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Tatiana Mendoza-Larreynaga  
tlarreyn@mail.umassglobal.edu

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Millennial Latina Non-Profit Leaders: Exploring Self-Sabotaging Behaviors and Their  
Journey to Reclaiming Their Power

A Dissertation by

Tatiana Mendoza-Larreynaga

University of Massachusetts Global

A Private Nonprofit Affiliate of the University of Massachusetts

Irvine, California

School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

April 2024

Committee in charge:

Marilou Ryder E.D., Committee Chair

Myrna Coté, E.D

Jamie Crews, Ed.D.

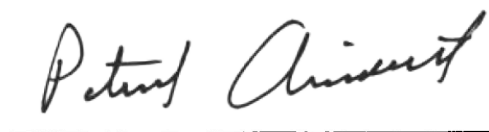
University of Massachusetts Global  
A Nonprofit Affiliate of the University of Massachusetts  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

The dissertation of Tatiana Mendoza-Larreynaga is approved.

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Dissertation Chair  
Marilou Ryder, E.D.

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Member  
Myma Coté, Ed.D.

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Member  
Jamie Crews, Ed.D.

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Associate Dean  
Patrick Ainsworth, Ed.D.

April 2024

Millennial Latina Non-Profit Leaders: Exploring Self-Sabotaging Behaviors and Their  
Journey to Reclaiming Their Power

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A heartfelt thank you to my mom, the cornerstone of my resilience and the epitome of strength. She has imbued me with the spirit of a tenacious Latina, tirelessly pursuing dreams and unwavering in her commitment to family. Her profound influence has shaped the woman I am today. Finally, immense gratitude goes to my husband, whose steadfast support has been a cornerstone of my doctoral journey. His encouragement not only propelled me towards achieving this degree, but he inspires me to be a beacon for Latinas striving to shatter barriers and achieve their dreams.

## ABSTRACT

### Millennial Latina Non-Profit Leaders: Exploring Self-Sabotaging Behaviors and Their Journey to Reclaiming Their Power

by Tatiana Mendoza-Larreynaga

**Purpose:** The purpose of this mixed method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and explore the impact of these behaviors on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by Millennial Latina nonprofit leaders to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

**Methodology:** Employing a mixed method sequential explanatory design, the research involved eight Millennial Latina nonprofit leaders, utilizing convenience and snowball sampling. Data collection included electronic Likert scales to quantify self-sabotaging behaviors and interviews to explore lived experiences. Analysis sought to identify prevalent behaviors and strategies for overcoming them, guided by thematic analysis of interview transcripts.

**Findings:** The study highlighted a complex interplay of cultural and gender norms, with key behaviors including minimization of achievements and difficulties with assertiveness, driven by cultural expectations and broader societal dynamics. Participants demonstrated resilience, employing strategies like personal development, cultural pride, and community support. Significant themes included the impact of motherhood, language barriers, and reliance on support systems like religion and social media on professional experiences.

**Conclusions:** The research concluded that the Latino work ethic, while a strength, can foster self-sabotage through perfectionism. Challenges related to motherhood reveal

societal gaps affecting working mothers, with language barriers affecting perceived credibility. Social media presents a nuanced role in professional networking and self-perception, amplifying feelings of inadequacy.

**Recommendations:** Eight recommendations were identified, including exploring self-sabotaging behaviors across various career stages and sectors, such as the impact on Latinas with different motherhood roles and the influence of social media and lack of intergenerational wealth. Additionally, extending the study to include diverse generational cohorts could offer comprehensive insights into mitigating self-sabotaging behaviors among women.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

It is evident that women do not lack toughness, leadership traits, or the proper skills set to dominate a corporate boardroom; and yet, where are these female titans of industry? Despite being in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the U.S. continues to lag behind many nations where women are visible in management positions; but more importantly, in top executive level roles. The problem associated with the rise of women to the highest echelons within an organization is complex. Nevertheless, it is critical to improve gender diversity and foster greater transformational change. The new feminist movement is more involved in reconciling the barriers that prevent women from reaching top executive roles by delving into the theory of leadership. Traditionally, leadership, whether in the realm of organizational structures or politics, has revolved around men and includes numerous studies that expand their particular characteristics and traits as leaders. Although theories on leadership have been around since the 1900s, numerous scholars have attempted to universalize leadership principles as applicable to both men and women. Nevertheless, feminists disagree with this universal approach because it does not consider the impact of gender on developing professional networks, access to mentors, and even how different transformational leaders are from one another based on their respective gender (Chin, 2011).

According to Dorothy Riddle, the implicit biases women encounter in the workforce include “benevolent bigotry, in which women are only respected when they embody traditional notions of femininity and stereotyping, or treating women as a monolith” (as cited in Haskins, 2018, p. 20). To this day, the role of leadership is still seen as a male one, and when women try to occupy these roles, they are penalized for

either acting against traditional female behaviors or for attempting to model male leaders. In such cases, they are seen as imposters or not genuine. Industries attempt to counteract implications of negative biases by focusing on efforts to hire women of color (Haskins, 2018). However, they fail in many respects because this is the extent to which the organization creates an environment of inclusion.

Additional research suggests full immersion of women is often difficult due to the “in-group homogeneity effect” (McDonald et al., 2018, p. 410). This phenomenon posits that the degree of interpersonal attraction towards others is dependent on the similarities shared concerning race, gender, class, etc. (Brewer, 2003; Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2010). In an organizational setting, this framework explains a reduced sense of organizational identification when women of color are appointed to executive/management level positions (McDonald et al., 2018). In essence, it is effortless to work and collaborate with individuals who share commonality points than it is to work on building differing relationships with other groups.

As noted in the article *Diversity in the C-Suite: The Dismal State of Diversity among Fortune 100 Senior Executives*, slow progress is being made toward diversity (Larcker & Tayan, 2020). This study primarily highlights how women comprise only 27% of the S&P 500 board seats, while at the CEO level, women only hold 7% of these positions among Fortune 500 companies. In other words, out of the 500 Chief Executive Officers, there are only 37 female CEOs. These demographics are astounding and alarming, considering that women are nearly half of the labor force at 57.1% compared to 69.1% of the men who participate in the labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Subsequently, among the Fortune 500 companies, the data also demonstrated that



ethnically diverse executives only account for 9% of the CEO positions (Larcker & Tayan, 2020). Put another way, the 9% previously mentioned signifies that out the 500 Chief Executive Officers, only 45 of them are not Caucasian. Considering that in the next 30 years the U.S. labor market will see a dramatic increase in women of color looking to occupy more leadership roles, it is important to understand why they are still underrepresented in C-Suite positions.

Aside from the increase of women in the workforce, a generational influence will also influence the business side of all organizations. According to Pollak (2019), by 2025, approximately 75% of the workforce will be made up by the Millennial generation. Currently, three generational cohorts are affecting the workforce. The Baby Boomers, born between 1946-1964, represent an estimated 68.59 million workers in the U.S. Generation X, currently one of the smallest generational cohorts in the U.S. labor market, account for 65.37 million workers born between 1965-1979. Lastly, Millennials, born between 1980-1999, are currently the largest generational cohort estimated at 72.24 million workers (Korhonen, 2024).

### **Background**

The demographic composition of top C-Suite positions (i.e., Chief Executive Officer or Chief Operations Officer) continues to be dominated by Caucasian/White men (Deloitte, 2018; Larcker & Tayan, 2020). Statistical projections have made it clear that by 2045 those who identify as White will be within the minority, whereas the Hispanic and Latino demographic is expected to become the fastest growing majority reaching 24.6% by 2060. Given the overwhelming turnover in ethnic diversity in the next few years, the challenge of expanding diversity in the C-Suite has been slow and it has fallen years

behind where organizations should be operating. In fact, multiple studies have demonstrated the positive correlation among increased profits, retention of talent, and overall health of the organization to a diverse workforce when it comes to age, gender, ethnicity, veteran, disability, and LGBTQIA+ representation (Baron, 2019). While the progress toward representation and inclusivity has been slow, the representation of minority women in the C-Suite is more of a modern-day shift, with incremental gains since 2004 (Deloitte, 2018).

In the article *Women of Color in the United States: Quick Take*, the Catalyst (2018) organization projects that by the year 2060, women of color will be the majority demographic represented in the U.S. labor force; and yet, minority and female executives continue to remain underrepresented across all C-Suite roles (Russell Reynolds Associates, n.d.). Rather than holding executive roles such as Chief Financial Officer or P&L (Profit & Loss) Leaders, which can help catapult a woman's candidacy for a CEO position, they are more likely to serve as a Human Resources Officer, General Council, or Chief Administration Officer. Arguably the representation of non-White employees and women rapidly diminishes among the highest ranks of any organization and dwindles among coveted executive roles where strategic and operational decisions are executed (Backer & Murphy, 2019).

### **Construction of Leadership Models**

Understanding diversity, creating value out of diversity, and making it part of the organization has become the latest push at the board and CEO levels of public corporations (Brescoll, 2011; Larcker & Tayan, 2020). The underlying value placed on increased representation across gender and ethnic groups is largely driven by better

financial performance. Kouzes and Posner (2012) reported that financial gain should not detract from the importance of corporations practicing diversity and inclusion cross leadership roles. As more comprehensive laws such as the Equality Act of 2010, prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, the truth is women are still an underrepresented demographic among the executive/senior-level positions in the U.S. labor force (Shippy & Watkins, 2015; Weston, 2015). Zenger and Folkman (2012) confirmed that this trend is consistent across public organizations, private organizations, government, and commercial organizations, both domestically and internationally. To understand this lack of inclusivity and diversity in top executive roles, it is important to understand that leadership models have only recently moved away from constructs based on values typically attributed to White/Caucasian, upper-middle-class men (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Mallen, 2009). Only in 1980s did researchers begin to seriously question whether leadership models based on White/Caucasian men could appropriately be generalized to women, let alone to people of minority backgrounds (Acker, 1993; Bensimon, 1989; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000).

### **Latina Leadership**

Considering that in the next 30 years, women of color will represent one of the largest demographics in the U.S. labor market, the exploration of Latina leadership is important. Latinos account for the fastest growing business sector and U.S. Latino spending power represents a trillion-dollar market (Bordas, 2013). According to the U.S. Census Bureau as of July 2017, the Hispanic or Latino population constitutes 18.1% of U.S. population, representing approximately 58.9 million people (United States Census Bureau, 2018). Latinos have become the nation's largest ethnic minority with an

expectation that the Latino population will reach 24.6% of the U.S. population by 2060 (Baron, 2019)). With Latinos quickly becoming the rising dominant workforce, the success of organizations and businesses will be intertwined with the cultivation of Latino talent (Bordas, 2013). Equally important, Bordas (2013) asserted that Latinos will have a transformative effect in this century because they will be the driving force behind the American economic engine.

It is important to note that the concept of Latino leadership is not a prevalent model explored or encountered in much of the literature pertaining to leadership. As Bordas (2012) criticized in her book *Salsa, Soul, and Spirit: Leadership for a Multicultural Age*, one of the most significant issues with leadership models and the approach to leadership is that they are almost exclusively written by White males and remain very Eurocentric. These Eurocentric models are in many respects outdated and uninformed in their monocultural perspectives. These models overlook the multiethnic, multiracial and multicultural nation present today and will continue to evolve for generations to come. However, the few works that do focus on multicultural leadership concur that Latino leadership is as diverse as Latinos themselves (Bordas 2013; Nogales, 2003; Ruiz-Williams, 2015).

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Establishing a foundation for discourse about the barriers encountered by Millennial Latinas in their pursuit of leadership roles is rooted in theories such as Latina Feminist Theory, Double Jeopardy Theory, and Intersectional Theory.

### ***Latina Feminist Theory***

Latina feminism is still constituted as an evolving field that explores the shared and divergent experiences of Latinas in the United States (Ortega, 2015). It is important to note that Latina feminism is heavily influenced by the pioneers of Chicana feminist thought, including but not limited to Alma García, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Cherríe Moraga. Much of their work was motivated by the struggle against racism in society and the desire to dismantle the *machismo* within the Chicano movement in the late 1960s and 1970 (Ortega, 2015).

### ***Double Jeopardy***

Double jeopardy is a term that first surfaced in the 1960s in response to researchers focusing only on issues centered on the race gap or the gender gap. However, it did not address the accumulation of the additional barriers and burdens faced by individuals who hold multiple disadvantaged statuses. For example, double jeopardy does not acknowledge the way in which the experiences of Latinas are unique compared to their singly disadvantaged (e.g., White women) and privileged counterparts (e.g., White men). With the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, Title VII of this legislation permitted the restructuring of the labor market in the United States by outlawing discrimination based on gender and race. As a consequence of this legislation, researchers began to focus on the workforce impacts experienced by men versus women, as well as any impacts to individuals from different racial/ethnic groups (i.e., Black versus White or Black versus Latinos; Frevert et al., 2015). Since then, more and more researchers have come to recognize that identities such as race and gender cannot be understood separately from one another, but must intersect (Frevert et al., 2015; Greenman & Xie, 2008). In *Gender*

*and the Work-Family Experience*, Hakim (2004) declared that women are already disadvantaged in the workplace by the simple fact that they earn less than their male counterparts; however, women of color are considered to be in “double jeopardy” for belonging to two disadvantaged categories—race and gender.

### ***Intersectional Theory***

Intersectionality is a term first coined by law professor and social theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw. In her 1989 paper “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” she asserted that people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression, including race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, and religion, as well as any other identity markers. Since 1989, intersectionality has become crucial in the efforts surrounding social equity at work (YW Boston, 2017) because it allows for dynamic conversations about people’s experiences based on their overlapping identities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The exploration of nine self-sabotaging behaviors helps to provide understanding of and insight into the limitations women put on themselves and thereby limits or halts their advancement into the C-Suite. The theoretical frameworks utilized in this study were adopted from *In Her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self* (Lerner, 2012) and *The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives* (Ryder & Briles, 2003). These frameworks encompass the nine self-sabotaging behaviors that women inadvertently exhibit at some point in their professional advancement (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003).

### **Thinking too Small**

Self-confidence studies have been conducted for several decades. As noted by Chusmir and Koberg (1991), extensive literature reviews conducted by Lenney (1977), Maccoby and Jacklin (1974), and White et al. (1981) found that women, in general, possess lower self-confidence than men. In relation to self-sabotaging behaviors, Lerner (2012) and Ryder and Briles (2003) claimed that women who possess low self-confidence and lack of self-esteem disempower themselves. This behavior undermines women's intelligence, skills, and leadership capabilities because they do not possess the confidence to demonstrate their potential and think big (Lerner, 2012; pas, 2020). As a result, McCarty (1986) and Robie (1973) presented the explanation that because levels of self-confidence correlate to sex, it could help explain why women have difficulties with obtaining and succeeding in high-paying, high-prestige jobs (Chusmir & Koberg, 1991).

### **Fear and Worrying**

The application of fear and worry regarding women's career development is recognized a psychological condition called fear of success (Komalasari et al., 2017). Liebert and Morris (1976) defined worry as the "cognitive component –a focus on negative performance and self-evaluation and a concern about failure" (Stavosky & Borkovec, 2010, p. 78). According to Lerner (2012), women frequently become consumed with worry about what could go wrong due to the societal pressures that are often placed on them. For example, the greater the success, the more sacrifices are required from both personal and professional relationships, such as loss of quality time with partners or children. As a result, women often choose to continue to think small and do not seek higher paying and more prestigious jobs because they fear and worry about

how everyone around them will be affected by their choices rather than putting their needs, desires, and aspirations first (L. Parker, 2015).

### **Misunderstanding One's Self**

Lerner (2012) asserted that women need to own and appreciate their accomplishments while also identifying and being compassionate about their limitations. For example, women are often incapable of accepting compliments or praise for their work or contributions. They view themselves as unworthy of receiving praise because they are continuously seeking perfection within themselves and the work they do (Crews, 2020). In fact, women who struggle to understand themselves are guilty of dismissing comments and instead focus on any criticism directed toward them or their work (Ryder & Briles, 2003).

### **Dishonesty**

According to Gutek and Larwood (1987), the career models often referenced in leadership literature are completely inadequate in their applicability toward women (Komalasari et al., 2017). Many of these career models do not consider the barriers that women face in the workplace and how this limits their opportunities for advancement. For example, women's representation decreases drastically among the highest ranks within an organization (Backer & Murphy, 2019). As a result, women often display more masculine attitudes and behaviors because they fear the backlash or criticism they may receive for displaying nonconforming gender behaviors (Crews, 2020). The fear of being feminine in top ranking positions is a display of dishonest behavior. Furthermore, dishonesty is regarded as a self-sabotaging behavior because it can make women appear



inauthentic and untrustworthy, which can easily cause them to lose touch with themselves and their true feelings (Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020).

### **Holding Back**

When women fear success, think too small, and are dishonest with themselves, these attributes constitute holding back. These self-sabotaging behaviors are rooted in the lack of self-confidence women have in themselves and their abilities (Pianta, 2020; Thomas, 2020). One of the ways in which women hold themselves back is by succumbing to negative self-talk. According to Lerner (2012) and Ryder and Briles (2003), negative self-talk minimalizes a woman's self-confidence by mispending energy and feeding the false belief that they are not as capable as or up to par with their male counterparts. However, if women can learn to quiet their inner critics and allow themselves to recognize their work and contribution, they will inevitably stop holding themselves back (Lerner, 2012).

### **Lack of Self-Reflection**

Not taking the time to go on vacation, failing to spend quality time with friends and family, and not understanding one's mental and emotional needs are some examples of self-sabotaging behaviors (Pianta, 2020). Keeping oneself constantly busy, without taking the time to stop for quiet reflection, will derail women's balance and success (Lerner, 2012). The lack of self-reflection is a prevalent fault to which women fall prey because they are constantly working hard to prove to themselves, their male colleagues, and their family that they can juggle everything (L. Parker, 2015; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020). The negative effects of this self-sabotaging behavior are not only

complete burnout, but more importantly, the missed opportunity to allow for self-growth and self-improvement both personally and professionally.

### **Isolating**

The importance of networks is critical because it can help women identify potential mentors and sponsors. According to Miller et al. (2006) and Montgomery (2019), mentor and mentee relationships are more likely to form when senior members see a version of their younger selves in their mentees (Pianta, 2020). Nevertheless, this presents several issues for women because there is a lack of senior ranked women in the workforce to begin with. Because the majority of corporate structures are predominantly male-oriented, women self-sabotage by isolating themselves completely from even their small networks (Thomas, 2020). Although women may not necessarily possess extensive networks, they can be creative and still reach out to personal and professional advisors available to them who can offer the support and honest feedback necessary for success (Lerner, 2012).

### **Disempowering Other Women**

The notion that there is no room at the top keeps women from helping one another. Self-sabotaging behaviors among women are generally triggered by feelings of jealousy, inadequacy, and fear of being surpassed (Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020). As Brock (2008) observed, the disempowering of other women causes the sabotage of the very networks that women need to pursue personal and professional advancement (Thomas, 2020). Women need to help other women along the way and not succumb to greed for power and position (Lerner, 2012).

## **Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace**

Infusing sex or gender role confusion in the workplace is identified as a self-sabotaging behavior because women's sexuality can be used against them in their personal or professional lives (Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020). Examples provided by Ryder and Briles (2003) include squashing natural feminine qualities, exhibiting male qualities, exhibiting girl-like behaviors, flirting at work, and utilizing prosodic speech (Pianta, 2020). Harris (2018) noted that too often, women in the workplace struggle to be honest with themselves because they are forced to maintain a fragile balance between their femininity and the expected masculine behaviors of a leader (Thomas, 2020). As a result, women tend to overcompensate in one way or another. For example, if women choose to display more masculine qualities, others perceive them as rude or disrespectful (Kawaguchi, 2014; Pianta, 2020). However, if women choose to display more feminine qualities, they display more flirtatious behaviors at work and dress sexier (Pianta, 2020).

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

The term *glass ceiling* was first introduced by Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Schellhards in a 1986 *Wall Street Journal* article to describe the reason for women having difficulty reaching positions of power and authority (Hoyt, 2013; Rivera, 2014). Since its introduction, literature on the glass ceiling metaphor strongly indicates the existence of invisible barrier(s) that primarily affect women and minorities from rising beyond a certain level in their given profession (Hoyt, 2013; Moore & Buttner, 1997). Barriers to women's advancement include: the lack of development opportunities at work, such as formal training, and not being included in key networks (Hoyt, 2013), as well as the underlying psychology related to gender roles (Rivera, 2014), which links men with more

leadership traits and women to predominantly caring roles (Hoyt, 2013; Rivera, 2014). Although these factors contribute to, or hinder, leadership opportunities for women on a broad level, Latinas encounter not only the aforementioned barriers noted, but also additional challenges as a result of the role that culture plays in their leadership development (Bonilla-Rodriguez, 2014; Rivera 2014).

As stated previously, within the next 30 years the U.S. workforce will see a dramatic increase in women of color looking to occupy leadership roles. With Millennials being between the ages of 20-39, they are the generation quickly entering the workforce; these Millennial women are looking to fill the leadership roles the Baby Boomers are leaving behind. According to the Catalyst (2014) organization, Millennial-aged women are earning more college degrees than their male counterparts. In fact, since 1982, more women have earned their bachelor's degrees than men; furthermore, from 1987 onward, women have been earning more master's degrees than men; and since 2006, more women than men have been earning their doctoral degrees. Although the data demonstrates a wave of more highly educated women branching into the workforce, the shift of women into leadership roles does not represent this trend. As a consequence, it is important to explore and understand the reasons why there are so few Millennial women leaders.

In understanding gender and generations, a multitude of authors have dedicated time to the new research on Millennial women and leadership. Such authors include Elisabeth Kelan (2012) and her book *Rising Stars Developing Millennial Women as Leaders*, which addresses intersectionality between gender and generation, millennials as leaders, and the generational gaps in the workforce. Not surprisingly, there is limited literature on the barriers that affect Latinas' pursuit of C-Suite roles (Bonilla-Rodriguez,

2011; Rivera, 2014). Similarly, research like that of author Lindsey Pollak (2019) that focuses on the multigenerational workplace and the varying strategies that help leaders maneuver through the different generational needs to be inclusive in the work environment is still limited in scope.

The application of different leadership models and the influence of gender and generation are becoming more prevalent as different generations collaborate in today's organizations. As the diversity in the U.S. labor force increases, organizations must understand the impact of different generations within an organization, as well as the effect organizational cultures can have on women entering the workforce. For instance, transformational leadership can no longer be interpreted as a gender-neutral theory that can be successfully applied as a universal fit for all leaders. Instead, transformational leadership must evolve into a theory that considers the intersectionality of gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, etc. (Carastathis, 2016) as crucial components to its application in order to fit today's diverse organizational environments. Equally important to understanding the disparities of Millennial Latinas in executive leadership roles is the examination of self-sabotaging behaviors. In particular, additional research is needed to identify which self-sabotaging behaviors are prevalent among Millennial Latinas pursuing C-Suite roles.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this mixed method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and explore the impact of these behaviors on their career development. A secondary purpose

of this study was to identify strategies employed by Millennial Latina nonprofit leaders to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

### **Research Questions**

In order to identify and describe the self-sabotaging behaviors experience by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and to explore the impact of these behaviors on their career development, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders experienced throughout their leadership careers?
2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders?
3. What strategies did Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

### **Significance of the Problem**

The age of intersectionality is already among us; organizations and today's leaders are more diverse than ever before. The U.S. has a growing Latina/o population that is projected to account for 24.6% of the population by 2060 (Baron, 2019). Similarly, the wave of Millennial-aged individuals has overtaken three other generational cohorts in the current workforce (Pollak, 2019): Traditionalists (born between 1922-1945), Baby Boomers (born from 1946-1964), and Generation X (born between 1965-1980).

There are three ways in which this research is significant to the study and exploration of the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latinas. First, this study acknowledges and expands the limited literature available as it pertains to Latino leadership. Since the 1900s, leadership models have been defined by a framework based

on values typically attributed to White/Caucasian, upper-middle-class men (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Mallen, 2009). According to Bordas (2013), it is important to appreciate the countless contributions the Latino community is making to America's multicultural leadership journey. By the same token, as America continues to grow more diverse by the day, there is a need to be more inclusive of diverse and multicultural leadership models that resonate with leaders of all cultures and ethnicities. By identifying the self-sabotaging behaviors that impact Latinas, the researcher will be able to make a better argument for both the importance and need to institute and practice multicultural and multiracial leadership models.

Secondly, this study focused on the generational changes affecting all industries, all types of organizations, and all leaders (Pollak, 2019). For the first time, the current U.S. labor force is experiencing a multigenerational workforce composed of three distinct generational cohorts. Each cohort varies from one another in terms of attitudes, expectations, and professional styles. The importance of exploring these generational interactions lies in the complexities it brings. For example, Millennial-aged women are one of the most highly educated compared to the Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, and Generation X cohorts. Similarly, as more opportunities have become available to women, they face additional pressure to do more and go beyond the achievements of their predecessors. As a result, this study will help inform whether specific self-sabotaging behaviors are more prevalent among Millennial-aged women and help researchers understand the generational gap that prevents Millennial women from achieving C-Suite roles.

Thirdly, this study explored the development of Millennial Latinas as leaders. Theoretical foundations such as Intersectional Theory (Crenshaw, 1989) and Double Jeopardy (Frevert et al., 2015) provide a foundation to explore the “additional barriers and burdens faced by individuals who hold multiple disadvantaged statuses” (p. 58), e.g., Millennial Latinas. Despite decades of equal opportunities legislation, women are still scarce in the most senior positions across industries and organizations; this disparity is even more pronounced for women of color. Overall, additional research is still needed to identify and describe the specific self-sabotaging behaviors that prevents women from advancing their careers (Crews, 2020). Consequently, the significance of this study is not only an understanding of self-sabotaging behaviors as they pertain to only women, or only Latinas, or only Millennial-aged women. This study went beyond sectional understanding and recommends exploring self-sabotaging behaviors from the perspective of intersectionality, which considers the intersecting barriers Millennial Latinas encounter as prospective and current leaders.

### **Definitions**

Terms used throughout this study are defined to provide clarity and a shared understanding of their meaning. Theoretical definitions stem from previous research studies and are used to provide an understanding of the operational definitions. The operational definitions establish the rules and procedures the researcher will use to measure the key variables of the study and to provide unambiguous meanings to terms that otherwise might be interpreted in different ways.



## **Theoretical Definitions**

- *Adobe Ceiling*: First introduced by Cecilia Preciado Burciaga, describing the additional forces that prevent Latinas from reaching top leadership or executive roles (Alicea, 2003).
- *Barriers*: Institutional, structural, or self-imposed limits that inhibit one's success or advancement (Crews, 2020).
- *Chicana*: An America woman or girl of Mexican origin or descent.
- *Feminism*: Includes a range of social, political, and ideological movements that advocate for the political, economic, personal, and social equality of the sexes.
- *Glass Ceiling*: A metaphor used to represent the invisible barriers that women encounter in their pursuit of leadership roles.
- *Intersectionality*: A term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) describing how people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression.
- *Personal Power*: A woman's ability "to act from a position of strength rather than reach out of fear and limitation" (Lerner, 2012, p. xv).
- *Self-Sabotage*: Any behavior that one engages in that undermines, erodes, or destroys their own credibility (Briles, 2006).

## **Operational Definitions**

- *Baby Boomer*: The generational cohort born from 1946-1964
- *C-Suite*: Widely-used vernacular describing the upper echelons of an organization's senior executives or managers (Bloomenthal, 2024).
- *Generation X*: The generational cohort born from 1965-1980.

- *Hispanic*: People who speak Spanish and/or who are descended from Spanish speaking lineage. This term is often used interchangeably with Latina/o, but it does not carry the same definition as Hispanic.
- *Latina/o*: People who are from or descended from people from Latin America (Central America, South America and the Caribbean). This term is often used interchangeably with Hispanic, but it does not carry the same definition as Latina/o.
- *Millennial*: The generational cohort born from 1981-1996.
- *Non-profit*: An entity created and operated for charitable or socially beneficial purposes rather than to make a profit.

### **Delimitations**

This study was delimited to female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders in Southern California. These individuals included women who (a) identify as Latina, (b) belong to the Millennial generational cohort (born between 1981-1996), and (c) currently serve in a senior executive or C-Suite level position.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I introduced some preliminary literature highlighting key themes related to Latina leadership; it also framed the problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions that were used to guide the study and emphasized the significance of the problem of Latina leadership. Chapter II includes a literature review incorporating major elements, or themes, that relate the problem under investigation to a body of scholarly work. Chapter III details the explanatory sequential mixed method research methodology employed by the researcher. Chapter IV provides a

detailed report of the qualitative and quantitative findings collected by the researcher. Lastly, Chapter V presents a comprehensive summary of the research study covering major findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II provides a review of the academic and professional literature pertaining to the self-sabotaging behaviors adopted by Millennial Latinas in their pursuit of C-Suite roles. The chapter begins with an overview of the foundational framework for leadership models, and transitions into a discussion regarding the rise of feminist leadership models. The chapter then divides into several sections tackling the intersectionality of diversity and leadership, as well as the articulation of the external behaviors that prevent Millennial Latinas from attaining leadership roles. Chapter II introduces the theoretical foundations and theoretical framework: women's personal power. This theoretical framework stems from the work produced by Lerner (2012) and Ryder and Briles (2003). The chapter concludes with empirical research surrounding self-sabotaging behaviors among Millennial Latinas, exploring the strategies they use to counter these behaviors, and identifying the gaps in the research that suggest areas for further study.

### **Leadership Models – Foundational Framework**

In the article *Women of Color in the United States: Quick Take*, the Catalyst (2018) organization projected that by 2060, women of color will be the majority demographic represented in the U.S. labor force. However, the literature continues to emphasize that women are not advancing at the same rate as their male colleagues, and therefore are still an underrepresented demographic among the executive/senior-level positions in the U.S. labor force (Davidson & Burke, 2004; Jogulu & Wood, 2006; Shippy & Watkins, 2015; Weston, 2015). A comprehensive study conducted by Zenger and Folkman (2012) confirmed that this trend is consistent across public organizations,

private organizations, government, and commercial organizations, both domestically and internationally. To understand the lack of inclusivity and diversity in top executive roles, it is important to look back at the early constructs of leadership and the impact on the advancement of women in leadership roles.

Leadership is one of the most complex and multidimensional phenomena studied in the field of social sciences (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). According to Bennis and Nanus (1985), decades of academic analysis have generated more than 350 definitions of leadership (Salas, 2005). Originally the word “leadership” was first used in the 1800s in writings that focused on the political influences and control by the British Parliament. Leadership was rooted in the beliefs and perspectives held by Anglo-Saxon countries that saw it as the right to inheritance, usurpation, or appointment (Bass, 1990; Jogulu & Wood, 2006). Most of the early scholarly work involving leadership as a field of study has been not only been male-centric, but also written from a White male’s perspective (Corsun & Costen 2001; Kruse & Perettyman, 2008; Salas, 2005; Wolverton et al., 2009).

Philosophers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries posited that what separated leaders from non-leaders were specific personal attributes or characteristics that made a person unique and exceptional (Bass, 1990). From this ideology came the “great man” theory, which argued that leaders were born. In other words, scholars believed leaders could not be made or trained because these individuals were naturally born with innate characteristics of leadership designed to attain greatness by divine design (Benmira & Agboola, 2021; Denmark, 1993; Northouse, 2001; Salas, 2005). From the great man theory, we also saw the branching out of trait theories which were prominent in the literature from 1904 up to 1947 and which consisted of large lists of traits that were

believed to be inborn and unique leaders (Bass, 1990; Jogulu & Wood, 2006; Spotts, 1976). Overall, women were not considered leaders; thus, throughout the 1940s, the proportion of women in management positions was very small. As noted by Jogulu and Wood (2006) women throughout the 1940s predominantly occupied roles as caregivers, assistants, teachers, or nurses, while only four percent of the management roles were occupied by women (B. Parker & Fagendon, 1994).

After the 1940s, leadership scholars began to move away from long lists of traits and the belief in the inborn characteristics of leaders. The prominent leadership theories that spawned in the 1970s focused on leadership behaviors that could be learned and how these behaviors influenced the interactions between leaders and followers (Jogulu & Wood, 2006). For example, Bass (1990) asserted that much of the literature at the time investigated how the leader utilized their attributes to adapt to the environment they encountered to provide direction or guidance on handling issues, concerns, or tasks. Prominent studies such the one conducted by the University of Michigan found that employers who fostered greater employee-oriented interactions demonstrated high group productivity and job satisfaction among their employees (Jogulu & Wood, 2006; Kahn & Katz, 1960). Moreover, the associations between trait and behavior inspired the work of Blake and Mouton (1964), who proposed a managerial grid that utilized behavioral dimensions to help measure a leader's degree of task-centeredness versus their person centeredness (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Jogulu & Wood, 2006). The leadership shift that occurred from the 1940s to the 1970s went from emphasizing inborn traits marking leadership qualities toward embracing both individual and situational aspects of leadership simultaneously (Jogulu & Wood, 2006). Given that the proportion of women

in management roles in the 1970s was only 16% (Powell, 1999), the behavioral theories continued to be predominantly applicable to males in management.

The leadership overview in this section was not intended to be all inclusive given a vast body of leadership literature. Instead, the goal was to briefly cover some noteworthy leadership theories and demonstrate how the depiction of leadership was not supportive of women in leadership roles (Jogulu & Wood, 2006; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Klenke, 1996; Lipman-Blumen, 1992; Mallen, 2009). Instead, it is clear that leadership theories between the 1940s and 1980s “depicted leadership implicitly or explicitly as a male prerogative, and the minimal numbers of women in management during these respective periods confirm that the role of management was largely seen as a male domain” (Jogulu & Wood, 2006, p. 242). For example, Stodgill’s *Handbook of Leadership*, published in 1974, overlooked gender issues in its examination of leadership, despite women comprising 16% of management roles at that time. In contrast, the traditional definition of male-centric leadership saw a drastic shift in the 1990s when research on gender differences in leadership styles began to emerge.

### **Rise of Feminist Leadership Models**

Denmark (1993) noted, “by ignoring gender as a variable in studying leadership, researchers created many blanks in theoretical and research design” (p. 345). As articulated previously, leadership models such as the great man theory, trait theories, and behavioral theories were based on research that used male samples. As more women entered the labor force and worked their way into leadership roles, researchers and practitioners assumed the leadership models based on male samples could be generalized and made applicable to women (Acker, 1990; Jogulu & Wood, 2006; Kezar & Moriarty,

2000). However, it became evident that scholars could not in good conscience generalize the framework established by traditional models because it ignored the growing evidence of how women experience the social world differently and thereby influencing how they perceive and enact their own leadership styles (Acker, 1990; Bensimon, 1989; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000).

For instance, in a large scale meta-analytical review of 162 studies on gender and leadership style, Eagly and Johnson (1990) found that women were equally capable as men when it came to leading in a task-oriented style. However, key differences in the same meta-analytic review also demonstrated that women exhibited a more participative leadership style, whereas men demonstrated a more directive leadership style (Jogulu & Wood, 2006). A follow-up meta-analysis of 54 studies focusing on gender and the emergence of leaders suggested that women emerged as social leaders more frequently than men (Eagly & Karau, 1991). In other words, women demonstrated leadership behaviors with participatory, relational, and interpersonal styles, whereas men emerged as more hierarchical, formal, and utilizing one-way communication leadership styles. The findings from numerous research efforts have contributed to the growing evidence that it is not only important, but critical that we broaden the models of leadership by exploring women's leadership (Desjardins & Brown, 1991; Estler, 1987; Helgesen, 1990; Lunnonborg, 1990; Lyons, 1990; Rosner, 1990; Shakeshaft, 1987). Although researchers have introduced broader inclusivity to leadership as it pertains to gender, additional complexity emerges when we bring to the forefront the importance of leadership styles demonstrated by members of different racial and ethnic groups (Armino, 1993; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000).



## **Intersectionality of Diversity and Leadership**

There is no shortage of scholarly and professional literature on the topic of leadership. However, when it comes to exploring the diversity of leadership as it pertains to racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, socioeconomic, and ability statuses, to name a few, it has been historically ignored, marginalized, and unacknowledged (Armino, 1993; Bonilla-Rodriguez, 2011; Ferdman, 1999; Sanchez-Hucles & Sanchez, 2004). According to Hucles-Sanchez and Sanchez (2004), part of the reason themes of race, ethnicity, class, ability status, and sexual orientation are not discussed is because of the complexity these identifiers add to the areas of leadership. Nevertheless, due to the changing demographics of the United States, scholars can no longer continue to focus on one or two diversity attributes when it comes to leadership diversity studies. For example, statistical projections have made it clear that by 2045, those who identify as White will be in the minority, whereas the Hispanic and Latino demographic is expected to become the fastest growing majority, reaching 24.6% by 2060 (Baron, 2019). Despite projections indicating a significant increase in workplace ethnic diversity, the effort to expand diversity within the C-Suite has progressed slowly and remains far behind the level at which organizations are expected to operate.

As will be discussed in the next few sections, the lack of advancement for diverse women into executive leadership roles has been attributed to the intellectual segregation that exists between the intersectionality of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and culture from mainstream leadership theory (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Kim & O'Brien, 2018). According to the intersectionality theory first proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, people belong to numerous social groups and by that premise people adopt multiple layered

identities as a result of lived experiences, social relations, history, and structured power (Crenshaw, 1989; Hill-Collins, 2004; Richardson & Loubier, 2008). As the research demonstrates, women leaders who come from diverse backgrounds are especially subject to double or multiple marginalization due to the lack of inclusivity and integration of their individual identities, as well as organizational cultures and subcultures (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Sanchez et al., 2004).

If we continue to limit the scope of leadership to just a few diversity attributes such as gender or race, we will continue to inflate the conflicts. Moreover, women with multiple marginalized attributes are subject to different expectations, evaluations, barriers, and reinforcements as compared to Euro-American men and women (Sanchez-Hucles & Sanchez, 2004). Given that intersectionality helps us to explore the interconnectedness of multiple identities and personas, it can also be used to examine, as Richardson and Loubier (2008) noted, “the interaction of diversity attributes toward understanding perceived leadership identity and perceived differences in leadership behavior and leadership efficacy” (p. 143). In order to further fill the leadership literature deficit regarding Millennial Latinas striving to rise to C-Suite leadership roles, the next few sections will explore the diversity of leadership when it comes to gender, race/ethnicity, and generational cohort.

### **Gender and Leadership**

In analyzing the intersectionality of gender and leadership, early work by Burns (1978) introduced the terms transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is characterized as a style governed by masculine qualities that, according to Klenke (1993), are distinguishable by a “competitiveness, hierarchical authority and high

control for the leader and analytical problem solving” (p. 330). Conversely, transformational leadership is more geared toward cooperation and collaboration, which enables the leader to empower followers and helps motivate them to reach collective goals (Bass, 1985; Jogulu & Wood, 2006; Kark et al., 2003). In the 1980s, organizations began to see the parallel benefits of the transformational leadership style with contemporary organizational changes that moved them toward less hierarchical, more flexible, team-oriented models (Jogulu & Wood, 2006; Kark et al., 2003; Rosner, 1995). In fact, a meta-analysis of 45 studies concluded that transformational leadership is acknowledged to be one of the most effective ways of leading people and it is a style in which women demonstrated a higher aptitude than men (Eagly et al., 2003).

It is important to understand that, to a large extent, transformational leadership is characterized as a feminine model because it is built on the foundations of cooperation, collective problem solving, and decision making (Jogulu & Wood, 2006). There is greater recognition across leadership studies that women who possess the above leadership skillset can lead organizations effectively; however, we continue to see few women in senior or executive leadership roles. Due to the masculine and feminine associations highlighted within leadership models, research has also demonstrated that women who utilize leadership styles that incorporate stereotypical feminine or interpersonal qualities are seen as too passive and do not inspire confidence in their effectiveness to lead (Eagly et al., 1992; Sanchez-Hucles & Sanchez, 2004). In contrast, if women choose to adopt leadership styles that align with more masculine behaviors, they are seen as less effective, especially by men, because such behaviors do not align with stereotypical gender roles and make the women appear too strident (Jamieson, 1995;

Sanchez-Hucles & Sanchez, 2004). Across organizations, the predominance of stereotypically masculine leadership models is still the norm. Within these environments women are often expected to follow the rules for leadership, even though the rules were designed for the advancement of men. In other words, the continued marginalization of literature addressing the importance of gender and leadership intersectionality disadvantages women in their journey of upward mobility.

### **Racial/Ethnic Diversity and Leadership**

Although White males are the predominant demographic occupying senior or executive leadership roles, the slowly increasing representation of women and racial and ethnic minorities is quickly changing the dynamics of the next generation of leaders (Eagly & Chin, 2010). For example, among Fortune 500 companies, the data demonstrates that ethnically diverse executives only account for 9% of CEO positions (Larcker & Tayan, 2020). To put it differently, this 9% signifies that out of the 500 Chief Executive Officers, only 45 of them are not Caucasian. Considering that in the next 30 years the U.S. labor market will see a dramatic increase in women of color looking to occupy more leadership roles, it is important to understand the literature on Latina identity and its impact on their leadership style.

The beauty of diversity is the multifaceted complexity it adds to our identity. Latina leaders can inhabit multiple intersecting identities such as being a queer woman, first generation college graduate, and part of the Millennial cohort. According to Garcia (2020), Latina identities are mutually constructed, meaning that “even two Latinas who have the same nationality can inhabit very different identities due to the diversity of the Latinx culture” (p. 118). Due to the multitude of diversity attribute combinations, Latinas

must contend with additional difficulties of racial discrimination and cultural influences (Rivera, 2014).

According to Hall et al. (2012), studies have shown that the intersection between gender and race-related oppression can contribute to additional stress for women of color. For instance, Vasquez and Comas-Diaz (2004) argued that racial and ethnic identity are some of the major components individuals use to help define themselves and others. Moreover, racial and ethnic group identities also contribute to an individual's sense of self in terms of their capabilities, motivations, and goals. Therefore, when racial stereotypes portray Latinos as uneducated and unambitious, it creates disadvantageous attributes that get associated with potential future Latina leaders (Eagly & Chin, 2010; Madon et al., 2001; Neiman et al., 1994). Both systemic sexism and racism not only undermine a Latina's willingness to put herself forward as a potential leader, but also in younger women it can prevent them from having access to diverse occupations, achieving academic success, and using and developing their talents (Kim & O'Brien, 2018).

As noted previously, the dominant paradigm of leadership is one that favors stereotypical White males who exhibit masculine leadership characteristics or traits. Therefore, if there is a disconnect with the widely accepted ideals of leadership because of the cultural stereotypes with which Latinas are associated, it helps elicit doubts about their leadership abilities and also makes Latinas personally anxious about confirming these doubts, steering them away from taking on leadership roles in order to not self-fulfill the stereotypes (Eagly & Chin, 2010). As stated by Nogales (2003), "it struck me that, contrary to what many people think about Latino culture holding women back, the reasons for women's successes lay in the very qualities which have their roots in our

cultural origins” (p. 2). However, the persistence of Euro-American and male-centric leadership models limits Latinas’ opportunities to explore and utilize the leadership characteristics inherent in their Latino culture. These leadership characteristics include:

- *Espiritu creativo* (creative spirit)
- The *aguantadora*’s (survivor’s) passionate determination
- The *comadre*’s (girlfriend’s) networking ability
- The *diplomática*’s (diplomat’s) discretion
- The *atrevida*’s (risktaker) courage
- The *malabarista*’s (multitasker’s) balance
- *La reina*’s (The queen’s) confidence (Nogales, 2003)

Stereotypes create negative portrayals of groups and individuals who have so much to share and contribute to the diversity of leadership styles. It also prevents senior or executive suites from being truly representative of the diversity in today’s labor force. The tendency to like and associate with others who are like oneself is what prevents women’s and racial and ethnic minorities from being accepted into leadership roles (Kelan, 2012). It creates resentment and resistance to overturning the status quo that has existed for decades. Therefore, we can no longer afford to ignore, marginalize and unacknowledged the importance of the intersectionality between race/ethnicity and leadership.

### **External Barriers to Millennial Latinas in Leadership**

Overall, women have experienced significant external barriers in their rise to leadership positions; however, when it comes to exploring the literature on developing Latina leaders or obtaining insight into the barriers or impediments, they encounter in

their pursuit of attaining leadership roles, the literature is scarce. To quote Muléy (2009), “despite demographic changes, women of color have remained on the fringes, rarely receiving the focus, attention, and understanding warranted by their numbers, intelligence, influence, and affluence” (p. 37). As noted by Barnes (2017) leading in a male-dominated industry as a minority female is challenging and discouraging due to the double standards and additional barriers encountered by minority groups. For example, Latinas often share similar experiences with their White female counterparts; however, due to the intersection of their gender and ethnicity, studies indicate that Latinas are presented with unique challenges and obstacles that affect their career advancement opportunities (Shorey et al., 2002; Vasquez & Comas-Diaz, 2004). The external barriers applicable to this study include the glass ceiling, the adobe ceiling, generational cohort, and reverse ageism. A review of these external barriers is provided in the sections that follow.

### **Glass Ceiling**

Women’s rise to leadership positions is a labyrinth that must be navigated without a map or compass (Carli & Eagly, 2016; Miller, 2022). Terms such as the “glass ceiling” are used as metaphors to acknowledge the invisible barriers to success women experience or encounter in their careers (Hernandez, 2020; Miller, 2022). The term glass ceiling was first used in 1978 by Marilyn Loden (2017), a management consultant-who noted at a conference that the barriers to advancement for women had more to do with cultural barriers than with their competence and ability as leaders. In a BBC interview, Marilyn Loden noted that during the 1970s and 1980s, the U.S. had no federal laws protecting women from workplace harassment or assault and there was no interest in helping

women move into leadership roles. As the data demonstrates, since 1950, the number of women in the labor force has increased progressively. For example, in 1950 18.4 million women were in the labor force, and in the year 2000, the labor force included 66.3 million women. In 2015 the number of women in the workforce jumped to 73.5 million (Toossi & Morisi, 2017), and as of March 2024 women account for 57.6% of the total labor force (U.S. Department of Labor, 2024). With an overwhelming labor demographic whose professional careers are being stifled by the glass ceiling phenomenon, organizations must “remove the cultural biases that allow men to have career success, while diminishing the strengths, styles, and capabilities of talented women” (Loden, 2017, para. 11).

### **Adobe Ceiling**

Although it is important to understand the impenetrable barrier the glass ceiling creates between women and their inability to reach executive or leadership positions, it is still a phenomenon encountered by White women (Barnes, 2017). Racial and ethnic minority women argue that the glass ceiling metaphor ignores intersectionality and its impact on career advancement (Hernandez, 2020). According to Holder et al. (2015), the glass ceiling metaphor has been described differently based on a woman’s racial and ethnic identity. For example, underrepresented groups have used terms such as concrete, stained glass, bamboo, and lavender ceilings (Hernandez, 2020; Holder et al., 2015). Latinas have adopted the term adobe ceiling to describe the additional forces that prevent them from reaching top leadership or executive roles. The term adobe ceiling was first introduced by Cecilia Preciado Burciaga, a former associate vice president for student affairs at California State University at Monterey Bay (CSUMB; Alicea, 2003). Burciaga



asserted that the adobe ceiling is “an obstacle that is far more challenging to overcome than a glass ceiling because a glass ceiling at least provides a vision of what lies ahead” (as cited in Alicea, 2003, p. 56). In other words, the muddiness of the adobe does not allow aspiring Latina leaders to prepare for the obstacles that might come their way or allow them the opportunity to set milestones to get them closer because they cannot know how much farther they need to go to obtain a leadership role (Alicea, 2003; Hernandez, 2020).

Statistical projections have made it clear that by 2045, those who identify as White will be within the minority, whereas the Hispanic and Latino demographic is expected to become the fastest growing majority reaching 24.6% by 2060 (Baron, 2019). Given the overwhelming turnover in ethnic diversity in the next few years, the challenge of expanding diversity in the C-Suite has been slow and has fallen years behind the level at which organizations should be operating. Although minority women face additional challenges, Latinas must be more proactive in advancing their own careers, highlighting their professional success, and continue chipping away at the adobe ceiling so that younger Latinas can break through this barrier (Alicea, 2003; Barnes, 2017).

### **Generational Cohort and Leadership**

For the first time, the current U.S. labor force is experiencing a multigenerational workforce composed of five distinct generational cohorts (Pollak, 2019): Traditionalists (born between 1922-1945), Baby Boomers (born from 1946-1964), Generation X (born between 1965-1980), Millennial/Generation Y (born between 1981-1996), and Generation Z (born between 1997 and later). According to the book *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* a “generation” is defined as “a group of

people born during a certain span of years whose shared worldview is grounded in social and historical events that have occurred during their formative development years” (Strauss & Howe, 1991). For the Traditionalist generation, World War II was their defining event, for the Boomers it is the Cold War, Generation X is the financial and social insecurity of ‘60s and ‘70s, and for the Millennials it is the dawn of communications technology in the 90s (Raymer et al., 2017; Strauss & Howe, 1991). In the U.S., the wave of Millennial-aged individuals has overtaken the Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, and Generation X cohorts; in other words, Millennials have officially become the largest generation in today’s workforce (Pollak, 2019). Given that each cohort varies in terms of attitudes, expectations, and professional styles, it is important to explore the Millennial identity and its impact on their leadership styles.

According to Pollak (2019), Millennials and Gen Zs are, on average, more highly educated than previous generations, but have less work experience. Moreover, the Catalyst (2014) organization reported that close to 60% of Millennial college graduates are women. In today’s workplace environments, having the generational intelligence to understand the differences in generations when it comes to their beliefs and value systems is critical for leaders. It allows leaders to examine existing leadership practices and consider what works to achieve the results organizations want with the people they are leading today (Addison-Levelle, 2017; Hillman, 2014; Pollak, 2019). For example, Deloitte (2015) found that Millennials believed the approach to leadership is still too traditional and inward looking across organizations. The digital-first generation is looking to redefine leadership, meaning they are proponents of leadership practices that help cultivate their “personal power and influence over others. They want to understand

themselves, their strengths, and limitations, and how to use all of that to better understand the individuals around them” (Weldy, 2020, p. 37). For this reason, when Millennials are considering employment opportunities, top priorities for them include:

- An organization’s treatment of its employees
  - Overall impact on society
  - Financial performance
  - Record for creating innovative products or services, and
  - Whether it has a well-defined and meaning purpose to which it is true
- (Deloitte, 2015).

Further insight into the generational conflicts between Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials was also identified in the Deloitte (2015) study. Regarding workplace priorities, there is a significant disconnect between what Millennials prioritize as important and what leaders within their respective organizations identified as organizational priorities. Millennials cited the following priorities as important:

1. Employee well-being: 37% of Millennials felt was important versus 17% of senior leaders
2. Employee growth and development: 32% of Millennials felt was important versus 18% of senior leaders
3. Making positive contributions to local communities/society: 27% of Millennials felt was important versus 18% of senior leaders
4. Ensuring long-term future of organization: 43% of Millennials felt was important versus 39% of senior leaders

5. Meeting short-term financial goals: 10% of Millennials felt was important versus 27% of senior leaders
6. Own personal income/rewards: 12% of Millennials felt was important versus 30% of senior leaders (Deloitte, 2015).

As is evident from the literature, there are significant generational differences between the various cohorts and how they understand and perceive leadership. As the diversity in the U.S. labor force increases, organizations must understand the impact of different generations within an organization, and leaders must navigate today's multigenerational workplace, which is more diverse and varied than ever before (Pollak, 2019).

### **Reverse Ageism**

As life expectancy has increased, older adults from the Traditionalist and Baby Boomer generation have remained in the workforce occupying top leadership roles or positions of power. Due to the new generational dynamics of having five generations represented in the workforce, researchers have found that a new form of ageism has emerged, one that is directed toward young adults in their 20s and 30s (Kessler et al., 1999; Raymer et.al., 2017). It is important to keep in mind that when ageism is discussed, it is typically associated with older adults. In fact, in the U.S., the federal government has protections in place to prevent discrimination against workers who are 40 years and older. This means that older employees cannot be disqualified from a position because they are seen as being "too old" to understand or learn the latest technology to function in any given role. In contrast, young professionals are not afforded the same protections under federal laws (Waldman, 2020). According to the research cited in the article "Am I Old Enough to Be Taken Seriously?" (Waldman, 2020), Glassdoor released a 2019 diversity

and inclusion survey that found that younger employees (52% of ages 18-34) are more likely than older employees (39% of ages 55+) to have witnessed or experienced ageism at work. For those of the younger demographic, reverse ageism can take the form of superficial comments such as, “I’ve been doing this since before you were born” or “the girls will walk us through the project forecasts.” With comments such as these, it can be easy for members of the Millennial generation to be overlooked for promotions or job opportunities. In the first comment, the young adult is deemed untrustworthy with important tasks because they do not necessarily have over 30 years of experience. In the second comment, young women are infantilized and not seen or treated as professional adults.

According to Raymer et. al. (2017), their literature search identified that popular and academic resources portray Millennials as having:

lower levels of impulse control, work centrality, work ethics, altruism, authenticity, patience, commitment, satisfaction, and motivations, and higher levels of leisure, individualism, narcissism, pay and promotion expectations, entitlement, and turnover intentions, than older generations. (p.155)

As a result of these negative stereotypes, older employees demonstrate a lack of faith in the competency and leadership capabilities of the Millennial generation. Moreover, the influences of reverse-ageist, generational stereotypes have stifled growth opportunities for Millennials because leaders are less likely to invest time in teaching and mentoring younger colleagues (Centers, 2018; Raymer et al., 2017). As Baby Boomers retire, more and more Millennials will be looking to move into leadership roles left by the Baby Boomers. In fact, over the next 30 years, the demand for educated, talented 35- to 45-

year-olds will increase by 25% (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Leaders can no longer afford to mismanage their young employees' potential because they risk having lower retention levels, plus missing the opportunity to advance the careers of these young professionals to help fill the gap being left by the Baby Boomers. Similarly, organizations can no longer afford to have fewer qualified Millennials move into management and leadership roles. As the diversity in the U.S. labor force increases, organizations must understand the impact of different generations within an organization and find ways to embrace new ways of working that appeal to the digital-first generations (Millennials and Generation Z) while continuing to embrace the Baby Boomers and Generation X workforce (Pollak, 2019).

### **Theoretical Foundations**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), theoretical foundations help to provide a rationale and scholarly perspective to various forms of research. For this study, the more applicable theoretical foundations include Chicana/Latina feminist theory and intersectional theory. Consistent among these theories is research and analysis findings that continuously demonstrate how the intersection of power relationships, identity formation, race, social class, and gender are endemic to the discussion of Millennial Latinas pursuing top leadership roles.

#### **Chicana/Latina Feminist Theory**

Najat El Hachmi (as cited in Johnson, 2019) argued that feminism is a global phenomenon, and it has specific manifestations in different areas of the world. More specifically:

Feminism is a global struggle of women who in each one of their sociocultural realities must find the most appropriate means to change the masculinism that pertains to them. Sometimes the arguments are ontological; other times they are political, legal, social, or refer to personal practices. (p. 8)

In other words, the characterization of feminism is the pursuit of challenging patriarchal roots of inquiry by addressing issues related to gender and equity (Saavedra & Perez, 2017). However, the word feminism itself is troublesome and myopic because across the literature it is synonymous with the White middle class experience. Very notably, White feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir, Carol Gilligan, and Gloria Steinem base their writings and experiences on the perspective of White women. As a result of this choice, they exclude the oppressive experiences created by the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, disability, and even generational cohorts. Therefore, other feminism theories that are inspired by women of color, such as Chicana/Latina feminism, help to provide a framework that embraces the various facets of multiculturalism and diversity (Saavedra & Perez, 2017). Moreover, such theories raise awareness of the specific challenges and stereotypes women of color experience regarding gender, ethnicity, race, class, and sexuality.

One influential figure within Chicana/Latina feminism is philosopher Gloria Anzaldúa (Keating, 2015; Keating & Gonzalez-Lopez, 2011; Saavedra & Perez, 2017). Anzaldúa's most notable work stems from her book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* in which she explores the intersections and intricacies of multiple aspects of her identity as a mestiza. The taming of the wild tongue is one of the more central motifs in *Borderlands* (Lockhart, 2007). Here Anzaldúa constructs an analysis of the importance of

language, linguistic identity, and cultural identity (Lockhart, 2007). In essence, Anzaldúa claims that those who possess multiple identities are always at the border, balancing which aspects of their identity will take precedence based on a given situation (Lockhart, 2007; Saavedra & Perez, 2017). Because of this constant balancing act, Latinas are not allowed to demonstrate their reliable authentic selves. For Latinas to make any headway into top leadership roles, they understand that some aspect of their linguistic and cultural identity needs to be sacrificed to be able to fit the ideal mold of who and what a leader is. The consequences associated with adopting mainstream societal norms can result in Latinas/os rejecting their culture altogether and becoming “Whitewashed.” This rejection can lead to a sense of alienation from not only their own culture and language, but also their people.

### **Intersectional Theory**

The term intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) in response to the Black feminist movement, where she sought to highlight issues of discrimination through privilege and oppression from patriarchal, Eurocentric societies. Crenshaw’s description of intersectionality encapsulates the lives and testimonies of socially marginalized people whose experiences with living at intersections of oppressions—whether due to racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, etc.—have been ignored or denied and as a result have created multiple levels of social injustice (Crenshaw, 1989; Gutierrez et al., 2022). Moreover, intersectionality acknowledges that a person’s identity should not be seen through the lens of one element being distinct from another. Rather a person’s identity is a composition of several distinct elements that are interconnected and mutually reinforced, thereby creating unique experiences. Due to the multitude of



diversity attribute combinations that can exist, Latinas must contend with navigating multiple identities, which brings about additional difficulties of racial discrimination and cultural influences (Garcia, 2020; Rivera, 2014).

**Theoretical Framework: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors and Women’s Personal Power**

As illustrated in the previous section, external barriers or impediments such as the glass ceiling, the adobe ceiling, and reverse ageism can discourage or prevent aspiring Latina leaders from pursuing or attaining leadership roles. According to Helgesen and Goldsmith (2018), systemic barriers are only one factor that affects women’s career advancement. The prevalence of self-sabotaging behaviors, whether conscious or unconscious, introduces an internal dimension that influences women’s pursuit of leadership roles (Crews, 2020; Miller, 2022; Pianta, 2020; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Sandor, 2022; Thomas, 2020). The exploration of the nine self-sabotaging behaviors helps to provide understanding and insight into the limitations Millennial Latinas put on themselves, thereby limiting or halting their advancement into the C-Suite (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Nine Domains of Women’s Personal Power Theoretical Framework*

Self-sabotaging behavior	Women’s personal power
Thinking too small	Recognizing women’s unique destiny
Fear and worry	Constructive preparation
Misunderstanding one’s self	Owning all of one’s self
Dishonesty	Honest self-expression
Holding back	Acting with confidence
Lack of self-reflection	Cultivating self-intimacy
Isolating	Building a power web
Disempowering other women	Inspiring other women
Infusing sex/gender role confusion in the workplace	Embracing one’s sexuality

For any given study, the purpose of introducing a theoretical framework is to be able to introduce and describe a theory to help offer an explanation of an event, a particular phenomenon, or research problem (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; USC Libraries Research Guides, 2022). The theoretical framework utilized in this study was adopted from *In Her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self* (Lerner, 2012) and *The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives* (Ryder & Briles, 2003). This framework represents the nine self-sabotaging behaviors that Millennial Latinas inadvertently succumb to at some point in their professional advancement (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003). It is also important to understand that these self-sabotaging behaviors are more inherent in Millennial Latinas because of the multitude of disadvantages they encounter due to their gender, age, and race/ethnicity. The self-sabotaging behaviors include thinking too small, fear and worry, misunderstanding oneself, dishonesty, holding back, not taking time for self-reflection, isolation, disempowering other women, and infusing sex/gender role confusion into the workplace. The corresponding domains of Millennial Latinas personal power include recognizing women's unique destiny, constructive preparation, owning all of one's self, honest self-expression, acting with confidence, cultivating self-intimacy, building a power web, inspiring other women, and embracing one's sexuality. The domains of self-sabotage and personal power will be explored in the following sections.

### **Thinking too Small**

A lack of self-confidence is a major source contributing to women underestimating their value, intelligence, capabilities, and strengths (McGee, 2010; Miller, 2022; Sandor, 2022). Self-confidence studies have been conducted for several

decades. According to Chusmir and Koberg (1991), extensive literature reviews have demonstrated that women, in general, possess lower self-confidence than men (Lenney, 1977; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; White et al., 1981). As a result of possessing low or no self-confidence, women believe they are not deserving of praise, promotions, compensation, or responsibility (Marcus, 2015). This behavior undermines women's intelligence, skills, and leadership capabilities because they do not possess the confidence to demonstrate their potential and think big (Lerner, 2012; Thomas, 2020). For women overall, the issues of self-confidence and thinking too small are well documented in the literature. However, Millennial Latinas encounter additional barriers regarding the relationship between self-esteem and ethnic identity.

When considering the intersectionality between ethnic identity and self-esteem, one can easily witness the stigma of being Latina/o. The United States has a long history of anti-Latina/o discrimination and anti-immigration political rhetoric and legislation (Ortiz & Telles, 2012). More recently, the Trump administration was at the forefront of national conversation when Donald Trump stated in his 2016 presidential campaign:

when Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best... They're sending people that have lots of problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people. (as cited in Glace et al., 2021 p. 593)

With such racist rhetoric, scholars noted that in the first year of the Trump presidency, a drastic shift within the Latina/o community took place (Glace et al., 2021). In the article "LatinX Identity and Intersectional Responses to Stigma," the authors Glace et al. (2021) referenced the works of Tajfel and Turner (1986), Armenta and Hunt (2009), and

Andrade et al. (2021), which explored how ethnic groups are an important source of self-esteem. By having an increased sense of ethnic identity, especially among Latina/o individuals, self-esteem can create a buffer against aversive discrimination and stigma. In other words, when Latina/os acknowledge the positive and innovative traits associated with their ethnic and cultural roots, it helps to create that sense of community. A community is built from the pride of belonging to a group of hard-working people who are proud of who they are and the struggles they have had to overcome to succeed. However, when the Latina/o community is nationally devalued and there is a prevalent culture of anti-Latina/o messaging supported by those in power, the consequences reverberate, and Latinas consistently think too small. According to the Brazilian thinker and educator Paulo Freire (2000) this is known as the psychology of oppression. With this phenomenon, Latinas/os, as well as other minorities, internalize the negative messages and beliefs supplied by the dominant culture, which in turn unconsciously prompts minority groups to collude with the society that keeps them “in their place” because they believe their culture is inferior (Bordas, 2013 p. 71). In response to the psychology of oppression, there remains a gap in the representation of Latinas in top leadership positions, as well as women minimizing their personal value, intellect, abilities, and overall accolades.

### **Fear and Worrying**

One aspect of fear and worry that women may encounter in their career development is linked to a psychological phenomenon known as fear of success (Komalasari et al. , 2017). Liebert and Morris (1976) describe worry as the “cognitive component –a focus on negative performance and self-evaluation and a concern about

failure.” According to Lerner (2012), women frequently become consumed with worry about what could go wrong due to the societal pressures that are often placed on them. These negative emotions can lead to self-prophesizing thoughts and behaviors that reinforce feelings of inadequacy or competency. For example, the greater the success, the more sacrifices are required from both personal and professional relationships, such as loss of quality time with partners or children. As a result, women often choose to continue to think small and do not seek higher paying and more prestigious jobs because they fear and worry about how everyone around them will be affected by their choices rather than putting their needs, desires, and aspirations first (L. Parker, 2015).

### ***Imposter Syndrome***

Another notable manifestation of fear and worry is imposter syndrome, which was originally termed the imposter phenomenon. Psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes (1978) posited that “despite outstanding academic and professional accomplishments, women who experience imposter syndrome persist in believing that they are really not bright and have fooled anyone who thinks otherwise” (p. 241). With a new and diverse generation on the rise, Millennial women are encountering unique challenges as they seek leadership roles. For instance, between 2008-2013, Ernst & Young (EY) surveyed more than 1,200 cross-company managers and non-managers who belonged to the Millennial generation, Generation X, and Baby Boomers (Rogers, 2016). Their findings indicated that within multi-generational work environments, 72% of the surveyed cited their discomfort with younger employees managing older employees (Carter, 2016). With women graduating with college degrees, their level of fear and worry about suitability to compete and be leaders in the workforce is high. Ryder and

Biles (2003) found that women often do not seek top management or leadership positions because they fear the internal and external barriers they may encounter. For Millennial women, the external barriers they encounter with wage gaps and not being seen as natural born leaders intersect with the internal barriers that reinforce the misconception that Millennials should not be considered leaders due to their age and minimal years of experience. The fear and worry associated with being a Millennial woman pursuing a leadership track can be overwhelming and can deter this population from taking on personal and professional challenges that could otherwise help them grow into future leaders.

### **Misunderstanding One's Self**

A key aspect of furthering oneself in any career is self-promotion. Women must learn to view self-promotion as a way to make their achievements, talents, and abilities visible to their leadership team (Madell, 2019; Olson, 2019; Pianta, 2020). Researchers have found that women are notorious for downplaying their accomplishments due to fear of being seen as boastful, competitive, and aggressive (Crews, 2020; Lerner, 2012; Pianta, 2020; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Sandor, 2022). Often, the consequences of not engaging in self-promotion can lead women to feel stuck and underappreciated, and can altogether result in their being overlooked for promotions, salary increases, and new opportunities (Frankel, 2014; Pianta, 2020; Sandor, 2022).

Rooted within the Latino community is the concept of *personalismo*. Bordas (2013) stated that “*personalismo* places value on the reliable authentic self and the preparation a leader undertakes to become the kind of person that people will want to follow” (p. 54). Women need to learn to be the narrators of their own leadership journey

and stop waiting for others to form an opinion of their work. Cultivating the ability to own all of oneself means learning to appreciate and accept one's strengths, accomplishments, and not judging oneself harshly in the areas where one needs improvement (Crews, 2020; Pianta, 2020). For example, women often struggle to accept compliments or praise for their work or contributions. They view themselves as unworthy of receiving praise because they are continuously seeking perfection within themselves and the work they do (Crews, 2020). In fact, women who struggle to understand themselves are guilty of dismissing comments and instead focus on any criticism directed toward them or their work (Ryder & Briles, 2003). However, by owning themselves and their accomplishments, women can tap into their inner selves and discover their motivation, values, and intentions behind their personal and professional pursuits. The tendency to dwell on the criticism and mistakes of the past hinders women's growth and extinguishes their courage to demonstrate the importance of their contributions.

### **Dishonesty**

According to Gutek and Larwood (1987), the career models often referenced in leadership literature are completely inadequate in their applicability toward women (Komalasari et al., 2017). As noted previously, the predominance of stereotypically masculine leadership models is still the norm across disciplines. Women who utilize leadership styles that incorporate stereotypically feminine or interpersonal qualities are seen as too passive and do not inspire confidence in their effectiveness in leading (Eagly et al., 1992; Sanchez-Hucles & Sanchez, 2004 p. 213). In contrast, if women adopt leadership styles that align with more masculine behaviors, they are seen as less effective, especially by men, because their behavior does not align with stereotypical gender roles

(Jamieson, 1995; Sanchez-Hucles & Sanchez, 2004). As summarized by Elisabeth Kelan (2012), “women have to display leadership by being masculine but not too masculine and feminine but not too feminine” (p. 86). In other words, by not demonstrating the right balance between these two ends of the leadership spectrum, women are automatically perceived as inauthentic and dishonest.

Across multiple organizations, researchers have found that leadership development is still very much rooted in the practices of cloning template-bound leaders who are modeled using narrow parameters, such as being male, White, and not a Millennial (Kelan, 2012). For the growing Millennial workforce, these stereotypical leadership molds make it difficult to develop and present an authentic self. According to Kelan’s (2012) research findings, Millennials do not perceive authentic leadership as having the autonomy to be oneself, but rather needing to display behaviors that others will perceive as appropriate and professional. In the age of social media, the Millennial generation has had to contend with navigating and shaping their public and private personas and the impact of this phenomenon on their professional careers. For most Millennials, social media has become a habit that requires constant updating of statuses, posting of pictures, and divulging their thoughts and perspectives on any given topic that is trending. However, as the public and private spheres collide, it becomes more challenging for Millennials to separate their social media activities from their workplace environments. According to Kelan, Millennials have increasingly voiced their reservations about maintaining an online presence because of how companies today are using social media platforms to find out as much as possible about a person. In several interviews, Millennials pointed out the fear of missing out on a job or promotion because



they may not be seen as the right type of person based on their social media account.

Dishonesty is regarded as a self-sabotaging behavior because it can make women appear inauthentic and untrustworthy, which can easily cause them to lose touch with themselves and their true feelings (Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020). For many Millennial women, being authentic with themselves and those with whom they interact entails a constant balancing act between the different personas they need to curate in their pursuit of authentic leadership development.

### **Holding Back**

When women fear success, think too small, and are dishonest with themselves, these attributes constitute holding back. This self-sabotaging behavior is rooted in the lack of self-confidence women have in themselves and their capabilities (Pianta, 2020; Thomas, 2020). For Latinas, one of the most notable manifestations of holding back is rooted in the societal effects of discrimination and exclusion that result from growing up brown (Bordas, 2013). As noted by Bordas (2013), the contributions of the Latino people, heritage, and culture are not taught in school, portrayed positively in the media, or acknowledged by people in positions of authority. Moreover, as was detailed in several previous sections, diversity is practically nonexistent among the top leadership ranks across different disciplines. Therefore, for Latinas to find notable role models such as Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor—the first woman of color, but more importantly the first Latina to serve on the Supreme Court—they must search, build networks to reach out to others who share similar experiences, and find and nurture their own qualities within themselves.

As noted previously, leadership in the dominant culture typically does not entail learning about and tapping into one's cultural identity or resolving issues of discrimination or exclusion (Bordas, 2013; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Hernandez, 2020; Madon et al., 2001; Neiman et al., 1994). What is more typically expressed is Latinos and other people of color attempting to escape negative cultural biases, discrimination, and exclusion by identifying with the dominant culture and cloning their behaviors and thinking patterns (Bordas, 2013; Chin, 2011; Eagly & Hernandez, 2020; Madon et al., 2001; Neiman et al., 1994). The consequences associated with adopting these mainstream societal norms can result in Latina/os rejecting their culture altogether and becoming "Whitewashed." This rejection can lead to a sense of alienation not only from their own culture and people, but also from those in the majority because they do not see an authentic and honest person. Becoming a Latina leader involves the integration of one's culture, history, and personal background (Bordas, 2013). However, when women hold back due to a lack of representation among leadership roles in relation to gender, race/ethnicity, or generational cohort, it can diminish a woman's confidence. It can cause them to retreat, hold back their insights and inputs, and feel like an imposter. For Latinas/os, their struggles are rooted in knowing and understanding their history, finding the positive attributes of their culture, and incorporating these qualities into their leadership identity.

### **Lack of Self-Reflection**

As referenced by Kelan (2012), the ideological framework that governs most organizational cultures is called the Protestant work ethic. This concept was developed by the sociologist Max Weber in 1934, who argued that hard work leads to salvation. In

today's workplace environment, the application of this concept highlights the ideal worker, as someone who is expected to work hard and forgo a private life (Acker, 1990; Kelan, 2012). For women, a mindset that is only centered around work and does not allow for vacations, spending quality time with friends and family, and learning to understand one's mental and emotional needs are characteristics of self-sabotaging behaviors (Pianta, 2020). There is an array of research that speaks to the different life cycles of women and how milestones such as motherhood can disadvantage women in their careers. However, Millennials are also encountering career disadvantages as they pursue work-life balance.

For the incoming Millennial workforce, research has shown that in comparison to previous generations, Millennials place a great deal of value on leisure. This leisure can translate to having an active social life outside of work, traveling, and pursuing hobbies. Given that this generation has grown up with technology, the concept of spending all day in an office and having strict 9 to 5 schedules is perceived as outdated and not dynamic given the advancements in video conferencing, as well as the availability of synchronous and asynchronous online collaboration tools. Researchers have argued that in order to remain competitive and attract Millennials, companies need to reinvent the concept of work environments in order to align with 21<sup>st</sup> century best practices (Kelan, 2012; Twenge et al., 2010). Keeping oneself constantly busy without taking the time to stop for quiet reflection derails women's balance and success (Lerner, 2012). This lack of self-reflection is a prevalent fault to which women fall prey because they are constantly working hard to prove that they can juggle everything to themselves, their male colleagues, and their family (L. Parker, 2015; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020).

Given that top ranking leaders continue to promote an ideology that rewards the prioritization of professional life over private life, women and Millennials will continue to operate at a disadvantage.

### **Isolating**

Visibility is critical for leadership development; it presents an individual with the opportunity to showcase the skills and expertise they can bring to a project or workgroup. However, for women, visibility is not an issue. According to Kelan (2012), in male-dominated environments, women stand out due to both their gender and their minority status as leaders. Although visibility is not a concern for women, the sort of attention that their gender attracts can give rise to self-sabotaging behaviors, including isolation. The academic literature of leadership features the concept of psychological safety, the formal definition of which is “being able to show and employ one’s self without fear of negative consequences of self-image, status or career” (McWhinney, 2021, para. 3). In other words, this concept is based on a team level construct where members feel that their environment and their peers offer the necessary support and safety to allow for interpersonal risk taking that does not result in “losing face, censorship, lost opportunities, and experiencing anxiety” (Kelan, 2012 p. 134).

It is always exceptional to be recognized for exemplifying top performance; however, for women and minorities, the consequences associated with making mistakes have rippling impacts across entire minority groups. An article by Barnes (2017) referenced research studies noting that African American women who were found to make mistakes received harsher penalties than their African American male and White female counterparts (Rosette & Livingston, 2012). A separate research article referenced

by Barnes demonstrated that when minority women make mistakes, they are judged based on not only their gender, but also their race (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). For minority women, psychological safety is a constant struggle that can lead to isolation. It can reinforce doubts about their leadership capabilities—thinking too small—which was discussed previously under the lens of the psychology of oppression. This framework explored the reinforcement of internalized negative messages and stereotypes by the dominant culture. In addition, isolation can also serve as a survival tactic to help minimize or remove anxiety triggers. Through the lens of fear and worry, the primary concerns involve self-fulfilling prophecies and behaviors that reinforce feelings of inadequacy or competency. Women frequently become hyper focused on what they feel they are lacking and tend to only foresee negative outcomes. Consequently, women isolate themselves when they succumb to the intimidation of work environments or when they underestimate their own competency (Sandor, 2022). This in turn can steer minority women away from taking on leadership roles.

### **Disempowering Other Women**

The notion that there is no room at the top keeps women from helping one another. According to the available literature, both men and women initiate or partake in sabotaging behaviors; however, women have a greater tendency to act as saboteurs within their own gender group (Pianta, 2020; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Sandor, 2022; Thomas, 2020). A notable study referenced by Pianta (2020) found that women make up 58% of workplace bullies and 90% of the time they intentionally target other women (Crothers et al., 2009). Disempowering women can take the form of a multitude of behaviors including but not limited to:

- Not serving as mentors to help women navigate organizational politics or grow other women's self-confidence through developmental feedback.
- Not serving as sponsors whereby they actively advocate on behalf of other women to lead initiatives or to be promoted into leadership roles within their respective department or organization.
- Expecting junior women to pay their dues and endure the same trials as the older generation.
- Feeling jealousy toward other women.
- Talking behind women's backs or spreading rumors about them.
- Being harder on women subordinates in comparison to male subordinates.
- Having unrealistic expectations of professional women role models (Kelan, 2012; Pianta, 2020; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Sandor, 2022).

Role models are an essential component of leadership because it helps aspiring leaders to visual their potential future selves. One of the most common reasons cited for the lack of diverse female leaders is that there is just not enough representation of them in leadership positions (Ibarra et al., 2010; Kelan, 2012; Kilian et al., 2005). However, what is often less emphasized in the literature is the idea that available female role models are not perceived as the right kind of role models. The dynamics between junior and senior women present distinct disempowering behaviors that affect both groups. According to the available research, individuals will look to identity with others who are like themselves, a process known as homophily (Kelan, 2012). Homophily can be expressed in relation to categories such as gender, class, race, and even generational cohort (Kelan,

2012; Quimby & DeSantis, 2006). This explains why women often look for other women as role models.

One of the main disconnects between Millennial and senior women in the workplace is the idealization of female role models. According to the research conducted by Kelan (2012), Millennial women were found to desire role models that exemplify both a successful professional and private life that are perfectly balanced. Moreover, Millennial women also seek role models that fit into the mold of the ideal worker. In other words, the female role model must exhibit a balanced dichotomy that encompasses both masculine characteristics that are more readily associated with leadership, while also maintaining an essence of femininity to ensure they are still identifiable as women. Kelan observed in her research that when Millennial women find the senior female leader lacking in the idealized versions of what a role model should encompass, they complain that the female role model was not the right fit for them. This in turn was found to have negative implications for building strong female networks, mentors, and sponsorships because Millennial women struggled to connect with the more senior female leaders in their organization.

In contrast, the disempowering of the more senior female leaders was observed in the added pressures of being the representatives for their gender across their respective organizations. Due to the scarcity of diverse female leaders, research has shown that the burden often falls on the few senior female leaders to mentor or sponsor the junior women (Kelan, 2012). This can often lead to a sense of overwhelm, meaning that women can often interpret the responsibilities of mentorship and sponsorship as something additional to add to their never-ending responsibilities in both the workplace and their

private lives (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Sandor, 2022). This sense of overwhelm and the pressure to be a representative for all women in the workforce can introduce doubt in their worthiness to be mentors or sponsors. In fact, senior female leaders often feel a disconnect with women of the Millennial generation. When female leaders reflect on the work and the hardships they have endured to rise to their position, they believe that junior women will not approve of the choices they made in their careers (Kelan, 2012). Rooted in this disconnect is the fear and worry that they will be judged and called out for not having the idealized balanced professional and private life that is expected of all women. Moreover, the lack of willingness to share their experiences with Millennial women and the compromises they have made in both their professional and private lives keep these two groups separate and at odds among themselves.

### **Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace**

Infusing sex or gender role confusion in the workplace is a self-sabotaging behavior because a woman's sexuality can be used against her in her personal or professional life (Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020). Leon Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory postulates that "an underlying psychological tension is created when an individual's behavior is inconsistent within his or her thoughts and beliefs" (as cited in Thompson et al., 2012, p. 500). As explained by Nancy Doyle (2021) in the article "The Female Brain is Dead: Long Live the Female Brain," the discomfort an individual experiences when they are faced with information that challenges or contradicts their beliefs leads to a rationalization of that information. However, this rationalization involves the altering or manipulating of the information in a way that allows the individual to refuse any adjustments to their thinking, beliefs, or behaviors.



One of the derivatives of Festinger's theory is known as gender dissonance. According to Ryder and Briles (2003), gender dissonance is the subconscious discomfort, uneasiness or anger that men may feel when they work or interact with women. Behaviors that can trigger dissonance among male colleagues include any deviation of gender role expectations such as the squashing of natural feminine qualities, being overly aggressive, or exhibiting male qualities (Pianta, 2020; Ryder & Briles, 2003). On the other side of the spectrum, dissonance can also occur when women express overly feminine behaviors such as exhibiting girl-like behaviors, flirting at work, giggling, or acting helpless or overly cute (Pianta, 2020; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020). Harris (2018) noted that, too often, women in the workplace struggle to be honest with themselves because they are forced to maintain a fragile balance between their femininity and the expected masculine behaviors of a leader (Thomas, 2020). When women are forced to balance the duality of masculine and feminine characteristics, it can put them at odds with the persona they wish to portray and the persona they must present in a professional setting. Therefore, when leadership qualities are oversimplified to a representation of either masculine or feminine qualities, we overlook the true qualities that matter in leadership, such as competence, context, and ethics (Doyle, 2021).

### **The Nine Domains of Women's Personal Power**

As thoroughly addressed in the preceding sections, the prevalence of self-sabotaging behaviors, whether conscious or unconscious, introduces an internal dimension that affects women's pursuit of leadership roles (Crews, 2020; Miller, 2022; Pianta, 2020; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Sandor, 2022; Thomas, 2020). The exploration of the nine self-sabotaging behaviors framework helps to provide understanding and insight into

the limitations Millennial Latinas put on themselves, which thereby limits or halts their advancement into executive leadership roles. Moreover, it also provides perspective as to how much more inherent these sabotaging behaviors are among Millennial Latinas because of the multitude of disadvantages they encounter through the intersectionality of gender, age, and race/ethnicity. Understanding that one side of the spectrum is representative of self-sabotaging behaviors, the other side of the spectrum encompasses the strategies women can employ in order to break the cycle of self-sabotage and learn how to reclaim their personal power. The corresponding domains of Millennial Latinas' personal power include recognizing women's unique destiny, constructive preparation, owning all of one's self, honest self-expression, acting with confidence, cultivating self-intimacy, building a power web, inspiring other women, and embracing one's sexuality. The domains of personal power will be explored in the following sections.

### **Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny**

As noted by Lerner (2012), women's personal power involves the resilience and courage to quiet the negative internal voices that belittle their talents and instead gear their energies to developing a better awareness of the self. Only by recognizing and self-acknowledging our talents and capacity for limitless growth can a woman begin to make unique contributions to the world. As discussed previously, the psychology of oppression is a phenomenon whereby people of minority backgrounds internalize the negative messages and beliefs supplied by the dominant culture, which in turn unconsciously prompts minority groups to collude with the society that keeps them "in their place" because they believe their culture is in fact inferior (Bordas, 2013, p. 71).

For Latinas to reject the effects of the psychology of oppression, they must learn to acknowledge the positive and innovative traits associated with their ethnic and cultural roots (Andrade et al., 2021; Armenta & Hunt, 2009; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In other words, they need to be able to acknowledge the strength with which their community and culture can imbue them. According to Bordas (2013), in the Latino culture there is an intriguing concept known as *destino*, which implies that “everyone was born for a distinct reason at a precise time in history and has a unique life path” (p. 55). Part of the journey toward leadership and life relies on the ability to answer questions such as: Who am I? What was I born to do? What is my life’s work? As part of unfolding one’s *destino*, Latinas are tasked with discovering their family history and traditions, exploring their heart’s desire, and reflecting on their legacy and personal visions. Only by truly knowing and understanding how the women before her have contributed to her unique history can a woman unlock a clear sense of direction and understand the special leadership contribution she is called to make.

### **Constructive Preparation**

It has been well documented in the literature that women have a greater tendency to experience fear and worry throughout their careers; this psychological condition is recognized as the fear of success (Komalasari et al., 2017). According to Lerner (2012), women frequently become consumed with worry about what could go wrong due to the societal pressures that are often placed on them. These negative emotions can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies and behaviors that reinforce feelings of inadequacy or competency. As called out by Crews (2020), there needs to exist a balance whereby women do not fall prey to excessive rumination. To be clear, this does not mean women should never feel

fear or worry, because these are natural human emotions; rather, they must learn to identify when their emotions of fear and worry are stripping them of their power and preventing them from moving forward (Crews, 2020; Thomas, 2020). As established by the Stoic Epictetus:

Make the best use of what is in your power and take the rest as it happens. Some things are up to us, and some things are not up to us. Our opinions are up to us, and our impulses, desires, aversions—in short, whatever is our own doing. Our bodies are not up to us, nor are our possessions, our reputations, or our public offices, or, that is, whatever is not our own doing. (as cited in Pigliucci, 2017, p. 31)

It is important to take charge of the things we have direct control of and learn to let go of those we cannot influence or change. Learning to acknowledge and harness one's emotions through targeted strategies such as setting goals, taking calculated risks, and overall using the emotions to positively fuel your drive toward success is fundamental for women practicing constructive preparation (Lerner, 2012; Thomas, 2020; Tweed, 2018).

### **Owning All of One's Self**

When it comes to leadership and being a leader, Bernie Valdez said it best; “A leader has to be really secure. You have to know who you are and have respect for yourself” (as cited in Bordas, 2013, p. 59). As part of this domain, a woman's personal power is rooted in owning both her strengths and weaknesses (Lerner, 2012), which can be derived from all aspects of one's self, including gender, race/ethnicity, and generational cohort. Prominent within the Latino culture is the concept of *consensia*, which speaks to a leader's personal clarity of knowing oneself and having personal

awareness (Bordas, 2013). According to Bordas (2013), *consensia* “beckons the leader to know why she seeks to be a leader and what she wants to accomplish” (p. 54), but for Latinas it also entails pulling personal power from the experiences of growing up a minority. The experiences of needing to combat and overcome racism throughout one’s life, as well as learning how to be secure with one’s cultural identity, contribute to Latinas’ personal power.

Latinas who own all of themselves avoid cloning the behaviors and thought patterns that the dominant White society instills in schools and other institutions. They must struggle with the urge to reject their culture and become “Whitewashed” because they want to assimilate and want to escape the negative cultural images associated with being Latina (Bordas, 2013). As noted by Lerner (2012) and Thomas (2020), “taking responsibility for the totality of one’s self brings the authenticity of self-acceptance and self-expressions” (p. 43). As a result, overcoming self-sabotage in this domain involves Latinas’ courage to integrate and draw strength from their cultural identity, roots, and family heritage (Bordas, 2013). Ensuring their culture is preserved for future generations is an essential function of Latinas’ leadership.

### **Honest Self-Expression**

As noted previously, dishonesty is regarded as a self-sabotaging behavior because it can make women appear inauthentic and untrustworthy, which can easily lead them to lose touch with themselves and their true feelings (Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020). According to Crews (2020), authors such as Hauser (2018) and Helgesen and Goldsmith (2018) also highlight that dishonesty as a behavior is rooted in the desire to please others and control what others may think. In the age of social media, the Millennial generation

has had to contend with navigating and shaping their public and private persona and the impact of such behavior on their professional careers. Therefore, in a world where people are bombarded with false or staged narratives of living grandiose lives, it becomes even more important to have the courage to remain true to ourselves. As supported by Chin (2011), Thomas (2020) asserted that “a woman who engages in honest self-expression is anchored in who she is, transmits her unique value to her organization, is ethical in all her dealings, and is determined to be authentic in her leadership role” (p. 44). Although being part of the dominant ingroup and feeling accepted is an enticing choice, the act of compromising one’s identity is far more dire. It can result in women never completing their leadership journeys and finding the answers to questions like who am I? What was I born to do? What is my life’s work? Or, as Bordas (2013) put it, they may never find their *destino*.

### **Acting With Confidence**

The capacity for a woman to find her voice is rooted in her ability to nurture her inner confidence. This confidence is achieved when one takes the lessons learned and harnesses the experiences of crises and personal failures as an exercise in growth and maturity (Lerner, 2012; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020). As noted by Briles (2006), women can begin to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors by becoming confident and growing their self-esteem. For Latina leaders, the pathway toward building confidence and self-esteem goes hand in hand with understanding one’s cultural history, finding the positive attributes of their culture, and incorporating these qualities into their leadership identity. For example, Lerner (2012) pointed out that acting with confidence means having the courage to ask for help. Foundational within the Latino community is the

concept of *juntos*, meaning union, being close, joining, or being together (Bordas, 2013). In other words, the Latino community recognizes and upholds the practice of leadership being group driven, whereby their “unity and empowerment is not dependent on a single leader or a small cadre of influentials, but on a community of leaders” (Bordas, 2013, p. 141). The ability to pool resources and assign accountability across individuals is what empowers Latinas to act with confidence. Moreover, Latinas are taught from a very young age the skillset of collaboration, which in turn promotes ownership, shared responsibility, and accountability for getting things done—all qualities necessary for a leader.

### **Cultivating Self-Intimacy**

As noted by Crews (2020) and Briles (2006), cultivating self-intimacy entails the prioritization of practicing self-reflection and learning to be more attuned with our own wants, desires, and expectations in both a professional and personal sense. As the literature has established, for women, the cultivation of self-intimacy is rarely seen as a priority. Reasons for this include avoiding the feeling of being alone, avoiding showing weaknesses such as crying, not taking vacation, or avoiding downtime because of the societal pressures to exemplify a Protestant work ethic, as well as ruminating on past mistakes and allowing grudges or discontent to grow within themselves (Crews, 2020; Lerner, 2012; Miller, 2022; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020). Keeping oneself constantly busy, without taking the time to stop for quiet reflection, derails women’s balance and success (Lerner, 2012). The lack of self-reflection is a prevalent fault to which women fall prey because they are constantly working hard to prove to themselves, their male colleagues, and their family that they can juggle everything (L. Parker, 2015;

Ryder & Briles, 2003; Thomas, 2020). It is important for women to learn how to cultivate self-intimacy to combat self-sabotaging behaviors. Miller (2022) referenced the work of Hauser (2018), who encourages women to practice self-intimacy. This can be accomplished through setting clear and realistic goals, learning to distinguish between important and unnecessary tasks, setting boundaries on how time is distributed between work and life, and learning to delegate work. Women who take the initiative to prioritize the cultivation of the self-intimacy are better able to realize their leadership potential because they work to ensure their work-life balance allows for the cultivation of those positive characteristics and behaviors that help a person grow into who they wish to be (Miller, 2022; Pianta, 2020; Thomas, 2020).

### **Building a Power Web**

Behind every great leader is a mentor who has been foundational to the development and growth of that individual. In many traditional cultures, mentorship has been framed as a hierarchical construct whereby young people destined for leadership roles receive knowledge and guidance from usually older leaders to ensure a line of succession is maintained (Bordas, 2013). However, more modern definitions of mentorship have evolved to allow for greater inclusivity of the people who surround us and contribute to our overall growth and maturity as aspiring leaders. Lerner (2012) defined a power web as “a gathering of people – friends, family, and acquaintances – who are committed to [one’s] growth and achievement” (p. 129). To elaborate further on Lerner’s concept of the power web, this model consists of three key roles: listeners, connectors, and motivators. First, individuals who fulfill the role of the listener offer advice, are confidants, provide constructive feedback, and create a safe space that allows



one to vent frustrations or concerns without judgment. Next is the role of the connector, who helps create networking opportunities that allow for fruitful connections and paves the way toward greater inclusivity into certain networks or social circles. Lastly, those who serve as motivators are crucial in helping to provide guidance and stimulus for continuing to set new milestones—both professional and personal—when it comes to leadership advancement. As noted previously, the creation of a power web is crucial to helping women advance in their careers.

### **Inspiring Other Women**

Across the domains of women’s personal power, it is evident that supporting and becoming a true ally of women is important in their leadership journey. As referenced by Miller (2022), women looking to move into leadership positions will inevitably encounter barriers that can often slow down or completely stop their ability to continue moving forward in their career advancement. The strength behind women empowering other women is the sense of collectivism and feeling of belonging to a group where there is support for one another, but also where collective knowledge and experiences can be accessed. A variant of Lerner’s (2012) power web, as discussed previously, is the concept of intergenerational leadership. According to Bordas (2013), Latino mentorship is founded on an intergenerational approach reflective of a family structure. For example, in Latino family households, there is shared responsibility among people of all ages, and everyone contributes to the overall whole. Similarly, within the Latino community, this same approach is taken with leadership. Latinos acknowledge that each generation has a unique perspective and set of skills they can contribute to the collective, and the collective can equally take something from this exchange, no matter the age. One cannot

neglect the fact that, by having greater diversity across leadership roles, women are granted greater accessibility to sponsors and role models with whom they share similar cultural backgrounds and who can understand the hurdles or roadblocks they encounter due to their gender, race/ethnicity, or generational cohort. Overall, sharing of experiences, distributing work, and offering mutual respect across the different generations is integral to Latino leadership and helps to shape the power and empowerment of Latina leaders.

### **Embracing One's Sexuality**

Harris (2018) noted that, too often, women in the workplace struggle to be honest with themselves because they are forced to maintain a fragile balance between their femininity and the expected masculine behaviors of a leader (Thomas, 2020). When women are forced to balance the duality of masculine and feminine characteristics, it can put them at odds with the persona they wish to portray and the persona they must present in a professional setting. This concept is known as gender dissonance, and for women it is important to identify the signs of gender dissonance to better control people's reactions and behaviors toward them (Ryder & Briles, 2003). For instance, flirtation or "cutesy" behavior in the workplace should be avoided because men and women witnessing this behavior can misinterpret it as a manipulation tactic (Crews, 2020; Frankel, 2014; Ryder & Briles, 2003; Sandor, 2022). Other factors that can help to minimize gender dissonance include setting clear boundaries with male colleagues, dressing appropriately, learning to communicate effectively without overemphasizing feminine attributes, and demonstrating confidence and intelligence in one's abilities (Ryder & Briles, 2003). Overall, the ability to embrace one's sexuality is not about denying our feminine identity, but rather being

informed of the gender role and stereotypes that exist and using that awareness to empower oneself to control the narrative of how women allow themselves to be perceived in the workplace.

### **Gaps in Research**

Significant research is dedicated to women's lack of representation in leadership roles. As this chapter establishes, research that focuses on documenting the experiences of Millennials, Latinas, or women of color overall in leadership roles is limited. As the section on intersectional theory addressed, the various aspects of a person's identity intersect to create different modes of discrimination and privilege (Crenshaw, 1989). The different levels of diversity influence one another and create unique experiences that cannot be universalized. In turn, there is a need for research and analysis to explore and understand the reasons for the lack of leadership inclusivity and diversity across public organizations, private organizations, government, and commercial organizations, as well as domestically and internationally (Zenger & Folkman, 2012).

### **Synthesis Matrix**

A synthesis matrix is provided highlighting how the academic and professional literature match the variables of this study (see Appendix A).

### **Summary**

Chapter II provided a review of the academic and professional literature pertaining to the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latinas in their pursuit of C-Suite roles. Sections presented in this chapter included an overview of the foundational framework for leadership models, as well as a discussion on the rise of feminist leadership models. The section on the intersectionality of diversity and

leadership expanded on the available literature addressing gender and leadership, racial/ethnic diversity and leadership, and generational cohort and leadership. Next, key external barriers Millennial Latinas have encountered were reviewed, including the glass ceiling, adobe ceiling, and reverse ageism. A discussion of the theoretical foundations that grounded this study were presented, including Chicana/Latina feminist theory and intersectional theory. The theoretical framework for this study was presented, along with descriptions and literature supporting the nine self-sabotaging behaviors and nine domains of women's personal power. Lastly, critical gaps in the research were presented.

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

### **Overview**

Chapter III details the methodology and research design used in this thematic study to understand the specific self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and the strategies the participants utilized to overcome these behaviors throughout their careers. To ensure methodological alignment, this chapter includes the purpose statement, research questions, and a description of the explanatory sequential mixed method research design selected for this study. Details regarding the participants are provided in the population, sampling frame, and sample sections of this chapter. The researcher includes a description of the research instruments, methods for data collection, and data organization for both the quantitative and qualitative components. The second to last section covers the limitations and ethical considerations within this study. Lastly, Chapter III concludes with a summary of the methodology for this thematic study.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this mixed method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and explore the impact of these behaviors on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by Millennial Latina nonprofit leaders to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

## **Research Questions**

To identify and describe the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and to explore the impact of these behaviors on their career development, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders experienced throughout their leadership careers?
2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders?
3. What strategies did Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

## **Research Design**

The methodology selected for this thematic study was an explanatory sequential mixed method research design. For the quantitative portion, the participants were asked to complete an online survey. This quantitative instrument was designed to help the researcher determine the most prevalent self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders. In addition, it was intended to collect statistical data related to the strategies Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders employ to counteract the self-sabotaging behaviors. The qualitative portion of this study included a follow up interview with each of the participants. The goal of conducting one-on-one interviews with each participant was to collect data that was not constrained by any predetermined analytical categories (Patton, 2015). Through these one-on-one interviews, the researcher had the opportunity to document information-rich cases highlighting the strategies Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders have utilized to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

## **Quantitative Research Design**

A quantitative research design emphasizes objectivity in measuring and describing phenomena by using numbers, statistics, structure, and control (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In other words, the goal of conducting a quantitative research study is to determine the relationship between one element (an independent variable) and another (a dependent variable) within a population. To conduct the quantitative portion of this mixed method study, an online survey was provided to the participants. The survey instrument was initially developed by researchers from a previous self-sabotaging thematic and was updated by the seven doctoral students who replicated the study with other populations.

The Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders who consented to participate in this study were invited to respond to an online survey focusing on the nine domains of women's personal power and the nine corresponding categories of sabotaging behaviors. These research participants were asked to respond to each behavior using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (1), to agree (2), to slightly agree (3), to slightly disagree (4), to disagree (5), to strongly disagree (6). The purpose of using the Likert scale was to allow the individual to express their degree of agreement or disagreement with each behavior (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Through this quantitative survey instrument, the researcher limited the responses to the predetermined categories to facilitate the comparison and statistical aggregation of the descriptive data (Patten & Newhart, 2018).

## **Qualitative Research Design**

Different from the quantitative method described previously is the qualitative method. This method does not emphasize results in numerical form; instead, it is

presented as a narrative that looks to identify or define themes captured in the data collected. Qualitative methods are more aptly applied in situations where the researcher needs the flexibility to inquire into selected issues to document details, provide context, and identify any nuances that cannot be extrapolated from numerical data. In other words, qualitative methods are employed when researchers are exploring ideas, designs, or processes, or even when numbers alone do not present a complete picture and a narrative is needed (Patten & Newhart, 2018).

The qualitative portion of this mixed method study involved one-on-one interviews with each of the participants. This design permitted the researcher to explore the narrative behind the results obtained from the quantitative survey instrument. The Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders who consented to the interviews were asked 13 open-ended questions focusing on the self-sabotaging behaviors that can influence a Millennial Latina's career development effort. In addition, the researcher also inquired into possible strategies employed by the participants throughout their careers to overcome any of the self-sabotaging behaviors explored throughout this thematic study.

### **Method Rationale**

One faculty researcher and seven doctoral candidates discovered a common interest in exploring self-sabotaging behaviors and the strategies used by leaders to overcome self-sabotage. As a result, a thematic study was selected to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors and explore the impact of these behaviors on career development and advancement into leadership roles among women. Moreover, the researchers focused on identifying the strategies employed by female leaders to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.



To ensure thematic consistency and reliability, doctoral candidates across disciplines were selected by the thematic team of researchers. The cohort of doctoral candidates leveraged an explanatory sequential mixed method study utilizing a theoretical framework adapted from Lerner (2012) and Ryder and Briles (2003), which focused on nine categories of self-sabotage and their associated domains of personal power. Each of the researchers interviewed eight to 12 participants. Ashley Sandor studied female secondary principals; John McCarthy researched K-12 gay male school leaders; LaToya Davis explored female higher education executives; Davina Bailey interviewed female higher education deans; Tatiana Mendoza-Larreynaga (this researcher) studied Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders; Kristen Miller researched female assistant superintendents; and Heather Vennes interviewed female charter school Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and superintendents.

### **Population**

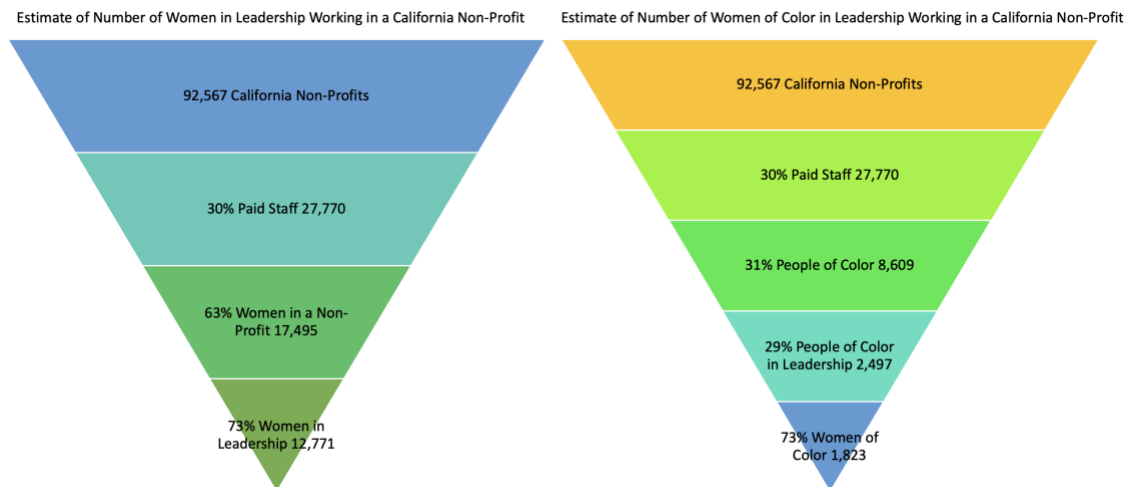
A population is defined as a “group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which the researcher intend to generalize the results of the research” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 129). In other words, the population is the total of all the individuals who have certain characteristics and are of interest to a researcher (Creswell, 2012). The population of this study is an estimated 1,823 Millennial Latinas in nonprofit organizations who hold executive or C-Suite level roles in California. Based on a 2019 economic impact report on California’s nonprofit sector, there are a total of 92,567 active nonprofits in California: 27,770 (30%) with paid staff, and another 64,797 (70%) that are all-volunteer organizations. These numbers do not include religious organizations. Approximately 1.2 million Californians

work for a nonprofit, meaning that one out of every 14 California jobs is at a nonprofit (CalNonprofits, 2019).

With regard to the diversity of the workforce, California nonprofits employ a significantly higher percentage of women and a slightly higher percentage of people of color than the overall civilian workforce. Overall, 63% of women account for the nonprofit workforce. With regard to staff leadership, women make up 73% of the nonprofit workforce, whereas on the Board leadership side women make up 56% of nonprofit Board of Directors. People of color account for 31% of the nonprofit labor force. In staff leadership, people of color make up 29% of nonprofit workforce, and similarly 27% of nonprofit Board of Directors are people of color (CalNonprofits, 2019)

**Figure 1**

*Comparison of Number of Women Working in a California Non-Profit Versus Women of Color Working in a California Non-Profit*



**Sampling Frame**

The sampling frame defines a set of elements from which a researcher can select a sample of the target population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In other words, this

group of individuals share common characteristics that the researcher can identify and study. The sampling frame for this study was limited to Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders within the Southern California region. The Southern California region comprises 10 counties: Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura.

Much of the available national and state reports of California's nonprofit sector presented only sectional demographic data that was characterized by either race (non-Hispanic White/person of color) or gender (non-Hispanic White/person of color; CalNonprofits, 2019; Costello & Manzo, 2000; DeVita et al., 2009; Kunreuther & Thomas-Breitfeld, 2016). The researcher was unable to find national or state reports that represented intersectional demographic data covering Latinas in the nonprofit sector. The researcher did find independent reports that provided demographic data on Millennial Latinas. According to the 2020 *Economic Status of Latina Report* (Hispanas Organized for Political Equality, 2020), in 2018, Latinas in the state numbered 7.72 million, or 19.5% of California's total population. Table 1 provides a holistic breakdown of Latina characteristics in California in 2015. It is important to note that according to the last column in Table 1, the percentage of all Millennials who are Latina Millennials equates to about one in four people in Fresno, Los Angeles, and the Inland Empire-Riverside-San Bernardino (Hispanas Organized for Political Equality, 2017).

**Table 2**

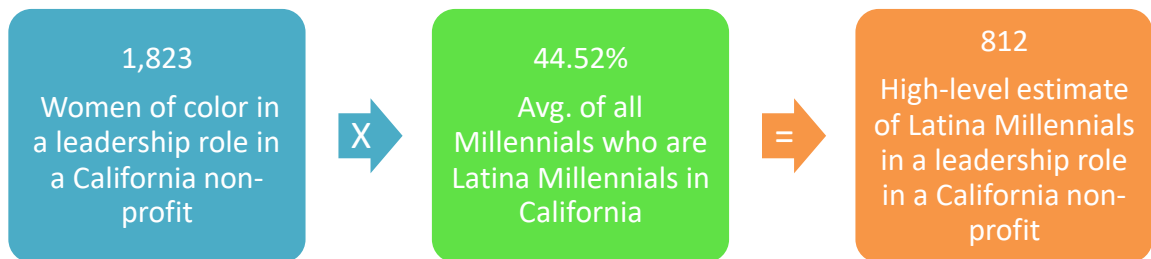
*Characteristics of the Population of Latinas in California by Metropolitan Area, 2015*

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	Total Population of Hispanics	Percent of Total Population of Metro Area	Average Age	Percent of All Latinas who are Native-born	Percent of All Millennials Who are Latina Millennials
Fresno	0.5 million	25.4%	26.3	72.3%	55.6%
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim	6.2 million	22.5%	30.3	59.1%	49.3%
Riverside-San Bernardino	2.2 million	24.4%	27.5	69.3%	55.6%
San Diego-Carlsbad	1.1 million	16.6%	29.1	63.4%	44.2%
San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward	1.0 million	10.7%	30.3	60.5%	29.8%
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara	0.5 million	13.6%	29.4	66.3%	32.6%

The specific number of Millennial Latinas in the nonprofit sector or Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders in the nonprofit sector could not be ascertained due to a lack of reporting databases that account for the specific demographic criteria. Multiple searches conducted by this researcher specifying the noted parameters failed to yield specific databases or reports that provided relevant information or statistics. However, based on the disparate statistical data available, the researcher estimated a potential sample frame of 812 Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders within the Southern California region.

**Figure 2**

*High-Level Estimate of Latina Millennials in a Leadership Role in a California Non-Profit*



## **Sample**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), “the group of subjects or participants from whom the data are collected is referred to as the sample” (p. 490). That is to say, the sample is the portion of participants selected from a larger group for the purpose of the study that the researcher is conducting. It is important to note that there are no specific guidelines that dictate the appropriate sample size in any given research study (Patton, 2015). The targeted sample size for this study was eight Millennial Latina non-profit C-Suite leaders. Potential purposeful sampling strategies employed in this thematic study included convenience sampling for the researcher to engage participants who were locally accessible and willing to participate in this thematic study (Creswell, 2012). Snowball sampling was also leveraged for the researcher to gain access to other relevant, and information-rich interviewees to document additional perspectives relating to self-sabotaging behaviors (Patton, 2015). For this explanatory sequential mixed method study, criteria for prospective participants included:

- Women who identify as Latina.
- Belong to the Millennial generational cohort (born between 1981-1996).
- Currently serve, in an executive, or C-Suite, level role in a Southern California nonprofit organization.
- Served in an executive, or C-Suite, level role in a Southern California non-profit organization for at least 1 year.

## **Instrumentation**

The current conceptualization of mixed method research first emerged in the 1980s (Molina-Azorin & Lopez-Gamero, 2016). Researchers realized that in order to

provide a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena, research questions should be tackled through a quantitative and qualitative lens in the same study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Molina-Azorin & Lopez-Gamero, 2016). This way, the researcher can compensate for the limitations encountered when using solely a quantitative or qualitative design (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

### **Quantitative Instrumentation**

The first phase of this mixed method study involved the collection of quantitative data to produce statistical information that could be analyzed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Thomas, 2020). The original thematic team developed the initial instrumentation based on the nine domains of women's personal power, a framework adapted from Lerner (2010) and Ryder and Briles (2003). The researcher collaborated with faculty and the seven doctoral candidates to update the thematic survey instrument, along with developing an alignment table to ensure the congruity between the survey questions with the purpose of the study (Appendix G).

The numerical data was collected via a survey instrument distributed to the participants using the online application Google Forms. This survey was designed to capture data on the self-sabotaging behaviors Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders experienced throughout their careers, including the impact of these behaviors on their pursuit of career advancement. The logic behind leveraging an online survey is the flexibility it allows both the researcher and participants regarding time, cost effectiveness, and efficiency in responding, collecting, and analyzing the data being requested (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Electronic copies of the quantitative consent

form were provided to the participants prior to collecting data. This document provided details pertaining to the purpose of the research, informing the participants about their Bill of Rights, and providing directions for completing the survey using a Likert scale.

### **Qualitative Instrumentation**

The second phase of an explanatory sequential mixed method research design requires the collection of personal stories or experiences shared by the participants to help explain the quantitative results or to elaborate further on the quantitative findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The original thematic team collaborated to develop the interview questions, creating an alignment table to ensure each interview question was congruent with the research questions and the purpose of the study (Appendix H). During the qualitative component of this study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with each of the participants via telephone, Zoom or WebEx, as a follow up to the electronic survey results received from the quantitative phase of the study. The interview questions were designed to capture rich information on the lived experiences of the Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders who experienced self-sabotaging behaviors throughout their careers. Moreover, the semi-structured interview format allowed the researcher to explore the strategies these women utilized to help overcome their self-sabotaging behaviors in their pursuit of career advancement.

### **Researcher as the Instrument**

Conducting qualitative interviews can be a complex activity that requires great skill, but also can expose the researcher to potential biases, which can result in skewing or misinterpreting the qualitative data collected (Patten & Newhart, 2018). According to Patten and Newhart (2018), the researcher can employ several safeguards to minimize the

potential of bias. For example, the use of semi-structured interviews is beneficial because it allows the researcher to think through the interview questions in advance to help them consider if the questions are complete, biased, or leading in any way. As stated in the previous section, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with each of the participants.

The recording of interviews after obtaining permission can also help to minimize the biased interpretation of data. The reason for this corresponds with the researcher's ability to transcribe the information so it can be reviewed and interpreted easily by others who were not present during the interview (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patten & Newhart, 2018). In alignment with best practice, the researcher requested permission from each participant to record the interviews. These interviews were then transcribed and presented back to the participants for review and validation. This data was also made available to members of the thematic group to solicit independent observations and analysis of the information collected to ensure it was in alignment with the analysis presented by the researcher.

### **Validity**

As noted by Patten and Newhart (2018), validity reflects the extent to which tests, questionnaires, interview questions, etc., can measure what they are designed to measure or accurately perform the functions they claim to perform. Within a mixed method study, the researcher must ensure validity in the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study. For the quantitative validity component, the survey utilized needed to demonstrate that the results captured were meaningful indicators of the construct being measured. In contrast, for qualitative validity, the information captured from the interviews needed to



be not only accurate, but also credible, dependable, and confirmable (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The original research team who conducted this study created, revised, and field-tested the instruments they utilized. To maintain congruency between the instruments and scope of the secondary thematic cohort, the researchers also took steps to review, revise, and field test the survey and interview questions, with oversight from the faculty advisors to ensure continued validity within the instruments.

### **Expert Panel**

Linda Davis (1992) aptly described how “decisions about data collection instruments can influence research outcomes whether an investigator’s purpose is to explore, describe, or explain phenomena of interest” (p. 195). Therefore, techniques that continuously improve data collection instruments are necessary to maximize the validity of a researcher’s findings. One of the methods leveraged in this study was the expert panel method. According to Davis (1992) and Lewthwaite and Nind (2016), the expert panel method involves the invitation of individual experts to provide a response or feedback on the appropriateness of the instrument being used within a given research study. For this research study, an expert thematic panel was consulted and asked to review the survey instrument and interview questions for alignment. Feedback gathered from the expert panel was used to refine both the quantitative and qualitative instruments to ensure they addressed the research questions, fulfilled the intended purpose of this research study, and aligned with the established conceptual framework. All participants completed a survey at the end of the field test to highlight the need for any changes or modifications to the process (Appendix I).

### **Quantitative Field Testing**

As noted by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the validity of a study is further enhanced through field or pilot testing. The purpose of conducting a field/pilot test is to: help identify any refinements to improve the clarity or format prior to its readiness for distribution, provide an estimate on the duration to complete the survey, and offer preliminary insight into emerging response patterns. The researcher worked with peer researchers on the thematic team to field test the online survey in order to confirm alignment with the research questions, ensure validity, and confirm reliability. After completing the online survey, all participants submitted the Survey Field Test Participant Feedback Tool (Appendix J). This feedback tool was used to gather information regarding any changes needed for the survey instrument such as rephrasing a question or clarifying the instructions. Revisions were made to the online survey to ensure the questions aligned with the research questions and the purpose of the study.

### **Qualitative Field Testing**

In reference to the qualitative field testing, the validity of the interview questions can be ensured through a process involving experienced interviewers providing a critique or feedback on the structure of the interview questions, field testing the interview guides intended to be used, and finally revising the questions based on the feedback or information collected from the field test (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The interview questions for this study were field tested by the thematic team in the presence of an expert interviewer to ensure the researcher was not leading the participant to respond in an already predetermined way.

At the conclusion of the field test, a Field Test Interviewee Feedback Tool was provided to all participants (Appendix L) and the Interview Observer Feedback Tool was provided to the expert interviewer (Appendix M). The researcher worked with the thematic group to revise the interview questions and interview procedures based on the feedback received. This field test provided the researcher with an opportunity to check for bias, evaluate the questions for intent, assess the length of the interview, and understand how data can be analyzed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

### **Reliability**

As part of the methodology, one of the main requirements of the research process is the reliability of the data and findings. Reliability deals with whether the data collection and analytic procedures of the researcher yield consistent, dependable, and replicable results over time and across researchers (Price et al., 2017; Zohrabi, 2013). In this thematic study, the measures of reliability employed by the researcher included internal reliability and intercoder reliability. Internal reliability is utilized as a means to assess the consistency of results across items within a quantitative instrument (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Zohrabi, 2013). This assessment was achieved by the researcher engaging peer researchers in the analysis, interpretation, and validation of the conclusions obtained from the survey distributed to the participants. In addition, the researcher also leveraged the recording and preservation of the interviews to allow for re-analysis or replication to increase the internal reliability of the data and findings (Zohrabi, 2013).

Given that the recording and preservation of the interviews was a technique designed to increase the level of reliability, an additional measure of reliability was applied to the qualitative portion of the study. Intercoder reliability deals with the extent

to which different researchers are able to agree on how to code the same content captured in the interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). For this purpose, after all of the interviews were transcribed and verified, the researcher coded each interview question and identified themes within the data. A separate peer researcher was asked to do the same procedure with the interview transcripts to allow a comparison of the data coded and ensure an 80% or greater reliability was met (Patton, 2015). After the data was coded, the researcher wrote a narrative analysis that identified common themes that emerged in each research question to construct a story of connected events from the research participants.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection for this explanatory sequential mixed method research study included the use of an electronic survey for the quantitative portion of the study and one-on-one interviews for the qualitative portion. Prior to conducting human research, the researcher received certification by the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research and obtained approval from the UMass Global Institutional Review Board (IRB; Appendix O). Each of the participants received a copy of the IRB Informed Consent (Appendix N) and the UMass Global Bill of Rights (Appendix D). Data collection for this thematic study could only commence upon receiving the participant's consent to take part in the study. To ensure the safety and privacy of the data collected, all information received by the participants was stored utilizing a password-protected digital device that could only be accessed by the researcher.

### **Quantitative Data Collection**

For the quantitative portion of this mixed method study, an electronic survey was developed using the web-based program Google Forms. Prior to receiving access to the survey, the researcher emailed each of the participants the bill of rights and informed consent form, which provided details surrounding the use of the data and the guarantee of confidentiality (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). After the researcher received the participant's signed consent, they were provided with the survey link and a deadline of 2 weeks to complete the survey. Estimated time to complete the survey was between 15-20 minutes. The researcher sent the participants reminder e-mails as appropriate, to ensure timely completion before the survey window closed.

### **Qualitative Data Collection**

The qualitative portion of this study involved the scheduling of one-on-one interviews with each of the participants. These interviews took place through an online meeting platform such as Zoom, WebEx, or Google Meet. In preparation for these interviews, an interview protocol and script were created to ensure validity and reliability within the study (Appendix E). Prior to conducting the interviews, permission was obtained to allow the recording of the interviews and acknowledge that each interview would take anywhere between 60-90 minutes. To ensure there was alignment between the researcher and participant, the purpose of this mixed method study was reiterated. The participants were also informed that because the interview was designed to be semi-structured, this empowered both the researcher and participant to ask clarifying questions to allow for the elaboration and additional probing of the information being shared. All interviews were recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Word's Dictate tool. Once the

transcription was complete, a copy was sent to the participants to verify for accuracy. Lastly, the validated transcripts were uploaded to NVivo for coding.

### **Data Analysis**

The methodology selected for this thematic study was an explanatory sequential mixed method research design. For the quantitative portion, the participants were asked to complete an online survey. This instrument was designed to help the researcher determine the most prevalent self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders. The qualitative portion of this study included a follow-up interview allowing the researcher to document information rich cases highlighting the strategies Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders have utilized to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. The data collected from the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study were integrated and analyzed to allow for a more complete and synergistic utilization of the data.

#### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

To conduct the quantitative portion of this mixed method study, participants were asked to complete an online survey. The results collected from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics to help the researcher transform the numeric values into sets of data that describe the results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher utilized frequency distributions to assess which of the nine self-sabotaging behaviors were referenced most often among Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders. Table 3 provides the self-sabotaging behavior category, the number of times the category was referenced, how many participants referenced the category (*n*), and the percentage of participants referencing the category.

**Table 3**

*Self-Sabotaging Behavior Categories Experienced by Millennial Latinas as Reported in Survey*

Self-sabotaging Behavior Category	References	<i>n</i>	% of Participants
Thinking too small	16	7	88%
Fear and worrying	40	8	100%
Misunderstanding oneself	23	8	100%
Dishonesty	22	8	100%
Holding back	52	8	100%
Not taking time for reflection	33	8	100%
Isolating	30	8	100%
Disempowering other women	5	3	38%
Infusing sex/gender role confusion	18	7	88%

*Note.* *n* represents the number of participants who rated either slightly agree, agree, or strongly agree.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

This method does not emphasize results in numerical form; instead, it is presented as a narrative that looks to identify or define themes captured in the data collected. In other words, qualitative methods are employed when researchers are exploring ideas, designs, or processes, or even when numbers alone do not present a complete picture and a narrative is needed (Patten & Newhart, 2018). Interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed. To ensure validity and reliability, the transcripts were provided to each of the participants for review and approval. These transcripts were then uploaded to NVivo for analysis by the researcher to identify those themes with high frequency. Each code was reviewed thoroughly to ensure it answered the study's research questions directly.

To ensure reliability, a separate peer researcher was asked to analyze 10% of the code obtained from the interview transcripts to allow a comparison of the data coded and ensure an 80% or greater reliability was met (Patton, 2015). In order to establish the

dependability and trustworthiness of the data collected in this explanatory sequential mixed method study, the researcher triangulated the data. According to Patten and Newhart (2018), triangulation involves the use of multiple sources or multiple methods for obtaining data. Therefore, the researcher conducted a comparative analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected to identify similarities and differences in the results. After triangulating the data, the researcher was able to draw conclusions from the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study.

### **Ethical Consideration**

This research study was approved by the UMass Global IRB. Written consent was obtained from each participant prior to collecting data, and safeguards were put into place to ensure that the rights of the Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders were upheld and their anonymity was maintained. Participants were informed of their voluntary participation status and had the right to withdraw from the study at any point in time. Information collected during the study was stored on a password-protected device, and all information related to the study could only be accessed by the researcher.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are the restrictions of design or methodology that occur in the study, that cannot be controlled by the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Disclosure of limitations is necessary to ensure transparency in this study. The limitation of this study included the location of the study, the sample size of participants, time constraints, and researcher bias.



### **Location of the Study**

Due to the size of the state of California, this study was limited to Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders within Southern California. These participants did not include any C-Suite leaders in private, religious, or educational organizations. Due to the researcher's location in Southern California, the study did not include any counties outside of the state. Therefore, the results of this study can only be generalized to non-profit organizations within the state of California.

### **Sample Size of the Participants**

A total of eight individuals participated in this study. The purpose of this study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and to explore the impact of these behaviors on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. According to Patton (2015), the sample size of this study is appropriate for a mixed method study; however, the findings from this study cannot be generalized to the overall population of Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders working in non-profits.

### **Time Constraints**

Time was a limitation in this study. To respect the participants' time, all interviews were limited to 90 minutes. Due to the time constraints placed on each interview, this limited the researcher's interaction with the participants, as well as the amount of detailed information that could be shared in these sessions.

## **Bias of the Researcher**

The researcher is herself a Millennial Latina who aspires to reach a top C-Suite leadership role in a non-profit organization. The results of this study have the potential to help not only the researcher accomplish her own professional goals, but also other Millennial Latinas overcome self-sabotaging behaviors in their careers. Given that the research topic is very personal to the researcher, a potential researcher bias could have resulted. To limit the effects of researcher bias, the researcher kept a reflective journal throughout the study to document ideas, opinions, thoughts, and feelings about the study. The researcher also used intercoder reliability to ensure validity and reliability in the data collected.

## **Summary**

Chapter III described the explanatory sequential mixed method research design utilized in this study. The chapter began with an overview, followed by a restatement of the purpose statement and research questions. Next, the research design section explained the selection of a mixed methods approach, which included quantitative and qualitative data collection processes. Details regarding the population, the sampling frame, and the sample selection process were provided. The quantitative and qualitative instrumentation was reviewed along with validity and reliability. The chapter then provided information about data collection and analysis, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study. The quantitative and qualitative analysis and findings are presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V concludes the dissertation with a discussion of the findings and considerations for future research.

## CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

### Overview

This mixed method study identified and described the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina non-profit C-Suite leaders throughout their career development and explored the impact of these behaviors on their career development. Equally important, this study identified the strategies Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders used to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. The theoretical framework for this study was adopted from *In Her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self* (Lerner, 2012) and *The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives* (Ryder & Briles, 2003). Chapter IV consolidates the data collection and analysis performed as part of this explanatory mixed method study to examine the lived experiences of Millennial Latina non-profit C-Suite leaders. This chapter provides an overview of the purpose statement, research questions, research methods, data collection procedures, population, sample, and demographic data. Chapter IV concludes with a summary of the data collected along with major findings related to each research questions.

### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and to explore the impact of these behaviors on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by Millennial Latina nonprofit leaders to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

## **Research Questions**

To identify and describe the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and to explore the impact of these behaviors on their career development, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders experienced throughout their leadership careers?
2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders?
3. What strategies did Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

## **Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures**

The methodology selected for this thematic study was an explanatory sequential mixed method research design. For the quantitative portion, the participants were asked to complete an online survey. This quantitative instrument was designed to help the researcher determine the most prevalent self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders. In addition, it was intended to gather the necessary data elements related to the strategies Millennial Latina C-Suite leaders employ to counteract the self-sabotaging behaviors.

The qualitative portion of this study included a follow up interview with each of the participants. The goal of conducting one-on-one interviews with each participant was to collect data that was not constrained by any predetermined analytical categories (Patton, 2015). Through these one-on-one interviews, the researcher had the opportunity to document information rich cases highlighting the strategies Millennial Latina nonprofit

C-Suite leaders have utilized to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. Interview were conducted via the Zoom communication platform, which allows users to connect to one another using video, audio, phone, and chat functions. Prior to any data collection, the participants were provided with the UMASS Global Bill of Rights, informed consent, and interview questions. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Dictate. All transcripts were coded using the qualitative analysis software program NVivo.

### **Population**

A population is defined as a “group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which the researcher intends to generalize the results of the research” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 129). The population of this study is an estimated 1,823 Millennial Latinas in nonprofit organizations, who hold executive or C-Suite level roles in California. With regard to the diversity of the workforce, California nonprofits employ a significantly higher percentage of women and a slightly higher percentage of people of color than the overall civilian workforce. Overall, 63% of women account for the nonprofit workforce, whereas people of color account for 31% of the nonprofit labor force (CalNonprofits, 2019).

### **Sample**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), “the group of subjects or participants from whom the data are collected is referred to as the sample” (p. 490). That is to say, the sample is the portion of participants selected from a larger group for the study that the researcher is conducting. It is important to note that there are no specific guidelines that dictate the appropriate sample size in any given research study (Patton,

2015). The targeted sample size for this study was eight Millennial Latina non-profit C-Suite leaders. Potential purposeful sampling strategies employed in this thematic study included convenience sampling for the researcher to engage participants who were locally accessible and who were willing to participate in this thematic study (Creswell, 2012). Snowball sampling was also leveraged for the researcher to gain access to other relevant and information-rich interviewees to document additional perspectives relating to self-sabotaging behaviors (Patton, 2015). For this explanatory sequential mixed method study, the criteria for prospective participants included:

- Women who identify as Latina.
- Belong to the Millennial generational cohort (born between 1981-1996).
- Currently serve, in an executive, or C-Suite, level role in a Southern California nonprofit organization.
- Served in an executive, or C-Suite, level role in a Southern California non-profit organization for at least 1 year.

### **Demographic Data**

As part of this study, all participant names and identifying information were omitted from the findings to maintain compliance with the consent standards. The eight Millennial Latinas who participated in this study were numerically identified as outlined in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Participants' Demographic Information*

Participant	Generational Cohort & Ethnicity	Month and Year of Interview
P1	Millennial Latina	March 2023
P2	Millennial Latina	March 2023
P3	Millennial Latina	March 2023
P4	Millennial Latina	March 2023
P5	Millennial Latina	February 2023
P6	Millennial Latina	March 2023
P7	Millennial Latina	December 2023
P8	Millennial Latina	December 2023

**Presentation and Analysis of Data**

Data collection for this study was initiated in February 2023 and was completed in December 2023. The researcher utilized the established research questions to guide the analysis of emergent themes and patterns. Findings related to each research question will be presented in further detail throughout Chapter IV. Narrative descriptions and excerpts from the interview transcripts will be leveraged in conjunction with numerical tables to demonstrate emergent themes and major findings based on the data collected across participants.

**Self-Sabotaging Behaviors**

**Thinking Too Small**

The category of Thinking Too Small includes five behavioral subcategories that may be experienced by Millennial Latinas in leadership. Table 5 depicts the overall self-sabotaging category, the specific self-sabotaging behaviors within this category, and the number of times Millennial Latinas reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors in their careers.

**Table 5**

*Reported Self-Sabotaging Behaviors in Surveys and Interviews – Thinking Too Small*

<b>Thinking Too Small</b>	Reported Behaviors in Survey		Reported Behaviors in Interviews		
	Count	%	Count	%	Total Frequency
I blamed others for why things aren't going well	1	12.5%	0	0.0%	0
I minimized my value ("I'm just a...")	6	75.0%	7	87.5%	72
I did not have the courage to step out of my comfort zone	3	37.5%	7	87.5%	28
I was not open to new experiences	0	0.0%	1	12.5%	7
I often made perfection the standard in my life	6	75.0%	4	50.0%	46

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 5 presents an integrated analysis of the responses gathered from both surveys and interviews, specifically within the Thinking Too Small category. This analysis demonstrated that the predominant self-sabotaging behavior among Millennial Latinas is the underestimation of one's own value. Notably, this behavior was identified by six of the participants in the survey component and referenced a total of 72 times by seven participants during the interview portion of the study. Notable highlights extracted from the interviews included Participant 1 sharing how:

It's really tough especially for immigrant Latino women because we feel like we're not valuable as who we are, that we have something that we have to prove. We have to provide something very special and something very new to be accepted in a country that is not our own and that for the most part doesn't want us. As women too, it's an extra challenge because women you know we're taught that we will never—at least I was taught that—women had a long way to go and that it wasn't going to be within my realm of achieving some things that men could achieve easily. Off the bat you're starting with so much to prove and not feeling like anything you do will ever be good enough because you are: an



immigrant, you are a woman, you speak with somewhat of an accent, you must learn English, or you don't understand a lot of the customs here. When you're brought up like that, I think it's very hard not to feel like your value is only measured by your achievements, so the more you achieve the more valuable you are and when you don't achieve at a certain level you're not going to be valuable.

Similarly, the theme of minimizing one's value was also prevalent in Participant 2's interview, in which she recollected that, in real time, she experienced a moment where she minimized her value due to the presence of other individuals in the room. She stated how:

I didn't have anybody really pushing me or complimenting me or boosting my self-esteem. I always had a little bit of the imposter syndrome going on, so I wasn't confident. In fact, I remember in my first big meeting, I was sitting in a room where there was a Chancellor, and I was terrified to speak up. I was like OK I'm the only Latina in here, I'm the youngest person in here, I don't know if I belong here, so with all that I was like I'm not going to say anything in this meeting.

In a separate interaction, Participant 2 remembered,

When I first got to attend a Cabinet meeting, all the attendees were older White men. So, of course, you feel like an imposter, right? I get there and I'm the only person whose parents have not gone to college, this guy next to me has an English accent, and I'm just like where am I right now? So, you definitely feel that imposter syndrome when you are one of the few women in the room, let alone one of the few people of color.

Analyzing the data presented in the table, the most salient behavior, with a total frequency of 72 instances, is the tendency to minimize one's value, indicated by the statement "I'm just a..." This behavior was reported by 75% of participants in the survey and a striking 87.5% during interviews. This data suggests a significant pattern of internalized minimization of self-worth among the participants. Equally noteworthy is the reported lack of courage to step out of one's comfort zone, with a total frequency of 28, which reflects a considerable barrier to personal and professional growth. This was observed in 37.5% of survey responses and matches the 87.5% found in interviews, underscoring the consistency of this behavior across different modes of reporting.

Another behavior with a high total frequency of 46 is the pursuit of perfection, with 75% of survey respondents and 50% in interviews noting that they often made perfection the standard in their lives. This may point to a potentially unyielding self-standard that could hinder progress and lead to burnout or decision paralysis. Conversely, the unwillingness to blame others for things not going well and the resistance to new experiences were less frequently reported behaviors in both surveys and interviews. This might suggest these are not as significant in the context of self-sabotage for the Millennial Latina population.

The discrepancies between survey and interview responses, particularly the increased frequency of certain behaviors reported in interviews, indicate a level of introspection and reflection that was elicited more effectively in a one-on-one interview setting. In summary, the data presented suggests that these Millennial Latinas identify with several of the subcategories under the self-sabotaging behavior of Thinking Too Small, potentially impeding their pursuit of leadership roles. There appears to be a pattern

of internalizing societal or self-imposed limitations, especially around self-value and risk-taking.

### **Fear and Worry**

The category of Fear and Worry includes seven self-sabotaging behaviors that may be experienced by Millennial Latinas in leadership. These seven self-sabotaging behaviors served as subcategories to which the data was coded. Table 6 depicts the overall self-sabotaging category, the specific self-sabotaging behaviors within this category, and the number of times Millennial Latinas reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors in their career.

**Table 6**

*Self-Sabotaging Reported Survey Behaviors – Fear and Worry*

<b>Fear and Worry</b>	Reported Behaviors in Survey		Reported Behaviors in Interviews		
	Count	%	Count	%	Total Frequency
I became anxious when thinking about a change in my career	8	100.0%	6	75.0%	27
I felt out of control in an unfamiliar situation	4	50.0%	2	25.0%	4
I resisted change	1	12.5%	0	0.0%	0
I feared looking stupid	7	87.5%	7	87.5%	30
I felt like an imposter on the job	7	87.5%	8	100.0%	36
I mulled over my mistakes	7	87.5%	6	75.0%	18
I feared being rejected	6	75.0%	7	87.5%	26

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 6 presents an integrated analysis of the responses gathered from both surveys and interviews, specifically within the Fear and Worry category. This analysis demonstrates that the predominant self-sabotaging behavior among Millennial Latinas is feeling like an imposter on the job. Notably, this behavior was identified by seven of the participants in the survey component and referenced a total of 36 times by all eight participants during the interview portion of the study. Participant 3 noted that as she was promoted into different leadership positions, there was an executive who was impressed

not only with her work but was interested in offering opportunities for her career growth. However, Participant 3 struggled to see the potential the executive was seeing in her and constantly doubted her own ability to fulfill the role.

It was really weird, for me to be told that I was doing a good job. I didn't feel like I was doing a good job because I was kind of learning the job as I was going. I wasn't coming in like I already know this...sometimes I feel like am I doing this right? Is this what people want? Is this the Board wants?

Following a particular incident early on in her career, Participant 3 admitted that one experience continues to create doubt in her own capabilities.

Last year we had a board meeting and at this time the previous executive director had just left. One of my fears was that with nonprofits money is always an issue...throughout the year I was communicating my concerns about the financials, and I felt like I was constantly shut down. Then comes the board meeting and sure enough I get all these questions thrown at me and I don't know how to respond...To this day, every time I have board meetings, I get so anxious because I'm like what if they ask me something I don't know? I always make sure I am preparing myself for the worst-case scenarios because I'm so worried that I'm not doing things correctly. Sometimes it's hard to do that [prepare] when I don't have a foundation and I kind of have to create as I go and figure out what it is that needs to be communicated.

Moreover, Participant 8 recalled that in her career journey, imposter syndrome was always there.

It's interesting because my career path was very diverse. So, I went from the military to the retail industry working for a Fortune 500 auto company doing administrative work, from there I went into higher education. Not having any background in higher education, I started doing financial aid (never doing financial aid), then from there I transitioned into an academic advisor role (not ever doing academic advising), then from there I went into real estate with the talent acquisition team as a project manager (never doing project management) but somehow, I ended up there. From there I navigated to healthcare, doing very similar work with talent acquisition and recruitment but they were all very different roles. In each role the imposter syndrome was present because I had never worked in any of those specific roles before. I was new to them so I felt oftentimes that I couldn't speak my opinion because I had no idea about the industry. I was new in each role I took on and that's what made me feel that fear of rejection of people asking what is she doing here? She's never done this before. So, it was interesting to navigate through these different careers.

Like the experiences of Participant 8, Participant 5 also highlighted how being a Millennial has fostered ideas of imposter syndrome.

I should also mention too that when I started in my career in finance in the public sector, I was always the youngest person in my department. This added even more to it like "you're too young like to have that sort of opinion" ... I know people like to think that reverse ageism isn't a thing, but a lot of women have had a lot of difficulty accepting me as their supervisor, leading them, or telling them what to do. I think the imposter syndrome is something that is really hard to shake. As we

continue to make progress we're stepping into new roles where you're feeling like you have to fulfill some sort of role, but you're not sure if you quite fulfill it yet.

So, as I continue to climb, I feel like it hasn't really left me.

The data presented in the Fear and Worry category from the study on Millennial Latinas highlights several critical insights into the psychological barriers that may impede their career progression. Firstly, anxiety about career change is universal among survey respondents, with a 100% reporting rate, which declined slightly to 75% in interviews, for a high total frequency of 27. Based on the responses provided, this phenomenon is rooted in a deep-seated concern about the risks associated with career moves, which is a significant obstacle to pursuing executive roles. The feeling of being an imposter on the job is reported by 87.5% of participants in both surveys and interviews, making it the most consistently reported fear with the highest total frequency of 36. This points to a prevalent imposter syndrome within the cohort, which is known to undermine self-confidence and could significantly deter leadership aspirations.

Moreover, the fear of looking stupid was reported by 87.5% in surveys and matched the interviews with the same percentage, cumulating in a total frequency of 30. Such fear is indicative of a high stress level regarding self-image and external perception, which has been shown to inhibit active participation and assertiveness in professional settings. Interestingly, although a fear of being rejected was a common worry, with a total frequency of 26, resistance to change was the least reported behavior in surveys and not reported at all in interviews. This suggests that although these women are open to change, their advancement may be more affected by internal fears rather than an unwillingness to embrace new situations.

Mulling over mistakes appears to be a significant concern, with 87.5% reporting this behavior in surveys and 75% in interviews. This indicates a propensity for over-analysis, which may result in an excessive focus on past errors rather than forward movement. Feeling out of control in unfamiliar situations, which can be a natural response to new environments, was less frequently reported but still significant, with a total frequency of 4. Collectively, these findings illuminate the inner emotional landscape of Millennial Latinas in the professional realm. They reveal a cohort grappling with self-doubt and the psychological impact of potential external judgment.

### **Misunderstanding One’s Self**

The category of Misunderstanding One’s Self includes five self-sabotaging behaviors that may be experienced by Millennial Latinas in leadership. These five self-sabotaging behaviors served as subcategories by which the data was coded. Table 7 depicts the overall self-sabotaging category, the specific self-sabotaging behaviors within this category, and the number of times Millennial Latinas reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors in their career.

**Table 7**

*Self-Sabotaging Reported Survey Behaviors – Misunderstanding One’s Self*

<b>Misunderstanding One's Self</b>	Reported Behaviors in Survey		Reported Behaviors in Interviews		
	Count	%	Count	%	Total Frequency
I could not accept compliments or praise	5	62.5%	5	62.5%	21
I have been reluctant to seek out feedback that would help me improve	3	37.5%	2	25.0%	13
I have focused on a person criticizing me	6	75.0%	6	75.0%	22
I have been resistant to describe or talk about my accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting ego	7	87.5%	6	75.0%	38
I did not accepted parts of myself that needed development	2	25.0%	1	12.5%	2

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 7 presents an integrated analysis of the responses gathered from both surveys and interviews, specifically within the *Misunderstanding One's Self* category. This analysis demonstrated that the predominant self-sabotaging behavior among Millennial Latinas is their resistance to describing or talking about their accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting ego. Notably, this behavior was identified by seven of the participants in the survey component and referenced a total of 38 times by six of the participants during the interview portion of the study. Participant 1 shared that being a Latina comes with a unique set of challenges when minimizing one's accomplishments. She stated how,

Part of being a woman and part of being Latina, it's very much ingrained in you that you cannot be boastful, at least in my upbringing and if you are then you're hurting somebody's feelings, or you are somebody who wants to show off and nobody likes a showoff. I think from a very young age I was taught that if you do that, you're going to take something away from somebody else and that's very unkind and you are very selfish.

Participant 1 further commented how her mom was always modeling several self-sabotaging behaviors. When Participant 1 was growing up, for example,

My mom would make something or cook or do something amazing for her family and she would say "it's nothing" and I know it was not nothing. I knew that it was not nothing because I saw the work she put into it, and I think being raised in that environment and being raised in a culture where you minimize yourself to make others feel good, especially because you're a woman and that's your role in the household or in your community...It's something that I'm very aware of. I'm



aware that my mom did this and that women in my culture, and women everywhere do this. As I grew older, I learned to model my mom's self-sabotaging behaviors and I try not to do that with my daughter. As much as I can, I try to raise my daughter to be very independent and very proud of her accomplishments and praise her for when she does something exceptional.

Participant 7, in many respects, also echoed the same sentimentality as Participant

1. As part of her educational and career journey, she has been witness to the long-lasting impact of self-sabotaging behaviors within the Latino culture.

I don't know if this is a culture thing or me personally, but I have to figure it was more so my upbringing. My parents came from Mexico; my mom was fifteen, my dad was eighteen and she was pregnant. When they came to this country so young, they had to overcome a lot of hurdles to achieve the American dream. After all they have accomplished, they remain humble and live such a humble lifestyle. It's something that they always taught me; it's not about showing off they would say but using those skills to be able to help others without necessarily showing them off. I remember whenever someone would ask me like, "Oh, what do you do?" I would simply say, "Oh, I'm in school," but never really discuss what school was because I didn't want to come off as arrogant in any way because I know that not many can afford education and not many have the privilege to be doing what I was doing for myself. I think the doctorate program was something that really transformed my thought process because it forced me to look into who I was, and what kind of leader I wanted to be. I realized how can I expect to make an impact, if I am still not comfortable with my own

accomplishments...and I mean being 25 and being done with my doctorate, it took me time to be able to come to terms and understand that sharing the journey doesn't mean boasting about it or being arrogant, it simply comes in a form of self-love and acceptance for all the hard work that brought me to be who I am today.

The Misunderstanding One's Self category reflects a critical aspect of self-perception that is essential for personal and professional development. The collected data from the study on Millennial Latinas indicates several key patterns. The reluctance to embrace self-affirmation is clear, with a notable 62.5% of participants indicating an inability to accept compliments or praise in both surveys and interviews, resulting in a total frequency of 21. This suggests a prevalent challenge with self-acceptance that can undermine confidence and the ability to internalize one's achievements.

A significant trend is observed in the avoidance of self-promotion, with an overwhelming 87.5% of participants expressing resistance to discussing their accomplishments with others in the survey and 75% in the interviews, totaling 38 instances. This behavior stems from a fear of being perceived as egotistical, which can be culturally influenced or linked to gendered expectations and is a considerable obstacle in career advancement where self-advocacy is often necessary. Furthermore, there is a pronounced tendency to focus on criticism, reported by 75% of the participants in both surveys and interviews, reaching a total frequency of 22. This indicates a heightened sensitivity to external evaluation, potentially leading to an overshadowing of positive self-regard and impeding a balanced self-assessment.

Reluctance to seek out feedback is less pronounced but still present, with 37.5% reporting in surveys and 25% in interviews, amassing a total frequency of 13. This reluctance could hamper growth and learning, because feedback is crucial for professional development. The least reported behavior, with only two instances, is the rejection of self-identified areas needing improvement. While less frequent, this could suggest Millennial Latinas are better attuned to the improvements they would like to make within their personal and professional lives. Overall, the data elucidates a complex interplay of self-sabotaging behaviors rooted in a misunderstanding of self. These behaviors are indicative of internal barriers that Millennial Latinas face, which could limit their recognition and pursuit of leadership opportunities.

### **Dishonesty**

The category of Dishonesty includes four self-sabotaging behaviors that may be experienced by Millennial Latinas in leadership. These four self-sabotaging behaviors served as subcategories to which the data was coded. Table 8 depicts the overall self-sabotaging category, the specific self-sabotaging behaviors within this category, and the number of times Millennial Latinas reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors in their careers.

**Table 8**

*Self-Sabotaging Reported Survey Behaviors – Dishonesty*

<b>Dishonesty</b>	Reported Behaviors in Survey		Reported Behaviors in Interviews		
	Count	%	Count	%	Total Frequency
I said “yes” to things when I actually wanted to say ‘no”	7	87.5%	8	100.0%	48
I took sides when I really wanted to stay neutral	2	25.0%	1	12.5%	2
I remained silent in a situation when it would have been best to speak up	7	87.5%	5	62.5%	26
I have been nice as a way to avoid confrontation	6	75.0%	4	50.0%	20

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 8 presents an integrated analysis of the responses gathered from both surveys and interviews, specifically within the Dishonesty category. This analysis demonstrated that the predominant self-sabotaging behavior among Millennial Latinas is saying yes when they wanted to say no. Notably, this behavior was identified by seven of the participants in the survey component and referenced a total of 48 times by all eight of the participants during the interview portion of the study. Participant 5 shared the following experience,

I feel like when I see the word dishonesty it sounds like a bad thing, but I feel people don't realize the impact of lying to yourself. For me when I was telling myself, “I was OK” or saying “yes” to things and you really want to say no because you feel like you have to say yes to everything. I feel that it's more of a people pleasing characteristic, you want to please people, so you say yes.

Within the same vein of having a lack of choice to say no, Participants 2 and 3 shared that it is not only the career that forces you to say “yes,” but also the circumstances in which you find yourself. Participant 2 put this into context when she explained,

When it's your boss and they tell you to do something, I'm like OK. When I wanted to keep my job so that I could pay my bills you have to say yes, you know what I mean? What I still do to this day when the president tells me to do something I don't want to do, my answer is "will do." I'm just being real because we are at will employees, we could be fired at any time and I'm an administrator, I don't have unions protecting me...I've seen people get fired around me, so I'm like yes, no problem even though I know it's the wrong thing to do. Some of it is just a waste of time and some of it is just silly things that they make you do that is a waste of time. I don't think I've had to do anything that's morally incorrect, but these are just things that I know don't work, but I have to say yes.

In similar fashion, Participant 3 highlighted how,

My whole life I've been a people pleaser, specifically with my family. No was never really an option for me and even now I am still learning to say no and it shocks my mom when I tell her no. I think unlearning to always say yes it's still very much alive, I feel like I'm very much responsible for the my staff and their well-being so a lot of the times I do stretch myself thin because I want to make sure that they're OK. I'll say yes to a lot of things like supporting them, making sure that the work gets done, even though I have like twenty other things going on. For me it's really hard to say no, I'm not a not a confrontational person at all. I like to say that it's because I'm a Libra, but I'm not big on confrontation, I just want to always keep the peace with everyone and make sure everyone's OK. I think a lot of the times I kind of hold on to that burden or responsibility of just saying yes because it's easier.

The tendency to acquiesce to others' requests or expectations, even when it contradicts one's own desires or best interests, is particularly prominent among Millennial Latinas. An overwhelming 87.5% of survey respondents reported saying "yes" when they wanted to say "no," and this was consistently reported by all participants in interviews, resulting in the highest total frequency of 48. This behavior points to a significant challenge in setting boundaries and advocating for personal needs, which is essential for authentic leadership. Remaining silent in situations where speaking up would have been beneficial was reported by the same percentage of participants in surveys and by a notable 62.5% in interviews, reaching a total frequency of 26. This indicates a reticence to express opinions or concerns, potentially due to fear of conflict or reprisal, and suggests a need for empowerment in communication skills.

The behavior of avoiding confrontation by being excessively nice was reported by 75% of participants in the survey and 50% in interviews, with a total frequency of 20. This may reflect a tendency to prioritize harmony over honest expression, which can suppress genuine dialogue and problem-solving. Taking sides in situations where neutrality would have been the preferred stance was the least reported behavior, with 25% in the survey and an even lower 12.5% in interviews, for a total frequency of 2. This suggests that although it is not as common as other behaviors, there may be instances of compromising one's neutrality under pressure. Collectively, these behaviors illustrate a pattern of inauthenticity that could prevent Millennial Latinas from engaging fully in their professional environments and advancing to leadership roles.

## Holding Back

The category of Holding Back includes nine self-sabotaging behaviors that may be experienced by Millennial Latinas in leadership. These nine self-sabotaging behaviors served as subcategories to which the data was coded. Table 9 depicts the overall self-sabotaging category, the specific self-sabotaging behaviors within this category, and the number of times Millennial Latinas reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors in their career.

**Table 9**

### *Self-Sabotaging Reported Survey Behaviors – Holding Back*

Holding Back	Reported Behaviors in Survey		Reported Behaviors in Interviews		
	Count	%	Count	%	Total Frequency
I did not reach out for help when I needed it	8	100.0%	6	75.0%	31
I have avoided criticism	5	62.5%	3	37.5%	7
I made inflections rather than make bold statements	5	62.5%	0	0.0%	0
I have apologized unnecessarily	7	87.5%	3	37.5%	6
I have talked down to myself	8	100.0%	5	62.5%	18
I preferred to sit in the back of the room at conferences or meetings	5	62.5%	2	25.0%	12
I preferred not to speak up in a meeting or group discussion	4	50.0%	7	87.5%	56
I have held back when I had the answer, question or thought because I was concerned about what other people think or the impression they will have of me	5	62.5%	5	62.5%	22
I felt insecure towards balancing work and family obligations	5	62.5%	3	37.5%	13

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 9 presents an integrated analysis of the responses gathered from both surveys and interviews, specifically within the *Holding Back* category. This analysis demonstrated that the predominant self-sabotaging behavior among Millennial Latinas is preferring not to speak up in a meeting or group discussion. Notably, this behavior was

identified by four of the participants in the survey component and referenced a total of 56 times by seven of the participants during the interview portion of the study. Participant 2 specifically cited strong physical reactions when even the idea of speaking up in a meeting was encountered in her journey toward leadership. She shared how,

I would get heart palpitations just speaking up in a room of five people and I could feel my neck getting red from the nerves kicking in. People now come up to me sometimes and say you're so confident, I'm like man, it was a journey. I tell people I did not come out of the box like this, this was some serious work.

She also shared a college interaction that not only affected her scholastic journey, but also spilled into her growth as leader.

When I first got to college my freshman year I was in a class, and I was speaking up in this communication course. I was really talkative, I was so excited to be at this college campus and I felt comfortable, it was a smaller class and there were some folks of color in there, so I liked speaking up. One day the professor said to me "what country are you from? I can't quite pick up your accent." At first, I was like what accent? I had a valley accent; I probably sounded a bit like a chola. I honestly don't know if it was the first time, he interacted with a Mexican American from the hood I don't know, so I responded to him I'm from California. He repeated his question, "no, where were you born? what country are you from?" Following that interaction, I felt like what he did to me had shut me down. What I did after was I decided I was not going to talk because I guess I have a weird accent. I knew that I was speaking English, but I said to myself I don't know what



he's talking about because I wasn't an ESL student, it was just a different style. I didn't speak up again in that class for the rest of the semester.

In other circumstances, the participants shared how it has been their experience that they must pay their dues before they have earned the right to speak. For example, Participant 4 shared,

The fear of the imposter syndrome, thinking that you're not good enough for the position that you have, I am currently experiencing that in my current role. I'm always kind of doubting myself in certain areas because I don't want to sound like I don't belong, I don't want to sound like I'm not worthy of the positions that are offered to me, and so there are times where I don't say anything because it's going to be used against me later on. I've seen it happen with people where they have been vocal on wanting to make change and then all of a sudden, they're given the worst assignments or all of a sudden, they're asked to do things that aren't necessarily beneficial or helpful for their career. As a result, we have learned how to wait to speak and wait to see how it goes because it's not until you get into a higher position that you're able to verbalize the changes that need to happen, but for actual change to happen we have to be able to get to the top. This also means that sometime to get to the top you have to just reserve your speech and at times measure what we're going to say.

Participant 4 also shared how there is always this feeling that there is never really a safe space to speak up. She noted that,

It's interesting because sometimes even in the most open dialogue you're told "we're all here to share," "we're here to improve," "we're here to make positive

changes,” but there’s always that underlying voice in me saying “be careful.”

When people say the tallest tree gets chopped, I’ve seen that happen around me and I have learned to reserve my speech. I am reserved when it comes to my participation, there are times where I do know a lot of the answers, but I won’t say anything because then I get comments like “oh can you stop showing off” or “oh there you go again.”

A different side to not preferring to speak up surfaced in the interview with Participant 2 and it provided a different perspective to what was encountered in the literature. She shared,

Honestly, I think this comes from growing up low income and being the only one in my family to have a high-level salary. Right now, I support my mom too, I live alone, I pay for everything on my own. I think people who have intergenerational wealth they have more of an option to say, “I could just leave my job right now because I have my parents to fall back on,” but in my case I don’t. My mom right now lives in Mexico, and I send money to her, for sure no one else on the president’s cabinet have to deal with some of the realities that I face. To this day I stay silent to save my job, but more recently I’ve been speaking up more because my confidence has improved, but I would say because this interview is asking about my whole career, I definitely remained silent for almost my entire career.

The  *Holding Back*  category of the study reveals behaviors that suggest Millennial Latinas may not fully leverage their potential in professional settings. A striking observation is that all participants reported talking down to themselves in the survey, and a significant 62.5% also did so in interviews, accumulating a total frequency of 18. This

self-critical behavior can severely undermine self-confidence and contribute to a diminished self-image hindering assertiveness and visibility in professional domains. Another behavior unanimously reported in the survey, with a high frequency in interviews (75%), was not reaching out for help when needed, resulting in a total frequency of 31. This suggests a possible belief that seeking help may be perceived as a weakness or a fear of being burdensome, both of which can limit professional growth and the development of collaborative relationships.

The tendency not to speak up in meetings or group discussions is also notable, with a higher frequency reported in interviews (87.5%) than in surveys (50%), indicating that this behavior may be more readily recognized or admitted in a reflective, conversational setting. This self-silencing behavior is the most frequently reported in interviews, with a total frequency of 56, suggesting a significant barrier to asserting one's presence and ideas in collaborative professional settings. Interestingly, behaviors such as making inflections rather than bold statements, and holding back even when one has the answer, are acknowledged by over half of the participants, signaling a reluctance to assert one's viewpoint. However, making inflections was not reported at all in interviews, which could indicate either a difference in perception of this behavior between the survey and interview settings or a reluctance to disclose this behavior in a personal dialogue.

Additionally, unnecessary apologies were reported by a high percentage of participants in surveys (87.5%) but less so in interviews (37.5%), which could suggest a situational aspect to this behavior, or perhaps an under-recognition of its occurrence during self-reporting. Finally, concerns over balancing work and family obligations were reported by 62.5% of survey participants and by 37.5% in interviews, pointing to the

ongoing challenge of managing multiple roles and possibly feeling that prioritizing one over the other may be viewed negatively. Overall, the data illustrates the complexity of the *Holding Back* behaviors among Millennial Latinas. These behaviors indicate a pattern of self-limiting actions and thoughts that could be significant obstacles to their professional advancement.

### **Lack of Self-Reflection**

The category of Lack of Self-Reflection includes five self-sabotaging behaviors that may be experienced by Millennial Latinas in leadership. These five self-sabotaging behaviors served as subcategories to which the data was coded. Table 10 depicts the overall self-sabotaging category, the specific self-sabotaging behaviors within this category, and the number of times Millennial Latinas reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors in their career.

**Table 10**

*Self-Sabotaging Reported Survey Behaviors – Lack of Self-Reflection*

<b>Not Taking Time for Reflection</b>	Reported Behaviors in Survey		Reported Behaviors in Interviews		
	Count	%	Count	%	Total Frequency
I have kept busy to avoid being alone	5	63%	3	38%	6
I have not allowed myself to mourn losses or cry	4	50.0%	2	25.0%	6
I have not taken vacations when I could	7	87.5%	5	62.5%	13
I have not allowed myself to experience “down time”	5	62.5%	8	100.0%	45
I have hated to ‘be wrong’	6	75.0%	2	25.0%	16
I have held a grudge with someone	6	75.0%	4	50.0%	9

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 10 presents an integrated analysis of the responses gathered from both surveys and interviews, specifically within the *Lack of Self Reflection* category. This analysis demonstrated that the predominant self-sabotaging behavior among Millennial

Latinas is not allowing oneself to experience downtime. Notably, this behavior was identified by five of the participants in the survey component and referenced a total of 45 times by all eight of the participants during the interview portion of the study. It was called out in several of the interviews that within the Latino culture, the idea of taking time off is not seen in a positive light. For example, Participant 6 shared how,

I have this amazing job with amazing benefits, and sometimes I take a day off because I need to take a break for my mental health or because I just want a day to myself. Anytime I do this, my parents say things like “oh my God they’re going to fire you” or “are you sure you should be taking the day off?” “Is it because you have an appointment or something?”

On a different occasion, Participant 6 recalled how,

I suffered a lot when I first started this position. I lost a really close friend and then a few years after that a nephew passed away. In all of those instances I kind of threw myself into what I was doing with work, I would work all the time to where I was exhausted. I kept myself busy and continuing to push myself was something that helped to keep me busy and kept me from focusing on the pain I was experiencing.

When discussing the need to set aside time for grieving the loss of a loved one, Participant 3 expressed the guilt she experienced in allowing herself that space for mourning.

When I read the category, I haven’t allowed myself to mourn losses or cry, I remember my grandma actually passed away almost two years ago now. At the time we had just picked up a really huge project that we were working with the

state on, and I was the main person taking the lead and I was so scared to ask for time off because my grandma wasn't doing well. I remember being like "oh it's fine, I think she'll forgive me if I'm not there" and then I think it was one of my coworkers who said to me "why are you not going to see your grandma? She's about to pass away, you need to be with her, you need to be with your family." I had to have another person tell me that for me to actually go and see my grandma, that was really hard on me.

Participant 8 shared,

I always felt that not taking time off was a reflection of how hard working I was, and I would say that it's one of the biggest things I regret...I felt like taking days off would not give the perception that I wanted to give off which was to be acknowledged as the hardest working person in the room.

On a more personal note, Participant 8 recalled how this self-sabotaging behavior affected her relationship with her son.

I was always just so focused on doing the next thing...when I finished my bachelors, I didn't take time to celebrate myself, I went into the next thing, what else can I accomplish. I went into my masters, and I didn't think that after my masters I was going to go for a doctorate degree but I was thinking maybe I should get a second masters, I was just going at it...I feel that it goes back to the framework of me not having that validation or not knowing what validation looks like because I never had it growing up. Nobody validated me by saying, "Hey, good job, let's celebrate this small win." I didn't know what that looked like...I became aware of that when I was able to take time to reflect and I remember the

first time I had asked my son how do you see me as a mom? And the first thing he said, “I wish you took time to play with me.” I feel like I’m getting emotional just thinking about it now because that helped me reflect like wow, maybe I’m not doing as great as I’m aspiring to do. At the end of the day me growing in my career, me growing as a person was to be a better version for my son, so my son could see what I have been able to achieve. I want him to see what being the best version of yourself looks like, but if all he sees is me work, I don’t want him to do the same thing when he gets older. I don’t want him to feel like he has to work his entire life and just focus on that.

The data for the Not Taking Time for Reflection category indicates a collective tendency to Millennial Latinas to overlook the importance of introspection and self-care, which is vital for personal development and professional growth. The most significant finding is that 100% of participants in the survey and a substantial 62.5% in interviews reported not allowing themselves to experience downtime, culminating in a total frequency of 45. This pervasive avoidance of rest and self-care can lead to burnout and a disconnection from one’s own needs and ambitions, which is detrimental to cultivating leadership potential. Additionally, the reluctance to take vacations when possible was reported by a notable 87.5% in the survey and 62.5% in interviews, showing a total frequency of 13. This behavior may be associated with a sense of guilt or perceived judgment about prioritizing personal time, which can impede work-life balance and disallow the rejuvenation necessary to maintain professional effectiveness.

A behavior related to the fear of solitude, “I have kept busy to avoid being alone,” was reported by 63% of participants in the survey and 38% in interviews, with a total

frequency of six. This suggests an underlying discomfort with self-reflection or an association of busyness with productivity, which can overlook the benefits of solitude in terms of clarity and decision-making. The data also shows participant' resistance to acknowledging and processing emotions, with half of the participants reporting that they do not allow themselves to mourn losses or cry, although this was reported less frequently in interviews, resulting in a total frequency of six. This may reflect a cultural or societal stigma about showing vulnerability, potentially hindering the development of emotional intelligence and resilience.

Resistance to admitting mistakes was also evident, with 75% of participants in the survey reporting that they hate to be wrong, which contrasts with a lower 25% in interviews, amounting to a total frequency of 16. The discrepancy may indicate a difference in how participants assess their reactions to being wrong in an anonymous survey versus a personal interview. Lastly, the tendency to hold grudges was reported by 75% of survey respondents and 50% in interviews, suggesting that personal grievances may be carried into professional settings, which can affect collaboration and leadership dynamics. The overall pattern from the data for the theme Not Taking Time for Reflection suggests that Millennial Latinas in this study may benefit from structured opportunities for reflection and self-care, which are crucial for leadership development.

### **Isolating**

The category of Isolating includes five self-sabotaging behaviors that may be experienced by Millennial Latinas in leadership. These five self-sabotaging behaviors served as subcategories using which the data was coded. Table 11 depicts the overall self-sabotaging category, the specific self-sabotaging behaviors within this category, and the



number of times Millennial Latinas reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors in their careers.

**Table 11**

*Self-Sabotaging Reported Survey Behaviors – Isolating*

<b>Isolating</b>	Reported Behaviors in Survey		Reported Behaviors in Interviews		
	Count	%	Count	%	Total Frequency
I have been afraid to reach out to people I didn't already know	7	87.5%	4	50.0%	11
I was unaware of the types of support needed to move ahead in my career	8	100.0%	6	75.0%	24
I felt guilty for taking up too much of people's time	7	87.5%	5	62.5%	9
I have relied exclusively on female mentors	6	75.0%	2	25.0%	2
I relied only on networking upstream	4	50.0%	0	0.0%	0

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 11 presents an integrated analysis of the responses gathered from both surveys and interviews, specifically within the Isolating category. This analysis demonstrated that the predominant self-sabotaging behavior among Millennial Latinas is being unaware of the types of support needed to move ahead within a career. Notably, this behavior was identified by eight of the participants in the survey component and referenced a total of 24 times by six of the participants during the interview portion of the study. Participant 3 shared,

As a Millennial it's really hard to find Latinas in similar positions that I'm in. I know from my executive director, she's had a really hard time finding a mentor because you don't hear about first generation Latina executive directors.

Similarly, when I was applying for my grad program I knew I wanted to do business, but it was really hard to find someone who had undertaken a similar journey and who could provide me with advice. I wanted to know where I could

find a network of women or Latinos that have completed an MBA or are in the process of completing their program. For me right now the question is what's next? And I would want to ideally have a mentor that can provide me with guidance or give me tips for advancement. My grad program has been very challenging because it's all predominantly White men and sometimes I feel this space is a little scary. Sometimes I take pride in the fact that I'm the only Latina in this program, but other times I feel that since I'm the only Latina in this program, it adds this fear where I have to represent all Latinas and I need to give it my all. Overall, it's really hard to ask for help when you don't know anyone you can reach out to, and you don't see fellow women or Latinas represented in the field you are pursuing.

Similarly, Participant 2 also echoed a similar sentiment:

I didn't have anyone pushing me or supporting me, when people ask me who are your mentors, I actually didn't have a mentor. First, there weren't that many Latinas in the space and I hate to say this, but the few Latinas and Filipinas that were in the space were really, really hard on me. They weren't supportive, when I reflect back, they were more like trying to climb over me so I wasn't experiencing the mentorship from women of color that I would have wished for, I see it more now, but when I was coming up I didn't see it...I just didn't know how to get support, I didn't know who to go to and many of the Latinas I went to college with didn't go into my field. So, I didn't know who to go to, I just didn't know where to go to get the type of support I was needing when I was going into leadership.

The Isolating category encompasses behaviors that indicate withdrawal from social and professional support, a pivotal aspect of career progression. Notably, every participant reported being unaware of the types of support needed to advance in their careers during the survey, and a significant 75% echoed this in interviews, leading to a total frequency of 24. This finding highlights a gap in understanding or accessing professional development resources, a critical barrier to growth. Additionally, a strong majority of survey respondents, 87.5%, reported an aversion to reaching out to new contacts, and this was confirmed by 50% of interviews, for a total frequency of 11. This finding suggests a potential fear of rejection or imposter syndrome, which can severely limit networking opportunities and the expansion of professional circles.

Feelings of guilt for occupying others' time were reported by 87.5% in the survey and by a significant 62.5% in interviews, amounting to nine occurrences. This indicates an internalized belief that their professional needs or inquiries are burdensome, which may discourage Millennial Latinas from seeking mentorship or advice, especially when considering the lack of representation in top leadership roles. A reliance solely on female mentors was noted by 75% in the survey and 25% in interviews, with a low total frequency of two. This could reflect a comfort level with female mentors or a lack of diversity in their mentoring relationships, potentially limiting their exposure to varied leadership styles and networks.

The least reported behavior, with no occurrences in interviews and reported by only half of the survey respondents, was networking only upstream. Although less common, this behavior could suggest a strategic yet possibly narrow approach to networking that misses out on the benefits of peer and cross-level connections. The

collected data indicates a pronounced trend of self-isolation among the participants, which could stem from various underlying causes, such as lack of confidence, fear of imposition, or limited knowledge of networking strategies, as well as inaccessibility to diverse leaders across leadership positions.

### **Disempowering Other Women**

The category of Disempowering Other Women includes five self-sabotaging behaviors that may be experienced by Millennial Latinas in leadership. These five self-sabotaging behaviors served as subcategories using which the data was coded. Table 12 depicts the overall self-sabotaging category, the specific self-sabotaging behaviors within this category, and the number of times Millennial Latinas reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors in their career.

**Table 12**

*Self-Sabotaging Reported Survey Behaviors – Disempowering Other Women*

<b>Disempowering Other Women</b>	Reported Behaviors in Survey		Reported Behaviors in Interviews		
	Count	%	Count	%	Total Frequency
I have felt too busy to help other women	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
I thought, why I should help other women since I did it the hard way	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
I have felt jealous of other women who have ‘made it’	2	25.0%	2	25.0%	11
I have talked behind a woman’s back	2	25.0%	3	37.5%	15
I have held women to a higher standard at work than men	1	12.5%	1	12.5%	3

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 12 presents an integrated analysis of the responses gathered from both surveys and interviews, specifically within the Disempowering Other Women category. This analysis demonstrated that the predominant self-sabotaging behavior among Millennial Latinas is talking behind a woman’s back. Notably, this behavior was

identified by two of the participants in the survey component and referenced a total of 15 times by three of the participants during the interview portion of the study. Participant 2 admitted the following,

Historically I have talked behind a woman's back because I'm a *chismosa* too, like the rest of us. Although I have talked behind women's back, I would say in the last few years I've really focused on not doing that and instead going up to the person directly and saying what is on my mind.

Similarly Participant 4 provided insight into what creates the environment where she is propelled to talk behind a woman's back.

It's so wacky because if a male advances, and I hate that I'm saying this, but if a male advances, I'm like "oh well." If a woman advances I immediately go "well, what does she have that I don't have?" "Why did she get it?" I go through all these things in my head and I'm like that's just wackiness but I do it.

Participant 4 elaborated further on this self-sabotaging behavior.

I have participated in talking behind a woman's back, I've talked about both men and women, but I tend to talk about men and women when they advance. It tends to hurt me more when it's a woman advancing because I always compare myself to them and that jealousy kind of arises inside of me and provokes me to participate in this behavior.

The Disempowering Other Women category reveals subtle yet significant behaviors that may inadvertently contribute to an unsupportive environment for women in professional settings. Notably, jealousy of other women who have "made it" was reported by 25% of participants in both the survey and interviews, for a total frequency of

11. This sentiment can undermine solidarity and suggests a perception of success as a zero-sum game, where one woman's advancement is seen as a personal setback for others. Talking behind a woman's back, reported by 25% of survey participants and an increased 37.5% in interviews, with a total frequency of 15, indicates the presence of workplace gossip or conflict. This behavior can create divisions and hinder the development of a cohesive, supportive network among female colleagues. Holding women to a higher standard at work than men, although the least frequently reported behavior with only three occurrences, suggests an internalized bias that could result in unfair expectations and pressure on female colleagues, which can be demoralizing and counterproductive.

The absence of reported behaviors such as being too busy to help other women or withholding help because they had to struggle themselves indicates a recognition of the importance of mutual support and potentially a willingness to assist one another when possible. The overall low frequency of reported disempowering actions is promising; however, even these few instances can have a ripple effect on the collective empowerment of women. It highlights the need for awareness programs that address internalized competition and foster a culture of mentorship and support among women, helping to dismantle barriers that impede not just individual but collective progress.

### **Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace**

The category of infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace includes seven self-sabotaging behaviors that may be experienced by Millennial Latinas in leadership. These seven self-sabotaging behaviors served as subcategories to which the data was coded. Table 13 depicts the overall self-sabotaging category, the specific self-

sabotaging behaviors within this category, and the number of times Millennial Latinas reported experiencing these self-sabotaging behaviors in their career.

**Table 13**

*Self-Sabotaging Reported Survey Behaviors – Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace*

<b>Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in Workplace</b>	Reported Behaviors in Survey		Reported Behaviors in Interviews		
	Count	%	Count	%	Total Frequency
I have dressed sexy at work	1	12.5%	1	12.5%	1
I have squashed my natural feminine qualities	5	62.5%	5	62.5%	34
I have exhibited male like qualities that aren't part of my natural personality	3	37.5%	3	37.5%	14
I have exhibited 'girl' like behaviors such as twirling my hair or using baby talk	1	12.5%	1	12.5%	5
I have flirted at work	2	25.0%	2	25.0%	9
I have used prosodic speech or speech patterns ("Valley girl," uptalk, vocal fry)	1	12.5%	1	12.5%	7
I have conformed to societal gender expectations (leaning up, taking notes, arranging food)	5	62.5%	3	37.5%	18

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 13 presents an integrated analysis of the responses gathered from both surveys and interviews, specifically within the Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace category. This analysis demonstrated that the predominant self-sabotaging behavior among Millennial Latinas is squashing one's natural feminine qualities. Notably, this behavior was identified by five of the participants in the survey component and referenced a total of 34 times by five of the participants during the interview portion of the study. Participant 8 commented how,

The military played a role in my experience. It was a place where I did not want to seem feminine because being feminine made it seem like I wasn't strong or powerful enough. The concept of being girly was a sign of weakness and I didn't

want to be seen weak in the military, especially with the goals I wanted to achieve in mind. Also, when I left the military and was doing interviews, I would make sure that I presented myself the least feminine way possible. This meant I didn't wear makeup, I just kept my hair in a bun, kept it simple because I didn't want my feminine traits to make it seem like I was weak or not good enough.

Participant 8 also shared the following experience she had while in the military.

In the military we have what is called boards where we compete against others to win soldier of the month or soldier of the quarter. One of the tests also included a marksmanship test, meaning you have to qualify on your M16, and you have to shoot based on military standard and hit every target. I would compete in these boards and in the beginning when I started doing them, I would curl my lashes, add some mascara, and I looked girly, I felt beautiful, pretty, and I felt feminine. Then I started hearing from other colleagues within the military "I'm just being favorited by the Platoon Sergeant because I'm a girl or because I'm the pretty girl, or I'm the New Girl in the company," that's why I'm being favored. When I heard these comments, it really broke me because how could they think that the Platoon Sergeant had anything to do with how well I was doing on my boards. After that I stopped wearing mascara, I stopped curling my lashes, I stopped doing anything that made me look pretty to make sure nobody associated my achievements due to favoritism or because of my looks. For me this experience spilled into my professional career after the military, which is why I didn't want to wear lipstick or do my makeup because I didn't want anybody to think that anything I achieved was based off my looks. I tried to be as manly as I could be in how I portrayed



myself to make sure that my female features were not going to be used against me.

Similarly, Participant 2 shared the following experiences,

Well, I've always felt like I have to act like a White male, and I always noticed they are the ones in all of the positions of power, so you just assume that you're supposed to be that way... I also started dressing like a man because I felt like that's what I was supposed to do. I never put on a lot of makeup, I even stopped wearing my hoop earrings because I felt like it was too ethnic, so I just stopped being who I truly was because I felt like that's what I needed to do to go into a leadership role.

In a separate instance, Participant 2 shared how widespread this idea is of squashing one's natural feminine qualities is.

I remember several years ago attending a summit for future women leaders and it was run by women of color. I went to the summit, and they dedicated a whole seminar on dress code and how you should dress. They basically said don't wear dangling earrings, don't wear too much perfume, don't wear too much makeup, dress like a man because you cannot be yourself if you want to make it a leadership role. That was their advice, these female presidents advised that once you get into the job, you could start to bring a little bit more of yourself, but to get the job and to get into the interview process you need to act like a White man. I was like, "OK, I've been doing it right all along," they solidified my thinking and perception even more. That is why even the women who went ahead of us had to do this, that's why I have squashed my femininity. I've made sure that I don't

dress sexy, I never wear anything low cut, I always dress very professional because I don't want anybody looking at me or checking me out above checking out my skills and my abilities.

On a different note, Participant 5 shared that she squashed her natural feminine qualities in response to her role as a single mother.

As a woman and being a single parent, I chose to adopt and exhibit more male-like qualities. I felt that as a single parent in the work environment, I had to be careful with taking time off when it had to do with my son. I had male coworkers who didn't have to worry about any time off due to their child being sick or not having someone to take care of them while they were working. This is why I tried not to complain or as much as possible tried not to take time off because of my child. Often, I felt judged because my male coworkers didn't have these issues, but as a single mom this was my reality. I felt like it affected how my superiors viewed me, it seemed as if I was more unreliable versus my male counterpart.

The Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace category presents behaviors that reflect internalized gender norms or societal expectations and their influence on workplace dynamics. The most frequently reported behavior was conforming to societal gender expectations, such as taking on tasks traditionally associated with women like note taking or arranging food, noted by 62.5% of survey participants and 37.5% in interviews, totaling 18 instances. This behavior suggests a propensity to adhere to conventional gender roles, which can reinforce stereotypes and potentially limit women's perceived capabilities in professional settings. Similarly, suppressing natural feminine qualities was reported by a significant proportion of

participants in both surveys and interviews (62.5%), with a total frequency of 34. This indicates an internal conflict where Millennial Latinas feel the need to downplay aspects of their femininity in order to be taken seriously, which stems from a perception that feminine qualities are less valued in professional environments.

Exhibiting qualities perceived as masculine that do not align with one's personality was reported by 37.5% of respondents in both methods, totaling 14 occurrences. This points to a pressure to embody traits traditionally associated with men in order to succeed or be respected in the workplace. Flirting at work was noted by a quarter of respondents, suggesting that some may feel the need to leverage personal charm in a professional context, which could lead to complications or misunderstandings. Interestingly, behaviors typically associated with youth or a lack of seriousness, such as twirling hair or using "baby talk" and using speech patterns like "Valley girl" or vocal fry, were the least reported but still present. These may reflect a lack of awareness about how such actions are perceived.

Lastly, the behavior of dressing in a way that could be considered sexy at work was reported by one person in both the survey and interviews, indicating that it is not a common issue among participants. These data points underscore the complex ways in which gender norms can influence behavior and self-perception in professional settings. Addressing these issues may require a multifaceted approach, including workplace training on gender biases, encouraging a culture of diversity and inclusivity, and empowering Millennial Latinas to bring their authentic selves to work without fear of judgment or repercussion.

## Impact of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

The second research question probed the extent to which self-sabotaging behaviors influenced the leadership trajectories of Millennial Latina non-profit C-Suite leaders. Unanimously, the participants acknowledged the tangible effects of these behaviors, a consensus summarized in Table 14 and further supported by the well documented data in Tables 5-13.

**Table 14**

*Percentage of Participants That Believe Some of These Behaviors Had an Impact on Their Career Development*

Agreement	%
Agree	100%
Disagree	0%

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Through comprehensive surveys and in-depth interviews, these Millennial Latina leaders shared insights into their professional advancements and the enduring challenges posed by various self-sabotaging actions. Despite recognizing their susceptibility to these detrimental behaviors, they also conveyed a resolute determination to confront and overcome these patterns, not only personally but also in a collective effort to guide and uplift other Latina leaders on similar journeys. For example, Participant 8 shared that,

For Latinas self-sabotaging plays a critical role in our personal and professional lives. I say this because if I had not taken the time to understand myself, I would still be doubting myself, I would still be holding back, and I would not have been able to confidently maneuver through the different careers I have held. I would not have taken a chance on myself to leave corporate America to start my own

business and focus on partnering with organizations that help women develop their leadership abilities.

Participant 8 went on further to highlight the impact of family when it comes to Latina success.

Especially as Latinas forging our career paths, we encounter not just the challenge of professional development but also the recognition of our value in advancing our careers. On top of this we're also facing the barriers of our families. For example, I'm a first-generation Latina so I'm the first to go to college, pursue a career, while still being a mother and being divorced, all of these are negative stigmas in my family. According to my family my focus should be caring for my husband and being a better mother by placing more time and attention on my son... When I wanted a divorce it took me a long time to say it. I was afraid of what my mom was going to say, I was afraid I would be criticized and made to feel like I was the one doing something wrong for wanting to break up my family. The same happened when I would move from career to career, I was criticized for wanting to improve myself and made to feel like I was selfish for focusing on my own growth.

Participant 3 stated,

I think about who's holding us back. Who's the one person that's holding you back the most? And the first person that comes to mind is me! At the end of the day it's us and I know it's really hard to break free from this cycle especially when we've been trained all our lives to practice self-sabotaging behaviors. Un-learning self-sabotage is difficult, but I think just acknowledging them and

learning to unlearn them is a great first step. I also think about the next generation that comes after, I think we also have to talk about the *Mujeres* who will serve as their mentors and I would love to be someone's mentor because I feel there is not a lot of us Latinas in these spaces and I think it's amazing when I do find someone like me in these spaces and it helps me feel like we can accomplish so much.

Similarly, Participant 4 shared,

I think we've come to a time in our society where it's accepted for Latinas to advance, I think that we sometimes shoot ourselves in the foot because we're still so overcome with the idea of advancing but wanting to make sure we don't mess it up...I really appreciated this interview because it really had me thinking how am I going to lead? What is really my purpose? Am I really keeping myself from advancement? These doubts I would say are always easier to say it to another Latina, but it's different when you're saying it to someone who doesn't understand your perspective, who never has to deal with walking into an organization and hear others say, "another brown person, why did you get that job? Is it because of affirmative action?" I think it's really important that women look out for each other, support each other, and practice the action of as I go up you go up with me. Unfortunately, across organizations your race, and the way you look, and the color of your skin, does play a factor in getting into leadership roles. I don't think people mean to make these superficial judgments on purpose, but it does play a factor, gender plays a factor and we're already fighting those

things and it's really important that we continue to motivate and support each other rather than fight each other because then no one wins.

Participant 5 shared her thoughts acknowledging the impact of self-sabotaging behaviors.

I think it's critical for women to overcome these self-sabotaging behaviors so that the other women watching them know that it's possible to do it too. If I didn't know that it was possible for other women to overcome these behaviors, it would just make it so much more difficult to fight and succeed. I'm not saying that I'm completely over all these self-sabotaging behaviors, I feel like it's going to always constantly be work, but at least knowing that other women are also going through this struggle and overcoming it, is motivation to not give up on yourself.

Participant 2 reiterated the same sentiment among the participants when she stated,

I think seeing other Latinas in this space is going to help and now we're starting to see more, so making sure that we are visible is critical. We need people like me to be in these positions of power because then other Latinas can feel like they can go to people who are in positions of power and ask honest questions. I try not to always use White dominant culture or White male language, but I do it when I need to, but every once in a while, I slip into my natural accent and go, "Girrrrrlll what's going on?" The reason why I do that is because that's my authentic self, plus I want them to know they can come to me and feel like they can also be their authentic self. I think that is important for us to do, to bring who we really are into the space so that other women can come to us for real conversations, for motivation, to help them get through difficult challenges in our careers, but yes, it's very critical for us to create that space for them.

## Strategies Used to Overcome Self-Sabotaging Behaviors

The third pivotal inquiry of the study delved into the tactics that Millennial Latina leaders in non-profit C-Suites employed to navigate past self-sabotaging behaviors throughout their professional journeys. The strategies unearthed are meticulously detailed in the following sections, shedding light on the practical approaches these leaders took. For clarity and impactful understanding, these strategies are thematically categorized in correspondence with the nine domains of women's personal power, providing a structured overview of their empowerment techniques within the leadership realm.

### Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny

Within the power domain of Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny, a singular strategy was noted by Millennial Latina leaders. Table 15 outlines this strategy, detailing its frequency of mention in the interviews, the proportion of participants who acknowledged it, and the instances where they leveraged these strategies throughout their careers.

**Table 15**

*Strategies to Address Thinking Too Small*

Strategy	Frequency	%
Destino	22	50%

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 15 offers a synthesized analysis of the interview responses, focusing specifically on the power domain of Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny. The analysis unveiled that the primary strategy adopted by Millennial Latina leaders is the concept of *destino*. Cited by half of the interviewees, the *destino* strategy surfaced a total of 22 times



within the interview discussions. When it comes to this power domain, Participant 7 shared,

It's the rediscovery of who is doctor [Participant 7]? What does she want? What does she visualize for herself? It's also about acknowledging that where you are now doesn't mean you are stuck here forever and it's not about the destination but more so the journey. I think it just takes tremendous self-awareness and acceptance, which is simply acknowledging your accomplishments and being proud of how far you've come...If I catch myself succumbing to those moments where I'm trying to strive for that perfection, I try to redirect this self-sabotaging behavior. Instead, I ask what am I striving for again? Is it worth it? If it's worth it then by all means let's do it, but if it's not, then I need to come back down to earth and focus on the now.

Similarly Participant 6 shared:

I would say the strategy requires a level of self-awareness almost like a check a self-check - am I happy? Am I on the path I want to be on? Even a career journal can be really helpful. At work we have a program where we can set and track goals. This has really helped me with identifying all of the important things I want to accomplish within my role and even where I want to see myself in the next 3-5 year or whatever you want to plan towards. I think what's important is that you should always take time to do self-checks to help you identify if you are where you want to be or is it time to move on.

In the realm of Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny, the study illuminated the significance of self-awareness and embracing one's cultural and ethnic identity as a

source of strength, particularly for Millennial Latina leaders. By acknowledging and celebrating their innate talents and capacity for growth, women can begin to contribute uniquely to the world. Table 15 captures the essence of this effort, underscoring the strategy of embracing one’s *destino*—a belief deeply rooted in Latino culture that speaks to the idea that everyone has a distinct purpose and path in life. Through interviews, four participants cited this strategy 22 times, demonstrating its salience in their leadership narratives. These leaders’ reflections underscored the critical role of understanding their unique destinies and unlocking a clear direction for their leadership contributions. By delving into their family histories, embracing their hearts’ desires, and envisioning their legacy, they embarked on journeys of self-discovery and fulfillment. The narrative data supports the notion that such self-knowledge is a cornerstone for overcoming the barriers constructed by self-sabotaging behaviors and for paving a path toward authentic leadership.

**Constructive Preparation**

Within the power domain of Constructive Preparation, two strategies were noted by Millennial Latina leaders. Table 16 outlines the strategies, detailing their frequency of mention in the interviews, the proportion of participants who acknowledged them, and the instances they leveraged these strategies throughout their careers.

**Table 16**

*Strategies to Address Fear and Worry*

Strategy	Frequency	%
Take Control	21	50%
Personal Development	10	25%

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors, *n* = 8.

Table 16 offers a cohesive review of the strategies that Millennial Latina leaders are utilizing to tackle fear and worry within the framework of Constructive Preparation. The table clarifies that the primary strategies adopted by these women are taking control (50%) and personal development (25%). This data highlights a proactive stance toward personal agency and the continuous journey of self-improvement as key to navigating the complexities of their professional experiences. Participant 2 shared,

I've been in meetings with the whole counseling division and they're just coming at me left and right. Big room with 30 people they're coming at me saying "you didn't do this, and you didn't do that" and that's hard, it is hard to be in a public position because it leaves you open to people criticizing you. I've learned that these criticisms often stem from them not knowing the whole story or not understanding budgets, so they need someone to complain to...me. I've been in situations a few times where they're coming at me and I tell myself I have to breathe, so I visualize having this bubble around me. I take deep breaths and I think to myself OK you can't cry in front of everybody, you can't break down, but they are really attacking you, but you have to just use the bubble and let it bounce off you. I use this bubble field to bounce all off all of the negativity and criticisms into the sky. Sometimes I admit that I want to bounce it back onto them because it's negative, but by bouncing it into the sky it allows you to remain composed, allows you to keep your power and your space, and it allows you to be able to answer with kindness.

Participant 7 expressed,

All of these self-sabotaging behaviors I'm sure are prevalent among females, but I think even more so in Latinas because there are so many barriers and obstacles that we as women of color have to overcome. I would also say this is even more challenging when you are in a field that is heavily dominated by males. It takes a different level of self-awareness and self-development to overcome many of these behaviors and when we think we've overcome them we should always look for opportunities to know and understand ourselves just a little bit better.

Participant 6 shared:

In terms of the strategies, I would say just continue exploring and learning because therapy is great, affirming is great, but you also have to build your skill set. We can't be naive here either, nothing is going to be handed to you and people will ask why are you more qualified over someone else? What makes you the right person for this job or role? I feel that the more you grow and I'm not saying education like go back to school, I'm saying look for any certifications in the professional setting, LinkedIn has so many programs they offer for free. Companies sometimes have internal programs and I feel that by building your skillset and the more you learn the more you can open opportunities for yourself because its within your control what you do and don't do to grow.

In addressing the presence of fear and worry, which is notably more prevalent in women's careers, the strategies Millennial Latina leaders employ are critical to overcoming such self-sabotaging emotions. Table 16 encapsulates the proactive steps taken by the interviewees in this study, illustrating that 50% have utilized the strategy of

taking control, indicative of a deliberate effort to assert authority over their professional journey. Additionally, 25% have engaged in personal development, underscoring the value placed on continuous growth and learning as a countermeasure to fear and anxiety. As demonstrated by the strategies identified in this study, Millennial Latina leaders actively apply these principles. By taking control and prioritizing personal development, they are not only advancing their careers but also paving the way for others who may face similar psychological hurdles. The approach reflects a conscious effort to navigate through fear and worry, not by suppression, but through empowerment and self-directed action.

### **Owning All of One’s Self**

Within the power domain of Owning All of One’s Self, several strategies were noted by Millennial Latina leaders. Table 17 outlines the strategies, detailing their frequency of mention in the interviews, the proportion of participants who acknowledged them, and the instances where they leveraged these strategies throughout their careers.

**Table 17**

*Strategies to Address Misunderstanding One’s Self*

Strategy	Frequency	%
Leverage Strengths	6	12.5%
Power of Experience	20	62.5%
Religion/Devotionals	12	25%

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 17 offers a synthesized analysis of the interview responses, focusing specifically on the power domain of Owning All of One’s Self. The strategies adopted by Millennial Latina leaders are captured poignantly, showcasing a reliance on understanding and leveraging personal strengths, drawing on the rich tapestry of their

experiences, and often, finding solace and guidance in religious or spiritual devotionals. This trifecta of strategies underscores a profound journey toward self-acceptance and the intentional use of one's unique assets and history as a wellspring of professional empowerment. Participant 2 stated,

There is this book by Don Miguel Ruiz called *The Four Agreements* and I use this book in particular as a strategy that for me has been very powerful, it's based on the Toltec way of living and my family is Tolteca. This book helps me go deep into my ancestral roots and I use it as my true guide for how to live my life. I also gave it to 120 of all my employees, asked them to read the book and use it to write down their values. In this book one of the chapters is called "Don't Take It Personally" and I use the techniques he outlines. When there's people that don't get along and I start to see issues come up within my division I tell them to go back and reread chapter 3 and try not to take it personally. I think that when people start coming at you and want to hurt you, there might be a reason behind it and sometimes they are just trying to deal with their own issues or problems. In the end it's not a reflection of you, it's a reflection of them. I use this book as a grounding for myself and for others as well.

Participant 4 shared:

I am guilty of reliving or ruminating on past conversations, emails, or reports that I have written and fixated on how I could have done it better. It's just awful and then I beat myself up again about things in the past. What I do is I have daily devotionals to help me release what I am feeling. I sometimes say things like "God I'm going to ask you to take my anxiety, I'm going to ask that you take my

worry, I'm going to ask you to take my silliness away and help me forget." I tend to reflect way too much sometimes and I think that reflecting over and over about something I said or didn't say or should have said or said wrong is not helping me grow and be the better person I am trying to become.

In other instances, Participant 4 confessed that it may take her a few sessions to release the negativity she is feeling within herself.

Instances when I feel jealousy, or I am holding a grudge I ask the Lord to take it away from me. "God, you know exactly what's in my mind and the jealousy that I feel and the envy that I feel and I shouldn't feel this way because I know you have things for me" and so I have to let it go and sometimes I have to say that prayer a lot because I can't let it go.

Table 17 illustrates the approaches Millennial Latinas have identified to clarify and affirm their self-perception. The predominant strategy, power of experience, was cited by a striking 62.5% of participants, signaling the importance they place on the lessons and resilience derived from their personal journeys. Religion/devotionals is also a significant strategy, referenced by 25% of the participants, indicating that many find strength and grounding within their spiritual beliefs or practices. Leveraging strengths completes the picture as a strategy employed by some of the leaders, underscoring the importance of recognizing and utilizing one's innate abilities.

Drawing from the literature, these strategies resonate deeply with the concept of *consensia* within Latino culture—a leader's profound clarity in self-awareness. Bordas (2013) emphasized the necessity for Latina leaders to be secure in their identities and utilize their unique life experiences, including the challenges of growing up as members

of a minority, as sources of personal power. This intrinsic power is fortified by the understanding and acceptance of their complete selves, unmoved by the temptation to conform to dominant cultural norms or to relinquish their rich cultural heritage in exchange for assimilation. Embracing their complete selves allows these leaders to preserve and honor their culture, ensuring its continuity and relevance for future generations.

### **Honest Self-Expression**

Within the power domain of Honest Self-Expression, Millennial Latina leaders noted dual strategies. Table 18 outlines this strategy, detailing its frequency of mention in the interviews, the proportion of participants who acknowledged them, and the instances where they leveraged these strategies throughout their careers.

**Table 18**

*Strategies to Address Dishonesty*

Strategy	Frequency	%
Remain True to Self	18	25%
Avoid Social Media	5	12.5%

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 18 consolidates the insightful feedback from interviews that concentrated on the domain of honest self-expression. This analysis reveals the key strategies employed by Millennial Latinas, which notably include a commitment to authenticity and a conscious decision to disengage from social media. These approaches underscore a dedication to maintaining integrity and fostering genuine connections, both within themselves and in their broader professional interactions. In her interview Participant 7 emphasized,



I've just gotten so close to God and my faith, and it has brought me back to finding joy in all of the little things. Through my prayers I have become self-aware of who I am and what I want and pursuing something that only aligns with my values and nothing more. I think I've discovered that I am worthy of being able to select something that aligns with my values and passions and not settle in the comfort of doing something because I'm scared of change.

In her journey she has also come to understand that being honest with oneself can help provide the courage to remain true to oneself.

What has helped me to combat negative thoughts and emotions has a lot to do with trying to be a godly woman. One of the things that comes to mind is understanding that I can't be kind to others if I'm not kind to myself first and being my most authentic self...one of the biggest things that I've learned in the past few years is just acknowledging emotions and knowing that it's OK to feel them, it is not a sign of weakness, especially for women.

Participant 5 stated,

I also took a year off of social media, like all forms of social media. It was awesome, it felt really, really good because you don't realize how much you look at your social media and how much you don't need it. There are so many people on their social media and you're constantly bombarded with notifications about potential acquaintances, tagging of people you know at parties, gatherings, charity events etc. At the end of the day people don't need to know what I'm doing 24/7, they don't need pictures of me every single day, they don't need constant access to me, it's very draining.

Table 18 offers a clear perspective on the strategies Millennial Latinas have employed to counteract dishonesty, a behavior that potentially undermines authenticity and trustworthiness in professional settings. The data highlights that 25% of these leaders prioritize remaining true to self, while a smaller percentage, 12.5%, focus on avoiding social media to maintain authenticity in their self-presentation. In the current digital era, the line between public and private personas can blur, especially under the influence of social media's constructed realities. Remaining true to oneself becomes a courageous act of resistance against the pressure to conform to unrealistic narratives.

A leader's honest self-expression is fundamental to conveying her unique value, contributing to the organization's ethical culture, and fortifying their authenticity in their leadership role. Such integrity is essential for Latina leaders who face the additional challenge of reconciling their cultural identity with professional expectations. Thus, confronting the allure of assimilation into the dominant group and the resulting disconnection from one's core identity, as these Latina leaders have done, becomes an act of reclaiming their *destino* and answering profound questions about their purpose and contribution. The strategies reflected in this table reveal a conscious decision to navigate leadership with an unwavering commitment to self-honesty and an authentic journey toward their destiny.

### **Acting With Confidence**

Within the power domain of Acting with Confidence, Millennial Latina leaders noted dual strategies. Table 19 outlines the strategies, detailing their frequency of mention in the interviews, the proportion of participants who acknowledged them, and the instances where they leveraged these strategies throughout their careers.

**Table 19**

*Strategies to Address Holding Back*

Strategy	Frequency	%
Affirmations/Meditation	20	50%
Collectivism	17	50%

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 19 distills the strategies that Millennial Latina leaders adopt within the domain of acting with confidence. The table reveals an even split between the use of affirmations and meditation, and the embrace of collectivism—each cited by half of the participants. This balanced approach reflects a dual pathway to bolstering self-assurance: one anchored in personal mindfulness and positive self-talk, and the other in the power of community and shared strength. Participant 2 stated, “I have practiced meditation. With guided meditation I have used it to help me work on believing and learning about myself and I feel it boost my self-esteem.” Participant 5 shared:

I think the imposter syndrome is something that is really hard to shake. As we continue to make progress and we step into new roles, you start questioning yourself about whether you are truly fulfilling the role. As I continue to climb, I feel like the imposter in me hasn't really left, but I try to remind myself that I got to where I am because of my experience. I think saying positive affirmations out loud really helps and what usually comes into my head is things like “you got here because you worked hard to get where you are, you didn't know anybody, it wasn't because someone referred you for this job. You got here because you saw this opportunity, you applied for it, you nailed your interview and all of the experience that you've gained from your previous jobs have led you to this one.” I

think it takes work to look in the mirror and remind yourself, you got yourself now own it.

Participant 6 stated:

Strategies I would say include giving yourself affirmations—yes, you belong here or yes, you know what you're talking about. Affirmations definitely help and you know one of my love languages is literally words of affirmation.... I don't fish for compliments, but it helps me to receive words of affirmation from people I respect in the company, it always feels really nice.

Table 19 illustrates the intentional strategies employed by Millennial Latinas to overcome the tendency to hold back, a behavior that can hinder the full expression of their leadership potential. The table indicates that both affirmations/meditation and collectivism are equally prevalent, each being utilized by 50% of the participants. These findings underscore the multifaceted approach these leaders take to cultivate inner confidence and build robust communal connections. The literature supports the idea that inner confidence stems from a profound understanding of oneself, the ability to transform personal challenges into growth opportunities, and the cultivation of self-esteem, as suggested by Lerner (2012), Ryder and Briles (2003), and Thomas (2020). For Latina leaders, this is intertwined with a deep appreciation of their cultural heritage, allowing the strengths of their background to enrich their leadership approach.

In line with the Latino cultural value of *juntos*, which espouses unity and collective action, these leaders recognize the importance of shared leadership. This community-centric view diverges from the traditional, individualistic leadership model and offers a more inclusive, collaborative approach. Latina leaders harness this cultural

wisdom, applying it to enhance their confidence and leadership skills. They grow their capacity to act confidently by engaging in reflective practices like affirmations and meditation and by fostering a collective environment where resources are pooled and responsibilities are shared, in alignment with Bordas’s (2013) concept of a community of leaders. This dual strategy empowers them to surmount self-imposed limitations and actualize their full potential as leaders.

### **Cultivating Self-Intimacy**

Within the power domain of Cultivating Self-Intimacy, Millennial Latina leaders noted dual strategies. Table 20 outlines the strategies, detailing their frequency of mention in the interviews, the proportion of participants who acknowledged them, and the instances where they leveraged these strategies throughout their careers.

**Table 20**

*Strategies to Address Lack of Self-Reflection*

Strategy	Frequency	%
Delegating Work	6	25%
Therapy	18	50%

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 20 synthesizes the proactive approaches Millennial Latinas have adopted in the realm of fostering self-intimacy. This analysis reveals that therapy is the leading strategy, utilized by half of the participants, reflecting a commitment to personal growth and emotional well-being. Additionally, a significant number have also embraced delegating work, which not only reflects a strategic approach to managing workload but also indicates a recognition of the value of introspection and the need for space to engage in reflective practices. Participant 7 shared,

My directors are really amazing. One of my directors is always empowering me to say no. Clearly, she knows how much responsibility I take on and sometimes that includes sacrificing my weekends to catch up. She's always telling me take the weekends for myself. More recently I've come to terms with the idea that with or without me the train is going to move. I'm not saying that I'm not making an impact in this organization, but it'll be OK without me, especially when I need to prioritize myself so I can continue to serve as a valuable asset to this organization.

Participant 5 shared:

When it comes to a strategy, learning how to make time for myself was huge. For me this involved signing myself up for therapy, this was a huge deal for me and I would say it was a pivotal moment for me because it helped me address so many different things that I couldn't before...in my sessions I unpacked childhood traumas. When I first joined therapy, I couldn't even express myself without crying, not because it was upsetting, I just couldn't talk about emotions without bursting into tears. Eventually I was able to talk about everything with my therapist, without bursting into tears...Also, as part of my healing I take time to go get my nails done, relax at home, and not worry about homework or feel this need to look at my e-mails.

Like Participant 5, Participant 3 also recalled her experience with therapy.

Therapy has been a really big help for me. I just recently started a couple of months ago and it's a space where I've talked about things like self-sabotage, fears and worry in the workspace. I've also talked about my confidence; I always feel like people don't take me seriously because I'm Latina and because I look a

lot younger than what I actually am. I constantly have to answer questions like, “How old are you?”

Table 20 reveals how Millennial Latinas are actively engaging in strategies to enhance self-reflection, a critical component of personal and professional development. The data shows that therapy is a strategy of choice for 50% of the participants, highlighting its significance in providing a structured space for introspection and growth. Delegating work is also noteworthy, embraced by 25% of respondents, emphasizing the importance of managing workload to create the necessary time for reflection. These findings align with the scholarly conversation emphasizing the importance of self-intimacy for women’s leadership development. As the literature suggests, women often neglect self-reflection due to societal pressures that undervalue downtime and emotional expression. By deliberately adopting these strategies, Millennial Latina leaders demonstrate an understanding that true leadership potential is realized not through relentless exertion, but through the thoughtful cultivation of self-awareness, personal care, and a balanced approach to one’s professional journey. This commitment not only enriches their personal lives but also potentiates their ability to lead with authenticity and resilience.

### **Building a Power Web**

Within the power domain of Building a Power Web, Millennial Latina leaders noted numerous strategies. Table 21 outlines the strategies, detailing their frequency of mention in the interviews, the proportion of participants who acknowledged them, and the instances where they leveraged these strategies throughout their careers.

**Table 21**

*Strategies to Address Isolating*

Strategy	Frequency	%
Mentorship	25	62.5%
Build Meaningful Relationships	22	50%
Networking	14	25%

Note. Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 21 captures the strategic initiatives Millennial Latinas have embraced to counter the tendency of isolation within the professional landscape. The data underscores mentorship as the leading strategy, with over half of the participants engaging in this practice, reflecting the high value placed on guidance and support from experienced leaders. Cultivating meaningful relationships also stands out as a significant strategy, signaling a focus on depth and quality in professional connections. Furthermore, a quarter of the participants acknowledged the importance of networking, illustrating the recognition of the broader professional community in personal growth and opportunity development.

Throughout her interview, Participant 4 highlighted the importance of finding someone who can serve as the listener as she works on building her power web. She noted,

This is a tough one because it's difficult to talk to a person you know and have 100% trust, they will have your best interests at heart. It all comes down to trust, at first, I would say it makes sense to be more reserve with the types of things you share because you never know if that person will turn around and use it against you. I want to make sure that what I say does not end up jeopardizing my own career and it's terrible to think that you're going to be in a field with others and



you may not be able to fully trust any of them. The strategy for me is to continue just having that conversation, finding that person you can trust and share with and who will be there to help you talk it out or map it out. I'm a big mapping it out kind of person.

Participant 5 shared,

The strategies I've used for building a power web is just saying yes to more opportunities, especially being in the nonprofit world there are so many events happening all the time. You also have to learn how to put yourself out there and go to these events. When I was doing stand-up comedy, I produced comedy shows for an entire year and part of that involved highlighting a local nonprofit each month with the comedy show. I forced myself to go to all of these networking events to meet different people to promote my business, but also just to meet other people who might share similar interests as me. If I only focused on keeping myself isolated, then obviously I wouldn't have seized many of the opportunities that presented themselves... I also noticed that as part of networking I didn't go there with the intention of just making superficial connections, I wanted to make genuine connections with other women. Somehow all of my little connections have grown into these network branches of different people from different areas...overall I know women may tend to stay away from professional networking sessions because they can seem intimidating, but if you look at it as trying to make connections versus networking, you might be surprised how enjoyable it can be to connect with others who share your values or who are in the same boat as you when it comes to your career or life in general.

Like Participant 5, Participant 6 also shared how surrounding herself with positive influences is a strategy she leverages in her professional career.

I have a younger sister and cousin and we're all very close and we are very driven women. When I see these incredible women keep trying and keep working on advancing their career it helped me a lot. Just having that positive influence around, seeing representation wherever you can find it, it really does have an impact on you. I would say surrounding myself and having amazing women in my life and seeing them grow as both women and professionals helps to fight off those self-sabotaging behaviors.

Table 21 reflects the strategies Millennial Latina leaders implement to dismantle the self-sabotaging behavior of isolation. Notably, mentorship and building meaningful relationships emerged as the most significant strategies, embraced by 62.5% and 50% of the participants, respectively. These approaches underscore the value they place on seeking guidance, forging deep connections, and gathering a supportive network, which aligns with Lerner's (2012) concept of a power web. The power web resonates with traditional cultural values where mentorship is not merely a transmission of knowledge but a relationship that nurtures and supports the growth of the mentee. In modern contexts, this mentorship has evolved into an inclusive network of individuals who support one's professional journey, serving as listeners, connectors, and motivators. Listeners provide a sounding board and feedback, connectors facilitate networking opportunities, and motivators encourage continuous personal and professional development.

The presence of networking as a strategy for 25% of the leaders also highlights the significance of broadening one’s professional community to avoid isolation. The data from Table 21, therefore, illustrate the proactive steps these leaders are taking to create their own power webs, understanding that it is an essential scaffold for career progression. In embracing these strategies, they not only strengthen their leadership capacity but also contribute to creating a more inclusive leadership model that draws on the rich tapestry of communal support, collective wisdom, and shared success.

### **Inspiring Other Women**

Within the power domain of Inspiring Other Women, a single strategy was noted by Millennial Latina leaders. Table 22 outlines the strategy, detailing its frequency of mention in the interviews, the proportion of participants who acknowledged it, and the instances where they leveraged these strategies throughout their careers.

**Table 22**

*Strategies to Address Disempowering Other Women*

Strategy	Frequency	%
Sharing Our Stories	16	25%

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 22 distills the essence of the interview responses, shedding light on the vital domain of Inspiring Other Women. This analysis pinpoints the significant strategy embraced by Millennial Latinas, which centers around the sharing of personal narratives. It highlights how storytelling serves as a powerful tool for empowerment, fostering solidarity, and offering inspiration to peers and the broader community. Participant 7 stated,

I might get emotional, but my sister's teacher shared that my sister was doing a presentation, it was like a science project and she was saying phrases like "well according to research" or "this author said the following" during her presentation. I know it's miniscule, but she's 11 and she is picking up on these things. She saw me go through my whole doctoral journey and knew how hard it was for me, but she also saw how transformative it was for me. What I want to say is that sharing your journey and accepting that it's taken hard work to get where you are doesn't mean arrogance. I can't tell others love yourself, be proud of where you're coming from if I wasn't even doing it myself. So, to combat self-sabotaging behaviors I have started sharing my story so others know it can be done, especially for Latinas, and it's one of the most personal things I have ever done. She also shared how being more open and putting herself out there has also given her the strength to challenge these self-sabotaging behaviors that live in her head.

I had posted a video about my journey so far thinking it was so minuscule, but so many people ended up viewing it and so many women commented and said things like "I'm 35 and I'm looking at this video and it's made me want to go back to school." I think acknowledging and feeling comfortable with speaking about it has allowed me to see how people don't perceive it as being boastful or arrogant - like what I thought in my head. Quite the contrary, they actually feel empowered, they feel like they can do it too. Also, I had the opportunity to be the class speaker for my graduation and just being able to get the feedback from everyone after I had done my speech just made me realize it again. It didn't come off as a bad thing, which is what I was thinking in my head, it was actually a method to

empower not only myself but others. Overall, I feel like my constant speaking up and sharing has helped me heal.

Like Participant 2, Participant 7 shared the following,

I remember several years ago I was invited to San Francisco to be a guest speaker; I was a Dean at the time. As part of my talk, I told my life story, which is pretty rough. Anyways, after my talk I was headed out when I noticed a student was running after me and she said, “Excuse me, my name’s Alicia and you’re Latina right?” and I said, “Yeah,” and she goes, “And you’re a Dean?” and I said, “Yeah,” and she goes, “How did you do that?” She said, “I didn’t know there were Latina Deans.” After hearing that I looked around like wait a minute, I am the only Latina Dean. I realized then that I have to speak up, I have to get over this fear of feeling stupid, I have to get over the imposter syndrome and I have to stop ruminating about all the errors I’ve made, I need to just move forward for Alicia and others like her. What stuck with me after that interaction was the importance and the power of my voice and my lived experiences as a Latina aspiring to be a leader. Each time I share this story I remind myself that what I do is for the Alicias of the world. In fact, Alicia did follow in my footsteps. She was like, “I need your exact degrees” and she came to my office and wrote down the degrees I got, and she went ahead and got those same exact degrees. She was like, “I don’t want to mess this up, I need to follow your exact footsteps to get to where you are because if I don’t then it’s not going to go correctly.”

Table 22 portrays a strategy central to reinforcing women’s leadership and mutual empowerment: the sharing of personal narratives. This strategy, practiced by 25% of the

participating Millennial Latinas, emphasizes the pivotal role of storytelling in building solidarity and shared wisdom among women, which is critical to advancing collective growth and overcoming barriers. The power of storytelling is profound in its capacity to inspire and galvanize action. It connects women, not only to each other's experiences but also to a larger tapestry of collective history and knowledge. Miller (2022) highlights that barriers to women's leadership are not just individual hurdles but often systemic challenges that require a unified front. In this context, the shared stories become a rallying cry, a means of empowerment, and a way to affirm belonging.

The literature suggests that intergenerational leadership within Latino communities, as Bordas (2013) describes, offers a model that parallels the concept of Lerner's power web, with a specific focus on the integration of diverse generational insights. Within Latino families, as in leadership, each member contributes to and benefits from the collective whole, irrespective of age. By engaging in storytelling, Latina leaders celebrate and utilize their collective voices. They foster a sense of community, where support, knowledge, and experiences are freely exchanged, enriching their leadership journey. This inclusive approach to leadership, which embraces diversity across age, cultural background, and experiences, not only strengthens the individual leaders but also fortifies the entire community, paving the way for a more equitable and understanding leadership landscape.

### **Embracing One's Sexuality**

Within the power domain of Embracing One's Sexuality, a single strategy was noted by Millennial Latina leaders. Table 23 outlines the strategy, detailing its frequency

of mention in the interviews, the proportion of participants who acknowledged it, and the instances where they leveraged this strategy throughout their careers.

**Table 23**

*Strategies to Address Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace*

Strategy	Frequency	%
Embracing Femininity	17	62.5%

*Note.* Number of Millennial Latinas reporting behaviors,  $n = 8$ .

Table 23 offers a synthesis of the strategies Millennial Latinas use to navigate sex/gender role confusion in the workplace. The table reveals a significant trend of embracing femininity, with over half of the participants recognizing it as their chosen method to assert their identity and counteract gender-based stereotypes. This approach signals a powerful shift toward reclaiming and valuing inherent feminine qualities as a source of strength in professional environments. Participant 7 stated:

Something that really helped me is really understanding what the definition of a woman was and understanding that I didn't have to compare myself to a male, I stand alone, and I stand strong. I don't need the comparison to validate what I'm capable of and what they are not capable, I think more than anything it's just acknowledging who we are, what we bring to the table, and leaving it at that, no need to compare or look elsewhere.

Participant 6 shared

I am the one that shows up with her nails done, I wear hoops, and I wear the red lip. I show up like me when I wouldn't before. In the past I wore short pink nails, I picked neutral colors for my wardrobe, and I didn't dare to wear a red lip but as I kept moving into higher positions, I didn't feel like I had to deny my

femininity...I also had to learn that it doesn't make me unprofessional to be feminine. Even if I am in a male dominated industry, I can be feminine because I am feminine, I'm a woman and it's taken me a long time to come to this realization.

Participant 8 shared:

I have my nieces and I constantly say to them, "Girl, you be girly, you own it and if anybody has a problem with it then they're going to have to come through me." You can be girly, be strong, be powerful, be effective and that does not take anything away from you. I had to live through a lot of experiences to know what that is like to feel ashamed to be feminine. Now, my power is we can be who we want to be regardless, I will wear my lipstick, I will wear my fake lashes, I will wear my hoop earrings and if anybody has a problem with them then that's too bad because it gives me power. It's interesting how being girly in the beginning was a negative thing in my mind...Seeing other women own their feminine features, seeing other women wear the lipstick empowered me to do it. I think the representation of seeing women of color own their red lipstick, own their hoop earrings, own the heels, it empowered me as well. I didn't see them as having less value because they were wearing the red lipstick, on the contrary, I saw them as very powerful women. I saw them doing the things that I wanted to do, and it helped peel off a layer of that negative mindset that I shouldn't do certain things just because I might be perceived as less capable. Representation for me really made a difference, if other Latinas were doing it why couldn't I do it too.



Table 23 reveals that 62.5% of Millennial Latinas in professional settings have identified embracing femininity as a strategy to navigate gender role confusion at work. This significant majority showcases the deliberate choice these women make to honor their feminine identity as a source of power, rather than allowing societal expectations to dictate their professional personas. The literature indicates that women often experience a tug of war between embodying their natural characteristics and conforming to the predominantly masculine traits traditionally associated with leadership—a tension Harris (2018) refers to as gender dissonance. The self-sabotage comes into play when women, to adapt, compromise their authenticity, potentially leading to confusion and misinterpretation among peers. By advocating for a confident presentation of one's abilities and intelligent navigation within gendered stereotypes, the goal is to control one's narrative in the workplace decisively.

In sum, embracing femininity does not equate to rejecting one's identity; instead, it signifies a conscious empowerment of oneself in a professional milieu. It is about being informed and aware of gender roles and stereotypes and using that knowledge to assert one's rightful place in the workplace confidently. The data from Table 23 attests to the strength and self-awareness these Millennial Latina leaders possess, allowing them to forge a path where femininity is not a liability but rather a reaffirmed aspect of their leadership style.

### **Key Findings**

To gain a deeper understanding of the self-sabotaging behaviors encountered by Millennial Latina non-profit C-Suite leaders, eight participants were engaged through both a survey and follow-up interviews. The survey yielded quantitative data that was

instrumental in addressing the first two research questions, whereas the qualitative insights gathered from the interviews enriched this data, offering further narrative and context to the findings. Based on the comprehensive analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data regarding self-sabotaging behaviors among Millennial Latinas in leadership roles, here are the key findings.

### **Key Findings: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors**

1. As supported by the data, Millennial Latinas demonstrated a pattern of internalized minimization regarding self-worth. This behavior was reported by 75% of the participants in the survey and 87.5% of the participants called this out during their interviews. Much of the context around the statement “I’m just a…” centered around cultural and gender norms.
2. When it comes to feeling anxious about a career change 100% of the Millennial Latinas reported this in the survey portion of the study, and only 75% appeared in the interviews. Many of them understood that pursuing any executive role requires continued advancements. However, they noted that the feeling of being an imposter on the job lent to their undermining of their self-confidence and at times deterred them from leadership opportunities.
3. Under Misunderstanding One’s Self, the predominant self-sabotaging behavior among Millennial Latinas was the intentional aversion to talking about their accomplishments for fear of trumpeting ego. The resistance to self-promotion was reported by 87.5% in surveys and 75% in interviews.
4. Prominent among all the participants in the interviews, Millennial Latinas reported that saying “yes” when they wanted to say “no” was one of the top

self-sabotaging behaviors encountered in their careers. Most of the participants cited external environmental factors such as needing to keep a job to provide for themselves and their families.

5. Preferring not to speak up in a meeting or group discussion was a recurring theme, with 87.5% of Millennial Latinas reporting it in their interviews and 50% in the surveys. Much of this self-sabotaging behavior was rooted in the participants not feeling like they belonged within the professional spaces, often due to a lack of representation of both women and women of color.
6. Millennial Latinas reported a continuous struggle to find work-life balance. They struggle to allow themselves to experience downtime, with 100% of survey and 62.5% of interview participants recognizing this tendency. The pressure to constantly work without taking time for self-care was predominantly mapped back to the work ethic of their parents.
7. Seventy-five percent of the Millennial Latinas in this study echoed in their interviews that they were unaware of the types of support needed to advance in their careers. Many cited the inability to find other women in leadership roles as role models or mentors.
8. In both the survey and interviews, Millennial Latinas acknowledged a strong sentiment and perception of seeing success as a zero-sum game, where one woman's advancement is seen as a personal setback for others.
9. A significant number of the participants reported feeling the need to suppress their feminine qualities or adopt masculine traits to be taken seriously. Many of them recognized that when they are the youngest person or only woman of

color in the room, they perceive that their authority and contributions do not hold as much weight as that of their White male counterparts.

### **Key Findings: Impact of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors**

1. All (100%) of the Millennial Latina leaders in this study acknowledge that self-sabotaging behaviors impede professional growth and leadership advancement.
2. As indicated by the data, Millennial Latinas are a subset group of women who are heavily influenced by both the cultural and familial expectations placed on them. Overall, they play a crucial role in shaping these self-sabotaging tendencies, often leading to conflicts between professional aspirations and perceived familial roles.
3. There is a strong emphasis on the need for greater representation, collective action, and mentorship to guide and uplift other Latina leaders, underscoring the importance of solidarity and support within the Latino community.
4. Understanding and valuing personal achievements and contributions is often a challenge, affected by external judgments and the negative perceptions associated with being Latino in America. The struggle with never being “good enough” places a burden on trying to achieve perfection.

### **Key Findings: Strategies Used to Counteract Effects of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors**

1. All strategies highlighted in the aforementioned data tables were found to address more than one self-sabotaging behavior.
2. Millennial Latinas place tremendous significance on self-awareness and embracing one’s cultural and ethnic identity as a source of strength. For these

participants, unlocking their unique destinies and paths in life is what helps shape their identity as leaders.

3. Millennial Latinas acknowledged the importance and power behind their pursuit of continuous learning when combating fear and worry and feeling so much like an imposter in their role.
4. Millennial Latinas leverage therapy and devotionals to increase their emotional intelligence, foster resilience against negative self-talk, and help them to be more secure with their own identity.
5. Participants reported adopting practices such as affirmations and meditation helps to build inner confidence to combat imposter syndrome and transform personal challenges into growth opportunities.
6. Millennial Latinas advocated for leveraging mentorship, building meaningful relationships, and participation in networking opportunities to not only reduce isolation, but also contribute to creating a more inclusive leadership model that promotes communal support, collective wisdom, and shared success.
7. Sharing personal stories was identified by the participants as a core strategy to inspire and empower other Latinas.
8. Participants reported that embracing and valuing feminine traits in professional settings, challenging stereotypes, and redefining perceptions of strength and leadership are key strategies. For Millennial Latina leaders, the focus is on shifting the view of femininity from liability to a cornerstone of their leadership style.

9. Participants reported creating spaces and encouraging environments where Millennial Latina leaders can express their true selves.
10. Participants acknowledged that women's leadership potential is realized not through relentless exertion, but through the thoughtful cultivation of self-awareness, personal care, and a balanced approach to one's professional journey.

### **Summary**

This explanatory mixed method study aimed to elucidate the self-sabotaging behaviors that Millennial Latina leaders in non-profit C-Suite roles encounter and to examine the ramifications of these behaviors on their career progression. Additionally, the study sought to uncover strategies these leaders might use to overcome such behaviors. Chapter IV presented a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the participants. It revisited the study's core elements, including the purpose statement, research questions, methodology, and details of data collection, as well as the demographics of the participant group. Data were conveyed through a combination of statistical tables and narrative accounts, providing a well-rounded perspective of the findings. All significant themes and conclusions drawn from the study were also introduced and discussed within this chapter.

## CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This mixed method study identified and described the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders throughout their career development and explored the impact of these behaviors on their career development. Equally important, this study identified the strategies Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders used to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. The theoretical framework for this study was adopted from *In Her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self* (Lerner, 2012) and *The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives* (Ryder & Briles, 2003). Chapter V summarizes the purpose statement, research questions, methodology, and population. Additionally, this chapter outlines major and unexpected findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for future research. This chapter concludes with the researcher's remarks and reflections on the research.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this mixed method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and to explore the impact of these behaviors on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by Millennial Latina nonprofit leaders to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

### **Research Questions**

To identify and describe the self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and to explore the impact of these behaviors on their career development, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders experienced throughout their leadership careers?
2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders?
3. What strategies did Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

### **Methodology**

The methodology selected for this thematic study was an explanatory sequential mixed method research design. For the quantitative portion, the participants were provided with an electronic survey designed to help the researcher determine the most prevalent self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders. The qualitative portion of this study included a follow-up interview with each of the participants. The goal of conducting one-on-one interviews with each participant was to collect data that was not constrained by any predetermined analytical categories (Patton, 2015). Through these one-on-one interviews the researcher had the opportunity to document information-rich cases highlighting the strategies Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders have utilized to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Dictate. Doc Tools through Microsoft Word was used to code the themes and patterns that emerged from the research.

### **Population**

The population of this study was an estimated 1,823 Millennial Latinas in nonprofit organizations who hold executive or C-Suite level, roles in California. With



regard to the diversity of the workforce, California nonprofits employ a significantly higher percentage of women and a slightly higher percentage of people of color than the overall civilian workforce. Overall, 63% of women account for the nonprofit workforce, whereas people of color account for 31% of the nonprofit labor force (CalNonprofits, 2019).

### **Sample**

The targeted sample size for this study consisted of eight Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders. Purposeful, convenience, and snowball sampling were used to identify participants and invite them to the study. Once identified, eligible candidates were invited via email to participate. Eligibility for this study was dependent on the candidate meeting the following criteria:

- Women who identify as Latina.
- Belong to the Millennial generational cohort (born between 1981-1996).
- Currently serve, in an executive, or C-Suite, level role in a Southern California nonprofit organization.
- Served in an executive, or C-Suite, level role in a Southern California nonprofit organization for at least 1 year.

### **Major Findings**

The exploration of both quantitative and qualitative data yielded responses to the three research questions posed in this study of self-sabotaging behaviors. An in-depth statistical and analytical review produced key findings, which are outlined systemically in Chapter IV. This section encapsulates the findings from Chapter IV and categorizes them in accordance with each of the research questions for clarity and coherence.

## **Summary Findings: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors**

Research question 1 asked, *What self-sabotaging behaviors have Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders experienced throughout their leadership careers?* The individuals involved in this study disclosed their encounters with nine distinct self-sabotaging behaviors. The following major findings are drawn from the information collected in both the survey and interviews.

### **Navigating Cultural and Gender Norms**

The key findings from the study on Millennial Latina leaders reveal a complex interplay of self-sabotaging behaviors deeply rooted in cultural and gender norms. A significant portion of the participants identified a diminished sense of self-worth, with many resorting to minimizing their achievements and contributions out of fear of appearing egotistical. As referenced by the participants, within the Latino culture, one of the key values to be upheld is to always be respectful. This emphasis on respect is often manifested as a paternalistic expectation for Latinas to understand their place and ensure they do not put themselves or others in a position of embarrassment or disappointment. This cultural nuance, which was identified in the interview portion of this study, is explored in the article, “Why Do Latino/a/x Professional Struggle to Toot Their Own Horns?” by Esmeralda Pérez Gómez and María Díaz (2022). In the article the authors make the argument that many Latinos grow up receiving guidance from family members that mold their thought processes, direct their behaviors, and frame their outlook by delineating what behaviors are deemed socially acceptable or unacceptable within the Latino community. The authors highlight how these lessons are encapsulated in proverbs

that can adversely affect Latinas attempting to advance and succeed in professional environments.

One of the proverbs explored in the article is *calladita te ves más bonita* (you look prettier when you are silent). This message, directed specifically toward Latinas, is a message conveying that they should be seen and not heard to avoid causing embarrassment to themselves, their families, their school, or their ancestors through their words (Pérez Gómez & Díaz, 2022). According to Pérez Gómez and Díaz (2022), this limits the Latina voice to express only what is considered “appropriate, tactful, pleasant, respectful, non-offensive, and politically correct” (para. 9). They argue that Latinas are conditioned from a young age to self-censor, choosing silence to avoid offending others or being misinterpreted. This self-sabotaging behavior, coupled with profound anxiety surrounding career advancement, emphasizes their sense of imposter syndrome, hindering their pursuit of leadership roles.

### **Navigating Boundaries and Assertiveness**

Among Millennial Latina leaders there is a noteworthy struggle to assert boundaries by saying “no.” Moreover, the participants demonstrate a reluctance to voice opinions in professional settings which further highlights the challenges Millennial Latina leaders encounter in creating or finding spaces where they are free to assert their presence and authority.

### **Navigating Mentorship and Challenges in Support and Representation**

Acknowledged across the participants there is a wide gap regarding mentorship and support, with 75% feeling isolated in their career paths due to a lack of accessible and diverse role models or mentors. The perception of success as a competitive arena,

rather than a collective achievement, creates feelings of isolation and unwarranted competition among Millennial Latinas. Lastly, the necessity to suppress feminine qualities in order to be deemed capable in a professional context reveals issues with gender norms and their influence on their self-perception and behavior, particularly when navigating spaces predominantly occupied by White male counterparts.

### **Summary Findings: Impact of Self-Sabotaging Behaviors**

Research question 2 asked, *What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders?* The individuals involved in this study shared how the nine self-sabotaging behaviors affected their career development. The following major findings are drawn from the information collected in both the survey and interviews.

#### **Career Challenges**

Among Millennial Latina leaders it was discovered that there is a complex landscape of challenges and societal dynamics that significantly affect their career trajectories. First and foremost, there is a unanimous acknowledgment among these leaders that nine self-sabotaging behaviors identified in this study serve as substantial barriers to their professional growth and advancement into leadership roles. Moreover, through the interview process, it was recognized that self-sabotaging behaviors are not an isolated phenomenon but are deeply intertwined with their cultural and familial expectations, which exert a profound influence on Millennial Latina leaders. These expectations often create a dichotomy between their professional goals and the traditional roles they are expected to fulfill, leading to internal conflicts and self-sabotaging actions.

## **Advocating for Latina Leadership**

Well documented in Chapter IV, the data underscores the critical need for increased representation and visibility of Latina leaders, advocating for a collective effort toward mentorship and support within the Latino community. Such solidarity is seen as essential for navigating the complexities of professional environments and overcoming ingrained self-sabotaging tendencies.

### **Summary Findings: Strategies to Overcome Self-Sabotaging Behaviors**

Research question 3 asked, *What strategies did Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?* The individuals involved in this study shared their varying strategies used across the nine power domains. The following major findings are drawn from the information collected in both the survey and interviews.

### **Investing in Personal Development**

The strategies leveraged by Millennial Latina leaders to counteract the effects of self-sabotaging behaviors highlight a multifaceted approach that is centered on personal growth, community building, and cultural pride. These strategies collectively emphasize the transformative power of self-awareness, continuous learning, and emotional intelligence in navigating professional challenges and identity crises.

### **The Power of Cultural and Ethnic Identity**

At the core of these strategies is a recognition of one's cultural and ethnic identity as a fundamental strength. Millennial Latinas view their unique backgrounds as essential to their leadership identity, guiding them toward their *destino* and influencing the type of leaders they aspire to become. As supported by the data collected in the interviews, their

sense of identity is reinforced by their commitment to dedicating time to their personal and professional growth and development. In leveraging self-improvement strategies, Millennial Latina leaders can better overcome their feelings of inadequacy and imposter syndrome that frequently arise in professional settings.

### **Empowerment Through Therapy and Spirituality**

Emotional well-being is another strategy leveraged by Millennial Latina leaders. Many of them acknowledged in their interviews that turning to therapy and spiritual practices helps them cultivate resilience against negative self-perceptions and anchor their identity in a place of security and confidence. Additional practices such as affirmations and meditation are also leveraged to help build inner strength and transform their personal vulnerabilities into opportunities for growth and empowerment.

### **Community and Collectivism**

As noted in the interviews, community support plays a pivotal role as a strategy, with mentorship, networking, and building meaningful relationships being key to breaking the cycle of isolation. These connections not only provide a platform for shared learning and support but also contribute to a more inclusive and collaborative leadership model that values collective wisdom and success across ages and cultural backgrounds.

### **The Power of Storytelling**

Sharing personal stories also emerged as a powerful strategy for combating self-sabotaging behaviors. In addition, the participants also highlighted that in their ability to find the courage to be open about their struggles and experiences, they realized it could be leveraged as a mechanism to help inspire and empower other Latinas. Furthermore, challenging traditional stereotypes by embracing and valuing femininity in the workplace

signifies a shift toward redefining leadership norms, where femininity is regarded as an asset rather than a hindrance.

### **Building an Authentic Self**

Lastly, the findings in this study highlight a shift away from the notion that leadership and professional success require relentless effort at the expense of personal well-being. Instead, there is a growing recognition among Millennial Latinas that true leadership potential is realized through nurturing self-awareness, practicing personal care, and adopting a balanced approach to professional development. This holistic strategy underscores the belief that effective leadership emanates from a well-rounded and authentic self.

### **Unexpected Findings**

During the interview phase of this study, the insights shared by the Millennial Latina leaders added profound depth and nuanced complexity to the examination of self-sabotaging behaviors within their demographic. The following unexpected discoveries surfaced from the investigation:

1. All the participants identified themselves as first generation Latinas with college degrees.
2. All the participants identified themselves as children of immigrant parents.
3. Participants were more likely to identify certain self-sabotaging behaviors in the survey than in interviews.
4. Twenty-five percent of the participants identified religion or devotional as a strategy to counteract self-sabotaging behaviors.

5. Fifty-percent of the participants identified using therapy as a strategy to counteract self-sabotaging behaviors.
6. Social media was identified as both a self-sabotaging behavior and a strategy to help counteract self-sabotaging behaviors.
7. Motherhood was a theme identified as a source of self-sabotaging tendencies.
8. Language barriers was a theme identified as a source of self-sabotaging tendencies.

### **Conclusions**

Conclusions for this research are based on the findings of this study as supported by the literature. The researcher derived multiple conclusions stemming from both the participants unique and collective experiences with self-sabotaging behaviors, the impact of these self-sabotaging behaviors, and strategies used to counteract self-sabotaging behaviors in their leadership careers.

#### **Conclusion 1: The Latino Work Ethic is Perceived as a Double-Edged Sword, Serving as a Strength While Also Potentially Undermining Oneself**

The concept of the Latino work ethic not only is a representation of strength, but also can be a source of self-sabotaging tendencies among Millennial Latina leaders. The Latino work ethic is deeply rooted in the cultural narrative of resilience, perseverance, and the determination to succeed. It is a testament to the community's values and the adversities they overcome as either immigrants or minorities in America. However, this same work ethic also traps Millennial Latina leaders in a cycle of self-sabotage.

According to the interview excerpts documented in Chapter IV, the participants shared



that the pursuit of perfectionism emerges as a direct consequence of this Latino work ethic.

In the article “The One Thing Preventing Latinas from Getting to the C-Suite,” Patricia Arboleda (2023) posed the question of what contributes to Latina perfectionism. The response is simple: cultural expectations. According to Arboleda, Latinas do not see perfectionism as a negative trait; instead, it is seen as a necessary characteristic required to get ahead that has been ingrained since childhood. From a very early age, Latinas are taught that they carry their family’s expectations in every aspect of themselves, including how they look, speak, treat others, and excel in all their undertakings. In other words, in the Latino culture, how an individual presents himself/herself is often seen as a reflection of his/her family’s values and the quality of upbringing he/she received. Therefore, this pursuit of perfectionism, while notable for always wanting to do one’s best, becomes a toxic trait, where the inability to acknowledge and celebrate one’s achievements becomes commonplace, as highlighted under the self-sabotaging category of Misunderstanding One’s Self. One of the negative outcomes associated with chasing perfection is a disregard for one’s personal well-being, blurring the lines between dedication and not allowing oneself to experience downtime. As noted by Arboleda, perfectionists are more prone to burnout. According to Dr. Gordon Parker (as cited in Quest for Life Foundation, 2024), professor of psychiatry at the University of New South Wales, “perfectionists are more susceptible to burnout because they set unrealistic standards for themselves that can trigger harmful behaviors like overworking and validation seeking” (para. 27).

## **Conclusion 2: Challenges of Motherhood**

The dichotomy between motherhood and professional environments, as experienced by participants, reveals not only the gaps in societal structures intended to support working mothers but also underscores the power of community and representation in mitigating some of these challenges. For example, across several interviews, the participants pointed to the fact that there is a lack of robust support systems for mothers, especially in the context of maternity leave policies, affordable childcare, and workplace flexibility, which in turn places an undue burden on mothers.

This burden was made more evident when the participants shared the added layer of unique challenges they encounter as single mothers. According to Amy Andrada (2022), the absence of support structures for single mothers can lead to feelings of isolation and uncertainty about their futures. Andrada specifically identifies issues such as the social stigma and marginalization single mothers encounter because they are not adhering to the model of a nuclear family with two parents. A lack of government assistance programs, community resources, and informal networks, such as family and friends, presents a greater challenge to single mothers when it comes to meeting the demands of parenting and maintaining their own well-being (Andrada, 2019). Moreover, single mothers often contend with cultural stereotypes and misconceptions. For instance, the participants highlighted how society judges single mothers more harshly than single fathers in the sense that single fathers are seen as self-sacrificing individuals who are undertaking such an incredible feat by raising a child. In contrast, single mothers in the same situation as their male counterpart are labeled as being irresponsible or incapable of providing for their child adequately as a single parent (Andrada, 2022). The guilt and

stress associated with delegating maternal duties, coupled with the fear of societal judgment, underscore a pervasive expectation that women should seamlessly manage both spheres without external support: the super woman phenomenon. One of the critiques highlighted by Andrada (2019) in “Woman and (Un)partnered Mother: Critiques of an Intersectional Perspective” is the need to challenge traditional constructs of motherhood to allow for a broader understanding and acceptance of varied forms of motherhood as a means to remove the limitations that it places on women’s identities and experiences as mothers.

### **Conclusion 3: Intersectionality of Motherhood and Professional Identity**

The exploration into the intersectionality of motherhood and professional identity among Millennial Latina leaders was a topic raised in the interview portion of the study. It introduces a complex landscape where cultural, societal, and internal factors converge, shaping their experiences and career trajectories in profound ways. In the chapter “Woman and (Un)partnered Mother: Critiques of an Intersectional Perspective,” Andrada (2019) argued that the conventional roles assigned to women as mothers are deeply intertwined with societal expectations when it comes to gender, race, and class. Andrada calls out that the ideal “good mother” is not only informed but also reinforced by a framework that dictates the roles and behaviors to which women should adhere if their identity as good mothers is to be evaluated favorably against a backdrop of societal norms that honor partnership and traditional family structures. As expressed in the interviews and Conclusion 2, participants felt a sense of guilt when delegating motherly duties, especially when they needed to shift their priorities toward their growth and development as leaders.

Millennial Latina leaders continuously find themselves at the crossroads of cultural expectations that value the self-sacrificing, ever-present mother and the modern necessity for dual-income households or personal career aspirations. One of the frameworks that supports the above observations is the “unresolved outcome.” Andrada’s (2022) *Scarlet Letter Effect: Evidence of a Single Mother Narrative* focuses on the perspective of single mothers; however, her exploration into how women navigate between traditional roles and equality-based narratives reveals that the constant negotiation between these contrasting ideologies often leads to a state of ambiguity or unresolved identity. In other words, they feel like they neither fully embrace traditional gender norms nor completely reject them, resulting in a state of in-betweenness that complicates their identities. The experience of intersectionality among Latina leaders involves not just managing the balance between personal and professional lives but also navigating a complex network of expectations, feelings of guilt, and systemic obstacles that affect them uniquely. This guilt is further amplified by the societal scrutiny that often judges working mothers more harshly than their male counterparts, placing an additional emotional burden on these women as they strive to meet both personal and professional expectations.

#### **Conclusion 4: Intersectionality of Language and Identity**

The profound impact of language on the professional identity and perceived credibility of Millennial Latina leaders reveals a critical aspect of their career navigation and personal expression. Language, far beyond a mere tool for communication, serves as a pivotal element of cultural identity and a marker of belonging within professional landscapes. In Anzaldúa’s book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* the author

explores the “taming of the wild tongue” and constructs an analysis of the importance of language, linguistic identity, and cultural identity (Lockhart, 2007). In essence, Anzaldúa claims that those who possess multiple identities, are always at the border balancing which aspects of their identity will take precedence based on a given situation (Lockhart, 2007; Saavedra & Perez, 2017).

The pressure to conform to “professional White talk” underscores a broader narrative of assimilation and the inability to express one’s cultural uniqueness in favor of a more universally accepted professional persona. This adaptation, while aimed at enhancing professional acceptance and credibility, inadvertently perpetuates a cycle of identity suppression and cultural dilution. Because of this constant balancing act, Latinas cannot demonstrate their reliable authentic selves. For Latinas to make any headway into top leadership roles, they understand that some aspect of their linguistic and cultural identity needs to be sacrificed to fit the ideal mold of who and what a leader is.

As shared in the interviews, participants have had to contend with a level of shame associated with their Spanish accents or any linguistic markers of their ethnic heritage. This feeling shared among the participants highlights the reality that in professional environments, implicit standards of communication exist that privilege certain linguistic characteristics over others. For Millennial Latina leaders, this reality presents a dilemma between embracing their cultural identity and conforming to the linguistic expectations that dominate professional spheres. Seen as a survival technique, conforming to linguistic expectations has profound implications for self-perception among Millennial Latina leaders.

The consequences associated with adopting these mainstream societal norms can result in Latina/os rejecting their culture altogether and becoming “Whitewashed.” This rejection can lead to a sense of alienation from not only their own culture and people, but also those in the majority because they do not see an authentic and honest person (Bordas, 2013; Chin, 2011; Eagly & Hernandez, 2020; Madon et al., 2001; Neiman et al., 1994).

The internalization of linguistic preferences as indicators of professionalism was identified by the participants as a root cause of feeling a sense of inadequacy or imposter syndrome when one’s natural mode of expression deviates from the norm. For these women, this eroded their self-confidence, and for 87.5% of the participants it resulted in them choosing not to speak up in meetings or group discussions.

### **Conclusion 5: Impacts of Social Media**

With the age of social media so prominent in this day and age, new challenges are identified when it comes to self-sabotaging behaviors. For instance, social media has been designed to allow its consumers unfettered access to the masses at an international level. For Millennial Latina leaders, social media can be leveraged as a tool designed to build professional networks, showcase both personal and professional achievements, and create mentorship opportunities that may have been previously inaccessible.

In contrast, social media can also be construed as a double-edged sword whereby comparisons and competition have become more commonplace. According to Kelan (2012), Millennials have increasingly voiced their reservations about maintaining an online presence because companies today are using social media platforms to find out as much as possible about a person. In several interviews, Millennials pointed out the fear of

missing out on a job or promotion because they may not be seen as the right type of person based on their social media account.

Human beings tend to want to carefully curate representations of themselves, which can distort reality, creating an illusion of achievement and perfection among peers. For Millennial Latina leaders, this can unconsciously feed feelings of inadequacy and imposter syndrome because they only see the best version of that person in that specific moment in time. The pressure to measure up can lead to a relentless pursuit of perfection, overshadowing their own accomplishments and undermining their self-esteem.

### **Implications for Action**

This study enriches the current research landscape concerning Millennial Latina leaders in nonprofit C-Suite roles, focusing on self-sabotaging behaviors, their impact, and key strategies for mitigating these effects. Drawing from an extensive literature review and the study's findings, the following recommendations for action are proposed:

#### **Implication 1: Storytelling**

The researcher is committed to disseminating the findings of this dissertation through journal articles and presentations at conferences focusing on Latina leadership. Preliminary invitations have been extended for the researcher to share insights on overcoming self-sabotaging behaviors among women at events tailored to inspire other Millennial Latinas. The interviews conducted with all eight participants highlight the foundational role of storytelling within Latino culture, serving as a vehicle for fostering community and union. This tradition of sharing personal journeys not only strengthens communal bonds, but also celebrates our collective diversity, encouraging us to embrace our multifaceted identities across various ethnicities religions and races. Through

deliberate storytelling, Latinos can highlight the vibrancy of our communities and the richness of our shared heritage.

### **Implication 2: Affinity Groups**

Organizations must allocate resources to foster and support affinity groups, creating spaces where working mothers can share experiences, resources, and strategies to achieve work life balance. Expanding organization-based affinity groups to also include young Latina leaders will foster an inclusive environment and provide visibility for a diverse group of women seeking recognition and guidance on progressing into various leadership roles within their organizations. Such groups play a crucial role in building powerful networks or “power webs,” essential in women’s professional development. Another advantage of organizational affinity groups is the capacity to harness the collective power, collaboration, and resources of their members to actively pursue significant social change within their respective organizations.

### **Implication 3: Mentorship**

Individuals from historically oppressed backgrounds have often encountered generational messages doubting their capabilities and facing barriers imposed by societal structures or internal conflicts. Overcoming these challenges begins with instilling a deep-seated belief in one’s potential for success. A foundational step in combating self-sabotaging behaviors lies in fostering self-confidence through mentorship, spanning professional, educational, and personal spheres. As highlighted by a study participant, mentorship must occur early in educational settings, enabling younger students to learn from older peers. This mentor-mentee dynamic throughout one’s formative years not only facilitates the early adoption of these roles but also integrates them into individuals’



professional personas as natural behaviors. Introducing and reinforcing strategies to counteract self-sabotaging tendencies from a young age can significantly impact the development of Latina leaders. Such an approach nurtures cultural pride, strengthens connections to one's heritage, and fosters an intergenerational community where leadership wisdom is seamlessly transmitted across generations, ensuring the vibrancy and continuity of their cultural legacy.

#### **Implication 4: Diversifying Leadership Models**

Effective leadership requires courage to make difficult decisions, confront entrenched systems, and dismantle barriers that hinder community advancement. Consequently, there is a pressing need for organizations and educational institutions to revamp their leadership development programs. This study's literature review and participant interviews highlight a prevailing reliance on leadership models steeped in White Anglo-Saxon Protestant values. To transcend these outdated frameworks, leadership education must diversify its sources, including a broader range of authors and perspectives in the study of leadership. It is essential for students to engage with leadership concepts that move beyond the traditional White male Protestant narrative, embracing inclusivity, equity, and intergenerational viewpoints. Although the conventional models offer foundational insights, expanding the curriculum to encompass more holistic and diverse leadership models will equip future leaders with the tools to foster more inclusive and progressive spaces in professional settings.

#### **Implication 5: Social Media**

In today's digitally driven society, it is critical to address feelings of inadequacy from a young age by incorporating media and digital literacy into school curricula. This

education must inform students about the psychological effects of social media, underscore the value of genuine representation, and highlight strategies for healthy engagement with digital platforms. Concurrently, the significant influence of social media, particularly for young Latino/a leaders championing social change, underscores the importance of utilizing digital tools to address critical issues like cultural identity, immigration, and equity. Through digital activism, they harness technology and media to spark social transformation and connect with vast audiences.

Reflecting on both literature and participant insights, it is clear that in order to mitigate self-sabotaging behaviors, Millennial Latina leaders must be encouraged to engage with social media mindfully. This effort entails setting clear usage boundaries, concentrating on uplifting and informative content, and understanding the constructed reality behind online personas. There is also a pressing need for more influencers who candidly share their real-life experiences, including their hurdles alongside their triumphs, to dismantle the prevailing narrative of perfection. Creating online communities focused on support, mentorship, and genuine professional exchange can offer Millennial Latina leaders a refuge from the competitive nature of social media, fostering spaces for connection, learning, and mutual support devoid of comparison. Additionally, in professional environments, there must be a stronger focus on organizing workshops that enhance digital literacy. These workshops should teach the critical assessment of social media content and explore ways to use social media constructively for both personal advancement and professional development.

## **Recommendations for Further Research**

These recommendations for further research were derived based on the specific findings and conclusions of this study:

1. Further research is recommended to explore the impact of self-sabotaging behaviors among Latinas, extending across various disciplines and sectors. Specifically, studies should be replicated to include Latinas in different stages of their careers within the armed forces, from active duty to veteran status, to understand how these behaviors influence their pursuit of leadership roles and transition out of military environments. Additionally, investigations should expand to encompass Millennial Latina entrepreneurs, shedding light on their challenges related to self-sabotaging behaviors. This comprehensive approach is advised due to the unique insights and experiences shared by participants regarding the struggle with self-sabotaging behaviors in these diverse yet interconnected spaces.
2. This research calls for replication through a study specifically designed to examine self-sabotaging experiences among Latinas, enabling a thorough comparison of self-sabotaging behaviors unique to this group.
3. This research calls for replication through a study specifically designed to examine self-sabotaging experiences among Millennial women, enabling a thorough comparison of self-sabotaging behaviors unique to this group.
4. This research warrants replication in a study dedicated to examining the self-sabotaging experiences of immigrant women who have relocated to the United States and the subsequent impacts on their professional pursuits.

5. This research warrants replication through a targeted study that delves into the self-sabotaging experiences of the emerging Generation Z workforce and the effects on their current academic or professional endeavors.
6. This research warrants replication to delve into the self-sabotaging behaviors of mothers across the various types of motherhood—Single, Co-Parenting, Independent, Traditional, and Ambiguous or Unresolved—and their effects on professional aspirations. This study would encompass single mothers facing unique financial and societal challenges, co-parenting mothers navigating shared responsibilities across separate households, independent mothers emphasizing autonomy in their parenting, traditional mothers adhering to conventional roles within a nuclear family, and mothers experiencing uncertainty in their roles and identities. This comprehensive approach aims to illuminate the diverse experiences of motherhood and their impact on women’s professional journeys, as identified in Amy Andrada’s works.
7. This research warrants replication with a study especially aimed at exploring the self-sabotaging experiences related to social media among women.
8. This research warrants replication in a study that delves specifically into the self-sabotaging experiences arising from a lack of intergenerational wealth among women and its impact on their academic and professional pursuits.
9. This thematic dissertation should be extended into a meta-analysis to comprehensively examine self-sabotaging behaviors and the strategies employed to mitigate them across women from the Boomer, Generation X, Millennial, and Generation Z cohorts.

## **Concluding Remarks and Reflections**

On a personal note, I, the researcher, come from a humble background as the daughter of Salvadoran immigrants who arrived in the United States with little more than hope and the dream to help my sister and me be more than what they could ever achieve. A part of my childhood was marred by domestic abuse at the hands of an alcoholic father, exposing me early to the resilience required to overcome adversity. Living as a Latina, discrimination has been a constant backdrop, challenging my legitimacy and right to occupy spaces I have earned, such as my acceptance into UCLA for my bachelor's degree, or CSUN for my master's degree, and now UMass Global for my doctoral degree. Comments suggesting my admissions were merely a token gesture to fill quotas only highlight the ignorance of the hurdles I have faced as a first-generation Latina navigating a path my parents could not dream of because of their own educational and economic barriers.

Throughout my journey, however, a select group of women recognized my potential, bolstering my resolve to achieve my ambitions. This thematic dissertation, therefore, transcends academic pursuit; it is a deeply personal exploration intertwined with the narratives of eight remarkable Millennial Latina leaders. Their participation not only validated the significance of this work but also fostered a sense of community among us, sharing in our collective struggles and aspirations for empowerment. This work reaffirms the ongoing need to champion gender parity and inclusivity. Armed with my experiences of overcoming systemic barriers tied to socioeconomic, linguistic, and educational disadvantages, I am committed to breaking through the adobe ceiling, leveraging my growing expertise to support others with similar backgrounds. This study

has fortified my determination to advocate for and empower Latinas, guiding my continued efforts to uplift the Latino and immigrant communities. My journey underscores the challenges and triumphs that define us, and it is this narrative I hope to share, inspiring others to join in the pursuit of a more equitable and inclusive future.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Synthesis Matrix

	Leadership Models - Foundational Framework	Rise of Feminist Leadership Models	Intersectionality of Diversity & Leadership	Gender & Leadership	Racial/Ethnic Diversity & Leadership	External Barriers to Millennial Latina Women in Leadership	Glass Ceiling	Adobe Ceiling	Generational Cohort & Leadership	Reverse Ageism	Chicana/Latina Feminist Theory	Intersectional Theory	Theoretical Frameworks: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors & Women's Personal Power	Thinking Too Small	Fear and Worrying	Misunderstanding One's Self	Dishonesty	Holding Back	Lack of Self-Reflection	Isolating	Disempowering Other Women	Initiating Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace	The Nine Domains of Women's Personal Power	Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny	Constructive Preparation	Owning All of One's Self	Honest Self-Expression	Acting with Confidence	Cultivating Self-Intimacy	Building a Power Web	Inspiring Other Women	Embracing One's Sexuality					
5	<p><b>Thematic Purpose Statement:</b> The purpose of this mixed-method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female <u>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</u> and to explore the impact these behaviors have had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by female <u>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</u> to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.</p> <p><b>Thematic Research Questions:</b> 1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female <u>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</u> experienced throughout their leadership careers? 2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female <u>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</u>? 3. What strategies did female <u>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</u> use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?</p>																																				
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**Thematic Research Questions:**  
 1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders experienced throughout their leadership careers?  
 2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders?  
 3. What strategies did female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

	Leadership Models - Foundational Framework	Rise of Feminist Leadership Models	Intersectionality of Diversity & Leadership	Gender & Leadership	Racial/Ethnic Diversity & Leadership	External Barriers to Millennial Latina Women in Leadership	Glass Ceiling	Adobe Ceiling	Generational Cohort & Leadership	Reverse Ageism	Chicana/Latina Feminist Theory	Intersectional Theory	Theoretical Framework: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors & Women's Personal Power	Thinking Too Small	Fear and Worrying	Misunderstanding One's Self	Dishonesty	Holding Back	Lack of Self-Reflection	Isolating	Disempowering Other Women	Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace	The Nine Domains of Women's Personal Power	Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny	Constructive Preparation	Owning All of One's Self	Honest Self-Expression	Acting with Confidence	Cultivating Self-Intimacy	Building a Power Web	Inspiring Other Women	Embracing One's Sexuality	
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38	Chin, J. L. (2011)																																
39	Clance, P.R., & Imes, S.A. (1978)														X																		
40	Crenshaw, K. (2000)																																
41	Chusmir, L.H. & Kobeg, C.S. (1991)														X																		
42	Corsun, D.L., & Costen, W.M. (2001)	X																															
43	Costello, K., & Manzo, P. (2020)																																
44	Crenshaw, K. (1989)		X									X																					
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46	Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011)																																
47	Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018)																																
48	Crews, J.R. (2020)												X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
49	Crothers, L., Lipinski, J., & Minutolo, M. (2009)																																
50	Davidson, M.J. and Burke, R.J. (2004)	X																															
51	Davis, L.L. (1992)																																
52	Deloitte. (2015)								X																								
53	Denmark, F.L. (1993)	X	X																														
54	Desjardins, C., & Osman Brown, C., (1991)		X																														
55	DeVita, J.C., Roeger, L.K., & Niedzwiecki, M. (2009)																																
56	Doyle, N. (2021)																						X										
57	Eagly, A.H. and Johnson, B.T. (1990)		X																														
58	Eagly, A.H. and Karau, S.J. (1991)		X																														
59	Eagly, A., Makhijani, M., & Klonsky, B. (1992)				X												X																
60	Eagly, A.H., Johannesen Schmidt, M.C. and Van Engen, M.L. (2003)				X																												
61	Eagly, A.H., & Chin, J.L. (2010)		X			X													X														
62	Edmondson, A. (1999)																				X												
63	Estler, S. (1987)	X																															
64	Federici, S. (2019)																																



**Thematic Purpose Statement:**  
 The purpose of this mixed-method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female **Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders** and to explore the impact these behaviors have had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by female **Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders** to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

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 3. What strategies did female **Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders** use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

	Leadership Model - Foundational Framework	Rise of Feminist Leadership Models	Intersectionality of Diversity & Leadership	Gender & Leadership	Racial/Ethnic Diversity & Leadership	External Barriers to Millennial Latina Women in Leadership	Glass Ceiling	Adobe Ceiling	Generational Cohort & Leadership	Reverse Ageism	Chicana/Latina Feminist Theory	Intersectional Theory	Theoretical Framework: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors & Women's Personal Power	Thinking Too Small	Fear and Worrying	Misunderstanding One's Self	Dishonesty	Holding Back	Lack of Self-Reflection	Isolating	Disempowering Other Women	Inflating Sex Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace	The Nine Domains of Women's Personal Power	Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny	Constructive Preparation	Owning All of One's Self	Honest Self-Expression	Acting with Confidence	Cultivating Self-Efficacy	Building a Power Web	Inspiring Other Women	Embracing One's Sexuality			
64 Federici, S. (2019)			X													X																			
65 Ferdman, B. M. (1999)																																			
66 Frankel, L. P. (2014)																X																		X	
67 Frevert T., Culbertson S., Huffman A. (2015)															X																				
68 Garcia, L.R. (2020)					X							X																							
69 Glace, A.M., Dover, T.L., & Major, B. (2021)														X																					
70 Greenman, E., & Xie, Y. (2008)																																			
71 Grollman, E. A. (2012, September 14)																																			
72 Gutek, B.A., & Larwood, L. (1987)																	X																		
73 Gutierrez, D., Gonzalez, C. & Seshadri, G. (2022)												X					X																		
74 Hakim, C. (2004)																																			
75 Hall, J. C., Everett, J. E., & Hamilton-Mason, J. (2012)					X																														
76 Harris, O. A. (2018)																						X												X	
77 Hauser, F. (2018)																											X								
78 Heilman, M.E., & Eagly, A.H. (2008)																																			
79 Helgesen, S. (1990)			X																																
80 Helgesen, S., & Godsmith, M. (2018)												X															X								
81 Hernandez, B. (2020)							X	X										X																	
82 Hill-Collins, P. (2004)			X						X																										
83 Hillman, D. R. (2014)									X																										
84 Hispanics Organized for Political Equality (2017)																																			
85 Hispanics Organized for Political Equality (2020)																																			
86 Holder, A. M. B., Jackson, M. A., & Ponterotto, J. G. (2015)								X																											
87 Hoyt, C.L. (2013)																																			
88 Ibarra, H., Carter, N. M., & Silva, C. (2010)																					X														
89 Jamieson, K. H. (1995)					X												X																		
90 Jogulu, U.D., Wood, GJ (2006)	X	X		X																															
91 Johnson, R. (2019)											X																								
92 Kahn, R. and Katz, D. (1960)	X																																		
93 Kark R. Shamir B. & Chen G. (2003)					X																														

	Leadership Model - Foundational Framework	Rise of Feminist Leadership Models	Intersectionality of Diversity & Leadership	Gender & Leadership	Racial/Ethnic Diversity & Leadership	External Barriers to Millennial Latin Women in Leadership	Glass Ceiling	Adobe Ceiling	Generational Cohort & Leadership	Reverse Ageism	Chicana/Latina Feminist Theory	Intersectional Theory	Theoretical Framework: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors & Women's Personal Power	Thinking Too Small	Fear and Worrying	Misunderstanding One's Self	Dichotomy	Holding Back	Lack of Self-Reflection	Isolating	Disempowering Other Women	Inhibiting Sex Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace	The Nine Domains of Women's Personal Power	Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny	Constructive Preparation	Owning All of One's Self	Honest Self-Expression	Acting with Confidence	Cultivating Self-Efficacy	Building a Power Web	Inspiring Other Women	Embracing One's Sexuality				
5	<p><b>Thematic Purpose Statement:</b> The purpose of this mixed-method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female <u>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</u> and to explore the impact these behaviors have had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by female <u>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</u> to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.</p> <p><b>Thematic Research Questions:</b> 1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female <u>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</u> experienced throughout their leadership careers? 2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female <u>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</u>? 3. What strategies did female <u>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</u> use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?</p>																																			
93				X																																
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97					X												X			X	X	X														
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	Leadership Model - Foundational Framework	Rise of Feminist Leadership Models	Intersectionality of Diversity & Leadership	Gender & Leadership	Racial/Ethnic Diversity & Leadership	External Barriers to Millennial Latina Women in Leadership	Glass Ceiling	Adobe Ceiling	Generational Cohort & Leadership	Reverse Agnost	Chicana/Latina Feminist Theory	Intersectional Theory	Theoretical Framework: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors & Women's Personal Power	Thinking Too Small	Fear and Worrying	Misunderstanding One's Self	Dishonesty	Holding Back	Lack of Self-Reflection	Isolating	Disempowering Other Women	Inflating Sex Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace	The Nine Domains of Women's Personal Power	Recognizing Women's Unique Deinity	Constructive Preparation	Owning All of One's Self	Honest Self-Expression	Acting with Confidence	Cultivating Self-Intimacy	Building a Power Web	Inspiring Other Women	Embracing One's Sexuality				
5	<p><b>Thematic Purpose Statement:</b> The purpose of this mixed-method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female <b>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</b> and to explore the impact these behaviors have had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by female <b>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</b> to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.</p> <p><b>Thematic Research Questions:</b> 1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female <b>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</b> experienced throughout their leadership careers? 2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female <b>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</b>? 3. What strategies did female <b>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</b> use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?</p>																																			
122	Mallen, J. L. (2009)	X																																		
123	Marcus, B. (2019)													X																						
124	McCarty, P.A. (1986)																																			
125	McDonald, M. L. m. u. e., Keeves, G. D. g. u. e., & Westphal, J. D. w. u. e. (2018)																																			
126	McGee, J.M. (2010)													X																						
127	McMillan, J.H., & Schumacher, S. (2010)												X																							
128	McWhinney, K. (2021, March 12)																			X																
129	Miller, K. (2022)						X						X																		X		X			
130	Missing pieces report: The 2018 board diversity census of women and minorities on																																			
131	Mitra, T. & Morisi, T.L. (2017, July)																																			
132	Molina-Anzorin, J.F., & Lopez-Gamero, M.D. (2016)																																			
133	Montgomery, M.L. (2019)																																			
134	Moore, D.P., & Buttner, E.H. (1997)																																			
135	Mulley, M. (2009)					X																														
136	Neiman, Y.F., Jennings, L., Rozella, R.M., Baxter, J.C. & Sullivan, E. (1994)				X													X																		
137	Nogales, A. (2003)				X																															
138	Northouse, P.G. (2nd ed). (2001)	X																																		
139	Olson, K. (2019)															X																				
140	Ortega, M. (2015)																																			
141	Ortiz, V., & Telles, E. (2012)													X																						
142	Parker, B. and Fagenson, E.A. (1994)	X																																		
143	Parker, L. (2015)														X																					
144	Patten, M.L., & Newhart, M. (2018)																																			
145	Patton, M. (2015)																																			
146	Pianta, R. (2020)												X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
147	Pigliucci, (2017)																									X										
148	Pollak, L. (2019)									X	X																									
149	Powell, G.N. (1999)	X																																		
150	Price, P.C., Jhangiani, R.S., Chiang, I.C. A., Leighton, D.C., Cuttler, C. (2017)																																			

**Thematic Purpose Statement:**  
 The purpose of this mixed-method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female **Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders** and to explore the impact these behaviors have had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by female **Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders** to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

**Thematic Research Questions:**  
 1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female **Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders** experienced throughout their leadership careers?  
 2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female **Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders**?  
 3. What strategies did female **Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders** use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?

5

	Leadership Models - Foundational Framework	Rise of Feminist Leadership Models	Intersectionality of Diversity & Leadership	Gender & Leadership	Racial/Ethnic Diversity & Leadership	External Barriers to Millennial Latina Women in Leadership	Glass Ceiling	Adobe Ceiling	Generational Cohort & Leadership	Reverse Ageism	Chicana/Latina Feminist Theory	Intersectional Theory	Theoretical Frameworks: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors & Women's Personal Power	Thinking Too Small	Fear and Worrying	Misunderstanding One's Self	Dishonesty	Holding Back	Lack of Self-Reflection	Isolating	Disempowering Other Women	Inflating Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace	The Nine Domains of Women's Personal Power	Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny	Constructive Preparation	Owning All of One's Self	Honest Self-Expression	Acting with Confidence	Cultivating Self-Luminescence	Building a Power Web	Inspiring Other Women	Embracing One's Sexuality			
151	Quimby, J.L., & DeSantis, A.M. (2006)								X	X											X														
152	Raymer, M., Reed, M., Spiegel, M., & Purvanova, R.K. (2017)																																		
153	Richardson, A., & Loubier, C. (2008)		X																																
154	Rivera, A. (2014)				X							X																							
155	Robie, E.A. (1973)																																		
156	Rogers, K. (2016)														X																				
157	Rosette, A. S., & Livingston, R. (2012)																				X														
158	Rosner, J.B. (1990)	X		X																															
159	Ruiz-Williams, B. (2015)																																		
160	Ryder, M., & Briles, J. (2003)												X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
161	Saavedra, C.M. & Perez, M.S. (2017)										X																								
162	Salas, D. P. (2005)	X																																	
163	Sanchez-Hucles, J., & Sanchez, P. (2004)		X	X																															
164	Sanchez, P., Hucles, P., Sanchez-Hucles, J., & Mehta, S. (2004)		X														X																		
165	Sanchez-Hucles, J., & Davis, D. D. (2010)																			X															
166	Sandor, A. (2022)												X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
167	Shakespeare, C. (1987)	X																																	
168	Shippy, M., and Watkins, C. (2015)	X																																	
169	Shorey, H. S., Cowan, G., & Sullivan, M. P. (2002)				X																														
170	Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (1999)																																		
171	Spotts, J.B. (1976)	X																																	
172	Stavosky, J.M., & Borkovec, T.D. (2010)														X																				
173	Stogdill, R.M. (1974)	X																																	
174	Strauss, W., & Howe, N. (1991)								X																										
175	Tajfel, H., & Turner, J.C. (1986)																							X											
176	Thomas, T. (2020)													X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
177	Thompson, J.K., Schaefer, L.M., Menzel, J.E. (2012)																					X													
178	Toosi, M., & Morisi, T.L. (2017)					X																													
179	Tulshyan, R., & Burey, J.-A. (2021)																																		

	Leadership Models - Foundational Framework	Rise of Feminist Leadership Models	Intersectionality of Diversity & Leadership	Gender & Leadership	Racial/Ethnic Diversity & Leadership	External Barriers to Millennial Latina Women in Leadership	Glass Ceiling	Adobe Ceiling	Generational Cohort & Leadership	Reverse Ageism	Chicana/Latina Feminist Theory	Intersectional Theory	Theoretical Frameworks: Self-Sabotaging Behaviors & Women's Personal Power	Thinking Too Small	Fear and Worrying	Misunderstanding One's Self	Dishonesty	Holding Back	Lack of Self-Reflection	Isolating	Disempowering Other Women	Infusing Sex/Gender Role Confusion in the Workplace	The Nine Domains of Women's Personal Power	Recognizing Women's Unique Destiny	Constructive Preparation	Owning All of One's Self	Honest Self-Expression	Acting with Confidence	Cultivating Self-Empathy	Building a Power Web	Inspiring Other Women	Embracing One's Sexuality
180	<p><b>Thematic Purpose Statement:</b>            The purpose of this mixed-method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female <b>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</b> and to explore the impact these behaviors have had on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed by female <b>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</b> to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.</p> <p><b>Thematic Research Questions:</b>            1. What self-sabotaging behaviors have female <b>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</b> experienced throughout their leadership careers?            2. What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of female <b>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</b>?            3. What strategies did female <b>Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders</b> use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?</p>																															
181	Tweed, C. (2018)																															
182	Twenge, J.M. (2010)																															
183	United States Census Bureau. (2018, September 13)																															
184	Urick, M.J. (2017)																															
185	USC Libraries Research Guides (n.d.)																															
186	Vasquez, M., & Comas-Diaz, L. (2004)																															
187	Waldman, E. (2020)																															
188	Weldy, L. (2020)																															
189	Weston, J.E. (2015)																															
190	White, M.C., De Sanctis, G., & Crino, M.D. (1981)																															
191	Wolverton, M., Bower, B., & Hyle, A. E. (Eds.). (2009)																															
192	YW Boston Blog (2017, March 29)																															
193	Yzerbyt, V., & Demoulin, S. (2010)																															
194	Zenger, J., and Folkman, J. (2012, Match 15)																															
195	Zorabi, M. (2013)																															

## APPENDIX B

### Email to Research Study Participants

#### WOMEN'S POWER AND SELF-SABOTAGING BEHAVIOR SURVEY

Dear Potential Participant:

You are being invited to participate in a research study conducted by Tatiana Larreynaga, a doctoral candidate at UMass Global University. The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and to explore the impact these behaviors have on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You are welcome to choose not to participate. If you do decide you participate, you may withdraw at any time.

The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential. Survey questions will pertain to your perceptions of identified self-sabotaging behaviors that you may have experienced throughout your career and the impact they may have had on your career development.

Please review the following information:

I understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowable by law. If the study design or the use of data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the researcher will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identity codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the principal researcher. I understand that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University at 16355 Laguna Canyon Rd. Irvine, CA 92618 (949) 341-7641.

If you have any questions about completing this survey or any aspects of this research, please contact Tatiana Larreynaga at [tlarreyn@mail.umassglobal.edu](mailto:tlarreyn@mail.umassglobal.edu) or by phone at 818-321-5886; or Dr. Marilou Ryder, Advisor at [ryder@brandman.edu](mailto:ryder@brandman.edu).

Sincerely,

Tatiana Larreynaga  
Doctoral Candidate

## APPENDIX C

### Electronic Informed Consent Form

**INFORMATION ABOUT:** Self-Sabotaging Behaviors of female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and Strategies Used to Overcome Them

**RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR:** Tatiana Larreynaga, Doctoral Candidate

#### **THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE ELECTRONIC SURVEY:**

**PURPOSE OF STUDY:** You are being asked to participate in an explanatory mixed method research study by Tatiana Larreynaga, a doctoral student from the School of Education at UMass Global University. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Prior to deciding on whether to participate, carefully read the information below and ask questions about anything that you may not understand. The purpose of this mixed methods study is to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and to explore the impact these behaviors have on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study is to identify strategies employed by female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors. This study will explore how self-sabotaging behaviors affect the professional growth of female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders. The data collected from surveying and interviewing female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders is envisioned to increase the field of understanding of the impact of self-sabotage on the careers of women in nonprofit leadership. Findings gathered from the research are anticipated to be used to describe self-sabotaging behaviors and identify strategies used by female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders to overcome self-sabotage.

By participating in this study, I agree to participate in an electronic survey using Google Forms. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. In addition, I agree to participate in an individual interview as a follow-up to the electronic survey. The interview will last approximately 45 – 60 minutes and will be conducted by Tatiana Larreynaga via Zoom or telephone. Completion of the electronic survey and individual interviews will take place <Date Range>.

#### **I understand that:**

- a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the Investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher and on a password protected device.
- b) I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be available only to the researcher and the professional transcriptionist. The audio recordings will be used to capture the interview dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. All information will be identifier-redacted, and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study, all recordings will be destroyed. All other data and consents will be securely stored for three years after completion of data collection and confidentially shredded or fully deleted.

c) The possible benefit of this study is that my input may help add to the research regarding self-sabotaging behaviors and strategies used by women to overcome self-sabotage. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study and will provide new insights about the women in educational leadership, self-sabotage, and strategies used to overcome self-sabotage. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

d) If I have any questions or concerns about the research, I am encouraged to contact Tatiana Larreynaga at tlarreyn@mail.umassglobal.edu or by phone at 818-321-5886; or Dr. Marilou Ryder, Faculty Advisor, at ryder@umassglobal.edu.

e) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide not to participate in the study, and I can withdraw my participation at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. I also understand that the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

f) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed, and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, UMass Global University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

**ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.**

**Clicking on the “Agree” button indicates that you have read this informed consent form and the information in this document and that you voluntarily agree to participate. If you don’t wish to participate, you may decline by clicking “Disagree.”**

- **AGREE: I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the “Research Participant’s Bill of Rights.” I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.**
- **DISAGREE: I do not wish to participate in this study.**



## APPENDIX D

### UMass Global University Institutional Review Board

#### Research Participant's Bill of Rights



### UMASS GLOBAL UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

#### Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the UMASS GLOBAL Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The UMass Global Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, UMASS GLOBAL, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

APPENDIX E

**Qualitative Interview Script and Instrument**

**Women's Power and Self-Sabotaging Behavior Interview Protocol**  
Interviewer's Copy

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

**INTERVIEWER SAYS:**

My name is Tatiana Larreynaga and I am an Portfolio Planner at L.A. Care Health Plan. I am a doctoral candidate at UMass Global University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I would like to thank you for participating in the Women and Self Sabotaging Behavior survey and volunteering to be interviewed to expand the depth of response.

I will be conducting interviews with a number of female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders, such as yourself to hopefully provide a clear picture of self-sabotaging behaviors that can impact women's career development efforts. In addition, I would like to explore any strategies you have used to overcome any identified self-sabotaging behaviors you experienced throughout your career. The questions I will be asking are the same for each female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leader participating in the study. The reason for this is to guarantee, as much as possible, that my interviews with all participating female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders will be conducted in the same manner.

**INFORMED CONSENT (required for Dissertation Research)**

Please let me remind you that your participation is completely voluntary and will greatly strengthen the study. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or would like to end the interview or not respond to a question, please let me know. Your information will be kept confidential, and your name will be changed to protect your identity. After I record and transcribe the data, I will send it to you via electronic mail so that you can check to make sure I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas.

Did you receive the Informed Consent and UMass Global Bill of Rights I sent you via email? Do you have any questions or need clarification about either document?

I have provided a copy of the questions and list of self-sabotaging behaviors for the nine categories of sabotaging behavior defined in my research that I will ask for your reference; however, I may have follow-up questions if clarity is needed. The duration of this interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Do you have any questions about the interview process?

**PROTOCOL QUESTIONS**

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your career journey that brought you to the role you currently serve in today?
2. As you think back on your career please reflect on your behavior related to the sabotaging behavior category of **THINKING TOO SMALL**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
3. As you think back on your career please reflect on your behavior related to the sabotaging behavior category of **FEAR AND WORRYING**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
4. As you think back on your career please reflect on your behavior related to the sabotaging behavior category of **MISUNDERSTANDING ONE'S SELF**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
5. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **DISHONESTY**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
6. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **HOLDING BACK**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
7. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **NOT TAKING TIME FOR REFLECTION**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?

8. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **ISOLATING**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
  
9. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **DISEMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
  
10. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **INFUSING SEX/GENDER CONFUSION IN THE WORKPLACE**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any of these self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
  
11. The top five sabotaging behaviors that the survey respondents identified as exhibiting throughout their careers were (1) (2) (3), (4) and (5). Of these five behaviors which two do you feel have the most impact on females attempting to promote within their careers?
  
12. Can you speak to your perception of how critical it is for women to overcome these behaviors as they relate to career development and promotions?
  
13. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding women and self-sabotaging behaviors?
  
14. "Thank you very much for your time. If you like, when the results of our research are known, we will send you a copy of our findings."

## APPENDIX F

### Survey Protocol/Tool

#### INTRODUCTION

We have the power inside to be great,” says women’s advocate Helene Lerner, “but oftentimes it’s covered by false beliefs about ourselves.” Lerner’s book, *In Her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self* (2012) maintains that women need to embrace their inherent power. “The world needs more women leaders,” Lerner says. “That means we [women] need to step out in ways we haven’t been.” To achieve true power, Lerner says women must first recognize and overcome its barriers. She describes nine common self-sabotaging categories that hold women back. A framework was adapted from Lerner’s thesis coupled with the work of Ryder and Briles from *The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives* (2003) to group female self-sabotaging behaviors within nine overarching domains.

**Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research on women’s personal power and self-sabotaging behavior. This study is focused on the following nine domains of Women’s Personal Power and nine corresponding categories of Sabotaging Behavior.**

- 1. Recognizing Women’s Unique Destiny: THINKING TOO SMALL**
- 2. Constructive Preparation: FEAR AND WORRYING**
- 3. Owning all of One’s Self: MISUNDERSTANDING ONE’S SELF**
- 4. Honest Self-Expression: DISHONESTY**
- 5. Acting with Confidence: HOLDING BACK**
- 6. Cultivating Self-Intimacy: LACK OF SELF REFLECTION**
- 7. Building a Power Web: ISOLATING**
- 8. Inspiring Other Women: DISEMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN**
- 9. Embracing One’s Sexuality: INFUSING SEX ROLE CONFUSION IN THE WORKPLACE**

It’s best not to ‘overthink’ the statements and respond with your first perceptual thought. It is anticipated you can complete this survey in 10-15 minutes. After you complete and submit the survey the researcher will contact you to schedule an interview to explore your thoughts on these behaviors and how they may have an impact on women’s ability to move forward in her career.

Directions: The following survey represents 9 categories of self-sabotaging behaviors. For each category there is a list of behaviors associated with each category. Using the six-point scale for each behavior, please indicate how you have personally exhibited each behavior throughout your adult life as you progressed along in your career.

- 1= Strongly Agree**
- 2= Agree**
- 3= Slightly Agree**

- 4= Slightly Disagree
- 5= Disagree
- 6= Strongly Disagree

1. **POWER DOMAIN:** Recognizing Women’s Unique Destiny (Capacity to have a significant impact; living up to one’s potential)

**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: THINKING TOO SMALL**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I blamed others for why things aren’t going well						
I feared being rejected						
I did not have the courage to step out of my comfort zone						
I was not open to new experiences						
I often made perfection the standard in my life						

2. **POWER DOMAIN:** Constructive Preparation (Embraces, understands and accepts fear)

**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: FEAR AND WORRYING**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I became anxious when thinking about a change in my career						
I felt out of control in an unfamiliar situation						
I resisted change						
I feared looking stupid						
I felt like an imposter on the job						
I mulled over my mistakes						

3. **POWER DOMAIN:** Owning all of One’s Self (Owns and appreciates accomplishments and limitations)

**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: MISUNDERSTANDING ONE’S SELF**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I could not accept compliments or praise						
I have been reluctant to seek out feedback that would help me improve						

I have focused on a person criticizing me						
I could not personally acknowledge my own accomplishments						

**4. POWER DOMAIN: Honest Self Expression (Accepting strengths and weaknesses)**  
**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: DISHONESTY**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I said “yes” to things when I actually wanted to say ‘no”						
I took sides when I really wanted to stay neutral						
I remained silent in a situation when it would have been best to speak up						
I have taken on too much at work when I didn’t want to						
I have hesitated to talk about accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting my ego						
I have been nice as a way to avoid confrontation						

**5. POWER DOMAIN: Acting with Confidence: Approaching obstacles with confidence; having the courage to step forward**  
**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: HOLDING BACK**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I did not reach out for help when I needed it						
I have avoided criticism						
I made inflections rather than make bold statements						
I have apologized unnecessarily						
I have talked down to myself						
I preferred to sit in the back of the room at conferences or meetings						

I preferred not to speak up in a meeting or group discussion						

**6. POWER DOMAIN: Cultivating Self Intimacy (Getting to know oneself more deeply)**

**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: NOT TAKING TIME FOR REFLECTION**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have kept busy to avoid being alone						
I have not accepted parts of myself that need improvement						
I have not allowed myself to mourn losses or cry						
I have not taken vacations when I could						
I have not allowed myself to experience “down time”						
I have hated to ‘be wrong’						
I have held a grudge with someone						

**7. POWER DOMAIN: Building a Power Web (Building a network of personal and professional advisors for support)**

**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: ISOLATING**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have been afraid to reach out to people I didn’t already know						
I was unaware of the types of support needed to move ahead in my career						
I felt guilty for taking up too much of people’s time						
I have relied exclusively on female mentors						
I relied only on networking upstream						

**8. POWER DOMAIN: Inspiring Other Women (Ability to inspire and empower other females)**

**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: DISEMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree



	Disagree		Somewhat	Somewhat		Agree
I have felt too busy to help other women						
I thought why I should help other women since I did it the hard way						
I have felt jealous of other women who have 'made it'						
I have talked behind a woman's back						
I have held women to a higher standard at work than men						

**9. POWER DOMAIN: Embracing One's Sexuality (Awareness of gender roles and sex role stereotypes)**

**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: INFUSING SEX/GENDER ROLE CONFUSION IN WORKPLACE**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have dressed sexy at work						
I have squashed my natural feminine qualities						
I have exhibited male like qualities that aren't part of my natural personality						
I have exhibited 'girl' like behaviors such as twirling my hair or using baby talk						
I have flirted at work						

**10: Impact on Self-Sabotaging Behaviors on Women's Career**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe some of the behaviors listed in this survey have had an impact on my career development (lack of promotions, moving ahead in career in a timely manner, lack of access to top positions etc.).						

APPENDIX G

**Quantitative Alignment Table**

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Question 1</b>	<b>Question 2</b>	<b>Question 3</b>	<b>Question 4</b>	<b>Question 5</b>	<b>Question 6</b>	<b>Question 7</b>	<b>Question 8</b>	<b>Question 9</b>	<b>Question 10</b>
What self-sabotaging behaviors have Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders experienced throughout their leadership careers?										
What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders?										

APPENDIX H

Qualitative Alignment Table

Research Question	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8	Question 9	Question 10	Question 11	Question 12	Question 13
What self-sabotaging behaviors have Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders experienced throughout their leadership careers?													
What impact did self-sabotaging behaviors have on the leadership careers of Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders?													
What strategies did Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders use throughout their leadership careers to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors?													

## APPENDIX I

### Survey Field Test Tool

#### **WOMEN'S POWER AND SELF-SABOTAGING BEHAVIOR SURVEY**

Included in the Electronic Survey: You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Tatiana Larreynaga, a doctoral student at UMass Global University. The purpose of this explanatory mixed method study was to identify and describe self-sabotaging behaviors experienced by female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders and to explore the impact these behaviors have on their career development. A secondary purpose of this study was to identify strategies employed to overcome self-sabotaging behaviors.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You are welcome to choose not to participate. If you do decide you participate, you may withdraw at any time.

The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential. Survey questions will pertain to your perceptions of identified self-sabotaging behaviors you may have experienced throughout your career and the impact they may have had on your career development.

#### **Please review the following information:**

I understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowable by law. If the study design of the use of data is to be changed I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the researcher will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identity codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the principal researcher. I understand that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that if I have any questions, comments or concerns about the study or informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, UMass Global University at 16355 Laguna Canyon Rd. Irvine, C 92618 (949) 341-7641.

If you have any questions about completing this survey or any aspects of this research, please contact Tatiana Larreynaga at [tlarreyn@mail.umassglobal.edu](mailto:tlarreyn@mail.umassglobal.edu) or by phone at 818-321-5886; or Dr. Ryder, Advisor at [ryder@umassglobal.edu](mailto:ryder@umassglobal.edu).

**ELECTRONIC CONSENT:** Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the “agree” button indicates that you have read this informed consent form and the information in this document and that you voluntarily agree to participate. If you don't wish to participate, you may decline by clicking the “disagree” button.

**Agree:** I acknowledge receipt of the complete Informed Consent packet and “Bill of Rights.” I have read the materials and give my consent to participate in the study.

**Disagree:** I do not wish to participate in this electronic survey.

## INTRODUCTION

“We have the power inside to be great,” says women’s advocate Helene Lerner, “but oftentimes it’s covered by false beliefs about ourselves.” Lerner’s book, *In Her Power: Reclaiming Your Authentic Self* (2012) maintains that women need to embrace their inherent power. “The world needs more women leaders,” Lerner says. “That means we [women] need to step out in ways we haven’t been.” To achieve true power, Lerner says women must first recognize and overcome its barriers. She describes nine common self-sabotaging categories that hold women back. A framework was adapted from Lerner’s thesis coupled with the work of Ryder and Briles from *The SeXX Factor: Breaking the Codes that Sabotage Personal and Professional Lives* (2003) to group female self-sabotaging behaviors within nine overarching domains.

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4. Honest Self-Expression: DISHONESTY
5. Acting with Confidence: HOLDING BACK
6. Cultivating Self-Intimacy: LACK OF SELF REFLECTION
7. Building a Power Web: ISOLATING
8. Inspiring Other Women: DISEMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN
9. Embracing One’s Sexuality: INFUSING SEX ROLE CONFUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

It’s best not to ‘overthink’ the statements and respond with your first perceptual thought. It is anticipated you can complete this survey in 10-15 minutes. After you complete and submit the survey, the researcher will contact you to schedule an interview to explore your thoughts on these behaviors and how they may have an impact on women’s ability to move forward in her career.

**Directions:** The following survey represents 9 categories of self-sabotaging behaviors. For each category there is a list of behaviors associated with each category. Using the six-point scale for each behavior, please indicate how you have personally exhibited each behavior throughout your adult life as you progressed along in your career.

- 1= Strongly Agree
- 2= Agree
- 3= Slightly Agree
- 4= Slightly Disagree
- 5= Disagree
- 6= Strongly Disagree

**1. POWER DOMAIN:** Recognizing Women’s Unique Destiny (Capacity to have a significant impact; living up to one’s potential) **SABOTAGING CATEGORY:** **THINKING TOO SMALL**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I blamed others for why things aren’t going well						
I minimized my value (“I’m just a...”)						
I did not have the courage to step out of my comfort zone						
I was not open to new experiences						
I often made perfection the standard in my life						

**2. POWER DOMAIN:** Constructive Preparation (Embraces, understands and accepts fear) **SABOTAGING CATEGORY:** **FEAR AND WORRYING**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I became anxious when thinking about a change in my career						
I felt out of control in an unfamiliar situation						
I resisted change						
I feared looking stupid						
I felt like an imposter on the job						
I mulled over my mistakes						
I feared being rejected						

**3. POWER DOMAIN:** Owning all of One’s Self (Owns and appreciates accomplishments and limitations) **SABOTAGING CATEGORY:** **MISUNDERSTANDING ONE’S SELF**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I could not accept compliments or praise						
I have been reluctant to seek out feedback that would help me improve						
I have focused on a person criticizing me						
I have been resistant to describe or talk about my accomplishments to others for fear of trumpeting ego						

I did not accepted parts of myself that needed development						
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**4. POWER DOMAIN: Honest Self Expression (Accepting strengths and weaknesses)**  
**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: DISHONESTY**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I said “yes” to things when I actually wanted to say ‘no”						
I took sides when I really wanted to stay neutral						
I remained silent in a situation when it would have been best to speak up						
I have been nice as a way to avoid confrontation						

**5. POWER DOMAIN: Acting with Confidence: Approaching obstacles with confidence; having the courage to step forward**  
**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: HOLDING BACK**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I did not reach out for help when I needed it						
I have avoided criticism						
I made inflections rather than make bold statements						
I have apologized unnecessarily						
I have talked down to myself						
I preferred to sit in the back of the room at conferences or meetings						
I preferred not to speak up in a meeting or group discussion						
I have held back when I had the answer, question or thought because I was concerned about what other people think or the impression they will have						

of me						
I felt insecure towards balancing work and family obligations						

**6. POWER DOMAIN: Cultivating Self Intimacy (Getting to know oneself more deeply)**  
**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: NOT TAKING TIME FOR REFLECTION**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have kept busy to avoid being alone						
I have not allowed myself to mourn losses or cry						
I have not taken vacations when I could						
I have not allowed myself to experience “down time”						
I have hated to ‘be wrong’						
I have held a grudge with someone						

**7. POWER DOMAIN: Building a Power Web (Building a network of personal and professional advisors for support)**  
**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: ISOLATING**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have been afraid to reach out to people I didn’t already know						
I was unaware of the types of support needed to move ahead in my career						
I felt guilty for taking up too much of people’s time						
I have relied exclusively on female mentors						
I relied only on networking upstream						

**8. POWER DOMAIN: Inspiring Other Women (Ability to inspire and empower other females)**  
**SABOTAGING CATEGORY: DISEMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have felt too busy to						



help other women						
I thought, why I should help other women since I did it the hard way						
I have felt jealous of other women who have 'made it'						
I have talked behind a woman's back						
I have held women to a higher standard at work than men						

**9. POWER DOMAIN: Embracing One's Sexuality (Awareness of gender roles and sex role stereotypes) SABOTAGING CATEGORY: INFUSING SEX/GENDER ROLE CONFUSION IN WORKPLACE**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have dressed sexy at work						
I have squashed my natural feminine qualities						
I have exhibited male like qualities that aren't part of my natural personality						
I have exhibited 'girl' like behaviors such as twirling my hair or using baby talk						
I have flirted at work						
I have used prosodic speech or speech patterns ("Valley girl," uptalk, vocal fry)						
I have conformed to societal gender expectations (cleaning up, taking notes, arranging food)						

**10. Impact on Self-Sabotaging Behaviors on Women's Career**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe some of the behaviors listed in this						

survey have had an impact on my career development (lack of promotions, moving ahead in career in a timely manner, lack of access to top positions etc.).						
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## APPENDIX J

### Survey Field Participation Feedback Tool

As a doctoral student at UMass Global University, I appreciate your feedback to help develop the most effective survey instrument possible.

Please respond to the following questions after completing the survey. Your answers will assist in refining survey items and making edits to improve the survey prior to administering it to potential study participants.

A hard copy version of the survey has been provided to refresh your memory of the instrument, if needed. Thank you very much for your assistance. Your participation is greatly appreciated!

1. How many minutes did it take you to complete the survey, from the moment you opened it on the computer until the time you completed it?
2. Did the section that asked you to read the consent information and click the agree box before the survey opened concern you at all? If so, would you briefly state your concern
3. The first paragraph of the introduction included the purpose of the research study. Did this provide enough clarity as to the purpose of the study?
4. Was the introduction brief and clear enough to inform you about the research? If not, what would you recommend that would make it better?
5. Were the directions to Part 1 clear, and did you understand what to do? If not, would you briefly state the problem.
6. Were the brief descriptions of the 6 choices clear, and did they provide sufficient differences for you to make a selection? If not, briefly describe the problem.
7. As you progressed through the 10 items in which you gave a rating of 1 through 6, did any items cause you say, “*What does this mean?*” Which item(s) were they? Please use the paper copy and mark those that troubled you. Or if not, please check here:\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX K

### Interview Field Test Tool

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **INTERVIEWER SAYS:**

My name is Tatiana Larreynaga and I am a Portfolio Planner at L.A. Care Health Plan. I am a doctoral candidate at UMass Global University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I would like to thank you for participating in the Women and Self Sabotaging Behavior survey and volunteering to be interviewed to expand the depth of response.

I will be conducting interviews with a number of female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders, such as yourself to hopefully provide a clear picture of self-sabotaging behaviors that can impact women's career development efforts. In addition, I would like to explore any strategies you have used to overcome any identified self-sabotaging behaviors you experienced throughout your career. The questions I will be asking are the same for each female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leader participating in the study. The reason for this is to guarantee, as much as possible, that my interviews with all participating female Millennial Latina nonprofit C-Suite leaders will be conducted in the same manner.

#### **INFORMED CONSENT (required for Dissertation Research)**

Please let me remind you that your participation is completely voluntary and will greatly strengthen the study. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or would like to end the interview or not respond to a question, please let me know. Your information will be kept confidential, and your name will be changed to protect your identity. After I record and transcribe the data, I will send it to you via electronic mail so that you can check to make sure I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas.

Did you receive the Informed Consent and UMass Global Bill of Rights I sent you via email? Do you have any questions or need clarification about either document?

I have provided a copy of the questions and list of self-sabotaging behaviors for the nine categories of sabotaging behavior defined in my research that I will ask for your reference; however, I may have follow-up questions if clarity is needed. The duration of this interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Do you have any questions about the interview process?

#### **PROTOCOL QUESTIONS**

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your career journey that brought you to the role you currently serve in today?

2. As you think back on your career please reflect on your behavior related to the sabotaging behavior category of **THINKING TOO SMALL**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
3. As you think back on your career please reflect on your behavior related to the sabotaging behavior category of **FEAR AND WORRYING**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
4. As you think back on your career please reflect on your behavior related to the sabotaging behavior category of **MISUNDERSTANDING ONE'S SELF**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
5. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **DISHONESTY**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
6. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **HOLDING BACK**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
7. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **NOT TAKING TIME FOR REFLECTION**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
8. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **ISOLATING**

- a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
- 9. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **DISEMPOWERING OTHER WOMEN**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
- 10. As you think back on your career please reflect on women's behaviors related to the sabotaging behavior category of **INFUSING SEX/GENDER CONFUSION IN THE WORKPLACE**
  - a. Can you provide an example or a story of a behavior in this category that you perceive had an impact on your career development efforts?
  - b. Can you describe some strategies used to counteract any of these self-sabotaging behaviors in this category?
- 11. The top five sabotaging behaviors that the survey respondents identified as exhibiting throughout their careers were (1) (2) (3), (4) and (5). Of these five behaviors which two do you feel have the most impact on females attempting to promote within their careers?
- 12. Can you speak to your perception of how critical it is for women to overcome these behaviors as they relate to career development and promotions?
- 13. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding women and self-sabotaging behaviors?

“Thank you very much for your time. If you like, when the results of our research are known, we will send you a copy of our findings.”

## APPENDIX L

### **Field Test Interviewee Feedback Tool**

1. How did you feel about the interview? Do you think you had ample opportunities to describe your experiences with self-sabotaging behaviors, the impact, and strategies used to overcome the barriers?
2. Did you feel the amount of time for the interview was ok?
3. Were the questions by and large clear or were there places where you were uncertain what was being asked?
4. Can you recall any words or terms being asked about during the interview that were confusing?
5. And finally, did I appear comfortable during the interview?

## APPENDIX M

### **Interview Observer Feedback Tool**

1. How long did the interview take? Did the time seem to be appropriate?
2. Were the questions clear or were there places when the interviewee was unclear?
3. Where there any words or terms used during the interview that were unclear or confusing?
4. How did you feel during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous? For the observer: how did you perceive the interviewer in regard to the preceding descriptors?
5. Did you feel prepared to conduct the interview? Is there something you could have done to be better prepared? For the observer: how did you perceive the interviewer in regard to the preceding descriptors?
6. What parts of the interview went the most smoothly and why do you think that was the case?
7. Are there parts of the interview that seemed to be awkward and why do you think that was the case?
8. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would it be and how would you change it?
9. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?