An Exploration of Latin American Leadership
as Seen Through the Theoretical Models
of Charles Ramírez Berg and Juana Bordas

Joshua A. Maxwell

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This Research Honors thesis has been approved for
the McDonough Center for Leadership and Business and
the Honors and Investigative Studies Committee by

Dr. Robert McManus
Faculty thesis advisor
April 14, 2011
Date

Dr. Gama Perruci
Thesis committee member
April 14, 2011
Date

Dr. Brent Yorgason
Thesis committee member
(if applicable)
April 14, 2011
Date
Chapter One

Introduction and Methodology

In the United States today, Americans are more and more convinced that leaders can rise to political power from a variety of backgrounds regardless of race, sex, color or creed. The election of President Obama in 2008 is a testament to such a mindset. However, Obama’s success is not indicative of the achievement of all American minorities. While African Americans continue to gain leadership positions across the United States, Latinos have yet to fill a significant number of upper-level leadership positions despite their rising population.

This raises an interesting problem when one looks at how the demographics of the United States are predicted to change in the near future. A projection made by the Pew Research Center in 2008 indicates that by the year 2050, Caucasians will make up only 47% of the population and will no longer comprise a majority of the U.S. population, while Latinos will account for 29% of the population (Passel). With Latinos set to become a prominent part of the U.S. population in a fairly short amount of time, it is disconcerting to see the failure of Latinos to rise into positions of leadership.

A quick glance at the political landscape gives a glimpse at the challenges faced by Latinos. Susana Martínez, the Governor of New Mexico, is currently the only Latino governor in the United States. Martínez, who is the first Hispanic woman to be governor in the United States, took over the position from Bill Richardson, who is also Latino. This surprising statistic already shows that there is a large absence of Latino leaders in the political realm.

Another example is the *U.S. News and World Report*’s issue on America’s Best Leaders (ABL). This project, the result of a collaborative effort between Harvard University and *U.S. News and World Report*, is intended to create a list of individuals who “motivate people to work
collaboratively to accomplish great things” (ABL 2009, “How They Were Picked”). The final list of individuals, ranging from 20 to 25, has always included a wide range of leaders in terms of both sector and gender. However, if one looks at the list of selected leaders from 2006 to 2009, only one leader of Latino origin or descent, Miami Mayor Manny Diaz, can be found. The list has included leaders from several other minorities, including some leaders that were born in different countries. But only one Latino leader has been able to make the cut over the course of this four-year project. These examples show a startling lack of Latino leaders either achieving success or being recognized for quality work. An explanation of this trend may be that Latino leaders lack the capacity to effectively pursue or succeed in positions of leadership due to the need to cater to both their American constituency as well as the various Latino groups to which they relate. This possibility of a Latino double bind in the United States is a major focus of this study.

Exploring this nation-wide trend is initially daunting, as a significant amount of time and resources would be necessary to provide an in-depth, quantitative explanation for this trend. However, an analysis of this problem through a medium that pervades every corner of American culture already can help to show the country’s views on Latinos as leaders and make such a study more feasible. The medium to be used in this project is that of American films. Such a decision was made on the basis that the American film industry makes films with the goal of appealing to the largest audience possible for the purposes of making a profit. Paradoxically, many American films about famous Latino leaders have been made and were successful, yet there are few Latinos who have managed to ascend to positions of leadership in the United States.
Films are an appropriate medium for the analysis of cultural views because they are a part of American popular culture. Barry Brummett, in his book *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture*, defines popular culture as the aspects of culture that are “most actively involved in winning the favor of the public and thus in shaping the public in particular ways” (Brummett xxi). Brummett continues his argument by saying that films work to win the favor of the public through their rhetoric (Brummett xxi). This approach to popular culture is complimented by Sonja Foss’ definition of rhetoric, which describes rhetoric as “the actions humans perform when they use symbols for the purpose of communication” (Foss 4). Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, it is argued that films are a method of communication that attempt to shape public opinion in a particular way, making it a worthwhile medium to study American views of Latinos as leaders.

However, simply studying films will only provide how public opinion is trying to be shaped. This does not necessarily mean that they succeed in their attempt to shape peoples’ mindsets. In an attempt to find a correlation between what is being portrayed in film and what is happening in today’s society, a Latino leader in the United States will serve as a case study to test for a correlation between film portrayals and the public’s real perceptions of these individuals. For the case study chapter, new reports, speeches and campaign commercials will allow for a comparison between films and a tangible example.

Using rhetorical criticism is an effective way of proceeding through this analysis. Rhetorical criticism is the process of implementing a systematic process designed to study and explain the symbolic acts that are being used to convey meaning (Foss 6). Since it is impractical to study all of the rhetorical aspects of any one film or media piece, it is necessary to choose specific theoretical lenses that will allow for a focus to be made only on pieces of rhetoric that
are both relevant to the study and serve as the most effective means of answering the research question. With the main focus of this project being the portrayal of Latino leaders, the use of the following two theoretical lenses provide strong perspectives with which to analyze the films.

The first lens uses Juana Bordas’ three dynamic components of Latino leadership found in her article “Latino Leadership: Building a Humanistic and Diverse Society”. She states that through using the three components of personalismo, tejando lazos (also known as weaving connections), and desarrollando habilidades (also known as developing skills), Latinos have the potential to help create a “culturally accessible and compassionate society that values people and community before material wealth and individual advancement.” Bordas argues that this model serves as an ideal method of leadership to which all Latinos should aspire.

The second theoretical lens is from Charles Ramirez Berg’s book Latino Images in Film. In the book, he identifies six of the most commonly-held stereotypes that are used to characterize Latinos in American film. These six stereotypes are: El Bandido, the harlot, the male buffoon, the female clown, the Latin lover, and the dark lady. Each stereotype exemplifies the negative aspects in these archetypes and perpetuates these views throughout many films of this nature, as well as those selected for this study.

The two films in question are Che and Evita. This combination of films was selected out of a desire to achieve diversity across gender and style of leadership. The success of these films also played a role in their selection. In addition, the Latino leader that will be studied alongside the two films is Bill Richardson, the former governor of New Mexico. His selection was based on his leadership in the political realm, much like Che Guevara and Eva Peron, as well as his extensive media presence and the public belief that he was the first viable Latino candidate for president of the United States.
*Evita*, a 1996 film directed by Alan Parker, tells the story of Eva Perón (played by Madonna), an Argentine woman who rose from her childhood as a lower class citizen to become the first lady and spiritual leader of Argentina. At times, her rise up the social ladder was far from glamorous, but her success as a leader is irrefutable. *The San Francisco Chronicle* describes the film as “epic, lavish, and fascinating” (Roca). It also describes the film as “one of the great musicals of all time” (Roca). This is a good film for the study in that it provides a strong example of a government and a female leader.

*Che*, a 2008 film directed by Steven Soderbergh and starring Benicio Del Toro, is presented in two parts that last more than two hours each. The first half of the film chronicles Che Guevara’s planned overthrow of Fulgencio Bastista’s regime in Cuba. *Part Two* focuses on Guevara’s failed attempt to bring a revolution to Bolivia, which ultimately leads to his death. The film is not presented from an omniscient point of view, but rather from Che Guevara’s own perspective through the use of his own writings and journal. Roger Ebert, from the *Chicago Sun Times*, praises the film both in length and format. He also calls Benicio del Toro’s performance “heroic” (Ebert). Such a film provides a chance to analyze a portrayal of one of the well-known military leaders in contemporary Latin American history.

The study of the two films will provide a window into how they aim to shape American views of Latino leadership. By using the aforementioned theoretical lenses, the films will be critiqued to learn insights on what they attempt to communicate. Once complete, the same method of analysis will be applied to former Governor of New Mexico, Bill Richardson. Then, comparisons will be drawn across these films and the Richardson case study in an attempt to analyze American perceptions of Latino leaders and how these perceptions translate into potential leadership challenges for Latino leaders today.
Theoretical Formation

**Latino Leadership.** In Juana Bordas’ article “Latino Leadership: Building a Humanistic and Diverse Society,” she makes the argument that there are three dynamic components inherent in Latino leadership. She also states that with these components Latinos have the potential to help create a “culturally accessible and compassionate society that values people and community before material wealth and individual advancement” (Bordas 114). The three components in question are *personalismo* (personalism), *tejando lazos* (weaving connections), and *desarrollando habilidades* (developing skills) (Bordas 112). In addition, Bordas begins her analysis of Latino leadership by discussing what binds Latino culture together into one specific identity.

The first of these values is trust, or being able to “count on” someone and know that they are loyal (Bordas 115). Respect is another essential value, as Latinos respect those who are older, have more knowledge, or have a position with authority. The third value is the importance of being congenial, which can be done by being polite, being courteous, and showing an interest in the lives of others (Bordas 116). With these values forming the foundation of Latino cultural identity, the three dynamic components that Bordas describes emanate from this base.

The first of these dynamics, *personalismo*, discusses what an individual must do in order to become a person that people look up to and aspire to be (Bordas 117). This requires the leader to embody traits that are looked for by members of the community. It also requires the leader to ask questions of themselves such as, “what kind of person are you?” and “why do you do what you do?” Knowing the purpose of one’s work is also considered an important trait for a leader to establish early on (Bordas 117).

Another large aspect of this dynamic is determination, which means that a leader has to be willing to put in hard work in order to make any notable accomplishments (Bordas 119).
Latinos hold labor (and manual labor, in particular) in high regard. Leaders should not be afraid to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty. Elitism is highly counterproductive to Latino leadership. This hard-work mentality, coupled with a focus on the importance of service and giving, completes a summarized definition of personalismo (Bordas 119).

*Tejando lazos*, or weaving connections, is the second dynamic spoken of by Bordas. It identifies Latino leaders as “storytellers,” or individuals who must identify current needs and form a vision for their people (Bordas 121). They also fulfill this role by serving as a link to integrate history into the existing society, allowing for lessons to be learned by the masses (Bordas 121). However, it is also important for these leaders to understand how times are changing and recognize the societal challenges that await them (Bordas 121-122). This is particularly significant considering that the Pew Hispanic Center has predicted that Latinos will comprise one-third of the nation’s population by the year 2050 (Garland).

Bordas says that the preparation of oneself and bringing people together by emphasizing their culture are merely stepping stones to the final component of Latino leadership: *desarollando habilidades* – hereafter referred to as developing skills (Bordas 127). She describes this concept as working towards “concerted and collective action” (Bordas 127). To achieve this, Latinos must understand the complexities of communication on both a personal and widespread level (Bordas 128). The ability to “connect” is essential. In addition, Latinos follow the mantra of “knowledge is power,” which in this context describes knowledge built from practical experiences and life’s many challenges (Bordas 127). This refers back to the “hands on” mentality that Latinos like to see in their leaders (Bordas 129). Finally, this dynamic of developing skills also stresses the importance of uniting people with a consensus on the action to
be taken, as well as to pursue social changes and not be content with maintaining the status quo (Bordas 129).

**Latino Stereotypes.** As mentioned earlier, Charles Ramirez Berg’s book *Latino Images in Film* describes the six Latino stereotypes that are most commonly found in American film. Although these stereotypes are not seen in every film in which Latinos are portrayed, they represent a majority of interpretations seen in American film. In addition, the stereotypes do not exist in their own vacuum and are capable of coexisting.

The first of the stereotypes is “el bandido” (Berg 68). This represents the typical Mexican bandit, unkempt and possessing several scars, burns, or missing teeth. The individual is cruel, untrustworthy, and ruthless. His reliance on Spanish and his inability to speak English properly is skewed to reflect a level of low intelligence (Berg 68). Movies such as the 1995 film *Desperado* and the 1993 film *Falling Down* keep such a stereotype alive.

*El Bandido’s* corresponding stereotype is The Harlot (Berg 70). This stereotype tends to be a secondary character that is both lusty and hot-tempered. Without a man to give her attention, she is lost. If she sets her sights on a man and does not receive attention in return, she will retaliate to gain revenge (Berg 70). All of this behavior is driven by her passions, which are fueled by what Berg refers to as “inherent nymphomania” (Berg 71). This causes The Harlot to be depicted simply as a mindless machine, without any deeper motivations for this behavior being provided (Berg 71).

The next pair of stereotypes are more comedic in nature. The Male Buffoon is a simple-minded individual who is unable to master English (Berg 72). This stereotype is unusual in that it makes fun of existing Latino stereotypes such as *El Bandido* by adding a non-stereotype characteristic (such as a bandit who reads romance novels). This stereotype requires the
knowledge of existing stereotypes in order for the desired humor to work and thrives on the use of irony when portraying Latinos (Berg 73).

The Female Clown, the counterpart to the Male Buffoon, portrays a Latina whose sexuality has been effectively neutralized by her characteristics (Berg 73). These characteristics include a sullied or promiscuous image and a comical demeanor (Berg 73). In addition, these individuals appear to have a lower level of morality than others (Berg 75).

The final two stereotypes are both intense in nature. The first is the Latin Lover (Berg 76). This person is described as having a “smoldering” presence and a magnetic personality. This combination results in such an individual with a “primal sexuality” that is both sensuous and not at all typical of an Anglo. A romantic relationship with such an individual has a real chance of going “out of control” (Berg 76).

The Latin Lover’s corresponding stereotype is The Dark Lady (Berg 76). In Berg’s definition, the dark lady is described as aristocratic. In addition, she is also described as both virginal and inscrutable. Males are often fascinated by such women because of the “cool” distance that they keep with them. Described as “circumspect and aloof,” the dark lady is often interpreted as a reserved woman who leads men on in a way that other women cannot (Berg 76).

**Films – *Evita and Che***

*Evita* traces the life of Eva Duarte (later Eva Duarte de Perón) from a child of the lower class to becoming the first lady and spiritual leader of Argentina. Through the use of her relationships with men, she quickly rises through the ranks of both society and government. Her background allows her to strongly resonate with the working class while attracting the loathing of both the military and the upper class.
*Che*, which tells the life of Ernesto “Che” Guevara, is broken down into two parts. *Part One* focuses on the Cuban revolution and shows the arrival in Cuba of Che and a group of Cuban exiles. Over the course of two years, the film shows how they mobilized popular support for an army and led a coup to overthrow Fulgencio Bastista’s regime. *Part Two* covers Guevara’s attempt to bring revolution to Bolivia. With the help of Cuban volunteers, he works to build a guerilla army capable of combating the militarist movement in Bolivia. However, because of insufficient troops, supplies, public support, and personal health problems, Che enters a hopeless struggle that brings about his own demise.

**Justifications**

These films are chosen for a variety of reasons. The purpose is to allow for different backgrounds and environments. In addition, balancing aspects such as gender and type of leader are also important in considering each of these films.

*Evita* works as a case for several reasons. It showcases a leader who relied on political influence to both obtain and secure power as opposed to military force. In addition, it calls into question the importance of ethics both in regards to governmental rule and intimate relationships. The film also provides an example of a strong female leader who also exemplifies many Latin stereotypes found in cinema.

*Che* provides an opportunity to analyze a portrayal of a military leader. More so than *Evita*, *Che* prompts discussion on the Machiavellian tactics that Che Guevara employed to achieve his goals. His brand of leadership is decidedly more aggressive and violent, yet was done to lead a revolution for the peasants of both Cuba and Bolivia. Also, having a military leader in this study reinforces the importance of having a variety of leaders in this study.
Methodology

The methodology being used for this paper is rhetorical criticism. In Sonja Foss’ book *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*, she defines rhetorical criticism as “the process of systematically investigating and explaining symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes” (Foss 6-7). In order to specify what rhetorical processes are in need of review, two theoretical lenses are being used to focus on the leadership and stereotype information that are relevant to the study.

As mentioned earlier, there are two tools that will be used to examine these pieces of rhetoric. The first is the most common Latino film stereotypes as identified by Charles Ramirez Berg in his book *Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion, and Resistance*. The six stereotypes correspond strongly to Latino leaders and help identify different characters within the film. The second tool is the three dynamic components inherent in Latino leadership as defined by Juana Bordas in her article *Latino Leadership: Building a Humanistic and Diverse Society*. Bordas argues that these three components comprise the essence of a Latino’s leadership style, and that the use of them can help create an environment that values people and community over material wealth and the advancement of one’s career.

These tools will serve to draw connections between the films and identify stereotypical behaviors and or contradictions in commonly-held beliefs. Comparing the connections found across the two films will help identify stereotypes that consistently appear within them and possibly affect how people view Latino leaders in general. Finally, these frames will be applied to the speeches, news articles, and artifacts surrounding former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson. An analysis of him will show how these theoretical models may apply to a contemporary Latino leader.
Statement of Purpose

This project is meant to study how American films portray famous Latino leaders. More specifically, it is meant to provide insight into how Americans stereotypically view Latinos as leaders such as former Governor Bill Richardson. If these films are a part of American popular culture, it is worth studying what audiences may perceive as the normal patterns of leadership in which Latinos engage. If these views are negative, it could mean greater obstacles lie ahead of Latino leaders in the United States.

Leadership

Since the challenges of Latino leadership lie at the heart of this project, it is necessary to be clear on what is meant when the word “leadership” is used. Leadership, for the purposes of this article, subscribes to the definition used by the McDonough Leadership Program at Marietta College. In his summary of the five components of leadership, Dr. Gama Perruci defines leadership as “a process through which leaders and followers work together toward a common goal within an immediate environment while being influenced by the values and norms of a larger cultural context” (Perruci).

This definition is effective for the purposes of this paper for several reasons. First, it makes no assumptions about leaders, followers, or the environmental context (Perruci). This will be an important issue throughout the paper, as evidenced by Richardson’s controversial decisions and balancing act between multiple Latino complicating the role of the leader in the leadership process. Identifying the core components of leadership while recognizing their potential to evolve and change allows for an examination of the process as opposed to a strict focus on context. Having been a student in the McDonough Leadership Program for four years, one of the reasons I chose to use this model is because of my high level of familiarity with the model.
Sonja Foss, a noted scholar in the field of rhetorical criticism, gives a comprehensive definition of the word “rhetoric,” as well as delving into its four dimensions. In short, rhetoric refers to the actions that people do when they use symbols as a means of communication with each other. The four dimensions she describes are: “1) rhetoric is an action; 2) rhetoric is a symbolic action; 3) rhetoric is a human action; and 4) rhetoric functions to enable us to communicate with one another” (Foss 4).

When Foss says that “rhetoric is an action,” she means that rhetoric only occurs as the result of a conscious action (Foss 4). Involuntary or unintentional actions that people interpret as having meaning do not fall into the category of rhetoric, as it must be a conscious attempt to symbolically communicate (Foss 4). These rhetorical actions are considered symbolic only if the symbol does not carry a direct and physical relationship with the concept or idea being communicated. Foss uses the example of freezing water indicating a change in temperature as a symbol that is not rhetorical, as there is a clear and tangible relationship between the two concepts (Foss 4). Only symbols that are used to indirectly communicate ideas are considered rhetorical actions (Foss 5).

These symbols must also be of human origin, meaning that objects and events that occurred naturally cannot be analyzed, as they are actions performed by humans in an attempt to communicate (Foss 5). People can incorporate natural occurrences into their rhetoric, but cannot analyze the objects themselves. Finally, rhetoric enables human communication to occur, whether it be to persuade, to educate, or even for self-understanding (Foss 5).

In other words, rhetoric is a social function in which people both influence and manage the meaning of these symbols (Brummett xii). Such a definition includes forms of rhetoric most
commonly thought of such as speeches and essays, but also includes other forms of rhetoric such as film (Brummett). Defining rhetoric solely in regards to what it does allows us to focus on how it manifests its management of meaning into the real world.

**Latin American**

Fred Jandt provides a definition of “Latin American” that clarifies terms that are either overused or mistakenly used when identifying cultural groups. The term “Latin American” is often interchanged with several other terms such as Hispanic, Chicano, and Mexican American (Jandt 358). Whenever any of these terms are used, being clear as to what group of people is being identified can significantly alter the focus of any study.

In this case, the term “Latin American” refers to “Spanish-speaking individuals who came from, or whose ancestors came from, anywhere in Latin America” (Jandt 358). In addition, the term “Latino” is interchangeable with the term “Latin American.” Both terms are more commonly used in the Southwestern United States, but serve to focus attention on the group being studied (Jandt 358).

**Limitations of the Study**

This study has the potential to provide useful insights into Latino leadership. However, it is impossible for it be an all-encompassing study of every American film based on a Latin American leader or contemporary Latino leader. Such an endeavor would require a level of analysis on a more encompassing scale that lies beyond the scope of this project. This is why choosing a selection of films was of great importance so as to still allow the study to provide a significant range of information on this topic.

In addition, the focus on this study is on three leaders that have all operated within the political realm. Therefore, what applies to leaders in this area of leadership may not speak for
other fields. This does, however, create an opportunity for future research to be done on other Latino leaders within other occupations to see if the same methods of analysis produce similar results.

**Outline of Remaining Chapters**

The remaining chapters of this paper will follow a set structure. The following three chapters (*Evita*, *Che*, and Case Study: Bill Richardson) will contain three sections. The first will be an introduction of the subject, providing a plot summary and relevant information on the films while providing a background on Richardson’s own political career. The next section will present the theoretical lenses being used for each subject of analysis. The remaining two sections will focus on applying each theoretical lens to the subjects being studied. Following the case study chapter, a conclusion of the project’s findings will be presented.
Chapter Two

Evita

Introduction of the Film

The film *Evita* is based on the musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice. It tells the story of Eva Peron (played by Madonna), a political leader and visionary who was both loved and hated by many in the country of Argentina. The movie transpires, for the most part, in musical form and provides commentary through a character known as “Che,” played by Antonio Banderas.

After showing a glimpse of Evita’s glamorous funeral, the film shows her as a child who is barred entry to her father’s funeral. This is because Evita is an illegitimate child and comes from a low class family. However, at age 15, Eva leaves her village after meeting Agustin Magaldi, a traveling tango singer. He helps her move to Buenos Aires, where she begins to set out to achieve the life she wants.

In her quest to become a performer, actress, and public figure, she uses many men to elevate her social status. As soon as she meets a new man with greater potential for helping her, she disregards her current partner. She was known to have sexual relations with many of these men, all because she was using them for her own purposes. Evita continued with this lifestyle until 1944, when she met Juan Peron. Peron was an aspiring young army officer affiliated with the right-wing government at that time. Eva begins a relationship with Peron that quickly gives her many social benefits.

However, Peron eventually falls out of favor with the government and finds himself imprisoned. Eva uses her celebrity status and her radio programs to cultivate a large amount of support for Peron, which eventually results in his freedom. Her continued support of Peron not
only results in their marriage, but also plays an important role in Peron becoming the new President of Argentina.

Upon Peron becoming the President, Eva is under the impression that the upper class will treat her with more respect. However, the opposite happens and they do everything they can to exclude her. As a form of retaliation, she reroutes government funds from society-led charities and founds the Eva Peron Foundation. Through the foundation, Eva works to directly benefit the countless poor and working masses of Argentina. In addition, she works to achieve suffrage for women. Her successes, coupled with her origins, results in her being adored by the poor and the working class.

At the height of her fame and success, Evita was loved by the masses and seen as a savior to the less-fortunate in Argentina. However, it is at this same height that she passes away from uterine cancer at the age of 33. The public react strongly and mourn her death, seeing it as the end of someone they loved dearly.

**Theoretical Lenses**

As mentioned earlier, the rhetorical critique of these films will be done using two theoretical lenses. The first focuses on the core components of Latino leadership as defined by Juana Bordas. In her article on the subject, she presents the kind of culture and leader that Latinos are looking for, and provides three components (*personalismo*, weaving connections, and developing skills) that form the basis of effective Latino leadership.

The second lens focuses on the recurring stereotypes that are used to portray Latinos in a variety of American films. These six stereotypes, identified by Charles Ramírez Berg, are *el bandido*, the harlot, the male buffoon, the female clown, the latin lover, and the dark lady. Each
male/female pair of stereotypes provides a plethora of negative stereotypes that recur throughout American films that portray Latinos.

These two theoretical lenses will be applied to both the two films as well as Richardson. A detailed analysis of all three cases using the same lenses of analysis will allow for a comparison to be made across the two films as well as the gap between film interpretations and real life scenarios.

**Application of First Theoretical Lens**

In a study of how Latino leadership is viewed, studying general film stereotypes of Latino leaders can be as insightful as examining and applying a given theory or model of leadership. In this case, Eva Peron is strongly portrayed in accordance with two types of typical stereotypical behavior. In the beginning, she starts off as “the harlot,” yet slowly progresses into the unmistakable “dark lady” as the film goes on.

In the early portions of Eva Peron’s life, many similarities to “the harlot” can be seen. The earliest point of Eva’s adult life that we are shown provides us with a glimpse into her relationship with Augustin Magaldi, a well-known tango singer. The movie’s narrator, Che, said that Magaldi was the first man “to be of use.” In this sense, Che is referring to the fact that Eva frequently slept with men to work her way up the social ladder.

Throughout this scenario involving Magaldi, we see Eva act as “the harlot” in several ways. The moment that Magaldi begins to try and leave to go back to his wife, Eva begins to beg and plead for him to stay with her and to take her to Buenos Aires. She can’t imagine what life would be like without having Magaldi. However, Magaldi soon realizes that Eva’s interests are not only for him. During their visit to a drinking establishment, Magaldi awkwardly sits at the bar while Eva begins to dance promiscuously with several men. In a fit of both defeat and
frustration, Magaldi returns to both his wife and children (of which Eva is surprised), leaving Eva wondering “what happens now.” She begins to look lost and starts asking, “where should I go?” Like the stereotypical harlot, Eva no longer has a sense of identity without a man to both support her and give her what she needs, both physically and monetarily.

This separation marks the beginning of a long series of primarily sexual relationships between Eva and a variety of men. At first, this behavior occurs out of a need for survival. It starts with her talking and dancing with every interested male she comes across. To those unaware of her desire to climb the social ladder, she appears to exemplify the harlot and acts as a mindless machine devoid of higher motivations or a sense of greater purpose.

However, her discovery by a local photographer quickly changes Eva’s motives. She stays with the photographer long enough to make it into several magazines across the city, causing her to become noticed by several other men. Once she finds one that surpasses the photographer’s socio-economic status, she brings him back to her room while walking by the photographer himself. As the photographer looks upon the two of them with sadness, Che tells him “goodnight and thank you, whoever,” mirroring Eva’s own thoughts on how she views him now. Che then hands him his bag and sends him on his way. On his way out, Eva says to the
photographer that while it is sad “when a love affair dies,” there is not a lover who doesn’t focus on how they can be supported and kept by another. This statement by Eva shows the beginnings of her transformation into Berg’s dark lady, as characterized by her “opaque” and deceptive nature (Berg 76).

The rotation of men in and out of Eva’s life continues. Very little cultivation of an actual relationship happens with any of them. As more and more of these men find themselves replaced by people they themselves introduced to Eva, Che tells them that while “we’d love you to stay, you’d be in the way,” followed by a gesture to leave. Soon after, a collection of all the men she has been with are gathered in song, lamenting that this was a “club I should never have joined.” They proclaim that “Argentine men call the sexual shots. Someone has altered the rules.” Through her numerous relationships with these men, Eva was able to elevate herself from model to radio personality to actress.

While some of her behaviors during her rise to greater fame may still be considered indicative of the harlot stereotype, Eva’s foray into relationships with military personnel marks a definite switchover in stereotypes from the harlot to the dark lady. As she begins dating people in the military hierarchy, she begins to attend many of the upper class social functions. At these functions, she is always dressed “to the nines” and appears like those who have reached the higher echelons of the social class structure. Her entire demeanor and attitude have come far since the young woman who was roaming various establishments in search of a man with which she could stay. Now she is more confident and sure of her growing superiority, adopting an aristocratic attitude towards those she now considers beneath her. Berg uses such an attitude to describe the dark lady, describing the stereotype as one that is “aloof” and prone to keeping people below her at a distance (Berg 76). This is evidenced her encounter with Magaldi, during
which she says to him that “your act hasn’t changed much.” This statement serves as an affirmation of Eva’s new viewpoint that she is now of a higher social standing and of her progress from then to now.

However, Magaldi’s response to Eva’s remark is also telling. While Eva tells him that his act hasn’t changed, he replies by saying “neither has yours.” Malgaldi’s remark indicates that he still believes Eva to be a harlot-esque person, despite Eva’s self-perception that she is no longer a member of the lower class or one who could be compared to Berg’s harlot stereotype. This contradiction of how Eva views herself versus how others view her is seen again later during her conversation with an Admiral on her “Rainbow Tour” of Europe to showcase the “New Argentina.” During one of her stops, Eva takes offense to an individual calling her a whore and is in disbelief that someone would refer to her with such a term. However, the Admiral tells her “it’s an easy mistake. I’m still called an Admiral though I gave up the sea long ago.” It is another case of Eva seeing herself as more of a dark lady, while others still remember and perceive her to be a harlot.

She remains distant with all of the men at these social functions out of a desire to stay with her current man until she finds an even better one: Juan Peron. Up until this point, she had
been staying exclusively with her current lover throughout every social event they attended together. She is shown as constantly being by his side. However, upon seeing Peron alone at a benefit concert for hurricane relief, she takes advantage of the situation and introduces herself, lying and saying that she came to the concert alone as well. She soon leaves with him and positions herself to be his new lover.

Her relationship with Peron further perpetuates the dark lady stereotype. Eva walks into Peron’s bedroom and harshly tells the woman that Peron had paid to sleep with that she is no longer needed and that she can now go. It is this action that relates Eva strongly to the dark lady. The woman is devastated and doesn’t know where to go, just as Eva once was. We see Eva compared to her old stereotype, allowing us to see again the sharp change that has taken place.

Eva, once a seemingly desperate and promiscuous woman with hidden plans of her own, demonstrates her air of superiority despite having been in the exact same position in which the prostitute is currently.

While Eva fits a majority of the dark lady stereotype, the only aspect that she does not share is that of being pure. This is a direct result of Eva’s previously long list of sexual encounters. Interestingly enough, this is the biggest point against her that many upper class people and military personnel use to criticize Eva and her role in the government of Juan Peron. Regardless of how Eva views herself or how much work she puts in for the people of Argentina, both the upper class and the military constantly refer to her as a “whore” and continually accuse her of having ulterior motives.

For Eva, her entire life has gone from a poor, unknown woman to an upper class woman who became the first lady of Argentina. Just as her social status underwent a drastic change over the years, so did her own behaviors as a woman. This shift in behaviors was from Berg’s harlot...
to his dark lady stereotype. As her harlot-like relationships with men led her up the social ladder, she slowly transformed into a female leader certain that her place in society is increasingly higher than that of others. However, even though Eva continues to view herself as aristocratic, there are still many in both Argentina and abroad that will call her a whore and remember the harlot whose strategies helped her get to where she did in Argentine society.

**Application of Second Theoretical Lens**

In Juana Bordas’ writings on the dynamics of Latino leadership, she says that Latinos who can exemplify her descriptive components of Latino leadership can help create a “culturally accessible and compassionate society that values people and community before material wealth and individual advancement” (Bordas 112). By focusing on *personalismo*, weaving connections, and developing skills, Latinos can achieve this objective. The depiction of Eva Peron in the film *Evita* shows some parts of this outcome to be true in that Eva tries to show the value she and the government places on people and community through her outreach programs. However, this depiction also shows Eva’s shortcomings as a Latino leader due to her inabilities to relate to all the peoples of Argentina, as well as because of her personal motivations for some of her apparently philanthropic actions.

The first component of Bordas’ model, *personalismo*, reflects Latin America’s people-based approach to everyday life. Richard Lewis identifies specific traits related to this aspect of Latin American culture in his book, *When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures*. Specific traits include a belief that people are more important than rules, a firm understanding of human values, and an emphasis of idealism over materialism (Lewis 523). In a group setting, Argentines in particular have more complicated meetings, as small talk and level of persuasive skill serve as a backbone for communication (Lewis 530). This concept of having the innate
ability to relate and work with large groups of people is an invaluable skill and relates to Bordas’ statement that “Latino leaders relate on a people and personal level first” (Bordas 117).

Eva does exceptionally well with this concept in regards to the lower class. In one example, Eva solidifies the view of herself to the Argentine people following the election of Juan Peron as president. After Juan Peron gives his opening address on the night he was elected, the crowd begins to cry “Evita.” Eva, answering the call, approaches the balcony of the Casa Rosada and sings the famous song “Don’t Cry for Me Argentina.” Following this address, she continues to address the crowd. By saying that “I was once as you are now,” the people resonate with Eva in the hope that they can reach similar kinds of success in their own lives.

However, she does not stop there. Eva works to craft her image in the best way possible so that the working class will adore her. She has her entire wardrobe overhauled during a lengthy fitting session, explaining her reason for doing so by saying, “I come from the people; they need to adore me.” This statement reflects Eva’s opinion that for her to succeed in her political pursuits, she must present an image to be admired and sought after. She states that los descamisados expect her to “outshine the enemy,” adding further purpose to the creation of her “dazzling” look that was born out of designer fashions.\(^1\)

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{This aforementioned aspect of personalismo relates to Kenneth Burke’s concept of consubstantiality. He defines the concept as synonymous with identification, where people begin to identify and define themselves with and/or against such things as people, ideas, property and values (Foss, et al, 192). This relates back to personalismo’s concept of a leader needing to become a person that people look up to and wish to be. In this case, Eva wishes to be that defining force in lives of the descamisados. While Burke states that there are three primary ways in which identification happens, Eva focuses on using joint interests as a means of identification (Foss, et al, 192). We see this through the telling of her own life story as well as through her wardrobe makeovers. However, she does also foster identification with the working class to a smaller extent through providing her and them with the common enemy of the upper class.}\]
For Eva, this common enemy becomes a larger issue for her after being rejected by the upper class. As a result, she ceases to make efforts to reach out to this sector of Argentine society. In one of the final scenes of the film where Eva dances with “Che,” she admits to not caring about the bourgeoisie, saying that she is “not in business for them.” With her sole focus on los descamisados (the shirtless), she has discarded the upper and middle classes and has given up being proactive in becoming a leader that those groups of people wish to be like. This reveals a weak point in Eva’s leadership as she is unable to gain their support.

This relates to another concept of personalismo that calls for leaders to embody the traits looked for by members of their community. Unfortunately, Eva shows a lack of strength when it comes to attaining the traits that are viewed desirable among the upper class. While part of this problem lay outside of Eva’s control and in the hands of a stubborn upper class, she consciously recognizes this by stating at a fundraising event that “the actress hasn’t learned the lines you’d like to hear.” She then states that she will not join their clubs or dance in their halls, cementing the divide that exists between her and the upper class. The clear physical separation between her and the upper class at the end of the fundraising scene is very symbolic of the actual separation that exists in her life and prevents her from being able to establish an environment of trust or respect, both of which are important for a Latino leader to have (Bordas 115).

However, Eva does reach a certain level of success with the general female population of Argentina. She travels across Argentina rallying for the right of all women to vote. With Eva serving as the model of an independent woman, she convinces women to fight for the right to be voters and also to fully support Juan Peron in his continued political pursuits. In this instance,
she embodies traits for which all women are looking, such as independence, confidence and personal ambition.  

While Juan Peron’s history of aiding the working class helped him gain their support, he paled in comparison to Eva, who was able to ignite their passion for change by showing that she was just like them. Her personal determination to succeed in life and make her own way shows that she is willing to do what is necessary to achieve results. As such, the working class felt they both understood her and trusted that what she said would actually happen.

Her determination to help los descamisados reaches its apex with the creation of her own foundation designed to make their dreams become a reality. Eva uses all of the resources at her disposal to acquire money to distribute to the members of the working class. As Che described it, all that would need to be done was writing one’s dream on a piece of paper and then throw it in the air. If Eva caught it, then that person’s dream would come true. This caused the working class to continue to adore her even more than before, further cementing Eva’s cult following. Her hard work and emphasis on service and giving capture another side of personalismo.

However, personalismo is only one part of the puzzle of Latino leadership. The second component, weaving connections (tejando lazos) refers to the leader as a “storyteller.” This component emphasizes the importance of identifying needs, setting a vision, integrating history,

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2 Her husband, Juan Peron, also experiences some success in the ability to embody desired traits. One of his most reoccurring “gimmicks” that occurs in the film once he is president is the removal of his jacket and the rolling-up of his sleeves in front of a large group of people. This provides a physical symbol to the people that he is similar to them to some extent. He carries this concept further by telling the Argentine people that “we are all workers now.” These actions by Juan Peron also relate strongly to determination, which is the final piece to the component of personalismo. Followers of Latin America want to know that their leaders are willing to “get their hands dirty.” Peron’s rolling-up of his sleeves is symbolic not only of his connection to the working class, but also of his willingness to dig deep and find ways of helping the descamisados. Ironically, it is Eva that helps them more than her husband in the long run.
and recognizing a change in the times.³ Eva once again proves her ability to the people of Argentina. In her speech following the election of Juan Peron, she uses the story of her life to relate herself to the people. She talks about her “wild days” and her “mad existence.” This sharing of a personal story provides a lesson to the people that social mobility that can be done and has happened. Yet she is quick to emphasize that regardless of her success, she will always be there for Argentina by saying “the truth is I never left you.”

By telling the people of her personal history and struggle to get to this point in her life, she links the history of both herself and Argentina to the current needs and desires of the Argentine people. The integration of history, the identification of the needs of the present, and having a vision of what can be done are two abilities that Bordas says are a part of the ideal Latino leader (Bordas 121). As her speech to the people continues, Eva begins to describe a potential vision for Argentina.

She does this by telling los descamisados that Peron is marching with them and then paints a picture of Argentina as a great nation that is “awakening.” She also provides them with a tangible aim of taking the riches from the oligarchs. Not only does she recognize and draw attention to the needs of the people, but she also provides them with a vision that they can conceive of and believe to be possible. Eva’s foundation serves as another way of showing los descamisados her commitment to their needs by providing them with the funds necessary to accomplish their personal goals, whether they are for survival or goals such as education.

In addition, her ability to recognize critical moments of change was a strength of hers that was amplified by her large influence as both an actress and a radio personality. When Juan

³ We see the concept of weaving connections occur early in the film when Juan Peron holds a benefit concert. Following a large earthquake, Peron quickly reacted to the situation by identifying the current needs and then provided a vision of how Argentina can recover from such a natural disaster.
Peron was imprisoned by the military, she uses her fame and influence to rally a large amount of political support from the working class. At one point in the film, inside Peron’s jail cell, he talks to Eva about the notion of leaving everything behind and saying that they could be “sipping cocktails on a terrace.” However, Eva describes this as a “nightmare” and then says they have the potential to take the country. Because of this faith in the call for a change in of government, Eva is able to get Peron released with the help of the working class, eventually leading to his election as president later. Other movements such as the right of women to vote also show Eva’s ability to recognize crucial times for action in the political world.

The final component of Latino leadership, developing skills, is an action-oriented concept. The ability to motivate a group towards a collective effort backed by their own consensus and a desire to shake up the status quo is considered a hallmark of this component of leadership. This is the component in which Eva excels the best.

Bordas describes one of the roles in developing skills as that of a communicator. Throughout the film, it is easy to see the ways Eva understands how to communicate with people both on a personal and wide-spread level. Bordas further details what it means to be an effective communicator by describing such a person as being able to hold “lively and animated conversation” as a means of not only communication, but of entertainment as well (Bordas 128). Bordas then emphasizes the importance of charisma as a trait, as well as the need for Latinos to connect to each other. Both of these concepts, in particular, are consistent with the aforementioned study conducted by Richard Lewis.

A prime example of her effectiveness is the actions she took to secure Peron’s freedom after he was arrested. Eva used her position in her radio program, spoke at several rallies, and told the story of how only one man, Peron, can help Argentina. Throughout all of these scenes,
she speaks with an unmistakable passion for both Peron and his cause, all the while being animated with both her language and her gestures in all of her speeches (even when on the radio). These actions, combined with her strengths in personalismo, helped her secure Peron’s release and were instrumental in him getting elected president.

Another vital aspect of developing skills is the ability to bring about collective efforts and work towards a group consensus. In this regards, Eva faces many difficulties. While her ability to resonate with the workers and achieve a consensus within that group cannot be argued, Eva is never able to cultivate any kind of consensus that transcended all of Argentina’s social classes. From the moment she steps into the spotlight as Peron’s mistress, her background alone makes such a task difficult from the start. Her statement that “we will take the riches from the oligarchs” singled out the upper class and invited conflict rather than promoted a collective effort. However, it is her refusal to work with the upper class following her disagreements with them at several fundraisers that ended any chance of her being able to fully unite Argentina.

Despite this setback, Eva is very effective in bringing about collective action among los descamisados. The creation of the “Foundation Eva Peron” provided the working class with a tangible result that had come out of Eva’s many efforts that some believe have been done for her sole benefit. Regardless, countless people flooded the gates of the foundation and Eva became heralded even more than before and gained a greater ability to rally people to her causes.

In summary, Eva is very successful in exemplifying a majority of the leadership components that are advocated by Juana Bordas. She demonstrates personalismo through her ability to relate to the working class as well as with a careful focus on physical image. She also works to embody desired traits in her followers through her role in women’s suffrage and the foundation she helped create for the working class. Her ability to weave connections is evident
through her the telling of her story from a lost girl to the first lady of Argentina. In addition, her ability to recognize key points of social change (i.e. the demand for Peron’s release and for a “new Argentina”) allowed her to capitalize upon the success of current thoughts and issues. Developing skills is the one component with which Eva struggles, as she is unable to unify multiple social classes together into a collective action. However, she does succeed in this effort within the working class itself, providing Peron a large amount of political support and giving the working class hope for future improvements in their quality of life. While many have questioned Eva’s ethics and motives, her results are undeniable and consistent in many ways to the ideal form of Latino leadership.

**Conclusion**

In the film *Evita*, Eva is shown to be a strong Latin American leader who experienced a radical transformation in both who she was and her place in society. She started off as a member of the lower class and found herself living off of her relationships with men as a means of survival. However, she used these relationships to her advantage and made her way through social circles, eventually leading to her role as the First Lady of Argentina.

An analysis of the film using Charles Ramírez Berg’s Latino stereotypes shows Eva being portrayed as a woman who firmly existed as a harlot. This is evidenced by her numerous sexual relationships, without which she is shown as being helpless. She eventually sets out to transform her social image through the use of influential men, desiring to be a woman who is characteristically similar to the dark lady. In her effort to become a successful woman who is a member of the upper class and superior to her origins, she creates a glamorous image for herself as Argentina’s First Lady.
However, no matter how much she tries to consciously embrace these characteristics, she fails to escape the continuous name-calling of many people. Instead, some still see Eva as the harlot who used her body to elevate her to place in society. Despite Eva being trapped between the aristocrat she wants to be and the harlot that she was, she is still shown to have become a dark lady in that she achieved a level of distance and aristocracy.

When *Evita* is analyzed using Bordas’ Latino leadership components, Eva is shown to be portrayed for the most part as an effective leader. In regards to *personalismo*, Eva demonstrates her skill in this area during her speech on the night that Peron was elected, giving *los descamisados* a vision and a cause for which to rally. She does this in part by sharing her own story and embodying the kind of leader for which people are looking. During her time in the Argentine government, she also works on creating an image that her followers will “adore” by glamorizing herself.

However, Eva’s inability to permanently shed her harlot image impacts her ability to be a leader that can fully employ Bordas’ *personalismo* concept. Although Eva sees herself to be similar in standing to the upper class, they do not share her opinion and shun her from their social circle. This prevents Eva from being able to relate to them any further and limits her actions within the political realm to a degree. She also experiences problems of this nature during the Rainbow Tour of Europe as people call her a “whore” as a reminder to the lifestyle she once had that led to her current place in society.

Her ability to weave connections is noted several times during the film. One strong instance of this is again when she addresses the crowd on Peron’s election night. She talks about her life and then identifies the needs of the Argentine people, to which she receives thunderous applause. During Peron’s imprisonment, Eva shows her strength in recognizing critical moments
of change and utilizes her radio and actress influence to not only secure Peron’s release, but also puts him in the ideal position to become the next president of Argentina.

Her ability to be an effective communicator on a small and large scale in the aforementioned example is also a reason why Eva excels in Bordas’ component that focuses on developing skills. Although she failed to spur collective action with the help of the upper class, she succeeded in mobilizing *los descamisados* with the Foundation Eva Peron and engaged Argentine women in the political process by assisting them in obtaining the right to vote.

Eva succeeded with *los descamisados* in overcoming her negative, stereotypical persona of her youth and being embraced as a political leader and visionary for Argentina. However, because of Eva’s problems with the upper class, she was never able to become the ideal Latino leader for which Bordas is looking. Although she was an effective Latino leader according to Bordas in many respects, her similarity to many negative Latino stereotypes identified by Berg prevented her from reaching her true potential.
Introduction of the Film

*Che* is a two-part film that came out in 2008. Directed by Steven Soderbergh, it stars Benicio del Toro in the title role. The two parts of the film, *Part One: The Argentine* and *Part Two: Guerrilla*, focus on two distinct moments in Che Guevara’s life. *Part One* shows Guevara and Castro’s efforts to liberate Cuba from beginning to end, while *Part Two* focuses on Guevara’s failed attempt to bring revolution to Bolivia and how it brought about his ultimate demise. While *Evita* focuses on both historical events and the title character, *Che* focuses heavily on the main protagonist’s character and little on the significance of particular events in history. Roger Ebert praised the film on avoiding the tendency of many depictions of Che Guevara to define him “either as a saint of revolution, or a ruthless executioner” (Ebert).

In *Part One: The Argentine*, the film’s opening sequence is a series of scenes that switch between 1955 and 1964. It begins in 1964 during an interview with Che by Lisa Howard, who asks him if reforms throughout Latin America would result in a weakening of the “message of the Cuban revolution.” Before an answer is made, the film goes back in time to 1955 and depicts the first meeting between Guevara and Fidel Castro. It is at this point where Guevara agrees to join the July 26th Movement after listening to Castro’s plans to overthrow Cuba’s dictator, Fulgencio Batista. The film then flashes back to 1964, showing Che Guevara deliver an aggressive speech to the United Nations General Assembly. His speech condemns “American imperialism” and stands up for the executions that have taken place under his and Castro’s leadership.
After the opening sequence, the film shows events in a chronological pattern, starting with a series of violent skirmishes from March of 1957 onward. Che shows his expertise in both fighting and strategy as he leads troops into battles that range from an early attack on an army barracks in the Sierra Maestra to one of the final battles of the Cuban Revolution that became known as the Battle of Santa Clara. During Guevara’s military campaign, he had to cope with severe bouts of asthma that at times rendered him unable to fight. Despite both personal and combat-related setbacks, Guevara helps lead his men to victory, saying “we won the war, the revolution starts now.”

In *Part Two: Guerilla*, the structure of the film changes and now focuses on key days of Guevara’s time in Bolivia. The second half opens with a television broadcast by Fidel Castro, during which he reads a letter to the Cuban people from Che Guevara. In the letter, Che announces his resignation from his positions, rank and Cuban citizenship, informing Castro that he is leaving to assist other countries that have requested his assistance with revolutionary efforts.

This leads Guevara to Bolivia under the guise of a representative of the Organization of American States. Upon successfully infiltrating the country, he goes into the mountains to unite with his troops and begins to coordinate Bolivia’s revolution. Guevara quickly establishes a rapport with most of his troops, however his greatest challenge is keeping the Cuban and Bolivian troops from fighting each other. The revolution is further complicated by a variety of factors. The first of these is his failed attempts to recruit peasants, some of whom are mistaking Che for a cocaine smuggler. He and his troops are also suffering through food shortages, as well as continued infighting.
While these problems continue, the Bolivian army begins to close in on Guevara’s whereabouts, discovering one of his old base camps shortly after a majority of troops had evacuated that site. This situation is worsened when Tania Bunke, Guevara’s connection to the revolutionary efforts, accidentally gives away the group’s identities and nullifies years of planning. Despite these setbacks, Guevara forges ahead with his plans of revolution.

More skirmishes take place between Guevara’s forces and the Bolivian army, resulting in both casualties and prisoners on both sides. However, Guevara’s biggest defeat comes from the massacre of several key members of his group by the Bolivian army. This situation, combined with Guevara’s increased problems with his asthma, lead to his capture and eventual execution by Bolivian forces. In the final scene of the film, Che Guevara’s body is loaded onto a helicopter and it flies out to an unknown destination.

Application of First Theoretical Lens

There are many Latino-centric films in American popular culture that one can look at and immediately identify as stereotypical (i.e. Desperado (1995), The Mask of Zorro (1998)). The film Che does not fall into that category. However, to the untrained eye, Che’s portrayal in this film may easily be described as stereotypical. While there are some stereotypical identifiers present such as Che’s physical appearance and manner in which he accomplishes his objectives, there is also a lack of correlation between many of Che’s behaviors and the stereotypes that Charles Berg’s book, Latino Images in Film, has stated are most commonly seen in American films.

The stereotype that can be most closely associated with this portrayal of Che Guevara is that of el bandito. To review, el bandito represents the typical Mexican bandit. Berg describes this individual as “dirty and unkempt, usually displaying an unshaven face, missing teeth, and
disheveled, oily hair. Scars and scowls complete the easily recognizable image” (Berg 68). The personality of this stereotype is one that is cruel, untrustworthy and ruthless (Berg 68). In addition, his inability to speak English is viewed as an indicator of low intelligence (Berg 68). Although this stereotype is not a perfect fit for Che Guevara, there are a great many characteristics that both Che and *el bandito* share.

Che’s physical appearance is one that exemplifies Berg’s Latino stereotypes. For example, Che’s hair (including facial hair) is always untamed and running wild. Across his face and body lie scars from Guevara’s numerous encounters. Whether he is out fighting in the woods with his troops or in New York presenting to the United Nations General Assembly, his appearance remains, for the most part, constant. Exceptions to this rule occur both in Che’s youth when he met Fidel Castro in 1955, as well as when he disguised himself as a representative of the Organization of American States. In these situations, Guevara shows the ability to give off the image of an upstanding, well-groomed individual.

Che’s similarities to this stereotype do not end at physical appearances. In many ways, Che’s way of accomplishing his tasks correlates well to the types of behaviors to which *el bandito* is prone. In particular, these behaviors are most easily witnessed when Che interacts
with his troops. For example, Che’s handling of two delinquent soldiers during the Cuban Revolution shows both cruelty and ruthlessness. One soldier is accused of deserting his post, terrorizing townspeople for food, and stealing from the poor, all of which resulted in Batista’s army torturing and killing peasants. The other is accused of impersonating a *comandante* and raping the teenage daughter of an important Cuban leader. Guevara tells both of these men that the punishment for these actions is death. He then takes them further into the woods and has his men shoot both of them. There is no debate, second chance, or the opportunity to explain their actions. These cruel and vicious acts directly correspond to Berg’s observed stereotypical behaviors of a “bandit” and are shown to be a staple of his personality throughout the film.

Che’s cruel methods of discipline continue throughout his campaign in Cuba. Before venturing deeper into the country, Che offers any troops who wish to back out of the revolution and leave the opportunity to do so. He makes this offer because he knows that it will be several weeks or more before anyone would be able to entertain the thought of leaving again. Che asks those who wish to leave to step forward in front of their group. Upon doing so, he tells them that they must return everything they have that belongs to the group and leave within 30 minutes. Che informs them that if he comes across them again, they will be treated as deserters and dealt with as such.

In addition to his disciplinary style, Che’s military tactics are equally ruthless and are executed without reservation. During the Battle of Santa Clara, Che orders his men to derail a train bound for the city that is carrying government troops and supplies. Another example of his crude tactics takes place in Bolivia when he orders his men to threaten a local peasant with death if he does not do exactly as instructed in transporting crucial supplies to Che’s forces. Even
though Che has verbally acknowledged that the peasants are the reason for which he fights, it may be the case that his need to survive and/or win outweighs his principles in this case.

While these film examples and Che Guevara’s own historical reputation effectively convey his level of cruelty, there are also several examples in the film that strongly counter the aforementioned behaviors. When Fidel Castro tells Che that the brother of one of his troops has died, Guevara, without hesitation, reaches for the condolence letter on the table and immediately signs his name. This is just one of many instances of Che displaying his personal values as they apply to his troops and the people he is serving, which directly contrasts Berg’s description of a *bandido* as “inarticulate” and “pathologically dangerous.”

When speaking to his troops prior to a battle in the Cuban Revolution, tells them the following:

> We respect the peasants…so no one is allowed to touch their harvest…or mess with them…or their families. If anyone does, he will be punished to the full extent of the revolutionary code.

This declaration summarizes Che’s philosophy of the importance of the peasants in the revolution of Cuba. He revisits this concept near the end of the film just prior to his death. During his captivity in a Bolivian cell, he asks a soldier if he has seen how the peasants live as they argue whether the peasants were receptive to Che’s ideas or not. Over the course of their argument, Che maintains complete composure and produces a logical argument despite having been beaten and tied up. These two statements and the manner in which he says them show a resolute belief that Guevara has on both the importance of peasants and how they should live. This again defies the *bandido* stereotype by showing us a Latino leader who, although at times cruel in his methods of discipline, maintains a strong moral belief of how the peasants should be allowed to live. Instead of inarticulate and dangerous, Che shows his genuine feelings to his
troops and maintains focus on the safety and freedom of peasants. This coincides with Bordas’ statement that “Latino leaders understand that good character is the foundation” of effective Latino leadership (Bordas 117).

Although Che has walked the line in regards to what is cruel and ruthless, he is, for the most part, trusted by the men that he has led. This contrasts the el bandito predilection of being one who is untrustworthy. In Che’s case, he has consistently been an individual who has engendered trust among a majority of those with whom he has worked. During the Cuban Revolution for example, Che went from being an Argentine foreigner to the man that Castro chose to train a new group of recruits.

This level of trust is manifested again during Guevara’s revolutionary efforts in Bolivia. During this point in Che’s life, he was faced with the challenge of coming in as a foreigner and immediately taking the lead of their military efforts. One of the communist party leaders that is with them, Mario, challenges Che’s methods and attempts to convince all of the troops to abandon the revolution and return to their homes. However, the level of trust that all of the troops have with Che causes them to disregard Mario’s warnings and continue to loyally follow Che on a quest to liberate Bolivia.

While the bandido stereotype can be applied to Che Guevara to some extent, the Male Buffoon and Latin Lover stereotypes do not appear in any strong manner in the film. Although Che’s romantic life is heavily depicted in the 2004 film The Motorcycle Diaries, there are no displays of romance in the film with the exception of the few times that his family appears on screen. It is because of this lack of romance that the Latin Lover stereotype does not apply to this case.
Despite Che’s lack of correlation with Berg’s Buffoon and Lover stereotypes, his physical resemblance to the bandido is made clear in Benicio del Toro’s version of the Che Guevara story. While Che’s methods of discipline and warfare do fit with the bandido’s stereotypically violent tendencies, his overall beliefs and actions go against the core of a bandido. In contrast to Evita, Che is a film that does not provide a large number of the stereotypes provided by Berg in his work.

**Application of Second Theoretical Lens**

The first component of Bordas’ Latino leadership model, personalismo, is a concept strongly exemplified in the film Che by Del Toro’s portrayal of Che Guevara. Bordas’ abbreviated definition of personalismo, where a leader embodies traits that earn him or her respect and then trust as a result, is witnessed many times throughout the film (Bordas 116). Through the manner in which he works with his troops, Che shows himself to be a charismatic leader who believes in developing strong relationships with the men who fight alongside him. Early in film when Fidel Castro reunites with Che in a forest in Cuba, Che greets him with open arms, and then proceeds to warmly greet each of the soldiers that arrived with Castro. He knows all of their names and gives many of them firm handshakes and several more receive a firm embrace. This close level of interaction has helped Che foster high levels of trust with his men and provides a role model of sorts.

In addition to fostering close personal relationships, Che also holds himself and his men to a firm moral code in regards to key aspects of the revolution, such as the treatment of the peasants. As mentioned earlier during the stereotype analysis, Che sits down with his men and addresses how peasants must be treated. Through remarks and standards designed to protect the
peasants and uphold the moral center of their efforts, Che defines not only the expectations of his men, but also sets the foundation of the nature and spirit of the revolution.

He carries many of these beliefs with him as he leads revolutionary efforts in Bolivia as well. Once again, he warmly greets all those who join him during his travels, many of whom he already knows. Even when Che has yet to meet someone, he is at least already aware of who they are and greets them in a similar fashion to everyone else. For Che, his ability to be a leader people look up to and resonate with is especially important during his campaign in Bolivia. This in turn results in several setbacks for Che as he sets out to gain their trust and confidence. Without inspiring confidence and showing that he is trustworthy, Che would be unable to become a leader to whom the Bolivians respect and admire, which Bordas argues is important due to the Latino “cooperative culture” that exists (Bordas 115).

One man in Bolivia, by the name of Mario, has a particular distrust for Che Guevara. During a late evening gathering around a fire, Mario uses his status as a leader of the communist party to try and convince the troops that following Che will lead to their demise. He argues that the people of Bolivia will turn their backs on the revolutionary army when they learn that it is being led by a foreigner and that there is no hope for a victory through armed conflict. However, a soldier counters his argument by saying that if what Mario says is true, then Bolivia’s name should be changed on the grounds that it was named after Simón Bolívar, a foreigner from Venezuela who led Bolivia in its quest to gain independence from Spain. Another soldier then remarks that Mario’s job is to keep Guevara’s identity a secret and portray him to the Bolivian people as a revolutionary from the country itself. This sense of loyalty and the comparison of Che to Simón Bolívar show the commitment that these men have to Che and how they look up to him as their leader. This scene shows that Che has managed to earned what Bordas refers to as
confianza, meaning the trust of followers (Bordas 115). The level of trust that Che’s troops have is indicative of a relationship that trusted Latino leaders have that Bordas describes as the equivalent of an extended family (Bordas 118).

Guevara continues to be a leader worthy of admiration through his focus on maintaining and acting as a group. When Che begins to experience severe problems with his asthma, one of his soldiers offers to return to a previous camp to search for Che’s medication. However, Che refuses, saying that he will not divide the group, nor will he allow anyone to risk their life for Che’s own well-being. This is another example of the familial relationship that Guevara has managed to cultivate among his followers. Such a relationship lies at the “heart of Latino culture” (Bordas 118). Shortly thereafter, when a member of his troop is in pain and unable to stand, he asks to be left behind, to which Che refuses. Che then proceeds to tend to him, showing a reciprocal relationship between him and his troops.

Che’s ability to be a role model to his followers and embody the traits they are looking for served him well throughout both revolutionary efforts. His determination and willingness for hard work, another important aspect of personalismo, is also strong and able to be witnessed. Throughout countless battles in both Cuba and Bolivia, Che proves to his men that he is a leader who will fight alongside them in every single battle and is not afraid to do what is necessary to help secure victory. He demonstrates his skill through initial battles against army barracks in Cuba’s Sierra Maestra to one of the final battles of Cuba’s revolution known as the Battle of Santa Clara.

Che also proves his willingness to “work in the trenches” during what he later refers to as the “march of the wounded” in June of 1957. Following his attack on the army barracks in the Sierra Maestra, approximately 20 men are significantly wounded. For several of them, they are
incapable of walking on their own. In the battle’s aftermath, Che helps them in every way possible, including treating several of their wounds using his medical background from Argentina. In a conversation with Castro, Che offers to lead the group of wounded back to the Cuban mainland while Castro continues the military campaign into western Cuba. Castro originally opposes the idea, fearing for Guevara’s life as more government troops begin to enter their current area. However, Che affirms that there is no other choice and that this is a task that must be done. Throughout this march, Che takes on the same amount of work, sometimes more, as those who are under his command. This attitude relates strongly to Bordas’ argument that “Latino leaders practice the essence of servant leadership” (Bordas 120). Such a mindset goes hand-in-hand with Bordas’ idea that Latinos place a high value on the willingness to do hard work (Bordas 119).

As Che’s personality and his actions on the field of battle help prove his skills in relation to personalismo, so do his words and his methods of long-term motivation speak to his ability to weave connections (or tejando lazos). This second component of the Bordas model focuses on the need to identify current needs, recognize changing times, and form a vision for the people. Guevara demonstrates his competency in this skill through not only his interactions with his troops, but also with his discussions in interviews with Lisa Howard. It is through these settings that we learn of Che’s view of current events and of his version of an ideal scenario for Cuba.

During Che Guevara’s 1964 interview with Lisa Howard in Havana, he shares his vision of the future when Howard asks him if he was frustrated when he led the march of the wounded in June of 1957 while Castro continued the military campaign without him. Without hesitation, he responds as follows:

A real revolutionary goes where he’s needed. It may not be direct combat. Sometimes it’s about doing others’ tasks…finding food, dressing wounds,
carrying comrades for miles, and then…taking care of them until they can take care of themselves. This is what it means.

This statement resonates with Bordas’ argument that a Latino leader must “be in sync with the times in which they lead” (Bordas 122). Che recognized after his battle in the Sierra Maestra that the wounded soldiers need a great deal of attention and would not survive without adequate care and protection. Rather than letting them struggle, he chooses to go where there is need of his help and further reinforces the service mentality supported by Bordas in her writings.

This is not the only time that Guevara’s calling as a revolutionary has taken him away from the field of battle. Later in the film, Castro orders Guevara to leave the front lines and to create a training camp despite them both knowing that an attack on their camp is only a few days away. Although Che initially had difficulty accepting the idea, he eventually realized why this was asked of him and performed his job to the best of his ability. This continues to show Guevara as a leader who is capable of examining the current needs of his environment, an important aspect of weaving connections, and act in the best interests of all those involved. In his interview with Howard, she asked him if he felt that this move was a demotion. Che responds by saying that regardless of whether he thought differently or felt the move to be a demotion, he knew that Castro had his reasons, which was sufficient enough for him. Che Guevara’s focus on these types of needs of the revolution provides him with an opportunity to share his vision of the future with his men as these events unfold.

A notable example of this takes place during Che’s involvement with Bolivia, where he and communist leader Mario debate if the “conditions” are right for an armed struggle. Mario insists that the time is not right, while Che counters his point by saying the following:

Mario, anywhere in the world where men are being exploited by men, conditions are right. When children work in mines and 50 percent of miners don’t reach 30 years of age; when these same miners go on strike to improve their wages and
they are massacred by the army, are those conditions right or not? If infant mortality rates are the highest in Latin America because of lack of hospitals and medical care, the situation is right for me. If we learned anything in Cuba, it’s that a popular uprising that isn’t backed by armed struggle has no chance of taking power.

These words are echoed throughout the entire film, but coalesce during this scene. We see the above remarks manifest through many of his aforementioned actions such as his stance on the treatment of peasants and his views on the role of a revolutionary. It captures Guevara’s vision of an ideal society that he has shared with his men over the course of his life. A clear result of his effectiveness shortly follows Che’s conversation with Mario. After their exchange, Mario makes his attempt to convince the soldiers to abandon the armed struggle and to return with him or face the loss of their stipends and the support of the communist party. However, the Bolivian soldiers have already established their loyalty with Che and share in his idea of the necessity of armed conflict. Mario, his advice rejected, leaves the camp without any accompaniment.

Che’s previous argument about “conditions being right” also indicates his ability to recognize changing times. His recognition of the needs of Bolivia and other Latin American countries played a major role in many of his life decisions. His decision to leave his family and a successful life in Cuba was because he was “summoned” by other nations and wishes to do the work that Castro cannot do because he is the leader of Cuba. From this declaration via a letter to Castro to his argument with Mario about “conditions,” Che shows an understanding of critical points of change that are about to take place.

Che Guevara’s ability to work with people, understand situations, and know where they are going show him to be ready to engage in the final component of Latino leadership, developing skills. An action-oriented concept, developing skills focuses on uniting people under consensus and directing them in a concerted and collective action. Another important
component is the ability to understand communication on both personal and wide-spread levels. While Che is adept at accomplishing these competencies to varying degrees, he does so in a unique and sometimes aggressive manner.

Although Che Guevara’s goal is to move his group towards concerted and collective action, his methods have ethical implications. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Che gives all of his men the chance to willingly leave his unit before they all march into battle, as there will not be an easy opportunity to leave once they begin to march towards their next target in Cuba. To those that chose this option, he ridicules them and orders them to leave and never return. This strategy, while harsh in its outcome, does provide Guevara the ability to move forward with a group that he now knows is fully committed to the task at hand.

Before the assault on the Las Villas region, Che continues to direct the group’s overall actions into one united effort. He tells them three things: 1) he is the only one to be in charge of the Las Villas region; 2) strict discipline will be enforced; and 3) due to the increasing intensity of their battles, those who wish to leave the unit may do so at this time. The film does not show the aftermath of Che’s offer to leave in this example, however there is no discernible lack of troops seen immediately after this meeting, which suggests that a majority of them chose to stay.

As the Cuban Revolution continues and Che makes his way into Santa Clara for the final stretch of the revolution, Che’s strategies for mobilizing group action widen to include an appeal to the population of Santa Clara. He broadcasts a message into the city explaining the worsening conditions of the military regime and then tells the people that if there was ever a time to fight, that time has come. However, there is no way of measuring Che’s effectiveness of gaining support, as the Battle of Santa Clara only shows the city’s population during the beginning of the fight as they begin to flee from the crossfire.
Che takes many of the strategies of mobilizing group action that he used in Cuba and develops them further for implementation in Bolivia. As he and his new military force prepare for their first confrontation with the enemy, Che tells his troops of the challenges that lie ahead:

> Our contact with the outside will be limited. Some of us will die, and it’s sad to see your comrades die because you can’t help them with your limited resources. Food will be scarce. Sometimes we won’t have anything to eat. And if all this weren’t enough, we’ll have to endure the harsh weather. By the end, we will have become human waste. That’s all I can promise you. Think it over. You still have time to go back home. Afterwards, it will be too late.

This statement, while not inspiring, does provide an open acknowledgement of the extreme challenges that they will face during their armed struggle. The advantage to such a strategy is that all of his troops now openly agree to continue with the movement, being fully made aware of the dangers it imposes.

However, a commitment to the cause turns out to be the least of Che Guevara’s problems in leading a revolution in Bolivia. A new problem that he begins to have is the infighting that takes place between the Cuban and Bolivian soldiers within his own group. In a meeting of the whole group shortly a Cuban and a Bolivian fight with each other, Che states that he will not tolerate this kind of behavior and will send future offenders back to their homes with a dishonorable discharge. He defends his strong stance on this issue by explaining that these kinds of incidents can destroy group morale and lower their battle readiness. In this situation, Che is facing the challenge of uniting two different Latino groups: Cubans and Bolivians. His aggressive efforts to stop the infighting are an effort for Che Guevara to reach out to all members of both groups, which is exactly what Bordas advocates (Bordas 129).

He closes the discussion by saying that those who have problems should talk to their superiors or to him. Che believes in having open and frank conversations with his troops about the dangers they are about to put themselves in, as well as the expectations he has for them as a
team. Although his actions against those who withdraw from the process are harsh, a near-absolute majority always remains and is ready to fight and is fully informed about what is being asked of them. This group dynamic allows Che to continue to lead his men in a collective effort towards the goal of revolution and is once again in line with Bordas’ model of fostering unity and consensus (Bordas 129).

**Conclusion**

As Roger Ebert described, Benicio del Toro gives a performance as Che that is not meant to “define” him under one absolute interpretation (Ebert). Rather, the film was intended to take the two selected journals of Che Guevara and translate them into realistic cinematic interpretation (Ebert). In *Part One: The Argentine*, Che’s efforts through the Cuban Revolution are shown to be indispensable and his motivations behind his actions are explored. In *Part Two: Guerilla*, Che’s failed campaign in Bolivia and the challenges that he faced in uniting two Latin American groups was the primary focus.

In the analysis of stereotypes within the film, Guevara’s portrayal has a strong physical correlation to Berg’s *bandido* stereotype. From a behavioral standpoint, Che exemplifies *bandido* tendencies in the manner in which he bothpunishes his troops and fights his enemies. His ruthless tactics and merciless nature also correlate strongly to Berg’s violent stereotype.

On the other hand, Che also defies the *bandido* stereotype in many ways. Throughout the film, Guevara is shown to have genuine care for both the physical and mental well-being of his troops and never hesitates to render assistance. Despite being in a revolution, Che makes it very clear to his followers that the peasants are to be respected and not harmed, going against the “pathologically dangerous” *bandido* that Berg describes in his research. In addition, Guevara succeeded on many occasions in engendering trust amongst his troops, as evidenced through the
Bolivian’s defense of his actions to their own party leader. All of these examples give the impression that Guevara is a leader whose ends are well-intentioned, but whose means are not.

In the analysis of Guevara’s portrayed leadership style against Bordas’ leadership components, he is shown to be adept as far as personalismo is concerned. He models Bordas’ value of personal relationships in various ways, whether it is by greeting each of his fellow soldiers one by one or by putting in the hard work and determination to lead all of his wounded men on a journey back to the Cuban mainland after a brutal struggle.

Che’s ability to weave connections (or tejando lazos) is shown at different points during the film when he addresses his troops before battle or when he speaks to Howard about his life as a revolutionary. During these moments in the film, Che reflects on past events and discusses the important needs that have made a revolution in Cuba necessary. In addition, Che leaves the comfort of Cuba in an effort to spread his vision of revolution around the world, completing Bordas’ three-step process of integrating history, identifying current needs and setting a vision for the future.

Finally, Che proves himself to be committed to the concept of developing skills in his attempts to create a unified and collective effort among his troops, regardless of their background. However, his methods of achieving such action have been known to be both aggressive and ruthless at times. This is seen through trademark speeches that Guevara gives on the eve of a battle that state the harsh realities they are about to face, inviting anyone who wishes to leave the opportunity to do so. Upon taking the option to leave, Guevara is quick to remove them from the ranks and threaten them should they attempt to return. Although his methods may be considered cruel by some, Che’s remaining troops all remain loyal to him and are ready to do anything it takes to accomplish their objectives and further the revolution.
Benicio del Toro’s portrayal of Che Guevara carries with it a large number of stereotypes often found in American film, but also go against those stereotypes on occasion. During the film, he is shown to be a leader who excels in Bordas’ leadership components. However, the manner upon which he sets out to accomplish them creates a conflict that goes against the desired cultural outcome of Bordas’ model, which is to have a “culturally accessible and compassionate society” (Bordas 114).
Chapter Four

Case Study: Bill Richardson

Introduction of Richardson

In this chapter of the paper, an analysis will be made of an actual Latino who has been one of the most public and active leaders of the demographic throughout the United States. As mentioned earlier in the paper, the goal of this project is to analyze the portrayal of Latin Americans in film as a way of understanding the lack of Latinos in American politics. Studying a Latino leader that has worked within the American government system provides a great opportunity to compare the results of the analyses of Che and Evita to the selected Latino leader to see if the stereotypes that appear in mainstream American films correlate to the nature of Latino leaders in the United States.

For this project, Bill Richardson, former governor of New Mexico, was selected as the subject of study. Because both Che Guevara and Evita Peron were both leaders in the political realm, Richardson was selected for the “real world” analysis portion of this project. In addition, his large degree of public exposure through his state and federal responsibilities provide ample material with which to apply both Berg’s stereotypes and Bordas’ Latino leadership components.

In the chapters focusing on the films Che and Evita, the films themselves served as the artifacts that were subjected to a rhetorical technique. For the analysis of Bill Richardson, speeches, news reports and commercials will instead serve as the artifacts to be analyzed. The same theoretical lenses used in the previous two chapters will be applied to these new artifacts in an attempt to find correlation, or a lack thereof, between the Latin American leaders represented in American film and former governor Bill Richardson.
Born in 1947 in Pasadena, California, Bill Richardson is noted for being one of the few Latinos in the United States to become a governor (Biography.com). Although he spent a majority of his childhood in Mexico City, he later returned to the United States and enrolled in the Middlesex prep school in Boston, Massachusetts. Later on, he attended Tufts University, where he received his bachelor’s degrees in both political science and French. He then went on to receive a master’s degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Biography.com).

Although Richardson put in a great deal of time working in various government staff positions for years after he left graduate school, his first major success in politics occurred after moving to New Mexico, where he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1982 (Biography.com). Richardson went on to be elected for six additional consecutive terms, during which he rose through the ranks of the state’s Democratic Party. During his time in the House of Representatives, he was able to form a strong connection with Bill Clinton and his administration through engaging in strenuous negotiations for hostages with countries that include Sudan, North Korea, and Hussein-controlled Iraq (Poltz). In addition to hostage negotiations, Richardson was also asked by Clinton to engage in meetings with strong leaders such as Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia. He was recognized for his achievements with three Nobel Peace Prize nominations, as well as the Bill Clinton-appointed position of U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations from 1997 to 1998 (Poltz).

Following his work with the United Nations, Bill Clinton appointed Bill Richardson to be the next Secretary of Energy, a role he occupied from 1998 to 2001. However, his time in the position was muddied by what was known as the “Wen Ho Lee case” that involved the disappearance of two hard drives that contained vital secrets pertaining to U.S. nuclear weapons research and development (Thomas). It is called the “Wen Ho Lee scandal” after the scientist
who was originally believed to be guilty of espionage. However, it was later proven that the scientist had not been guilty of such an act (Koo).

Following his time as Secretary of Energy, Richardson worked as a private consultant for a few years before being elected as the Governor of New Mexico in 2002, which would later lead to his reelection in 2006 (Biography.com). Described by many as a “resume candidate” for President of the United States (Richardson Profile), Richardson was originally a candidate for the Democratic Party nomination until he withdrew in January 2008 after coming in fourth at both the Iowa and New Hampshire caucuses (Biography.com). Following Barack Obama’s election in 2008, Obama offered Richardson the position of Secretary of Commerce. However, due to a pending legal case concerning the awarding of state contracts to some of his campaign contributors, Richardson declined the position and completed his term as governor of New Mexico (Biography.com). It is currently unknown what his future career interests are.

**Application of First Theoretical Lens**

While Charles Berg’s stereotypes on Latinos in American film may have partially formed in society through uneducated observations, Bill Richardson himself does not provide a strong example of a Latino as is commonly portrayed in a variety of films. In regards to his physical appearance and regular demeanor, he follows a more North American persona. However, both his personable nature and his questionable decisions and history may be sufficient enough for him to be stereotyped regardless of whether his other traits show no correlation to Berg’s theories.

In terms of his physical appearance, Bill Richardson does not match the image of *el bandido*, which is the only one of Berg’s male stereotypes that is given a concrete physical description. His television advertisements for President of the United States show him to be an
individual dressed in business attire who conducts himself professionally (New Ads). This is a stark contrast from the *bandido*’s dirty, unshaved, and damaged appearance. However, it is important to note that Berg has observed the physical evolution of the *bandido* in some cases, resulting in an individual who is “well groomed and impeccably dressed” without any changes in behavior. In a large number of public appearances, Richardson has always presented himself in the aforementioned professional manner, but has, on occasion, been publically seen with an unshaven face (McKinley).

One notable instance of Richardson adopting an unshaved appearance took place after he dropped out of the presidential race in January of 2008 (Obama). He continued having a beard for nearly all of 2008 until he appeared at a press conference in Washington D.C. following the announcement of his nomination as Obama’s secretary of commerce. Obama himself remarked that he was “deeply disappointed with the loss of the beard,” jokingly saying that his wife may have forced him to remove it. However, in an interview with Esquire Magazine following the press conference, Richardson stated that he grew out a beard “as a rebellion against those consultants who told me I had to comb my hair, shave, lose weight. I said, ‘You know, I’m gonna do what I want now.’ That was a good feeling” (Obama).
While Obama did not view Richardson’s beard as unprofessional, Richardson’s consultants apparently disagreed. The influence of his consultants can be witnessed in Richardson’s campaign commercials for president, where he presents himself with a shaved face (New Ads). However, it is only when Richardson is not playing a role on the federal level that he chose to stop shaving. Once Obama nominated him to be secretary of commerce, he started shaving again. Although Richardson seems to be comfortable having an unshaved face in as New Mexico’s governor, he seems uncomfortable to do so at the federal level despite his spoken disdain for his consultants’ advice. This may relate to Berg’s view that an unshaved appearance is indicative of a negative Latino stereotype, and particularly that of the *bandido*. However, Obama would seem to not see this as an issue, saying “I thought that the whole Western, rugged look was really working for him” (Obama).

Physical appearances aside, there are many who would describe Richardson in a negative light in ways that would echo some of the behavioral tendencies inherent in a stereotypical *bandido*. One reason for this viewpoint is Richardson’s involvement in the Wen Ho Lee case. In George Koo’s article in the *San Francisco Gate*, he describes Richardson’s involvement as “one of America’s most disgraceful cases of miscarriage of justice” (Koo). Richardson’s firing of Lee and his accusations of espionage on behalf of China caused him to come under fire because of the believed racial profiling that took place during the incident. Further worsening the situation, Richardson continued to defend and justify all of his actions even after a federal judge overturned 58 out of 59 counts of indictment (the last count stayed in order to protect the federal government’s lack of due process in the case) (Koo).

4 It is pertinent to note that although the thesis only focuses on comparing Richardson to the *bandido*, there is a possibility that he shares some characteristics of the male buffoon. A brief example of such behavior can be witnessed in Richardson’s comedic television campaign during his efforts to run for the presidency.
The article goes on to describe a petition being circulated in the San Francisco Bay area, calling for then president-elect Obama to retract his appointment of Richardson to the position of secretary of commerce. He continues by stating that the protest seeks to have either Richardson apologize and condemn racial profiling or for Obama to select another individual to fill the position. In this case, Richardson’s actions as viewed by the protesters in San Francisco correlate to Charles Berg’s behavioral descriptions of the *bandido* in that they were irrational, dishonest, and potentially “shifty” (Berg 68).

This incident is further compounded by a more recent accusation, while governor of New Mexico, that his aides “steered bond business to a big campaign contributor” (McKinley). This yearlong investigation, although dropped by prosecutors, effectively made it impossible for him to accept Obama’s offer to be secretary of commerce due to the damage done to his popularity (McKinley). The accusations of “shifty” allocations of resources again portray Richardson as a dishonest *bandido*. However, Richardson is still far from a full *bandido*, as violent and cruel tendencies are behaviors to which Berg draws particular attention (Berg 68). On the other hand, some of Richardson’s decision such as the Wen Ho Lee case and his campaign investigation create leadership implications in regards to his ethics and practices.

**Application of Second Theoretical Lens**

In both positive and negative ways, observing Bill Richardson’s leadership provides ample insight into Bordas’ concept of *personalismo* as applied to a real world situation. In particular, Richardson’s style of day-to-day leadership and the manner at which he has dealt with multiple incidents during his career reflect his level of skill with this inherent component of Latino leadership. Through the above actions, we can see clearly what Richardson does to
become a leader one aspires to, to embody traits sought after by followers, and to show his determination to get the job done.

Richardson can be seen to be a personable leader through his campaign style. During the election for New Mexico’s new governor in 2002, Richardson set the record for most handshakes within an eight-hour period with a staggering 13,392 handshakes. Aside from the potential desire to put oneself in the Guinness Book of World Records, the amount of work going into shaking the hands of so many constituents already shows the level of hard work at that Richardson is willing to perform to reach out to those that he represents (“A Whole Lotta Shaking”). This relates to Bordas’ statement that “Latino Leaders relate on a people and personal level first” (Bordas 117).

Richardson’s people-based approach has not been a strategy unique to his race for governor of New Mexico. During his 14-year congressional career, he held over 2,000 town meetings for his district (Poltz). He is a person who puts a high degree of focus on personal interaction. For example, when leaving a plane after arriving for a 400-person fundraiser and still suffering from a lack of sleep, Richardson did not hesitate to say “I’m not going home until I meet everyone in this room” (Poltz). This kind of communication style is a hallmark of Richardson’s and can be witnessed during several other points of his career.

His true strengths in regards to communication are fully demonstrated in the global arena, providing a positive example as a United States diplomat. An article by CBS News summarizes what Bill Richardson has done on the international level to earn five nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize (“Nominated for Nobel Prize”). Democratic Representative Bart Gordon of Tennessee provided his own rationale for giving Richardson his fifth nomination by citing his work around the world as “his willingness to continue to go around the world, whether it’s a
matter of hostages or other tense situations, and work with all parties” (“Nominated for Nobel Prize”).

What Bart Gordon is referring to is Richardson’s history as an unofficial negotiator through the Clinton era and beyond (Plotz). In the 1990s, Richardson secured the release of several people including a U.S. helicopter pilot that crashed over North Korea, two American citizens that unknowingly crossed the border into Iraq, one American that was imprisoned in Bangladesh, and three aid workers that were being held hostage in Sudan (Plotz). In addition, Richardson has negotiated with famous dictators such as Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Fidel Castro in Cuba (“Nominated for Nobel Prize”). His work as a diplomat led Clinton to appoint him as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in 1997 (Biography.com), where he reportedly brought his same personalismo-style of negotiation through hand-shaking and the building of relationships (Plotz).

His extensive history of positive negotiations around the world firmly establishes Richardson as a model Latino leader as far as Bordas’ personalismo is concerned. The report on Richardson’s style of negotiation while working with the United Nations once again reflects his alignment with Bordas’ statement that “Latino leaders relate on a people and personal level first” (Bordas 116). However, it is Richardson’s unofficial diplomat role prior to his appointment to the UN that shows his determination to put in the hard work necessary to achieve positive change. This is evidenced by the fact that he has conducted many of his diplomatic missions on his own without needing an official request or sanction by the federal government (“Nominated for Nobel Prize”). In doing so, Richardson’s actions are resonating with the values that people have for a peaceful resolution to conflicts around the world as well as using his heritage as a means of relating to those in Latin American countries. As Bordas has said, the embodiment of
the traits looked for by community members (such as value-aligned actions and a remembrance of one’s origins) is a characteristic that leads to an effective Latino leader (Bordas 117).

On the other hand, there also exists a plethora of events and opinions that may indicate public disdain of Richardson and his actions. While his people-skills have been observed on a continual basis, Richardson possesses a track record of poor decisions and potential scandals that have made him an undesirable candidate for other opportunities that have been opened to him, and thus directly go against Bordas’ *personalismo* concept. A notable case that received a significant amount of attention from the press was the Wen Ho Lee case, where Richardson’s rash and stubborn decisions while he was the Secretary of Energy continue to haunt him to this day.5

In March of 1999, two hard drives went missing that contained vital data on secret nuclear weapons research. Richardson, under the belief that the department was a victim of espionage, singled out Wen Ho Lee, an atomic scientist, and fired him from the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Lee’s identification as a spy was falsely made, and resulted in his detention and placement in solitary confinement “without the benefit of due process” (Koo).

Following the realization of their mistakes, the FBI operatives apologized to Lee for lying under oath, while the judge was required to apologize and repeal the sentence placed on Lee (Koo). However, Richardson is the only prosecuting individual who not only refused to apologize, but also insisted that his actions were legitimate. Such actions and beliefs caused some protests in the San Francisco area to occur when Obama offered Richardson the secretary of commerce position.

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5 There is a concept associated with Latin America known as “machismo,” which prescribes the role and behaviors that are expected of a Latin male. They are often described heavily masculine and having a great deal of pride, which may relate to Richardson’s refusal to admit that he was in the wrong when he falsely accused Wen Ho Lee.
In this example, Richardson is not actively doing anything to become a leader worthy of aspiration. When discussing personalismo, Bordas argues that “Latinos look to personal example, reputation, core values, and how one leads his life” (Bordas 117). Through statements written in multiple articles and websites, citizens of the United States came together and stated that they feel Richardson is not the example of a leader that the country needs (Koo). For example, George Koo in his article in the San Francisco Gate accuses Richardson’s actions of legitimizing racial profiling against those of Chinese descent. This viewpoint is further represented by Chinese Americans that began to circulate a petition of their own in protest of the nomination, still believing that Richardson’s actions in the Wen Ho Lee case were motivated by racial discrimination (Wang). These types of statements and several others are all used to raise continual opposition against Richardson pursuing a new leadership role in the political realm.

In Bordas’ writings on Latino Leadership (and developing skills, in particular), she discusses the importance of Latino leaders working towards social change (Bordas, 129). For Bill Richardson, his own background of being Mexican-born with an American upbringing not only influences his actions, but also presents him with a host of conflicting challenges when it comes to bringing about social change in controversial issues such as immigration. For example, Richardson declared a state of emergency in the four counties of New Mexico that share its borders with Mexico on the grounds the area had become “devastated by the ravages and terror of human smuggling, drug smuggling, kidnapping, murder, destruction of property and death of livestock” (CNN.com). While there was little backlash from either New Mexico or the federal government, the Mexican government issued a statement where they described Richardson’s views as “generalizations that do not correspond to the spirit of cooperation and understanding that are required for dealing with problems of common concern along the border” (CNN.com).
This public statement shows Richardson’s inability to satisfy to Bordas’ belief that “savvy Latino leaders cast their nets wide (Bordas, 129),” meaning that they must learn to bring together various Latino subgroups in an attempt to create “a collective Latino identity (Bordas, 129). The conflicting views of New Mexico (whom he serves) and Mexico (whom he identifies with) make such unification difficult and lock Richardson into a double bind that prevents him from encompassing all of the stakeholders involved and adopting an inclusive nature that Bordas says is a Latino value (Bordas, 129). However, Richardson is restricted to following the will of his constituents, as indicated when he said in an interview that “My people on my side asked me to take this step, and I’ve done so reluctantly” (CNN.com).

Another controversial decision made by Richardson as governor was to sign a law in 2003 that allowed illegal immigrants to receive a driver’s license provided they went through the normal driver education process (New Mexico). Richardson admitted to the controversial nature of the law and explained his rationale for doing so in an appearance at the State University of New York, sponsored by the Council of Foreign Relations (Better Politics). He started by giving a logical defense, saying that issuing licenses to illegal immigrants allows them to “keep track of them,” reduce insurance costs, and increase traffic safety. He then goes on to say that it is a way of integrating these individuals into society, which Richardson believes is “better for society” (Better Politics).

However, Richardson emphasizes that this law is not meant to reward those who immigrate into New Mexico illegally (Better Politics). He states that this system should still let legal immigrants have the priority of integrating into society, but still allow a way of illegal immigrants who are embracing American values a way of safely existing with the rest of their
newfound community (Better Values). In theory, Richardson’s actions are exactly the type of leader behavior for which Bordas advocates.

This is because Bordas believes that an effective Latino leader will find a way “to include all Hispanic subgroups and set up structures that ensure representation” (Bordas 129). In this case, Richardson’s goal is to integrate two distinct groups of Latinos: those who have a legal right to be in New Mexico, and those who have immigrated to the state illegally. Richardson’s license law is what serves as the structure, giving illegal immigrants an opportunity to operate safely and effectively in society.

However, this decision has proven to still be highly controversial several years later. New Mexico’s current Latina governor, Susana Martínez, is currently attempting to fulfill a promise she made to repeal the law (Senate Rejects Bills). The argument of both her and the supporting Republicans is that the issuing of driver’s licenses to illegal immigrants creates a public safety risk and serves as a magnet to draw more and more immigrants to New Mexico. In addition, Martínez has countermanded an executive order made by Richardson that prevented state police from asking a person about their immigration status (Senate Rejects Bills). Currently, New Mexico’s House of Representatives (New Mexico) and Senate (Senate Rejects Bills) continue to aggressively debate the effort to repeal and a solution has yet to be reached.

The controversy surrounding Richardson’s creation of the license law and Martínez’s efforts to repeal it eight years later once again prove the difficulty that he has in making policy decisions that can satisfy and include all Latino groups that exist in New Mexico. It is a further example of Richardson’s arduous task of appealing to his constituency while trying to unite the Latino community. Unless Richardson finds a way of escaping this double bind, he will be
unable to effectively create a unified Latino community that Bordas describes to be the ideal goal of a Latino leader (Bordas).

While many of Richardson’s actions and statements have been viewed as focused against Mexican immigrants or cooperation between the two groups, he is quoted as publically speaking out against a bill passed through Congress and former President George W. Bush in the fall of 2006 (Talhelm). This particular piece of legislation called for the building of a fence along the New Mexico and Texas borders in an attempt to reduce illegal immigration. Richardson spoke against the bill, first saying that the fence “gets in the way” of the U.S.-Mexico relationship, and then saying that “one of the most significant and constructive acts the (newly Democratic) U.S. Congress should take is to get rid of it.”

In contrast to the last example, this is a case of Richardson attempting to find a way of promoting unity not just within New Mexico’s Latino population, but also in between the United States and Mexico. Such an act falls in line with Bordas’ concept of social change, especially when one considers how important Richardson believes the improvement of relations with Latin America to be. In a speech expressing his desire to run for president at the University of California, Los Angeles, Richardson argues that former President George W. Bush failed to “engage the region,” citing the numerous military operations during Bush’s presidency as a distraction from foreign policy development in the Western hemisphere (Richardson). Richardson then outlines a seven-point plan to “rebuilt our relationship with the rest of our hemisphere,” which includes diplomatic engagement, a realistic plan for Cuba, and advocating for a permanent UN Security Council seat for a Latin American country (Richardson). With these statements being known, it is apparent that Richardson’s actions in regards to opposing the construction of a border fence are in line with his policy views and work towards creating
positive change for New Mexico, Mexico, and Latin America overall. Such goals exemplify the ideal Latino leader that Bordas describes in her work.

**Conclusion**

Bill Richardson is, without a doubt, a complex and high-accomplishing Latino leader in the United States. He is an example of a political leader who has had to reconcile the aspects of American and Latin American cultures that have at times come into conflict with each other. These conflicts have manifested throughout Richardson’s political career in both how he attempts to navigate traditional Latino stereotypes, as well as through his efforts to be an inclusive leader while maintaining allegiance to the responsibilities assigned to him.

In regards to Latino stereotypes, Richardson, for the most part, does not exemplify traditional physical portrayals of Latin Americans as seen in film. The closest he gets to such a stereotype is the presence of his beard during a point in his career where he was not advancing in the presidential election. Richardson was quoted as saying that his consultants forced him to remain clean-shaven, implying a negative connotation to having an unshaved face. Although such an opinion from the consultants is never stated, Richardson resumes his regular shaving habits upon being nominated for secretary of commerce. Since Richardson was still governor of New Mexico during all of these events, it implies that Richardson may have felt his national image would be hurt by the presence of a Latino-stereotypical unshaved face, whereas in New Mexico it would seem to not be an issue. This could indicate another instance of the aforementioned double bind that may have surrounded Richardson.

While Richardson rarely looks like the *bandido*, Richardson’s history in regards to both the Wen Ho Lee case and a campaign contribution investigation can give the impression to the public that he is reflective of negative behaviors associated with the aforementioned stereotype.
In the Wen Ho Lee case, Richardson received public embarrassment and anger after falsely accusing a scientist of being a Chinese spy. The situation, which received national coverage, was never fully put to rest, as Richardson chose never to apologize for his actions. In the investigation launched into government awards being given to his campaign contributors, Richardson had to face the assumption being made that he was engaging in unethical campaign activities. While the investigation was dropped, it effectively ruined Richardson’s political capital and made it nearly impossible to accept his nomination as Obama’s secretary of commerce.

This conflict between two cultural identities continues to be seen through the lens of Bordas’ Latino leadership components. While his personable nature and person-centered negotiating style have been well-received around the world, his actions as New Mexico’s governor and as secretary of energy have never been met with satisfaction from all stakeholders. A reason for this difficulty may be due to the fact that his stakeholders are often his American constituency and the Latino community (and by extension, Latin America itself). This was witnessed times with immigration-related issues. Richardson’s declaration of a state of emergency along the U.S.-Mexico border was done to protect the United States from the high levels of murder, drug smuggling and destruction of property. However, Richardson received criticism from the Mexican government, accusing him of making “generalizations” that did not reflect Mexico’s cooperative nature in regards to the border issue.

This issue of conflicting cultures arises again with Richardson’s passing of a law allowing illegal immigrants to be issued driver’s licenses. Although passed with the intent of improving traffic safety and integrating more of the immigrant population, Martínez and her supporters view it as a risk to public safety and are working to see its repeal. In the last example,
Richardson was criticized for protecting state interests. This time, the state is criticizing him for aiding those immigrating to New Mexico, despite a goal of the aid being increased safety for all of New Mexico’s inhabitants.

Despite the difficulty of Richardson making policy decisions that history tells us will be inevitably controversial, he nevertheless chose to speak out against Congress and former President George W. Bush over a bill that would see the construction of a fence along the borders of New Mexico and Texas. Although the fence was intended to reduce illegal immigration, Richardson made the argument that it would interfere with future relations between the United States and Mexico. It is through this declaration that Richardson was able to at least proclaim his value for unifying not only Latinos with the rest of New Mexico’s population, but also the United States with Mexico.

Although Richardson rarely exemplifies many of the physical aspects of the *bandido*, his controversial history casts doubt in the eyes of the public. Separate from his public perception is his challenge of balancing the expectations made of him by New Mexico, the United States, and the Latin American community. When it comes to making decisions that affect multiple stakeholders that Richardson also identifies with, he faces the impossible challenge of finding an effective solution across multiple cultures. This dual role, although advantageous in his work around the world, has proven to be a double bind in his political career, effectively locking him out of working on the federal level again for the near future.
Chapter Five

Conclusion

Whether one examines the number of Latino U.S. governors or the number of Latinos selected for America’s Best Leaders article over the last five years, it cannot be denied that the Latino community is lacking a collection of strong, public leaders. This paper started out of a desire to find an explanation for the low number of Latinos in leadership positions in the United States by examining public perceptions. Rather than engage in an empirical study to gauge public opinion, it was decided that an analysis of American films made about famous Latin American leaders through the use of rhetorical criticism would offer the chance to understand how the public perceives Latinos and how it communicates those perceptions to others through film.

To analyze the films, two theoretical lenses were used as the tools to analyze these films. The first was Charles Ramírez Berg’s six Latino stereotypes that are found to be the most recurring in American films. Berg’s research eased the process of determining whether the films being studied were portraying their title characters in a manner that has been identified as stereotypical and negative. The second lens was Bordas’ model of Latino leadership, which focused on what Latino leaders should be doing to create a “culturally accessible” (Bordas 114) environment. This lens provided an opportunity to balance the negative-toned analysis of Berg’s theories with a positive approach on how Latinos should lead.

In the analysis of Evita, Eva was shown to exemplify many of the negative stereotypes that Berg discusses. In the beginning of the film, she was primarily characterized as a harlot, although she demonstrated her wit and manipulative tendencies through her use of men for both survival and social advancement. As she climbed the social ladder with the title of First Lady
being the ultimate prize, she began to transform herself into Berg’s dark lady through her self-
glamorization and her circumspect demeanor. However, Eva failed to permanently escape the
harlot stereotype, as she was continually name-called during the Rainbow Tour and denied
access to the upper class’ social circle. Her inability to unify the different subgroups in
Argentina prevented her from cultivating the kind of positive culture that Bordas says is possible
with the right kind of Latino leadership.

However, she nevertheless demonstrates superb personalismo skills as evidenced through
her mobilization of los descamisados as well as through securing Peron’s release following his
imprisonment. Her ability to “weave connections” by using her past as a means of addressing
current needs allowed her to set a vision for the future that los descamisados rallied around.
These skills are also what afforded her great success in releasing Peron from prison and securing
the women’s right to vote.

In the analysis of Che, Guevara also exemplifies one of Berg’s stereotypes to a large
extent. In both his physical appearance and the manner in which he accomplishes his goals,
Guevara is portrayed strongly in the film as a disheveled and violent bandido. However, Che’s
overall motivations for the revolution directly contradict the bandido’s nature, and correlate
more to Bordas’ view of uniting all Latino subgroups. In regards to Bordas’ personalismo, Che
demonstrates not only his personable nature with his troops, but also his willingness to do
anything and everything for the sake of both his men and the revolution. Through conversations
with his men in both Cuba and Bolivia, he was able to address what had to be done in the
moment, while reminding them of the vision they are working towards. However, when it came
time to create a collective action among his entire group, Guevara did not hesitate to use ruthless
means as a way of uniting the group under one clear goal. This echo of the *bandido* brings back the conflict of Guevara’s just ends and his unethical means.

After analyzing *Evita* and *Che*, an analysis of Bill Richardson, former governor of New Mexico, provided an opportunity to use the same theoretical lenses to see how a real life Latino leader compares to the Latin American leaders portrayed in American films. When analyzed using Berg’s stereotypes, Richardson was found to not be physically characterized by such constructs, with the exception of a debate over whether a beard is beneficial or hurtful to Richardson’s image.

Richardson’s lack of a beard for most of his career may have been an effort to shed him of any negative stereotypes that are associated with archetypes such as Berg’s *bandido*. This is similar to the way that Eva glamorized herself in order to become someone that could be adored whilst attempting to remove her harlot qualities. In both cases, these two leaders are facing the challenge of creating their own self-image while being unable to shed the stereotypes associated with either their past or stereotyped culture.

While there was little to draw from Richardson’s physical appearance, his involvement in both the Wen Ho lee case and the campaign investigation put doubt in the minds of many. This doubt showed Richardson to be potentially untrustworthy like the *bandido*, which effectively ruined any chance he had of accepting his nomination for secretary of commerce under the Obama administration. However, these kinds of tactics and perceptions of Richardson echo Che Guevara’s portrayal in the film *Che*. In the film, Che did not hesitate to use harsh “*bandido*” tactics to accomplish a positive outcome, such as when he threatened those who wished to leave his troop in an attempt to intimidate the others and convince them to stay the course. Richardson’s firing of an atomic scientist, Wen Ho Lee, is a similar case of harsh action taken
for the sake of the positive outcome of protecting the country’s nuclear secrets. His actions were perceived by the general public as *bandido* in nature, just as Berg’s model interprets Che’s methods in much the same way.

In addition to Richardson’s public controversies, he also faced the difficult challenge of being an ideal Latino leader while reconciling his two cultural identities during his service as governor of New Mexico. This Latino version of a double bind brought with it a new level of complexity to every decision he made while in office. His declaration of a state of emergency in New Mexico resulted in him receiving criticisms from the Mexican government, while his law that allowed illegal immigrants to be issued driver’s licenses caused controversy among his American constituency. This double bind made it impossible for Richardson to make policy decisions that could effectively unite all of the Latino subgroups that existed in New Mexico.

Madonna’s portrayal of Eva showed a similar double bind problem. While her self-transformation into Berg’s dark lady was made so that *los descamisados* would adore her, the transformation was also done to afford her greater ability to relate to the upper class. However, no amount of fundraisers or social functions was able to convince the upper class to separate Eva from the harlot-like life of her youth. In fact, her continued focus on winning favor with the upper class caused the Latino double bind to surface in the form of “Che,” who called her out at one of the events in the form of a peasant by saying that “little has changed for us peasants down here on the ground.” This shows that Eva, like Richardson as a politician, had difficulty satisfying one group without alienating the other. However, Eva and Richardson’s inability to achieve Bordas’ ideal outcome is not indicative of their competencies in other areas of her model. When it comes to *personalismo*, Eva is remembered for mobilizing *los descamisados* and the women of Argentina while Richardson is known worldwide for his negotiating efforts.
that have earned him five Nobel Peace Prize nominations. These numerous parallels between the two films and Richardson’s public perception of his actions show that American popular culture is in some way linked to current perceptions of Latinos leaders in the United States.

An important part of this thesis is Barry Brummett’s argument that popular culture contains the aspects of culture that are “most actively involved in winning the favor of the public and thus in shaping the public in particular ways” (Brummett xxi). After analyzing two American-made films that are a part of American popular culture as well as a well-known Latino leader in the United States, there is a definite correlation between the portrayals of Eva Peron and Che Guevara with the thoughts and opinions in regards to Bill Richardson’s leadership.

Richardson’s questionable role in two legally-compromising events immediately brought about the perception that he was either cruel for racially profiling someone or deceitful in the manner that government funds were being awarded. Despite all of the positive work that Bill Richardson has done, one investigation is all it took for the public to view him to a smaller extent as a leader whose means could fundamentally be similar to that of someone like Che Guevara. Even Richardson’s wearing or losing of a beard becomes the subject of news stories, which may have proved that his consultants were thinking correctly about trying to control Richardson’s ideal physical appearance.

This presents Latino leaders with a difficult challenge in the years to come. Should they wish to be accepted by the American people at large, they must learn to tone down or eliminate their stereotypical features, as Eva tried to do through her glamorization. However, this is no longer a viable option should a Latino leader wish to retain a favorable connection with the Latino community, as such a connection requires the leader to “stay the course” as a means of building credibility and respect (Bordas 115).
This leaves Latinos leaders in the United States in the middle of their own double bind. If they tread too closely to Latino stereotypes, they lose the ability to relate to a larger audience. But if they try to relate to that larger audience too much, then they lose the support of a community that serves as a source of their cultural heritage. The challenge for Latino leaders in the years to come will be to learn how to effectively navigate this environment and find a solution to a seemingly zero-sum game.

While this thesis has generated an intriguing theory as to the implications inherent in Latino leadership, there are a plethora of avenues for further research. An exciting venue for further research lies in exploring the leadership challenges in other professions outside of politics such as teaching or entertainment. Movies such as *Stand and Deliver* starring Edward James Olmos and *Selina* starring Jennifer Lopez, respectively, can offer insights into how Latinos are portrayed in these careers and whether or not they face similar or different challenge to Latino political leaders. Likewise, there are still more films in the American film industry that focus on other famous Latin American political leaders. This provides an opportunity to continue the avenue of research started in this thesis to see if other films continue to support or contradict the implications that have already been made.

A parallel line of research that can evolve from this thesis is the exploration of leadership challenges being faced by other minorities in the United States using the same basic model established in this research. Groups such as Asian-Americans, who protested against Richardson’s alleged racial profiling, would serve as a worthwhile area to study. Researching equivalent film stereotypes of the selected group and their own views on ideal leadership would allow for a similar approach but with a distinctly different cultural focus.
A further line of research can be conducted on the challenges of the double bind that not are faced by not just Latinos, but by other minorities as well. Doing similar or more in-depth studies with several cultural groups would eventually allow for a broad comparison to be made to see if many minorities in the United States face this problem or whether each group is subject to a unique circumstance. Such a study has a broad range of applications and uses.

Finally, an additional line of study also gives validity to the research conducted in this thesis. This is because the theories presented by both Berg and Borjas have yet to be fully explored or applied in a multitude of settings. By using their theories in this thesis, it allowed for an opportunity to test their theories to see how they function as a model for their own fields, which has yet to be done to a significant degree. Applications or tests of their theories may bring to light new ideas that have yet to be considered or claims that in hindsight may no longer apply.

While the generation of new ideas is always welcome, the realization of the idea of a Latino double bind presents a new leadership challenge that will not be easily overcome. It will become more important than ever for Latino leaders to be conscious of how the values and norms of their environment effect and change their dual identity. While the McDonough model of leadership talks about the relationship that takes place between leader and follower, this study has shown that those relationships become considerably more complex when the leader must establish relationships with two opposing groups of followers that could in fact wish to pursue two entirely different goals. Navigating this unknown arena will be a challenge that may define Latino leaders for years to come.
Works Cited


