing rigid do's and don'ts. Moreover, it is essential to recognize that cultural intricacies entail exceptions and contradictions, inherent to this multifaceted subject.

Imperfectly conveyed information may occasionally lack precise caveats, but the recognition of nuances remains vital. For instance, a statement like "*In Latino cultures, the elderly receive the most respect*" necessitates acknowledging the qualifying adverbs "usually" or "most of the time". Emphasizing a positive attitude and learning from errors allows for resilience, where a single faux pas does not disrupt the entire learning process. Consequently, this section delves into Geert Hofstede's four cultural dimensions, then explores six additional critical cultural value dimensions.

Ten Cultural Domains

A comprehensive understanding of the ten cultural value dimensions delineating crucial cultural disparities worldwide significantly aids in navigating culture shock. In this section, we shall examine the four cultural dimensions formulated by Geert Hofstede, followed by an exploration of six supplementary cultural value dimensions. Please note that while Hofstede developed six dimensions, the emphasis in this paper shall be on the four most paramount dimensions by the author. Hofstede (1991) described four dimensions forming cultural opposites: (1) individualism versus collectivism, (2) small versus large power distance, (3) weak versus strong uncertainty avoidance, and (4) feminine versus masculine patterns.

Cultural Dimension #1: Individualism Versus Collectivism

Individualists – In individualistic societies, social ties between individuals are characterized by looseness, and there is a prevailing expectation that each person is responsible for their well-being and that of their immediate family (Figure 6).

Collectivists – In collectivist societies, individuals are ingrained into tightly-knit in-groups from early life, frequently within extended families encompassing uncles, aunts, and grandparents. These cohesive groups provide ongoing protection to their members, contingent upon unwavering loyalty. As demonstrated in the chart, Guatemala and Colombia register notably low scores on the Hofstede scale for individualism, signifying their strong collectivist tendencies. In contrast, the United States exhibits an exceptionally high level of individualism, scoring 91 points (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6
HOFSTEDE COUNTRY COMPARISONS

Country	Power Distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty Avoidance
United States	40	91	62	46
Argentina	49	46	56	86
Uruguay	61	36	38	98
Chile	63	23	28	86
Peru	64	16	42	87
El Salvador	66	19	40	94
Colombia	67	13	64	80
Ecuador	78	8	63	67
Mexico	81	30	69	82
Venezuela	81	12	73	76
Guatemala	95	6	37	98
Panama	95	11	44	86
LATAM Average	73	20	50	85

https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool?countries=united+states

As a former member of the U.S. military community, I experienced multiple deployments to include Germany, Kuwait, Iraq, Korea, Japan, the Philippines Islands, and Latin America. These deployments offered valuable opportunities to study and comprehend cultural value dimensions. Surprisingly, many academic colleagues have limited international travel experience, often restricted to vacations in destinations like Cancun, which does not depict the true Mexican culture.

Within individualist societies, cultural norms are apparent from an early age. For instance, in the United States, infants may have their own rooms and cribs when coming home from the hospital, and the desire for a three-bedroom home aligns with the nuclear family structure. Parents begin instilling individualist values in their children before they can even speak. Yet, in some Latino cultures, children may sleep between their parents in a communal bed (or on the floor), fostering collectivist loyalties from infancy.

The transition to adulthood is marked by significant differences, as turning 18 in the U.S. often involves seeking a job and moving into one's apartment, whereas, in collectivist cultures, multi-generational cohabitation is common. This dichotomy underscores the shaping of mindsets and life trajectories that commence during infancy within individualist and collectivist societies (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7
INDIVIDUALISTIC VERSUS COLLECTIVISTIC PATTERNS

	Individualists	Collectivists
General	"I" identity	"We" identity
Family	Nuclear Family	Extended Family
Relationships	Privacy Regulation	Relational Harmony
School	Individual Competition	Teamwork
Workplace	Personal Competence	In-Group Emphasis
Communications Patterns	Direct Communication Pattern	Indirect Communication Pattern

Regarding U.S. national culture, the Bill of Rights stands as a pivotal document that centers on safeguarding individual rights and curbing the authority of the Federal government. Our Bill of Rights ensures various freedoms, such as free speech, press, association, religion, and the right to bear arms, among others. In the United States, citizens possess the liberty to choose their place of worship or opt to remain at home, engaging in personal pursuits like watching football, without any compulsion to attend religious gatherings. This exemplifies the essence of personal choice within the American cultural context. In contrast, numerous communities worldwide might subject individuals to ostracization (or worse) if they refrain from participating in group prayers, as in Islam, or other communal meetings and rituals.

In the context of cultural comparison, individuals within individualist cultures tend to prioritize their unique identities within nuclear families, typically comprising a father, mother, two children, and pets. Privacy regulation is highly valued in individualist societies, and this culture encourages individual competition while emphasizing personal competence attained through education and training. Direct communication patterns prevail, epitomized by the adage "*Say what you mean and mean what you say*." Unsurprisingly, individualistic societies revolve around the notion of individual selfhood and meritocracy.

In contrast, collectivist societies (*most, but not all, Latino societies*) present a distinct contrast by focusing on communal identities denoted by a "we" identity. Extended families, often spanning four generations, might reside under the same roof, diminishing the emphasis on privacy. Collectivists prioritize relational harmony and teamwork, stressing in-group cohesion and employing indirect communication patterns to maintain harmony within the community. Trust is stronger among in-group members while outsiders may be viewed with suspicion, and a sense of shared fate exists among group members. An expatriate is someone who temporarily or permanently resides in a country other than their native country for work, business, or other reasons. So, building partnerships in collectivist cultures may pose challenges for individualist ex-pats, since these assignments are often short, whereas cultivating trust demands time and nurturing.

Students raised by parents with differing cultural backgrounds, one from an individualistic background and the other from a collectivistic background, may exhibit a dual pattern of behavior. They may find adapting and navigating between these diverse cultural groups effortless. Moreover, educators may also display a dual pattern, demonstrating individualistic tendencies during off-duty hours, but adopting more collectivistic behaviors in a classroom setting. This is a common and normative phenomenon, as the context of the situation often influences behavior, and the emphasis on teamwork in collective cultures can shape individual conduct. How we teach and assess may impact since "individualists" focus heavily on exam scores, but "collectivists" focus more on group projects. In the public sphere, there can be a conflict between doing what is best for oneself and what is best for the group, as well as how one resolves this conflict (Parks, et.al., 2013).

Individualism Versus Collectivism Scales
Using the Hofstede scale, one can plot the levels of individualism worldwide. One can find some interesting data correlations; for instance, countries that the United Kingdom or Northern Europeans originally colonized have very strong individualism scores (e. g. United-States = 91; Australia = 90; United

Kingdom = 89; and Canada = 80). In contrast, countries that were settled or colonized by Portugal or Spain have some of the lowest scores (e. g. Guatemala = 6; Ecuador = 8; Panama = 11; Venezuela = 12; and Columbia = 13). So, an U. S. academic or expatriate who is visiting Guatemala may experience a high degree of culture shock, just like a visitor, immigrant, or refugee coming from Guatemala to the United States (Figure 8).

FIGURE 8
HOFSTEDE COUNTRY COMPARISON
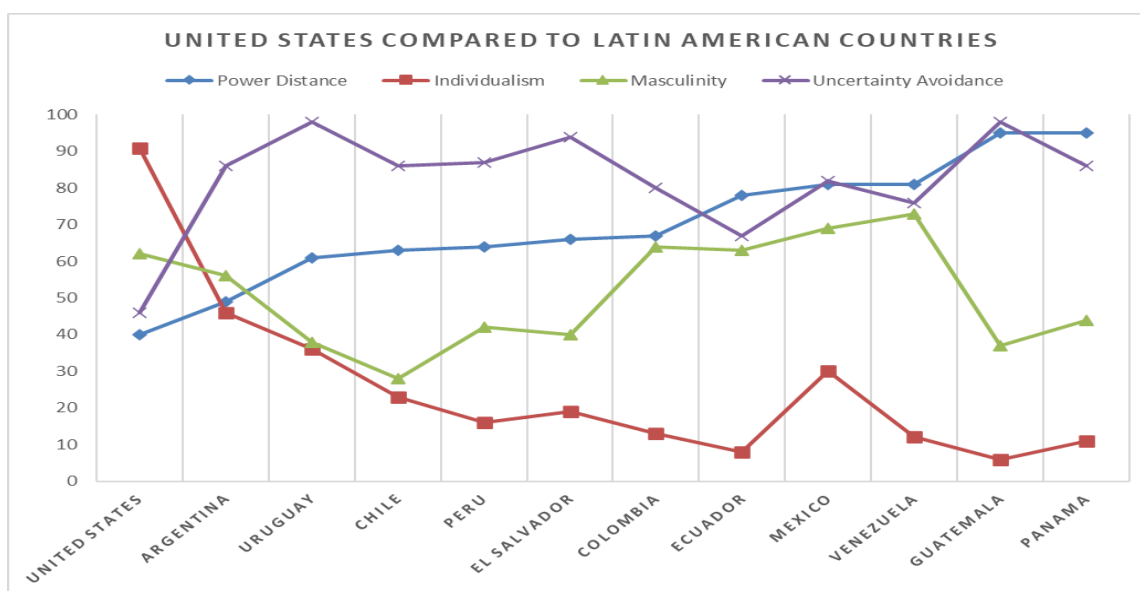
Cultural Dimension #2: Authority – Low (or Small) Versus High (or Large) Power Distance

Hofstede's second cultural dimension, "power distance" pertains to the degree to which less powerful members within organizations and institutions, such as the family, accept and expect unequal power distribution. While all societies exhibit some level of inequality, the extent of such disparity varies (e. g., the United States scores 40 points, while Guatemala scores 95 points on the power distance scale). Cultures characterized by small power distance emphasize interpersonal relationships, resulting in situations where children might openly challenge their parents due to the perception of low power distance between parent and child. Furthermore, some low-power-distance societies believe that the younger generation is more knowledgeable than their elders, particularly within popular culture. Teachers in such societies actively seek feedback from students in the classroom, and subordinates in the workplace anticipate consultation with their superiors on work-related matters. Communication patterns are mostly informal, with limited use of titles.

Large power-distance cultures accentuate status-based equality differences, where membership in a ruling caste can significantly influence one's standing. In such societies, children are expected to unquestioningly obey their parents, and elders are revered for their wisdom due to their advanced age. As a result, it is uncommon for a child to contradict an adult, particularly a parent. In areas with low literacy rates, tribal elders assume the role of repositories of wisdom. Professors in large power-distance cultures typically adopt a lecture-style approach without actively seeking student feedback. Subordinates expect clear-cut guidance or orders more than participatory decision-making (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9
SMALL AND LARGE POWER DISTANCE PATTERNS

	SMALL	LARGE
General	Emphasize Interpersonal	Emphasize Status-based Differences
Family	Children may contradict parents	Children should obey parents
Relationships	Younger is smarter	Older is Wiser
School	Teachers seek feedback	Teachers Lecture
Workplace	Subordinates Expect consultation	Subordinates Expect Guidance
Communications Patterns	Informal	Formal

Communication patterns are typically more formal, reflecting the vertical or hierarchical view of social interactions. Notably, every individual in large power-distance societies has a predefined role with associated do's and don'ts. For instance, in Western cultures, students may address professors by their first names, but social interactions between students and teachers are limited, and placing their feet on desks is discouraged. Given the diverse global student population within the United States, educators must adapt their behavior to accommodate the cultural norms of the students they teach. Encouraging group discussions may involve asking American or European students to speak less assertively, as direct communication is a cultural norm in these regions. Additionally, educators may actively seek the opinions of Hispanic-Female students, as their cultural tendency may be more reserved during meetings.

Like the individualism scores, the power-distance scores are clustered as well. Canada, the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland are clustered toward the lower end of the scale. And at the higher end of the scale are Latin American countries such as Guatemala, Panama, Mexico, and Ecuador (Figures 6 & 8).

Cultural Dimension #3: Risk – Low Versus High Uncertainty Avoidance
Uncertainty-avoidance cultures are characterized by a propensity for strict laws and rules, often holding absolute truths as cultural norms. Conversely, uncertainty-accepting cultures display greater tolerance for differences and have fewer stringent regulations (e.g., per Figure 6 & 8: Guatemala scores 98 but the U.S. scores 46 on the uncertainty-avoidance scale). In weak uncertainty-avoidance cultures, value is placed on uncertainty. This leads to dynamic and changing family structures, high mobility, a welcoming attitude toward challenges and changes in schools, encouragement of risk-taking in the workplace, and the perception of conflict as potentially positive (Figure 10).

FIGURE 10
WEAK AND STRONG UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE PATTERNS

	WEAK U. A.	STRONG U. A.
General	Uncertainty Valued	Uncertainty is a threat
Family	Dynamic and Changing	Family Rules
Relationships	High Mobility	Low Mobility
School	Challenges Welcome	Routines Welcome
Workplace	Encourage Risk-Taking	Clear Procedures
Communications Patterns	Conflict can be positive	Conflict is Negative

In contrast, strong uncertainty-avoidance cultures tend to view change and uncertainty as threats. In these cultures, family rules dominate personal life, mobility is low, routines are embraced, workplaces establish clear procedures, conflict is typically regarded as highly negative, and there is little tolerance for ambiguity. When examining risk in terms of low versus high uncertainty avoidance, there is not a strong correlation between individualist and collectivist societies. High uncertainty-avoidance societies

demonstrate little tolerance for the unknown, leading to the development of numerous checklists and frameworks to manage uncertainty, as seen in the examples of Germans and Japanese with their emphasis on total quality management and extensive industrial regulations.

The historical influence of the Roman Empire, with its far-reaching code of laws, has similarly impacted culture within Spanish and Portuguese colonies and their nation-state offspring, reinforcing a high uncertainty-avoidance approach. North Americans have a higher comfort with ambiguity. In contrast, many Latino sub-cultures emphasize building trust rather than relying on contracts, fostering a more entrepreneurial approach to uncertainty. The relationship between uncertainty-avoidance and cultural traits is complex and is not strictly aligned with individualist or collectivist tendencies.

Cultural Dimension #4: Masculinity Versus Femininity (a. k. a. Competitive v Cooperative)
Geert Hofstede's concept of masculinity versus femininity does not equate to a comparison between men and women; rather, it represents a distribution of emotional traits associated with gender stereotypes. The competitive pole is considered masculine, characterized by assertiveness and competition, while the modest, caring, and cooperative pole is seen as feminine. In countries with a feminine orientation, both men and women exhibit modest, caring values, but in masculine countries, they are more assertive and competitive (e. g., the U.S. scores 62 and Chile scores 28 points (Figure 6 & 8). Competitive cultures prioritize achievement, success, merit, and results, emphasizing individual or team performance and competence development. Such cultures often view work as a defining aspect of one's self-image, and males typically take the lead with a need for academic adaptation in schools. Gender roles in competitive societies are often seen as complementary, with masculinity associated with toughness and femininity with softness (Figure 11).

FIGURE 11
COOPERATIVE VERSUS COMPETITIVE PATTERNS

|	**COOPERATIVE**	**COMPETITIVE**
General	Flexible Sex Roles	Complementary Roles
Family	Emphasize Nurturing	Emphasize Achievement
Relationships	Both take initiatives	Males take initiatives
School	Social Adjustment Critical	Academic Adjustment
Workplace	Work to Live	Live to Work
Communications Patterns	Fluid Gender	Masculine Tough/Feminine Soft

On the other hand, cooperative cultures prioritize nurturing relationships and believe in achieving results through collaborative efforts. Sensitivity, emotions, and caring are valued more than rationality, and decision-making often involves reconciliation and consensus. Cooperative societies may exhibit more flexible gender roles and emphasize nurturance, with both males and females taking initiative. In the workplace of cooperative cultures, work is seen as a means of income, and gender communication may be more fluid with overlapping roles. It is important to recognize that masculinity versus femininity, as conceptualized by Hofstede, extends beyond gender itself and encompasses a range of cultural values and behaviors related to competition, cooperation, but not necessarily gender roles.

Comparisons With the United States
An informative comparison can be made by incorporating cultural scores from various regions, including Latin America, Asia-Pacific, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, and contrasting them with the United States of America. Figure 12 illustrates this comparison, revealing an inverse relationship between power distance and individualism scores. Countries in the southern regions, scoring high on power distance with an average of 70 points, tend to exhibit lower individualism scores, often in the high 20s. In contrast, the United States stands out with a remarkably high individualism score of 91 points but a notably low

power-distance score of 40. These cultural dimensions highlight the varying societal preferences for hierarchical structures and individual autonomy across different regions.

FIGURE 12
COMPARING THE UNITED STATES WITH OTHER REGIONS
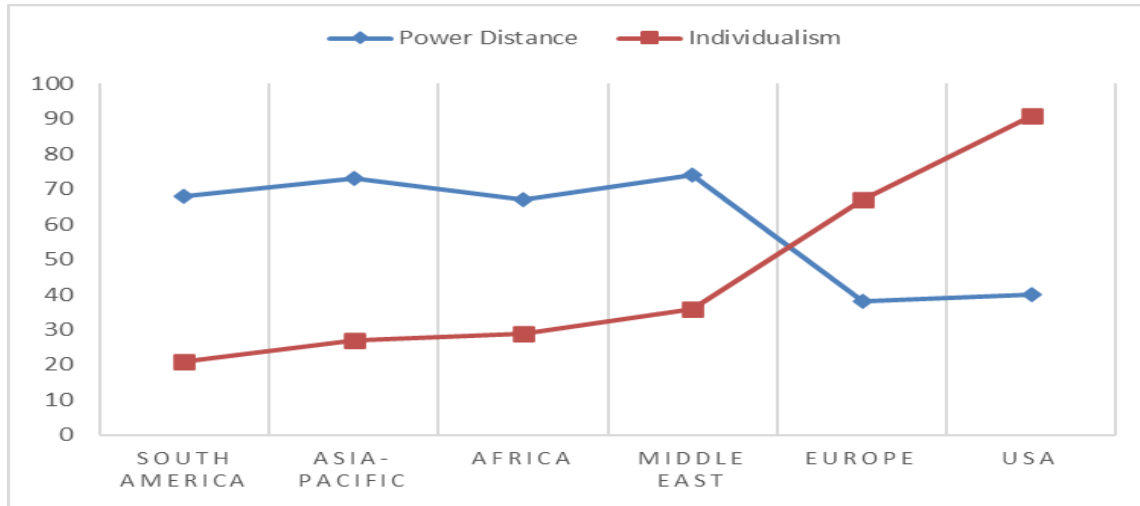
Six More Cultural Comparison Criteria

The next six criteria include comparisons between direct and indirect; neutral and effective; doing and being; punctuality and relationships; universalism versus particularism; as well as loose versus tight societies.

Cultural Dimension #5: Communications – Direct Versus Indirect

In the realm of communication, cultural differences between low-context and high-context cultures manifest distinctly. Low-context cultures rely on explicit and direct communication, leaving little room for subjective interpretation. Verbal exchanges prioritize specificity and clarity, characterized by individuals saying exactly what they mean. Conversely, high-context cultures assume a shared understanding of unwritten rules and a common narrative that informs participants of the situation. Context, encompassing environmental cues, body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and appearance, is crucial in interpreting the intended meaning. Religious communities often exemplify high-context communication.

Edward Hall (1959, 1966, 1976, 1983) introduced the concepts of Low-Context and High-Context (LC/HC) communication patterns. Low-context cultures typically endorse individualistic values, employ direct verbal styles, embrace linear logic, adopt matter-of-fact tones, and use informal verbal expression assertively. This pattern is observed in Northern European and North American societies.

On the other hand, high-context communicators embrace collectivistic values, employ indirect verbal styles, utilize spiral logic, which does not necessarily follow a linear pattern (A+B does not always equal "C"), and may employ understated tones, informal verbal expressions, and verbal reticence or silence. Notable examples of countries exhibiting high-context communication patterns include Vietnam, South Korea, China, and Japan. Nevgi, Seppo, & Nishimura (May 2008) found that Japan and Finland belong to HC cultures, whereas India is closer to an LC culture with some HC cultural features; hence HC/LC is not an 'either-or' proposition.

Low Context Cultures

Low-context cultures comprise Northern European nations and former British colonies, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In these cultures, communication styles prioritize clarity, precision, and directness, often emphasizing the rational and unemotional aspects. Work habits within low-context cultures reflect meticulous planning, a linear approach to tasks, strict time consciousness, project division, delegation of authority, and a reliance on empirical data for decision-making (Figure 13).

FIGURE 13
CULTURE, COMMUNICATION, & WORK HABITS

Low Context Cultures	Communication Styles	Work Habits
Americans	Unemotional	Plan ahead meticulously
Australians	Direct	Take a linear approach to tasks
Austrians	Strive for precision	Time conscious
British	Use logic to make points	Subdivide projects
Canadians	Prefer succinct, to-the-point	Delegate authority
Germans	language	Rely on empirical data for
New Zealanders	Intent on making a decision	making decisions
Scandinavians	Action-oriented	Follow guidelines/rules
South Africans	Rarely interrupt	Punctual
Swiss		Prefer fixed agendas

High Context Cultures	Communication Styles	Work Habits
Africans	Nuanced	Multitask
Arabians	Indirect	Delegate to relatives
Central Americans	Paced	Flexing timetables
Indians	Relationship focused	Rely on oral information
Italians	Extroverted	
Middle Eastern	Interweave professional and	
Portuguese & Spanish	social	
Russians	Gregarious	
South Americans		

High Context Cultures	Communication Styles	Work Habits
Chinese	Nuanced	Methodical
Japanese	Indirect	Rely on procedures
Koreans	Paced	Make decisions by consensus
Singaporeans	Introverted	Plan slowly
Taiwanese	Patient	Rely on facts
Turkish	Unemotional	
	Listeners	

High Context Cultures

High-context cultures operate with the assumption that individuals share a deep understanding of unwritten rules and a common narrative that informs their interactions. Context plays a crucial role in these cultures, encompassing elements such as the environment, process, body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and appearance. High-context cultures can be further divided into two groups (Figure 13). Typical Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Singaporeans, and Taiwanese communication styles tend to be nuanced, indirect, paced, and often introverted. Despite these communication differences, their work habits often

resemble those of Low-Context Cultures (LCC), characterized by systematic approaches, reliance on procedures and factual information (not emotion), and a preference for decision-making through consensus. So, an American educator teaching in Northeast Asia may admire the work habits of their counterparts yet experience frustration due to the indirect communication style prevalent in high-context cultures.

The other subdivision of high-context cultures comprises individuals from Latin America, Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Middle East. In these regions, communication styles are also nuanced, indirect, and paced, but individuals tend to be extroverted and highly sociable. Contrasting with LCC regions, their work habits exhibit notable differences. People from these areas commonly multitask, delegate tasks to relatives, maintain flexible timetables, and rely heavily on oral information. As a result, an American educator working in one of these regions may experience frustration with their counterparts' work habits and communication norms.

Cultural Dimension #6: Expressiveness – Neutral v Effective

Unemotional Cultures, or neutral cultures, exhibit restrained emotions and refrain from openly displaying their thoughts or feelings. In these cultures, cool and well-controlled behavior is highly regarded, and statements are delivered in a monotonic manner, devoid of emotion. However, it is essential to note that unemotional or neutral cultures do not imply a lack of emotion; rather, they simply avoid overt displays of emotion during meetings.

On the other hand, Emotional Cultures, or affective cultures, express emotions more readily, openly, and passionately. Meetings in such cultures may involve a wide range of facial expressions and physical gestures that should be familiar to participants beforehand. A notable illustration of the contrasting communication styles between Low-Context Cultures (LCC) and High-Context Cultures (HCC) can be observed in the movie "*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*", particularly during the meeting between the bride and groom's parents; as well as the cultural contrast in the movie "*Fools Rush In*" starring Salma Hayek and Matthew Perry.

FIGURE 13
AFFECTIVE V NEUTRAL (EMOTIONAL VERSUS UNEMOTIONAL)
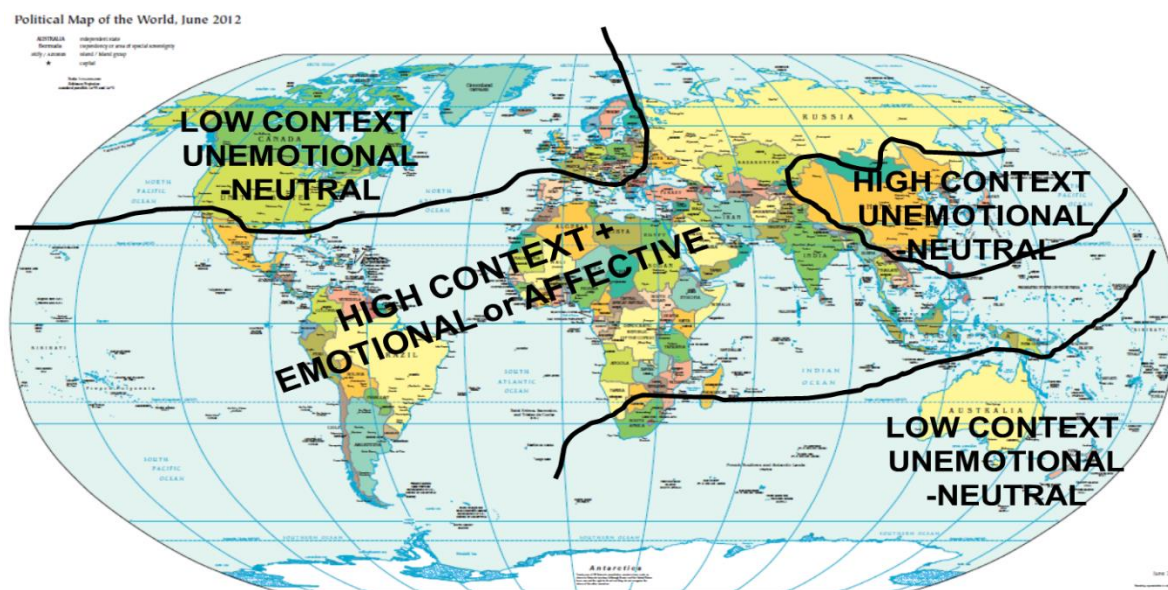
Cultural Dimension #7: Lifestyle – Being vs. Doing

Cultures can be analyzed through the lens of "being" versus "doing" lifestyles. In "doing" cultures, work holds a central place in individuals' identities, proving their significance and worth. Lives in these

cultures revolve around performance and achieving tangible results. Examples of "doing" cultures include many northern European countries, Canada, the United States, and Northeast Asia.

In contrast, "being" cultures emphasize relationships and overall quality of life. Individuals in these cultures are content with balancing their work and personal lives. While work is still necessary, it is not the most crucial aspect of their identity – a perspective still somewhat prevalent in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia; but do not generalize that all Latinos have a "being" lifestyle.

Cultural Dimension #8: Time – Punctuality vs. Relationships

In cross-cultural contexts, variations in the importance placed on punctuality and relationships can be observed. Cultures prioritizing punctuality are often called "monochromic," which implies a tendency to focus on one task at a time. In monochromic cultures, individuals emphasize careful planning, scheduling, and effective time management, which aligns with the values of individualism and personal time management. People in monochromic cultures are generally more task-oriented, concentrating on the current task without being distracted by other potential influences.

On the other hand, cultures that prioritize relationships are often described as "polychronic." In polychronic cultures, the value lies in human interaction and connections, surpassing the importance of adhering to strict timetables or material possessions. As a result, less emphasis is placed on completing tasks within rigid timeframes. In polychromic cultures, individuals' personal and work lives are intertwined, leading to simultaneous attention to multiple events or activities (Figure 14).

FIGURE 14
TIME – PUNCTUALITY VS. RELATIONSHIPS

	MONOCHRONIC	POLYCHRONIC
Actions	One thing at a time; laser-sharp, intense focus on one thing	Many things done simultaneously
Focus	The job at hand; schedule coordinates your activity	Easily distracted; interpersonal relationships coordinate activity
Attention to time	Think about deadlines (when)	Think about outcomes (what)
Priority	Tasks	Relationships
Punctuality	Emphasize Promptness	Bases promptness on relationship
Holidays	Sacrosanct regardless of personal ties	Subordinate to personal ties

Cultural Dimension #9: Rules – Particularism vs. Universalism

Various cultures approach the concept of rules differently, which can be observed through universalism and particularism. In universalistic cultures, rules are applied uniformly to everyone, often formalized through legal contracts to ensure consistency in legal proceedings and educational settings. Trustworthiness in such cultures is determined by one's commitment to honoring their word or contractual obligations.

Conversely, particularistic cultures take a different approach, prioritizing the significance of relationships with others and adapting to variable circumstances. In these cultures, there may be inconsistencies in legal and educational contexts, and trustworthiness is assessed based on the ability to navigate changing mutuality, rather than rigid adherence to contracts. Contracts may be regarded as starting points for discussions that allow for more agreement flexibility.

For expatriates, potential conflicts may arise when interacting with individuals from particularistic cultures, especially considering American culture places significant emphasis on contracts and universalistic principles. Deployed countries often exhibit particularistic cultural tendencies, leading to differing expectations and understandings of contractual obligations and relationships. Understanding and navigating these cultural differences is crucial for effective communication and collaboration in cross-cultural contexts.

Cultural Dimension #10: Social Norms – Loose vs. Tight

The last category for cultural comparison pertains to loose versus tight cultures. In loose cultures, few rigid rules, norms, or standards exist, allowing for greater individual freedom and autonomy while ensuring that actions do not harm others. Illustrative examples of loose cultures can be observed in places like Hollywood or Las Vegas, where a more permissive and liberal approach to behavior is evident.

Conversely, tight cultures emphasize the need for a clear consensus on rules, norms, and standards governing appropriate conduct. These rules, norms, and standards are strictly enforced, as evident in locations such as Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where adherence to strict regulations is integral to social order. Highly religious cultures often align with tight cultural tendencies, underscoring the importance of adhering to established rules and standards as an integral aspect of their cultural identity.

Some areas within Latin America may lean more towards loose cultures (e.g. Cancun, Mexico), characterized by relatively relaxed rules and norms, a greater emphasis on individual freedom, and a more permissive approach to behavior. Other parts of Latin America align with tight cultures (e.g., Muslims in Suriname), emphasizing the importance of strict adherence to established rules, norms, and standards to maintain social order and cohesion and the primacy of family.

East Meets West -or- North Meets South: Communicating a Thought

Returning to the illustrative scenario formerly presented in Figure 5, we revisit the interaction between a foreign man and an American woman (Figure 15). The American woman is likely to adhere to individualistic cultural norms, emphasizing a small power distance, weak uncertainty avoidance, and a strong inclination towards competitiveness; her communication style is expected to be direct, punctual, and heavily focused on her professional pursuits. Given her background in a universalistic culture, she upholds the belief that laws apply to all, and her communication tends to be neutral, displaying controlled emotions compared to male or female counterparts from the Middle East, North Africa, and much of Latin America. The United States is characterized by a relatively loose cultural orientation compared to other regions worldwide. This particular characteristic posed one of the challenges that U.S. women encountered in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and U.S.-born Latinas might face these challenges in some Latin American countries such as Suriname as well.

FIGURE 15
COMMUNICATING A THOUGHT IS COMPLEX
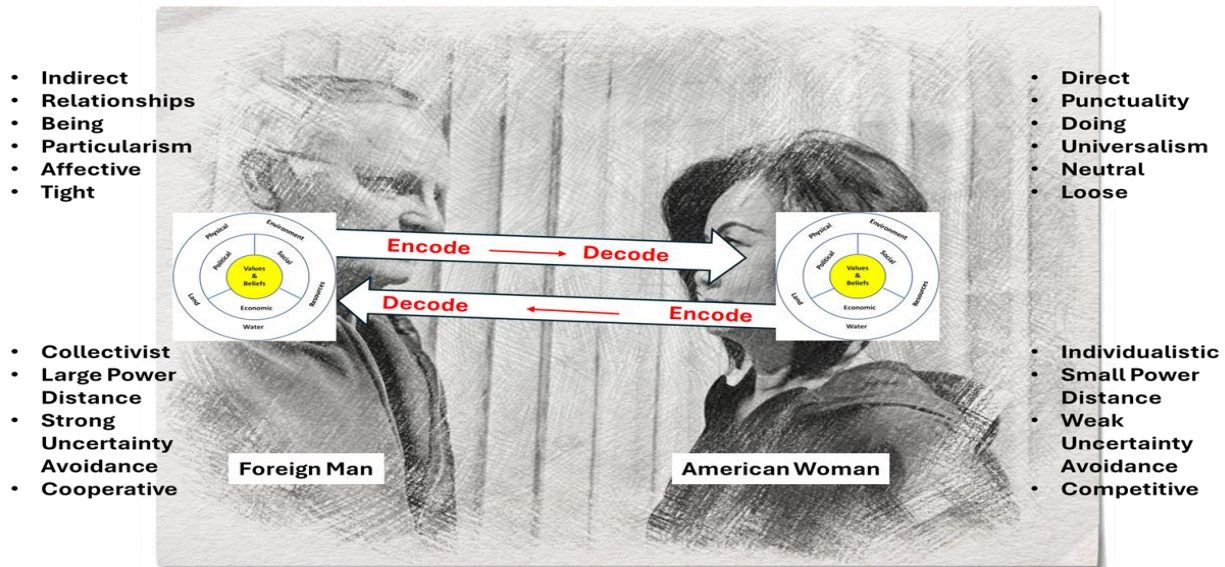
In contrast, the foreign man, hypothetically from Guatemala or another Latin nation, is likely to belong to a collectivistic society, characterized by a high-power distance score. He may exhibit strong uncertainty avoidance tendencies and come from a highly cooperative cultural setting. His speech is expected to be indirect, prioritizing relationships over punctuality, and his cultural focus is more on being rather than doing. In his particularistic society, the application of rules depends on specific circumstances, which can be distinct from the universal perspective of the American woman. Moreover, his culture might also be emotionally expressive, yet simultaneously stringent with strict rules and norms, particularly regarding gender-related matters or machismo.

During their hypothetical discussion, the American woman may encode her messages based on her ten cultural norms. While her speech may be accurately conveyed, it will be decoded by the foreign man's cultural framework, shaped by his familiarity with his unique cultural norms. Similarly, the foreign man's speech will be encoded by his cultural framework and decoded by the American woman's cultural lens. Consequently, substantial misunderstandings may arise between these well-intentioned individuals due to the complexities of cultural differences and interpretations.

CONCLUSIONS

This mixed methods research began with the following research question (RQ): "How do cultural dimensions impact teaching methodologies and educational outcomes, particularly in the context of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and what strategies can be employed to enhance cross-cultural understanding in educational settings?"

Cramblet Alvarez, et.al., (2023) found that curriculum is critical in truly serving a diverse student body; whereas we contend that understanding culture is even more important. We have determined that a focus on culture is like a rising tide that lifts all boats. Faculty play a crucial role in fostering academic validation, particularly through in-class actions. This includes demonstrating genuine concern for students' learning, being personable and approachable, treating students equally, structuring learning experiences that empower students to recognize their learning capabilities, providing individual support to those in need, and offering meaningful feedback. These faculty-initiated actions of an academic nature contribute significantly to cultivating positive student attitudes and behaviors that lead to academic development (Rendon, 1994).

This research delved into various cultural dimensions and their multifaceted impact on interpersonal interactions, encompassing social, economic, political, natural resources, and VBBN (values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms) domains to enhance academic validation. We explored their relevance across Latin America by drawing from Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions, such as individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, and long-term orientation. However, organizational cultures differ from national cultures. Organizational cultures distinguish different organizations in a country based on practices like symbols, heroes, and rituals. National cultures differ at deeper levels, mainly values. Managing international business is a lot like teaching in an HSI – both require addressing national, organizational, and familial cultural differences (Hofstede, 2008).

In addition to cultural dimensions, we examined the concepts of low-context and high-context cultures, with their implications on communication styles in different social settings (Hall, 1959, 1966, 1976, 1983; Hall & Hall, 1990). We also explored the significance of being versus doing lifestyles, considering their impact on economic structures and individual aspirations. Furthermore, we addressed the variations between universalistic and particularistic cultures and loose and tight cultures, shedding light on how these factors influence political systems, natural resource management, and societal values.

Throughout this exploratory research, we highlighted the potential challenges arising from cultural differences in daily interactions and cross-national or cross-cultural cooperation. Recognizing the interplay of social norms, economic practices, political ideologies, natural resource management, and VBBN within cultural contexts; we emphasized the importance of cross-cultural awareness to foster effective communication, cooperation, and mutual understanding. By analyzing cultural dynamics through a multidimensional lens, this academic dialogue enriches our comprehension of cultural diversity's

complexity and underscores the significance of cultural intelligence for successful global interactions. Now that we've gone over cultural differences that describe the Latin American countries from which many of our HSI students may have come, the next section will focus on "*So What*?" We acknowledge a cultural difference, so how do we apply this knowledge in our classrooms?

THE WAY AHEAD

The United States is heading in a very negative direction, where the far-left talks incessantly about whiteness, white privilege, white fragility, and white supremacy as if their calendar is stuck on either 1492, 1619, or 1865 AD. So, the right has had a visceral reaction against the critical race theory's 'oppressor versus oppressed' narrative, and against a shift from multicultural inclusion to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives that are not seen as either diverse (in thought), equity (equal opportunity, not outcomes), or inclusive (e. g. affirmative action quotas). In addition, the insistence that there is "systemic racism" without multivariate empirical proof, does not emphasize individual agency or equality of effort (Baker, 2022; 2023a/b/c/d; 2024).

In my faculty senate, I have heard anti-white comments from academic peers, who promote themselves as enlightened. As a Latino who has lived in 35 countries across the globe, I have never witnessed any other country criticized as much as the United States by her own citizens, as well as recent immigrants. In short, throughout the United States many DEI programs and 'white supremacy hyperbole' from our elected officials, are dividing, not uniting the country (Baker, 2024a). It is my hope and aspiration that Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) do not condone or support this anti-American and/or anti-White rhetoric – after all, Cesar Chavez wrote that the "preservation of one's own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures" (Chavez, 2023). Unlike DEI, this statement conveys the idea that maintaining one's cultural identity does not necessitate hostility or disregard towards other cultures. It emphasizes the importance of respecting cultural diversity while also valuing and preserving one's heritage. As an aside, Chavez's United Farm Workers union in the 1960s and 1970s fought illegal immigration to protect the jobs and pay of U.S.–born Hispanics.

Our HSIs have become increasingly important with the influx of more than ten million immigrants during President Biden's administration, and our political, social, and economic apparatus has been ill-prepared. The first step in HSI's success is stopping the hyperbole or hate against the American majority, which merely creates more division. In addition, these are some of the current realities to which academics and businesses all need to adapt. Note that we use the term '*unauthorized aliens'* because that is terminology found in U.S. Statute – it is not considered a pejorative:

- According to Title 8, U. S. Code § 1324, subsection 1324(a)(1)(A)(i), it is illegal to bring aliens into the United States through any entry place other than a designated port of entry or another legal entry point, even if the aliens have been legally authorized to enter.
- A 2018 study by Yale reported the presence of over 22 million unauthorized aliens in the U.S. (Bernal, 2018); and between 2021 and 2024, CBP data estimates almost 10 million entered from Fiscal Year 2021 to FY 2024 (Resendiz, 2022; Blankley, 2023; CBP, 2024). This results in 32 million unauthorized aliens, about 10% of the U.S. population. Significant numbers of unauthorized aliens do not have high-school education (Hollinger, 2011).
- It is important to address misinformation and hyperbole. Far-left groups claim patriots on the right are anti-immigration, while the right consistently emphasizes support for legal immigration, but opposition to unauthorized aliens (e. g. illegal immigration). Factually, we recognize that the 9/11 attacks were caused by 19 immigrants, and today there are millions of unauthorized aliens without proper vetting. And there are concerns that illegal immigrants appear to be convicted of crimes such as homicide, sexual assault, and kidnapping at higher rates than the Texas State average (Kennedy, et.al., 2022). Between 2021 and 2024, U.S. nationwide convictions of criminal noncitizens by type of criminal conduct included: 4,150 for Assault, Battery, Domestic Violence; 2,948 for Burglary, Robbery, Larceny, Theft, Fraud; 7,232 for Driving Under the Influence (DUI); 169 for Homicide, Manslaughter; 7,239 for

Illegal Drug Possession, Trafficking; 27,195 Illegal Entry, Re-Entry; 1,076 for Illegal Weapons Possession, Transport, Trafficking; and 1,256 for Sexual Offenses (CBP, 2024b).

- The number of non-Mexican unauthorized aliens apprehended at the border nearly reached 1.5 million in 2022 (Buchholz, 2023). A potential backlash is predicted after Biden leaves office and there is a historical precedent, known as "Operation Wetback. "It took place between 1954 and 1955, and its primary focus was to locate and apprehend unauthorized aliens living and working in the United States.
- Pew Research found almost four in ten Americans (36%) hold positive views of socialism; but many people crossing the southern border are escaping socialist regimes, such as Venezuela under Chavez and Maduro. This should serve as a relevant teaching point in every HSI (Baker, 2021; 2023a).
- Hispanic Americans often speak out against 'systemic racism' and the legacy of slavery, but we should acknowledge Latino history. According to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, most slaves were brought to Latin America, not North America. The United Nations claimed that the U.S. owed reparations to Blacks due to slavery, but conveniently ignored that Latin America had 30 times more African slaves (12 million) and the Islamic Caliphates imported almost 44 times more slaves (17 million). Nor did the U.N. address the one million White Europeans enslaved in North Africa, or that African tribes were 'wholesalers' in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. As academics with integrity, we should not be liars or hypocrites in this issue (Sowell, 1994; Gates, 2017; Baker, 2023d).
- If the United States were to dissolve and divide into four countries based on race and ethnicity, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of White America would be second in the world after China. Hispanic-American GDP would be ranked #12 between Russia and Brazil, African-American GDP would be #16, higher than every country in Africa, and Asian-American GDP would be #19, just below Mexico. As a Latino community, we should stop incessantly criticizing the United States – overall, U.S.-born Hispanic Americans are the most prosperous and free Latinos in the entire world, with 1.6 million Latino/a millionaires (World Bank, 2021; Census, 2022; Baker, 2023a; Bell, 2023; Statista, 2022).
- The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo resulted in Mexico ceding a significant portion of its territory to the United States in exchange for $15 million as compensation for the loss of the territories and to settle claims of American citizens against the Mexican government, which accepted the $15 million as stipulated in the treaty, thereby finalizing the transaction. Addressing the myth that the United States stole land from Mexico as a mestizo, I concede the fact that Mexico lost, and the U.S. military emerged victorious: end of story! Let's move on and stop bashing our adopted country (LOC, 2023).
- Contrary to beliefs held by many in our indoctrinated left-leaning population, 'systemic racism' is not the primary cause of failure by minorities in academics or business. Out-of-wedlock births are the most significant predictor of generational or systemic poverty, leading to disparity issues in education, housing, healthcare, and wealth – not racism (Baker, 2023c).
- The non-stop propaganda of the dangers of white supremacy is not supported by fact. For instance, per capita Black-on-Black violent incidents are 283% higher than Hispanic-on-Hispanic violent incidents; and Black-on-Hispanic violent incidents are 319% higher than Hispanic-on-Black violent incidents; finally Hispanic-on-Whites violent incidents are 300% higher than vice versa. Whites and/or white supremacy are <u>not</u> the problem (Thompson, et. al, 2022; Baker, 2024). All these cultural cues are for naught if we do not agree to fact-based, unbiased discussions conducted with respect and good intent.

We examined the concept of *white supremacy*, and it became obvious that its definition and perception have been manipulated over time, leading to its common misuse today. What is now labeled as "white supremacy" is often an exaggerated interpretation of certain ideologies or individual acts. Concurrently, trends demonstrate a significant decline in <u>explicitly</u> white supremacist organizations or movements

worldwide; hence isolated incidents of racism should not be used to generalize an entire population or society. American citizens can point to efforts since the 1960s that ended systemic racism and promoted equality within various institutions, leading to increased inclusivity and protective laws for marginalized communities. Our changing demographics, brought about through massive immigration, have also contributed to a reduction in the influence of any single racial group to assert any degree of supremacy by race. Most Americans, irrespective of their racial background, reject racial supremacy and actively endorse tolerance and inclusivity, which was not true during the Jim Crow era (Baker, 2022, 2023a/b/c/d, 2024).

Given the current realities, HSI professors must prioritize facts over politically expedient hyperbole, which will enhance our credibility both in the eyes of the majority and within our ethnic communities. Yet, a concerning trend has emerged, where the term 'diversity' is reduced to a mere synonym for racial representation, reducing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goals to mere faculty and student quotas. Unfortunately, this approach often neglects the diversity of thought and the richness of various cultures.

Hispanics acknowledge that a U.S.-born Mexican-American's experiences are distinct from those of a Cuban-American who fled Castro's oppression and killings in Cuba, or a recent Venezuelan refugee fleeing Chávez's Bolivarian Republic and their repressive 21st Century Socialism (Baker, 2021). As a mestizo raised by an impoverished mother in a predominantly Black neighborhood, I celebrate the greatness of the United States for it is American culture that enabled me to become a first-generation college graduate, earn a doctorate, and now contribute to a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) – it has been a truly awe-inspiring journey (Baker, 2022).

Returning to the topic of culture, while theory provides valuable insights, its application in classrooms or businesses is what truly matters. As a highly-rated faculty member with positive feedback from Hispanic, Black, Asian, and White students alike, I offer the following tips for success:

1. Familiarize yourself with the physical, economic, social, political, and VBBN (values, beliefs, behaviors, norms) domains – understanding each student's background is more work intensive, but it helps tailor curricula for our students' success.
2. Learn about the four Hofstede dimensions, Hall's HC/LC, and the other cultural dimensions, as they shed light on the reasons contributing to students' behaviors in our classrooms.
3. Continue teaching about race and ethnicity but shift away from the negatively biased critical ethnic study focus to a more constructive approach. I recommend James A. Banks' '*Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies*' (2002), which helps teachers conceptualize, design, and implement a democratic, thoughtful, and just curriculum that reflects the experiences, hopes, and dreams of all Americans. "Critical Ethnic Studies" and "Constructive Ethnic Studies" are two different approaches to the study and teaching of ethnicity and cultural diversity as compared in this figure.

FIGURE 16
CRITICAL VERSUS CONSTRUCTIVE ETHNIC STUDIES

Critical Ethnic Studies	Constructive Ethnic Studies
Focus: Critical Ethnic Studies places a strong emphasis on analyzing and critiquing power structures, systemic inequalities, and historical injustices related to race and ethnicity.	Focus: Constructive Ethnic Studies aims to promote a positive and inclusive understanding of various ethnic and cultural groups. It seeks to celebrate diversity and promote harmony.
Critical Approach: It often takes a critical and sometimes confrontational approach to examining issues of racism, discrimination, and oppression. It may highlight problems in society and challenge the status quo.	Positive Approach: It takes a more positive and proactive approach, with a focus on mutual respect, empathy, and unity among students.

Division: Critical Ethnic Studies may sometimes frame the discussion in terms of oppressor versus oppressed, emphasizing the power imbalances between racial and ethnic groups.	Unity: Constructive Ethnic Studies encourages students to understand and appreciate one another, fostering unity and a sense of community among diverse groups.
Controversial Topics: It is more likely to delve into controversial and uncomfortable topics, including racism, systemic discrimination, and historical injustices.	Balanced Perspective: While it acknowledges historical injustices and discrimination, it often seeks to emphasize the contributions and achievements of various ethnic groups.
Political Ideology: In some instances, it may be associated with more progressive or left-leaning political ideologies.	Peaceful Solutions: It promotes non-violent and constructive solutions to societal issues and doesn't focus on confrontational or critical approaches.
Challenges: Critics argue that it can sometimes create divisions and overlook the potential for unity and constructive solutions.	Diverse Thinking: It is more open to diverse perspectives and encourages educators and students to think critically & explore different ideas.

4. Initiate a survey during the first week of your class to inquire how students identify themselves using social criteria (*you can make it optional*).
5. Use the *Cultural Context Inventory* developed by Dr. Claire B. Halverson to explore the low and high-context continuum, which can help determine the cultural perspectives of both you and your students at: https://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/pub/Context_Cultures_High_and_Lo.htm. This helped shift how I teach and assess, without the notion of giving unearned points based on one's hue.
6. Evaluate your grading criteria to ensure a balanced approach; your assessments could be equally based on individual quizzes or exams and group exercises. Avoid assigning points based solely on a person's race or ethnicity, but design culturally relevant classes and assessments that create bridges, not divides.
7. Develop practical exercises that emphasize our shared commonalities rather than focusing solely on our cultural differences e.g. out of 1800 students that I surveyed 99% agree to the concepts of don't **C**ovet, don't **L**ie, don't commit **A**dultery (*student definitions vary depending on marriage or singles*), don't **M**urder, don't **S**teal (CLAMS) – if we agree on basic values & beliefs, then the rest should be easy.
8. Teach students a 'victor' mentality, where they choose to succeed if they work and study hard. Emphasize the positive rather than harping on the negative victim mentality e.g. there are 1.6 million Hispanic millionaires, as well as 1.7 million Black American millionaires in the United States – success is attainable (Bell, 2023; Baker, 2024).
9. Politicized professors must abandon hyperbole in the classrooms and on campus, to return to fact-based research and teaching. In a 1948 speech at Morehouse College, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr said:

"A great majority of the so-called educated people do not think logically and scientifically. Even the press, the classroom, the platform, and the pulpit in many instances do not give us objective and unbiased truths. To save man from the morass of propaganda is one of the chief aims of education. Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal and the facts from the fiction. The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. " – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, 1948

10. Since the Supreme Court (2023) found affirmative action unconstitutional government-mandated systemic discrimination against Asians and White males in education, we must engage senior university leadership to proactively implement this ruling in Hispanic education with a shift from victim to victor foci. Woodard, et.al., (2024) proposed five conjectures for university leaders: predicting changes in research, revamped admissions processes, a ripple effect in hiring practices, scrutiny of the first Black Harvard president's actions, and the need for mandatory training to prevent legal deception by Ivy League schools.

Critical Ethnic Studies frames student evaluation based on skin color rather than character, conduct, or merit. It has faced criticism for creating a dichotomy between alleged oppressors and oppressed groups, fostering division among students of different races and ethnicities. Concerns have also been raised about its false association of capitalism with racism, sometimes without adequate acknowledgment of historical contexts, such as slavery in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. It has also been accused of portraying Marxist and Maoist governments in a positive light while disregarding the potential negative consequences of these Socialist regimes that resulted in the deaths of 100 million people (Courtois, et.al., 1999, p. 4). Critics argue that it may romanticize neo-Marxist figures known for violent actions while marginalizing the peaceful approaches of figures like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Furthermore, it has been cited as promoting a covert approach to teaching controversial subjects and favoring a far-left political ideology among educators, thereby limiting diversity of thought.

We recognize that individuals from any cultural or ethnic background, including Hispanics, can have some degree of unconscious or implicit biases. Unconscious bias is a natural part of human cognition and can manifest in various forms based on personal experiences, societal influences, and cultural contexts. Implicit biases are automatic judgments and attitudes that occur without conscious awareness. I have witnessed this among fellow Hispanics who unjustly target non-Hispanics for every ill in our community. Whether Conscious bias or Unconscious bias, this anti-White bias is a result of Critical Ethnic Studies. For example, Greene & Oesterreich (2012) call for a "radical revolution in Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) grounded in the ideological conviction that racism in education is structural, oppressive to all, and distinctly harming to students, staff, and faculty of color." This hyperbole does not bridge the divide between Hispanics and American Anglo-majority.

As a subset of Critical Ethnic Studies, DEI is divisive – a meta-analysis determined that many diversity training programs fell short of demonstrating effectiveness (Bezrukova, et.al., 2016). In addition, white job applicants think companies pushing diversity and inclusion is discriminatory. This negative view of DEI isn't just among job seekers—it's also shared by two-thirds of HR folks who run DEI programs. Hence, researchers and people doing the training agree that DEI might not improve harmony and tolerance – it could make them worse (Haskell, 2024a). Tesla CEO Elon Musk stated "D.E.I. must D.I.E.! The point was to end discrimination, not replace it with different discrimination." Researchers found that the rush to implement Diversity Training (DT) has outpaced evidence of its effectiveness. Research shows that DEI training can stir up or worsen prejudices, yet despite these findings, the investment in DEI programs and staff persists, despite evidence proving its inefficacy (Haskell, 2024b).

In contrast, Constructive Ethnic Studies is an educational paradigm that fosters student empowerment, promoting aspirations, resilience, and heightened engagement. It cultivates mutual respect, self-assuredness, awareness, intergroup comprehension, and empathy. This approach emphasizes the elevation of ethnic groups, their cultural backgrounds, and contributions while refraining from disparaging other demographic segments. Furthermore, it conscientiously addresses historical issues of racism and discriminatory practices. In its pedagogy, Constructive Ethnic Studies embraces a pluralistic view by presenting a spectrum of political perspectives and non-violent strategies for societal transformation. It equips students with the capacity to comprehensively grasp and evaluate divergent viewpoints and encourages the development of well-constructed, evidence-based arguments over using hyperbolic rhetoric.

Swain & Towle (2024) advocate for training that aligns with Constructive Ethnic Studies and should be embraced by all Hispanic Serving Institutes. They identify that organizations can never bring about reconciliation using a conflict model and that the current DEI training is a failure. They wrote:

"Our vision is designed to help leaders return to the basics of running an organization without dealing with the distractions and conflict that the DEI approach inevitably creates when it divides the workplace into warring affinity groups. Our goal is to equip these leaders with information on how they can achieve diversity without reaping divisiveness, how they can attain equal opportunity without the false promise of equity's equal outcomes, and how they can accomplish integration of individuals without the group demands of an inclusion model that encourages affinity groups (where identity groups self-segregate to gripe about their workplaces or learning environments). We respect the individual's autonomy and believe that talent is distributed without regard to race, sex, religion, or sexual orientation. This is part of returning to basics (Swain &Towle, 2024, p109-110).

Future Research and Training

The valid concerns surrounding critical race theory, anti-racism, and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives among many white individuals primarily revolve around constant blame and guilt, reverse discrimination, racial polarization, free speech as well as academic freedom issues, and cultural backlash. These concerns reflect varying interpretations and anxieties related to discussions on race and racism highlighting the complex nature of addressing racial issues in contemporary society.

Engaging in constructive dialogue and fostering a nuanced understanding of these concepts can promote inclusivity and effectively confront lingering inequalities. Racial fatigue is a phenomenon affecting people of all hues due to continuous and typically negative discussions on race and racism. It results from feelings of guilt, defensiveness, fear of saying the wrong thing, and heightened polarization in such conversations. Leaders, not managers, are needed to unfreeze employee defensiveness (Winter, et.al., 1997).

Resolving these issues in academia and businesses must involve the concept of reframing. Reframing is a widely recognized psychological and communication technique, which constitutes a pivotal approach in the fields of psychology, therapy, communication studies, and problem-solving. It entails the deliberate act of altering one's perspective or context to reinterpret a given situation, predicament, or issue. The primary objective behind reframing is to shift the cognitive focus away from negative or unconstructive interpretations, consequently facilitating the adoption of more affirmative and constructive outlooks (Ury, 1981; Fisher, 1991).

This cognitive restructuring process empowers individuals to reassess problematic scenarios from alternative angles, potentially unveiling positive aspects or novel opportunities that were previously obscured. In instances of interpersonal conflict or communication discord, the strategic implementation of reframing can identify areas of mutual understanding and foster collaborative problem-solving. By effectively challenging maladaptive thought patterns and broadening the scope of perception, reframing paves the way for adaptive responses and ameliorative resolutions to diverse challenges and predicaments. Per Ury (1981) and Fisher (1991) reframing helps change the way each party views the conflict situation:

1) Identifying whether the conflict is an adaptive or technical challenge refers to understanding whether the conflict requires a simple solution (technical) or a deeper change in attitudes and behaviors (adaptive).
2) Restating conflict positions in common interest terms involves finding shared interests between the parties rather than focusing solely on their opposing positions.
3) Changing complaints to requests encourages parties to communicate their needs and desires positively, leading to a more solution-oriented discussion.
4) Moving tense interactions from "blaming" statements to mutual-focused problem-solving statements helps reduce defensiveness and promotes collaboration.
5) Helping conflicted parties recognize the benefits of a win-win approach emphasizes the potential for mutual gains and fosters a cooperative mindset.

6) Encouraging parties to see the "bigger picture" in the conflict situation involves considering broader implications and long-term consequences, which can lead to more informed decision-making.

Conceptually, "reframing" is solidly in the realm of psychology, not business pedagogy, however, future studies on how reframing can improve workplace performance and students' success is essential and must be pursued via further research in applied management and organizational behavior.

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