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Exploring the Barriers and Facilitators of Puerto Rican Women Senior Leadership in New York City Nonprofit Social Service Organizations

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EXPLORING THE BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS OF PUERTO RICAN WOMEN

SENIOR LEADERSHIP IN

NEW YORK CITY NONPROFIT SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

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Puerto Rican women in senior leadership positions within nonprofit organizations contribute to the direction and governance of many New York City agencies. The findings in this research bring attention to their experiences and grit in the sector. According to Smith and Nkomo (2022) grit gives women of color in leadership the ability to bounce back after being discouraged and sidelined in their careers or to survive in hypermasculine cultures. Grit is defined as women who lead with passion, perseverance and know who they are (Smith & Nkomo, 2022). This study explores barriers and facilitators encountered by Puerto Rican women who were or are in the New York nonprofit field in executive-level positions.

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I dedicate the completion of this dissertation to my mom Mariana, and dad Moises. Thank you, Mom, and Dad, for instilling in me a love for advocacy and learning. I miss you both every day.

To my community mom, Dinorah Pagan, you were and continue to be my motivation for completing this dissertation. Thank you for reminding me that Boricua pride is in my heart and soul. Gracias.

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CHAPTER 1
Introduction and Problem Statement

The barriers and facilitators Puerto Rican women Chief Executive Officers/Presidents and Executive Directors experience within New York City nonprofit organizations are examined in this narrative research. Puerto Rican women make up a suitable study population for several reasons. The Census reports (Bureau, 2022), that, in 2020, of over 1 million Puerto Ricans in New York City, women made up 50.6% of the population, 23.3% have a degree or higher and 79% have a high school diploma. The study will produce new knowledge about the profession of Puerto Rican women within nonprofit organizational structures. New York City's nonprofit sector is suitable to study due to its size and economic impact. According to a report by the New York City Comptroller (2020), New York City's nonprofit sector is a critical driver of the City's economy and contributes 77.7 billion dollars annually to the state's wealth making it a particularly relevant sector to study. New York nonprofit sector's employees are 64% women, 34% foreign-born, and 56% people of color (Stringer, 2020). It is also important to portray the realities of social service nonprofit organizations to get a clear picture of its agency revenue. According to Burghardt (2021, p. 37), there are more than 210,000 nonprofit organizations across the United States, ten thousand nonprofits have revenue of excess of 10 million dollars while 56% of the 210,000 have less than $250,000 in revenue. This is important in understanding the barriers and facilitators because it highlights the statement of the problem related to the underrepresentation of Puerto Rican women in senior leadership in New York City nonprofit organizations. Puerto Rican women in senior leadership positions within nonprofit organizations contribute to the direction and governance of many New York City agencies. The findings in this research bring attention to their experiences and grit in the sector. According to Smith and Nkomo (2022) grit gives women of color in leadership the ability to bounce back after being discouraged and

sidelined in their careers or to survive in hypermasculine cultures. Grit is defined as women who lead with passion, perseverance and know who they are (Smith & Nkomo, 2022). This study explores barriers and facilitators encountered by Puerto Rican women who were or are in the New York nonprofit field in executive-level positions. Sweat (2020) defines "barriers" as "obstacles to participating and advancing in organizations due to institutional and systemic challenges identified as the intersectional undercurrents of race, ethnicity, class, and gender" (p. 2). "Facilitators" are defined as "opportunities to thrive, build successful networks and sustained career progress in executive leadership roles" (Sweat, 2020, p. 2). The study utilizes an intersectional lens to examine leadership alongside race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Concerning representation of women of color in senior positions, 'intersectionality' means a lens through which to interrogate mainstream topics such as leadership to reveal taken-for-granted assumptions that sustain inequalities in the workplace" (Rodriguez et al. al., 2016, Richard & Loubier, 2008). Considering all those factors is necessary because they create barriers and or facilitators for women of color in senior leadership positions. "The concept of intersectionality stems from a need for a more diverse understanding of feminist issues in direct relation to the broader feminist movement, and it has since grown to an expanded definition that accounts for gender and race as well as other factors" (Macias & Stephans, 2017, p. 166).

Exploring intersectionality within the Puerto Rican community provide a historical base for the more diverse Latino neighborhoods today since the "great migration" of the mid-twentieth century (Falcon, Bavier, & Haslip-Vierra, 2017). Additionally, according to the Center for Puerto Rican Studies (Roman, 2018), New York and Florida are the only states with more than one million Puerto Ricans (Roman, 2018). Development of the Latina/o community of New

York City has often served as an indication of things to come for the Latina/o population (Falcon, Bavier, & Haslip-Vierra, 2017, p. 14). New York presents a push-and-pull situation for Latinos, specifically for Puerto Ricans as a large Latino group (Belen, 2016). The push and pull are the chronological structures beginning after the group arrived and describing the economic, political, and social forces that push and pull to different places across the United States (Sluyter, Watkins, Chaney, & Gibson, 2018). Due to the Puerto Ricans' experience and their role in New York's development and its constant settlement cycle and transitions, it is essential to understand the historical context upon their arrival (Rodriguez C. E., 2017, p. 79).

Even though Puerto Ricans began arriving in New York before Puerto Rico became a US territory, they arrived after 1898, the US occupation of Puerto Rico (Rodriguez C. E., 2017). As Puerto Ricans settled in New York City during the post-war era, pathways for integration and inclusion began developing. A young generation of Puerto Rican social workers formed a group of upwardly mobile Puerto Rican professionals to gain access to expanding political networks through antipoverty programs and civil rights initiatives (Lee, 2014). Those achievements included developing organizations that support Puerto Ricans' education in New York City. The mid-1960s launched the War on Poverty and provided the resources for a new wave of antipoverty programs (Acosta-Belen & Santiago, 2018). The War on Poverty federal mandate was simple and straightforward: first, to reduce poverty, and second, to increase marginalized people's participation in the United States democracy (Lee, 2014). As with many of the antipoverty programs of this period, the United States Congress reduced and eventually eliminated federal funding for these programs (Acosta-Belen & Santiago, 2018). However, Puerto Rican organizations continued to grow since the mid-1960s (Duany, 2017). The organizations provided specific

support services and engaged in advocacy and public education (Hall, 2016). Achievements included bilingual education, bilingual voting assistance, removing accents as a barrier to employment in the school system and elsewhere, establishing institutions that facilitated high-school-to-college pathways, and founding Puerto Rican studies programs (Rodriquez C.E., 2017). This historical information is essential for the context of the study because failure to place historical context limits the understanding of the barriers and facilitators Puerto Rican women face as senior-level leaders and their navigation of them. The navigation for senior leaders in the sector begins with understanding the complexity of nonprofit organizational structures.

Understanding the barriers and facilitators which is at the center of this study is also tightly connected to the comprehension of the current structures of management in the non-profit sector because the sector continues to evolve, with organizations creating different management and leadership structures to direct their agencies. An example of this change is the c-suite organizational structure. C-Suite is a much more recent organizational structure introduced to address the need of those top teams to reach close decisions and to represent the organization to its various constituents (Svejenova & Alvarez, 2017). Executive-level positions, referred to as "C-suite," are the highest-level positions in nonprofit organizations. The term "C-suite" refers to the senior positions that typically begin with the word "Chief," such as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and others (Brown, 2019). Other high-level positions in the nonprofit sector include executive director, general manager, and operations manager (Alcaraz-Minnick, 2020). Tasked with making decisions on the organization's strategic development, direction, and actions, people in those positions consider the preferences and needs of stakeholders (Mangual, 2019). A pathway to these leadership positions for all employees may appear linear, from junior to senior levels. However, research suggests that, for women of color,

that is not the case. According to Xie and Pang (2018), women of color's career path can look more like a maze than a straight line, making it more difficult to advance to top executive positions within organizations.

According to a report by the Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York, 70.6% of CEO's/ED's positions in New York City nonprofit organizations were occupied by Whites, 15.8% by African Americans, 5.6% by Asians, and 5.1% by Latina/o (2018, p. 11). Available research also demonstrates that the representation of women of color in senior positions sharply decreases as the organizational level increases due to the so-called "glass ceiling" effect (Gipson, Pfaff, Catenacci, & Burke, 2017). This is important for the statement of the problem of barriers and facilitators because it conveys the underrepresentation of Puerto Rican women in the sector.

Scholarship exploring the topic of Puerto Rican women and leadership in the field of nonprofit organizations call for revealing the accomplished assets in the discussion. Much of the literature review search about Puerto Rican women generate studies through a deficit at-risk lens and assume a homogenous Latino population. This does not tell or consider the assets the Puerto Rican women yield as a group. This study contributes to the elevation and amplification of Puerto Rican voices and influences who are considering or prepared to lead but may not be aware of the barriers or facilitators that face them as senior-level leaders.

The research begins with a literature review of background information on nonprofits' organizational policies and the regulatory bodies that govern them. Next the literature review describes the role leaders engage in by providing a leadership framework. The leadership framework offers leadership definition, a look at women of color in leadership, Latina/o White privilege, and colorism, as well as women of color in nonprofit leadership and its complexity. Lastly, the literature review lifts up Puerto Rican women in New York and their creation of historically

founded and led Puerto Rican nonprofit organizations. It follows an analysis of the literature identifying a knowledge gap in the published sources. The research utilizes a feminist theoretical framework. Following the theoretical framework is a detailed look into the research methods, in-depth findings, and discussion. Lastly, revealed are the studies implications and limitations. The study considers the following research questions:

1. What factors facilitate or are barriers to the advancement of Puerto Rican women to executive-level leadership positions in New York City nonprofits?

2. What barriers and facilitators exist to Puerto Rican women holding executive-level leadership positions in New York City nonprofits?

3. How do such women of color navigate through the barriers and facilitators as senior level leaders in the New York nonprofit sector?

CHAPTER 2
Literature Review

The following literature review situates the problem of barriers and facilitators in the underrepresentation of Puerto Rican women leaders in the non-profit sector. While some topics considered in the review may seem only marginally related to the problem posed in the study, they are nevertheless important because they highlight important concepts, phenomena, and questions, the understanding of which is needed for the ability to answer the main questions of the study.

Background on Nonprofit Organizational Policies

Before discussing the specific question of barriers and facilitators, it is necessary to consider the broader background of nonprofits and policies impacting the sector because it plays a vital role in providing support to communities and nonprofit leadership is the voice of the communities they serve. This section offers a brief review of background information relevant to the policies and operations of nonprofit organizations. The literature also speaks to the limited opportunities women of color experience as leaders. Moreover, the literature explores women of color and their experiences heading the nonprofit sector, particularly the barriers and facilitators of the underrepresentation of Puerto Rican women in senior leadership in New York City nonprofit organizations, the problem this study works to address. The goal is to highlight the current knowledge of the problem at the center of this study, which exists in published literature and identifies knowledge gaps that the study will attempt to fill. The literature review consists of two parts. First briefly reviewed are the nonprofit regulatory frameworks, primary federal, state, and local regulatory hiring practice and policies that govern and set the work of nonprofit organizations, and which can potentially adversely influence the roles of women of color leaders. Additionally in this section are nonprofit principals guiding the sector and identifying potential

gaps. The second area of focus is on leadership and women of color. The sources offer several working definitions, visual illustrations, and examples of women of color in leadership. These sources assist in identifying the facilitators and barriers to the advancement of Puerto Rican women in the nonprofit sector.

Main Regulatory Frameworks Governing Nonprofits

While charitable organizations in the United States were founded in colonial times the concept of "nonprofit organizations" as a unified and coherent "sector" dates back only to the 1970s (Hall, 2016). Establishing a New York City charitable organization begins with a group of founding volunteer board members and an executive director. Eventually, the organization can grow into a long-standing nonprofit business with a board of directors, many staff members, a chief executive officer and a president, along with endowments, diversified funding, and budgets. To be designated a nonprofit, all organizations must develop policies and practices which enable them to operate as a 501(C)(3) entity. Of the twenty-nine 501(C) tax designations (Service, 2021) 501(C)(3) is the most used (Research, 2021). However, the tax designation does not tell the entire story as not all nonprofit organizations are fiscally equal.

> Most nonprofits are small: two-thirds have operating budgets of less than $1MM, but these account for only 2% of the sector's total spending. By contrast, only 2% of nonprofits have budgets of over $50 MM, but these represent 80% of total spending Hospitals, Health and Human Services ("HHS"), and Educational Institution nonprofits account for nearly half of the organizations in the sector and 80% of its expenditures (Morris, Wyman, MacIntosh, Bordone, & Roberts , 2018).

Nonprofit governance is not a one size fits-all model. Nonprofit social service organizations governance model depends on diverse areas of focus. A few areas where they may

differ are the organizations size, constituents, funding, technologies, decision-making process, and board structure. What is clear that among the most important impacts of these nonprofit organizations is the need for trained nonprofit leaders – people who can master and increasingly complex policy and funding environment (Hall, 2016).

Board Members and Board Support

A basic understanding of the roles and functions of boards of directors is needed because they play key roles in the governance of nonprofit organizations and are vital to supporting and guiding senior level leadership. The board's internal practices include strategic planning, legal, ethical, and financial oversite, fundraising, evaluating, guiding, and supporting the CEO/Executive Director. Understanding the board's roles and responsibilities include the boards level of commitment and involvement within the organization (Busmane, et.al 2019.) What is not always addressed when discussing nonprofit board's is the support they give or the lack thereof and its impact on women of color in leadership. According to Miller-Milleson (2003), board members, through personal and professional contacts, are to be a benefit to the organization because they can access information and reduce uncertainty. Boards of directors who do not access information, resources or reduce uncertainty lead to barriers for the senior leadership they directly supervise.

Equal Opportunities in Nonprofit – Hiring Practice

As a business, a nonprofit organization must observe the United State Equal Employment Opportunity Commission/EEOC guidelines, which ensure that organizations administer fair, inclusive, and equitable employment practices. All organizations must maintain human resource policies and practices, which protect both the staff and the organization. Existence of policies, however, do not guarantee absolute protection against biases, microaggressions and racist

practices against some employees. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is an actionable

claim. The Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC) (2021), Title VII of the Civil

Rights Act of 1964 is an act that enforces the constitutional rights to confer jurisdiction upon the

district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public

accommodations and prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs. For instance, it does

not provide definitions of race or color discrimination or how they differ in a magnified

interracial employment discrimination claim filed by Latinos (Hernandez T. K., 2009). In

relation to the qualified Puerto Rican women seeking senior level leadership in New York City

nonprofits, yet low numbers of senior female Puerto Rican leaders, it is a challenge for women of

color to say they were qualified but not hired due to their race, gender, vocal accent, or ethnicity.

This section will discuss how the gaps in policies and laws are problematic and serve as barriers

for promotions, hinder the cultivation and interest in seeking senior level management. It will

conclude with ways to identify the gaps or opportunities for Puerto Rican women seeking and

sustaining senior level positions.

Federal Policies and Laws

In addressing the barriers and facilitators of Puerto Rican women in senior-level

positions, it is important to note the complexity of identifying discrimination based on race,

gender, ethnic and vocal accent and the relationships between these phenomena and existing

federal legal frameworks. National-origin discrimination comprises treating applicants or

employees unfavorably because they are from a particular country or part of the world, ethnicity,

or vocal accent, or having the mere appearance of an ethnic background (2021). There are laws

that make it illegal for employers to create policies and practices that have negative impacts on

people of "a certain origin". According to EEOC (2021), an employer may not base an

employment decision on an employee's foreign accent, unless it seriously interferes with the employee's job performance. Race discrimination comprises of treating applicants or employees unfavorably because he/she is from a certain race or because of personal characteristics associated with race (such as hair texture, skin color, or certain facial features); race discrimination also includes treating someone unfavorable because of their skin color complexion (EEOC 2021). The EEOC discrimination and racism definitions are broad and can leave racism and discrimination difficult to acknowledge or challenge unless it is overt and obvious.

New York City Department of Labor

 Similarly, The Department of Labor Section 5252 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules of the State of New York prohibits discrimination against employees and prospective employees upon wage assignment, income execution for a prospective employee based upon wage assignment or income (Labor, 2017). Section 5252 defines discrimination by the statement that no employer shall refuse to discharge, lay off, refuse to promote, or discipline an employee or refuse to hire a prospective employee because of pendency of any action or judgement obligation. It does not offer an employee or employer any clear guidelines on practice.

National Council of Nonprofits

 The National Council of Nonprofits positions itself as an organization that assists and create organizational tools proven to advocate for "America's charitable organizations" (2021). The current policies focus on improving nonprofits business structure and less on equity, diversity, and inclusion. The entirety of the official statement on the website is a stand for equity and justice while denouncing racism, intolerance, and exclusion. However, it does not offer clear ways to ensure achievement equity, diversity, and inclusion.

New York City Council of Nonprofits – Guiding Principals

The New York City Council of Nonprofits, together with the National Council of Nonprofits, joined YWCA USA to create guiding principles to advance racial equity that focuses on the organizations' programming. The statement signed by thirty-seven nonprofit organizations offers its funded service the assurances of good programming. Part of the statement reads: "We are committed to achieving a more comprehensive approach to justice and safety that invests needed resources in schools, childcare, mental health, affordable housing, job training and other supportive programs and services that contribute to healthy, strong, safe and vibrant communities" (Nonprofits N. Y., 2021). This statement addresses programing and community constituents. It is not enough to have guiding principles advancing racial equity focusing solely on the organizations' programming. The staff and leadership who provide and implement programming must also benefit in the investment. When staff work under the conditions where too much stress is the norm and danger to one's well-being are accepted practices, "social justice" becomes a forgotten value necessarily better left unexamined (Burghardt, 2021, p. 54).

Leadership – A Review of Concepts and Definitions

The concept of leadership is essential to define to uplift the existing leadership skills the Puerto Rican women bring to their role as senior leaders while working within a limited definition and framework that continue to stagnate the sector. The definition of leadership on the ground remains limited, and relationships between people remain subject primarily to intuition and spontaneity (Bouvard & Suzanne, 2016). Researchers usually define leadership according to their perspective and the phenomenon of most interest to them (Rosari, 2019). According to Bouvard and Suzanne (2016, p. 102) leadership is the capacity of an individual to consciously

influence other individuals. Reni Rosari (2019), argues leaders are agents of change, persons whose acts affect other people more than other people's acts affect them. The emerging perception by leaders of successful leadership share having relationships with staff on the ground, teams, and others within the organization; and expressed leadership through a series of tasks and actions (Richardson, 2021).

> For leadership relationships to exist there must be four essential elements present in the relationship: 1. Relationships based on influence; 2. Leaders and followers are the people in this relationship; 3. Leaders and followers intend real changes; 4. Leaders and followers develop mutual purposes (Bass, 1990; Rosari, 2019, p. 18).

> The many definitions of leadership have a common attempt at capturing relationships between people, influence and an encapsulation of strengths and challenges. According to Wolak (2016), leadership is not easily pigeonholed into one neat category, which might explain why they appear to be almost as many theories of effective leadership as the number of languages spoken.

Visual Illustrations of Leadership - Metaphors

When discussing women in leadership the metaphor known is the concept of the glass ceiling, The glass ceiling metaphorically acknowledges invisible barriers to mostly white women's career advancement (Hernandez B. , 2020). In this section we will look beyond the concept of the glass ceiling and share how women of color illustrate the barriers they confront on their path to leadership which are important for this study. In an inquiry by Haslam and Ryan (2008), "research provides evidence that women of color often encounter a range of problems and barriers on the other side of the glass ceiling. Studies demonstrate various complexities when women of color engage in pathways to leadership such as that of the "glass ceiling", "concrete

ceiling", "adobe ceiling", "labyrinth", and "glass staircase or escalator" "glass cliff" to name a few" (p. 532). These metaphors serve as visual illustrations of some of the barriers many women of color confront when attempting to advance or sustain their leadership positions. Scholarly definitions focus more on the value of metaphor to elucidate concept that may be vague and complex (Carli, 2016). The glass cliff refers to the appointment of women of color to leadership positions when organizational conditions are risky or precarious (Carli, 2016, Haslam & Ryan, 2008). The concrete ceiling as a metaphor represents the degree of difficulty African American women of color face in striving to conquer challenges of becoming leaders (Barnes, 2017). The sticky floor metaphor implies that women of color are prevented from any advancement beyond entry level of leadership (Carli, 2016). The adobe ceiling illustrates the dense and muddy barriers that Latinas must navigate to attain leadership roles (Alicea, 2003; Hernandez, 2020). The muddiness of the adobe ceiling makes it difficult to see through, know exactly what lays ahead, and know how much further is needed to go toward leadership success (Hernandez B. , 2020). The labyrinth metaphor suggests that advancement is difficult but not impossible (Carli, 2016). The labyrinth is both optimistic in its acknowledgement that women of color do succeed as leaders and realistic in its reflection of the uncertainty of success (Carli, 2016). A study by Jones and Jones (2017) reports there is an underrepresentation of women of color in leadership roles within for-profit and nonprofit organizations. By looking at the correlation between policies, practices, leadership, and leadership metaphors, we can begin to look at women of color in nonprofit leadership and its complexities, further identifying the barriers and facilitators they encounter.

Women of Color in Nonprofit Leadership: Executive Director and CEO

The United States Internal Revenue Service registers 1.5 million nonprofit organizations (Research, 2021). The revenue and expenses these organizations reported from 1998 to 2016 was 2.48 trillion U.S. dollars (Research, 2021). Nonprofit New York (2020), reports the total number of nonprofit organizations in New York City is 46,595. The number of New York City nonprofit organization by borough are as follows: Bronx 3,334, Manhattan 21,236, Brooklyn 13,214, Queens 7,242, and Staten Island 1,569 (York N. N., 2020). These numbers speak to the enormity of effort organized for and with people across the nation and specifically New York City. Those who lead and manage nonprofit organizations and the sector's capacity to deliver on its promises to serve communities centers directly on the effectiveness of its leaders (Renz D. O., 2016). Renz (2016) argues, "the typical nonprofit's complicated mix of clients and markets, which correlates directly to complicated business models supported in diverse and inconsistent funding and financing models, makes the work of nonprofit leadership and management distinctive" (p. 743). Adding to the complexity of management within nonprofit organization is the different models of governance.

The governance framework beginning with how leadership identifies, Executive Directors and or Chief Executive Officers/C-Suite models. The distinction among these two roles for this study is important to make. Not all senior leaders identify in the same way although they are all nonprofit organizations providing social service support in New York City. The difference between the two is a question of governance of the organization and the type of support the senior leadership receives. CEO governance avoid potential conflicts of interest between the board and CEO by providing clarification of their roles and responsibility (Carver 1990, Kreutzer 2009). Manager and or Executive Director governance cannot be divided neatly into policy

making versus executive policy (Drucker 1990, Kreutzer 2009.) In either model, establishing clear roles, responsibilities and policies is important as it guides and supports senior leaders and the organization.

Nonprofit organizations receive less attention than the private sector and government. The lack of attention to nonprofits as a sector may also affect the leadership structure within these organizations. Nonprofit leaders provide a "social return" on investment as opposed to a "financial return" that the for-profit counterparts might seek from an investment in a private business (Company, 2020). Many nonprofit organizations and their leadership must fundamentally rethink and clarify that which is core to their mission and then seek innovative ways to address its operation (Renz D. O., 2016). What makes nonprofit leadership distinct is the focus on the organizations mission and vision. It is when nonprofit leaders forget to or fail to keep the mission, vision, and values of the organization as the foundation for all the decisions and choices they make that nonprofit organizations have the greatest potential of losing their way (Renz D. O., 2016). Renz (2016) goes on to share, "many failures of nonprofit leadership and management exemplify the cultural contradictions of the sector, when nonprofit leaders think they can operate as a conventional business only to discover that they had violated important rules (some written and some not) about what is acceptable for a nonprofit" (p. 744). According to Ming Xie (2018, p. 32), leadership within nonprofit organizations is understood to be complex in terms of behaviors, linkages, group needs, and mission statement objectives. A new generation of nonprofit leaders is preparing to lead these important organizations although passion and dedication are essential to the future of the nonprofit sector; passion and dedication are not enough (Renz D. O., 2016).

Women of Color in Leadership

   This section of the literature review centers around the following concepts and themes

connected to women of color in leadership and their path to success. To understand the specific

plight of Puerto Rican women senior leadership, it is important to understand the broader internal

and structural barriers facing all senior leaders first, particularly women of color. Internal

structures are those within the position of control of the organization, such as corporate cultures,

which alienate and isolate women of color (Richardson, 2021). One of the internal structural

barriers to the underrepresentation of women of color's leadership roles is the lack of support

women of color-leaders receive from nonprofit organizations' board of directors. For instance,

Thompson (2020) discusses the frustration of dealing with board members' aggression based on

gender and race (p.91). She states that Black women leaders recognized that the typical

leadership definitions did not provide a realistic understanding of what it takes Black women to

succeed in a professional environment (Thompson C. D., 2020). Latina leaders on the other hand

as Dean (2016) argues face the 'tripartite oppression' by sexism, racism, and norms within the

Latino community that relegate them to specific roles as mothers and caregivers. Dean's work

(2016) adds women of color in leadership experience cultural differences within the workplace,

in working in male-dominated work environments, and being women of color in those

workplaces. Tripartite oppression facing Latinas persists in their varying degrees of power.

According to Metcalfe, (2020) Latina leadership have fewer chances to develop and display

attitudes and skills, which might lead to their promotion. Latina leaders often come under more

scrutiny for their decisions making then their male counterparts (Dean, 2016). Thompson (2017)

suggest that many women of color who strive to move into leadership positions work hard to

break down barriers, give voice to the marginalized, and are often the only representative of

women of color in leadership within their organization. Latinas expressed frustration about only

being hired to illustrate that the organization was diverse, only to find that colleagues did not actually value their opinion and contributions (Biu, 2019). Other Latina leaders felt the presences of subtle racism while being assigned to leadership roles with the greatest number of Latino/a in specific departments, feeling that administration assumed they could only be effective in that specific branch (Hernandez B. , 2020). Ofronama Biu (2019) states that the common barriers for Latina women in nonprofit organizations included inequitable salaries, being overlooked for job opportunities, promotions or other recognition, stereotypes regarding ethnic and gender identity, language, and or accent; and being tokenized and burdened with representing their communities. Watkins et.al. (2019) described tokenism as numerically underrepresented social group members in their work group, organization, or occupation. Yet despite the barriers women of color are confronting they continue to identify facilitators toward advancement. Lopez De Victoria Rivera (2019) study observed how Puerto Rican women were able to build a ladder from their experiences and were active in finding support systems and resources to help themselves advance into the top leadership positions.

Latina/o White Privilege, Afro-Boricua, Colorism and Leadership

Latina/o white privilege is a subject rarely addressed when discussing the complexity of leadership influencing the Latina/o community. Drawing on the mestizaje notion that Latina/o's are so racially mixed that they are all racialized in the exact same way, white presenting Latina/o's can feel justified in denying the existence of white privilege in Latina/o communities while at the same time accessing white Anglo privileged space and opportunities with greater ease (Hernandez T. K., 2019). This can act as both a barrier and facilitator for Puerto Rican women in senior level leadership. This is especially important to note because research shows that Latina/o's who identify as white, and are identified as white, impacts employment and

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educational opportunities. Because Latina/o's are a diverse ethnic group, exploring the impact of Whiteness on inequality is of great importance in addressing issues related to prejudice, discrimination, and racism in American society (Hernandez T. K., 2019). Colorism is another layer of barriers and facilitators Puerto Rican women meet when seeking advancement in leadership positions.

Established in the colonial practices of the Spanish, colorism included the denigration of the culture, language, political system, religion, and aesthetics of the indigenous people and Africans in the region (Hunter 2016, p.55 as cited by Telles, 2014). According to Haywood (2017, p. 761), Latina/o's experience discrimination, the degree of discrimination, often occurs, and the outcomes vary based on skin color stratification or colorism, practices assign advantages to those that most closely resemble a White phenotype. Accordingly, hair type, body shape, and facial features, such as the shape of the nose and fullness of the lips, influence views of where one sits on the color spectrum (Haywood, 2017, p. 761 cited by Hunter, 2005). In this study, it is essential to address how Puerto Rican women who are executive directors and senior-level leaders are advanced or hindered due to Latina/o white privilege or colorism. This speaks to the limited opportunities offered and open to Afro-Boricuas or those who identify as Puerto Rican. Conversely, it is also essential to look at the challenges and discrimination women of color face in their roles.

The U.S. has its own specific history of slavery, colonization, and migration that create different racial make-ups, tensions and systems of oppression (Loubriel, 2018). Women of color report being passed over for new jobs or promotions in favor of others—list include men of color, white women, and white men—with comparable or lower credentials (Biu, 2019). This dichotomy is especially troublesome as we look at Latina/o White privilege: whiteness is uplifted, both across Latin America and in the United States, and those who are positively racialized have

many more advantages and benefits than everyone else (Loubriel, 2018). However, gaining the opportunities due to Latina/o White Privilege does not tell of this groups entire experience in white spaces. Puerto Rican women face marginalization because of their race and ethnicity. This hinders Puerto Rican women who identify as Afro-Boricua, Black Latina, or biracial. Women of color described being overlooked for new job opportunities or promotions, often in favor of white and/or male candidates with fewer qualifications (Thomas-Breitfield & Kunreuther, 2017). The literature indicates that the racial and ethnic identity of the Puerto Rican women as both a barrier and facilitator.

Post-Colonial Feminism – Lifting Latina and Black Feminist Voice

This section examines feminist leadership and feminist concepts as feminism plays a significant role in the nonprofit sector. Contextualizing the Latina and Black feminist voice brings to light how they organize and advocate. These concepts and strategies are important to women of color in nonprofit leadership. Feminism spans from suffrage (first-wave feminism) to issues of workplace equality and reproductive rights (second-wave feminism) to cultural constructions of gender and patriarchal oppression, with recognition the previous iterations of feminism often did not account for the perspective of racialized or queer women of color (third-wave feminism) (Sharma, 2019). Postcolonial feminism is a critique of the homogenizing tendencies of Western feminism (Mishra, 2013). Prominent voices of postcolonial feminism like those of Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldua and bell hooks describe the barrier women of color confront.

> As women of color, we have been taught either to ignore our differences, or to view them as causes for separation and suspicion rather than as forces for change. Without community there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice

20

between an individual and her oppression. But community must not mean a shedding of

our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist (Lorde, 2007,

p. 112).

Audre Lorde's postcolonial voice is present in the work of the New York City Chapter of

the Young Lords Party (YLO) discussed in this study. The collective visionary work of African

American and Afro-Caribbean lesbian feminist articulated a politics of unity that has echoed in

the work and organizing women of color feminist over the last three and a half decades

(Figueroa, 2020). YLO was not a nonprofit or a one-issue organization and did not receive

government or foundation grants (2016). It was not comprised of social workers nor were

salaried. YLO identified as grassroots organizers with a commitment for a revolution towards

reform (2016). The women of YLO had a political platform and organized grassroots activities

that articulated their feminist ideals while building and demonstrating their leadership. As shared

in Herstory of the Young Lords (Morales, 2016) as a member speaks of her YLO leadership

lessons:

> "Today, I'm a union organizer with 1199 SEIU, United Health Care Workers. We
>
> represent one hundred thousand workers in this country. The Young Lords Party inspired
>
> me in fighting for social justice in the healthcare system. I see myself as a woman in the
>
> struggle, and I always backtrack to what I learned in the Young Lords" (2016, p. 163).

Gloria Anzaldua (2012), speaks of border crossing or la mestiza that stand between leadership

and workspaces in the following way:

> Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where
>
> people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle, and
>
> upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy.

Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from

them. A borderland is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge (Anzaldua, 2012).

These examples of women of color feminist leadership begin to explain the facilitators

that open their path toward senior leadership and their fight against various barriers Puerto Rican

women leaders face in New York City. This is especially true for women in leadership within

YLO. The YLO women named a "revolution within a revolution" involved community

organizing, collective consciousness raising, empowering, and defining the status and needs of

women of color (Acosta-Belen, 2016). The critical perspective of postcolonial feminism

addresses inequalities related to hegemonic power-relations by examining the relationship

between the colonizer and the colonized, as well as commenting on postcolonial gender roles

(Al-Wazedi, 2020). This advocacy of women of color supports postcolonial feminist notions.

They introduced a reproductive health agenda, fostering an inclusive environment for LGBT

members in a time when sexuality issues were rarely addressed, creating a Woman of Color's

Union, and demanding a leadership role within the Young Lords Central Committee (Acosta-

Belen, 2016). Much of the work led by the women of YLO made a significant impact on the

leadership of the social service nonprofit sector.

Historical Context - Puerto Rican Women Organizers and Activist in New York

Understanding the history of Puerto Rican women organizers and founders of nonprofit

organizations in New York City is important because other leaders would adopt the work of

these trailblazers. This historical context establishes and presents a facilitator for Puerto Rican

women in senior leadership positions. Leaders like Yolanda Sanchez who mentored rising

community activist and organizers. Yolanda Sanchez was one of the most prominent activist and

community organizer and founder of Puerto Rican Association of Community Affairs (PRACA)

an agency that provided adoption and foster care services to children and families of the Latino/a community founded in 1957. Several groups of Puerto Rican women in diasporic history inspired social service work within nonprofit organizations in New York City. Petra Santiago an activist and well-known community organizer in the Lower East Side of Manhattan (Loisaida) had for more than forty years mobilized people for community participation, founded key grassroots organizations such as the United Organization of Suffolk Street, and was also deeply committed to working with youth, particularly in promoting recreational programs such as Little League Baseball teams (Ruiz & Sanchez Korrol, 2006). Alice Cardona a political activist and community organizer developed knowledge and expertise about the public schools, encouraged parental involvement, and worked with youth employment programs (Ruiz & Sanchez Korrol, 2006). As shared by Women of color's Activism NYC (2016), Dr. Evelina Lopez Antonetty mentored by community activist and a leader in her own right, she went on to create a nonprofit organization that still exists. Dr. Lopez Antonetty joined forces with other parents to create United Bronx Parents (UBP), an organization dedicated to community development in the South Bronx with special emphasis on educational reform (Services, 2016).

Another formidable leader in the development of NYC nonprofits was Antonia Pantoja. A black, queer, Puerto Rican educator, social worker and foundational figure who established several groundbreaking institutions in New York City (Lopez, 2020). Antonia Pantoja empowered activist and organizers by providing personal growth and educational opportunities and preparing leaders who will make individual and collective contributions toward the Latino communities and culture and social involvement (Garcia, 2021). Among her groundbreaking institutions is Aspira, created in 1961, which promoted education and advancement to Puerto Rican youth in New York City by providing clubs within schools, career and college counseling,

advocacy for bilingual education and other services (Lopez, 2020). Pantoja's family like Evelina Lopez Antonetty's family arrived in New York City from Puerto Rico in search of economic relief from poverty (Acosta-Belen, 2016). The Puerto Rico/U.S. economic project called Operation Bootstrap was predicated on the massive migration of Puerto Ricans out of Puerto Rico as the new industrial economy was not able to provide families like the Pantoja family economic relief (Lopez, 2020). It is impossible to imagine the founding development of Puerto Rican activist or of the school reform of Dr. Lopez Antonetty without the precedents Dr. Pantoja set (Lopez, 2020). It is this Puerto Rican cultural awareness; consciousness-raising that can further uncover the barriers and facilitators in the study. Puerto Rican consciousness took root, which proudly expressed the Puerto Rican migrant experience leading to organizing work (Lopez, 2020). Regaining a historical knowledge once rendered invisible led to several different movements in Puerto Rico and the continental United States.

Significance of Puerto Rican Women in Leadership

The narrative assumption that not enough qualified people of color candidates exist is a myth that Puerto Rican women and women of color participation can dispel (Thomas-Breitfield & Kunreuther, 2017). Included in the structural change, organizational leadership must be bold. Female leaders demonstrate their desire and effort to transcend barriers to leadership (Xie & Pang, 2018). Biu Ofronam's (2019), research found women of color indicated high leadership aspirations but were also most likely to report that both race and gender were barriers to their career advancement. Conversely, education and training do not provide equity (Biu, 2019). Women of color with the advanced education were more likely than men of color, white men, or white women to work in administrative roles and the least likely to hold senior leadership positions (Biu, 2019). To identify women of color in leadership it is important to look at

leadership structures that guide nonprofit decision makers. Leadership starts with making race and ethnic equity a top priority to create cultural change. The Puerto Rican women of the 1970s and 80s coalesced as a force in New York nonprofit organizations. The women of color were educated, were advocates, and were committed to community. They also took on key positions within institutions that continue to affect the Puerto Rican community today.

Multiple generations of Puerto Ricans have resided in the United States over the past century and "these cohorts continue to reinforce each other through successive waves of migration from Puerto Rico" (Acosta-Belen & Santiago, 2018, p. 143). The Puerto Rican community sought upward mobility through economic means, slowly resulting in a Puerto Rican middle class (Acosta-Belen & Santiago, 2018, p. 143). Education was also a key element in Puerto Rican upward mobility. By the year 2000, 63 percent had a high school diploma or higher, over 12 percent had completed a college degree, and almost a quarter had some college education" (Acosta-Belen & Santiago, 2018, p. 148). The improvement in educational achievement is consistent with the general improvement in educational attainment across the country since 1970s (2018). Because of their educational accomplishment, Puerto Ricans saw an increased presence in managerial, professional, technical, sales and administration support positions. This demonstrates Puerto Ricans are a group seeking opportunities to advance their education and most importantly advance their careers.

Qualified and Interested

Studies affirm that women of color who want to lead have the qualifications and the interest necessary in leading nonprofit organizations. Whatever their interest in leading or if their leadership is restricted to middle management, studies do show that they are more than ready and capable. According to the study by Race to lead (2019), for example, the report confirms

findings from the original Race to Lead 2017 report that women of color have similar leadership qualification as white respondents. However, the barriers facing women of color on their way to senior leadership are numerous. The report asserts, that more support and fewer challenges were offered to white respondent than to women of color, these gaps between the two grew compared to their original report in 2017 (2019). It is not enough to make employers or board members aware of all the barriers that vague policies and practices bring to the employees. Women of Color are advancing, and nonprofit organizations are lagging. The efforts are to form actionable process and practice for diversity, equality, and inclusion in employing the qualified individual or group. Studies show that there is a misunderstanding of the impact of these barriers Puerto Rican women face and the facilitators they yield despite all the diversity, equity and inclusion training in nonprofit mission statements, current hiring practices and funding requirements.

Knowledge Gap

From existing literature, we know that some Puerto Rican women make it to senior leadership roles but that their numbers are limited, and their pathways are challenging. There is nothing written specifically about Puerto Rican women on their way to leadership in New York City nonprofits. Identifying the barriers and facilitators of Puerto Rican women CEO and executive directors within New York City nonprofits and the intersection of leadership make this study important. The last specific literature capturing Puerto Rican executive directors in New York City nonprofit was written in the 1990's. This historical gap in the literature creates a space for Puerto Rican women to offer their voices, give direction to the women currently interested and needed in these roles. Similarly, unavailable presently are the actual voice and experiences of Puerto Rican women in senior leadership roles in New York City nonprofit organizations. The study attempts to fill this knowledge gap.

CHAPTER 3
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is feminism. As previously outlined, feminism

spans from suffrage (first-wave feminism) to issues of workplace equality and reproductive

rights (second-wave feminism) to cultural constructions of gender and patriarchal oppression,

with recognition the previous iterations of feminism often did not account for the perspective of

racialized or queer women of color (third-wave feminism) (Sharma, 2019). This section of the

study considers feminism's main tenets and their application to the study. Feminism is an

influential theoretical structure and applying it to this study allows for a further contextualization

of the questions, methods, and results. This discussion places the study into a larger socio-

cultural and socio-economic frame, thus showing the readers the importance of this problem in a

larger context of social policy. Used to deepen the understanding of this feminist framework is

bell hooks definition of feminism "a movement to end sexism, sexual exploitation and sexual

oppression" (2015, p. 40). Included in this definition are the assertion of Luisa Capetillo, Puerto

Rican labor activist and feminist:

> You will set a great and dignified example by breaking all traditional customs, which are
>
> unjust and tyrannical, they are symbols of ignorance, in order to establish the realm of
>
> freedom, equality, and fraternity, symbols of truth and justice (Capetillo, 2004, p. 23).

A significant step for feminism is recognizing that ending gender-based discrimination

has not yet been achieved. Women of color often hit the proverbial glass ceiling or brick wall

due to the lack of recognition that discrimination still exists. Moreover, one cannot end what one

does not recognize as existing (Ahmed, 2017). Chicana feminist research recognizes feminism

and feminist works developed a need to confront patriarchal structures that limited and

constrained the daily lives of Latinas but also speaks to the limitation of traditional (or white

feminist) movements in the lives of women of color (Velasquez, 2017). Audre Lorde (2007) argues that "Women of color must recognize differences among women of color who are our equals, neither inferior or superior, and devise ways to use each other's differences to enrich our visions and our joint struggles" (p.122). Using the feminist lens, the authors of those studies were able to provide platforms for feminist dialogue and increase the knowledge of women of color in their field. As argued by Sara Ahmed (2017, p. 33), "to bring feminist theory home is to make feminist theory work in the places we live, the places we work." The main principle of feminism as an analytical framework, which applies to this study, is the emphasis feminism places on gender, race, class, and cultural difference in the places where Puerto Rican women work as executive-level leadership in New York City nonprofits. Using third-wave feminist theory also emphasizes advocacy and dialogue for and among women of color. The study will apply these principles through the exploration of the lived experiences of Puerto Rican women, feminism, and leadership in dialogue together to help delve into identifying the barriers and facilitators. Using feminist theory as an analytical frame in the study allows the research to generate new insights into advocacy based on women's rights and reveal driving forces not yet exposed.

Feminism of Color

Feminists of color developed revolutionary ideas and theoretical frameworks to analyze how systems of power operate (Morales, 2018, p. 13). Focusing on and taking note of themes, metaphors, concepts, and contexts identified in the literature will assist this research in identifying barriers and facilitators faced by Puerto Rican women in their positions as senior-level leaders. The additional complexity of this problem comes from the historical and colonial underpinnings of Puerto Rico/U.S. relations. Balancing U.S. imperialism and a diasporic reality bolsters the complexity of this argument. These concepts, compounded by the feminist theoretical framework, may reveal obstacles and driving forces not yet exposed for Puerto Rican

women. It is also important not to assume that all Puerto Rican women identify as feminists or categorize their advocacy and work as feminists. The struggle to identify as a feminist relates to the challenges of not associating with either white or Black feminists because they did not fit into either of those categories (Velaquez, 2008). A description by Amato (2021), like other Puerto Rican predecessors, Puerto Rican women leadership organizing for Puerto Rican self-determination did not initially describe themselves as feminists. Although their alignment is neither a Black nor a white alliance of feminism, Puerto Ricans tend to connect to Black feminist ideology while having their ideology and identity. Puerto Rican women utilize a multifaceted deconstruction of power structures in their fight for agency. Notwithstanding the many achievements attained, it is in the intersectionality that Puerto Rican women continue to struggle. Studies on Latinas and leadership look at intersectionality as the sociocultural identities Latina form that may intersect with race, ethnicity, gender, class, orientation, disability, generational, immigration, and language experiences (Hernandez B., 2020, p. 38). The term Intersectionality was originally coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) where she makes the argument that with Black women as the starting point, it becomes more apparent how dominant conceptions of discrimination condition us to think about subordination as disadvantage occurring along a single categorical axis (p. 140). This, she argues, causes the erasure of women of color in the conventionalization identification and remediation of race and sex discrimination by limiting inquiry to the experiences of otherwise-privileged members of the group (Crenshaw, 1989). Ignoring the intersectionality risks doing things by half measures and leaving major sectors of the population dissatisfied (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Along with the dissatisfaction is the oppression and marginalization of women of color. Intersectionality in this study is the

multidimensional approach to the Puerto Rican experience as senior leaders in New York City nonprofits.

The use of feminism is central to studies like this one because the sexism, sexual exploitation, and sexual oppression and ways in which the present is shaped by colonial histories including slavery, are central to the exploitation of labor under capitalism (Ahmed, 2017). Feminists of color have developed extraordinarily rich historical, political, and cultural analyses challenging the assumptions and conceptualization of the dominant feminist ideas of the 1970s as primarily based in the experiences of white middle-class women (Eisenstein, 2009, p. 142). "Otros saberes" introduced by Yomaira Figueroa as the practice of introducing, engaging and circulating peripheral knowledge. In using the term, otro saberes she refers to the epistemological break that occurs when devalued or othered knowledge comes to be understood and valued as other ways of knowing about Latinas (Figueroa, 2020). In the fight for women of color's rights and social justice, Puerto Rican women mobilized against colonial and patriarchal oppression (Morales, 2018). Inserting Puerto Rican feminist thought into the research means considering their struggle in identifying barriers and facilitators in their positions as senior leadership within New York City nonprofits.

Historical Context of Feminism and Puerto Rican Women

The feminist topics highlighted in the coming sections are essential for understanding the problem of barriers and facilitators in Puerto Rican women's leadership in the nonprofit sectors for several reasons. They highlight important aspects of the Puerto Rican cultural identity which may have a considerable influence on how the women see themselves and behave in the workplace. Understanding the influence of these cultural and identity factors allows us to gain a

more nuanced insight into the problem of barriers and facilitators in nonprofit Puerto Rican leadership.

To begin considering this problem, let us examine the contributions made by Luisa Capetillo who is a historical figure identified as one of the first Puerto Rican women of the early 19th century to advocate and write about women of color rights. Luisa Capetillo wrote, Mi Opinion Acerca de las Libertades, Derechos y Deberes de la Mujer/My Opinion regarding the Liberation, Rights, and Duty of Women (Capetillo, 2004). Luisa Capetillo stands out as a leader in the fight against colonial oppression and spent a great deal of her life fighting for the rights to education for women, women sexual rights along with the rights of workers in Puerto Rico and U.S., specifically New York and Florida (Capetillo, 2004). In 1912, Capetillo moved to New York as she became involved with the Latino community, with cigar workers who actively embraced her anarchist ideas (Valle-Ferrer, 2006). Nevertheless, Capetillo did not have any affiliation with any feminist group or identify as a feminist. There are no allusions to the topic or evidence that she joined any feminist groups organized on the island, aside from those in labor movements (Valle-Ferrer, 2006). This is important as it speaks to the worker's advocacy and leadership but does not assume a feminist label. This detail further affirms the marginalization and challenges of identifying as a feminist. Recognizing the limited and, in some cases omitting women of color from history, Capetillo spoke of how women identified themselves in their fight for agency. She succeeded in her efforts at informing workers about their rights and as a reader (a person who read newspapers to the laborers as they worked). The historical foundation of Puerto Rican women formed the basis of activism and fought for political, economic, and educational rights. Other women like Ana Roque de Dupery, a suffragist and advocate for education (Rodriguez F. V., 2021); Blanca Canales in 1950, a political organizer who revolted

against the United States and Lola Rodriguez de Tio (Acosta-Belen, 1986) played key roles in fighting for the independence of Puerto Rico and Cuba (Acosta-Belen, 2016). These Puerto Rican women paved the way for the Puerto Rican emigrant and diaspora to continue advocating for economic, educational, political, and pay equity while elevating awareness of the complexity of their intersectional truths. Puerto Rican women brought their feminist consciousness and organizing to the United States to the diaspora and played a significant role in the development of US Third World feminism (Amato, 2021).

Women of New York City's Young Lords Movement and Feminism

As noted in previous chapters, a relevant group to this study is the women of the New York City Young Lords Party. The female identified members developed a "Position Paper on Women" creating a feminist ideology for the Puerto Rican women of the diaspora (Fernandez, 2020). The position paper reflected a new wave of feminist analysis linking the origins of women's oppression on the institution of marriage and the nuclear family emphasizing the distinct experience of poor women of color and their historical racialized roles as "cheap labors and sexual objects" (Fernandez, 2020, p. 314). This is relevant as it helped develop the foundation for advocacy, leadership, and a feminist ideology among the women of color in the Young Lords Party. The Young Lords Party in New York City were self-professed Puerto Rican nationalists giving political expression to the common social, economic, and cultural urban experience of Puerto Rican and Black who grew up alongside each other in the 1950s and 1960s (Morales, 2016). The women of color in the Young Lords Party understood that to fight for social change organizations, they had to mobilize the community and develop relationships with the politically, economically, and educationally disenfranchised (Morales, 2018). This group served as a platform for women of color to elevate their voices and leadership. However, this was not a platform that the women of color were given, it is one the women of color fought for

(Fernandez, 2020). It was in the New York City chapter of the Young Lords Party that women of color declared their voices (Liberation, 2015). The motivated women of color made changes and ensured their voices were heard, demanded more than the theoretical equality announced by the organization (Morales, 2018). Morales described the reality faced by women of color in the Young Lords in the following way: "Facing this reality, several of us in the East Harlem branch formed a Women of color's Caucus we studied the Young Lords' Thirteen Point Program and Platform, especially Point 10, which stated: 'We want equality for women of color. Machismo must be revolutionary…not oppressive" (2018, p. 143). This demonstrates that Puerto Rican Women were resisting the contradiction of "Machismo as revolutionary" and working to navigate through the barriers to create change within the organization and gain leadership positions within the party.

In the frontlines of these struggles were the Young Lords Organization (later the Young Lords Party and the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization), the Puerto Rican Student Union (PRSU), El Comite, and Resistencia Puertorriquena (Belen, 2016). These groups of people acquired a critical consciousness that led them to recognize the level of oppression they were experiencing and living in their communities. The dynamics of the long-standing U.S. colonial domination over Puerto Rico, its control of the island's economy, and the oppressive nature of the internal colonialism Puerto Ricans face in U.S. society opened a door to action (Belen, 2016). These events and others led to the creation of leadership to advance many political and radical organizing efforts of its time. This history left a blueprint for organizing and leadership and offers this study an intersectional lens to senior-level leadership. This context assists this research in identifying barriers and facilitators Puerto Rican women face in their

position as senior-level leaders. This feminist theoretical framework may reveal obstacles and driving forces not yet exposed for Puerto Rican women today.

Latina Feminism, Motherhood, and Culture

Central to Latina feminists is motherhood. It is an important part of their lives and feminization. Educated or not, the onus is still on women of color to be a wife/mother (Anzaldua, 2012). The familial responsibilities continue as women of color are in leadership roles in nonprofit organizations. The cultural conflicts of mothering appear in the lives of many Latinas. The realities of the conflict are described by Gloria Anzaldua (2012),

> If a woman rebels, she is a mujer mala. If a woman does not renounce herself in favor of the male, she is selfish. If a woman remains a virgin until she marries, she is a good woman. For a woman of my culture there used to be only three directions, she could turn: to the Church as a nun, to the streets as a prostitute, or to the home as a mother. Today some of us have a fourth choice: entering the world by way of education and career and becoming self-autonomous persons.

The historical context of a Puerto Rican woman's fight for motherhood is combined by Puerto Rican women's fight for reproductive health (Acosta-Belen, 2016). Puerto Rican feminists fought sterilization policies in Puerto Rico, which by the mid-1960s, had resulted in more than 35% of women of color unable to bear children (Morales, 2018). The main principle of feminism as an analytical framework, which applies to this study, is the emphasis feminism places on gender, race, class, and cultural difference. The study will apply these principles through the exploration of feminism and leadership in dialogue together to help delve into the barriers and facilitators.

Using feminist theory as an analytical frame in the study allows the research to generate new insights into the lived experience of Puerto Rican women and reveal any barriers and

facilitators yet to be exposed and how they navigate through them. Latinidad feminista, feminist analysis has always valued the remembering of women's stories as a corrective measure leading to the politicized consciousness (Rosario, 2014, p. 107). Such a review is important because it situates the study in an influential theoretical structure, which, in turn, allows for further contextualization of the questions.

Latina Homogeneity

A concept identified to support this study is Latina homogeneity and intersectionality. Perez De Jesus (2019, p. 1) identifies another working definition of intersectionality as the interconnected nature of various social identities (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, Etc.). The importance of intersectionality is best communicated by Perez De Jesus (2019, p. 2) in her study as she shares, "in a group where all members shared identity markers (all Latina: all women) – all assumed they were of like-mindedness." They soon realized there were vast differences and made faulty assumptions among the women in the group. The focus of this study is on one affinity group (all Puerto Rican, all women); this study will work not to make false assumptions that all are the same in their identification, race, class, ethnicity, etc. "The ultimate aim of intersectionality is to challenge inequality and enact change to eliminate it" (Rodriguez et al., 2016, p. 5). Conceptions of equality, expressed in rules that insist only on treatment as the same across the board, can remedy only the most blatant forms of discrimination, such as the refusal to hire a black Ph.D. rather than a white college dropout, which stand out and attract attention (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 9). Then there is the notion of intersectionality in which Puerto Ricans identify as White Latina, Afro-Boricua, Hispanic, Latina, Latinx, Puerto Rican, Nuyorican, or woman of color. Another is the unique voice of color. This may be the most

curious as it may be challenging to refer to for Puerto Rican women and other Latinos let alone classify and address inequality.

This study will work to communicate and elevate the various intersectional experiences and narratives among Puerto Rican women executive leaders. The idea is to create a guide that relates to differences among Puerto Rican women in leadership. Audre Lorde (2007) states: We have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate (p. 115). The idea is to use this study to identify the unique qualities to further delve into the barriers and facilitators of the Puerto Rican women in this study and not to make false assumptions that all are the same in their identification, race, class, ethnicity, etc.

CHAPTER 4
Research Methods

This narrative study explores the barriers and facilitators facing Puerto Rican women in senior-level leadership within New York City nonprofits. A narrative study is a bounded section of dialogue sequentially ordered and outlines various functions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Riessman, 2008). "Narrative is the everyday practice of storytelling; the teller/speaker uses the basic story structure to organize events and experience to bring forward what is perceived as important and significant for the teller and the audience." (Lewis & Adeney, 2014, p. 161). In this study, narrative research explores the stories Puerto Rican women in senior-level positions tell to make sense of their lived experiences. "The procedure for implementing narrative research consists of focusing on studying individuals, gathering data through the collection of their stories, reporting individual experiences, and chronologically ordering the meaning of those experiences" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 68). According to Ntinda (2019): Narrative research aims to unravel consequential stories of people's lives as told by them in their own words and worlds. In the context of health, social sciences, and education, narrative research is both a data gathering and interpretive or analytical framework (p. 411).

There are specific features that define a narrative study however not all narrative projects contain all the elements (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Shedding light on the identities of the individuals/how they see themselves, description of the physical, emotional, and social situations, and utilization of the narrative stories gathered through interviews as the primary form of data collection are the defining features that will be used in this narrative study.

Rationale for the Method

The rationale for a narrative method is that it allowed for a distinctive, thoughtful, reflective, and in-depth way for the Puerto Rican women in senior leadership in this study to tell their

story. Narrative research acts to discern the individual storied experience through narrative threads and then compose a narrative account of the person's lived experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Narrative inquiry also delves into the institutional, social, cultural, familial, and linguistic narratives in which each participant's encounter are embedded and that shape each individual experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 58). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), part of the logical sequence of stages in a narrative study is preparing and distinguishing the type of interview by determining what mode is practical and what interactions will net the most useful information to answer the research questions. The researcher obtained CUNY IRB (Internal Review Board) approval to select individuals who self-identified as women and Puerto Rican. A one-on-one semi-structured interview will work best as it allows the researcher to understand Puerto Rican women in senior leadership through their narrative.

Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A semi-structured interview allows the researcher to prepare questions for the interview and participants in this study: it also allows the prospective participant the freedom to express their views that may go beyond the questions offered. A semi-structured interview format allowed the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to an emerging worldview of the respondent, and to gain new ideas on the topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Conducting the interviews in person was also crucial to this study. The researcher met with the participants in person to lead the discussions. The in-person interviews allowed the participant to build trust with the researcher and develop an interest in supporting the study. The semi-structured interview also offered an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the Puerto Rican woman as senior leaders in New York City nonprofit organizations that can help interpret stories within the context of further supporting the narrative analysis. The narrative

analysis in this research works to explore relationships between barriers and facilitators, for example, the racial identification and privileges gained or challenges faced through specific associations to senior-level positions. Another example is the level of education, leadership experience, and the extent to which individuals do not choose senior-level leadership. Before the interviews, the researcher identified how often the researcher would meet the participants.

Interview Sessions

The researcher interviewed each participant three times for a total of twenty-seven sessions. The researcher hand-delivered the second set of transcripts to all nine participants, totaling thirty-six contacts. The consideration to conduct three sessions is important for this study. The three sessions gave the researcher time to develop trust, build space for the participants to share their lived experiences, ask clarifying questions, review the transcripts collected, and close the circle on the interviews. All sessions were scheduled to take between thirty-to-ninety-minute periods. Setting the space for each participant was important. Each session was held either in the office of the CEO's or executive directors or in spaces where the participants have a consultant business. The researcher worked to create a feeling to the space that would be meaningful for the discussion. In each session the researcher had water or coffee and a snack native to Puerto Rico (quesito, guava, marrallo, coconut candy). If the researcher was unable to find a snack native to Puerto Rico other small snacks were shared with the participants. Culturally this was important as it showed a sign of respect and gratitude for their time and willingness to participate in the study and allowing the researcher to meet in their organization. The first two sessions were recorded and transcribed. Rev.com transcription service was used to assure speech to text was accurate.

Prior to the last session the researcher hand delivered the second sessions transcripts. The researcher made sure to maintain confidentiality and trust. The last session was used to debrief and collect the transcriptions with the participants. This was important because it provided participants an opportunity to discuss changes or request omissions that could possibly identify them in the field. As this study is an anonymous study the closing session was significant. All transcriptions were reviewed by both participants and researcher for accuracy, reliability, and trust. Researcher identified two new participants to interview each month for four months. The fifth month the researcher identified one participant. A total of nine Puerto Rican women New York City CEOs or executive directors consented to participate and share their lived experiences.

First Sessions

The first sessions averaged sixty to ninety minutes. The first session was always the longest. The researcher created the space for the participants to tell their lived experience. The researcher tried not to interrupt with follow-up questions during this first session unless it was necessary. When the researcher did interrupt it was to clarify a term or paraphrase to confirm what was shared. At times the participant would speak in a low tone or shared terms that were unfamiliar to the researcher. An uninterrupted session allowed for the sharing to take many different directions and provide detailed description of their experiences. There were also a few times where participants thought they needed to quietly mention a name they did not want recorded. These were also moments the researcher spoke to assure the participant that they can freely share, to please speak up and any information they wanted omitted would be excluded. The meetings took place either early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Participants were assured that they would have an opportunity to review and edit anything off the transcripts. The knowledge that they would review the transcripts and remove anything they thought would be of

harm gave the participants the trust and freedom to share openly. The first session also gave the researcher data to review. The review of the transcripts was essential for the study. The researcher then scheduled the second interview with participants.

Second Session

The researcher reviewed the first transcripts, and a second set of questions were created. There were different clarifying questions composed for each participant in the study. The clarifying questions at times went deeper into a statement a participant made or identified a specific group in the inquiry. Also hearing the interviews for the second time provided new insights into the discussion. This was important as the researcher tried not to interrupt the participants which may have changed the direction of the conversation and the chronological approach to their lived experience. In the second session, there were an average of six to sixteen clarifying questions. Only one participant could not answer all fourteen questions in the first session due to a schedule conflict. The second session was used in this specific situation to complete the interview and address clarifying questions.

The researcher and participant reviewed the first transcript in the second session. The researcher had two transcript copies, one for the participant to review and the other for the researcher to refer to and ask clarifying questions. The times were labeled on the transcript and highlighted or identified the areas that needed clarification. During the second session, the interview was more of a dialogue than an interview allowing for more questions and exploration of the ideas the participant shared and the researcher needed explaining. There was also more trust built between the interviewer and participants. The average conversation took about forty minutes to an hour.

Third Session

During the scheduling of the third interview, the researcher requested that the participant have the first and second transcripts for any final edits and for the researcher to collect. After completing the review, the researcher thanked the participants for sharing their lived experiences and valuable time. The closing sessions were challenging to schedule. The researcher rescheduled three of the closing sessions due to conflicts or personal situations in the participants' lives. The closing sessions took about thirty to forty minutes. Many participants thought the interviews and questions allowed them to reflect on their path toward senior leadership. Allowing time for this study in their busy schedule and sharing their experiences gave the participants a moment to reflect on their lives. It was a brief time to pause. These were moments they did not always have time for or even permitted themselves to take.

Study Participants and Their Selection

Puerto Rican women in senior level positions were interviewed, with the purpose of identifying the barriers and facilitators experienced as senior level leaders in New York City nonprofit organizations. Along with the fourteen questions created there were additional clarifying questions asked based on the first interview and the responses given. The study employed a purposive and snowball sampling method. The criteria of the participants are specific to Puerto Rican women with a history of being in senior level leadership in New York City nonprofits. Additionally, this study was specific to social service nonprofit organizations.

The researcher used the organization's nonprofit status to identify prospective interviewees within membership organization and networks that create linkages and coalitions with other organizations. A few examples of these network organizations are Human Service Council, Community Resource Exchange, and Hispanic Federation. The Hispanic Federation (2020) is

one of the nation's premier Latino nonprofit membership organizations founded in 1990. Membership organizations work to reinforce nonprofit agencies through capacity building and fundraising network that support operational needs and leadership training. Another networking resource available was, The Center for Puerto Rican Studies. The Center for Puerto Rican Studies/Centro de Estudios Puertorriquenos (El Centro) at Hunter College Silberman School of Social Work was founded 45 years ago (Vargas-Ramos, 2018), and has evolved into an unparalleled resource for the Puerto Rican Diaspora (Vargas-Ramos, 2018). The researcher looked to these organizations to help identify Puerto Rican women executive directors for this study. Another method for identifying these organizations was through the review of various New York City Internal Review Service (IRS) 501(C)(3) tax code social service listing.

The membership organizations, network and IRS tax code social service listing rendered only one organization with a self-identified Puerto Rican woman in senior leadership. Most of the leaders were identified as Latina or not at all. Spanish surnames do not mean they are or identify as Latina or specifically that they are Puerto Rican. The purposive and snowball sampling was much more successful but also had some challenges for the same reason as searching through membership organization listings. Although many people knew of a Latina in senior level leadership it was not as obvious if they self-identified as Puerto Rican.

The women identified received an email describing the study and a request for their participation. The email shared how they as Puerto Rican women working in New York's nonprofit sector make up a particularly relevant and suitable study population. The e-mail letter included the information found by the Center for Puerto Rican Studies reporting that, in 2016, Puerto Ricans accounted for 5.5 percent of the total population in New York and 28.8 percent of the state's Latino population (Roman, 2018). Therefore, understanding the underrepresentation of

Puerto Rican women in the nonprofit sector will help us better understand the problem in relation to this key population of New York. Additionally, the email shared how their participation in the study can help produce new knowledge about Puerto Rican women within organizational structures. The letter also included how New York City's nonprofit sector is a critical driver of the City and States economy. Lastly, they received information on how this study will tell of their lived experiences, tell their stories, and amplify their voices to bring awareness of the barriers and facilitators Puerto Rican women in executive leadership confront. Perspective participants were instructed to respond with either their interest or disinterest in the study. The researcher would then respond accordingly to their confirmed reply. A disinterested participant received a letter thanking them for reading about the study. The prospective participant could contact the researcher if they changed their minds and wanted to participate in the study. There were several reasons for the senior leader's disinterest or inability to participate. The first is the time commitment of scheduling three interview sessions. Other perspective participants had layers of staffing that did not allow the researcher to make direct contact with the senior leader. There were also staff who assured the researcher that the senior leaders were interested in participating in the study. However, no interview was scheduled. The researcher as part of the IRB approval created an outreach guideline to only contact an organization or the senior leader three times before contact ended as a confirmation of disinterest. Others wanted the questions ahead before they committed to participating in the study. The researcher did not agree to this request. The researcher thought it would give a scripted answer.

Sample Size and Saturation

To maximize information this study conducted purposeful sampling choosing Puerto Rican CEO's and executive directors from social service nonprofit organizations in New York

City. The study worked to reach saturation. Saturation in this study is defined as the development of categories and aspects of data collection and analysis intertwined that are difficult to measure and including variations in the interviews and responses (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). "Although saturation is used as an indicator of an effective sample size in qualitative research and is seen in quality criteria of academic journals and research funding agencies, it remains unclear what saturation means in practice" (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017). An approach offered by Hennink et.al. (2017, p. 604), saturation occurred between eight to sixteen interviews depending on the saturation sought. In this study saturation occurred with nine participants, meeting three times totaling twenty-seven sessions. Reaching a point of saturation or redundancy means that you begin hearing the same responses to your interview questions, no new insights (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The study will simultaneously engage in analysis and data collection. In this study the experiences were rich in detail and all distinct. There was always something new to learn in each session. However, there were consistent and recurring themes that continued to repeat themselves which allow the researcher to reach a point of saturation.

Memorandum and Notes

After each interview, the researcher took notes and wrote memorandums. The notes and memorandums were an additional step in recording comments on the researcher's thoughts about the interviews, analyzing the narrative data, creating clarifying questions, and identifying themes arising from the interviews. The researcher formulated the memorandum and notes, along with the review of the first transcripts clarifying questions. The clarifying questions were different for each participant. They averaged between six to twelve clarifying questions.

Transcript Reviews

The time used for the clarifying questions also allowed the participant to review the transcripts from the first interview with the researcher. The participants received a copy of the transcripts to examine as they were asked clarifying questions. The researcher highlighted areas needing clarification. Sixty to ninety minutes were used for the second session. Based on the trust built in the first interview, the participants offered the same level of detail in the second session. The participants hesitated less as they were familiar with the format and built trust with the researcher. The second transcript review was challenging as the researcher had to build in time to give the participants their second transcripts for review. The participants were quickly handed the transcripts by the researcher and given final instructions for the third and final session. Building in this time is important for the study to create consistency with the review of the transcripts.

Collecting Transcripts Closing Session

In the third session the researcher reviewed the first session and second session transcripts again with the participants. The participants informed the researcher of words or dialogue that they thought had to be removed. As a closing third session, participants could share closing thoughts or reflections of the first and second interviews. The participants shared insightful and wise words. These modifications did not change the substance of their interview or minimize the lived experience shared. The modifications consistently established reliability of anonymity.

Data Collection

The interviews were recorded and transcribed, as is standard procedure in qualitative research. Participants received information that their responses will remain confidential. The key to narrative qualitative research is the use of stories as data, specifically, first-person account of experience told in story form having a beginning, middle and end (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Adapting the following general reporting structure is appropriate: an introduction to familiarize

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the reader with the participants and the intended purpose of the story, patterns of meaning articulating themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data is analyzed through the theoretical lens of feminist theory. Narrative research with a feminist lens considers understanding and ultimately improving the lives of those who in this study self-identify as women, focusing on researching the diverse and intersecting lives of self-identified women (Woodiwiss & Smith, 2017). In this narrative research, it is important that the stories are told by and about Puerto Rican women.

The interviews gathered were a first-person account of experience constituting the story "text" of a narrative research approach. Because the "text" of the story forms the data set for what was analyzed in this type of research, is written texts, is often cited as information narrative inquiry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These oral histories gather personal reflections and their causes and effects from one or several individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Plummer, 1983).

Researchers Memorandums

After recording each interview, the researcher created a set of written notes, in which conceptual ideas are documented. In this study, memos catch the researcher's thoughts, capture the comparisons and connections made and crystalize questions and directions to pursue (Charmaz, 2006). In this study the memos helped form clarifying questions from the review of the initial uninterrupted interview. Memos comprised of reminders that the researcher wrote as the inquiry unfolded. Writing memos served as prompts that elaborated processes, assumptions, and actions covered by the codes or categories created in the study (Charmaz, 2006). A recording device was used while conducting each interview. Memo writing captured:

- fresh ideas that developed and created new concepts,
- clarifying questions for the second session,
- stay involved in research and writing and,

- assists in identifying specific categories and coding for this research study.

Coding and Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis may be a description of both the story and themes that emerge from the narrative (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The analysis of data involves identifying recurring patterns that characterize the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Riessman calls this process "thematic analysis" during which the researcher analyzes "what" is spoken and written during the data collection (Creswell and Poth, 2018). In this study, the theory and the themes emerge from the narrative. It does not oversimplify the codification for pattern making. Coding is conducted in several cycles. "Coding is a cyclical process that requires you to recode not just once but twice (and sometimes even more)" (Saldana, 2021, p. 20).

First Cycle

The first cycle of coding is conducted "in vivo." In vivo coding is particularly useful for this study because it can offer imagery, symbols, and metaphors for rich category, theme, and concept development (Saldana, 2021). Description of themes and metaphors are both in English and Spanish. This is an inductive coding process. In Vivo coding is useful for the various dialectal descriptions of leadership by the participants contrasting them to the identified descriptions in the literature. In this study the lived experienced shared were vivid and detailed. It was helpful that the researcher is bilingual and Puerto Rican. They were able to code switch alternating between the Spanish and English language. Their experiences came across clearly and at time symbolic.

Second Cycle

The second cycle follows an exploratory coding method. First, provisional codes were assigned. According to Saldana (2021), "provisional coding begins with a 'start list' of researcher-generated codes on what preparatory investigation suggest might appear in the data before they are analyzed" (p. 213). After provisional codes were created, lean coding was conducted. Creswell and Poth (2018) define "lean coding" as the creation of a short list expanding it only to a list of initial codes as necessary.

In the analysis, a reality check of provisional codes took place. "When Provisional Codes are first applied to qualitative data, the researcher may soon learn whether each item from the start of the list has relevance or not" (Saldana, 2021, p. 218). The researcher was mindful of the pitfalls with provisional codes as they may prevent from innovative ideas. Saldana (2021, p. 218) contends premature coding can lead to a willingness to tolerate ambiguity, flexibility, and the researcher to remain honest. The initiating five coding categories are leadership, leadership metaphors, board of directors and Latino White Privilege/Colorism. These are prominent themes identified in the literature driving to answer the studies question of exploring the facilitators and barriers of Puerto Rican women senior level leaders in New York City nonprofits. Several of the initial themes did come up in the interviews but not all of them. Other themes identified were mentoring, nonprofit operations, "It just happened" a *call to lead*. The issue of barriers and facilitators to senior leadership in New York City nonprofit organizations is complex as all themes can be both barriers and facilitators.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of the research are elements that provide evidence of the quality of a re-
search study and decrease researcher bias. The aim is to gain an understanding of the social phe-
nomenon in this study exploring the barriers and facilitators Puerto Rican women experience in
senior leadership within nonprofit organization. Trustworthiness involves establishing (Lincoln
& Guba, 1985 & Cohen & Crabtree, 2008):

- Credibility – confidence in the 'truth of the findings'

- Transferability – showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts.

- Dependability – showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated.

- Confirmability – a degree of neutrality of the extent to which the finding of a study is
  shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation or interests.

 In this qualitative study, trustworthiness is insured by following a processual approach and trian-
gulation. Hayashi et.al. (2019) share a processual approach that can support studies trustworthy
practice. However, they also indicate researcher may want to adapt more than one approach. The
procedural operationalization of trustworthiness is comprised of analyzing the debriefing and the
reflection as a continuous process (Hayashi et al., 2019). In this study the researcher has done
both analyzing the debriefing and reflection as a continuous process in action. A benefit to trust-
worthiness as a process is the action, observations, reflections, and sometimes even withdrawing
from the field to be able to start all over again (Abib, Hoppen, & Hayashi , 2019). The proces-
sual operationalization of trustworthiness is comprised of the following (Abib, Hoppen, &
Hayashi , 2019, p. 104):

- Attention of the researcher towards the research project that initially seek to establish the subject area, the design and the limits of the research and the alignment of the subject, the design, and the method of investigation.

- Organization of the data collection (choice of respondents and informants, adoption of participant observation or not).

- Data codification and analysis that establishes the structuring of concepts, the evidence, and the categories' correct connection.

- Data analysis that seeks to understand the phenomenon through multiple sources of data and in a complete way.

- Discussion of the results and a return to the theory, which completes the theorization process.

Reading the Narrative Data

To maintain anonymity, numbers and the word participant are used to identify the Puerto Rican women in the study. The passages shared by the participants in chapter 5 are extensive and detailed. Having extensive and detailed passages is a mindful decision by the researcher. Sharing the narrative data in this way points out the uniqueness of this study, gives a clear voice of the lived experiences shared by Puerto Rican women senior leaders in New York City nonprofit organizations, and values multiple ways of knowing. The focus is to understand how the participants interpret their lived experiences, identify the barriers and facilitators, and elevate the themes. For this reason, the researcher creates the space for the participants to have their voices lifted in this next chapter labeled: Findings Barriers and Facilitators.

CHAPTER 5

Findings Barriers and Facilitators

The themes identified give an in-depth look at the lived experiences of the Puerto Rican women in this study. They shared common themes that led them to senior leadership roles in a New York City nonprofit organization. In the findings the barriers and facilitators are raised to further reflect on their lived experiences as senior leaders. The main themes which emerged from the interviews and around which this chapter is organized are divided into two separate categories and seven themes. The first overarching topic is: It just happened – Senior Leadership discusses how their paths led the participants in this study towards complex path of nonprofit leadership and its relationship to New York City. The themes in this section are as follows: pathways towards senior leadership, leading nonprofits in New York City and nonprofit operations. This second overarching topic covers the Beyond the Mentoring Models covers themes related to what allows them to navigate through many of the microaggressions, traumas and daily nonprofit stressors. The themes are as follows: Las Tia's and Comay's Puerto Rican, Healing Spaces, Afro-Boricua, and Latino White privilege.

The first theme identified based on the interviews was that of pathways towards organizational leadership beholden on the women in this study identified as a *call to lead*. To answer the first question in the problem statement, we will examine what led women toward senior-level leadership. Their responses to the first question reveal that the women who did not think they were prepared to take on executive or senior leadership roles jumped right in and many without receiving executive training or support. The path formed the foundation for how they understood the needs of the community, rose in their positions, and met the organizations mission. This is described in the literature as the glass cliff, suggesting that the appointment of women of color to

leadership positions when organizational conditions are risky or precarious (Carli, 2016, Haslam & Ryan, 2008). The tasks ahead of them were not easy but their narrative describes their grit and tenacity.

It just happened - Pathways toward Senior Leadership in New York City Nonprofit Organizations

The factors facilitating the advancement of the Puerto Rican women in this study to executive-level leadership positions in New York City nonprofits begins with a "call to lead." This term means the pathways towards organizational leadership were strongly encouraged for the women in this study. The strong encouragement to lead came from boards of directors, founding members of organizations or community leaders this was identified as "it just happened." The literature describes the road to senior leadership for women of color as a maze. The Puerto Rican women in this study share that it was more of a direct line toward senior leadership for them. The organizations the women have led or are leading called on the women to meet an immediate need and use their already established expertise and experience in organizational development to guide the nonprofit. Once in these positions the study finds that the demand to represent marginalized communities of color set in motion the call for these Puerto Rican women to head a nonprofit organization. Their trajectory and executive preparation came when they were asked to take on the responsibility as senior leaders. These well-positioned women demonstrated how they led their organizations. There are also women in this study who did launch their career with a focus on senior leadership. Similarly, they all were "called" to support marginalized communities of color due to their personal experiences and wanting to change systems of oppression.

Three of the nine Puerto Rican women senior leaders were on a trajectory to become executive directors. Even though they were on a course toward senior leadership, it was a more

complex path than identified in the literature. The answers given by the three women during their individual interviews did not completely confirm the idea of a maze which is highlighted in the literature review. Six of the Puerto Rican women in this study shared their entry points into becoming an executive director or CEO/President as a straight line. They began with statements like, "it just happened," "so it happened.", "the necessity at the moment," "I fell into this kind of work," or "that is a loaded question because I did not start my career thinking that I was going to work towards leading an organization." Participant 4 shares, "The so-called War on Poverty programs discovered a lot of minority talent that when you have so many people in the Puerto Rican community …., becoming involved, as community leaders, it began the creation of many Puerto Rican storefront organizations." Their path to leadership was an urgent need to fill a gap in governance and support historical Puerto Rican organizations. These women demonstrate their leadership in their work supporting community because of their strong leadership skills they are "called to lead."

The question asked of all participants was, "what motivated them to become an executive director?" The responses they offered describe the women's difficult decisions to take on these roles, as many needed to be on the path toward senior leadership. The three Puerto Rican women who were on a path towards senior leadership were focused and preparing for executive positions. They developed networks, were supported, or had role models of family members in leadership to guide them. They were also supporting specific communities that they developed a connection to.

Participant 1

What initially motivated me to get into nonprofit work was, really, from the time I was growing up, I remember, my dad who grew up during the depression and was always pointing

out the differences between people who have money and the people who don't and the struggles that people who don't have money go through.

Participant 5

I felt it was imperative to at least learn and grow into an executive director role with the lens of being a woman of color and specifically, a Puerto Rican woman and to help the communities.

Participant 6

I knew my predecessor and we worked together, and I knew they were about to retire. I said, "I think I'm going to go for it. This is an organization that has a specific population focus and it serves the South Bronx." I saw the potential for additional growth for the organization.

The following six Puerto Rican women were urged or encouraged by the board of directors, challenges in the community, or a path that opened the doors for them to lead. They chose to heed the call, and as was shared, "it just happened."

Participant 3

I am going to be honest. I did not set my vision to be an executive director of a nonprofit. I started in the nonprofit field, as I was really interested in community work. I fell into this kind of work because I wanted to learn a little bit more of how to become active in my community.

Participant 2

The necessity at the moment. It was the beginning of the AIDS awareness, was 1985, and we were a small group of Puerto Rican professionals, mostly social workers. Nobody else wanted to take a job that didn't have benefits, funding. I was on unemployment at the time, so I did it.

Participant 4

The budget was 60,000 dollars for the entire organization, and I got the position because I had some college education, and I did not want to work in the private sector.

Participant 8

It just happened in a progression, ……I grew up in the NYCHA development, and both my parents worked very hard, and my mother was a social worker, BSW social worker. I decided to be a social worker and obtained my MSW. I never thought that the doors to be a director or even an executive director would ever be possible because although my mother was a professional, her position was always considered an "other."

The literature addresses the critical consciousness that leads Puerto Ricans to recognize the level of oppression they are experiencing. What is familiar about Participants 7 and 9 is their agreement to lead historically founded Puerto Rican organizations. Their experiences also demonstrate how a crisis and a commitment to support historically founded Puerto Rican organizations led them to a senior leadership role.

Participant 9

That's a loaded question because I didn't start out my career thinking that I was going to work towards leading an organization. I actually came here in a time of crisis. The Executive Director, passed away, unfortunately in the middle of what would be the height of their leadership.

Participant 7

So, it happened. The Board asked me if I wanted to be the ED. I said, "I could do it, but I am not a fundraiser. You'll get me somebody to write the grants or I hire somebody to write the grants."

The six participants discussed a topic the researcher still needed to consider as part of this study. The researcher did not consider that the participants in the study might not want an executive director position or think that they would even have an opportunity to be an executive director. As one participant shared, "I never thought that the doors to be a director or even an executive director would ever be possible…." Participant 9 shared, "The Executive Director passed away….". Witnessing these experiences impacting the leadership of these organizations can discourage other Puerto Rican women in nonprofit organizations from considering senior leadership roles. The notion that one must sacrifice health to sustain an organization is a barrier. Not wanting or considering an executive director position is a significant find as it can speak to another reason why Puerto Rican women executive directors are underrepresented in the sector.

Barriers and Facilitators- Pathways to a *Call to Lead*

Reflecting on the barriers and facilitators of the first theme, pathways to leadership or "a call to lead," the researcher asked, knowing what they know now and what they would have asked before taking on the role of senior leaders. Their responses identify some of the barriers and facilitators they confront or are confronting as leaders of their organization. The organizations promised the participants to support, while others received limited information about the organization's operations. However, others were in thriving finance agencies but faced with microaggressions by funders and their board of directors, creating barriers for them to lead.

Participant 8

Where is the help? There have been nights that I'm thinking about how we are going to pay the bills. How are we going to pay the staff? How are we going to do things? There have been times where the ones that had college education broke the hell out of the organization and the ones that are from the neighborhood that were like, "We got you. We are going to stay here." Having a staff of seven people, or I think like eight, but when the money went down, they ran

and the people from the neighborhood were like, "No. We are staying. We are not going to run away."

As the researcher continues to delve further, Participant 8 begins to answer the question with a question, "where is the help?" which the board of directors did communicate would be available to her when she took on the role. She also paid college-educated staff who were the first to leave the organization when the financial situation became dire. The tone of the conversation was not one of anger but of exhaustion.

As the participants continue to share, they clarify to the researcher that the Board of Directors and funders must understand their fiduciary responsibilities. They must also know about the communities the organizations serve beyond what Participants 1 and 5 called the "savior" or "savior mentality" way of thinking. There must be practice towards addressing microaggressions and systemic racism they experience.

Participant 1

I think all the things that I've struggled with are things that nobody talks about. It's not the work, it's more the structural racism, it's more the microaggressions. Nobody talks about that. I have a good education. I went to some of the best schools in the country. Nobody talked about that. Right? And I don't know, you kind of enter this not knowing what to expect. And I think when you're a leader in an organization, and I've since had this conversation with a lot of leaders of color, actually was just talking with someone recently around how the fundraising piece can sometimes be the most challenging because you're exposed to people who have a lot of money, who have no idea what it's like to live under the circumstances that some of the children and families that we work with live under, and want to be a savior and have certain perceptions about those populations. And you must sometimes sit and swallow that, and then you have to recover

from it. And that's hard and nobody talks about that. Nobody talks about that. None of the certificate programs around nonprofit management that I went to, nobody talked about that there, nobody talked about it at graduate school. The work is the easy part. It's managing the microaggressions and the things that come your way that takes a lot from you and requires you to recover. But at the same time, you got to show up and be there 100%. So, you don't really get time to recover. And that's hard, that's really hard.

"It's managing the microaggressions and the things that come your way that takes a lot from you and requires you to recover." Participant 1 shares and Participant 5 demonstrates as she takes a moment to take an exasperated breath, "look at me, phew." Noticeably, the exasperation is palpable.

Participant 5

Why are they here? Those boards, there's something dysfunctional about, I think, the relationship with board members. It's like, they don't do a lot of the work that they're supposed to be doing, especially around fundraising, quite frankly, so that a lot of it falls on the Executive Director or CEO, but then, they're quick to be evaluating, is there's something, I don't know... I think, I'm not the only one that says it, but a lot of ED's feel that they're just so dysfunctional with the boards. So, I think that the more that you can diversify your board with people that really understand the mission, that really are committed to Give/Get. So, I've tried to always bring one or two people that I trust, and they can start influencing others and then take it from there.

Researcher followed up question, "You just shared, they're mostly White boards. Do you get a sense that they do understand the communities that they're sitting on these boards for? Participant 5 continues, No. I'll tell you, one community that I work with as ED, I mean, literally

there are board members that are like, "Why don't we just give the kids laptops?" And like, it just doesn't work that way. Our kids have trauma. Our kids really can use that one-on-one time or that connection. So, the laptop is not a solution. It's maybe a tool. Or I've had someone say, "Why can't they pull themselves from their bootstraps?" Yeah. Look at me. I'm like, phew. And then you've got others that have more of a savior mentality.

Participant 9

How much support would I really get? Not the support that people say, "Yeah, we got your back. No problem", but boots on the ground, real roll up your sleeves, "Let's get in there with you and help you figure this out" kind of support, you know?

The following participants discuss agency culture, practice and systems that help them navigate through barriers within nonprofit organizations.

Participant 3

I think important questions for me is to understand what the culture of the board is. I think it is critical. When you're an executive director and you're responsible for the people who hire you and could fire you, it's understanding what that culture is and what that relationship and what their expectation of the role is. Because the worst thing you want to do is to walk into an organization and their cultures don't align, and you have different views.

Participant 4

I should have asked to see the financial statement.

Participant 6

I need a board that's going to support me in making these changes, but also help the organization and the infrastructure in terms of fundraising and other things. I think that's another

piece that's difficult because they operate in such an antiquated way, and they're used to it. That's their fiduciary responsibility.

As Participant 1 shared she sought out a network outside of her organization and the institutions for guidance and recovery. This as identified in the literature is the facilitator and the why Puerto Rican women succeed as senior-level leaders in New York City nonprofit organizations. In the following section the women in the study provide detailed description of the women who help create their ladder to success.

Leading Nonprofits in New York City - A Call to Serve in New York City

As a second theme the participants in the study shared the importance of leading in New York City and how vital it was to their growth as senior leaders in nonprofit organizations. Upon the arrival of Puerto Ricans in New York City they established cultural groups, clubs and businesses that provided networks, social and cultural connections to families entering and living in New York City. Following the second world war, Puerto Ricans began leaving New York City. They left fragmented barrios, affordable housing was impossible to find small businesses bodegas and botanicas – closed their doors or relocated, taking capital with them and their critical community leadership skills they exerted (Beck, 1987). The organizations they created did not have sufficient resources or political access to state or city-wide agencies to address social and economic struggles (Karrol, 2017). The launch of New York City nonprofit organizations was President Johnson War on Poverty initiative. President Johnson thought of himself as the new FDR and wanted to shape the programs in that image. He developed and began anti-poverty programs with the approval of a five-million-dollar budget (Beck, 1987). New York Puerto Rican community earlier associations, self-help societies, social organizations and the profession-

ally orientated groups that helped shape communities in the inter-war years meant the broad dispersal of the city's population (Karrol, 2017). Organizational structures of pioneering colonias could not provide a viable structure to address the needs of Puerto Ricans (Karrol, 2017). However, several organizations did survive, and others were created.

This section shares the barriers and facilitators Puerto Rican women experienced leading the nonprofit operations, funding, and board members within their nonprofit organizations. Including this brief historical perspective is essential. It points to how the participants in this study arrived in New York City and how the clubs developed by Puerto Ricans and funded by President Johnson's war on poverty policies impact their work today. Their reasons for choosing New York City shaped their view of work in nonprofit organizations. The question asked of all the participants was, 'why did they choose to lead a New York City nonprofit organization?' They also shared how they want or wanted to address the complex issues impacting the different communities. All chose New York City as a place to lead and do their work.

Participant 2

Born in Puerto Rico and raised in New York. Its where I was and at the time there was AIDS, and it was coming to get us. It was a big, bad, evil thing that could come and get you and kill you. There was no science.

Participant 4

I came from Puerto Rico to New York, and I didn't know any other place. I came to the Lower East Side, to my first job in the 70's.

Participant 7

Born in Puerto Rico and we came to New York City in the mid-seventies. I saw how the Bronx was burning but then I got involved in organizing with a youth group. I've been a volunteer, a youth member, then an adult activist.

Participant 8

I had children and it's easy to focus on your career and unbalance your children by moving. Even though some people say, "Oh you might get a better job if you move to another state." But I didn't want to unbalance their lives.

Although Puerto Ricans have migrated to a number of important cities such as New York, the migration to St. Croix is being recognized quite recently (Simounet 2013; Villarini and Gonzalez 2010). The Puerto Ricans were an important Crucian diaspora group (Simounet, 2013). Three of the women were born in Puerto Rico and one was born in the Virgen Islands.

Participant 5

I've been in New York City since 1984, born and raised in St. Croix, Virgen Islands, I'm ninth generation Puerto Rican, raised Boricua, Puerto Rican woman. I learned about structural and institutional racism and from there I transitioned into nonprofit work in New York City.

The Puerto Rican women who migrated from Puerto Rico and St. Croix and the diaspora group born and raised in New York City were all committed to advocacy, community leadership development or their concern of their own families in the city. As Participant 1 shared, "I couldn't imagine doing this work, really, anywhere else other than New York."

Participant 9

Well, this is where I grew up. This is my neighborhood. And the DNA of this organization is about empowering community to be the leaders that we are. Community planning, self-

determination; these are all the things that came out of this organization that I feel like I embod-
ied, and who better than to be of the community to lead an organization here? You want that kind
of succession plan. You want to pass that baton within the community and see that leadership
grow and rise.

Participant 1

New York City offers, a complex landscape. There isn't a shortage of issues in place
where you could really make a difference. I couldn't imagine doing this work, really, anywhere
else other than New York. I mean, this is my backyard, my neighborhood, this is the city that
raised me.

Participant 3

Born and raised in New York City. There's just something different, and I've had oppor-
tunities and I have looked at other opportunities outside of New York City. I do know that it's
important for me to work in a large city, but New York is unique.

A participant made it a point to share that there should have been questions about the par-
ticipants 'background.' A few questions offered were: Were they born in Puerto Rico? If so, what
area in Puerto Rico? Were they born in New York? What borough? Although the researcher did
not ask the questions posed by Participant 7, the participants shared their histories, the need to be
in New York City, and their love for their neighborhoods. The question, "why lead a New York
City nonprofit" gave the participants space to delve deeper into their personal history, shared
throughout the findings.

Participant 6

Yo me crie en El Barrio (I was raised in Spanish Harlem.) I was from the projects. I was a single mom and a caregiver. My interest was more in the human services side and being an impact to support my community. It was a passion I had. It was en la sangre como dicen (how they say it's in the blood.)

Barrier and Facilitators - Leading Nonprofits in New York City - A Call to Serve in New York City

However, their origins, like their experiences choosing New York City, were all unique and significant. Their stories add to the narrative of historically led Puerto Rican nonprofit leadership in New York City. Some Puerto Rican women migrated from Puerto Rico, while others made it a point to share that they grew up in New York City Housing (NYCHA) developments. At the same time, others shared their experiences as middle-income Puerto Rican families. Nevertheless, another was a Puerto Rican mother keeping her children rooted in one community. It is essential to establish the historical context of the migration and cultural establishment of Puerto Ricans in New York.

Nonprofit Operations - It's a Business – Operations and Board of Directors

The third theme identified in the study is nonprofit operations. There were several different questions that brought forth discussions about the various structures of nonprofits as a sector. In the literature the topic of board of directors and fundraising are highlighted. In the interviews the topic of board of directors and fundraising were also presented. However, the question of operations, fundraising and sustaining historically led Puerto Rican organization and their need for financial support were not found in the literature. Participant 9 raises the question, "Where are the organizations parachutes for nonprofits?" Participant 9 discussed the bailout for banks, the airlines, and other for-profit businesses yet there are no bailouts for historically founded and led

Puerto Rican organizations or any nonprofit organizations in the United States. Participant 9 very simple but profound question, "Why is that?"

Funding challenges go beyond senior leaders identifying funding for the organization. Consider that many of the city and state funds secured for their organization does not automatically provide a cashflow for the agency. State contracts don't pay on time further destabilizing the organization (as well as increasing the director pressure on the financially strapped executives) as Burghardt shares, (2021, p. 40). Board of directors and funding institutions often blame financial challenges within organizations on the senior leadership rather than on a complex system of funding and fundraising.

Participant 2 – Board of Directors

A barrier Puerto Rican women face within boards is competition. The competition presented itself as Board Members undermining the Executive Directors or Board Members jockeying for the Executive Director position. I was overworked, not getting any sleep, and to have my motives questioned, as if I was going to steal something, or as if I was totally stupid, everything was second guessed. Support was not presented as if, "Well, I'll have to help you with this because you don't know how to do it." a Puerto Rican woman on the board said, "I'll interview them for you," and taking over. Or wanting to sit on interviews. Not necessarily giving me a list of people where I might be …. Because I was totally new at this. There were other Puerto Rican women on the board who as soon as money came in, really jockeying for the position. It wounded me. I never stood up to them.

Competition in nonprofit organizations emerges when resources are scarce, and the nature of funding and contract awards, typically based on competitive procurement, may exacerbate rivalry (Bunger, 2013). Fiscal uncertainty within organizations can create competition

among Puerto Rican women senior leaders in the sector, which Participant 2 highlights in this study. The participants discussed the competition, lack of support, micromanagement, or how undermined leadership caused distrust. This experience came from organizations with predominantly Puerto Rican members on their boards, and at times, it was other Puerto Rican women competing with them. The competition among Puerto Rican women is essential to explore and examine. Confronting any real or perceived breach of trust undermines the networks among Puerto Rican women and other women of color in senior leadership positions. Trustworthiness is an expectation that an organizational partner will not behave opportunistically to exploit the partner's vulnerability (Bunger, 2013). The culture of the nonprofit sector is competitive. *Competition* is a barrier built into the sector that Puerto Rican women and women of color in New York City nonprofits can dismantle. Lifting competition is a significant find that leaders can use as a tool and a pitfall to avoid in an already complex system of nonprofits versus feeding into it thinking like for-profit business is all part of the course. The literature identified several pitfalls nonprofit leaders fall into, "some written and some not," but one senior-level leaders can mindfully address.

Participant 4 – Historical Puerto Rican Organization

I was part of the Board of Directors then I became the Executive Director. They spoke so bad about the last executive director and bad about me. At one point the issues were about us getting funding. A community member, Puerto Rican woman assigned to the neighborhood funding committee said, "That woman who replaced the last executive director shouldn't get any money" a supervisor I knew was there and shared, "No, that woman has a name, and she used to

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work for me, and she deserves the position, and the agency is doing good things in the community." Board of Directors should be supporting the executive director at all levels. But there is a lot of competition sometimes from all members for the job of executive director.

Participant 6

My predecessor handheld the board, they were not responsible. They didn't take the responsibility or accountability of a board. My predecessor did everything for them. There were term limits, but they were never held to it. I had to boldly make changes. I asked the board to nominate another prospective board member. We then introduced them to the organization by presenting the staff, programs, fiscal and the overall operations. We gave them job descriptions and explained their fiduciary responsibilities, their give/get. I will say I did not have anyone guiding me in this process. I learned it all online and through hands on experience.

Participant 5 - Board of Directors

One of the barriers and an important one is boards, when there's not a diversity makeup. My experience has been mostly boards of White people and really working through some, I think of the biases, sometimes that people bring to the table has been challenging. If I had F/U money, I think a question I would ask board members, "why are you here?" What impact have you made? Describe to me the community that it is that you're trying to help? I think that I would dig deep around, do you understand the communities that you're servicing? How do you feel about Black and Brown people? But we are in white spaces where there are few of us, and we want to work with our communities, so I think sometimes, "Let me just get in and let me do the work."

In the following lived experience, the participants address the need to restructure the organization, contracts, and agreements important to the organization and facing microaggressions over hiring a diverse staff.

Participant 6 – Organizations Structure

One of the biggest things I learned very quickly is that I needed a good team, my leadership team. I needed a good Chief Financial Officer, and a Chief Program Officer. I really needed dynamic directors for each of the initiatives that we have, because without them, I couldn't do my job effectively. I had to do a lot of restructuring and brought in the C-Suite model. Prior to the model implementation the staff would respond by being reactive and not really thinking through.

Participant 9 – Contracts and Agreements

Running the organization is like running a business. Even though we say its nonprofit, there's nothing nonprofit about running a nonprofit. Operations, contracts and agreements and the legal aspects of running an organization is also very important. That is an added capacity that you don't have built in, because when you build out the work of an organization, it's really program centered, but everything else is kind of left out of the pie, and you have to figure it out because that's all-general operating. But general operating is what makes the programs work.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are principles nonprofits want to include in the organization's operation. However, few agencies know how to implement a DEI culture and practice. Nevertheless, others in leadership distort what it is in place to do, as Participant 1 shares. This next experience speaks of the executive directors hiring practice within nonprofit organizations.

Participant 1 – Hiring Staff/Microaggressions

It was interesting because when I was hiring about a year ago, a senior person came to me and said, I just want you to keep in mind, remember diversity when you're hiring. And I said,

what do you mean by that? My team's the most diverse team here. Well, I'm talking about diverse in another way, like just your team is a little too diverse. And I said, are you telling this department that? Are you telling this other department? All these departments are all white. Are you telling them to bring in people of color? Or is it because they have one or two people of color, they've met their quota and that's good enough. I'll hire who has the skills and ability to do the job.

When navigating funding either through the state, federal, city, private or foundational dollars, nonprofit organizations are often confronted with financial uncertainty. Both federal and individual states are notorious for request for proposals (RFPs) being offered at the last minute and with tight turnaround times, forcing executive directors and their development team (if they have them) to work late hours to meet the deadline (Burghardt, 2021, p. 40). Echoed by Participants 7, "pidiendo" or the "ask" is a barrier senior-leaders are to navigate through within organizations. Another challenge is actually getting the funds from the granted proposals. Burghardt (2021, p. 40) goes on to share federal and state funding arms also often pay late, erratically, and sometimes not for months at a time. However, the funding institutions do expect that the services and support to the community are provided even if leaving the nonprofit financially strapped. There is also the competition for dollars among partnering organizations. In these following shared experiences, the participants discuss their specific struggles with funding.

Participant 5 - Funding

So many times, we get pitted against each other. We're competing for the little dollars, and I've always been more of a collective impact. How do we pool to create, to co-write proposals? So that we can all get what we need and create initiatives were you're good at this, and you're really good at this. I'm good at this. How do we do this together to maximize impact?

Participant 8 - Funding

Funding has always been a struggle for me because the whole thing about you having to ask for this or you are asking for that, "Tu estas pidiendo." (You're always asking.) It is always a big problem for me to ask for funds. That's why we are not a million-dollar organization or any-thing like that. I do love collaborating. I would rather collaborate and identify funding with other organizations. I'd rather collaborate than compete for funding. I think all the current funding for the organization is through a collaboration with another organization.

Participant 9 - Funding

All the funding we've been building along the way has been to support the one vision that we are on now, and its community self-determination, its self-sufficiency. It's about how are we working and building on the legacy of the organization where we don't have to reinvent the wheel. We already did so much of that, if we are smart and we look back and be strategic, then there are ways that we can do more. A facilitator is our grant writer. She is a fund developer who has helped me open my experience up to, "How are we telling the story? How should we be tell-ing the story where we're not just jumping for funding?" However, when you think about an in-stitution to place, keep and preserve, there is no parachute for our nonprofit agencies. Other busi-nesses, banks; they all gone through it. And they all had the support hand over fist to recuperate. Why is there none for nonprofits that are struggling? Especially historically led, Puerto Ri-can/Latino led organizations that have gone through the toughest times in the city? So that needs to change.

Participant 3 - Funding

A barrier in fundraising is identifying big donors. I do have big donors that are donating. And sometimes, the barrier is because large citywide institution wants to poach the donors, versus work collaboratively. I don't want to hurt the relationship because I think they have the capacity to give more. There is also competition among other organizations. I want to make sure we are not competing against each other. So, trying to balance because I don't want us as an organization to look crazy.

Barriers and Facilitators -Nonprofit a Business – Operations, Funding and Board of Directors

A facilitator was identifying the competition among Puerto Rican women in senior leadership. By identifying that competition exist is a facilitator in this study. By "naming it", the women can have open and honest dialogue about why this is occurring and build a stronger foundation towards a consistent network and coalitions among one another.

"Where are the Parachutes?" This was a question posed by Participant 9 addressing the financial help, stability and saving nonprofit organizations specifically historically founded and led nonprofit organizations. Financial stability as indicated in the literature also involves funding organizations meeting fiscal responsibilities by awarding and reimbursing grants in a timely manner. Delayed funding while having rigid and unrealistic contractual obligations are barriers for senior leadership who then have to struggle to identify and find approaches to financially stabilize the organization. According to Burghardt (2021), an uncertain environment and weak financial resource means that the people working under those conditions are stressed and potentially traumatized over time.

Building networks, coalitions and health are topics discussed in this section and allows the study to move on to the next section that includes building networks, identifying role models, and creating healing spaces for Puerto Rican women in senior leadership.

Looking Beyond the Mentoring Models

Significant roles along with mothers, Abuelas in Puerto Rican culture are Las Tia's y La Comay. Referred to by Puerto Ricans as La Comay, the role continues to be an influential cultural icon as a revered, an empowered leader who looks out for her community and continues to play an important part in the lives of Puerto Ricans (Camacho, 2012). This section of the study discusses four additional themes. The remaining themes discussed are Las Tias y Las Comays Puerto Rican models of leadership, beyond the mentoring models, healing spaces and Afro-Boricua and Latino White privilege.

Puerto Rican Women Leaders – Las Tia's y Comay's

The question asked of the participants to engage in this conversation about role models was, "Is there a Puerto Rican woman in history who inspired you or contributed to your role as a leader?" The researcher shared examples: Women of the Young Lords Party, Evelina Lopez Antonetti, and Antonia Pantoja. A few of the women mentioned the Young Lords Party Iris Morales. Several Puerto Rican women were identified as organizers, community, and political advocates. Some Puerto Rican women identified are Alice Cardona, Yolanda Sanchez, Petra Santiago, Anna Vincenty, and Lorraine Cortes-Vasquez. Representation matters; the participant's responses speak to how important representation is and that the work and leadership of the women mentioned by the participants are respected and serve as a model to nonprofit leadership and work today.

Participant 3

She was from the Young Lords. Iris Morales, she ran a nonprofit also for... She would fund small, independent grassroots nonprofits. She didn't work directly with me, but just understanding she came from the Young Lords, understanding her struggle, I had opportunities to speak to her, inspires you to do the work. I went to Hunter College. I had access to a wealth of Puerto Rican study courses. My mom is essential to my development, and I would say she's a strong person, and I think that's the role model, even though we disagree on a lot of things, but she was fierce as a mom.

Participant 7

Women that I have learned and have inspired me, the founder of my organization. People that I know, just hearing the stories, the founder of my organization, and Iris Morales (Young Lord Party). I know Antonetty because I know her daughter, but I read some of the stuff about her. It's also really people, my mother, people that I know, those are the people that inspire me more than people I don't know. Like my grandmother inspires me. I ask her, "How do you buy this land?" She was like," Yo tenia un puerco y una vaca (I had a pig and a cow) and I raised that. And then I sold it for $125. and I was able to buy two acres of land." It was like, okay. And that land, we still have it in Puerto Rico. Those are the stories, learning from the people that I know have inspired me, just the struggles.

As reflected in the literature, the women of the Young Lords Party continue to affect the current leadership as recognized in the narrative. They remain a significant group of women organizers in Puerto Rican history. It is confirmed in their continued influence on Puerto Rican women today. Identifying Iris Morales, specifically by the women interviewed in this study, also speaks of her continued work and advocacy for Puerto Rican women and other women of color.

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Another group of women continues to serve as an influential group of Puerto Rican women in history, like Antonia Pantoja, as Participant 9 identified herself as an Aspirante. Participant 1 spoke of Alice Cardona and her political knowledge and confidence. Petra Santiago's mantra to the young women she worked to develop as leaders and advocates, "Una mandar al carajo al tiempo es lo mas saludable." Translated (Sending someone to hell at the moment is the healthiest). The quote continues to live on as Participant 4's nonprofit organizational mantra.

Participant 4

Her name was Petra Santiago. She was the first woman manager of the independent baseball league that was for youngsters, for people in the neighborhood on the Lower East Side... She started working as a community activist with then Mobilization for Youth. That was one of the very good, the best one of the first programs that started. Then when funding came through Great Society, she established an organization called United Organization on Suffolk Street. I joined the organization. She was the Executive Director of United Organization of Suffolk Street. She established a daycare and helped people in the Lower East Side. What she wanted, for everybody was adult basic education. And they taught people from Ecuador and Dominican Republic English, adult basic education. She had miniature voting machines so that people could learn how to vote. Really. Because the first time you vote, nobody tells you. And she was fierce. She would go to meetings, and she would say whatever she wanted to say.

Participant 1

A less well-known on a national scope, but well-known here in New York City is Alice Cardona and I met Alice when I was in college. It was one of those, it was like a women's break-fast, and I got invited to, I don't know, I think through the mentor I had, who worked at the big

financial institution. She took me to the women's breakfast. And I see this woman and she's just kind of talking and I was just observing her from a far. And I was like, oh my gosh, she seems amazing and very unpretentious. And I went up to her and I talked with her, I introduced myself and I said, I would love to work with you. I learned how to network with my other mentor, I just kept those relationships going. When I think of Puerto Rican women, I think Alice was a definite influencer for me. Yeah. I think Gladys Carrion also major influencer for me, total badass. Someone who just really focuses on doing what's right for kids and families, even when it's not aligned with the policy. I think the two of them, lesser-known figures. I always think of Alice as like the godmother of like, Nydia Velázquez wouldn't be there without Alice.

The participants also shared their levels of acculturation into the dominant culture and needing to learn how to respond to leaders like Antonia Pantoja, who had introduced Aspira at her then-school.

Participant 2

There was this dichotomy and this blend of cultures for me. I've had this mixture, but there was nothing fortifying my Puerto Rican-ness and Antonio Pantoja was going to do that. But I didn't know that I just knew there was this hickey meeting where all the hickey kids that had accents, some of them, were going to be at, so I didn't go. Later, I got involved with a progressive labor movement. Big, bad left group. I was maybe 19 years old. Through that, I became involved with a Puerto Rican Socialist Party. Two Puerto Rican young men had been killed by the cops under this underpass that used to be La Marqueta at night and I went to that. I was still half unconscious, but it was important to me. Then I started seeing that you've got to speak up for being Puerto Rican and it's a good thing.

As identified in the feminist theory using feminist analysis and uplifting Latinidad Feminista is to value remembering women's stories as a corrective measure leading to the politicized consciousness. The Puerto Rican women in this study consistently bring in the political, gender, and leadership narrative important in telling the stories of their lived experiences.

Participant 5

Well, Sonia Sotomayor comes to mind, but if you think about early on, Lolita Lebron, and then I must use my Titi, who was for 30 years a teacher in a Puerto Rican High School. And she was really a role model for me, fluent in English, French and Spanish. She was a mentor to so many. She then developed Alzheimer's and it was just really touching to see how the outpouring of love from many of her previous students. She made sure that women got into Bard, Vassar, you name it. So that outpouring of love. There's something to be said about looking up to your close to homes, well, she would be one.

Participant 6

There were so many people who crossed my path, as a professional growing in this business. I've worked with a lot of service providers. Besides my grandmother, because I see her as a facilitator, because she was a teacher in the Sunday school, and she had the institute, because I grew up in a Pentecostal church. She was a senior leader in that. For me, she was my first mentor. Lorraine Cortes-Vasquez Commissioner New York City Department of Aging, she's a bulldog. People walk on eggshells with her because she says what she says, and she means it. That can be intimidating for some. But she's there. She's present.

What is noticeable about identifying Antonia Pantoja as a leader in this study is the intergenerational connection between the participants. Although in this study the researcher did

not ask the participants age the researcher did observe generational differences between the participants.

Participant 9

Antonia Pantoja I'm an Aspirante! I got to meet her. I wrote an essay in middle school, and they did a trip to Puerto Rico when she was alive, and I got to meet her. So, she would be on my list. Yolanda Garcia, totally on my list; high, high in the ranks. I was reflecting on the women in history that made a difference in my life. And certainly Dr. Pantoja and Yolanda Garcia, Anna Vincenty. My mom, of course. The pathways that I'm creating intentionally within this organization is to have that pipeline is starting with interns, starting with our youth leadership.

The Participants mentioned their mothers, Tia's and Abuelas as role models in their lives. Many of these strong role models are in history books and also in Puerto Rican homes and among family members. Participant 8 makes the point of the almost invisible group of Puerto Ricans sharing, "Where are they? Why aren't we reading about them? I only became aware of Puerto Rican leaders when taking college courses about Puerto Ricans." As previously stated in the literature, Puerto Rican women's leadership success is in the networks formed outside nonprofit institutions. Identifying as a homogenous group can lead to not knowing other Puerto Rican women in history or, presently, as Participant 8 points out, rendering them invisible.

Participant 8

To say whether those folks, that you mention, of course they do represent us, but there's just not enough, they're not enough, where do you read about those folks? You read about them when you were in college maybe, there was one book that one of them had, but that's it, you don't really grow up with books about who they are.

Barriers and Facilitators of Puerto Rican Leadership

Representation is important. If Puerto Rican women can see people like themselves in the field, they may be more likely to envision themselves as senior leaders in the sector. Identifying as a homogenous group as a Latina/o creates a blend of invisibility, making it difficult for Puerto Rican women to learn of one another in the field. Participant 8 did not mention anyone in history whom she considered a role model. Given that one Puerto Rican woman in senior leadership cannot identify other Puerto Rican women in leadership, the researcher suggests a shift needs to occur. Creating networks, coalitions, or collaborating with others to seek guidance as senior leaders is difficult.

A facilitator in this study is that there are Puerto Rican women in senior leadership. Establishing and creating a resource guide to connect Puerto Rican women in senior leadership would be an asset to their overall support, continued collaboration, and guidance to other women of color pursuing careers in nonprofit organizations.

Beyond the Mentoring Models

Mentoring is a developmental relationship between a more experienced mentor and a less experienced protégé, with a focus on career development and growth (Smith, 2018; Kram, 1983,1988). Mentoring relationships are not always positive. According to Smith (Smith 2018; Eby 2007; Esnard et al., 2015; Leck & Orser 2013: Ragins & Kram, 2007; Thomas, 2001), mentoring challenges stem from the differences in values, personalaities, and workstyles, which may be inherent in mentoring relationship where the mentor and protégé differ in terms of identity. All the participants in this study shared mentoring, coaching, certificate programs and training aimed at collaboration and exchange of ideas for an opportunity to acquire new knowledge, increase development and strengthening their leadership. The Participants did share

that they struggled with "mentors" who did not have their best interest in mind. As Participant 1 describes, "I think the first thing is that nonprofits need to start from a place of value, valuing the women of color that are in their organization, valuing the Latinas that are in their organization." The women in the study share their lack of interest in structured mentoring and interested in identifying their own support. The researcher understood that the participants used the term mentoring but meant something distinctive at their specific level of senior leadership. In this section the themes addressing support, healing and development were significant.

Participant 8

Let us say if somebody just started being an executive director, so, somebody that maybe had more years could be partnered up with each other. It doesn't mean that the person who's been there more years know more. It's about learning from each other. I think that's almost the same way you went about finding us. Word of mouth. There's no directory, there's none of other stuff. So, just talking to friends and family, if they know about organizations in the community, and yeah, just word of mouth. Researcher asks "How would you use this supportive space for your growth as an executive director? The participant responds, "I will use it to get better in different areas that I have been weak. Maybe there's areas that I'm a little bit stronger than others, but just to help myself, ask me to grow. And, to help other people. Like I said, exchange. I don't see it as me getting, getting, getting, but how can we make this as an exchange?"

There are Puerto Rican men in history not mentioned in this study. The focus of the study is the underrepresentation of Puerto Rican women in New York City nonprofit organization. There are two participants in this study who do recognize Puerto Rican men as role models and support in their lives.

Participant 1

Mentorship is important, but even when people are well-intentioned around their mentorship, they can be hurtful, and it can be harmful. And the person who's being mentored can end up having to carry more than they thought they would need to carry in a mentoring relationship. So, I say mentorship, but I think sometimes it's better to go outside of your organization than to be mentored by somebody in the organization, unless that person is Latina. I have been fortunate to have mentors along the way. I think when you have mentorship, you have to be open to being mentored and I've always been open to being mentored. I mean, I think because of how I grew up, I always felt like I didn't have a chance to fail. I didn't have time to find myself. I had to just get in it and like "darle todo que le puedo dar" (give it all that I have) and that has just been how I've operated. I see everything as an opportunity, everything. My dad would always say to me, "te tiene que dar a conocer" (you must make yourself known), right. If I would say, oh, there's this thing "vamos tu vas a ir" (come, you're going), he would always encourage me to go. He was very invested in making sure that I always looked professional and that's like a whole other Latino thing from our hair to our nails, just being, in a very traditional Latino way of being pulled together. But I had great mentors. And when I was in college, I had a professor who really took me under her wing and mentored me.

Participant 2

I would've done it (sought out support and guidance) but I didn't know the questions to ask. I think you have to be trained; I was not. And you have to have mentors. You have to have mentors and they can come in all sorts of ways. Maybe a mentor in the field, maybe just a mentor in your life. So, you have different needs, and you need to surround yourself. I didn't always do that. I mean, I learned later to do it.

Participant 3

I think in New York City, what I've learned also is to tap into different networks and resources. Because I think as an exec now, the job is lonely. And if you don't have people you could call, it becomes even more lonely and isolating, and making sure that you build your go-to people that you could bounce your frustrations and ideas, because you can't always share that with your team. And I would say that New York City should build that. And it shouldn't always sit in one organization. That you need to maintain those old networks that you had when you first started and build upon them. And I think it's those relationships that have allowed me to grow in New York City and understanding that networking is really critical and important. And maintaining those relationships are important sometimes, making sure we don't burn our bridges.

Participant 4

Mentoring, when the mentoring is honest, is a matter of really, really asking somebody, "How can I help you? Really, what is it that you need from me? Not from the rest of the world, from me? What could I offer to help you out specifically?" Executive directors, Puerto Rican women, they must learn. The first thing is that we are very valuable, that we are no less than anybody else, and confront the situation and take it from there. And then ask for help. Many people don't ask for help. And wishful, Board of Directors should be supporting the executive at all levels. But it's a lot of competition sometimes from all members for the job. Yeah. I don't know if there is a group of Puerto Rican women now to support other women leaders.

Participant 5

     I have found mentors, so a critical moment in my career was being accepted in a leadership fellowship. One of my mentors, Puerto Rican woman scholar. She is known for her mentorship and guidance to all women, but specifically to Puerto Rican women. So, I met her there and so that really opened my network of people. And I tap on her and other Boricua women. There is a group of Boricua women that I turn to. Shared experiences can be safe spaces to speak. I find myself looking, what other organizations can I find, as opposed to, there should be this active recruitment research, and recruitment to bringing more Puerto Rican women in. I think... At least I don't think that it exists. But something where there's a mentorship program that's very peer to peer. So, I think one that's perhaps it's just for executive directors of Puerto Rican descent or heritage, peer to peer, but then this combined mentorship, almost like a big brother/big sister, if you will.

Participant 6

     I wish there was a training for Latino leaders. I know they have different things here and there, but I wish there was an actual certification program that would help coach and support Latino leaders because I didn't know a lot of things. Then I have my competitors, I guess I would call them, who are different. Culture's different, values are different, and they weren't like me. I would look to them for advice, but the advice wouldn't really, I would have to figure out how to mold it to fit the needs that I needed for my team and for my organization. If there was some sort of a training that solely focused on Latino leaders, I think it would have been an easier transition for me. Because again, I'm not only learning as a new ED, but I'm also learning as a new ED in a pandemic. So, I had a double whammy of trying to figure it out because I'm isolated now. Now who the heck am I going to reach out to? I'm not in the community. I'm not out here. I'm working

from upstate calling in, Zooming in to everything, trying to see what other training there is, trying to figure out, and restructuring. A good training, I did, but it was through one of the CUNY schools. They had an executive leadership certificate training, and it was good. However, it was a white man teaching it. I didn't connect because I felt it was missing the culture piece. It was missing the fact that I'm a woman piece. It had all those points, so it had about board. It had about staff engagement. It had about development. All those areas that are so important, but it lacked that piece because it is important as women leaders. We're still women. We're parents. We're moms and wives. That's always hard because we're juggling 50 things, but we're making it happen.

Participant 7

I guess things that now that I work with other women of color, like the director here at the center, she's a young woman of color. She's half. She's half Boricua and half Dominican. And just making sure that she's okay, having that mentorship. Like the founder of the organization, when she left, she had a life to do. She mentored me before as an organizer but having somebody to walk with me through the whole thing would have been good. And I know that there's more programs like that now.

Participant 8

I'll tell you something that happened with an organization that will answer who were my mentors. I got an MPA because of the organization I was working in, but it was under different leadership. New people came in, everybody forgot about my receiving my MPA. When I applied for a senior leadership position within the organization they said, well, we can't offer it to you because you don't have the MPA. And then when I said, "Well, I do." They were shocked. They didn't know what to say. Then I asked if I could see the person's resume, and I said, "Let's look at

both resumes." And they didn't know what to say. Then the executive leadership said that he could get me any position that I wanted in the city. What was he telling me, that he was not going to make me a senior leader within the organization? So that has really been my experience, I would say that it's even my current experience now as well. Although you can work with people that are nice, they're not really looking out for you. I feel that a lot of it has to be with how people view Puerto Ricans period, I mean, that's how I see it because I see who gets promoted and it's like, oh, okay.

As previously mentioned, and observed the women are creating their own senior leadership ladders and spaces connecting to Puerto Rican and women of color leaders outside of their organization. The researcher identifies them as "Las Tias and Las Comays." Las Comays are Puerto Rican women senior leaders identified as a collective who work to form a paradigm shift embracing various experiences, cultural, ethnicity, creating an egalitarian and trusted bond to further their work through a strategic network and healing approach while simultaneously educating one another and forming a connection. The characteristics of Las Comays are the various components offered by the women in this study throughout all of the interviews. Participant 9 further affirms and acknowledges elements of La Comay.

Participant 9

Trusted mentorship: someone that you know has your best interests at heart and wants to see you personally succeed, wants to see your organization succeed. And they're in a capacity where they can do that. So not just putting you under their wing and introducing you to people who you need to know in the network, but also showing you like, "Look, this is a tool, and this is how this tool can be used." Because you could present the toolbox to anyone, but it doesn't necessarily mean that they're going to know how to use it and when to use each tool in the

toolbox. You could be sitting on a wealth of knowledge and a wealth of resources, but if there's

no one there to walk you through it to say, "Hey, this is how I've used it. And you might find

another way to use it there too", or you could say, "Damn, I didn't even realize that you could use

that tool ... " Right? There's just so much of that experience that you can get out of the

mentorship that I didn't have then, and I really don't have now, but I find who I need to console

with, consult with. I say 'console' because that is a whole other connotation. "You need to help

me through this because I need to heal." But I mean 'consult.'

Barriers and Facilitators - Beyond Mentoring

Beyond mentoring is both a barrier and a facilitator. However, a number of the women in

this study identified "mentors" within their organizations. Connecting all of their experiences

about mentoring is their agreement that the support best sought came from Puerto Rican women

and other women of color outside of their organizations. However, the descriptions and examples

of the type of support they sought were in opposition to structured mentoring. The "mentoring"

described a revered leader among Puerto Rican women who are trusted and respected and can

offer an honest exchange of ideas and views. This person would not come in as the expert but as

someone who shares their practice and experiences as Puerto Rican women leaders in the field of

nonprofits.

The women in this study seek coaching involving the work and transitions to other

organizations, salary negotiations, and affirmation of their lived experiences especially

addressing microaggressions. They want to share approaches of how they may have addressed

situations in the field and healing from some of their experiences together to establish alliances

and the support be reciprocal and an attempt to balance one another to address what comes with

being a senior leader. The women in this study do not want to be consumed by the barriers that

can make them physically and mentally ill. They want to identify actionable and best practices

and processes for institutional change within many of the racist, sexist and oppressive practices

within organizations. This is more than a structured program on business leadership can offer,

but it is achievable. Participant 1 shares, 'A well-known Puertorriqueña told me, "You know,

there's mentorship and there's sponsorship." Sometimes people don't have bandwidth for

mentorship, but they may have time for a sponsorship. Sponsorship - Who can I connect you

with? You two should be talking. Or, oh, you are looking for another position? I'll keep you in

mind when I see something. So that is sponsorship. I wonder. How many people are missing out

on that opportunity of sponsorship because the mentorship, can be long term. It's deeper and it

takes more time. And then perhaps at some level, once in your career, you don't need that

mentorship as much. It's more around that sponsorship. I feel like that's where I'm at now.

Sponsorship.

The Metaphors of Puerto Rican Women in Senior Level Leadership

Metaphors give a critical illustrative depiction of the Puerto Rican women's experience

as New York City senior-level leaders in executive spaces. The metaphors illustrate how they

experience leading in executive roles within nonprofit organizations. The metaphors reveal many

pressures of leading nonprofits and in white-majority spaces.

Participant 1 – Velalo/Watch Them

I think I have pretty much risen to the top in every place that I've worked, as far as I'd like to go.

But when you get up there, it is lonely. It is precarious. I'm constantly watching. I shift my eyes

because it's like, you constantly have to watch your back. And I think when you are well-

educated, smart, strong, there are a lot of MWM (mediocre white men) that are really

intimidated. You have to constantly be scanning the environment because they come after you,

all the time. You come into these spaces with the best of intentions. And so, when you get up there, you just have to be prepared to be let down. I keep my sights on my north star. My north star is the work.

Participant 3 –Latina Salary Cap

I strongly believe this organization that had issues with Latina leadership specifically because I have seen where several Latinas that were in key positions at the time had barriers put in front of them. Capping their salaries or limiting their salary requirements, and in my head, I'm like, "A male over here and you're giving him X amount of dollars, but you're going to shortchange this one for an extra 10 or 15 grand?

As identified in the literature review the common barriers for Latina women in nonprofit organizations included inequitable salaries, being overlooked for job opportunities, promotions or other recognition, stereotypes regarding ethnic and gender identity, language, and or accent; and burdened with representing their communities.

Participant 1 – El Achaque

The work we are doing is too important. People can't wait for you to get over your achaque, whatever achaque you have this week, for the work to happen. And so that creates a reputation for me because I hold people accountable because I don't put up with bullshit, and the women of color get it but the white women they don't like that at all. It's like having two full-time jobs, you're constantly having to navigate the environment and the space in ways that your white colleagues do not have to. White men and white women can take up as much space as they want to. They can have a total emotional breakdown in the middle of the floor. They can make accusations, they can get upset, they can have bad days. You can't have any of that stuff.

These three metaphors illustrate the barriers Puerto Rican women in this study experience while also creating strategies that can best address them. who create strategies to strongly advocate for themselves experience as senior leaders. This next metaphor illustrate what crisis looks and feels like and what gets created on the other side of the crisis.

Participant 9 – Steel, Diamonds, and Phoenix

I can see a connection with each of the metaphors offered as the example shared. I'm also thinking about 'steel' and how steel is made in the fire and molded, just like diamonds, right? The best diamonds are diamonds that have been under enormous pressure. And for me, because of my direct experience…I didn't come into this kind of like, "Okay, I'm a VP and now I made it up to become president." I didn't have that trajectory. I kind of was thrust into this kind of like steel; kind of just put in, and then you start on the heat, and you start molding it and crafting it and then you come up with whatever that invention is. Like a phoenix, you know? "How do you build and come out of it in a time of crisis?"

The following metaphor explains a plan for success in the field by providing three mantras that can serve as a framework.

Participant 6 – A Seat at the Table

"Never Let Them See You Sweat", "Let's Stick to The Plan", and "We've Got to Keep Our Eye on the Prize." If anything, its these three frameworks. Always make sure that you demand that attention because there's always a seat for you at the table.

Participant 8 – Un Sancocho

My leadership experience is taking a little bit from different places and then just creating my own. And then I'm like this does not serve me. This does serve me. This does not serve my

community. This does serve my community. Dale el sancocho que tu le pone todo (the sancocho the stew that you put everything.)

The last two metaphors challenge the idea the feminist theoretical perspective about the adobe ceiling described in the literature and the idea that an alliance among women specifically Puerto Rican women and women of color.

Participant 2 – Quitate Tu Pa'Poner Me Yo/You leave, and I will replace you

The idea of the Adobe ceiling is pretty and romantic, but don't overstep. It's the "Quitate tu pa' poner me yo!", it's still the competition. It may be a side effect of colonialism, a side effect of oppression not just colonialism, that we expect some great white ally to be aware, to help, to quitarse, when we want them to. Why did this one get this position when this heroine, this wonderful Anglo heroine has been struggling for your community? I think it's because we are not recognizing our own power and using it and we're still coming with a tin cup asking for a handout, and not demanding based on our real credentials, our hard-won credentials and experience.

Participant 4 – Una Manda Al Carajo Al Tiempo Es Lo Mas Saludable/Sending them to hell at this time is the healthiest.

You don't take shit from anybody. I was told, "Don't be defensive. You don't have to answer but don't lie about it." "And nobody's better than you."

Participant 8 – Division and Opposition

There is no alliance within us, there is no alliance. We don't support each other, period.

Barriers and Facilitator to Metaphors

Facilitators of metaphors offered by the Puerto Rican women in this study offer images and phrases specific to their experiences. The glass ceiling, which many refer to and is a well-

known term, does not fully describe the experiences of all women. Metaphors like "sancocho", "achaque", "Velalo", or "Quitate Tu Pa'Poner Me Yo" illustration the intersection of cultural, language, and the experiences as a senior leaders in a New York City nonprofit organization. Participant 5 The intersectionality of bias and gender discrimination.

And when you look at women just in general, getting paid less than men. Latinas are at the end of the spectrum. Why are we lagging? How do we partner with community colleges, with workforce development organizations to break the gap, at least even the playing field more for Latinas, and I'm not sure what the break is, even from the Latina spectrum, where the Puerto Rican women are there. I say all those metaphors are applicable, and then there is something to be said around the intersectionality.

Healing Spaces for Growth and Development

The commitment to what the women called "the work" is palpable. What they may not have been ready for, as Participant 1 shares, was the contrast and clash of the "heartwarming and heartbreak" that comes with being in a senior leadership position. Some of the barriers experienced have caused the women traumas and have no place to go and heal. There is no training, certificate program, or support to address some of the experiences. They discuss wanting to heal from the traumas they were subjected to as they confronted microaggressions, colorism, racism, and sexism.

Participant 9

I think there's a nonverbal expectation to put in those hours. It's not like they tell you, don't do it. They see you do it. So, no, I think it was more a nonverbal expectation, but also for me to feel like I needed to get the work all done. I think it's a mix of two things. But more of, if you work hard, you put in the hours, you'll get recognized for it, that kind of nonverbal kind of

thing. When you realize they're not recognizing you for that, and I've learned that. I will put in that time. But they're not every day. They're less frequent that I'm putting that amount of time.

Several of the women in this study did share of this unspoken expectation to work long hours while sacrificing their health and their own families. My question to them was, "Were you told to work the long hours by the Board of Directors?" Most said no, "but it was expected." As stated by Burghardt (2021, p. 66), one cannot stand for social justice and disregard that exhausted worker living with secondary trauma by simply "thanking them for their service" and recommending self-care as a cure all. Putting family planning on hold, ending up in the hospital or experiencing the loss of executive directors and board members to then be propelled into leadership roles are experiences that cause stress, physical illness, and challenge mental health.

Participant 4

But I always wonder what would've been if I would've put my family life first than my career. You know, we thought about different ways to adopt and everything, but I was just like, at this point, that's not what I want to do. And I refocused on my career. But that's one of my regrets. I wish I would've taken a pause, not been focused on trying to grow my career so quickly and work hard and taken some time sooner to start a family.

Participant 7

I ended up in the hospital. I think if I wouldn't have ended up in the hospital, I think COVID would have killed me. When the director of the center, got sick. She had cancer and I thought I was superwoman. I took my job as the executive director of my organization and the director of the center. So together in my organization, I had a full staff and then I supervised the staff from the center. I was working in my office then I was coming to the center in the evening. I think it was a week that I worked the whole week, and I was barely sleeping. And that shit

caught up to me. And I ended up 20 days in the hospital. And I was like, "You have not slept in a while. You are hearing shit. You're not sleeping. You're going to be bugging out." My family, "Esta se esta volviendo loca" (I think she is going crazy). They took me to the hospital, and they were trying to figure out what was going on with me. They couldn't find anything that was going on with me, but I was like, what I really needed was to slow my brain down because everything was too fast. To slow my brain down, they gave me medication. I was like, I can't do this. This is not me. When I was in the hospital, I was like, if I do anything, because they told me you do not need to go to the psych ward. I ended up in the psych ward for less than 24 hours. I was like, no, this is not me. And I told the doctor, "If I stay here, I'm really going to lose it." I did the outpatient. And then they gave me outpatient and slowly I started working with the psychologist. I went to Puerto Rico for two weeks, spent time with my family over there. And when I came back and that appointment, the lady just took me off. I was on medication for a few months.

There are implicit expectations put upon Puerto Rican women and women of color in senior leadership to work through their vacation, put their lives on hold, or, as Participant 1 shared, "work two jobs" as they work within "white spaces." What keeps one from a new DSM diagnosis – accumulation of anxiety, a fear of not meeting one's desired payroll accumulated from multiple sources is that it all seems so normal because other agencies' leaders are experiencing the same thing (Burghardt, 2021, p. 41). A question the researcher raised to a few participants is how they create a different work environment for themselves and the staff. Several participants shared how through supervision, they encourage their staff to take their vacation time and offered self-care as a practice.

Participant 1

I mean, I think I have always worked in predominantly white institutions, and I think when you are Latina and Puerto Rican, you deal with stereotypical tropes of who you are. I mean, there have been so, I don't know that they're barriers but there are incidents that, over time, just wear on you, you carry them with you because they're painful because there is no formal mechanism for healing. And I think for people of color, for Latinas doing this work, it's heartwarming and heartbreaking the work itself and then the experience itself. Because you can be, you can feel really great that somebody has extended an opportunity to you and that's super heartwarming like, wow, they believe in me and then you can come into a space and realize it's a total snake pit and it's heartbreaking, or you can be aggressed, and nobody has your back. That's heartbreaking. I think the other question is just thinking about how do, when you asked how organizations can help to support better, which you asked, but I'm just thinking there's no healing process that organizations do when these situations happen. And so, people of color, Puerto Rican women, we're just left kind of having to find our own resources to care for ourselves, to recover from the wounds that we have from working in these spaces, all in the service of trying to do the work for our community. So, I think that's another kind of deep dive point.

Participant 6

Taking care of me, allocating more time for me, whether it's my health, whether it's taking time to, what I do now every day, I really try to take a walk every day, so I walk the dog. It's not my dog. It's my daughter's dog, but I walk the dog every morning. I take about a good hour walk. It allows me the time to not think about work. I can think about sometimes what my day is going to be like, but it's helping me, health wise. That was especially important during COVID because it was overwhelming. Because here I am, trying to implement things, put it in place, still stay connected to the team. Didn't want to lose the people. I think more of, it's more

my health because I am diabetic, transparent. I can do better, but I'm always rushing. I think on Monday, we were on a six-hour call. I didn't have lunch, barely had a breakfast. By the time I ate, it was an unhealthy lunch/dinner. That's not good for me as a diabetic. I have to have my meals. I think taking the self-care is important, even though we preach that to our team.

Participant 2

I did get a lot of support from the board president. He was in the mental health field, and we became such good friends. He was so supportive, and he eventually got AIDS and died. When he told me that he was ... we were in the middle of a lot of politics and when he told me that he got it, I mean his partner had died. I said to him, "Okay, you have to take care of yourself. I am resigning you do not need to be standing up to me. You must do what you need to take care of yourself, in or out of the organization. You don't need this stress." I also felt like, "Oh my God, if he's not around what am I going to do?" It wasn't totally selfless, but I was worried about him. And I said, "I don't need this. There's funding, somebody else can pick it up," and somebody else did. It's so many years later, or it doesn't hurt like it used to, but what I find puzzling is that there's still this anger.

Participant 8

They (white people) are surprised I'm Puerto Rican. So, just being able to pass, unfortunately and I resent it, and it's given me a lot of traumas, passing over. It helps me stay in the game. A lot of people don't like Puerto Ricans. What I told my daughters is that my struggle is the journey that opened their doors to do better. In some ways my suffering opened the door for them.

Barriers and Facilitators – Healing Spaces

Healing is the facilitator in this section. Healing is putting actionable approaches to addressing the microaggressions, colorism, racism and sexism. Discrimination, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) was mentioned in many of the interviews as an approach that the leadership is implementing with their staff and executive leadership. However, if DEI is going to work it must also be implemented within the Boards of Directors and actionable processes in the Board of Directors Bylaws. Many in the study shared of "antiquated boards." This can begin with addressing the Board hierarchical structure. Dismantling the tiered approach may be where the Puerto Rican women in senior leadership may want to begin the change. It is time to create a more equitable distribution of power. There are other less explored Board structures that can provide the space to create an equitable distribution of power, identify microaggression and bring swifter action.

Barriers - Understanding that this culture of work hard and put in long hours and you will be recognized leads to as is shared in the study, "the hospital", "trauma", and in some cases "terminal illness" and "death." This is not an over exaggeration as this study has shared countless examples of the health challenges among the senior leaders. They discuss wanting to heal from the traumas they were subjected to as they confronted microaggressions, colorism, racism, and sexism. Creating healing spaces goes beyond this particular study. However, if the Puerto Rican women in senior leadership had access to one another and were able to seek support through dialogue, coaching and support, the researcher is confident that they could identify ways to create those healing spaces within their organization. However, they cannot do this alone. Board of Directors and funders must make financial and time investments towards supporting the creation of internal and external healing spaces for nonprofit organizations as this is a larger issue than just one senior leader or one organization.

Afro-Boricua and Latina White Privilege

None of the primary questions in the study inquired about how the participants identified racially as part of this research. Unprompted, the participants shared their self-awareness and experiences of their racial and or ethnic identity. Included in the descriptions are the facilitators or barriers the Puerto Rican women in this study faced as senior leaders in executive spaces. In the literature review, Latino White privilege and colorism are topics explored. Puerto Ricans are mixed-race people whose self-identification is not easily determined by many of the apparent black-and-white dichotomies and colonized thinking; it is complex. Latina white privilege and colorism were acknowledged as both barriers and a facilitator for the participants in this study. Some women self-identified as "light skin" Puerto Ricans "Afro Boricua, among other examples. Their lived experience will share the complexity of being in white spaces and among other Puerto Ricans as participants self-identified as racially, ethnically, and linguistically. Within the healing space section, Participant 8 discloses the complexity of "passing over" and the trauma she continues to experience. These experiences identified in the healing section can also exist in this section as it addresses the barrier she identifies as "passing over."

Participant 1

I think as a light-skinned Latina, part of the challenge is sometimes I'm sitting in a room and people forget that I'm there.

Participant 6

The consequence of this invisibility is that organizations do not consider the contributions and leadership from the Puerto Rican executive directors and further generalizing the communities they are tasked with serving.

Invisibility - being Puerto Rican, or the silence, not revealing you are Puerto Rican and "passing for white" are important to lift among Puerto Ricans and for this study among Puerto

Rican women in senior leadership. The study uncovers an invisibility that exist among Puerto Ricans that is important to delve deeper into the topic. It is necessary to delve deeper beyond having greater opportunities and address the trauma and not fitting into the tropes created by other groups about Puerto Ricans.

Participant 7

I had to work harder. And, I had to tone down being Puerto Rican. And because I was light, it's easy for people to forget. Very easy. And as long as I'm obedient and I say, "Yes, Yes," everybody loves me. But when I start bringing up inequality and "This is not right," this is when people start feeling anxious and want to be around their own people. But as long as I look like them, then I'm fine. But I can't be Puerto Rican, I'll never get anything.

Participant 8

Una that I don't fit into the category of all Latinas. "Yo soy una mujer Negra (I am a Black woman.) Yo no tengo la educacion. I don't have a college education. I don't fit into those labels and all that other stuff, and I don't kiss ass." I'm from the Bronx. All those things are the same things the people in my neighborhood have. Maybe I don't have "un papel de educacion" but using my knowledge and my privilege that I have knowing politicians, foundation and that I can make a change.

Participant 4

I was invited to be on the board of a Puerto Rican women's group. I asked the Puerto Rican Woman leader, "Why another group?" "Why not support the existing Puerto Rican women's group?" The leader responded, "No, it's Blanquita." And I recall being called, "Blanquita." I remember that many of the leaders in those organizations were Blanquito.

Participant 5

Always think about the intersectionality. I just feel like I'm dissecting, I'm always peeling the onion and trying to understand, where do I fit in? In this patriarchy and white supremacy and what does that mean. And then there is my age when I'm older. I've already experienced ageism. How does that continue to shape me as I continue my executive career and how can I help others learn from my experiences? How I improve and create a positive impact?

Participant 3

I think because we're in New York, we take it for granted. Just because we have a ton of people of color working for the organization, we are not intentional about the work and we're not intentional about how we see communities. I felt like as an organization, we fell short. There is a center in predominantly community of color, and it is in bad condition. And I said, "It's because it's in a Brown and Black community that you guys decided not to reinvest in that center." I'm very conscious that this center and organization is in a different community. I said, "So let's not pretend that we don't do this." I said, "We're passionate.

Barriers and Facilitators Afro-Boricua – Latino White Privilege

The facilitator of a light-skin Puerto Rican woman are the opportunities of having, as one participant describes it "more open doors". However, the cost is being in spaces may outweigh the opportunities. Another participant discussed hesitating to identify as Puerto Rican. As she shared, "People do not like Puerto Ricans." Despite Latinos' insistence that "Hispanic/Latino" signifies an ethnic identity, scholars have argued that it tends to operate as a racialized category in daily life. No matter how "blond or blue-eyed" an individual is, the moment that individual self-identifies as Puerto Rican, they enter into the category of racial "Otherness." (Lee, 2014)

Participant 3

We think this equity work is important, but you need someone who could do this and help us through some of these hurdles and call us out when we're not wanting to really face up to what's in front of us," I said. And I said, "I believe you need a consultant to move the work." And I'm like, "And I'm not telling you who to use. Just figure someone that you could work with to help move this work." I mean, I think I'm the only female Latino exec, well, here, currently.

Participant 7

In 1965 in the era where the bosses would visit the home and drink liquor with the staff. My father's boss came to see him. My father wrapped up my sister, me and my brother and my mother. And he's told us, they think I'm white, you guys have to go hide in the room, you cannot come out. I was a child and that hurt me so much, I didn't understand racism, discrimination, and it was so painful. And he said, "Just remember, I'm white, you have to stay in the room." And we didn't discuss it again, we never discussed it again. It never came up again, but it keeps coming up, it keeps coming up.

CHAPTER 6
Discussion

This study uncovered several gaps in the research about Puerto Rican women in senior-level leadership. In this discussion the researcher is reminded of "Otros saberes" a practice of presenting, engaging, and circulating peripheral knowledge. Otro saberes, is an epistemological break that occurs when devalued or othered knowledge comes to be understood and valued as other ways of knowing about Latinas (Figueroa, 2020). In this narrative study, otro saberes is learning Puerto Rican women in New York City nonprofits are experiencing both barriers and facilitators as senior level leaders. Additionally observed, is the knowledge of how social workers, community advocates and organizers advanced to senior leadership positions was a straight pathway and not a maze as identified in the literature. Their readiness to lead was observed by the Board of Directors and or founding leaders of nonprofit and historically founded Puerto Rican organizations.

Another key finding is addressing the barrier of Boards of Directors, which the literature identifies. The Puerto Rican women in this study also found it a barrier that later became an opportunity for structural change. They developed job descriptions and educated the boards on the organization's mission, vision, and organizational values to focus the board members on their governance and fiduciary responsibility. Nevertheless, others in the study changed the organization's structure to create a c-suite or a collaborative model. The women also discussed competition as part of the culture among Puerto Rican women in senior leadership and specifically among boards. The competition in the nonprofit culture may be feeding this barrier among senior leadership. However, because it has arisen in the lived experiences and the discussion, the researcher also identifies the competition as an opportunity to discuss openly.

Of the nine Puerto Rican women in this study six were not on a trajectory to becoming senior leaders. This pattern encouraged the researcher to delve further into the statement of the problem regarding the underrepresentation of Puerto Rican women in senior level leadership. It is complicated given that all nine Puerto Rican women were ready to lead New York City nonprofit organizations yet only three aspired and were on a trajectory towards senior level leadership. They all took on these positions to advocate for various causes (AIDS, older adults, youth and families) or to address an organizational crisis (death of an Executive Director or a Board of Director). The researcher addressed this as a *call to lead.*

What is unclear is their interest in becoming executive directors. Participant 8 is the only person who shared that she had not considered the position because she did not think it was a possibility for her. The barriers identified in the findings may outweigh the facilitators leading Puerto Rican women in nonprofit organization to seek other opportunities beyond senior leadership. What the women in this study did emphasize and is essential to their continued growth and development as leaders in the sector is sponsorship, networks, coalitions, support which the researcher is now calling Las Comay's.

Las Tia's and Las Comays looking beyond the mentoring models was another key find in the research. The Puerto Rican women in this study identified that more support is needed in their very isolated roles and work they are implementing and accomplishing. They all mentioned mentoring as a model. However, their descriptions of what or who they were looking for went beyond the mentoring model. The women spoke of trust, sharing ideas, peer-to-peer support, an exchange of resources among other components. What they were adamant about was that the connection is to other Puerto Rican women and women of color who would be able to affirm some of their experiences and find strategies and solutions to the barriers they are experiencing.

They were also clear that this support should be outside the organizations they work in and be unstructured. This study also affirmed, that representation matters. It is important for Puerto Rican women to value their own leadership, their history and their continued impact on New York City nonprofits today. In identifying the Women of the Young Lords and other historical figures like Antonia Pantoja, Petra Santiago, Alice Cardona, Yolanda Sanchez and Evelina Antonetti the researcher was able to uncover a rich history not yet told in social work schools, nonprofit, feminist or women of color leadership studies. This gap in nonprofit history renders Puerto Ricans and other communities of color who are founding members of an organization and those who lead them invisible. The chronicle account of historically founded and led Puerto Rican, Black, Asian, and all other groups must make known their lived experiences.

The women also addressed wanting healing spaces to recover from the microaggressions, racism, sexism, and oppressive systems they were and are confronting. Healing from secondary trauma was a consistent topic of discussion. The researcher did not ask questions concerning trauma, healing, or stress the women experienced in this study. The subject of trauma was elevated in the lived experiences shared with the researcher. Many of the women identified the mental healing from the trauma they were experiencing. However, they also spoke of physical healing. Participant 1 described a retreat center; Participant 6 shared her walks that ground her each morning, and Participant 7 returned home to Puerto Rico to heal. These are all places to start to create a healing framework for Puerto Rican women working in New York City nonprofit organizations. A starting point toward healing is identifying other Puerto Rican women, moving away from their isolated roles, and identifying other Puerto Rican women and other women of color to create a community of women to address and change these systems that women have to

create healing spaces to recover from. There is power in numbers; identifying other women who are advocates, social workers, and community organizers can begin to create systemic changes in the position.

The barriers identified in the study may outweigh the facilitators possibly keeping Puerto Rican women out of these leadership roles. The underrepresentation of Puerto Rican women in New York City nonprofit organizations does not negate the realities of what women of color are experiencing and the exclusion of these nonprofit roles due to sexism, colorism, and racist practices. This combination of systemic oppressive barriers with Puerto Rican women possibly not aspiring to take on leadership further impacts the representation of Puerto Rican women in the sector. The women in the study are not waiting for someone to find a solution. They have created outside networks which are the key to their current success. Strengthening the outside network may be a pivotal facilitator to increasing the number of Puerto Rican women in senior leadership roles.

Latino White Privilege/Afro-Boricua Leaders although the researcher did not have questions about race in the interview, the primary questions in the first session did allow the women to talk about their experiences as "light skin" Puerto Ricans and "Afro Boricua." The "Light skinned" Puerto Rican women discussed the challenge of leaders in white spaces forgetting that they were in the room while racist and insensitive conversations were taking place about the community the board members were charged to serve. Once the White leaders realized the Puerto Rican women were in the space, they would stop the discussion.

Identifying the themes in the narrative study give an in-depth look at the lived experiences of the Puerto Rican women in this study. They shared common themes that led them to senior leadership roles in a New York City nonprofit organization. The barriers and facilitators

further reflected the lived experience as senior leaders. The main themes that emerged from the interview and emerged as the findings in chapter 6 were organized and divided into two separate categories and seven themes. The overarching topics were: It just happened – Senior Leadership and Beyond the Mentoring Models. The themes were: pathways towards senior leadership, leading nonprofits in New York City, nonprofit operations, Las Tia's and Las Comay's Puerto Rican women in leadership, beyond the mentoring models, healing spaces, Afro-Boricua, and Latino White privilege.

Research Questions Answered

To answer the first research question: What factors facilitate the advancement of Puerto Rican women to executive-level leadership positions in New York City nonprofits? This study found that Puerto Rican women developed strong leadership and organizational skills in their fields and work. They created a trusting relationship with other Puerto Rican women leaders who worked outside their organization. The Puerto Rican women in this study identified both leaders in the New York Young Lords Party and women who historically founded Puerto Rican organizations in New York City. This research group of nine women with grit and skill share rich narrative data; the study shows that opportunities are available to Puerto Rican women. However, it must address Puerto Rican women's underrepresentation in the sector. Organizations must do better at creating a more sustainable and healthier path toward senior-level leadership. Puerto Rican women are ready to answer "the call to lead." A best practice for the health of the organization and the Puerto Rican women chosen to lead is to create a succession plan to orient the new leader into the role. Senior leadership and Boards can begin to implement a succession plan when the organization is financially secure, senior leadership is reliable, and the board is

effective. Making decisions when the organization is in crisis puts a strain on the senior leadership, as the findings share.

The second question: What barriers and facilitators exist to Puerto Rican women holding executive-level leadership positions in New York City nonprofits? In answering the second question, numerous barriers exist for Puerto Rican women holding executive-level leadership positions in New York City nonprofits. The results confirm that Puerto Rican women experience microaggressions, racism, discrimination, colorism, and sexism. The results also confirm the need for more support from Boards of Directors and funders. Acknowledged in this study is the competition in the sector. Addressing the competition among Puerto Rican women in leadership positions, one can begin by using a feminist lens, recognizing differences among women of color who are our equals, neither inferior nor superior, and devise ways to use each other's differences to enrich our visions and our joint struggles as argued by Audrey Lorde (2017). Acknowledging the competitive nature can create a platform for dialogue and increase the knowledge of women of color in their field. The main principle of feminism, as an analytical framework, is the emphasis feminism places on gender, race, class, and culture for Puerto Rican women who work as executive-level leadership in New York City nonprofits. This study confirms that women of color are advanced while the nonprofit sector lags.

The third and final question in the study is; How do such women of color navigate through the barriers and facilitators as senior-level leaders in the New York nonprofit sector? The study found that the Puerto Rican women in this study created new organizational structures to develop and address the organization's barriers and, often, ineffective governance. The narrative data demonstrates the women's ability to restructure an organization by implementing new organizational structures, coaching or recruiting new board members to develop effective

governance, and they advocate for their staff beyond "self-help." Implications of Findings of the Barriers and Facilitators

Nonprofit and historically founded Puerto Rican organizations and the Puerto Rican leadership must find a place in New York City's nonprofit and social work history. Discussing the colonization and economic oppression that continues to ravage Puerto Rico must be shared as part of the social work history. The story of their displaced people to the mainland, as well as the narrative of the diaspora. The current Puerto Rican narrative in research is told through a deficit lens. Sharing the assets only bolsters Puerto Ricans to strive to identify themselves as leaders of New York City nonprofit organizations and network with one another to fill the gaps. Participant 8 shares:

> They (nonprofit organizations/white leadership) think about a Puerto Rican woman like me when it is doing the director's dirty work, but they don't think of me as a Puerto Rican woman when it's to run an organization. I could continue to do all the dirty work so I could stand there and be the Puerto Rican face, but you're making a six-figure salary.

This study recognizes nine Puerto Rican women who were identified through a purposive and snowball sampling. As one executive director in this study asked, "how did you find us?" There is no listing identifying Puerto Rican women executive directors or CEO's. Why is this important? If these leaders were able to identify one another they could seek one another for additional support, create coalitions, networks and strengthen their leadership and organizations. By not identifying them they are render them invisible and diminish their experiences. The microaggressions, language discrimination, sexism and oppressive environment never get addressed. heterogenous as essential affirming the individual experiences not as one homogenized group but as heterogeneity. Latina groups and for them to own their own narrative and history.

Do not assume that because they are Puerto Rican women executive directors that they come from small nonprofits. The term grassroots organizations were not mentioned by any of the Puerto Rican women in this study. They organizations were identified in various importance of identifying individual The first interview question asked the Puerto Rican women in this study what motivated them to take on the role of Executive Directors or Chief Operating Officers. The impetus for them was to support marginalized neighborhoods in a community they either grew up in or to support a city they felt they had to give back to. The women shared how the values they learned from their fathers, abuelas, Tia's or Puerto Rican women leaders led them toward a path toward these roles. Once in the positions they confronted a multitude of barriers. Confronting these barriers they developed frameworks, coalition, and identities as senior leaders within their organizations, Puerto Rican communities and are creating pathways to leadership for other women of color and Puerto Rican women.

They were addressing causes (HIV/AIDS, the crack epidemic, environmental issues, etc.) and demands (the passing of a senior leader or board member) within the Puerto Rican community from other Puerto Rican leadership who recognized the skills and leadership the women had as recognized community organizers. Their senior "professional development or training" began while on the job for all of them. The women sought out trainings or "mentors" to find what is necessary to combat or challenge the oppression, microaggressions, racism and sexism they confront daily as senior leaders. The women are creating their own senior leadership spaces with a connection to women outside of their organization. The researcher identifies them as "Las Comays." Las Comays are Puerto Rican women leaders in NYC nonprofit work identified as a collective form paradigm shifts that embraces their experiences, cultural, ethnicity, form a trusted

bond to further their work through a strategic network and healing approach while simultane-
ously educating and forming a connection.

Closing Comments from the Puerto Rican Women in this Study

To end all the interviews the researcher asked if the women had any closing comments or anything they wanted to share to close the interview. This discussion what two women shared.

Participant 6

What makes me stand out from the rest is, I'm passionate. And that's something that I see a lot within our culture of women who are in these positions. We are passionate. And if you're in a job because it's a job, then this is not the profession for you. You must love what you do. And in the nonprofit world, you must love what you do, because it's not about the money. It's about ese corazon. El corazon because we are people. We are the type of people that love and like to be loved, but also like to give love. And what we do as a profession is work that's committed to improving communities, improving homes, improving just a culture. That's who we are. And I love it. I do. I always say that. I even say that to my kids. You got to love what you do in life. Don't ever work and do something because you just have to do it. Find your passion and stick to it. That's all I'm going to say.

Participant 9

I'm just grateful for the conversation. I appreciate that you're looking at Puerto Rican women leadership specifically. I think in this day and age, we're all getting grouped up together because we're all people of color who have struggles, but to really isolate it and say, "How's the Puerto Rican woman striving in this world and in this work?", I appreciate that. Because I identify as Nuyorican, and so I want to make sure that there are more intentional connections to where I'm from, culturally speaking. Even my language and how my Spanish is turned into

something different completely; I don't want that to be lost. There's some pride that you have to have in that. And it's okay for us to be prideful of our origins and our culture and our community while still being inclusive. And I'm also working on creating that here too, but I appreciate you asking the questions and I appreciate you unpacking that, because I'm sure there's going to be a whole host of other questions that come out as a result of it, but I think it all starts with that real interest and, "How is this particular community doing?"

Implications

Political Implications

Diversity Equity and Inclusion – It seems to be a bullet point in the organizations grants that not many organizations do not know how to put in practice.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) – Puerto Rican women limited opportunities can be addressed by to focusing on the sectors hiring practice putting a spotlight on Colorism. Puerto Ricans are racially diverse. Discrimination based on colorism is not as obvious and difficult to prove. EEOC policies must be more specific and clearer in the language to giving people of color an opportunity to address discriminating practices.

Universities, Social Work Departments must look beyond the settlement house histories and look at Historically Puerto Rican, Black and Asian organizations in New York City creating new knowledge about the nonprofit sector and its impact on communities of color.

Nonprofit Implications

Membership Organizations and Nonprofit listings of leadership must look at the representation of other ethnic groups beyond one homogenous label – Latina/o/x

The women in this study created a supportive sector for themselves. They must continue to co-create a framework that other women of color can model and identify that outside support.

Puerto Rican Women Leading

Las Tia's Y Comays Representation matters they must find one another. At this moment they are an invisible group.

Competition –it is out of the bag they are competing for the same breadcrumbs. Moving forward they can create a space to discuss this barrier.

Limitations

The limitations of the proposed methodology include the inevitable problem of portraying all Puerto Rican women as a homogenous group, which may lead to unnecessary overgeneralizations. The researcher attempted to address the overgeneralization by the nature of the narrative study and the individual approach afforded by in-person interviews as opposed to group interviews, surveys, and other qualitative instruments.

The researcher identified New York City membership organizations that did not render any participants for the study; this is a limitation. The researcher then utilized purposive and snowball sampling to identify Puerto Rican women senior leaders in nonprofit organizations. Employing purposive and snowball sampling allowed the researcher to identify an intergenerational group of women. However, more than purposive and snowball sampling was needed to identify a larger group of Afro-Boricua women to interview. This limitation did not allow the researcher to sufficiently cover the barriers or facilitators of Afro-Boricua women in this field.

The research does not ask the participants about their sexual orientation; thereby, not having LGBTQ representation is a limitation of the study. Latinas embody diverse sexual identities – heterosexual, bisexual, lesbian, celibate, single, and those who move through sexual categories (Group, 2001). Not included in the study are the voices of the Puerto Rican LGBTQ

community or men. The focus of the study is on self-identified Puerto Rican women. The researcher expects that this study is a start to understanding the complexity of Puerto Rican leadership in nonprofit organizations through the lens of Puerto Rican women and can only grow to look at other groups.

Given that each organization has wide-ranging organizational charts, the researcher selected Chief Executive Officers and Executive Directors as part of the pool of senior-level leadership. The wide-ranging titles in a nonprofit organization are a limitation since governance can vary. Addressing this limitation, the researcher asked the participants to choose a title that closest fits senior-level management within the organization their employed in or founded. "Uncertainty and tension guide the work, and rather than produce conclusive findings, the process offers understanding and meaning" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 59).

Another limitation in the study is the topic of motherhood among the Puerto Rican women in this study. Motherhood did not emerge as a consistent and common theme. Also, the researcher did not have a question specific to motherhood, marriage or the nuclear family and its influence on their role's as senior leaders in New York City nonprofit organizations.

Future Research

The ample time given to the researcher by the senior leaders in this study presented voluminous narrative data. The data will continue to expand toward articles in social work, nonprofit leadership, and feminist journals. The researcher will seek to get articles published with the El Centro, The Center for Puerto Studies, a respected research think tank focusing on Puerto Rican research. The researcher will also seek audiences of Puerto Rican women and women of color within social work, nonprofit and social services conferences. The research will also work to create a list of previous and current Puerto Rican CEOs and Executive Directors

removing creating visibility with the confidence that they will create networks, coalitions, "Comadrasco's" that can continue to create new approaches, policies, curricula, that hold diversity, equity and inclusion statement as policies and holding all accountable to the mission and vision created to support communities they serve and the staff and leadership they employ.

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