

YOU MADE IT, ARE YOU STILL FACING IT? EDUCATED LATINAS  
EXPERIENCING IMPOSTOR PHENOMENON AND MULTIPLE  
MICROAGGRESSIONS IN THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD

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A Dissertation

by

Isabel Acosta

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Date

## DEDICATION

To the amazing educators who were my supervisors while I was a clerk in the Grant Joint Union High School District/Twin Rivers USD. Thank you! You helped me find my purpose in life; you saw something in me that I never saw in myself. To Dr. Diann Kitamura and Rudy Puente, thank you for sitting me down and telling me at the age of 23 that I had potential and needed to return to school to become a teacher or a lawyer (Rudy). You encouraged me to return to community college and at least take a couple of classes; you even let me leave work early to attend class. You two were there for me through it all, thank you. To Dr. Shelley Holt, Anna Trunnell, Larry Tosta, Brenda Kendall, and Dayna Russell, for supporting me while I worked as your clerk and went to school. For letting me make up my work hours at night and on the weekends so I could miss work during the day to attend class and still be able to provide for my family. Brenda and Shelley, thank you for your support; you never questioned my work ethic nor my school schedule. Thank you for trusting me and giving me the example that a woman can do anything she sets her heart out to do. Larry, you always looked out for me. You helped me get my new schedule board approved to protect me and you helped me find a school to do my student teaching at. You always encouraged me and provided guidance and words of wisdom. Thank you for watching out for me boss man. Anna and Dayna, thank you for always being such great friends. I learned the importance of being a hard-working momma and how to be a compassionate and collaborative leader from the two of you. You loved my family and through it all, your families became my family. It's an honor to be your friend. Diann, Anna and Dayna, Ismael and I will forever be grateful

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You meet thousands of people, and none of them really touch you. And then you meet one person (7 to be exact), and your life is changed. – Anonymous

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P-12 Educational Leadership



Abstract

of

YOU MADE IT, ARE YOU STILL FACING IT? EDUCATED LATINAS  
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MICROAGGRESSIONS IN THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD

by

Isabel Acosta

With the growth in the Latinx population in the United States, research on the Latinx experience has become essential. In the United States, 2% of the population holds doctoral degrees and 0.6% of those degrees are held by Latinx (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018a). In the subcategory of Women with doctorates, Latinas hold the lowest percentage of doctorates, 7.3%, despite being the largest minority group in the United States (National Center of Education Statistics, 2016). This research examined the professional experiences of Latinas with doctorates, specifically the internal conflict of Impostor Phenomenon (IP; Clance, 1985) and the external conflict of microaggressions in the workplace. The findings suggest that 91.6% of the Latinas in this research experience moderate to intense feelings of IP. The findings also suggested that the Latinas in this research are susceptible to microaggressions based on the intersectionality of their identity, such as age, gender, and race/ethnic identity. This study uses the constructs of intersectionality, social dominance, and cultural community wealth as theoretical lenses through which to view these educated Latinas' experience with IP, microaggressions, and the psychological and physical effects of such internal and external conflicts. The study also highlights the selfless reasons why these Latinas continue to thrive despite their

experiences with IP and microaggressions. Overall, this study extends the view of Latinas with IP and microaggressions to their experience after graduate school. Recommendations for practice and future research and implications are discussed.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

From a historical perspective of the dominant American culture, Latinas in the United States are *Twice a Minority* (Melville, 1980), where their identity lies in two different minority populations: ethnicity and gender. Members of individual populations are subjected to treatment of inferiority, inequality, and inequity. Despite being at the forefront of civil rights movements and the women's movements, Latinas today have yet to experience the full benefits of those victories. Yet, men of color and White women have been the recipients of the majority of the rights gained through these struggles. Latinas and other women of color continue to be excluded from positions of power and influence. Many Latinas continue to "earn" a seat at the table by becoming highly educated; however, even the most highly educated Latinas with doctoral degrees are subject to second-class status while facing multiple discrimination. Not only do these Latinas with doctorates face the external factors of multiple microaggressions, they face the internal conflict of inadequacy and not belonging even though they earned their right to be in the space. Their new arrival to academia and other spaces in which they have earned access due to their education prompts another level of effort required to resist and overcome the gender and racial oppression that perpetuates their inequality to become prominent in the world of social research. Thus, to understand Latinas' post-doctoral experiences in the professional world, it is imperative to understand how racism and gender inequality have historically and systematically shaped the lives of Latinas and other women of color since the inception of this country.



### **Racism in America**

Currently, in the United States, Latinos are the largest minority population. In 2017, the number of Hispanics in the United States amounted to 58.9 million, accounting for approximately 18.1% of the total United States population; In California, Latinx comprise 39.3% of the total state population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018b). The Latinx community has quickly and decisively become the largest minoritized group in the United States and arguably the majority in California. The impact of the Latinx footprint will affect the future labor force of the United States and, more profoundly, on the economy of California. Despite being the largest cultural group in the United States, Latinx are far behind their White peers in many measurements of success such as academia and the professional workforce. At the core, the inequities and inequalities people of color face can be traced back to the inception of this country, built on racism, which continues to systemically divide and oppress those the dominant White culture considers less than themselves (Borunda, 2016; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Cultural racism, the assertion of superiority of one's cultural group over another (Sue, 2004, 2010), continues to affect the United States in all sectors (i.e., education, employment, housing, etc.). It is deemed the most harmful and detrimental form of racism, which encompasses the other two forms of racism: individual and institutional (Jones, 1997; Sue, 2004, 2010).

The dominant White culture in the United States colonized and subjugated native cultures to justify their continued exploitation and oppression of minoritized cultures, and the dominant class has determined their culture to be superior and all others to be inferior

(Borunda, 2016; Khalifa, 2018; Nakano Glen, 2015). Once they colonized, the wealthy White elites created social, economic, and psychological structures that benefited them and denied others the same rights (Borunda, 2016). Non-whites were considered inferior; therefore, they were not equal to the White elitists (Borunda, 2016; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Nakano Glen, 2015). For example, indigenous natives and Blacks were not extended the same inalienable rights afforded to the White architects of the preamble. Indigenous natives were considered savages and less than Blacks, who were given worth based on how much they were paid for. Blacks fell victim to chattel slavery, which transformed them into property that could be bought, sold, and inherited from one generation to the next (Alexander, 2011; Zinn, 1997). Racism was intentionally embedded in the dominant White culture and continued to manifest itself throughout generations, constructing a reality in which the power and privilege of the dominant White culture has deemed the norm (Borunda, 2016).

During the Antebellum period in the United States, the abolition movement was spearheaded by the women's suffrage movement. Women were often on the front lines of the abolition movement as they explored their political and socioeconomic power (Couvares, Saxton, Grob, & Billias, 2000). Slavery in the United States, however, was less about human rights and more about political and economic dominance. The rights of the federal government over the state governments, centralized control versus local control, and the industrial economic model versus the agricultural economic model influenced the battles in the legislative arena (Zinn, 1997). Several attempts to settle these larger socioeconomic and sociopolitical disputes resulted in such policies as the

3/5th law where Blacks were considered 3/5th of an electoral vote and strict slavery extradition laws. Eventually, these disputes resulted in irreconcilable differences that ultimately led to the Civil War (Keyssar, 2000).

In the Post-Civil War era, racism was still overt and established through political and social structures. Examples of the systemic effort to maintain inequities included which establishments people of color could access, whom people of color could love, and codes of conduct that constrained and penalized people of color for minor infractions. State laws were put in place to ensure the oppression and enslavement of Blacks. These laws were known as the Anti-Miscegenation Laws and Black Codes. The Anti-Miscegenation law prohibited cross-racial marriages, criminalizing the love of interracial couples (Borunda, 2016). The Black codes were established by Southern states after the Emancipation Proclamation as a way to control the freedmen and Black lawbreakers (Alexander, 2011; Wilson, 1965). The Black codes stated that (a) freedmen must have employment, (b) freedmen could not assemble without a White person present, (c) freedmen could not be taught to read and write, and (d) public facilities had to be segregated. Punishment for failing to abide by these codes was enforced through acts of cruelty and violence, most publicly and in the name of the law. This was used to discourage Blacks from rebelling and served as a reminder of their place in the social structure, perpetuating racism in the social structure of the country.

As a result of racism being inextricable from United States culture, being cross-generationally and structurally ingrained, the oppressed became what Freire (2014) called sub-oppressors. Borunda (2016) identified Freire's concept of sub-oppressors as

internalized racism, when the oppressed have embodied the thoughts of inferiority and then reproduce oppression towards themselves and others (Freire, 2014). As the oppressed internalize their oppression, the dominant White culture continues to have power and control over the oppressed; they no longer pursue freedom from their oppressors, they aspire to become one with the oppressors, which could lead to horizontal violence and cultural invasion (Freire, 2014). As a result, the conditions encourage the oppressed to assimilate to the dominant White culture, losing their cultural uniqueness, identity, and language (Borunda, 2016; Freire, 2014). However, assimilation has not been a viable option for people of color and allies from the dominant White culture. Some Blacks chose to resist the assimilation process and value their differences, leading them to fight for their rights.

The Civil Rights movement heralded the rejection of cultural invasion as marginalized communities reclaimed their cultural identity through several tactics, including civil disobedience (Borunda, 2016). Examples of civil disobedience during the Civil Rights movement include Rosa Parks refusing to cede her seat for a White person on a bus, the Greensboro Sit-In, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s March on Selma, and Cesar Chavez's and Dolores Huerta's fight for farm workers' rights. The Post-Civil Rights movement forced overt racism to become socially unacceptable. Nonetheless, racism became covert and oppression manifested in different ways (Sue, 2010). While overt racism was frowned upon, a segment of well-intentioned Whites prided themselves in being morally just human beings who would not discriminate. Yet implicit bias and covert racism continue to manifest itself through racial microaggressions (Dovidio &

Gaertner, 1996; Sue, 2010). Despite the passage of policies such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and court cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, cultural invasion by the dominant White culture continued.

In current history, even the most prestigious position in this country has been tainted with racism. President Donald J. Trump used racism to tout carry his political campaign, and his message appealed to enough people that it helped him become elected. He kicked off his Presidential campaign in 2015 attacking Mexicans.

When do we beat Mexico at the border? They're laughing at us, at our stupidity. And now they are beating us economically. They are not our friends, believe me. But they're killing us economically. The U.S. has become a dumping ground for everybody else's problems . . . They're sending people that have lots of problems and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people. (TIME Staff, 2015, para. 9)

He then proceeded to state, "It is coming from more than Mexico. It's coming from all over South and Latin America, and it's coming probably, from the Middle East" (TIME Staff, 2015, para. 11). Throughout his presidential campaign, whether on his campaign trail or through Twitter, he used racist remarks against Mexicans as a platform to gain momentum in his campaign, calling Mexico's court system corrupt, stating that Mexico was killing the United States on jobs and trades, vowing to build a wall, and assuring the public that Mexico would pay for the wall (Reilly, 2016). In addition to making racist remarks, he targeted Jeb Bush because of his Mexican-born wife, claiming that Bush had to like illegal criminals because of his wife; he stated that Bush was crazy and who cared if he spoke "Mexican" claiming, "This is America, English!!" (Moreno, 2016). In addition to targeting Mexicans as rapists, he blamed Blacks and Hispanics for committing

an overwhelming amount of crimes in major cities (Moreno, 2016). His political campaign instilled hate among members of the dominant White culture, fueled racist acts of violence and disrespect, and divided the country with his rhetoric. Even after his presidential win, Trump continued to not only attack Mexicans but all Latinos, Muslims, Blacks, and women. Currently, President Trump has found himself under fire for the inhumane treatment of migrant families, who are being detained and imprisoned in migrant camps and summarily treated cruelly and inhumanely, living in cages. Also, migrant children are being separated from their families and face never returning to their families due to the Department of Homeland Security's inability to identify and reunite families due to their limitation and inability to cross-reference registration information technology regarding the children and parents (Merkley, 2019). Despite surface-level advancements in social justice through policy reform in previous years, racism continues to be reinforced and self-perpetuated due to the historical and social structure that has persisted since this country's inception.

### **Gender Inequality**

Latinx women were not always subjected to gender discrimination. In the pre-Columbian era, one of the many Mesoamerican civilizations, the Nahua held women, specifically mothers, with high regard. The Nahua civilization was located in what is now considered Mexico, established in the valley of Mexico, on Lake Texcoco and surrounding areas. In the year 1519, right before conquest by the Spaniards, the population in the valley was 1 million inhabitants, with the remaining 2 million living in the highland valleys and plains surrounding the valley (Smith, 2012). The Nahua are

known for many accomplishments, such as their religious practices and advanced agricultural sciences such as their aqueduct system and ability to build a city on water (Cotera, 1976; Smith, 2012). They are also known for their family structures and gender roles, boys learned to fish and work outside the home and girls worked in the home and managed the household (Smith, 2012). Despite the gender roles, women and men were considered equals. Women held positions of queens and priestesses and not only assumed head roles at home but also participated in the economic sector (Cotera, 1976).

Nahua religious deities record women and men as gods and goddesses. Women were highly respected, as they were the givers of life. In the Nahua culture, the birth of a girl was celebrated by the entire family and seen as a gift from the Goddess of Childbirth, Cihaucoatl. Mothers were highly regarded, and if a woman passed during childbirth, she would be worshiped and joined the group of goddesses known as Cihuapiltin. The Cihuapiltin were given the status that warriors who died on the battlefield received. Furthermore, their bodies would be guarded because warriors would try to cut off a finger from their left hand. After all, it was said to give them power over their enemies during the war (Cotera, 1976).

The status of women in pre-conquest societies was distinctly different from that of women in European nations. In the Nahua culture, women were also able to divorce, own property, and rule over the land. However, with the Spanish conquest, these rights and structures were ripped away from women, and they were thrust into enslavement. The once highly regarded female gender was measured against the Eurocentric classist system that placed them at the bottom. The status of women in European societies was

that of second-class citizens. An example of the Eurocentric gender classist system is evident in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). She wrote, "The *rights* of humanity have been thus confined to the male line from Adam downwards" (p. 141). However, in Mexico, with the 1810 Mexican Independence War, Mexican women were not seen as second-class citizens; they were not excluded from voting because they participated in the war and in 1890, were given the right to attend higher education institutions (Cotera, 1997). Women's rights in Mexico took a step further during the Revolutionary War of 1910, solidifying their partnership with their male counterparts, winning respect and admiration (Cotera, 1976,1997).

In the United States, gender inequality, like racism, was instituted since the birth of this country. Women, time and time again, have and are fighting for their right to be treated as equals. Women in the United States faced many sociological losses that served to maintain the female gender in a subservient position such as: (a) in 1769, the United States adopted a concept from the English system in which women were not allowed to own property or keep their wage earnings; (b) in 1777, all states passed laws decreeing that women did not have the right to vote; (c) the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment passed with the words "citizens" and "voters" being defined solely as "male" in the constitution; (d) in 1873, the Supreme Court voted in favor of excluding married women from practicing law; and (e) the National Recovery Act placed a provision stating that only one member of a family could hold a government job, which led to many women losing their job (Milligan, 2017). Sexism is so ingrained that once Black men were given the right to vote, it took half a century for women of any race to be given that same right (Steinem, 2010).



However, once White women obtained the power to vote, some of them became the suboppressors (Freire, 2014). As this previously marginalized population gained more and more victories in the arena of gender equality, they summarily ignored the haunting question raised at the Seneca Falls conference by Sojourner Truth “Aren’t I a Woman.”

Despite the many gains that women have accomplished with regard to their rights and freedom in the United States, in today’s political climate, political correctness is no longer an issue and overtly sexist attitudes are condoned not only by some of the United States population but also by our current President, Donald Trump, who employs sexist discourse as a method of attacking any female who opposes his views or actions (Pimentel, 2017). Women’s rights are constantly attacked; their right over their body, wages, reproductive system, and the ability to be a member of the armed forces continue to be topics of political debate, a struggle against the conservative agenda that continues to create policy and legislation limiting a women’s rights and access to equality (Estes, 2017; Pimentel, 2017; Sue, 2010). For example, the current president of the United States tweeted that women should expect to be sexually assaulted while in the military because men cannot control themselves (Pimentel, 2017). In another tweet by President Trump, he claimed that he could not control himself when he is around beautiful women, leading him to kiss them because he cannot help himself due to the instant attraction he has to them (Pimentel, 2017). In a video interview that surfaced, Trump is speaking with a report when he stated

Yeah, that’s her. With the gold. I better use some Tic Tacs just in case I start kissing her. You know, I’m automatically attracted to beautiful – I just start kissing them. It’s like a magnet. Just kiss. I don’t even wait. And when you’re a

star, they let you do it. You can do anything . . . Grab ‘em by the pussy, you can do anything. (Victor, 2017)

Once elected, women and male allies all over the country marched in a women’s movement, invoking their disgust of his mindset and proclaiming their right to their bodies and to be respected. However, in the United States, women’s rights are not guaranteed like those of their male counterparts; at any moment, a group of male politicians or a conservative Supreme Court can deny women any of their rights and freedom based on their conservative view. For the past three years, President Donald Trump has targeted the freedom women have over their reproduction rights. He has called for repealing Title X family planning programs, which offer contraceptives, sexually transmitted infection testing, pregnancy, and cancer screening and counseling, wanting health insurance companies to no longer offer abortion coverage (Burrows, 2020). Women in the United States, although they currently have some rights, are not guaranteed to keep them, especially not over their bodies. Women continue to fight the second-class citizen mindset that has kept them oppressed.

Not only do women face gender inequality and microaggressions from their male counterparts, but they also face it from their female counterparts. The gender inequality mindset that women are inferior has been ingrained into the construct of this country and has been socially reproduced generation to generation, to the extent that women have deemed it to be the truth. Freire (2014) used the term sub-oppressors to identify when the oppressed group internalizes beliefs of inferiority. Although this term has been used to discuss racism, much can be said about women adopting oppressive beliefs about their

gender, maintaining their level of inferiority in this society and reproducing such oppression toward their gender. Such oppression is evident in professional spaces in that studies have found that women in leadership positions (a) tend to be more negative on other women, (b) with a woman supervisor were less satisfied with their supervisor's work, (c) will question another woman's qualifications more than males', and (d) are less likely to promote women than men are to promote women (Bonjean, Corder, Markham, & South, 1982; Cooper, 1997; Ibarra, 1992; Rose, 1978; Rose & Stone, 1978). Women not only have to face gender inequality mindset from males and some females who have deemed it to be the truth, but women of color have to also face an additional layer of inequality, race.

The personal is political for women (Hanisch, 1969). In the United States, women of color are more susceptible to discrimination every day. The identity of women of color has been socially constructed to be seen as inferior, twice the minority (Melville, 1980). Such a mindset is continuously perpetuated not due to the lack of understanding or education on the topic, but because it is embedded in everything—politics, gender hierarchy, religious beliefs, social media/media, and the patriarchal mindset. Latinas in today's sociopolitical climate are facing discrimination at a heightened level, constantly in battle with the societal oppression that continues to remind them that they are seen as inferior. However, through higher education, highly educated Latinas have found one way to resist and push back; here, they can be both seen and heard while occupying positions of power and influence that were not intended for them.

### **Statement of the Problem**

With the growth in the Latinx population, research on the Latinx experience has become essential. Among that research, the intersectionality of the Latina experience is most prominent. For example, Garcia (1989) began to look at the specific issues that affected Latinas/Chicanas as women of color in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s, Achor and Morales began to look at Latinas' graduate school experiences. Their findings highlighted the Latinas' academic experience, which was filled with microaggressions and racism and the internal struggle of feeling like an impostor who did not belong. Such experiences create a sense of not belonging and continue to place a divide amongst human beings solely based on something they do not have control over, their race and gender. Despite the decline of overt racism post-Civil Rights movement, much of the racism is ingrained in our society and its systems, starting with education.

Education was not created to be the great equalizer that Horace Mann (1848 as cited in Growe & Montgomery, 2003) envisioned in which school would be a birthright that would be available to every single child. Since its inception, education was created to divide, used to empower the White elitist population with knowledge and employed as a weapon to marginalize people of color (Borunda, 2016; Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2017). The current educational system perpetuates the racial/ethnic inequalities by providing information created by the oppressor to indoctrinate the oppressed into their false reality through the "banking" concept of education (Freire, 2014). The banking concept of education identifies knowledge acquisition as the act of "depositing" in which the student is the "receptacle" that must be "filled" by those who hold the knowledge, the

teacher (Freire, 2014). Such an educational model limits the student's ability to develop critical thinking, fosters the student's submersion, and denies the student's ability to also be a source of knowledge (Freire, 2014). Using such an educational model also ensures a student does not question the curriculum or their own place in such history (Freire, 2014). To begin correcting racial disparities in the educational system, including higher education, the system must address race (Carter et al., 2017) and give voice and listen to those who are marginalized.

Research has also been conducted on Latinas in the workforce from service occupations to corporate America, while also researching the uneven playing field due to race and gender (Fuller, Hollingworth, & An, 2019; Lean In, 2018; UnidosUS and The National Partnership for Women and Families, 2018). Latinas are greatly represented in the service industry and underrepresented in the professional workforce and least represented in supervisory/managerial positions (Lean In, 2018; UnidosUS and The National Partnership for Women and Families, 2018). Despite finding that Latinas face racial/ethnic discrimination, gender discrimination, microaggressions in the labor force and the educational pipeline, researchers have noted that Latinas continue to strive and make gains, achieving their doctoral degrees. In examining what transpires as Latinas break into this level of academic achievement, this research examines the post-doctorate professional experiences and the degree to which Latinas adopt the insecurity of IP. This study sought to reveal whether Latinas still face microaggressions in the workplace because of their gender and or ethnic identity despite having achieved the highest degree attainable.

### **Nature of the Study**

This study aims to expand the emerging literature on the Latina experience by asking what happens after accomplishing and achieving the highest academic pathway, a doctorate. This study is the first to research Latinas with doctorates in the workforce and study their experiences with microaggressions and Impostor Phenomenon (IP). As Latinas break into the elite group to which only 2% of the United States population belong, the study examines their experiences related to racism, microaggressions, and IP and determining whether membership to this exclusive group merits equitable treatment. Despite their achievement, they continue to live in a space where no matter the achievement, they feel less-than because of the institutional and cultural racism ingrained in United States society they face every day. This research explores both the external factors, microaggressions, and the internal factor, IP, these Latinas face, clarifying that both can be experienced simultaneously, yet only one, microaggression, can affect the other, IP. This research is meant to give voice to those Latinas and their experiences now that they have attained their doctorate and work in a professional space, to bring light the daily experiences of implicit bias, microaggressions, and feelings of being an impostor.

This study sought to answer the following questions:

What is the psychological experience of Latinas post completion of their doctorate degree?

Sub-questions related to the larger question:

1. Which variables regarding racial microaggressions are significantly related to Latinas with doctoral degrees? (Quantitative)

2. What specific examples of microaggressions have Latinas with doctoral degrees faced in the workplace? How has this affected them? (Qualitative)
3. Where do Latinas with doctoral degrees score on the Impostor Phenomenon Scale? (Quantitative)
4. What are the specific lived experiences in which these Latinas felt like impostors? (Qualitative)
5. Despite the internal conflict of the Impostor Phenomenon and external conflicts of racial microaggressions, what keeps you thriving every day? (Qualitative)

### **Theoretical Framework**

To understand the Latina post-doctorate degree experience, this study used the theoretical frameworks of social dominance theory, intersectionality, and cultural community wealth, and specifically resistance culture in conjunction with endurance labor. Social dominance theory emphasizes intergroup discrimination in which groups claim and perpetuate a social hierarchy based on differences such as age, gender, and other arbitrary reasons such as race/ethnicity or religion (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Intersectionality asserts that people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression: race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identity markers (Crenshaw, 1989). This study uses intersectionality to highlight the oppression Latinas face due to race and gender. Endurance labor is the determination to fight back while enduring racist, classist, and sexist assaults that are solely fueled by the emotional desire to beat the system that has worked so hard to discriminate and alienate a person (Cuadraz & Pierce, 1994). This study uses endurance labor to show the determination of

these Latinas to fight the “isms” they face to stand their ground and claim their place in the dominant White culture.

### **Operational Definitions**

#### **Latinx/Hispanic**

Referring to an individual of Mexican, Cuban, South or Central American, Puerto Rican, Dominican or any other Spanish culture, origin, or heritage regardless of race. The term Latina is used when specifically addressing the female gender within the Latinx community.

#### **Minoritize**

“A verb referring to the ever-morphing nature of how and on whom oppression is enacted” (Khalifa, 2018, p. 19)

#### **Oppression**

“The disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because a tyrannical power coerces them, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society” (Young, 1988, p. 271).

#### **Racial Microaggressions**

“Brief and commonplace verbal and behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 278).

### **Limitations**

This study focused on Latinas with doctoral degrees who are currently on a professional career track. This study employed a non-random convenience sample in



which the researcher first distributed the survey to a social media group of Latinas with doctorates. This process then generated a snowball sampling technique to gain more participants. Some of the assumptions made in this study were that Latinas continue to show some form of IP despite having obtained the highest degree. Another assumption was that Latinas continue to face racial and gender microaggressions in the professional workplace despite having worked hard to attain their degree and establish their place in the dominant White culture.

### **Significance**

In today's political climate, people of color, specifically the Latinx community has been a target of racism and hate. Also, women and their rights have been under scrutiny by conservative politicians, including the current President, and their rights have been put up for political debate. As the Latinx population continues to rise in America, racism, which was once frowned upon, has become overt and acceptable in the eyes of many once again. The current President of the United States of America began his presidential campaign by creating a racial war against the Latinx community by portraying them in a negative light and projecting them all as rapists and criminals. On that same note, the President has used sexist discourse to demonize any women whose views differ from his political views, made negative sexual comments regarding women and their sexual life, and has placed value on women based on their appearance instead of their intelligence and hard work (Darweesh & Abdullah, 2016). With such racist and sexist discourse coming from our head of state, hate speech, racism, and sexist and racist microaggressions towards people of color and women have become ever more prominent.

Due to the intersectionality of being both Latino and female, Latinas are subjected to face overt and covert racism and microaggressions in their personal, academic, and professional lives. Researching their current experiences in this political climate is ever so important to understand how such discourse has affected their professional lives.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the overview of the statement of the problem, the research question, and the significance of the three theoretical frameworks. Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature on the Latina experience and theoretical frameworks. Chapter 3 explains the research design and methodological approach. Chapter 4 provides the data collected during the research, and Chapter 5 presents the discussion of the findings, limitations, and recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As existing research on Latina's postdoctoral experience (professional and personal) is sparse, Chapter 2 begins with a review of literature that examines major trends in the experiences of being a Latina in the United States. The first section reviews Latinas' experiences as minority females in the labor sector and as doctoral students. These sections bring light to how Latinas have historically been marginalized before holding the highest educational degree and identify similar or different experiences that Latinas with doctoral degrees face in their professional lives post-degree attainment. This literature review also discusses theoretical concepts such as IP, cultural community wealth, and negotiating ethnic identity while attaining academic identity, along with latino critical race theory, intersectionality theory, and endurance labor.

#### **Being Latina in the United States**

When divided by gender, since the 1980s, the Latina population has grown from 7,443,440 to 27,980,897 in 2015, making Latinas 45.8% of the Latino population in the United States (Flores, Lopez, & Radford, 2017). In the 1980s and 2000s, the Latina population was at its highest, exceeding their male population, at 50.4% in the 1980s and 55% in the 2000s (Flores et al., 2017). Such data shed light on why scholars began to look at the Latina experience in the United States. Research on Latinas can be traced to the late 1970s early 1980s in which Chicana feminist scholars researched specific issues that affected Chicanas as women of color (Garcia, 1989); and in the 2000s, research on the experiences of Latinas in higher education became prominent.

Throughout the United States history, Latinos have faced racism, violence, and inequality by the dominant White culture. Latinas in the United States are not only vulnerable to discrimination due to their ethnic identity, but they are also considered “twice a minority” (Melville, 1980), Latina and female, which makes them vulnerable to multiple discriminations. The term “multiple discrimination” (Uccellari, 2008) is about any one person who is being discriminated based on more than one ground, in this case, gender and ethnic identity. Even when measured against gender peers, Latinas are still considered less-than because of ethnic identity and are not treated equally as compared to White peers. Historically, Black women have also been considered less-than and like Latinas, faced inequality because of their twice a minority status (Melville, 1980). An example is Isabella Bomfree, who was better known as Sojourner Truth. She was a former slave and outspoken advocate for justice, specifically civil and women’s rights, and she faced inequalities through multiple discrimination (Michals, 2015). Sojourner Truth’s 1851 Ain’t I a Woman? speech brings light to the very notion of the differences between a woman of color and a White woman in America:

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? (Fordham University, 1997, para. 2)

Truth gave her speech over 168 years ago, yet, being a woman of color in this “evolving” democratic country and being “colored” and a woman in the United States lessens her

value in history, her pay, her degree attainment, and her humanity in comparison to Anglo women.

### **Latinas in the American Labor Sector and Unequal Wage Sector**

In the labor sector, women in general face inequality in hiring and promotion practices, including entry-level jobs even though women have earned more bachelor's degrees than males since the 1981-1982 school year and more doctoral degrees since 2008 (Lean In, 2018; National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Women as a whole have made progress in their degree attainment but that same momentum is not reflected in the professional world, and Latinas continue to face inequities due to gender. In addition to gender inequities in the labor sector, Latinas face additional challenges amongst their gender peers regarding equal pay, equal opportunity, and when receiving support in the workplace due to their race/ethnic identity. UnidosUs and the National Partnership for Women and Families (2018) addressed the current gender wage gap and highlighted the inequality amongst women. According to that report, in the United States in 2017, full-time employed women were paid 80 cents to every dollar paid to men employed full-time (see Table 1). However, Latinas were paid 53 cents for every dollar paid to White, non-Hispanic men and further, in California, where the largest population of Latinas hold a full-time job, they made 43 cents to every dollar that a White, non-Hispanic male made.

Table 1

*Latina Wage Gap by State 2017*

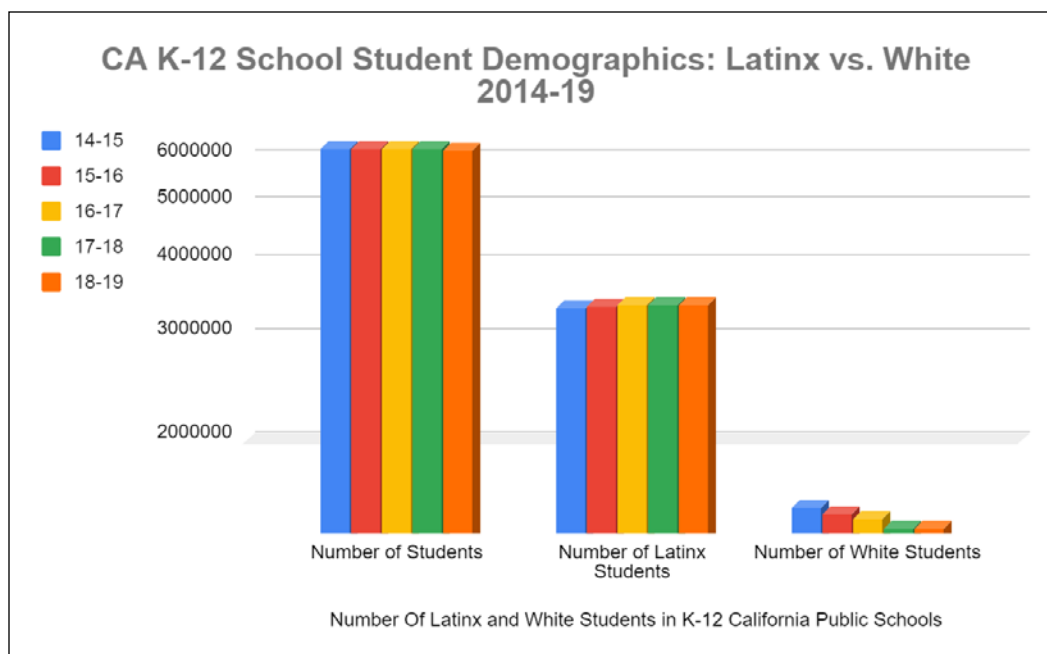
State	Number of Latinas Working Full Time, Year-Round	Median Wages for Latinas	Median Wages for White, Non-Hispanic Men	Annual Wage Gap	Cents on the Dollar
California	1,598,564	\$30,624	\$71,875	\$41,251	\$0.43
Texas	1,217,007	\$27,085	\$61,496	\$34,411	\$0.44
Florida	661,657	\$30,208	\$50,161	\$19,953	\$0.60
New York	457,532	\$35,191	\$62,558	\$27,367	\$0.56
Puerto Rico	321,342	\$23,290	\$33,968	\$10,678	\$0.69
Illinois	250,300	\$29,566	\$60,904	\$31,338	\$0.49
New Jersey	232,145	\$31,629	\$74,524	\$42,895	\$0.42
Arizona	229,691	\$29,685	\$53,958	\$24,273	\$0.55
Colorado	131,419	\$31,455	\$58,778	\$27,323	\$0.54
New Mexico	119,240	\$30,440	\$54,898	\$24,458	\$0.55
Nevada	97,044	\$30,035	\$54,486	\$24,451	\$0.55
Virginia	96,882	\$32,224	\$61,274	\$29,050	\$0.53
Georgia	93,160	\$25,361	\$52,202	\$26,841	\$0.49
Pennsylvania	85,941	\$30,039	\$52,763	\$22,724	\$0.57
Washington	84,464	\$28,622	\$61,201	\$32,579	\$0.47
Massachusetts	81,275	\$34,785	\$67,267	\$32,482	\$0.52
North Carolina	80,140	\$24,228	\$49,896	\$25,668	\$0.49
Maryland	72,923	\$32,270	\$70,241	\$37,971	\$0.46
Connecticut	63,441	\$33,504	\$70,724	\$37,220	\$0.47
Oregon	46,919	\$26,433	\$52,252	\$25,819	\$0.51
Michigan	45,608	\$30,318	\$52,066	\$21,748	\$0.58
Ohio	43,354	\$31,075	\$50,832	\$19,757	\$0.61
Utah	42,866	\$25,547	\$54,814	\$29,267	\$0.47
Indiana	42,344	\$27,014	\$50,086	\$23,072	\$0.54
Wisconsin	38,389	\$26,941	\$51,064	\$24,123	\$0.53
Oklahoma	37,053	\$23,987	\$49,334	\$25,347	\$0.49

Note. An analysis of the wage gap in the 25 states with the largest number of Latinas who work full-time year-round, plus Puerto Rico. Reproduced from UnidosUS and The National Partnership for Women and Families (2018, p. 4)

The report also noted that Latinas in the United States are overrepresented in the low-wage occupations, such as the service industry, which do not provide accessible health benefits, paid leave, and retirement plans, making them the “least likely group of women workers to live with economic security or have access to paid sick time” (p. 1).

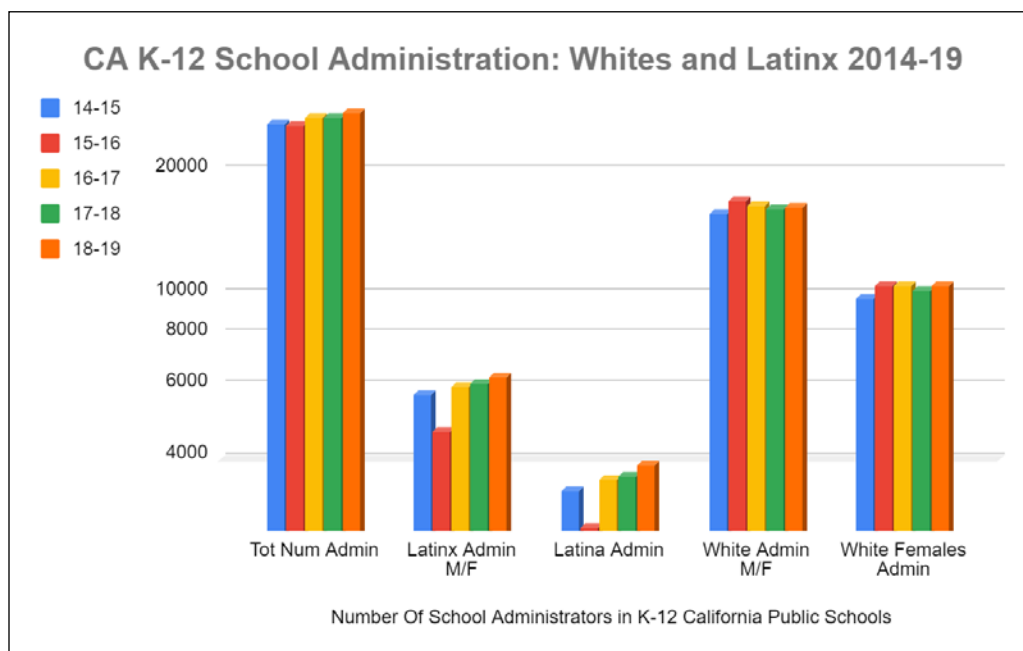
However, the Latina wage gap does not only affect the low-wage workers, but it also affects Latinas in all levels of occupations, including executive and professional occupations (UnidosUS and The National Partnership for Women and Families, 2018).

For example, according to Fuller et al. (2019), in the educational work field, White men have the highest probability of obtaining a principal position and men of color have the highest probability to obtain a vice-principal position. Further, women of color have the lowest probability of being hired in either of those positions when compared to White male educators. In 2012, 80% of female principals were White, 10% were black, 7% were Latinas, while students were 46% White, 15% black, and 29% Latinas. This disparity reveals the lack of proportional representation of the students' and principals' racial/ethnic characteristics (Fuller et al., 2019; Hill, Miller, Benson, & Handley, 2016; Snyder, Brey, & Dillow, 2018). Currently, in California, Latinx K-12 students outnumber the White student population (see Figure 1) yet the White administrative population outnumbers the Latinx K-12 administrative population (see Figure 2).



Source: California Department of Education (n.d.a)

*Figure 1.* A comparison of the Latinx and White student demographic information of California public school districts.



Source: California Department of Education (n.d.b)

*Figure 2.* A comparison of the White and Latinx demographic information of California public school district administrators.



Not only are women, specifically women of color, least likely to get a supervising position, but they are also the least likely to get support from their supervisors. In 2018, McKinsey & Company surveyed the employees of 279 companies regarding Women in the Workplace (Lean In, 2018). The study obtained survey results from 64,000 participants regarding their human resource practices and workplace experiences. Not only did the study find inequities in the hiring and promotion aspects of the labor sector for women and women of color, but women are also least likely to receive support from their supervisors when compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore, the percentage of support decreased when the data factored in race/ethnicity. Figure 3 depicts that women, in general, feel less supported by their supervisors when compared to their male counterparts in all six levels of support. Also, Black women had the lowest and Latinas the second-lowest percentage of perceived support from their supervisors when compared to their White female counterparts.

	MEN OVERALL	WOMEN OVERALL	WHITE WOMEN	ASIAN WOMEN	LATINAS	BLACK WOMEN	LESBIAN WOMEN
Provides the resources I need to succeed	49%	45%	47%	44%	43%	42%	45%
Helps me navigate organizational politics	41%	37%	39%	32%	30%	25%	35%
Creates opportunities for me to showcase my work	45%	42%	43%	44%	40%	35%	43%
Promotes my contributions to others	46%	44%	46%	40%	39%	35%	44%
Socializes with me outside of work	55%	47%	48%	53%	45%	35%	46%
Helps me balance work and personal demands	44%	46%	48%	46%	44%	39%	39%

Source: Lean In (2018)

*Figure 3.* Levels of support for supervisees related to gender.

In the 2015 labor force, 7.5% of Latinas in comparison to 4% for all women were categorized as involuntary part-time workers because they were unable to secure a full-time position. Also, Latinas are less likely to have a unionized position as compared to other women (Gándara, 2015). When it comes to whether a Latina will be able to make a living wage, the best predictor is education. Latinas with higher education degrees are more likely to hold a full-time job (Gándara, 2015). In the professional world, Latinas are beginning to make their presence noted; however, they are still underrepresented in the field. For example, in 2014, women were 80% of the teacher workforce, yet Latinas only made up 8.7% of that group. In that same year, women made up one-third of all lawyers in the United States; however, Latinas were underrepresented in this workforce and only comprised 6.7% of that group. Lastly, women were 37% of all medical physicians, and Latinas comprised 7.5% of that group (Gándara, 2015). Despite the gains

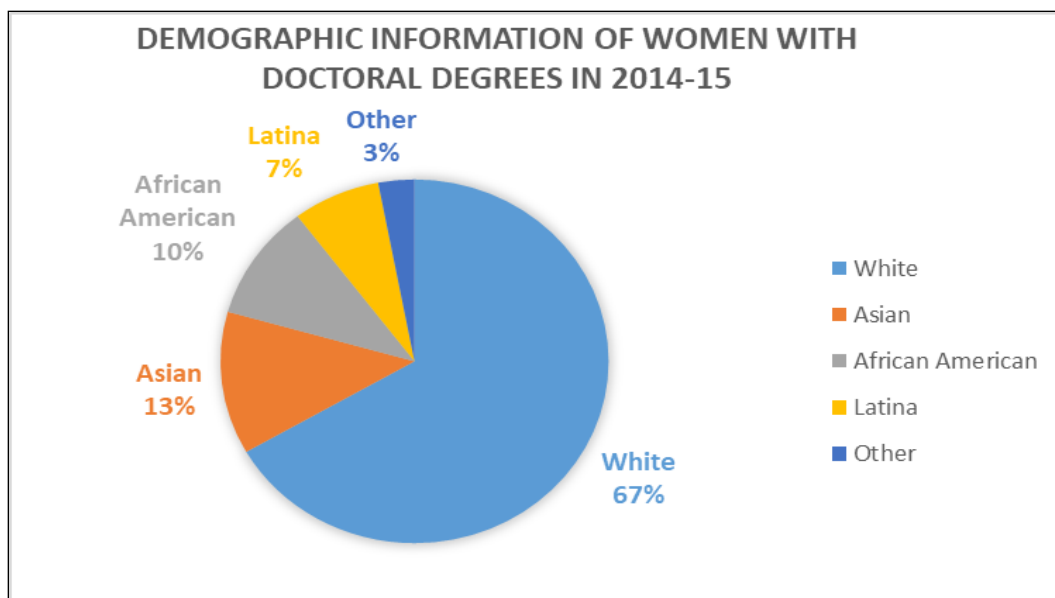
that women in the United States are making, Latinas continue to be underrepresented in all levels of the Labor Force. Although higher education is a predictor of Latinas holding a full-time living wage, Latinas in higher education have other obstacles to overcome in their conquest of a terminal degree.

### **Latinas in Doctoral Programs Facing Microaggression**

Students of color, specifically Latinas in this case, have continuously had to resist the current Eurocentric education model in efforts to access an equitable education. The current Eurocentric model is not inclusive of other cultures and races, creating challenges for students of color and causing them to feel less-than throughout their educational trajectory. In efforts to assimilate students of color, United States policy has used education and schools as the weapon to wash out the differences of people of color and continue to perpetuate the superiority of Anglo-Americans through school systems and curriculum (Borunda, 2016). The master narrative of curriculum and textbooks in the United States continues to perpetuate the racial/ethnic and gender inequalities by providing a one-sided history that benefits the dominant White culture (Borunda, 2016; Loewen, 2007). American textbooks provide irrelevant information that is far removed from primary sources and gives a one-sided perspective to controversial historical events (Loewen, 2007). The 1925 American Legion claims that textbooks must, (a) “inspire the children with patriotism,” (b) “be careful to tell the truth optimistically,” and (c) “dwell on failure only for its value as a moral lesson, must speak chiefly of success” (Loewen, 1999, p. 21). Such a mindset can lead to textbook publishers and writers leaving out pertinent information about people of color and their role in the United States history

because it may not be patriotic or tell the truth of colonialism and oppression. If textbooks do not reflect the population they serve and the successful journeys of women, people of color, and women of color, children from marginalized communities may never understand that they can achieve greatness.

Despite Latinx being the largest ethnic/racial minority in the United States, when it comes to obtaining the highest achieving degree in higher education, a doctoral degree, Latinas fall into the last place. It is projected that Latinas will be one-third of the female population in the United States by 2060, yet when compared to other subgroups, they have lower high school graduation rates and are least likely (19%) to obtain a college degree (Gándara, 2015). Currently, in the United States, 2% of the population holds a doctoral degree in which 0.6% of that 2% are Latinos (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). In the category of the women with doctoral degrees, Latinas currently have the lowest percentage who hold those degrees and yet represent the largest minority group in the United States. In 2014-15, of the women who hold doctoral degrees, 66.7% were White, 12.7% were Asian, 10.3% were African American, and 7.3% were Latinas (National Center of Education Statistics, 2016).



Source: NCES (2016)

*Figure 4.* Demographic data of women with doctoral degrees in the United States in 2014-15.

Research on the Latina experience has started to focus heavily on Latinas in higher education. That research has identified that Latinas face isolation in academia, experienced racial trauma, and are subject to racial microaggressions from faculty and peers during their higher educational experiences, including doctoral programs (Achor & Morales, 1990; Gildersleeve, Croom, & Vasquez, 2011; Gonzalez, 2006; Gonzalez, Marin, Figueroa, Moreno, & Navia, 2002; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Research on Latinas in higher education has revealed the element of racial microaggressions that Latinas have endured throughout their educational experience. For example, Achor and Morales (1990) conducted research on 100 Chicanas with doctoral degrees and examined how and why these women succeeded

at obtaining their degrees. Their research identified a significant number of barriers and racial microaggressions the women faced while attaining their doctoral degree. The research found that 43% of these Chicanas indicated they received negative attitudes and treatment from the faculty, 27% received it from their academic adviser, and 28% of these Chicanas received prejudicial treatment from their peers (Achor & Morales, 1990). In this study, specific participants noted different negative lived experiences. One noted that peers devalued her participation in the program by perceiving her as an “affirmative action case,” while another participant had to convince the graduate program that she was not going to get married nor have children during her time in the program to avoid dropping out (Achor & Morales, 1990).

Sólorzano and Yosso (2001) used counter-storytelling to examine the gender and racial discrimination that one graduate student, Esperanza Gonzalez, faced in her graduate school experience. Esperanza retold her experience when she would question liberal ideas of social justice that excluded the lived experience of Chicanas and instead of considering her question, she would be ignored, dismissed, or labeled super-sensitive or as an “angry Chicana.” This left her with the notion that it was better to stay quiet (Sólorzano & Yosso, 2001). Esperanza also described a time when she received a “B+” on a paper. The feedback from her professor stated she received that grade due to her only seeing him once for academic support and if she had gone back to see him, he could have rewritten her work to avoid her work from being elementary and scholars thinking it was not sophisticated (Sólorzano & Yosso, 2001).

### **Latinas, Microaggressions, and Mental Health**

Despite Latinas' ability to successfully navigate the higher education system and earn their membership into the small, 2%, exclusive academic community of those with doctoral degrees in the United States, their degree could call for an asterisk to note the oppression, microaggressions, and obstacles they faced while attaining their degrees. Along with the completion of their higher education degree, some of these Latinas endure irreversible physical and psychological consequences that some of their White peers may not endure. According to Sue (2010), race and ethnic-related forms of racism and microaggressions have caused physical and psychological detrimental consequences to people of color. Much of the physiological and psychological effects of race-related forms of discrimination and microaggressions research has been conducted on African Americans (Carter, 2007; Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). The racial microaggression stress that is inflicted on people of color has been strongly implicated to medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease, respiratory issues, hypertension, elevated heart rates, depression, lower life satisfaction, low self-esteem, anxiety, and helplessness (Brondolo et al., 2008; Carter, 2007; Clark et al., 1999; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue, 2010; Utsey & Hook, 2007). Less research has been done on the physical and psychological implications that racial microaggressions have on Latinos. However, medical problems, such as high blood pressure, have been linked to perceived discrimination faced by Mexican Americans (James, Lovato, & Khoo, 1994; Sue et al., 2007). Also, perceived discrimination has been linked to psychological distress, high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Finch, Kolody, & Vega, 2000).

Not only do Latinas in higher education run the risk of physical and psychological implications, but women in the professional workforce are also susceptible.

Spencer (2017) conducted a qualitative study on the factors that contributed to the success of six Latina California community colleges administrators. This study captured the experiences of these women and the microaggressions to which they were subjected in their work environment. When describing their experiences with microaggressions in the workplace, these Latina administrators noted the physical and psychological stress they experienced in their leadership positions. The microaggressions they faced caused them to feel invalidated, which lead them to have feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt, and low self-confidence in their leadership positions (Spencer, 2017). For example,

Administrator 6 described her experiences as follows:

This was the first space that I've been in where I was second-guessing myself. There were a variety of different things that happened, and I started to think to myself, "Is it me? Is it in my head? "Is it me? Is this in my head? And it was so mind-boggling to me. They make me look crazy, and they make me look like 'I'm Latina.' I'm not one to come in every day with my fist raised and demanding respect. That's not me. I have other things to do. I have programs to run. Because of these microaggressions, I get put in a situation where I'm constantly the one in the room that has to raise questions, you know? (Spencer, 2017, pp. 90-91)

Administrator 6 noted that her experience with microaggressions in the workplace caused her to doubt herself in her workspace, the one she was qualified to be in. According to Sue (2010), Latinas are negatively impacted by racism, microaggressions, prejudice, and discrimination, which negatively affects their psychological well-being and decreases the perceived efficacy in the workplace. Root (2003) identified that exposure to microaggressions and harassment in the workplace leads to psychological implications



such as anxiety, paranoia, depression, sleep difficulties, lack of confidence, worthlessness, intrusive cognitions, helplessness, loss of drive, and false positives. Sue (2010) suggested that organizations can begin to address issues of microaggressions and racism in the workplace by addressing and changing their culture and climate in the workplace through their values, procedures, vision statements, and protocols of how problems are defined and solved.

### **Impostor Phenomenon**

Impostor Phenomenon (IP) is a term created to describe women who excelled in the professional world but who could not attribute their intelligence and abilities to their success. Subsequently, they have internalized feelings of being a “phony” in their professional role (Clance, 1985; Clance & Imes, 1978). The feeling of being a fraud, an impostor, caused these women much stress and anxiety as they internalized the mindset that they did not deserve any praise for their accomplishments because they did not believe they had earned it (Clance & Imes, 1978; Cowman & Ferrari, 2002; Harvey & Katz, 1985; Parkman, 2016). This term was not coined to describe people who were deceitful or dishonest in their performance or pretended to hold certain credentials they did not have (Clance, 1985).

We’re talking about people who have valid, tangible accomplishments yet are haunted by the fear that they cannot keep repeating their successes, or that they are somehow not as capable or as bright as they appear to others. These people are painfully aware of any deficiencies that exist in their knowledge. They tend to see others’ strengths and abilities and to admire and overrate the intelligence or achievements of those around them, always comparing themselves to these people, always believing that in such comparisons they come up short. (Clance, 1985, pp. 24-25)

According to Clance (1985), those who identify themselves with having feelings of IP constantly question themselves and may experience at least two or three of six different characteristics found in the impostor profile. The first is the Impostor Cycle in which anytime they find themselves in need to perform, they face fear, anxiety, and doubt that either causes them to procrastinate or over-prepare. Once they have completed the task, they find relief, yet the next time they must perform, they begin the cycle once again, forgetting their previous accomplishments and negating their intelligence and capabilities. The second characteristic is the need to be the best or be special in which the person has difficulty accepting that they will not always be the best and begin to see themselves as unintelligent because they are not the best. The third characteristic is the Superwoman/Superman, in which they expect perfection and flawlessness from themselves in their performance and the belief that their work must be done with ease. However, when it is not perfect or done with ease, the impostor becomes overwhelmed and feels like a failure. The fourth characteristic, Fear of Failure, is found in self-ascribed impostors who are afraid of being humiliated or shamed if they make a mistake, which causes them high levels of stress and anxiety. The fear of failure pushes them to work hard to ensure they never make a mistake to fail. The fifth characteristic is Denial of Competence and Discounting Praise, in which the impostor cannot accept and internalize that they are competent and intelligent individuals. Their denial leads them to construct different reasons as to why they are not intelligent and competent and makes them incapable of accepting positive feedback or affirmation regarding their work. The final characteristic is Fear of and Guilt about Success which, according to Clance (1985),

is especially seen in women. These women have a desire to be extremely successful, yet they fear such success could cause them to be seen as aggressive or unfeminine and negatively affect their relationships with males.

Males also go through the characteristic of Fear of and Guilt about Success; however, their fear comes from not wanting to be more successful than their fathers are. This different frame of reference is thereby familial and patriarchal rather than racial. For those impostors who are pioneers of reaching such success, they fear it because it brings about a separation between them and their community. In these cases, success may induce rejection from their community or their success may be perceived as lacking humility. In the professional aspect, the impostors fear success because they fear that more will be asked of them, adding on responsibilities and fear they may not be able to meet such expectations. Despite going through some of these characteristics, impostors make positive first impressions and are adept at disguising their ill perception of themselves.

IP was initially coined to describe women in the professional setting; however, it has been linked to people of color and minorities in which their IP scores are higher (Cokley, McClain, Enciso, & Martinez, 2013). For example, Harvey and Katz (1985) surveyed African American and Latino students in undergraduate programs and found that those who suffered from the IP felt they had fooled others into overestimating their intelligence. The individuals in this study attributed their academic success to external factors such as luck and physical attractiveness. Additionally, they feared that people would find out they were frauds (Harvey & Katz, 1985). Furthermore, this research

found that the feeling of being a fraud was greater in those who were the first in their families to succeed academically, in their finances, and their career goals (Harvey & Katz, 1985).

Although the IP research is mostly focused on students in higher education, some studies have been conducted on professionals with a higher education degree (Hutchins, 2015). For example, Hutchins (2015) studied the IP among higher education faculty. The research found that IP scores were moderate among higher education faculty members and that those without tenure experienced higher scores. Of the participants, 61% were women and 88% were affiliated with the social sciences. Although this research was conducted on higher education faculty with doctoral degrees, this research could have furthered their study by further examining the degree of impostor based on race, ethnicity, and academic field of those faculty.

### **Cultural Community Wealth**

Esperanza. . . When you leave, you must remember to come back for the others. A circle, understand? You will always be Esperanza. You will always be Mango Street. You can't erase what you know. You can't forget who you are. (Cisneros, 1989, p. 105)

When discussing social and racial inequities, deficit thinkers look at students of color and assume that their poor academic standing is due to (a) their parents not caring about their education and (b) the student lacks normative cultural knowledge and skills (Yosso, 2005). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) identified that the lack of academic success is due to the student's lack of cultural capital, which can only be obtained through formal education as well as assets and resources that come from living a

privileged life. Bourdieu and Passeron went on to identify that some communities, such as the dominant White culture, have cultural wealth while others, mostly people of color, are culturally deficient in the cultural wealth valued by the dominant culture. This orientation underscores deficit thinking in which scholars fail to notice that people of color develop and flourish in a range of contexts outside of the dominant White culture. Although the communities that fall outside of the economically privileged classes may not have monetary wealth and assets that are a part of the dominant culture, people of color grow up in communities that have an abundance of other forms of wealth. Yosso (2005) called this range of assets as community cultural wealth (CCW).

CCW is composed of six different capitals: aspirational, navigational, social linguistic, familial, and resistant. Aspirational capital is what people have given themselves and their children to dream, to set goals and hope for a better future despite barriers that are currently in place preventing them from such success. Many first-generation students dream of and enter higher education because of the aspirational capital they received as children. Linguistic capital notes that people of color have multiple languages, social, intellectual, and social skills that were acquired through multiple communication experiences in different languages, styles, and settings (Yosso, 2005). Such experiences come through storytelling, music, nursery rhymes, translating/interpreting for parents, and using colloquial vocabulary that holds shared meaning discernable only to those within the cultural community. Familial capital refers to “those cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition” (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). Familial capital

is not limited to immediate family but extends its definition of familial to the membership of a community. Social capital refers to the networking and ability to navigate a system (i.e., scholarship process, higher education, employment, legal justice, etc.) based on the community resources and social contacts one has acquired. Navigational capital is having the skills to navigate the social institution to receive the necessary help and assistance to be successful in that institution. Resistance capital refers to the skills and understanding of the inequalities and inequities they face and the oppositional behavior needed to confront it head-on (Yosso, 2005). With resistance capital, endurance labor was born. Endurance labor is the determination to fight back while enduring racist, classist, and sexist assaults that are solely fueled by the emotional desire to beat the system that has worked so hard to discriminate and alienate a person (Cuadraz & Pierce, 1994).

Endurance labor was coined to be the counter of cultural capital. According to Cuadraz and Pierce (1994), Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) concept of cultural capital is only accessible to those who are culturally and linguistically competent within a particular worldview, and it continues to reproduce inequality and uphold structures of power. On the other hand, endurance labor emerges from the efforts of those who do not have the capital to make changes but gather up enough inner determination, courage, and at times anger to fight the very hostile system that has kept them powerless. Also, endurance labor taps into the individual's dreams and aspirations of being more than their situation. It incorporates the visualization of seeing themselves in the professional roles they desire. Cuadraz and Pierce (1994) do note that although endurance labor does not

start with the individual having cultural capital, they do end up with some of it because of their eventual accomplishments. They do note that despite their opposition to the existence of cultural capital orientations, they are still subjugated to institutional racism, sexism, and classism.

CCW counters the deficit perspective by identifying the richness of communities of color and the cultural wealth attained through their historical and cultural shared experiences. CCW then can be seen as a cycle, which continues to reproduce itself within communities of color, creating a cycle of success stories. These counter-narratives can serve as fuel for families and communities of color to produce future aspirational capitals. Through the CCW lens, members of the dominant White culture can no longer dismiss the experiences and cultural wealth of people of color. Also, they must challenge the traditional subtractive model by embracing the epistemologies of minoritized communities. Given the increased diversity in the American fabric and the multicultural experiences that shape the contours of the American experience, CCW creates an avenue through which all cultures can be included and celebrated.

### **Social Dominance Theory and Intersectionality Theory**

Group discrimination is a social construct that has been created by oppressors to validate their annihilation or enslavement of different groups of people to assert their social dominance. Social dominance theory (SDT) is a framework that studies such social hierarchies and the benefits of being the dominant group of people as well as the disadvantages of being in the subordinate groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). SDT's fundamental truths are that it is in the nature of human beings to (a) establish dominance

over another group based on differences and (b) to maintain the social hierarchy to continue to reap the positive social benefits that are products of their dominance. Such benefits include wealth, political power, health care, education, housing, and nutrition. The negative social disadvantages are the complete opposite—poverty, little to no political power, poor health, poor housing, and poor nutrition along with negative sanctions such as prison (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

SDT identifies three different group systems, age-based, gender-based, and an arbitrary set. In the age- and gender-based systems, position in that social hierarchy system is fixed based on biological factors. In the age-based, your membership changes with your age; the younger you are, the lower the social hierarchy and the older, the higher. In gender, social constructs have placed women in the subordinate group and men in the dominant group. In the arbitrary system, the hierarchy is socially constructed and can be constructed based on one group's need to dominate the other. These group differences can be based on race/ethnicity, social class, religion, or any other distinction that can categorize a group (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Racism and sexism, topics this study focuses on, are two forms of oppression and discrimination often thought of as separate and independent frameworks. In SDT, sexism is seen through a gender-based system and racism is analyzed through the arbitrary set. These binary perspectives fail to address other categorical discriminations that comprise the multiplicity of oppressive experiences of minoritized communities such as being both a woman and of color (Crenshaw, 1989). Thus, this study looks at both SDT and intersectionality theory. In 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the intersectionality



Framework to expose and identify the lived experiences of Black women who are left without a voice under the binary categorical literature. Their stories regarding discrimination were left out of the conversation about social justice. The binary perspective about racism specifically focused on the perspective of men of color. Binary perspectives about sexism speak to the White female perspective.

Discussions about racism and sexism independently leave out the intersection of race and color, neglecting the experiences of women of color. Intersectionality asserts that people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression: race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identity markers (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality promotes the inclusion of all experiences by all people, discarding the binary perspective of each discriminatory category and changing the conversation of the “women’s experience” to the “women of color experience” (Crenshaw, 1989).

### **Summary**

The literature demonstrates that women of color, specifically Latinas, are continuously impacted by the racism and sexism ingrained in the United States' social structures. Racism is a social structure used to oppress one group based on the difference of race/ethnicity and provides privileges to the dominant group, also known as social dominance. Sexism has been a part of the country’s social structure since the inception of the country. Women have continuously fought for their rights over their bodies, education, wages, and civil rights. The literature also notes that there are further complications when taking into account the intersectionality of being both a woman and of color. The implications of this intersectionality can lead to Latinas having feelings of

being an impostor, facing heightened incidents of microaggressions in the workplace, and having physical and psychological consequences due to those experiences.

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

Latinas in the United States are considered twice a minority (Melville, 1980). According to social structures, they are categorized as the inferior gender and a minority race/ethnic group. Their identity as a woman of color makes them susceptible to face racism, microaggressions, prejudice, and discrimination in any environment such as education and the workforce. Currently, 2% of the United States population holds a doctoral degree and of the women who hold doctoral degrees, only 7% of them are Latinas (NCES, 2016; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Previous research has identified that these Latinas face microaggressions, racism, and prejudice and display feelings of an impostor in their higher education academic journeys. This research focused on IP and racial microaggression with Latinas who have acquired a doctoral degree and are in the professional workforce.

#### **Research Design**

This research is a mixed-methods approach and involved a concurrent nested design. By using a mixed-methods approach, this research employed a quantitative survey, conducted qualitative interviews, and analyzed both sets of data to further build and give depth to the research (Creswell, 2014). Using a mixed-methods approach was beneficial because the quantitative data produced outcomes from a large population and the qualitative data brought insight to the lived experiences of the participants, providing a complete understanding of the research at hand (Creswell, 2014). A concurrent nested

approach collects and analyzes both quantitative and qualitative data, concurrently giving primacy to one of the two forms of data, while the additional data are used to address a different question or set of questions that are useful for obtaining a broader perspective on the study (Hanson et al., 2005). Even though this is a mixed-methods study, the concurrent nested approach fostered emphasis for the qualitative data drawn from the open-ended interviews while still obtaining significant data regarding racial microaggression and IP with a larger participant number.

Using non-experimental quantitative survey research provided descriptive statistics of the participants' self-perception regarding their level of Impostor Phenomenon using the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS; 1985). A Pearson correlation was run on the data collected from the Racial Microaggression Scale (RMAS; Torres-Harding, Andrade, & Romero Diaz, 2012) to identify which variables regarding racial microaggression are significantly related. Using the quantitative method in this research allowed a large population of Latinas with doctoral degrees to participate in this research, offering a large data set, thus allowing the generalization of the sample group to its population (Creswell, 2014). In addition to the quantitative survey research, this research used a qualitative phenomenological research in which the researcher described the participants' lived experiences with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). The phenomenological research gave depth in understanding lived experiences in which these participants felt like an impostor and endured microaggressions in the workplace due to their gender and ethnic identity.

**Role of the Researcher**

The role of the researcher in this study was to distribute surveys, collect and analyze the data, and conduct open-ended interviews via telephone. Within this role, the researcher obtained approval from the creators of two pre-existing surveys for data collection. The researcher used both survey templates to create one full survey and then distributed the survey using Qualtrics software. The researcher then conducted interviews and kept a record of the interviews using Google Voice. The questions were semi-structured, which allowed the participant to provide detailed answers. The researcher transcribed all interviews. Once transcribed, the researcher analyzed the data to identify common themes among the participants.

**Research Questions**

This study sought to answer the following question:

What is the psychological experience of Latinas post completion of their doctorate degree?

Sub-questions related to the larger question follow:

1. Which variables regarding racial microaggressions are significantly related to Latinas with doctoral degrees? (Quantitative)
2. What specific examples of microaggressions have Latinas with doctoral degrees faced in the workplace? How has this affected them? (Qualitative)
3. Where do Latinas with doctoral degrees score on the Impostor Phenomenon Scale? (Quantitative)

4. What are the specific lived experiences in which these Latinas felt like impostors? (Qualitative)
5. Despite the internal conflict of the Impostor Phenomenon and external conflicts of racial microaggressions, what keeps you thriving every day? (Qualitative)

### **Setting, Population, and Sample**

The setting was not specific to one area, it spanned to any Latina in the United States who had completed a doctoral degree in the United States. The participants were sought through a Facebook group of Latinas with doctoral degrees and a purposeful snowball sampling was conducted from thereon. The participants were Latinas who have a doctoral degree and were currently in the workforce, as this research attempted to further explore Latinas' lived experiences in the United States. It also attempted to gain information on whether the participants experienced IP and microaggressions despite holding the highest degree in their field. This research received participation from 202 Latinas with doctoral degrees and seven of the participants opted to be interviewed.

### **Data Collection and Instrumentation**

Quantitative data were collected through a survey that consisted of two pre-existing surveys distributed to participants through Qualtrics. The two preexisting surveys are the RMAS and the CIPS (see Appendices A & B). The participants were asked to agree to the survey's informed consent letter and encouraged to complete the survey (see Appendix C). In addition to the two survey scales, the participants were asked five demographic questions regarding their age group, the type of doctorate degree they held, the state they currently lived in, and if they identified as Hispanic/Latina (see

Appendix D). The last section of the survey encouraged participants to opt for a one-on-one semi-structured open-ended interview recorded via a Google Voice phone conversation. Interviews lasted no more than one hour each. The identity of the participants was kept confidential by the use of a pseudonym through the collection of the data as well as through the reporting and analysis in Chapter 4.

### **Quantitative Instrument: Racial Microaggression Scale (RMAS)**

The first Instrument used in the survey is the Racial Microaggression Scale (RMAS; Torres-Harding et al., 2012) and was created using Sue's taxonomy to measure the frequency of racial microaggressions across racial groups. This instrument is a 32-item scale used to assess the frequency and impact of racial microaggression. The RMAS has six subscales: invisibility, criminality, low achieving/undesirable culture, sexualization, foreigner/not belonging, and environmental invalidations. The invisibility items on the scale address how the participant is treated: whether they are perceived to be lower status, not seen or treated as a real person, and devalued or dismissed. The next subscale of items, criminality/assumptions of criminal status, addresses whether the participant has ever been perceived as dangerous, criminal, or aggressive. Low achieving/undesirable culture is when the participant is perceived to be one and the same with others of the same race, assuming they are all low achieving, incompetent, and dysfunctional and receive unfair treatment and entitlement. Sexualization addresses the over-sexualization and sexual stereotypes one experiences based on one's racial/ethnic identity. The next subscale's items address the participants' perception regarding being a foreigner/not belonging in which the participants assess whether they have been treated

as a foreigner or made to feel that they do not belong; i.e., their true “Americaness” is questioned because of their racial identity. The last of the factors is environmental invalidations, addressing the assumptions acquired due to the racial representation in powerful roles, such as the workforce and the community (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). With this scale, the participants indicated how often they had experienced a particular racial microaggression on a 4-point Likert-type scale (0 = not at all; 1 = a little; 2 = moderate level; 3 = high level). When the respondents indicated a microaggression had been faced, they then responded by selecting the level of the impact (stressful, upsetting, or bothersome) of that experience through a three-point Likert-type scale (0 = not at all; 1 = a little; 2 = moderate level; and 3 = high level). Each item was averaged to obtain a score on each subscale.

The second instrument in the survey used was the CIPS (Clance, 1985). The scale is a self-assessment developed to measure the components of the Impostor Phenomenon, in which one can be considered successful by external standards, but self-perceives personal incompetence and fraudulence (Clance & Imes, 1978). The scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale, which determines whether or not individuals have attributes of IP and if so, to what extent. The totals from each question are totaled. A total score higher than 80 signifies that the participant has intense IP experiences. A total of 61 to 80, the participant frequently has IP feelings. A score of 41 to 60 indicates the participant has moderate IP experiences. A score of 40 or less indicates the participant has a few IP characteristics. The scale is the most prominent of all IP scales used to explore IP due to its reliability of  $a \geq .80$  (Hutchins, 2015).



## Qualitative Instruments

One-on-one interviews were conducted using semi-structured questions, which are listed below the research question they address (see Appendix E).

2. What specific examples of microaggressions have Latinas with doctoral degrees faced in the workplace? (Qualitative)

- a. Have you faced microaggressions as a supervisor? If so, explain your experience (If applicable). How did this affect you psychologically or physically?
- b. Have you faced microaggressions from your peers? If so, explain your experience (If applicable). How did this affect you psychologically or physically?
- c. Have you faced microaggressions as a subordinate? If so, explain your experience (If applicable). How did this affect you psychologically or physically?

4. What are the specific lived experience in which these Latinas felt like Impostors?

- a. Can you think of a time when you felt like an Impostor in life? How did this affect you psychologically or physically?
- b. Can you think of a time in which you felt like an Impostor at work? How did this affect you psychologically or physically?

5. Despite the internal conflict of the Impostor Phenomenon and external conflicts of microaggressions, what keeps you thriving every day?

### **Reliability and Validity**

The validity of this research and its findings is strengthened through the mixed-methods approach used to offset any weaknesses that either method presents on its own. For the quantitative survey, reliability was ensured through the pre-existing scales that were created by experts regarding each topic—IP and racial microaggressions—and have been used in multiple pieces of research as reliable and valid instruments. Each participant was given the same questions with as much time they needed to complete the survey. In efforts to achieve generalization amongst the population, this research aimed to survey 120 participants but resulted in surveying 202 participants.

### **Data Analysis**

This research used a concurrent nested design. A Pearson correlation was run on the RMAS scores to identify which of the six subthemes (variables) were significantly related among Latinas with doctoral degrees. The CIPS score was individually totaled to obtain a score to determine the level of the IP that each participant experienced. Both quantitative scales were utilized using an online survey instrument, Qualtrics. During the survey, participants who opted to do the interviews chose a pseudonym linking their identity to their results. For both quantitative and qualitative data, the participants' identity remained confidential. The qualitative interviews described the lived experiences the participants had with microaggressions and IP. The interviews drew qualitative data from the participants. After the interviews, the data were transferred from the recording device and transcribed by the researcher using HyperResearch, a transcribing and coding software. The data were coded and common themes in the

participants' responses were identified and grouped. For the quantitative data, this study used descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics provided the mean, range, and standard deviation to describe the sample and variables. Inferential statistics were used to infer from the sample data what the majority of the Latinas with doctoral degrees may perceive regarding their experience with IP and racial microaggressions. A Pearson correlation provided data regarding which variables related to racial microaggressions are significantly related among the participants.

### **Protection of Participants**

The researcher obtained permission from the Sacramento State's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the research. All participants were given a brief background regarding the study but not to the extent to which the information provided could inflate the results. In this research, participants remained confidential. Participants were able to choose a pseudonym instead of actual names and the identifiable information was kept to a minimum. All data are electronically secured in password-protected files and a password-protected laptop. All recordings were destroyed upon the completion of transcribing, and transcripts will be destroyed within three years of the completion of the study.

## Chapter 4

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Chapter 4 presents the results from the qualitative and quantitative data gathered through individual interviews and surveys from Latinas with doctoral degrees in the United States. The purpose of this study was to (a) identify the level of IP, (b) determine which variables regarding racial microaggressions are significantly related, and (c) give voice to the lived experiences of Latinas with doctoral degrees related to IP and microaggressions in the workplace.

This entire study used a non-random convenience sample to recruit 202 participants who completed the study's quantitative scales. The recruitment process involved identifying and then inviting Latinas with a completed doctorate through Facebook to sign up and participate in the overall study through a Google Form. Thereafter, a snowball effect was created, as the original invitation post was shared on Facebook, Twitter, and email by the researcher, by members of the social media group, and by those with whom they, in turn, shared the invitation to participate.

A total of 236 possible participants signed up to participate in the study, and a total of 202 of those possible participants completed the survey. Figure 5 depicts the age groups of the 202 participants. After completing the survey, the 202 participants had the opportunity to opt-in for an interview of which 93 participants opted to be interviewed. Of those 93, seven participants were randomly selected. All seven participants were first-generation college students and graduates. Five of the seven participants worked at a higher education institution, one worked at an agriculture biotechnology research

company, and one worked at a law firm. Table 2 depicts the age group and workplace of the final seven who opted to participate in the open-ended in-depth interviews.

Table 2

*Participant Age and Workplace*

Participant	Age Group	Workplace
Dolores	25-34 years old	Agriculture Biotech Company
Estela	25-34 years old	Higher Education Institution
Evita	55-64 years old	Higher Education Institution
JLo	25-34 years old	Higher Education Institution
Julia	25-34 years old	Higher Education Institution
Olivia	35-44 years old	Higher Education Institution
Victoria	25-34 years old	Law Firm

These interviews were recorded and lasted no more than one hour (see Table 3). At the start of the interview, participants were asked to create a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality and to acknowledge they received the informed consent form (see Appendix F), and the participants verbally acknowledged they had received the consent form and that they were consenting to the interview. At the beginning of the recorded interview. Additionally, participants were asked to identify their career field and the position they held in their workplace. Participants were asked six open-ended questions related to Research Questions 2, 4, and 5. After the interviews, the audio recordings were

transcribed and coded using HyperResearch. Participants' responses were analyzed using deductive coding to answer the six questions about Research Questions 2, 4, and 5.

Table 3

*Interview Duration*

Participant	Interview Duration
Dolores	46:50
Estela	59:02
Evita	53:54
JLo	51:19
Julia	33:00
Olivia	51:15
Victoria	32:25

In this chapter, the data are presented in three sections. First, the Microaggressions section presents quantitative data analysis and qualitative data. It answers Research Question 1 by addressing variables regarding racial microaggressions and their significance as related to Latinas with doctoral degrees. This section also answers Research Question 2 through qualitative data, providing specific examples of microaggressions that Latinas with doctoral degrees face in the workplace. The quantitative data from the RMAS are presented through descriptive analysis and a Pearson correlation data analysis. Qualitative data are presented through emerging

themes that arose from the participants' lived experiences of microaggressions in the workplace.

The second section presents the quantitative data and qualitative data regarding the IP. This section answers Research Question 3, assessing Latinas' with doctoral degrees level of identification with the CIPS (1985). In the production of quantitative data, Research Question 4 is also addressed with qualitative data examining the specific lived experiences of the participants in relationship to ever feeling or being made to feel like impostors. The quantitative data from the CIPS (1985) are presented through descriptive analysis. Then the qualitative data are presented through identified themes that emerged from the participants' lived experiences as related to the IP.

The third section presents the data regarding the Effects of Microaggression and Impostor Phenomenon and answers Research Question 5 asking what keeps these Latinas thriving every day despite the internal conflict of IP and external conflicts of racial microaggressions, examining. The Effects of Microaggression and Impostor Phenomenon section addresses the psychological and physical effects of microaggressions and IP that were noted regarding Research Questions 2 and 4. Research Question 5 focuses on the participants' ability to overcome and thrive despite the microaggressions and IP they face.

## **Findings**

### **Microaggressions**

**Quantitative data descriptive statistics.** The RMAS (Torres-Harding et al., 2012) consists of 32 questions with six subscales measuring a range of specific incidents

within this domain: foreigner/not belonging, criminality, sexualization, low-achieving/undesirable culture, invisibility, and environmental invalidation. The RMAS examines the occurrences and distress elicited by incidents of racial microaggression directed at people of color (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). For each of the 32 questions, participants were asked to rate how often each of the identified types of incidents happened to them on a 4-point Likert-type scale (0 = never, 1 = a little/rarely, 2 = sometimes/ moderate amount, 3 = often/frequently).

All 202 participants completed the entire scale. Table 4 provides the cumulative frequencies in each subscale for all 202 participants. In this section of descriptive statistics, for reporting purposes, the emphasis is given to the subscales for which the majority of the participants indicated having had such experience. Subsequently, the four subscales are divided into two sections: (a) never and little/rarely and (b) sometimes/moderate and often/frequent. In the foreigner/not belonging subscale, 56% of the participants claimed to experience foreigner/not belonging racial microaggressions in which they were made to feel as if they did not belong or were not considered a “true” American. In the criminality subscale, 78.2% of the participants expressed not being treated as if they were aggressive, dangerous, or a criminal. In the sexualization subscale, 50.5% of the participants expressed being treated in an overly sexual manner or being subjected to a sexual stereotype. In the low-achieving/undesirable culture subscale, 75.7% of the participants expressed being treated like people from one’s race were interchangeable, uniformly incompetent, and incapable to achieve, or only succeed due to special treatment or unfair entitlement. In the invisibility subscale, 53% of the



participants expressed being treated as if they were not a “real” person or of lower status as well as being dismissed or not valued. Lastly, in the environmental invalidation subscale, 91.1% of the Latinas in this study expressed that there were negative perceptions regarding their race derived from not seeing one’s race at work, school, community settings, or in positions of power. Two of the six subscales had a high rate of racial microaggressions faced by the Latinas with doctoral degrees in this study: (a) environmental invalidation (91.1%) and (b) low-achieving/undesirable culture (75.7%). The opposite can be said for their experiences with criminality in which 78.2% said to have never to little experiences of being perceived as a criminal.

Table 4

*RMAS Total Frequency by Subscale*

Variables/Subscale	Frequency	Percentage
1. Foreigner/Not Belonging Subscale, Questions 1-3		
Never	21	10.4
Little/Rarely	66	32.7
Sometimes/Moderate	78	38.6
Often/Frequently	37	18.3
2. Criminality Subscale, Questions 4-7		
Never	63	31.2
Little/Rarely	95	47.0
Sometimes/Moderate	40	19.8
Often/Frequently	4	2.0
3. Sexualization Subscale, Questions 8-10		
Never	40	19.8
Little/Rarely	60	29.7
Sometimes/Moderate	59	29.2
Often/Frequently	43	21.3

Table 4 (continued)

Variables/Subscale	Frequency	Percentage
4. Low Achieving/Undesirable Culture Subscale, Questions 11-19		
Never	6	3.0
Little/Rarely	43	21.3
Sometimes/Moderate	118	58.4
Often/Frequently	35	17.3
5. Invisibility Subscale, Questions 20-27		
Never	28	13.9
Little/Rarely	67	33.1
Sometimes/Moderate	90	44.6
Often/Frequently	17	8.4
6. Environmental Invalidations Subscale, Questions 28-32		
Never	3	1.5
Little/Rarely	15	7.4
Sometimes/Moderate	71	35.2
Often/Frequently	113	55.9

**Quantitative data Pearson correlation.** A Pearson correlation was run on the RMAS to answer Research Question 1, “Which variables regarding racial microaggressions are significantly related regarding Latinas with doctoral degrees?” Cohen’s scale for effect size was used to determine the strength of the relationships between variables. The variables put into the correlation consisted of foreigner, criminality, sexualization, low-achiever, invisibility, and environmental. Of these variables, the following were found to be significantly related (see Table 5).

Table 5

*Significant Correlation*

Subscales	<i>r</i>	Sig.	Effect Size	<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup>
Sexualization & Environmental	.195	$p < .01$	Low	4%
Foreigner & Environmental	.204	$p < .01$	Low	4%
Criminality & Environmental	.251	$p < .01$	Low	6%
Invisibility & Environmental	.368	$p < .01$	Medium	14%
Low Achieving & Environmental	.372	$p < .01$	Medium	14%
Foreigner & Sexualization	.390	$p < .01$	Medium	15%
Sexualization & Invisibility	.400	$p < .01$	Medium	16%
Foreigner & Low Achieving	.402	$p < .01$	Medium	16%
Sexualization & Low Achieving	.466	$p < .01$	Medium	22%
Foreigner & Criminality	.479	$p < .01$	Medium	23%
Criminality & Sexualization	.514	$p < .01$	High	26%
Criminality & Low Achieving	.519	$p < .01$	High	27%
Foreigner & Invisibility	.543	$p < .01$	High	30%
Criminality & Invisibility	.639	$p < .01$	High	41%
Low Achieving & Invisibility	.665	$p < .01$	High	44%

A Pearson correlation was used to determine which variables within the racial microaggression are significantly related. A Pearson correlation indicated a low positive significant relationship between the sexualization subscale and the environmental

subscale,  $r(201) = .195, p < .01$ . The effect size is low and the  $r^2$  is 4%. Although the effect size is low, the participants who said they were perceived as sexualized due to their race also said they did not find their race positively represented in their environment or within positions of power. Subsequently, those two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a low positive significant relationship between the foreigner subscale and the environmental subscale,  $r(201) = .204, p < .01$ . The effect size is low and the  $r^2$  is 4%. Although the effect size is low, the participants who felt they were treated as a foreigner or as someone who did not belong also said they did not find their race positively represented in their environment or within positions of power. Those two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a low positive significant relationship between the criminality subscale and the environmental subscale,  $r(201) = .251, p < .01$ . The effect size is low and the  $r^2$  is 6%. Although the effect size is low, the participants who felt they were treated like criminals due to their race also said they did not find their race positively represented in their environment or within positions of power. Those two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a medium positive significant relationship between the invisibility subscale and the environmental subscale,  $r(201) = .368, p < .01$ . The effect size is medium and the  $r^2$  is 14%. Although the effect size is medium, the participants who felt invisible due to their race also said they did not find their race positively represented in their environment or positions of power. Those two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a medium positive significant relationship between the low achieving subscale and the environmental subscale,  $r(201) = .372$ ,  $p < .01$ . The effect size is medium and the  $r^2$  is 14%. Although the effect size is medium, the participants who felt they were perceived as low-achievers or of an undesirable culture due to their race also said they did not find their race positively represented in their environment or within positions of power. Those two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a medium positive significant relationship between the foreigner subscale and the sexualization subscale,  $r(201) = .390$ ,  $p < .01$ . The effect size is medium and the  $r^2$  is 15%. Although the effect size is medium, the participants who felt as if they were treated as foreigners and as if they did not belong due to their race also said they felt sexualized because of their race. These two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a medium positive significant relationship between the sexualization subscale and the invisibility subscale,  $r(201) = .400$ ,  $p < .01$ . The effect size is medium and the  $r^2$  is 16%. Although the effect size is medium, the participants who felt sexualized because of their race also felt invisible, not valued, or being dismissed because of their race. Those two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a medium positive significant relationship between the foreigner subscale and the low achieving subscale,  $r(201) = .402$ ,  $p < .01$ . The effect size is medium and the  $r^2$  is 16%. The participants who felt as if they

were treated as foreigners or as if they did not belong due to their race also said they felt as if they were perceived as low achievers or members of an undesirable culture because of their race. These two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a medium positive significant relationship between the sexualization subscale and the low achieving subscale,  $r(201) = .466$ ,  $p < .01$ . The effect size is medium and the  $r^2$  is 22%. The participants who felt as if they were sexualized due to their race also said they felt as if they were perceived as low achievers or members of an undesirable culture because of their race. These two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a medium positive significant relationship between the foreigner subscale and the criminality subscale,  $r(201) = .479$ ,  $p < .01$ . The effect size is moderate and the  $r^2$  is 23%. Participants who said they were treated as a foreigner, as someone who does not belong, also said they felt they were treated like a criminal because of their race. Those two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a high positive significant relationship between the criminality subscale and the sexualization subscale,  $r(201) = .514$ ,  $p < .01$ . The effect size is high and the  $r^2$  is 26%. The participants who felt as if they were treated like criminals due to their race also said they felt as if they were sexualized because of their race. These two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a high positive significant relationship between the criminality subscale and the low achieving subscale,  $r(201) = .519$ ,  $p < .01$ . The effect size is high and the  $r^2$  is 27%. The participants who felt as if they were treated like

criminals due to their race also said they felt as if they were perceived as low achievers or members of an undesirable culture because of their race. These two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a high positive significant relationship between the foreigner subscale and the invisibility subscale,  $r(201) = .543, p < .01$ . The effect size is high and the  $r^2$  is 30%. The participants who felt as if they were treated like a foreigner and as if they do not belong due to their race also said they felt as if they were invisible, not valued, or being dismissed because of their race. These two variables were significantly related.

A Pearson correlation indicated a high positive significant relationship between the criminality and the invisibility subscale,  $r(201) = .639, p < .01$ . The effect size is high and the  $r^2$  is 41%. The participants who felt as if they were treated like a criminal due to their race also said they felt as if they were invisible, not valued, or being dismissed because of their race. These two variables were significantly related.

Lastly, a Pearson correlation indicated a high positive significant relationship between the low achieving and the invisibility subscale,  $r(201) = .665, p < .01$ . The effect size is high and the  $r^2$  is 44%. The participants who felt as if they were treated like a low achiever or as a member of an undesirable culture due to their race also said they felt as if they were invisible, not valued, or being dismissed because of their race. Those two variables were significantly related.

**Qualitative data.** Qualitative data from individual interviews were used to address Research Question 2: “What specific examples of microaggressions have Latinas

with doctoral degrees faced (from subordinates, peers, and supervisors) in the workplace?” Six of the seven interviewees expressed that they experienced microaggressions as a supervisor or as a professor. All seven participants expressed that they experienced microaggressions from work peers, and four of the seven experienced microaggressions from a supervisor (see Table 6). Through the analysis of the interviews, four themes emerged (see Table 7) relating to participant experiences with microaggression in the workplace: ageism, women as sub-oppressors, racial/ethnic stereotypes, and lack of recognition and respect. Due to the intersectionality of being a scholar, a woman, and a Latina, some of the experiences fit in multiple emerging themes.

Table 6

*Experienced Microaggressions*

Participants	As a Supervisor/Professor	Work Peers	From Supervisor
Dolores	X	X	-
Estela	X	X	-
Evita	-	X	X
JLo	X	X	-
Julia	X	X	X
Olivia	X	X	X
Victoria	X	X	X



Table 7

*Research Question Two Theme Frequencies*

Participants	Ageism	Women as Sub-Opressors	Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes	Lack of Recognition or Respect
Dolores		X		X
Estela	X	X	X	X
Evita	-	X	X	X
Jlo	X	X	X	X
Julia	X	X	X	X
Olivia	X	X	X	X
Victoria	-	X	X	X

**Theme one: Ageism.** Four of the seven participants identified experiencing microaggressions because of their age or because they looked young. Such experiences negatively affected the participants and led to them feeling discredited and or causing them to reflect on how they dressed so as not to look too young. The four participants who expressed ageism were in the 25-34 and 35-44 age group. They faced ageism multiple times by someone at their workplace who projected the opinion that they were too young. This was experienced as a student not respecting the professor/student relationship, a peer treating them as less-than, or peers treating them like their age diminished their accomplishments. Estela shared one experience with one of her students during a class session:

Now out here, age is a factor. So, one time in class, mind you, these are Ed.D. students my age or older, we were talking about A Nation at Risk, which is a policy. I had students listen to Ronald Reagan's six-minute speech that was broadcasted over the radio. After they listened, I had mentioned that this is the way the majority of Americans heard A Nation at Risk, through the radio broadcast. So, this one student, a White woman who had just finished identifying herself as a boomer, raises her hand and says "doctora." She says, "You know we had TVs back then, right?" and I looked at her like, I never said there wasn't TVs. Then she says, "You know we had TVs back then and I actually watched this commentary, not this speech but his other speech live on TV." Like, she had to point that out, reinforce her age, reinforce who she was, she was a teacher at that time in the 1980s when A Nation at Risk was broadcasted . . . the rest of the class started laughing and it was just this moment like, she needed to reinforce her authority over me, it felt like, and to reinforce this notion that you're too young for this.

This experience caught Estela by surprise and she felt personally attacked by her student. Estela did not experience ageism just with her students; her peers also noted her age and others questioned her status as a professor. When discussing topics in her profession, other professors would try to re-explain concepts as if she did not understand them. Also, they commented, "You're too young to know this!" Estela also noted that she not only looked too young according to the standards of her colleagues and students but is 4 feet 7 inches tall, which makes her look perceivably even younger to her students and colleagues. At conferences or when being introduced to others, Estela is often faced with the comment, "You're too young to be a professor." When at the university's women's faculty locker room in the gym, she often receives stares from the other faculty as if she does not belong there.

JLo shared her experience with ageism and her title being minimized:

So it's like, there's also the age thing because I'm young. I just turned 28. There are some grad students that are older than me. So, it's just weird. I mean my personal attitude is if you're ABD you can call me by my first name because had

things gone a little bit differently, I'd still be a grad student. That's it. But if you're a first- or a second-year, no, I'm not your homie. I'm a doctor to you. Some people get too chummy and it's like, I think it's a combination of I'm young and I'm a woman of color. On one hand, I like being approachable. I do. Especially for other women of color, I love that, but at the same time that does not mean I should not be respected.

Julia shared one of her experiences:

So I had a really good relationship with my students, and a lot of the comments that peers would say is like, "Well, the reason why you're so successful, the reason why the students listen to you is because you're young," not attributing it to the fact that I was good or I had the best practices. They were like, "Oh, because you're young they feel comfortable." At one point, someone also said like, "Oh, he must be in love with you because he always goes to you for advice." And I think it was just coming from my appearance.

Olivia shared an experience that she and other young professors face:

It's more the age I would say than the race because I feel like we're all lumped together. Some of the older faculty would walk by and say, "Hey kids, what you are up to today?" So saying, "Hey kids," and we might be in office hours with students, and it's like "Don't call me that." So even trying to process those kinds of comments with each other, it's like what the hell do we do about this? Because don't disrespect me like that. So that may be related to the age gap.

Olivia also experienced ageism from another faculty member while attending a training. Olivia was approached by an older White female who was late to the training and decide to sit in the same table as her. This woman questioned why Olivia was there because she thought Olivia could pass as one of her students and not a professor who was attending the training. Additionally, during that training, the trainer had commented, "Oh I have these files on a flash drive," and then she made a joke about having them on a floppy disk, at that point the lady looked at Olivia and said, "Oh you wouldn't know what that is, huh?" And she started laughing at Olivia. Such a comment was not only a jab to Olivia but also implied that because of her age, she would not know what something was.

Both Estela and Julia expressed that they found the need to change the way they dressed by making their attire more “professional” to counter the perception that they looked too young to be in their professional role. Estela shared, “Like, I’ve had to, especially now as a Prof, like really change the way that I dress, change the way that I speak.” Julia shared:

And I always try to give people the benefit of the doubt, but I think because of that, especially when I was teaching and I felt like I needed students to take me more seriously, it got to the point where I would try to dress more professional and give hints that I was in a position where they couldn't say some of the things that they were saying.

Overall, 57% of the participants identified that their age or youthful look was a factor in why peers and students felt it was appropriate to discredit their role or knowledge. The perception of “You’re too young” caused Estela to question and state: “It is undergirded, if they were a young White male, would you tell him that? No, you would probably congratulate them on their accomplishment, not reinforce this notion of “What are you doing?” She further thought it is not only because she is young, “For me, when they tell me I am too young to be a professor it’s because I am a Latina because I am small, but it’s also because I look young; it’s because they don’t believe I could be a professor.” The display of ageism in this study reveals that despite having the highest terminal degree, having worked hard and studied hard for it, youthfulness or age in a person's eye can discredit all of the hard work. It is important to consider Estela’s comment about if she were a man, would his young age be a reason for people to feel like they could negate his accomplishments?

*Social dominance theory.* SDT (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) identifies how a group of people establish dominance over another group of people based on who are deemed not only different but whose differences are attributed a negative value. With the ascribed power differential, the dominating group endeavors to maintain a social hierarchy and continue to reap the benefits of their dominance. SDT identifies that the biological factor of age is used to dominate a group of people; the younger you are, the lower you stand on the social hierarchy ladder. For this theme, Ageism, five of the participants expressed that they experienced microaggressions due to their age. The result indicates that their aggressors, through social dominance, attempted to invalidate their accomplishments and titles to maintain their position of power based on the sole identifier of age.

***Theme two: Women as sub-oppressors.*** Every interview participant in this study identified that they experienced a microaggression by other women in their workplace more than from a man, whether it was a supervisor or a subordinate. The microaggressions varied from lack of respect because of their race/ethnicity, age, or belief of one's intellectual or leadership capacity. As supervisors, Dolores, Estela, Evita, Jlo, and Victoria faced microaggressions from a female subordinate. Dolores shared:

I think it's more like etiquette in the workplace. With one individual, there was a conversation that was being had about a specific way we were going to tackle a problem that was going on in our labs and I had already decided on what we were going to do and how we were going to proceed with that. And in front of other people, it was pretty much an open office space, this woman would not back down on like, "Well that's not it, that's not enough" and I said, "Look we have priorities within our program and within those priorities, we need to see fit what we need to move forward." I was trying to be just very, like, straightforward and not have a situation escalate and this individual would just not drop it and it got to

the point where other people came to me after that conversation and said like, “Hey what was that all about, like she shouldn't be talking to you that way, like she doesn't talk to anybody else that way.” And I think it was a matter of that disrespect that was being shown maybe because she felt that. Again, I see that as a microaggression because she’s never spoken to anybody else like that and I'm her supervisor and the way she speaks about other supervisors who are not Hispanic is very different.

In the previous theme, Estela shared how a student had to make it a point to highlight her age during a class while covering the topic of a Ronald Reagan speech. This event was not the only moment in which Estela had to face a microaggression from this student, as she continued to make Estela’s age an issue. Estela shared that during a luncheon held with the department, students, and community, she was assigned to sit next to this student and some community members. The student had to make sure that she reminded Estela of her age:

She made this point to tell everyone that it’s my first semester and they’re my first class, and this was the first class I’m ever teaching. Whereas I had mentioned so many times in class and had to reinforce at that table that this was not the first class that I am teaching. I’ve been teaching for years at college level, graduate-level courses. This is the first class I am teaching out of my Ph.D. and at this university but it’s not my first class. I felt like I had to reinforce that again because of her notion of demeaning me in a way by saying this is the first class I am ever teaching. Again, reinforcing this notion of her being superior or knowing and her feelings and need to introduce me to the table.

This student attempted to minimize Estela’s education, her experience, and her cultural wealth. Such incidents were not the only ones that occurred between Estela and this student. At the end of the semester, this student made it a point to inform Estela that she had learned more from her than she originally had *expected* and because of that, they were going to be good friends. The student never apologized nor asked Estela if she wanted to be her friend. She just informed her that she would be. It is as if she was

granting Estela the status of being an equal to her, only because she had decided such action would occur. Evita shared that her experience came from a peer who had taken a supervisory role while they did not have a leader:

Well, it was really a long time ago, but it was most about the way she made me feel. She made me feel that I didn't know what I was doing, and to the point that I was really falling apart, that I actually wanted to quit my job because I would come home, and I would be just reduced to tears. On top of that, there were a lot of other challenges that we were having at our clinic, and one of our challenges is, I think, had to do with the changes in the school. It was just very hard to organize students at that time, and so the project was faltering, and I just felt terrible, because I had worked on the other projects and they were successful, but this one was just not taking off. And it was more about the way she made me feel, and at the time our school was very . . . it's still ethnically diverse, it's just that the ethnicity of the school changed. So, she was very subtle in the way she would make her points. One time, she wouldn't say it straight up, but just very subtle about how she was having a hard time understanding why I wasn't able to do this work if the kids were like me, if the kids were Latino. What's wrong with me, not being able to organize a group of Latino kids and that I should be able to do it. There was just this sort of doubt of my ability to organize, but then the other part was just my ability overall as a professional.

This peer self-declared herself the supervisor and did not treat Evita as an equal despite them having the same title. She automatically assumed the lead role. Not only did she establish her social dominance, taking her position in the hierarchy scale, she also generalized that because Evita was Latinx, she should also automatically be able to relate to and be able to organize other Latinx.

Victoria supervised some of her peers at a law firm, and if something went wrong, she had to make sure it was fixed. One woman she directly supervised constantly treated her as a hostile threat even for the simplest things. Victoria shared:

This one lady was very hesitant and always resisted anything I had to say from the simplest tasks, even though it was her job to do certain tasks if I said it, she was very resistant and hesitant. She actually got in my face one day and said, "No, I'm

not going to do that." I was just asking her, I don't remember what the task was, I don't remember the task. It could have been . . . Her task was to answer the phone and to open the mail and to write to remind clients when they had court dates. It was probably a simple task that I asked her to do and she got in my face about it. She started yelling at me. I don't know what it was. It could have been because I was younger than her and I am a woman, or it could have been because my race or she was intimidated because of what I was trying to accomplish in my life.

On the other hand, Julia and Olivia faced microaggressions from a female peer of the same race. Julia also felt she had received a microaggression by a supervisor, but it was even harder to grasp due to the aggression coming from another Latina. Julia shared:

It is interesting because this comes from another Latina woman. It's interesting because I feel like it's a weird dynamic. You're also a Latina woman, and you're saying these things. When I had a baby, she was just making a lot of remarks about motherhood, like if I didn't turn in something. Like if I said, "Okay, I'll get you this by Monday," and I got it by Tuesday, she would make comments like, "Oh, yeah, now with a kid, people's priorities change." Those are like more explicit things, but she would also make microaggressive comments about the shift in my priorities since I had a baby. I expected it from the dominant White culture, like White males or even males, I kind of expect it. But when it comes from someone who shares a lot of the identity that I share, who is aware of these things, I think it's really difficult.

Olivia shared how she faced microaggressions from the trainer of the workshop that was discussed in the previous theme. This trainer had temporarily taken the position of department chair. She was upset because she did not like that Olivia had helped organize an event in which the keynote was solely in Spanish. Olivia shared:

So, our keynote was in Spanish and we were so proud of it so we sent an email to the College. And this woman replied, directly to the main organizers, the dean, and three other folks, and just said, "This is basically discrimination against people that don't speak Spanish and what if I wanted to attend?" So now we're dealing with this White lady who has this power trip, that's against bilingual education. She then took me away from my class. And in my field, I'm one of the few people in the country that does what I do, and she took me away from this class to put in this White woman who is bilingual and is the principal at a dual language school, but it's a class that I created.



The new department head used her position to enforce a worldview in which she would not tolerate Olivia's "discrimination" and leveraged her power to show Olivia what happens when you do not "stay in your place" and follow the social dominance hierarchy in the workplace. In essence, the inclusion of Spanish as a viable form to communicate was being interrogated.

During the interviews, all seven participants gave descriptions of times when they had been on the receiving end of a microaggression by a supervisor or a subordinate. In this case, some of their supervisors or subordinates were women. Paulo Freire (2014) discussed the role of sub-oppressors. Of the 2% of women with doctorate degrees, Latinas are subjected to the same oppressive behaviors they have been subjected to by males. Unfortunately, sub-oppressors have also taken on the thoughts, ideas, and treatments against which they have fought and then subject their gender to the same oppressive standards.

*Sub-Oppressor and social dominance.* Paulo Freire (2014) identified that racism has been structurally engrained in the social construct of the United States, as it has been passed down from generation to generation. The construct of racism is so engrained that the oppressed have deemed the tenets of racism to be true, have embodied the ideology of inferiority, and have reproduced oppression on themselves and others. Women in the United States have fought for their right to equality to men yet have also adopted the sub-oppressor role and continued the oppression of other women, specifically of color, through the arbitrary system of social dominance, where the hierarchy is socially

constructed. The lived experiences of these Latinas being microaggresed by other women raises the issue that women, though they can unite together for their collective rights, have assumed the role of a sub-oppressor based on race/ethnicity and thereby reify their social dominance rank.

***Theme three: You are all one in the same, racial/ethnic stereotypes.*** In the world, 22 countries have Spanish as the official language, not including other Latin American countries who have a different language as their official language. In the United States, many people believe that if someone is Latina/Hispanic, then they share similar cultural traditions or treat them as though they do. In this study, six of the seven women spoke about a time when they experienced a microaggression based on cultural assumptions.

Estela shared many of her racial/ethnic stereotypes microaggression experiences. One of the experiences transpired when the supervisor who had recently hired her called her the name of the only other Latina in the entire program. This other Latina was not even faculty but a student. In another incident, a student made a generalization about the food she ate. Her experience with another faculty member whose office is down the hall from her became an ongoing experience. Estela shared:

Then you have the other little racial microaggressions, assuming who I am. Like, this one White male professor who is older and is just full of dad jokes. He's that White male who tries throwing dad jokes at everything. He was passing by my office; his office is two doors down from mine. I literally started having my door closed after how many times he would stop to talk to me. He once stopped and said, "Oh hey, do you like the 'uhraypas?'" and all I heard was "a rapist" but he was trying to say arepas. But all I heard was, "a rapist" so I kind of stopped and I looked at him for a minute. Then I noticed that he was eating and I said, "oh yeah, I like arepas" and he said, "Oh, I thought you would, there is this good place

over there.” It was just a really weird conversation, like the things he assumes that I am into. Then he also stopped a couple of weeks later with a newspaper that had a Día de Los Muertos skull on it, a Calavera and explaining things about the day, which it caught me off guard that this was out here. He made it a point to bring it to me, which can be seen as thoughtful but can also be seen as, “Why are you bringing this to me?” Given his positionality and who he is.

Evita, in the previous theme, shared her experience with a supervisor being upset with the fact that she could not organize a group of Latino students, assuming it should have been easy for her because she is Latina. Also, the same woman presumed that Evita was hired for that purpose. Evita shared that her conversation had some insinuation of why she was hired:

So, it was sort of like they needed somebody onsite, and they needed somebody that can relate to the kids. So, it was sort of like that kind of matching thinking, I guess. But it was just sort of . . . once she insinuated that, it was like . . . I was hired because of my race, or at least they thought it would work because of that. When she made that comment I was like, “oh!”

JLo shared her experience related to her New York accent and being generalized with another woman who was previously in the department before her:

Recently I was talking to this much older professor, an older White woman, and we hadn't spoken, it was our first time speaking and she's just like, "Where are you really from? LA!" And I was like, Huh? Why would she think LA of all places? And I think that it may have to do with the fact that a woman, who was also a young woman of color, she was around my age, she had just left. But it was just that feeling of "Oh, are you lumping me with this other woman because she was from LA?" And I'm not. I'm from New York and I mean anybody who has heard me speaking could probably tell I was not from the west coast. So, I thought that was a little odd.

Julia, in a previous theme, described how other professors assumed that a student was in love with her and that was why he passed. She went on to describe the racial/ethnic stereotypes of sexualizing her Latina-ness:

And something that I feel in my field, in biology, that a lot of people have to do is conform and kind of get rid of their femininity because people don't take them seriously. And that's not something that I felt is mutually exclusive. I can be smart, and I can be a professional, but I can also hold to my femininity. And because of that, I think that a lot of people would make comments that were microaggressions. So, yes, they would say like, "Oh, he must be in love with you," and I think, to me, it's like this Latina, like, you're trying to be sexy in the workplace, or things like that. That would, I feel, like, discredit my intelligence and my efforts.

Olivia noted an experience that she shared with her dean due to a dress she wore to a work event:

I want to say that most of the people at our college, they try to be progressive and nobody, of course, intentionally is hurting our students or each other, but I was part of the scholarship committee last year and it must have been May 2nd or something and I had a dress that my friend's mom had brought me from Michoacán. It was this really nice red dress, de manta, and then it had the embroidered flowers on top very nicely colorful, it's a native dress from Mexico. So I wore my dress and I was actually going to be presenting the award, I was the M.C. along with my colleague. And so a lot of people were like, "Oh your dress is so beautiful! I wish I had something like that." I'm like, "Okay, whatever." Well, one of the donors, she was probably in her 70s or 80s, a White woman comes up to me and touches the flowers on my dress, which is near my breast, and she just said, "Oh this is a beautiful dress! Where did you get it? And if I want one, where would I get this from?" And I felt a little like you're violating my space and you just touched me. And then my dean comes up to me and he says, "Oh that's a gorgeous dress! But aren't you a little too early?" And I looked at him and I was like, I know where he's going with this, but I said, "What do you mean?" And then he's like, "Well Cinco de Mayo's a couple of days away." And I told him, "I don't celebrate Cinco de Mayo. This is a dress. Like I'm wearing a dress." I said, "It's not a costume." And I said, "Do you celebrate the Battle of Gettysburg?" And then he just looked at me. And I was like, "It's just Cinco de Mayo's just a battle that was fought and it's not a celebration." And so, he was just like, "Oh yeah. It's so publicized now, and people are making money off of it." He tried to change the conversation, but I was just like no, no. I know what you're doing.

Victoria's experience was that because she was Latina, it was assumed that she was aggressive. Also, during her conversations with her peer, he made generalizations about Latinos. She described her interaction with a peer:

Then this other guy I worked with always made comments. He was very also pushy and resistant as to what I would have to say. He made comments that I was aggressive even though I wasn't being aggressive, I was just direct. A lot of times I was telling him to do his own job. So I felt a lot of it from him. I actually worked with him for, actually, he started after I started for nine years and that was my experience with him for nine years. That constant push back. Every once in a while, he would joke and say, "Oh, it's the Latina in you." But really that's probably not joking. That's probably the stereotype. I guess. He would say all kinds of things, let's see. Oh, that I would put him down when I wasn't. It's like, "Can you take this phone call? Because they're saying you haven't called them, so please call them or talk to them." He would say, "Oh, please don't hurt me." "I'm not hurting you. I'm not touching you. I'm not physically hurting you. I'm just telling you to do your job." It was just constant pushback from him. He also made comments about my race. He would say Hispanics tend to work hard. I don't know if that's a compliment or not. He would also say that Hispanics pay off their bills.

In this theme, the content of the racial/ethnic stereotypes the Latinas experienced were not all the same. The generalizations had to do with food and cultural practices, being able to get along with anyone who is Latinx, one's accent, the sexualization of Latinas, dress attire, being perceived as aggressive, or being perceived as hardworking people who pay off their debts.

*Social dominance.* The arbitrary system in social dominance, the hierarchy of one group over another, is socially constructed and based on the need to dominate another group. Within this theme, it is based on race and ethnicity (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Although some of the lived experiences of the participants with microaggressions based on racial/ethnic stereotypes are not acts of racism; they are implicit reminders to these

Latinas that they are seen as different. For example, Olivia wore a traditional Mexican dress and instead of just seeing it as a beautiful dress, the dean assumed she was wearing it as a way to celebrate Cinco de Mayo, a holiday that the United States consumers market has used for financial gain. There was also the assumption that Estela would want to read a Día de Los Muertos article piece despite that the holiday is mostly celebrated by Catholics and not all Latinx are Catholics. Or assuming that Evita could not have been hired due to her hard work, intelligence, and capacity in the field. All of these are microaggressions Latinx face perpetuating the social hierarchy of the dominant White culture.

***Theme four: Lack of recognition or respect.*** Every participant shared an experience in which they were not recognized for who they are and for what they brought to the table. They also experienced mistreatment that did not validate or respect the cultural wealth they bring to their workplace. All of Evita's and JLo's experiences have been shared within the presentation of the other themes.

For Dolores, her experience occurred when she left her Post-doc position to go into the industry and was not given the recognition or respect for work she was still doing despite no longer being in the Post-doc. Dolores shared that a colleague had taken the work of an experiment that she had designed, collected the data for, and done a preliminary analysis. She had every intention of completing the work, yet, he wrote the manuscript and put himself as the first author:

Pretty much, like, within a month he's like, "Hey I wrote the manuscript if you want to review it" and he sent it to me. I was left aback, and it was frustrating, but it was also like such a shock that somebody would do that. I felt like nobody

would have done that, I felt like had I been, honestly, I felt like it's very much like, I'm a woman and you're a man and you think that maybe this is okay. Or culturally like, you know, within the scientific field there are all kinds of examples of women being pushed aside and the man is the person that, that ends up getting credit for a discovery or something or the other. So I felt like very much in that same situation because there was all of this work that I had done for like the past year and a half.

Dolores found herself feeling upset and began to question her own worth and contribution to the project.

That was really frustrating, and it led to, so it's one of those microaggressions but that comes back to. So I was actually questioning like, what was my contribution to this work? Was it worth it? Did I really, like, not deserve the first authorship? Thinking like that and I had to, like, it took me like a day or two of just like ruminating in those questions and being like, this is not okay.

Dolores dealt with her feelings and questioning of herself and realized that she did not deserve what she was going through and decided to call her old supervisor to question how such an event could have taken place, advocating for herself, her work, and her worth.

Finally, I called my supervisor, like my old advisor, and I told him this is not okay, like, this is happening, and I know you're aware of it and I don't know what other conversations had been going on over there. I'm just like, "look I understand that he's contributed to the work in this way, but I think it's pretty messed up that I wasn't added to the conversation when this was decided. I'm assuming you had some role in allowing him to move forward with that but regardless, I deserve to receive the recognition in that work that I developed that I designed and that I carried out." He said, "Okay like what can we do or how can we move forward or what do you think would be fair?" I said well, I want co-first authorship. I understand that he contributed but my contribution needs to be acknowledged and respected because if it wasn't for me, like that data that he just so easily collected and put together to analyze wouldn't have been there in the first place.

Dolores's supervisor respected her wishes and gave her what she requested; should she have stayed quiet and not advocated for herself, the results of such an event

could have turned out differently. The fact that such an event even occurred was confirmation for Dolores that her peer and her supervisor did not recognize her nor respect her from the beginning. She concluded that if they did, things would have been different.

Estela shared about a moment as a new professor attending a student's dissertation defense. During this event, she did not receive recognition or respect from her supervisor nor her peer, living through multiple experiences of microaggressions, which only confirmed the notion of her being invisible. While attending a dissertation defense with a large audience, Estela's supervisor called her by another name:

When she got up in the first place, she said, "oh hi Lucia, she didn't even use my real name, she used the name of the one Latina student we have in our department, the one. She called me her name. I was like, you're the chair of my department, you just hired me.

Not only did this supervisor generalize the two Latinas in the department, a faculty and staff, she added insult to injury by continuing to make Estela feel invisible after the defense when she asked for questions, dismissed the committee to convene in another room, and invited the 45 guests in the room to take their time and get to know the staff. She called them one by one, pointing them out, and forgot to mention Estela, who was not only sitting next to and in front of her but was seated near another faculty member who also did not help the committee chair remember that Estela was present:

First, she says, I want to also point out all of the professors in the room from our department so if you have questions about our program you can speak to these professors. I am literally sitting in the front row. I'm in the front row mind you, and I'm sitting not too far from another male faculty member and she doesn't point me out, she doesn't say my name and I am here thinking, "oh great she's going to point me out and this is going to be the perfect opportunity for students



to see me. It was early in the semester, I was new, there was a lot of students of color there because the student that was defending all worked with them, so they all went to support him. And then she doesn't say my name, she had pointed to professors who were there and those that had already left and the male professor who I was sitting not far from and he didn't point me out either or inform her that I was there.

In addition to being generalized and feeling invisible, at that same event, Estela attempted to make small talk with colleagues. While attempting to join a conversation a colleague was having with other people, the colleague was rude to her:

I decide to get up and talk to the faculty members. I decided to join this conversation and I went to say hi to someone and she kind of stops her conversation and gives me this look, like a look that felt like she was scolding me for stopping the conversation. I'm like "I am sorry, I was just coming over to say hi" and I kind of backed off. She then said, "Okay, just let me finish what I am saying."

Once she was introduced to the group, she was reminded once again that she did not look like a doctor. Within a matter of an hour, Estela had four experiences in which she was not recognized nor respected but made to feel invisible and not respected.

Julia described experiencing a lack of recognition or respect from her male students:

But what I often find is a lot of the men in the program, the students who are male, do say things to me that I have to sometimes pause and think about what it that they mean by that is. They would say things like, "If I have a question can I text you?" Just things that I feel like they wouldn't say to other professors. They would, I think, also challenge me more than other professors that I was teaching with during the lectures. So they would constantly raise their hand and challenge me on things that I was teaching. So when I was presenting something in a lecture, I remember one time a student asking like, "Whoa, where did you find this?" And I had a citation up there, and I was like, "Well, usually, if you have a question about the sources, just look on my slides. That's where I have all my resources." And that student, I guess, he wasn't content with that, and still went ahead with like, "Well, are you sure that's what they meant?" And that's

something that I felt like I would get as a woman compared to the males that were also teaching the course.

Olivia described a time when she was asked to chair a search team for a new position in the department. However, with the task, she was told what she needed to do and was not entrusted to make the correct choice. Olivia shared:

So when I was volunteered to be the chair of the faculty search, the associate dean is actually the woman that hired me when she was a department chair. So, she hired me and that's when she told me, "We want you, but when we hire you, I won't be department chair anymore." So, when I came in, she became the associate dean and this other woman that was a lecturer became the department chair. Well, I was told to talk to her about getting advice about the job search. "This is how you can organize yourself," or "This is how you can do the Zoom interviews," or whatever. And I was like, "You do remember that I just went through my own interviewing session, but whatever." The lady sat me down and said, "I want to remind you that I'm here to help you. Also, your department chair's applying for the position," and she was using her name because we're all pretty friendly. And I said, "Yes, I'm aware of that." And she said, "You know, you need to at least consider her." And then she just started, I don't even know how to say the word, me estaba regañando. Scolding. And I'm just sitting there like, what is going on? She made it seem like, you need to give her an opportunity. If not, she's going to leave us. And she's been doing so much for the school, and this and that. And I'm looking at her, and I just said, "Thank you for your comments. I'm going to do what's best for the department and for our students." And I just walked away feeling like, why are you going to put me in this situation and now I have two people that are expecting me to grant someone something just because they've been there before.

Victoria, in her previous job, had started as a receptionist before getting her J.D., yet, after her accomplishment, her boss refused to promote her even though she was doing the job. She had worked with this lawyer for more than nine years. He would yell at her and blame her for anything that went wrong in the office, even if it was not her responsibility. He once got mad at her because he had missed a dentist appointment. In another incident, a colleague, another attorney, questioned the lawyer regarding their billing process, insinuating that they could be unethical. When Victoria conducted some

research to see if they were being unethical, she brought her research to her boss to show him that the attorney was correct and that their billing practices were unethical. He then became very upset with her and wrote her up for insubordination. Victoria did not understand why he would only treat her in that manner. He also only held her responsible because she was a woman. Victoria described her conflict with being held accountable for others' tasks and did not understand why her boss would use gender as an excuse for her peer:

Then when it came to holding my male peer accountable, he would say women are more organized and that's why he gave him more slack than me because, "Well, I can't give him these assignments because you are more organized than him. Women tend to be more organized than men." So, the other guy got away with more just simply for the simple fact that men are not organized according to him. He's the one that got the raises. My boss wouldn't talk to him about the way my boss would speak to me. If the guy didn't want to do a task, even though it was his job to do it, then my boss would make me do it even though the guy was given the raises and not me. That was my whole experience for nine years.

In addition to being categorized and microaggressed against due to her gender, the microaggressions reconfirmed her boss's unwillingness to promote her or give her a raise even though she already did the work for a different position and despite being in the firm for nine years:

My boss would keep me in low-level positions even though I could do a lot more. I did more. Yeah, I did a lot more. There was a point where I was a receptionist and he had me also do his finance, his billing for his clients and I had to do paralegal work. Paralegal work, reception work, and billing. I think the goal was to have me be at a low-level position, technically receptionist, but also paralegal, also billing department. I think it was just a good excuse to keep paying me at a low wage. Even after I graduated with the JD, he kept me there. Other attorneys will tell him, "She has a doctorate now. She needs to move up." It was a constant push back from other attorneys. "I can train her; she has a doctorate." Or even before I had the doctorate people would tell him, "She's getting her doctorate, she wants to be an attorney, we need to put her in another position." That was the

constant pushback. My whole nine years being there, I felt that way for the simple fact that I started as a receptionist, that's fair, I was young. But anytime I had the opportunity to move up I didn't get to move up, so I left.

Fortunately for Victoria, she eventually acknowledged her worth and understood she deserved more than what she was currently getting; she decided to leave the firm.

*Intersectionality and cultural capital.* The intersectionality of being female, Latinx, and educated to the highest level, for all seven of these women, and for six, young, played a part in their experience with microaggressions of not being recognized or respected. Despite their accomplishments, their attempt to be successful in their professions, their mastery in their field, and the degree they hold, these Latina women continued to be disregarded and disrespected. Regardless of their title, degree, and intelligence, they were denied access to the cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) they had earned through resilience and endurance labor. Due to the intersectionality of their identity, it was difficult for these Latinas to discern which part of their identity was agitating those around them and causing them to microaggress them. The participants at times attempted to understand what it was about them that caused others to microaggress them but the intersectionality of their identity confused them as to which part of their identity was the main reason. Dolores stated:

Such as them being surprised that the program has gotten to the place it is now. Implying, you know, that there was a doubt that I could do it. Whether that's because I'm Hispanic or because I'm a woman or because of my age, I feel like that's where that intersectionality is a little more difficult to tease out.

Estela stated:

For me, a lot of my microaggressions that I get have been between this intersection of my height because I'm small, my age because I look a lot younger and the fact

that I am Latina. They all kind of intersect. And then when I speak, I speak very much with this LA, Chicana accent, right. So, I get a lot of people who assume that you know, I prefer speaking Spanish.

Estela also stated:

Yes, so the comment of “You’re too young to be a professor,” I get that all the time, all the time. The thing for me when I hear that, it is undergirded with this notion of, like, one, if they were a young White male, would you tell him that? No, you would probably congratulate them on their accomplishment, not reinforce this notion of “What are you doing?” you know? Like, for me, when they tell me I am too young to be a professor, it’s because I am a Latina because I am small, its because I look young, it’s because they don’t believe I could be a professor.”

JLo stated:

Some people get too chummy and it's like, I think it's a combination of I'm young and I'm a woman of color. On one hand, I like being approachable. I do. Especially for other women of color, I love that, but at the same time that does not mean I should not be respected.

Victoria stated:

Her task was to answer the phone and to open the mail and to write to remind clients when they had court dates. It was probably a simple task that I asked her to do and she got in my face about it. She started yelling at me. I don't know what it was. It could have been because I was younger than her and I was a woman or it could have been because my race or she was intimidated because of what I was trying to accomplish in my life.

During the interviews, it was evident that most of the interviewees understood that the intersectionality of who they are played a part in the microaggressions they were receiving.

### ***Summary of data addressing research question one and research question two.***

This section examined the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, which addressed Research Question 1 and 2. Which variables regarding racial microaggressions are significantly related to Latinas with doctoral degrees? And what are the lived

experiences regarding microaggressions of Latinas with doctoral degrees? For the quantitative data, the descriptive analysis of the frequency for each subscale response shows that five (foreigner/not belonging, invisibility, low-achieving/undesirable culture, sexualization, and environmental invalidations) of the six subscales had a frequency response rate of 50% or more participants having moderate to frequently experiencing these types of microaggressions. The data from the Pearson analysis and correlation suggest a significant relationship of  $p < .01$  among all the subscales but the effect size is not always high. Among the subscales, all five groups had a significant relationship of  $p < .01$  and a high effect size of 0.5 or higher. Criminality and sexualization had a high effect size of 26%, criminality and low achieving had a high effect size of 27%, foreigner and invisibility had a high effect size of 30%, criminality and invisibility had a high effect size of 41%, and the highest effect size of 44% was from low achieving and invisibility. These correlations were reinforced when comparing it to the descriptive statistics with the frequency of each subscale and the qualitative data collected from each open-ended interview. The following themes emerged from those interviews: ageism, women as oppressors, racial/ethnic stereotypes, and lack of recognition and respect. Within those themes, the seven Latinas with doctoral degrees addressed microaggressions that had to do with foreigner/not belonging, criminality invisibility, low-achieving/undesirable culture, sexualization, and environmental invalidations.

### **Impostor Phenomenon**

**Quantitative data.** The CIPS (1985) was developed to determine whether or not people have IP characteristics and to what extent they suffer from it. The higher the

score, the more frequently and seriously IP interferes in their life (Clance, 1985). The data of the descriptive statistics of this portion of the study aimed to answer Research Question 3, “Where do Latinas with doctoral degrees score on the Impostor Phenomenon Scale?”

The 202 Latinas with doctoral degrees were asked to take a 20-question, five-point Likert-type scale survey regarding how true the statements were to their life. The 5-point Likert-type scale had the following value: 1 = not at all true, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, and 5 = very true. After completing the CIPS, the number of each response was added. The range of scores could be from 20 to 100. If the total score is 40 or less, the participant has few IP characteristics experiences; if the score is between 41 to 60, the participant had moderate IP experiences; a score between 61 and 80 means the participant frequently has IP feelings; and a score higher than 80 means the participant often has intense IP experiences (Clance, 1985). In this study, 8.4% of the participants expressed few IP characteristics, 24.8% had moderate IP experiences, 46% had frequent IP feelings, and 20.8% had Intense IP Experiences (see Table 8).

Table 8

*CIPS Total Scores, How Intense Does IP Interfere with Their Life*

Level	Total	Percentage
Few IP Characteristics	17	8.4
Moderate IP Experiences	50	24.8
Frequent IP Feelings	93	46
Intense IP Experiences	42	20.8

As far as the seven interview participants, one scored as moderate for IP experiences, three scored in the frequent IP range, and three scored in the intense IP experiences (see Table 9). Evita, who scored 55, had moderate IP experiences. Evita was also the oldest of the seven participants by 20 or more years. Dolores scored a 71, Olivia scored a 63, and Victoria scored a 78, all expressing frequent IP experiences. Both Dolores and Victoria are in the 25-34 age group and Olivia is in the 35-44 age group. Estela scored an 85, JLo a 92, and Julia a 92, all expressing intense IP experiences. All three of them are in the 25-34 age group.

Table 9

*CIPS Score with Age for Interview Participants*

Participants	CIPS Score	Level of IP	Age Group
Dolores	71	Frequent IP Feelings	25-34 years old
Estela	85	Intense IP Experiences	25-34 years old
Evita	55	Moderate IP Experiences	55-64 years old
JLo	92	Intense IP Experiences	25-34 years old
Julia	92	Intense IP Experiences	25-34 years old
Olivia	63	Frequent IP Feelings	35-44 years old
Victoria	78	Frequent IP Feelings	25-34 years old



### **Qualitative data.**

*Research question four: Specific experiences with IP.* Qualitative data from individual interviews were used to answer Research Question 4: “What are the specific lived experience in which these Latinas felt like impostors?” This portion of the data analysis gives insight into the lived experiences of these Latinas with doctoral degrees and their experience with IP. One of the characteristics of the IP is an inner sense of not belonging in the space that you have earned the right to occupy. For all seven Latinas with a doctoral degree, their academic setting is what made them feel they did not belong. Now as scholars, their work continues to fuel the internal conflict of, “I am not good enough, I do not belong here.” This section presents the lived experience of the first time each Latina felt like an impostor and the lived experience of them currently feeling like an impostor at work. Dolores shared her experience regarding the first time she ever felt like an impostor:

Yeah, so, I mean, it started, honestly during undergrad. So I am, a first-generation college student within my family. My parents, they're both immigrants that came from Mexico and I'm the third of six. So even within my siblings, I was the first to go out and go into college, which was like three hours away to a huge state university. It was really like a culture shock. To get there and realize that there's not a lot of people that look like you and there were multiple times during undergrad where I was like, “Wow, should I even be here? Not a lot of other people look like me! What am I doing here?” type of thing. Then in the science classes that I was in, I felt a lot like that, too. I started off with an engineering degree and later on, I changed majors. I realized that it wasn't what I was really wanting to do. There were a lot of guys in those classes, there were a lot of White males because as it is, there's not a lot of Hispanics but then you put that other element of like there's not a lot of women in there either. So, I felt that then, and then it kind of it went away. And then again, I felt it when I started graduate school. I think I came in pretty confident but pretty quickly I realized what I didn't know and that there's a lot that I didn't know, so I started feeling that way again.

Although Dolores attributed her feelings to the fact that she was not prepared for her classes, her feelings were more deep-rooted. She was the first in her family to go to college so she was entering uncharted territory that she had to experience and navigate on her own. Dolores also shared her experience of feeling like an impostor at work:

It's more like internal and when I'm developing work. I work for a company and a lot of the research that we're doing like is kind of new territory. Nobody has done it before so you're designing protocols, you're wanting to expand the knowledge of a given field. So, I often find myself, you know, "like can I do this?" Like, this is a big role to have, you know, me leading this program. Am I capable of doing this? Sometimes, I fall into those cycles of thinking. To me, it is not logical but it's hard to kind of sort through that non-logic when it comes from an emotional place. So yeah, I think it's like this contradicting dichotomy, but it exists and it's kind of where I am . . . I'm like, okay, but maybe she doesn't know what I'm talking about because, you know, it's a very specific field and unless you have a background in it, you may not know exactly the work that I'm doing. So maybe I'm just receiving this positive feedback because they think they know what I'm doing and is that the case everywhere. So, it's just kind of like this constant questioning of, what am I doing? And trying to set that aside and then do the work and then comes another inner questioning and things like that.

Despite her knowledge and educational accolades, Dolores could not help but question the positive praise and minimize all that she brings to the table at her workplace. Estela shared her first time experiencing IP, feeling out of place:

I would say it was the first day of classes in my Ph.D. program. Where it really hit me, like, "What are you doing?" I remember we were a cohort of 15, half EDD and half Ph.D. students, and we're sitting in a big round table and looking around the classroom and I was one of two women of color in the cohort. Every person had to go around and say their name, what brought them to the program and all that stuff. I realized I was the only person right out of my master's and the only person who didn't have a ton of work experience years behind me, and I was the youngest in my cohort. Then, we get to the point where there is this White male talking and he starts crying about how much he loves helping minority students and everybody is sympathizing with him. I'm like, "Oh God, what are you doing here Estela? What is happening?" I started to question myself on whether this was something I really wanted to do. Could I actually pull it off? I

didn't have as many years of experience as the other people in the program, and I didn't look like them. I was fully funded which I was grateful for so . . . this is the only reason I'm at least going to do this year because I have the funding for it. And then I remember in classes, always just being extremely quiet, I never really talked a lot because, I don't know if it was that I didn't feel like I had anything to say or more of, "am I going to say this right? Is it going to come out correctly?"

Estela shared her experience of feeling like an impostor while trying to find a job and what it felt like once she did:

Like, going on the job market was a whole other world. Trying to finish my dissertation and do all of this while knowing that there are very few Latina faculty out there, there are even fewer Latina faculty that got a position right out of the Ph.D. with a tenure-track position. It's one of those things where I had to really tell myself like, "you can get a job, you will get a job, and you can finish this dissertation!" and then once I did get a job and finished the dissertation, I was done. I literally could not start writing again or moving across the country for months. Like, I couldn't even believe that it had actually happened. It had taken so much of my energy that I couldn't even think about it. I couldn't even celebrate getting the job because it can be taken away, like, "don't do anything, it can easily be taken away, you're not there yet!" Then when I took the job, I noticed that I am one of two Latinas in the whole school of education and then we only have one Latina student. We are not represented on this campus and that is hard. Then, trying to get tenure, I am scared to open my teaching evaluations, even though I think this semester went pretty well, I am still terrified to open them. I don't know what they are going to say. Even in the courses that I was adjunct in before, I did not open them at all. Only those in ethnic studies I did because they were mostly students of color but not in the courses that I taught in the education department. I just felt like, the students were not very open to learning about what I was teaching about which was a critical cultural study in education and I did not have one student of color in any of those courses. I received so much push back in those courses that after class, I would go home and not do anything. Not even open a single email because I was so drained from teaching critical cultural studies, which I happen to love that topic.

Evita shared her first experience with the IP when she transferred to an Ivy League school and felt completely invisible. This contrasted with her experience as a transfer student from a community college where she felt supported. Also, the community college was very diverse. Arriving at this Ivy League school as a stepping

stone to attend veterinary school was a huge shock for her, as she was the only Latina in the program full of White males. Yet, it was not the students who made her feel out of place, it was her advisor. He would dismiss her and made her feel unwanted. She explained her experience when she realized her advisor had an issue with her:

So it was advising time, and there was a girl that he was just finishing a conversation with. For whatever reason, the door was open. I could see him really smiling at her, and she's smiling at him, I thought, "This is my major . . . this is how I" It was like, "Wow," it was major validation that he was giving her. It was just a weird feeling that I got, it was sort of . . . well, I didn't get it at that moment, but as I'm talking about it, I'm thinking about it right now, it's just like . . . feeling like he was so . . . I don't know, he was just pleased, I guess, pleased with her. And then it's like, "No," then, "here I come." It was a complete change. It was not very helpful, just wanted to be done with things really quickly, and I didn't see any of that. She was a girl in my class, she was blond, blue eyes, very sweet, nice girl, I guess. Smart. It's like, "Well, I'm smart, too." It was sort of like, "Okay," and so that was very weird. (Starts crying)

Recalling this incident made Evita emotional and she began to cry. Experiences such as this one caused her to begin to question why she was attending that school:

I would say during my time there, I definitely felt, "Why am I . . ." at some point, I actually was feeling like, "Why the hell am I here? I didn't even want to come here." I can't believe I'm crying. (Continues to cry). Yeah, but it's true, and this one girl, it was just true. I really did feel like I didn't belong there, that I really wanted to . . . I mean I had really wonderful friends, but I think what really got me upset was that I had to change my field after graduation, and I didn't want to do that because I felt that was going to disappoint my parents mostly. But I felt like I was a disappointment to myself, and I have this thing that I wanted to be a veterinarian since I was 10 years old, and it was sort of my goal, and I just couldn't do it. I just couldn't do it. I just couldn't do it.

While discussing this portion of her IP experiences, Evita became very emotional describing the experience of being treated differently because she was a Latina. Such experiences caused her to leave the field after graduating. The only thing that kept her from throwing in the towel early on was her resilience and unwillingness to disappoint

her parents. Fortunately, she found another field she also loved. Evita shared her experience with the IP at her new job:

I can say that in my new job, I'm adjusting to a new setting and just everything about it. I'm learning new content and because I had all this experience doing training and presentations, and all that, pretty quickly I was already going out, doing trainings with my colleague. But so I have to say that sometimes when I was doing those trainings for presentations, I really felt like I didn't know what I was doing. But I felt like a lot of times, I was winging it. Definitely, the colleague that I've done the most trainings with and has been there longer. He's a guy and he's also younger than me. And he's really smart, real smart person. Really bright. And he's funny. And such a wonderful presenter. So the one thing that I'm not used to is having a co-presenter, in my previous roles, it's been a one-person show. I've done it all by myself. So it's different now that I have a partner or colleague/collaborator. So that part is new for me, so you get to see other people's styles and all that, and so then I feel like I'm still trying to find my sound and my voice in this new role because I was starting to feel that I couldn't do it, I was really feeling it (IP).

Growing up, JLo also felt smart; she excelled in her K-12 experience. As she got older, she began to see that she was not always going to be at the top. JLo shared how IP was heightened as she entered graduate school and realized she was no longer the “smartest:”

I think imposter syndrome really started to kick in during grad school. Because I mean, again, you go from the bottom to the top and as you get more niche, you find more elite people, people who are the top. I've realized like, I'm meeting different kinds of people. Wow, there's so much I don't know. I'm not the best. I've never felt dumber than I felt in grad school. Especially when you're an undergrad and you had some people who had master's degrees, had been working for 10 years, had all these really neat things to say about the theorist we were reading, and I'm over here being like, "I could barely fucking read this theory. I don't know what's going on." Because being a grad student is a set of skills that you pick up. Learning how to read something, learning how to critique something. I didn't know. I'm still learning. I used to remember feeling so, so, so stupid. So stupid. I didn't enjoy a lot of my classes, especially special needs courses, because I didn't feel like I had much to say. I didn't know what to say. I didn't know what to look for.

Similarly, JLo shared her experience with microaggressions at work:

No, it's been really hard. So, I went on the job market mainly through post-docs and I ended up with this. This is literally the only job I got. The only thing. And jobs are like parking spots, you only need one. But yeah, I've been feeling a lot of "imposterisms" because I felt the need to prove to my colleagues, "Oh, you didn't make the wrong choice." My CV could be better than what it is right now, but I'm trying. I'm really, really trying. I always feel this pressure of, I need to be in the office five days a week, show that I take my job seriously. I'm trying. I think my "imposterisms" really ramped up quite recently because I've started preparing for teaching a course. I've TA'ed, but I've never taught a full-length course. It's just, I mean, I don't know. Maybe you've taught a course. But it's really overwhelming and it's a lecture-based course. It's just like, "Oh my god, there's so much to talk about and there's so much I don't know." There's this feeling of incompetence. There's so much like, how could I not know X, Y, and Z? I don't know this. I haven't read that. What about this? What about that? What should I put in? How am I filling all these weeks? I think what made it a little bit worse was I was offered a TA, which in theory is that "Oh wow, you got a TA. Someone to help you out. Awesome." But the TA has already taught courses, has a better CV than I do. At the end of the day, I'm the one with the doctorate, but I feel so little compared to her. And it's not jealousy. It's not. She's nothing but nice to me, but I just feel so little compared to her and she has no idea. She has no idea that I think that way. But yeah, no, it got so bad. I was talking to my department head recently and I embarrassed myself. My eyes were watering up because I'm so nervous and I'm so anxious about teaching.

JLo's impostor feelings are coming from not knowing how to do something, not from a lack of intelligence or ability because she cannot know what she has never experienced. Measuring herself to others has only added pressure to herself.

Subsequently, IP is heightened during these times and can play games on the mind.

Julia shared her first experience with the IP:

One of the most significant times where I felt this, and I think it affected the way I acted, was when I was applying to the doctoral program. At the time, there were other fellows, a lot of initiatives to maximize student diversity in Ph.D. programs specifically, like in biomedical sciences. And I was applying to programs, and at the university that I was at there was this man, it was a White male, who would provide guidance on what schools to apply for and would guide us through the way. But he would take a lot of the credit for getting you into the school. So,

sometimes a lot of people would get in, and they were like, "Oh, we got in because of so-and-so." And we know that connections are real, but we also know that those students earned their way in there. So, I remember when I applied to those graduate programs, I didn't tell him what schools I was applying to because I didn't want to feel like the only reason I got in was because this person pulled strings and that I wasn't good enough. And then I also didn't apply to a lot of the initiatives to maximize student diversity because I didn't want to feel like I only got into the school kind of as an affirmative action case and that was because I was already dealing with so much imposter syndrome and felt like, "This is luck, or I've been really lucky that these people have helped me, or it's because of this person that maybe they asked for a favor and I'm in this position." I always wanted to prove to myself that if it is imposter syndrome, then I'll get it. And if it's not, if it's really luck, then I won't get it, right? And now that I'm years removed and been part of these programs, I understand the need, all these biases in admissions and even like grant funding that happened based on race and ethnicity. But because I had, I think, major imposter syndrome, I felt like I didn't want to get in and people be like, "Oh, the only reason you got in was because you're a minority, and we needed to fill a box."

To prove to herself that she was qualified to get into a doctorate program on her own and not wanting to feel like an affirmative action case, Julia felt the need to get in on her own merit. Julia shared her experience with IP at work:

I feel it all the time. And sometimes when we're talking about a topic, and I'm the expert in the field, it takes me back to being an undergrad and trying to answer a question, and I know that I know the answer, but I second-guess myself. So, I sometimes will stay quiet and not say anything just because I feel insecure in my answers. And I'm like, "What if I get it wrong?" So, that's an experience that I feel often. I submitted a paper, and it got accepted. At first, I was like, "Okay, I should already be thinking about a journal because they're probably going to reject it." As soon as I submitted it, I was like, "They're probably going to reject it." And they accepted it, and instead of saying like, "Oh, wow, they saw value in this," or, "I'm really grateful for this," I was like, "I wonder if it's because of the senior author." I always attribute it to something else. This was recent, like a couple of months ago, maybe two or three months ago. That's the first thing I thought about was like, "Maybe it's because of the senior author that they accepted my paper." And I've heard that before too, people will say like, "Oh, you only got this because . . ." Not to me, but other people, like, "Oh, this person got this because so-and-so was on this paper, or so-and-so was on this grant." So, when I get something, I sometimes attribute it to other people who help me, instead of my work.

In this case, Julia minimized her own cultural wealth, her talent, and all that she offers. She proceeded to talk herself down rather than acknowledge she has come this far because she is intelligent and earned the right to be heard and acknowledged. This is testament to the fact that, at times and just for a brief moment, IP in a person can be so heightened that it mutes one's ability to have their voice heard.

Olivia shared her first experience with the educational system in the United States and how it contributed to her gaining impostor feelings. She entered the United States as a 10-year-old child in the sixth grade. At that time, she was an English learner and found it difficult to connect with her Xicanx teacher who spoke Spanglish. She found herself having to learn Spanglish to eventually learn English. Not only was language access a barrier for her, but she also encountered discrimination based on the way she looked, her clothes, and the way her mom combed her hair. Once she entered middle school, she was automatically placed in the lowest track of English and math classes, making her feel dumb despite being academically proficient in Tijuana. Oliva shared an experience in which she felt dismissed by a teacher who did not see her intelligence:

I didn't speak English, so just the fact that I don't know if I didn't speak English well or if I was just afraid of speaking it and I had a thick accent, so people already had the notion of what I knew or didn't know. As soon as I opened my mouth, it was like, "Oh okay. You're going to be in these classes." At the time, I didn't know what tracking was, but I was tracked into the lowest possible track. And in Tijuana, I was competing academically in the city and I was getting prepared to compete academically in the state to represent my state and go meet the president, and that's when my parents brought me over here. So, I was always excelling academically, and then I came over here and all of a sudden, I was dumb. So, middle school, in my math class I remember this teacher specifically, Mr. Ledesma. And I saw his name, "Ledesma," and I was like, "He has to speak Spanish," and so I remember talking to him in Spanish and he didn't understand



me, and that's when I learned if a person looks like me in terms of skin color or their last name, it doesn't mean they speak Spanish. And so this teacher was teaching place value, I remember this very clearly, he was teaching place value, which was something I learned in first grade in Tijuana, and he thought I didn't understand and since I wasn't familiar with the spelling of the difference between 100 and one-hundredths, and so he kept saying it louder and louder to my face and I'm just like, "I just don't know what the number is," because I didn't know the word hundredth existed. And so, I want to say that was probably the day that he just gave me a coloring book and some crayons and just threw me to the back of the room to color. So, I feel like these experiences slowly were putting me down, like I was dumb.

Olivia shared her experience living with IP and how it affects her ability to believe in herself as a professor and do what she needs to do for her students:

I think it's in creating my classes. So these classes were already created and handed to me as a science expert to modify, to edit, to change, and even though I was told, "This is for you, here you go," I was still asking for permission. And I still find myself doing this sometimes. "Oh, is it okay if my class doesn't meet this day because I want them to attend an event that's happening in the community?" Like asking for permission where everybody else is doing whatever they want. Some people don't even show up to class on time or at all or cancels class on the same day. And here I am still thinking, "Oh is this okay to do?" So I think just this, now I'm a second year and I just finished my first semester, I'm barely making decisions that as a professor I know I can make, but I was afraid of, I don't know, either messing up with students or getting myself into trouble when it's not about that anymore, but I didn't know this. What else? Even to make copies, my students make the science notebook really nicely, but it requires a lot of copies being made. Well, I was being questioned about that too. So, it's all these things that happened that . . . Or needing money to buy material so we can do science experiments. Why do I have to continue proving myself or explaining myself? So, it makes it hard not to feel like I'm in charge of this, but I still have to ask for permission.

Victoria shared that her first experience with IP happened once she got her Juris Doctorate but she was unable to pass the bar:

So now in my mind, I feel like my degree is not as important because I haven't been able to pass the bar. I've been feeling that. I feel that a lot now. I feel like where I work now, there's some prestige in saying who I work for and that I don't deserve to work for him. Yeah. I've said it out loud to my coworkers. "I should

have done something else with my life." I've been feeling really bad about not passing the bar. I graduated with a law degree in 2018. I took the bar in July of '18. I took the bar in February of '19. I took the bar in July of '19. So, I've probably been feeling like that since November of 2018 when our results came out for the July bar. It's been an everyday feeling. I don't know what I was thinking.

For Victoria, earning her Juris Doctorate was overshadowed by not passing the bar. Yet, without the bar, she was hired to work for a prestigious lawyer, a job that she got based on who she is and what she had already accomplished. Victoria also shared how she is currently internalizing IP at her new workplace:

Here I'm feeling it now when I'm doing my discovery work because it's challenging. Even though I can do the job, I know I can excel in this position, but I still feel that way. I'm not good enough for this job. I'm just amazed that someone can trust me to accomplish what I need to accomplish for this position. Because this position is a lot of responsibility. You get served with, they call them foreman, from the other side, from opposing counsel. They serve you with special interrogatories. They serve you with a request for production of documents. These have to be done within 30 days. That's hard to . . . I mean that's, I know, 30 days seems like a long time, but it isn't. You got to get your client's medical records together. I've been feeling like that since I've got in this position. Even though it's everything I ever wanted, it's just a very . . . It's a lot of responsibility and I question myself, "Can I really do this?" I think that goes back from my experiences on how my boss made me feel at my last job. Just always putting me down, everything was wrong. Even though one day it was right, the next day was wrong. Even though one day he wanted it like this, but then the next day he didn't want it like that. It was that constant inconsistency that I think is leaking into this job. That constant self-doubt I should say. I don't know if I should really be entrusted with this position.

*IP and their lived experiences.* Impostor Phenomenon (Clance & Imes, 1978)

was a term created to describe women who excelled in the professional world but had a hard time attributing their success to their intelligence and abilities. It manifests as an internalized mindset of believing that they are not good enough, they do not belong, or that they did not earn their success (Clance, 1985). The seven interview participants in

this study all shared how they have all internalized a level of IP during academia and at their workplace. They question their ability even though they have worked hard to attain a doctorate, are the most qualified person for the job, and for some, they are one of few researchers in the field. Nonetheless, they continue to have internal conflict about their worth and ability.

***Summary of data addressing research question one and research question two.***

This section examined the quantitative and qualitative data analysis which addressed Research Questions 3 and 4. Where do Latinas with doctoral degrees score on the Impostor Phenomenon Scale? And, what is the specific lived experience that these Latinas felt like impostors? In the quantitative section of this data analysis, the descriptive statistics indicate that of the 202 participants, 8.4% had few IP characteristics, 24.8% had moderate IP experiences, 46% had frequent IP experiences, and 20.8% had intense IP experiences. The data from the descriptive statistics were reinforced by the qualitative data collected through seven open-ended interviews. The qualitative data presented gave an in-depth lived experience of the internal conflict they faced in academia but also face every day at work.

**The Effects of Microaggressions and Impostor Phenomenon**

**Psychological and physical effects.** During exploration of Research Questions 2 and 4, participants were asked how the IP or microaggressions affected them psychologically and or physically. This section presents data derived from the participants' lived experiences as related to their health. Seeing that it was a two-part question, some of the participants remembered to answer it directly, while others alluded

to it and some never responded to it. To follow are different snippets of the conversation in which the participants discussed anything that had to do with psychological and physical health. The different conversations are grouped separately.

Dolores shared different thoughts about her journey with mental health:

In grad school, although I didn't go to the doctor and I wasn't diagnosed particularly, I did feel like there was a point there where I had anxiety and likely depression, too. But I think there I was surrounded by a lot of friends and a lot of families just because of where I was. I had that support team to kind of at least kind of guide me through and not feel the major weight of it.

Dolores's support team is part of her cultural community wealth that she was able to access during such a difficult time. They took a part of her "carga" and gave her the space to talk and help her cope with her anxiety. In addition to having her cultural capital, she attempted to use her own cognitive behavior strategies to help her get through it all.

Then it had gotten to the point where I could no longer think my way through it, which that has never happened before. That's not to say that's how you know to get over depression or anything, but I think I had previously been able to use some cognitive-behavioral strategies to overcome some of these things. I do think like a huge factor was that whole like interaction with my past-lab and that postdoc it just brought me down really bad. It was an accumulation of that it had everything and again that's that was like a big major thing that kind of brought up again the questioning of my capacity and what I could do of the work that I was doing. So . . . yeah I mean it does take a toll on your mind and on your body ultimately.

However, eventually, when the carga became too big, she had to seek professional help, which helped her.

This past year, I was diagnosed with, like, severe depression, and I think a contributor of that has been me feeling the way I do about the work that I do and just kind of like that lack of confidence in myself that is sometimes there. Now, that's a little different, so I'm actually like on antidepressants now and I can say

that they have helped a lot. I think it's helped a bit, like, to have more of a, I guess, a positive outlook on what I'm doing. So, I do think like, you know, the medicine helped.

It also has helped that her partner is also a scientist and to an extent could empathize with her and her experiences.

Luckily, like I said, I feel like I have the support of people around me that I can openly talk to about this stuff and especially with my partner. He is also a scientist, a Hispanic scientist. It's interesting to find the differences in how we face and how we dealt with different situations or just how different situations have treated us. I think a big part of that is because he's male and because I'm female, so there's definitely some aspect of that in there. It's been nice to be able to have somebody who is in the same field, essentially, and who knows the typical way of interactions and how things should go. To kind of provide some validation for what I feel, like, "Hey you're right, like, this isn't okay, and you should say something. Even, "hey this is good, you're doing well and what you're supposed to be doing."

With professional medical help and drawing from her CCW, Dolores was able to manage her depression and anxiety. In response to the impact on her psychological health, she found what best worked for her.

Estela's coping mechanism was running; it helped her clear her thoughts.

I need to prepare, not just mentally but also emotionally prepare for these feelings and interactions that may bring the feeling of the impostor. For conferences, I have to emotionally prepare because I have to socialize and network. Also, I have to be mentally ready and prepare to present. On the days I have to present, I have to go to the gym and run because if I don't run, I can't clear my head. So I am mentally, emotionally and physically preparing for everything because these things that gnaw away at us, take away so much of our energy, you know, even just thinking about it.

Evita shared different thoughts throughout her interview that gave insight into how she pulled through undergraduate school with IP and life with microaggressions. She spoke about her experience of how she coped during undergraduate school.

I did have crying sessions with my roommate. So definitely, I felt very frustrated with . . . academics, mostly, is what really made me very frustrated. But I don't believe I ever shared anything like that where I felt that it was because I wasn't smart or anything like that. It was mostly just sharing being frustrated.

However, her experience in responding to the adverse impact on her life was different. Her experience with a co-worker, who had taken the supervisor role while they did not have a boss, was negative and caused her emotional distress. "I had no idea that her treatment towards me was having such an impact on my health, and I was so sick, and I really attributed it to her, and it manifested physically in asthma." At first, Evita did not recognize the impact that the microaggressions were having on her. Eventually, Evita's feeling of being a failure was too much to deal with on her own; she sought professional medical help to get her through. "I had to see a therapist because I really felt like I was just a failure in my field. It's like, I am a failure." For Evita, seeking therapy was her way of managing her mental health.

JLo shared two different thoughts about her health experience:

I mean it's not a coincidence that my anxiety ramps up because I was always very type A. Being the daughter of immigrants, being overachievers, being the best . . . overcoming odds, all that . . . But being the overachiever after a couple of years of that really starts to mess with you.

Being the daughter of immigrants put a burden of expectation on her shoulders; that carga of expectation, those who sacrificed so she could have the opportunities that she had. It is a carga that most first-generation students take on, yet, it is a lot of responsibility. The sacrifice was made, yet the tools to access education, mental health, and financial stability is a difficult journey that not all can access, especially how to properly access mental health services. JLo discussed her diagnosis:

I got into a bout of depression and I had to go on antidepressants, and I had suicidal thoughts because I was so overwhelmed. I felt like I was on a rat wheel that I could never get off of. I felt like whatever I did it was just never good enough and that everyone else had something better to say than me.

Although in the eyes of her parents and the community she was considered to be “succeeding” in attaining the “American Dream,” this dream was never given a final destination. The finish line was not blatantly visible. This led her to think that nothing was ever enough.

Julia shared how she does not like confronting someone on the spot because a lot of emotions build up and she begins to feel angry, which causes her to remove herself from the situation. Julia also shared that when she begins to feel like an impostor, she looks at her journal to remind her of the great things about her:

And I have my little planner that's like a physical planner, and I'll have things that I have to look at once in a while, like, "Remember why you started. Remember why you're doing this. And the fact that you speak Spanish is a strength in your research." I've actually had to write these things down because when I feel really confident or when someone writes me a letter of rec, I'm like, "Oh, wow, people are saying all these nice things about me." I almost will take little things that they say and write them down, and then when there are those really hard times where I feel rejected or someone says something that made me feel really down about myself, I go back, and I reflect on those things and I remember those things. So, I try to amplify the positive voices and try to just acknowledge, but also ignore a lot of the microaggression, and even my own internal imposter syndrome voice.

Olivia shared that there was a time in her life when she used to work out and exercise; she used to run half marathons and even did a triathlon once. Even during her Ph.D. program, she made sure to make time for exercise. However, now, she cannot sleep through the night, and at times she has nightmares. She eventually realized she was officially depressed.

This last summer I was officially depressed and going through both anxiety and depression, actually. So I started looking into therapy and I just started going somewhere. I've done two visits and it's learning about what all these things do to my body that I'm trying to focus. Like, "Okay, when you get frustrated at work because you're not getting paid, where do you feel it?" And I'm like, "I don't know." So, I'm trying to learn how all of these things are affecting my body.

Olivia's previous method of self-care was to exercise. Now, she is also learning how to listen to her body and recognize the signs of feeling her frustration.

Victoria shared how her old boss affected her self-confidence and how it was starting to show at her new job:

I think it has affected me a lot because now I have very little confidence. Maybe after five years, I noticed it started getting to me. I kept asking him questions because if I don't ask him I, have a feeling he's going to complain about it; say I'm doing this wrong. I questioned every little thing I did. Now my new job, I question every little thing I do and my coworkers are like, "You're fine." They see and they may make comments like, "You need to have more confidence in yourself." So, I have no confidence. Now it's starting to show.

All of Victoria's experiences of microaggressions and mental and emotional distress that she dealt with and the accumulation of low perception of herself has been so internalized that it is suppressing her ability to see her worth and to thrive.

*Microaggressions and health.* Sue (2010) discussed how race and ethnic forms of microaggressions and racism have caused people of color detrimental physical and psychological consequences. Perceived discrimination has been linked to high levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and psychological distress (Finch et al., 2000). In this study, three participants were diagnosed with depression. Estela and Julia noted they had coping methods that helped them deal with microaggressions and IP. Estela would run, as it cleared her mind, whereas Julia kept a journal of all the positive things people said



about her. This journal provided a counter narrative that she could read whenever she began to feel down or like a failure.

### **Qualitative Question five: Why I Thrive**

This section answers the qualitative Question 5, which focuses on the participants' ability to continue to thrive despite chronic experiences with microaggressions and experiences that heighten IP. This section presents a narrative of the reason why these seven participants continue to thrive despite the internal and external conflicts they face every day.

Dolores shared that her reason to continue thriving despite all the conflicts she faced every day is that she has a purpose greater than herself:

Yeah, that's a really good question. Um to do the work. That that there is a need, there's a purpose behind the work that you're doing. Regardless of whether I think that I can or can't do it like that work needs to be done. Like I said, I work like in that agriculture biotechnology sector and so it's very much this big challenge of like, how are we going to feed the world? So, the research that I'm doing is contributing to that. I think this is one of the biggest challenges of our generation right now. I remind myself that I've been trained. I know I have this training and I'm here now so I'm in a place where I have to do that because if I don't do it like who else is going to do it? And I need to contribute to that problem in this way that I can. I think that has lately been the biggest driver of why I keep doing what I'm doing and why I can continue to push. I feel like the work that I'm doing has a purpose and it's gonna help a lot of people, it's gonna help a lot of species really it's going to help our planet and that's what I see as the end goal. Like, just do what you can as much as you can with what you have and just push through and make it happen.

Dolores' purpose is to provide her services and help feed the world. Dolores also credited her parents, specifically her mother, for always offering her support and encouraging her when she is down.

I think a soundboard for all of that is always my parents, my mom. It's huge, she's always offered me that support. Not so much telling me, oh you can do anything but more like, "look, I've seen you do this and you've done that, this is just the next big thing. Don't focus on everything that you need to do, you know, just start small, little by little. You know, like, knowing that my parents gave up so much to come to this country and the least that I could do is make a realization of what they've started for me. I mean over my life that has been the push, not just make them proud but make their work and their sacrifices worth something; something they can look at and not regret having made that decision.

Dolores tapped into the aspirational capital that her parents provide her, the hopes and dreams of succeeding in this country, and making a better life for her and future generations. Estela shared that her experience of having her first Latina professor played a big role in her life, someone who represented who she was:

I think back to the day that I had my first Latina professor and as an undergraduate, I went to a Hispanic Serving Institution and I felt like we didn't have that many Latina faculty. But the day that they hired a Latina faculty member, who was 30 and had her Ph.D. with a new tenure-track position and I remember being so enamored at what she had accomplished and what she had done. All of us there were Mechistas, the women in the MECHA group were ecstatic, we would go to her office, we were definitely bugaboos, right, we were always there. To see what it meant for us to have her there is what keeps me going. What it meant to see somebody like her, to remember that there isn't that many of us that are continuously climbing through and making it through. And what it means for our future students.

Having a positive role model of the same ethnic background impacted Estela; this professor was her social capital. Estela needed to continue to thrive because of the message it would give to future Latinx students and students of color.

Also, what it means for the field of education and what it's going to mean for the future students of the students that I work with. To see more people of color or even if they are not a person of color, someone who is critical and challenges the dominant structure because that is what I intend to do with working with policy. To change policy for our students, that's what keeps me going. Just knowing that my presence here makes a difference, the work that I am doing makes a difference. Out here, there is so much work that I have to do, especially in

regards to immigration and educations and the intersection of those two and their policy. The state has been growing and we see young immigrant families and children. I have already started to do work to start preparing local school districts but just knowing how much work that needs to happen and knowing that there is not a lot of us here is what keeps me going.

Estela also understood that her perspective on life would be necessary in the educational policy world. Evita shared that when she begins to doubt herself or have impostor feelings, self-talk and motivation keep her thriving:

I think what's making it more manageable is self-talk. Like, "I'm capable, you got this, girl." I have to tell you that's something I had to do to myself. Before I even got my job, when I had the interview at the job that I have now, I mean I was driving to the school. And I really hadn't psyched myself. I had to say it out loud in the car, just like a crazy person, but I had to say something to the effect that you belong here. You worked really hard, and you belong here, don't doubt yourself . . . I mean it's certainly like those conversations. "Do not doubt yourself, you belong here, you worked really hard," and all this kind of pepping and prepping myself . . . I think the frustrating part for me, especially in this new setting and the impostor-ish feeling that I have is trying to figure out how to be my own person, and not try to copy everybody else. And that, I think has been very challenging for me, and I also feel like I have to give myself a break and tell myself, they've been here longer, they have a different rhythm than you do, but it doesn't mean that you're not good. You are good at this. You've been doing this . . . you've been doing presentations before, and those kinds of things. So, I have to really kind of keep that in my head and just not feel like . . . it's almost like feeling competitive, that it's like, "I got to do better," and it's like, "Come on, Evita!"

JLo understands that to change a system, there has to be people with different perspectives in the conversations. Change is not going to come if she is not in the room when certain conversations are taking place.

I mean I do think I have something important to say. I don't know exactly what it is, but I do think I have something important to contribute. And again, I'm not the smartest person out there, but I've met some really dumb people in academia and I'm just like, "Okay." I've met some really tone-deaf, super unaware people, who somehow they find something fascinating to say. I'm no worse off than them . . . I

think that's it. You can't make changes in toxic places if you're not there to call it out.

For Julia, her past is what keeps her thriving. She understands where she came from and the privilege that she now has because of her position.

So I think, for me, I just have to think back to where I came from, my community, and who I'm actually doing this for. And that's why I feel super privileged to be able to be in a position that I'm at. So, despite all the other stuff that is going on, I always remember that. But another thing that I realized too is I grew up in really poor neighborhoods, and I still live in the neighborhood I grew up with because living in California, it's really expensive. People will be talking about things that are not how I grew up, people from different classes like, and "We went skiing. We went this." People do really expensive things that I never did. We'll be out at a conference networking, and I feel like I can't identify with those people. But those Latinas that grew up more similar to the way I did, or folks who grew up in kind of similar neighborhoods where they didn't have a lot of money, that made me feel really comfortable. So, I think one of the reasons why I stay in science is because I've been able to identify with those people. So even though there's only a few, I feel like I'm not alone completely.

Julia not only uses her past as her motivation to continue thriving, but she also understands the power of social capital and how she can be the provider of such capital for other Latinas. She is using a survival mechanism for Latinas in science, as long as she is in the space, she is securing a foothold for future Latinas in science. She acknowledges that she has become their social capital.

Olivia shared that she continues to thrive because she has a message to give to her students. She is on a mission to help her students become culturally competent human beings.

And so I've always wanted to be a teacher, and I tell my students even now when I introduce myself, "I'm a teacher who got a Ph.D. I'm an elementary/middle school teacher who went and got a Ph.D. And that's who I am first." And so, just knowing that, I'm changing the way that . . . Because in my classes, yes, I'm the science educator, or STEM educator, engineering educator, but I'm a critically

conscious individual first. So, in every single one of my classes, we start reading about CRT and community cultural wealth. So, we read about Solórzano and Yosso and that's how we open up my class before I start reading the standards in science or whatever other standards. But you need to understand the length of this class. And then I talk about deficit thinking, and I close that with cultural community wealth.

Olivia's objective to teach about CRT and CCW shifts the way her students think. She is helping her students transition from the Euro American thought process of deficit thinking to strength-based thinking.

I don't want students to go through what I went through. So whether they're immigrant or not, a lot of our students that we get are stuck with these 70% White teachers that don't know what the heck is going on with their students and I feel like I made this commitment in middle school that after that one math teacher I had, Mr. Ledesma, that I was like, "How are you a teacher and you have me coloring in the back? Why is it that you don't know what to do with me?" And I know what's going on so that to me was so demoralizing, and even just that whole school where I attended if you weren't wearing a belt, you had to wear a rope around your waist because there was a lot of cholos and it was to be able to get the cholos to stop bringing their pants down, or whatever. Sagging their pants. All these things, there's something really wrong with our education system and knowing that I can't change the system by myself, but I can change the way that teachers are prepared.

Olivia's desire to evolve her students from deficit thinking to culturally competent individuals and her desire to change the education system is her reason to continue to thrive. Olivia acknowledged that she is an agent of change and she has the power and privilege allowed by the space in which she works to be a torchbearer in the academic setting.

Victoria, like the other participants, understands she is in a space where she can make a difference; for Victoria, that difference starts at home.

I think I don't give up because I have a child that turned 12 in January and I don't want her to give up. I want her to see that her mother never gave up no matter

what. I think that's what keeps me motivated. I need to be a good role model for her. If it wasn't for her, it'd probably be really easy to give up. Yeah, I would have to say my only motivation is my child. Just so she doesn't give up when she has her own struggles when she grows up.

Victoria recognized that she continues to persist and does what she does for those who follow her. She understands that her choices now will have an impact on future generations and will ultimately open a path for her daughter and her daughter's daughter. The vision of impacting future generations fuels her endurance in the face of multiple challenges.

*Endurance labor and cultural community wealth.* These participants had many reasons why they continued to thrive despite the challenges to their sense of competence and confidence. Through their entire experience, it was evident they were not going to give up, despite adversity or microaggressions or their level of internalized IP. These women displayed the term endurance labor (Cuadraz & Pierce, 1994), the counter of Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) cultural capital. Endurance labor emerged from people like these women who did not have the cultural capital to succeed in life but used their determination to fight back despite enduring racist, classist, and sexist assaults. Their efforts are fueled by their emotional desire to beat the system that has discriminated against them. These seven participants were willing to be the only color in a room, withstood multiple microaggressions, and sustained psychological and physical distress in order to make a difference in their lives; their family's lives; and for those future professors, scientists, lawyers, and researchers who will come behind them. They are holders of aspirational capital as Yosso (2005) identified. They entered a school system

intending to dream and have a better future despite the barriers. They too were holders of what Yosso (2005) calls resistance capital, where they gained the skills and understanding of the inequalities they were facing and the oppositional behavior they needed to confront. They are now holders of power and privilege, they are change agents, and have taken upon themselves to be social capital for the future generations of Latinas.

### **Conclusion**

This study used a mixed-methods approach to address each research question. The data were analyzed using a concurrent nested approach that collects and analyzes both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time but gives priority to one data set, in this case, the qualitative data set. Quantitative data were collected through one survey consisting of demographic questions and two scales: RMAS and the IPS. The data in each scale were analyzed with descriptive statistics and also, the RMAS was analyzed using a Pearson correlation to find the significant relationship among the subscales. Five groupings of the subscales demonstrated a significance in the relationship and had a high effect size. The descriptive statistics of the IP data analysis highlighted that 66.8% of the 202 survey participants experience frequent to intense IP experiences.

In the qualitative portion of this study, Research Questions 2, 4, and 5 were answered by giving light to the lived experiences of seven Latinas with doctoral degrees and their experiences with IP, microaggressions in the workplace, psychological and physical health, and their ability to thrive despite the obstacles.

Chapter 5 follows and includes a review of the study's purpose and research questions, a summary, and interpretations of the findings. Also included are recommendations for future research.



## Chapter 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to (a) identify the level of IP, (b) determine which variables regarding racial microaggressions are significantly related, and (c) give voice to the lived experiences of IP and microaggressions in the workplace for Latinas with doctoral degrees. To collect data relevant to these areas, 202 Latinas with doctorate degrees completed a Qualtrics survey that utilized two scales: (a) CIPS (Clance, 1985) and (b) RMAS (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Additionally, seven participants were interviewed in person, which produced themes emerging from the qualitative portion of this study. Subsequently, the data from this study provide educational leaders and professional career leaders insight into the experiences of highly educated Latinas. The voices of these participants provide a platform for Latinas with doctoral degrees to share their experiences with microaggression in the workplace and how they navigate the internal conflict of IP.

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, using a quantitative and qualitative research design. A concurrent nested approach was used to collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time while emphasizing the voices inherent in the qualitative data. The quantitative data addressed a set of questions that provide a broader and measurable perspective specifically examining the Latinas' with doctoral degrees experience with racial microaggressions and IP. The qualitative data provided an in-depth view of their lived experiences with microaggression and IP in the workplace. The following section highlights all five research questions and provides

a summary of the quantitative and qualitative data pertaining to the research questions, which is followed by the Findings in Theoretical Context, Implications, recommendations, and conclusion.

### **Research Questions**

What is the psychological experience of Latinas post completion of their doctorate degree?

Sub-questions related to the larger question follow:

1. Which variables regarding racial microaggressions are significantly related to Latinas with doctoral degrees? (Quantitative)
2. What specific examples of microaggressions have Latinas with doctoral degrees faced in the workplace? How has this affected them? (Qualitative)
3. Where do Latinas with doctoral degrees score on the Impostor Phenomenon Scale? (Quantitative)
4. What are the specific lived experiences in which these Latinas felt like impostors? (Qualitative)
5. Despite the internal conflict of the Impostor Phenomenon and external conflicts of racial microaggressions, what keeps you thriving every day? (Qualitative)

### **Summary of Findings**

#### **Research Question One**

Research Question 1, “Which variables regarding racial microaggressions are significantly related regarding Latinas with doctoral degrees?”, was addressed by collecting quantitative data using the 4-point Likert-type Racial Microaggression Scale

(RMAS). The scale comprises six subscales: foreigner/not belonging, criminality invisibility, low-achieving/undesirable culture, sexualization, and environmental invalidations. The findings suggested 15 significant relationships among the six subscales with a  $p < .01$ . Of the 15 significant relationships, five of them had a high effect size; criminality and sexualization at 26%, criminality and low-achieving at 27%, foreigner and invisibility at 30%, criminality and invisibility at 41%, and low achieving and invisibility at 44%.

### **Research Question Two**

Research Question 2, “What specific examples of microaggressions have Latinas with doctoral degrees faced in the workplace?”, was addressed by the data emanating from the qualitative interviews suggesting that Latinas with doctoral degrees face many forms of microaggressions in the workplace, not just race and gender. Four themes emerged from the qualitative data collected: ageism, women as sub-oppressors, racial/ethnic stereotypes, and lack of recognition and respect.

The first theme, ageism, is defined as “prejudice against someone based on their age” (Nelson, 2016, p. 337). Although much research on ageism concerns the elderly, this study revealed that ageism also plays a factor in young Latina professionals. Five of the seven participants discussed facing microaggression in the workplace due to their age or because they had a youthful look. Their aggressors used the participants’ youthfulness or age to discredit their intelligence and accomplishment to maintain social hierarchy. The participants experienced age-related microaggressions by peers, subordinates, and supervisors. Estela not only looked young but was also small in stature, so she was

constantly reminded that her appearance did not fit what others stereotypically expected a professor to look like. Such microaggression also led her and Julia to make changes to their appearance or clothing to not appear youthful and, thus, minimize the microaggressions they faced based on their age and or youthfulness. Estela stated, “Like, I’ve had to, especially now as a Prof, like really change the way that I dress, change the way that I speak.” To be seen as a professor, as a doctora, she had to change aspects about herself in an attempt to reduce the number of microaggressions she received based on her youthfulness.

The second theme that emerged from this study was women as sub-oppressors in which the women in this study faced many microaggressions from other women who were supervisors, peers, and or subordinates. Not only were the microaggressions coming from the dominant White culture but also from women of the same race or ethnic background who had similar lived experiences. Some of the participants, such as Julia, expressed difficulty in understanding how she could be receiving microaggressive mistreatment by her supervisor who was also a Latina, a female Latinx. Julia assumed her supervisor would have more insight and would have had some of the same lived experiences of race- and gender-based microaggressions yet she was perpetuating the same oppressive behaviors. Paulo Freire (2014) identified this as taking in the mindset of the oppressor and becoming a sub-oppressor.

The third theme that emerged from Research Question 1 was racial/ethnic stereotypes. These participants experienced being treated as if all Latinx are the same despite there being 23 official Spanish-speaking countries in the world with different

cultural practices and characteristics that make up people's identity. In this study, six of the seven participants experienced microaggressions in the workplace that were rooted in stereotyping them based on their racial, ethnic, and cultural practices. The topics within the racial/ethnic stereotypes consisted of food, dress attire, work ethic, cultural practices concerning religion and holidays, sexualization of Latinas, and being perceived as if being a Latina made you aggressive.

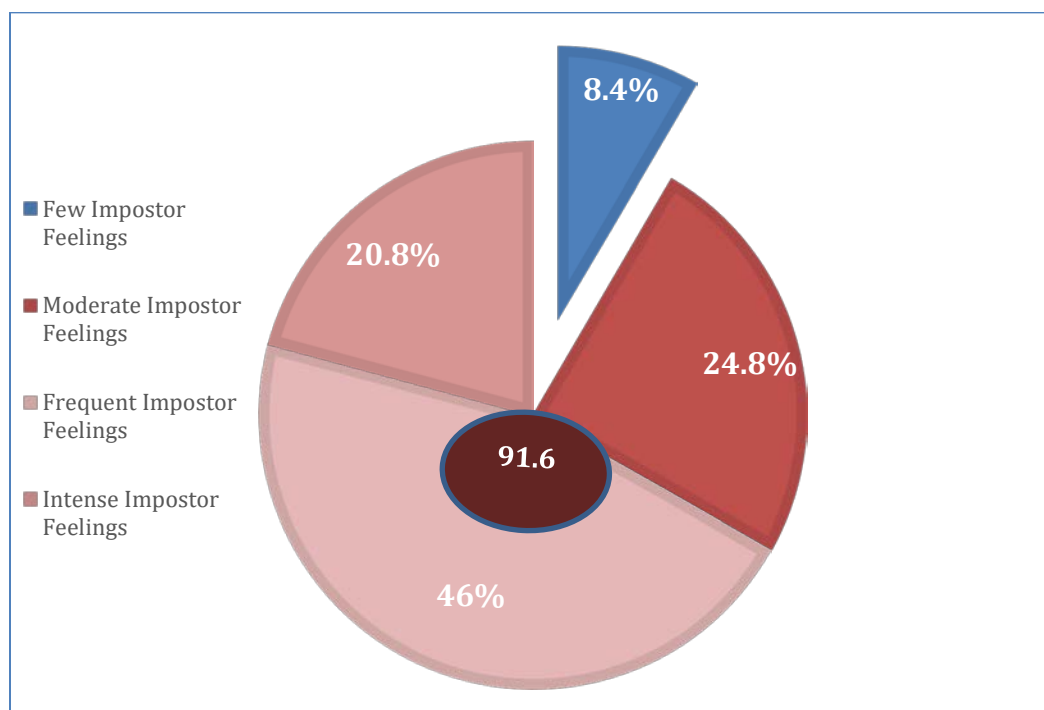
The stereotyping of all Latinx as a homogenous group appears to be an ingrained perception and subsequently perpetuated in a range of sectors in this country from media to politics. In the United States, Latinx from all different countries are systemically marginalized by the dominant White society by not recognizing their racial identity and forcing them to all be grouped into one ethnic identity: Hispanic (Berrios, 2006; Romain, 2013). For example, Estela dealt with another faculty member who assumed she liked Arepas and celebrated Dia de Los Muertos. Julia was told by a faculty peer that a student was able to learn from her because she was attractive and he must be in love with her. Victoria was perceived to be aggressive because she was Latina. For Evita, her peers assumed that because she was Latina, she should be able to organize a group of Latino students. Such marginalization has removed the identity of these cultures and the beauty of what makes them unique and has deemed a sense of one-in-the-same based on one simple factor, they speak the same language. This theme aligns with data in Table 4 illustrating 75.7% of participants experienced moderate to frequent feelings of being perceived as low-achieving/undesirable culture; the feeling of being treated as if people from one's racial background are interchangeable, among other characteristics.

The fourth and final theme that emerged from Research Question 2 is the lack of recognition or respect. In this study, each participant experienced not being recognized for who they are or what they brought to the table and was not respected by their peers, subordinates, and supervisors. For example, Victoria, despite having her Juris Doctorate, is kept in a receptionist position but expected to do work above her pay grade. In essence, her employer is not validating her degree but still using her knowledge. For Olivia, even though she was chosen to head a hiring committee, supervisors still firmly attempted to persuade her to give the position to a specific person, instead of trusting her to use her judgment and give the job to the perfect fit for the department. Dolores experienced this when another researcher used her data without asking permission, wrote a manuscript, and then put himself as the first author. This theme aligns with data of Table 4 illustrating 53% of participants experienced moderate to frequent feelings of invisibility, i.e., being treated as if one is of lower status, not seen as a “real” person, and being dismissed or devalued. The notion of being hyper-visible and invisible at the same time—hyper-visible because they are a Latina in a White dominant setting, but also invisible because, despite their presence in this setting, their identity is not respected—means they are not always treated as equals.

### **Research Question Three**

Research Question 3, “Where do Latinas with doctoral degrees score on the Impostor Phenomenon Scale?” was addressed by collecting quantitative data using the 5-point Likert-type CIPS. The scale comprises 20 questions used to determine whether and to what extent the participants possess IP characteristics. Table 8 data indicate that of the

202 participants who took the scale, 8.4% had few IP experiences, 24.8% had moderate IP experiences, 46% had frequent IP experiences, and 20.8% had intense IP experiences. When combined, the data suggest that 91.6% of the participants experienced moderate to intense feelings of IP (see Figure 5).



*Figure 5.* Degree that participants experience IP, a combination of percentages of moderate to intense.

Table 10 presents the crosstabulation of the CIPS score group by age group. In the age groups of 25-34 (69.8%), 34-44 (75.3%), and 45-54 (55.9%), more than half of the age group scored frequent to intense feelings of IP. Whereas in the age groups of 55-64 (87.5%) and 65-74 (100%), more than 85% of the age groups scored few to moderate IP feelings.

Table 10

*CIPS and Age Group Crosstabulation*

	Few IP	Moderate IP	Frequent IP	Intense IP	Total
	Feelings	Feelings	Feelings	Feelings	
25-34 years old	11.3%	18.9%	35.8%	34.0%	100.0%
35-44 years old	4.1%	20.6%	56.7%	18.6%	100.0%
45-54 years old	9.3%	34.9%	41.9%	14.0%	100.0%
55-64 years old	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%	100.0%
65-74 years old	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Table 9 presents that of the seven participants, five were in the 25-34 age range; three of these participants offered intense IP experiences, and two expressed having frequent IP feelings. The last two, the one in the 35-44 age group has frequent IP feelings and the last, Evita, who was in the 55-64 age group, had a low score of 55, which put her in the moderate IP experience range. Table 9 and 10 data suggest that the older these Latinas are, the less they have IP experiences in comparison to the participants in the younger age groups.

**Research Question Four**

Research Question 4, “What are specific lived experiences in which these Latinas felt like impostors?”, was addressed by collecting qualitative data related to these Latinas’ experiences with the IP for the first time in life and the workplace. The data collected during these interviews suggest that these Latinas first experienced IP in



academic institutions. For five of the seven of the participants, higher education was when they began to feel like impostors, as if they were out of place and did not have the necessary knowledge to perform at the level of their peers. For Evita, her advisor's lack of support and unwillingness to connect with her exacerbated her feelings of being an impostor. For Olivia, she felt like an impostor in the sixth grade when she came to the United States and entered the school system. She was treated as though she was low achieving because she did not speak English despite being an academically advanced student in Mexico. The qualitative data for Research Question 4 also identified that all seven of these participants currently experience IP at their workplace. Despite having a doctorate and the knowledge in their field, these Latinas had the internal conflict of feeling inadequate or unworthy, they have internalized the negative perceptions of those around them.

### **Research Question Five**

Research Question 5, "Despite the internal conflict of the Impostor Phenomenon and the external conflict of Microaggressions, what keeps the participants thriving every day?", was addressed by the qualitative data. Despite the internal and external conflicts, the participants felt they had a purpose. These participants noted they had something important to tell the world. They wanted to be a representation to other Latinas, showing them they belonged in those spaces, to be someone's hope and inspiration to continue in their studies. For those who had children, they wanted to also be an example for the next generation. They are what Gutierrez (2020) identified as Torchbearers, those who "light the way for others . . . Often, they are the 'first' in their communities to forge a path as

they quest for knowledge, they also quest for equality, and they quest for transformation and preservation” (p. 183). All of these women, although at times they feel lonely in their space, are making their presence known and unapologetically being an educated Latina in a space that was never intended for them to be in.

### **Findings in the Context of Theoretical Framework**

#### **Intersectionality**

The most prevalent themes found in the microaggression qualitative data were ageism, women as sub-oppressors, racial/ethnic stereotypes, and lack of recognition or respect. These Latinas with a doctoral degree faced microaggressions under three identifiers: because they were female (gender), Latinx (culture/ethnicity), and because some looked youthful or young (age). Each participant faced microaggressions from multiple individuals for different reasons, which brings to question, which of the participants’ identity characteristics impacted the perception of the microaggressor? For some microaggressors, age was the biggest impact, such as in the case of Estela and her student who constantly felt the need to point out her age and her experience as a professor. Her age was also prevalent with her faculty peers who felt the need to re-explain things to her and note that she was too young to know the information. For Olivia, age was also the identifying marker that had a greater impact on her faculty peers. Due to their being a group of young faculty who had recently been hired, the seasoned faculty would lump them together and address them as kids. For Dolores, her race was her most prominent identity marker that triggered her subordinate to feel that she could disrespectfully challenge Dolores’ decisions regarding how they were going to tackle a

situation. Not only Dolores but other subordinates and peers noted that this individual never spoke in that manner to the non-Hispanic supervisors. For Evita, race was also an identifying marker for microaggressions on behalf of her coworker who noted her frustration with Evita and her inability as a Latina to not organize Latino students. The same peer insinuated to Evita that her race was the reason why she had been hired, discrediting all of her other qualifications for being in that position. For Victoria and her relationship with her previous supervisor, her gender was prominent in his perception when it came to who he would give certain work to. He stated that instead of giving her male peer a specific work task, he would give it to her because women are more organized than men. However, for the majority of the shared experiences with microaggressors, it was difficult to discern and unravel which part of the participant's identity was impacting the microaggressor; their identity markers are braided together and do not exist independently.

Crenshaw's (1989) framework of intersectionality asserts that people can experience oppression through multiple sources, such as race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identity markers. The intersectionality of these identifiers applies to the microaggressions, a symptom of oppression, as they surface concerning race, gender, age, and other identity markers. Intersectionality, in this case, would acknowledge the experience of microaggressions through multiple sources occurring simultaneously, discarding the singular attribute of each factor by merging multiple independent factors into a layered lens of all the factors that construct one's identity. In the interviews, some participants found it difficult to pinpoint one specific

factor as the reason for their experience with microaggressions, acknowledging that any part of their identity could have played a role in their experience. For Victoria, it was hard to discern which identity markers triggered her co-workers to microaggress her. In the case of Dolores, having a peer take her research and write a manuscript without asking her or respecting her work, she felt like she could not pinpoint which of her identities caused such disrespect. Dolores stated, “Whether that’s because I’m Hispanic, or because I’m a woman or because of my age, I feel like that’s where that intersectionality is a little more difficult to tease out.” The intersectionality of the participants’ identities has caused them to experience a complex level of prejudice that has not been experienced by all individuals.

### **Social Dominance Theory**

Throughout this study, the participants’ lived experiences provided an insight into the microaggressions faced by the Latinas with a doctoral degree through the framework of social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Social dominance theory asserts that it is human nature to establish dominance over another group based on differences and to maintain social hierarchy for group benefit. Social dominance identifies three different group systems that can be implemented to assert social dominance, which all can be found in this study. The first, age system, deems that the younger you are, the lower you are on the hierarchy ladder. In this case, five of the Latinas, despite all of their accomplishments and titles, faced microaggressions based on their age, allowing their aggressors to negate their accomplishments and discredit them while continuing to maintain their position of power.

The second system of social dominance (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), the gender system, in this study was manifested through the passing down of the gender hierarchy mindset from generation to generation and in turn, made to be a known truth to society causing the oppressed women to become sub-oppressors. Freire (2014) discussed the term sub-oppressors through the lens of racism in which the oppressed have embodied the mindset of being inferior and then adopt the mindset as the truth. They, in turn, reproduce this oppression among themselves and others. In this study, sub-oppressors are examined through the lens of gender. In the United States, gender inequality has been instituted in the social norms since the inception of this country. The mindset of women being inferior to men has been passed down from generation to generation, deeming women to be weaker, less than, and unable to choose for themselves, needing men to make political decisions about how to live their lives. Such a mindset of women being inferior has caused women to take on the role of being a sub-oppressor and thus, treating a successful woman as a threat instead of an ally. The qualitative data of the lived experiences revealed the theme of women as sub-oppressors. In this study, women, not only of the dominant White culture but also of the same race/ethnic identity demonstrated microaggressive behavior toward the participants in the workplace.

Also, the social reproduction of gender hierarchy has caused women to sub-oppress their group by believing they do not belong or they are not adequate to compete in the workforce. This ingrained societal mindset has been internalized and the term Impostor Phenomenon was coined when women entered the professional workforce in which they excelled but had feelings of being fraudulent and, thus, never attributed their

success to their intelligence and abilities (Clance, 1985, Clance & Imes, 1978). In this study, the CIPS scores reveal that 66.8% of the participants had frequent to intense IP feelings, 24.8% had moderate, and only 8.4% of the participants had few IP characteristics.

The internal struggle of women feeling inferior or inadequate, an impostor, has not been a result of a mindset created by women but has been created by men since the inception of this country when women were not respected as equals. However, gender-based social dominance does not always mean males are the only ones who explicitly microaggress women. The male dominant and superiority mindset has been generationally passed down and engrained into our country's social practices, causing women to accept such a mindset as the truth. This, in turn, has allowed men to maintain their place in the social hierarchy and continue to reap the social benefits of being at the top. Through their gender-based social dominance, males have the benefit of being the decision makers for those who are below them in the social hierarchy rank. Some of the decisions that men, specifically men in the dominant White culture, are currently making regarding women include women's access to higher education, professional roles, and the ability to choose regarding their bodies and life choices for which men are never questioned.

The third system, arbitrary system, is socially constructed based on differences that can be used to divide people (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999); in this case, race/ethnic identity is a socially constructed difference. Social dominance through race/ethnic identity is noted in the descriptive statistics from the quantitative data collected by the

RMAS. The data reveal that more than 50% of the participants identify they had experienced moderate to frequent microaggressions stemming from one of the five themes from the six subscales: foreigner/not belonging, sexualization, low-achieving/undesirable culture, invisibility, and environmental invalidation; of these six subscales, low-achieving/undesirable culture and environmental invalidations had the highest moderate to frequent percentage. Both subscales, show the impact of racial microaggressions and subjection to social dominance. The data in Table 4 show that 75.7% of the participants had moderate to frequent racial microaggression experiences in the low-achieving/undesirable culture subscale, being treated as if people from one's racial background are interchangeable, low achieving, and dysfunctional and as if successes are due to unfair entitlements and special treatment.

The data in Table 4 also show that 91.1% of the participants had moderate to frequent racial microaggression experiences in the environmental invalidations scale, negative perceptions that derive from observing that people from one's racial background are largely absent from work, school, or community settings or positions of power. Treating Latinas as interchangeable or low achieving are tactics used to maintain social hierarchy established by and for the dominant White culture. As long as Latinas do not take space in higher-level positions of power, the less input they will have in the decision-making, which keeps them powerless. If left unchallenged, the dominant White culture will continue to maintain social dominance. As long as the dominant White culture controls decision making, Latinas and people of color and all of their identity

markers will continue to be perceived as a deficit, and their knowledge, culture, and race will never be treated as wealth but as different or less than.

### **Cultural Community Wealth, Aspirational Capital**

Through the perspective of the dominant White culture, deficit thinkers assume students of color perform academically poorly because they do not have parents who care or they lack a set of skills needed to excel, a set of skills that can only be obtained through formal education, assets, and resources that come with living a life of privilege (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Yosso, 2005). Despite not having cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), the dominant White culture fails to acknowledge that people of color, and in the case of this study, Latinas with doctoral degrees, possess an abundance of CCW. This study revealed examples of how the participants used their CCW to reach their educational and career aspirations. In this study, all seven of the Latina participants were first-generation college students and graduates; their parents were unable to grant them the benefits that come with Bourdieu's (1997) notion of cultural capital; however, they received and espoused aspirational capital, allowing them to dream and set goals despite the external and internal conflicts they faced ahead. These participants aspired to validate their parents' hard work of coming to this country. One such participant, Evita, talked about her parents not being educated, and yet they knew the value of education. She openly conveyed the desire to make her mother proud and finish school. Dolores acknowledged that her parents, especially her mom, motivated her to continue to aspire to reach her dreams. The understanding of what her parents had



sacrificed to come to the United States, the desire to validate their hopes, and value their sacrifice is what kept her focused on becoming ‘doctora.’

### **Becoming Social Capital with Resistance Capital and Endurance Labor**

These doctoras not only possess aspirational capital, but they push past the microaggressions they are dealt and suppress the internal struggle with IP. They ignite their resistance capital and employ the skills to navigate the inequities and inequalities that stand in their way and the oppositional behavior that confronts them (Yosso, 2005). Cuadraz and Pierece (1994) called oppositional behavior endurance labor. Like CCW, specifically resistance capital, endurance labor is the determination to fight back against the racist, classist, sexist assaults they have to face, using their inner determination, courage, and, at times, anger to fight the system that has worked so hard to keep marginalized communities from succeeding (Cuadraz & Pierece, 1994; Yosso, 2005). These women had to resist all microaggressions leveled at them and resist internalizing the characteristics of the IP throughout their educational trajectory. Evita discussed her first experience with IP when she struggled with her advisor not supporting her or even attempting to care about her and her ability to become a veterinarian. Despite the advisor’s neglect and her own IP, she stood her ground and leveraged her resistance capital and endurance labor to fight for her place at the Ivy League school. In the end, she used the opposition to inspire her, “I’m going to graduate from this place. I am leaving this place with my bachelor’s degree. I am not leaving!”

Resistance capital and endurance labor give them the desire, the *ganas*, to make their success happen no matter the cost. That *ganas* is what motivates them to acquire

navigational capital, acquiring the skills they need to navigate the social institution to receive the necessary help and assistance and eventually graduate with their doctorate (Yosso, 2005).

Currently, these doctoras continue to exercise their resistance capital in their professional workplace as they continue to fight against microaggressions, inequities, and inequalities. Despite having acquired the highest terminal degree, a doctorate, these doctoras live in the constant struggle of who they are and want to become despite the dominant White culture that devalues them and conveys a message telling them who they are supposed to be. For Dolores, Estela, JLo, Julia, Olivia, and Victoria, their resistance and determination to continue to thrive is greater than them. Their aspirations drive them to make a difference in their field, to voice their perspective, to represent other Latinas, to model for their children that giving up is not an option; these women through their aspiration and their resistance have created a space where they have become social capital (Yosso, 2005) for other Latinas who are coming through the academic and professional pipeline. Despite their constant struggle, these doctoras continue to push forward and challenge the system, becoming the torchbearers for all educated Latinas. As torchbearers, not only are they unapologetically taking space in the professional world and academia, they are creating a path for the generation of educated and professional Latinas.

### **Psychological and Physical Well-Being**

According to Sue (2010), experiences with racism and microaggressions related to race and ethnicity can cause detrimental consequences to the psychological and

physical well-being of people of color. For example, perceived discrimination has been linked to psychological distress such as depression and anxiety (Finch et al., 2000), something that Dolores, JLo, and Olivia all shared. All three of them, because of the psychological distress they were experiencing, were diagnosed with clinical depression. Also, JLo suffered from anxiety. For others, the stress occurred with discrimination or microaggressions, which can result in physical symptoms and illness, such as cardiovascular disease, respiratory issues, hypertension, elevated heart rates, depression, lower life satisfaction, low self-esteem, anxiety, and helplessness (Brondolo et al., 2008; Carter, 2007; Clark et al., 1999; Solorzano et al., 2000; Sue, 2010; Utsey & Hook, 2007).

In this study, Evita noted the microaggressions she was facing from a peer at work were causing her to come home upset, in tears, and with so much stress that it manifested in asthma. For Victoria, the microaggressions she was receiving from her previous employer were so prevalent that it manifested in having such low self-esteem and disbelief in her ability to perform at work that even her peers noted it.

Microaggressions, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace can lead to psychological consequences in the workplace such as anxiety, depression, lack of confidence, worthlessness, and loss of drive (Root, 2003) for women both in the educational system and the workplace. As Latinas in the professional workplace continue to amount in numbers, concerns of their overall psychological and physical health continue to grow.

### **Implications**

There are several implications of the study findings. To fully understand the implications of the study, it is important to identify the root of the problem; we live in a society where racism, classism, sexism, and all the other “*isms*” attempt to inform our identity as a country and as a society. Borunda (2016) described all the isms that divide us as proverbial smog that interferes with our ability to see one another; above and below the smog line are conceptual positions that have opposing mindsets. Above the smog is Transcendent Identity, the perception that promotes the mindset of looking at the way people behave versus the characteristics that make their identities such as race or skin color. Underneath that smog is the world known as a Perceptual World of Submerged Identity, a dichotomous perception that does not promote or allow the exploration of diversity and building bridges (Borunda, 2016).

Systemic racism, classism, and sexism are the smog that has been self-maintained in our society since the inception of the United States. The dominant White culture has instilled social dominance and through systemic oppression, a negative social mirroring; instilling the belief that anything different, from history to cultural values of other races, is inferior. Systemic oppression has been passed down from generation to generation to the point that the oppressed have taken what is true to the dominant culture and have adopted such truth, becoming sub-oppressors (Freire, 2014). Generational oppression has impacted our society to remain under the smog, in the state of perceptual World of Submerged Identity, causing society to judge others based on race and identity, creating horizontal violence in which people lash out at others in one’s group. Until society

decides to eliminate the smog and see people for who they are, our society will continue to live through oppression, microaggressions, and IP, causing cultural mistrust and race-related stress.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

#### **Diversity in the Workplace**

Higher education institutions and professional workplaces need to prove that their value of diversity is more than just a blurb in their mission or value statements, beginning with their hiring practices, not just hiring the token person of color, female, or female of color. As more and more people of color and women of color continue to earn their membership in the exclusive club of 2% of people with doctorate degrees in the United States, workplaces and higher education institutions, especially those institutions that serve a specific population, need to begin to diversify their staff so the population they serve can see themselves in high-leveled positions and positions of power. Workplaces need to be purposeful in their recruitment and hiring practice, allowing other departments such as the diversity department to help them recruit qualified candidates that mirror the population they are serving.

#### **Addressing Microaggressions and Providing Diversity Training**

Higher education institutions, K-12 school systems, and other professional workplaces need to address the systemic behavior of microaggressions that their faculty, students, and employees face, specifically, people of color and women. According to Sue (2010), organizations can address the existence of microaggressions and racism by evaluating and adjusting their values, vision, procedures, and protocols for how to deal

with such occurrences. One procedure they can put into place is in-depth diversity training regarding racism and microaggressions, which should be conducted with all staff in person. This would not consist of a yearly mandatory online module but rather a rigorous training that promotes self-examination and the development of Transcendent Identity (Borunda, 2016).

Higher education and workplace institutions should take mid-year and or yearly climate surveys regarding the culture and climate of the workplace so they can assess the attitudes of their peers and supervisors as well as their experiences with microaggressions and racism that employees have had to endure. Especially for those higher education institutions, if such experiences are being felt by faculty members, one could only question the experiences of students. Such data collected should be discussed among the supervisors and then spoken about as a department. Also, there should be a system established in which someone can report their aggressor and their behavior, and have it dealt with appropriately.

For students in K-12 and higher education, diversity training or a course should be a required class that students should take for high school graduation and freshmen courses, using a curriculum created to give voice to the experience of people that are microaggressed by anything that makes them diverse in comparison to the dominant White culture. In addition to the courses, counseling departments and or diversity offices should provide support and mentor programs for students who might need assistance because they feel out of place, are facing microaggressions or discrimination, or are

having a hard time acclimating to the educational system and all of the rigor and expectations.

### **Mental Health Services in Higher Education**

Although this study did not intentionally seek to find out whether these participants faced microaggressions in higher education, the literature review informs that Latinas in higher education, including doctoral programs, experience trauma and are subjected to racial microaggressions from faculty and peers (Anchor & Morales; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Gonzalez et al., 2001; Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). In this study, all the participants experienced an IP in their academic setting. Five of them specifically felt it in higher education. Such findings should inform and trigger higher education institutions to instill mental health programs for the students and staff. Some institutions have embedded IP programming into their orientation events for all students and developed workshops to help students cope with failures and success (Cokley et al., 2013; Parkman, 2016). Not only should they embed this programming in orientations for students but also the staff. In doing so, developing the capacity to respond to microaggressions so the negativity is not internalized would do much to ease psychological and physiological symptoms. By conducting frequent wellness checks or surveys for both students and staff to assess their well-being, there is greater opportunity for connecting them with mental health services.

### **Finding the Humanists in Our Country and Creating an Alliance**

In this research, the terms “dominant White culture,” and “gender discrimination” are not intended to describe “all Whites” or “all males” in America. They are used to

describe the overwhelming majority of those in a position of power who have established and perpetuate traditional power structures that tend to oppress people of color and women. It is also used to describe those individuals who have chosen to be silent on issues of prejudice and discrimination based on race and or gender because they are not affected by the pain and suffering of that group of people and accept and or benefit from living in the reality and oppression that the dominant White culture and White males have established since the inception of this country. The researcher knows that some Whites and men are critically conscious (Freire, 2014) and critically aware of the prejudice and discrimination and do their part in making a change and challenging the inequities and injustice that people of color and women face in the United States. These individuals are what Borunda (2016) identified as Humanists, individuals whose “core values are grounded in a concern with the need, well-being, and interest of all people” (p. 4) despite their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. The researcher recommends these Latinas create alliances with humanists to fight the injustices they face in the United States, which affects how they are perceived and treated in life, including higher education and the workplace. Freire (2014) noted that the oppressed women of color, specifically Latinas in the case of this research, must remember that it is only them who can liberate themselves from the oppression and liberate the oppressor from their mindset and reality. Freire (2014) also noted that while creating these alliances, the allies must engage in critical conversation and challenge the system of power but also allow the oppressed to operate their liberation.



### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher suggests the following for future research. The suggestions include expanding information to the survey by asking questions about other aspects of the participants' lives and re-administering it.

1. On the survey's demographic questions, it is recommended to add the question of whether or not the participant is a first-generation college graduate. Also, it is helpful to add the question on whether they were classified English learners in their K-12 schooling. This will help the researcher analyze data by demographics.
2. On the demographic survey, add a question regarding the participant's sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is a part of a participant's identity and can also be a layer of why a participant is experiencing microaggressions. Such data can contribute to the intersectionality of a participant's identity and give insight into whether the participant's sexual orientation was impacting the perception of the microaggressor.
3. Future research should add a mental health and wellness survey to identify the current well-being of the participants and gain information about their current self-care practices.
4. To research the participant as a whole, it is recommended to add a question to the qualitative questions regarding the participant's family and their impact on their academic and professional careers, to gain more insight into the CCW they received.

5. It is recommended to conduct this study on other groups such as African American women, Asian American women, Latinx males, African American males, and Asian males and other minoritized groups.
6. It is recommended that future research be done on higher education institutions, specifically, population-serving institutions such as Hispanic serving institutions and African American serving institutions, regarding how the mental health programs and procedures they have in place help members of these specific populations.
7. It is recommended that future researchers look at the attitudes and beliefs of Euro-Americans and help them deconstruct any explicit and implicit beliefs and biases about other people who are not members of their dominant culture.

### **Researcher's Notes**

The purpose of this study was to validate, affirm, and empower. First, the experiences of educated Latinas with IP and microaggressions in higher education and the professional workplace were to be validated to show them their experience is not an isolated occurrence but something that other educated Latinas face. It was critical to affirm the injustice, prejudice, and discrimination they face however implicit or explicit it may be. Finally, it is also intended to affirm the participants' place in this world. Doctoras, you belong, you are more than enough. It is hoped they are empowered to keep breaking the barriers and prove that Latinas can excel in anything they put their minds to. This study also has a purpose in the world of research: to broaden the research on Latinas' experience with the IP and microaggressions. Most research conducted on

Latinx with IP and or microaggressions has been done regarding their experience in higher education programs (Achor & Morales, 1990; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Gonzalez, 2006; Gonzalez, et al., 2001; Gonzalez et al., 2002; Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). This research intended to be one of the first, if not the first, study to highlight what happens to Latinas after they have attained the highest terminal degree and gained membership to a population that only 2% of Americans and 0.6% of Latinx belong to and the role IP and microaggressions have in their professional lives. This study draws the conclusion that membership in this group does not automatically guarantee respect from other professionals, specifically when one is a person of color. Despite their achievement, racism and injustice are so ingrained in the American society that no matter what Latinx and people of color attempt to do to gain social capital, they will never be treated as equals or fairly by the dominant White culture.

As for myself, a Latina who is about to attain her doctorate, this study has been a roller coaster of emotions. I have felt sad, hurt, angry, disillusioned, proud, and empowered. When I decided to conquer higher education and pursue the terminal degree of a doctorate, I was so naive. I thought that attaining my doctorate would even out the playing field among myself and the dominant White community; with time, I realized how wide-eyed and ignorant I was. My sadness came from listening to these women and the hardship, discrimination, and microaggressions they have faced. I felt their pain, their tears, and their sorrow. I was sad that just like them, I too had lost my innocence and trust in this world, losing the innocent mindset that education alone was the great equalizer. I was hurt and angry at the world for these women, to know that every day

when they wake up, the fact that they are breathing and thriving is offending and enraging another human being to the point that they use their energy to make these women's day a little more difficult. Knowing that despite their accomplishment, these hard-working women are not respected in their profession. They did not have cultural capital that was passed down by their parents; they worked hard as first-generation college students to learn how to navigate a system that no one in their family could help them navigate. I was hurt and angry that the world, this country, and President Trump, condone this behavior and have contributed to the problem of discrimination and racism in this country. I felt disillusioned with the educational system, the system that I am a part of as an educator, a student, and a parent. While investigating microaggressions and IP in higher education, it was astonishing to me that even the most elite of programs in education are so biased, whether implicit or explicit, and how the very people who are supposed to enlighten you and educate you are a part of the problem.

As a former English learner teacher and a current school administrator, Olivia's story about being dismissed in junior high and automatically identified as unintelligent broke my heart. I hope I never get to the point in my career when I automatically begin to decide what each student deserves, what they are capable of, or what they are worth. As I end this journey, I feel proud, reignited, and empowered because of these women. I am proud of them, of who they are, and their triumphs despite the adversity they face every day. During their interviews, I felt myself identifying with all seven of them, their thought process, their humor despite the darkness, their families, their life, their grit, and grace. I am proud to have gotten to know these amazing Mujeres, doctoras, unapologetic

change agents, and torchbearers. Their journeys and unwillingness to back down to the internal and external conflicts to make a difference, to be a foothold for the next generation of Latinas is admirable. I am empowered to continue to thrive, to take my torch, and to relentlessly, unapologetically, take my place, be heard, and academically and professionally reproduce Latinas so together we can have a seat at a table, in a space that we were never intended to occupy.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

## Racial Microaggression Scale (RMAS)

Racial Microaggression Scale: Torres-Harding, Andrade, Romero Diaz, 2012

Foreigner/Not Belonging

1. Because of my race, other people assume I am a foreigner.
2. Because of my race, people suggest that I am not a “true” American.
3. Other People often ask me where I am from, suggesting that I don’t belong.

Criminality

4. Other people treat me like a criminal because of my race.
5. People act like they are scared of me because of my race.
6. Others assume that I will behave aggressively because of my race.
7. I am singled out by police or security people because of my race.

Sexualization

8. People suggest that I am exotic in a sexual way because of my race.
9. Other people view me in an overly sexual way because of my race.
10. Other people hold sexual stereotypes about me because of my racial background.

Low Achieving/undesirable Culture

11. Other people act if they can fully understand my racial identity, even though they are not of my racial background.
12. Other people act as if all of the people of my race are alike.
13. Others suggest that people of my racial background get unfair benefit.
14. Others assume that people of my background would succeed in life if they simply worked harder.
15. Other people deny that people of my race face extra obstacles when compared to Whites.
16. Other people assume that I am successful because of affirmative action, not because I earned my accomplishments.
17. Others hint that I should work hard to prove that I am not like other people of my race.
18. Others suggest that my racial heritage is dysfunctional or undesirable.
19. Others focus only on the negative aspect of my racial background.

Invisibility

20. Others prefer that I assimilate to the White Culture and downplay my racial background.
21. I am mistaken for being a service worker or lower-status worker simply because of my race.

- 22. I am treated like a second-class citizen because of my race.
- 23. I receive poorer treatment in restaurants and stores because of my race.
- 24. Sometimes I feel as if people look past me or don't see me as a real person because of my race.
- 25. I feel invisible because of my race.
- 26. I am ignored in school or work environments because of my race.
- 27. My contributions are dismissed or devalued because of my racial background.

Environmental

- 28. When I interact with authority figures, they are usually of a different racial background.
- 29. I notice that there are few role models in my racial background in my chosen career.
- 30. Sometimes I am the only person of my racial background in my class or workplace.
- 31. Where I work or go to school, I see few people of my racial background.
- 32. I notice that there are few people of my racial background on the TV, books, and magazines.



## APPENDIX B

## Clance IP Scale

For each question, please circle the number that best indicates how true the statement is of you. It is best to give the first response that enters your mind rather than dwelling on each statement and thinking about it over and over.

- 1- not at all true
- 2- rarely
- 3- Sometimes
- 4- Often
- 5- very true

1. I have often succeeded on a test or task even though I was afraid that I would not do well before I undertook the task.
2. I can give the impression that I'm more competent than I really am.
3. I avoid evaluations if possible and have a dread of others evaluating me.
4. When people praise me for something I've accomplished, I'm afraid I won't be able to live up to their expectations of me in the future.
5. I sometimes think I obtained my present position or gained my present success because I happened to be in the right place at the right time or knew the right people.
6. I'm afraid people important to me may find out that I'm not as capable as they think I am.
7. I tend to remember the incidents in which I have not done my best more than those times I have done my best.
8. I rarely do a project or task as well as I'd like to do it.
9. Sometimes I feel or believe that my success in my life or in my job has been the result of some kind of error.
10. it's hard for me to accept compliments or praise about my intelligence or accomplishments.
11. At times, I feel my success has been due to some kind of luck.
12. I'm disappointed at times in my present accomplishments and think I should have accomplished much more.
13. Sometimes I'm afraid others will discover how much knowledge or ability I really lack.
14. I'm often afraid that I may fail at a new assignment or undertaking even though I generally do well at what I attempt.
15. When I've succeeded at something and received recognition for my accomplishments, I have doubts that I can keep repeating that success.
16. If I receive a great deal of praise and recognition for something I've accomplished, I tend to discount the importance of what I've done.

17. I often compare my ability to those around me and think they may be more intelligent than I am.
18. I often worry about not succeeding with a project or examination, even though others around me have considerable confidence that I will do well.
19. If I'm going to receive a promotion or gain recognition of some kind, I hesitate to tell others until it is an accomplished fact.
20. I feel bad and discouraged if I'm not "the best" or at least "very special" in situations that involve achievement.

Note. From *The Impostor Phenomenon: When Success Makes You Feel Like A Fake* (pp. 20-22), by P.R. Clance, 1985, Toronto: Bantam Books. Copyright 1985 by Pauline Rose Clance, Ph.D., ABPP. Reprinted by permission. Do not reproduce without permission from Pauline Rose Clance, [drpaulinerose@comcast.net](mailto:drpaulinerose@comcast.net), [www.paulineroseclance.com](http://www.paulineroseclance.com).

## APPENDIX C

### Informed Consent Form-Survey

#### YOU MADE IT, ARE YOU STILL FACING IT? EDUCATED LATINAS EXPERIENCING IMPOSTER PHENOMENON AND MULTIPLE MICROAGGRESSIONS

Welcome to the research study!

My name is Isabel Acosta and I am a doctoral candidate at California State University, Sacramento, in the Doctorate of Educational Leadership program. I am interested in understanding Latinas with doctoral degrees and their experience with Impostor Phenomenon and Racial Microaggressions. You will be presented with scenarios relevant to Impostor Phenomenon and Racial Microaggressions and asked to rate your experience on a Likert scale. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential.

If you volunteer to participate, you will be asked to take a survey with two scales, Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) and The Racial Microaggression Scale (RMAS) with a combined 53 questions. The study should take you no longer than 30 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. If you would like to contact the Principal Investigator in the study to discuss this research, please e-mail Isabel Acosta at [REDACTED]

This study includes a qualitative interview portion that will be conducted at a later time. You will have the opportunity to opt-in to the qualitative portion at the end of the survey should you be interested. You are not required to opt-in to the qualitative interviews.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email [irb@csus.edu](mailto:irb@csus.edu).

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that you are a Latina with a doctorate degree, that your participation in the study is voluntary, that you are consenting to take both CIPS and RMAS scales, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

## APPENDIX D

## Demographic Questions – Survey

1. Do You Currently Hold a Doctoral Degree?

2. Do you identify as Hispanic/Latina?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

3. What Type of Doctoral Degree do you hold?

- ☐ D.A.
- ☐ D.S.W.
- ☐ D.B.A.
- ☐ DHSc
- ☐ Ed. D
- ☐ J.D.
- ☐ Ph. D
- ☐ Psy. D
- ☐ M.D.
- ☐ O.D
- ☐ D. Des.
- ☐ D. Engineering
- ☐ DPA
- ☐ DrPH
- ☐ DNP
- ☐ MFA
- ☐ other (please insert below)

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your degree in? (i.e., Ph.D. in Economics, Ed.D. in Educational Leadership, etc.)
- 
5. What is your age group?
- ☐ 18-24 years old
  - ☐ 25-34 years old
  - ☐ 35-44 years old
  - ☐ 45-54 years old
  - ☐ 55-64 years old
  - ☐ 65-74 years old
  - ☐ 75-84 years old
  - ☐ 85 years or older
6. In which state do you currently reside?
- ▼ Alabama (1) ... I do not reside in the United States (53)

## APPENDIX E

### Qualitative Interview Questions

What is your role at your workplace?

Are you a supervisor? :

Pseudonym:

RQ2: What are specific examples of microaggressions that Latinas with doctoral degrees have faced in the workplace? (Qualitative)

- a. Have you faced microaggressions as a supervisor? If so, explain your experience (If applicable). How did this affect you psychologically or physically?
- b. Have you faced microaggressions from your peers? If so, explain your experience (If applicable). How did this affect you psychologically or physically?
- c. Have you faced microaggressions as a subordinate? If so, explain your experience (If applicable). How did this affect you psychologically or physically?

RQ4: What are the specific lived experience that these Latinas felt like Impostors?

- a. Can you think of the first time you felt like an Impostor?
- b. Can you think of a time in which you felt like an Impostor at work?
- c. How did this affect you psychologically or physically?

RQ5: Despite the internal conflict of the Impostor Phenomenon and external conflicts of Microaggressions, what keeps you thriving every day?

## APPENDIX F

### Informed Consent Form-Interviews

#### YOU MADE IT, ARE YOU STILL FACING IT? EDUCATED LATINAS EXPERIENCING IMPOSTER PHENOMENON AND MULTIPLE MICROAGGRESSIONS

My name is Isabel Acosta and I am a doctoral candidate at California State University, Sacramento, in the Doctorate of Educational Leadership program. I am conducting this research study to Latina's post-doctoral experience regarding Racial Microaggressions and Impostor Phenomenon. If you volunteer to participate in the Qualitative Interview process, you will be asked a series of question regarding your personal experience with Impostor Phenomenon and Racial Microaggressions.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right not to participate at all or to leave the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are some possible risks involved for participants. These risks are not anticipated to be any greater than risks you encounter in daily life. There are some benefits to this research, particularly that it will expand current research on the Latina experience, specifically post-doctorate in relation to Racial Microaggressions and Impostor Phenomenon.

It is anticipated that study results will be shared with the public through presentations and/or publications. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Measures to insure your confidentiality are, 1. Only your pseudonym will be used to identify you for the qualitative interviews data analysis, and 2. All data will be stores on a login and password secured laptop that only I have access to. Raw data containing infromation that can be identified with you will be destroyed as soon as the interviews are transcribed. The de-identified data will be maintained in a safe, locked location and may be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from you. Raw data will be destroyed after a period of 3 years after study completion.

If you have any questions about the research at any time, please contact me at [REDACTED] or my chair at [rborunda@csus.edu](mailto:rborunda@csus.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research,

Innovation, and Economic Development, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email [irb@csus.edu](mailto:irb@csus.edu).

Your participation indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Please keep this form as your copy.



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