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# Advice as Metadiscourse: On the gendering of women's leadership in advice-giving practices

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# Advice as Metadiscourse: On the gendering of women's leadership in advice-giving practices

by

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is about advice as social practice. Specifically, I examine leadership discourse as communicatively constituted and advice-giving as creating a metadiscourse of gendered abilities and leadership asymmetries. In the light of the growing number of initiatives created for women to improve their status as leaders, this project examines leadership, not as a quality, but as discourse: as a communicative dynamic. This is in line with how organizations see leadership when they create leadership programs, for these programs are designed to advise or teach women to be different and better leaders. My purpose is to encourage inclusiveness and contribute to leadership discourse research as well as explore how leadership discourse is negotiated as gendered and gendering. This means it creates gender as well as classifies it.

My research analyzes the personal narratives of corporate women and career coaches who advise professional women in their career progression. The data consists of written discourse in which I evaluate four amazon best-sellers books written by corporate women and career coaches. I utilize a synthetic approach to discourse analysis to examine how advice is organized, constituted, and made up of leadership discourse. My three analytical chapters comprise the strategies of the authorship, advice as narrative, and advice as a site of gender and gendered identity. Findings like linguistic patterns, acceptance or counter master narratives, and identity negotiations are examined as they are strategically deployed in the author's personal narratives. I conclude with a discussion of the role of self-help literature as an agent and its contribution to the leadership discourse.

## INTRODUCTION

*"We like to think we have moved beyond gender bias, although perhaps not as far as we believe."* (Spector, 2016, p. 18)

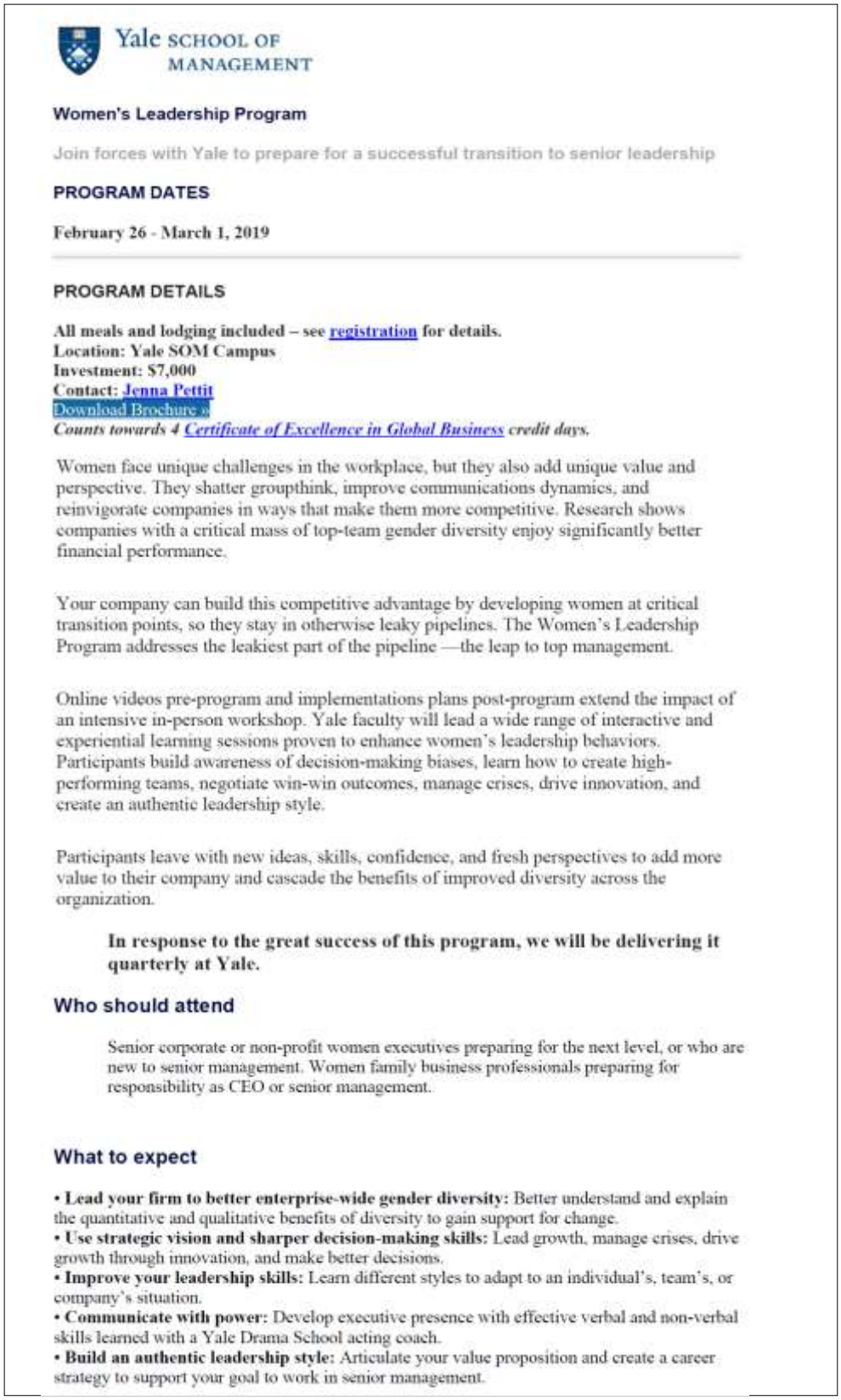
*Monday morning, I arrive at the office, and the first thing I do is read my emails. I see an email's subject that reads, "Urgent departmental meeting at 10:00 a.m." It is November, and our director indicates that the bank's president wants a presentation of the annual results for each business area. We are three product managers (one man and two women). The presentation is next week, Tuesday, but the director wants the presentation ready on Thursday. As usual, he wants to review every single number. This type of presentation is tough; we invest many hours in it. However, it is an opportunity to show my achievements, how great I am at managing my products, and how worthy I am for the next performance bonus.*

*During the review meeting, the director tells us that he will only go to the president's meeting with Benjamin. The director says, "We both can explain everything. We can do the job." That means the director (a man) and one of the product managers (a man) can do the work. Wait, it is not the work. They will present the business results (achievements) and have exposure and recognition with the bank executives while the other two product managers (both women) would stay at the office. Unfortunately, many meetings are managed in the same way.*

The previous anecdote was part of my everyday experience in a male-dominated field. I worked as a Product Manager in a bank in Puerto Rico. As part of my responsibilities, I oversaw promoting deposit products, creating business plans, marketing campaigns, business results,

branch employees training, and operational process implementations. In general, financial institutions are mostly male-dominated fields where men occupy top positions and women struggle to reach those top positions. I argue that gender asymmetries are ubiquitous, and women are subject to a targeted initiative in the corporate world because women are seen differently in their capacity as leaders. Specifically, organizations have identified particular ways to assist women in their career aspirations, for which they have created programs, seminars, and conferences exclusively dedicated to women. Some examples are the International Leadership Association, which holds the *Women and Leadership Conference*, and the Yale School of Management, which conducts the *Women's Leadership Program*. The very existence of these initiatives, which fall under the rubric of leadership training, point to a concerted interest in assisting women to achieve their career goals and thus fill the gap between where women are and where this aspiration, unwittingly, creates and feeds a metadiscourse of gendered inability. In fact, these programs are a double-edged sword; by offering help, initiatives for women support the presumption that women are helpless, require special attention, and need unique advice to be a leader.

A key feature of this gendered metadiscourse is its characterization of leadership as an innate "quality" that is more or less present (or quantifiable) and measurable in individuals and is thus less present in women as a category. As an exemplar of this argument, I present and examine the introduction page for the *Women's Leadership Program* (Figure 1). The program develops executive women who are prepared to advance into senior management positions. The text is from the Yale School of Management webpage and explains the program's details, requirements, and accomplishments. My discussion of elements of the text is an example of the type of analysis that I will conduct in this research project.



Yale SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

**Women's Leadership Program**

Join forces with Yale to prepare for a successful transition to senior leadership

**PROGRAM DATES**

**February 26 - March 1, 2019**

**PROGRAM DETAILS**

**All meals and lodging included – see registration for details.**
**Location: Yale SOM Campus**
**Investment: $7,000**
**Contact: Jenna Pettit**
Download Brochure »
***Counts towards 4 Certificate of Excellence in Global Business credit days.***

Women face unique challenges in the workplace, but they also add unique value and perspective. They shatter groupthink, improve communications dynamics, and reinvigorate companies in ways that make them more competitive. Research shows companies with a critical mass of top-team gender diversity enjoy significantly better financial performance.

Your company can build this competitive advantage by developing women at critical transition points, so they stay in otherwise leaky pipelines. The Women's Leadership Program addresses the leakiest part of the pipeline —the leap to top management.

Online videos pre-program and implementations plans post-program extend the impact of an intensive in-person workshop. Yale faculty will lead a wide range of interactive and experiential learning sessions proven to enhance women's leadership behaviors. Participants build awareness of decision-making biases, learn how to create high-performing teams, negotiate win-win outcomes, manage crises, drive innovation, and create an authentic leadership style.

Participants leave with new ideas, skills, confidence, and fresh perspectives to add more value to their company and cascade the benefits of improved diversity across the organization.

**In response to the great success of this program, we will be delivering it quarterly at Yale.**

**Who should attend**

Senior corporate or non-profit women executives preparing for the next level, or who are new to senior management. Women family business professionals preparing for responsibility as CEO or senior management.

**What to expect**

• **Lead your firm to better enterprise-wide gender diversity:** Better understand and explain the quantitative and qualitative benefits of diversity to gain support for change.
• **Use strategic vision and sharper decision-making skills:** Lead growth, manage crises, drive growth through innovation, and make better decisions.
• **Improve your leadership skills:** Learn different styles to adapt to an individual's, team's, or company's situation.
• **Communicate with power:** Develop executive presence with effective verbal and non-verbal skills learned with a Yale Drama School acting coach.
• **Build an authentic leadership style:** Articulate your value proposition and create a career strategy to support your goal to work in senior management.

Figure 1: Yale School of Management Webpage. This presents the introduction page of the Women Leadership Program.

In Figure 1, the leadership program speaks on behalf of the academic institution by explaining how the program is constituted. Yale suggests to organizations the importance of investing in their women population if organizations want to succeed. We observe how texts represent aspects of the world and are located in relation to social practices (Fairclough, 2003). Thus, the text functions as an agent and a participant of Yale's everyday production (Cooren, 2004). The webpage has the role of a recruiting agent by detailing what the program is about and who would benefit from participating in the program. As an agentive voice, this text intends to sell the program to corporations to help improve their performance and diversity by enrolling senior corporate women.

In the first sentence of the first paragraph (lines 1 and 2), Yale states that "women face a unique challenge in the workplace...". First, I observe that nobody acknowledges this "fact." Second, Yale does not present data that supports this argument that women's challenges are unique. Yale recognizes the societally established social personality and normative behaviors expected of women by categorizing them as beings with unique challenges (Takano, 2005). Yale assumes that society and organizations have some expectations in terms of gendered norms that constrain women's career advancement (Allen et al., 2016). Thus, organizations attribute gendered differences to establishing some stereotypes, labels, and personalities toward women. In addition, the first sentence positions women as inherited challenging bodies since those unique challenges are distinctive and specifically for women. Thus, these challenging bodies need additional help and must learn how to do leadership.

The program assumes that leadership is not an innate quality that any women have. The notion of leadership is innate because the desirable quality of being an effective leader is associated with being a male in the traditional leadership models (Baxter, 2010). Therefore, corporate

masculinity is present in terms of career advancement and operates as the norm; thus, women and men who aspire to grow professionally must adopt this masculine leadership style (Baxter, 2010). Yale, the organizational agent, offers help to transform women into leaders and overcome their unique challenges.

Organizations create policies regarding equality and inclusiveness; however, these policies are not practiced in everyday work activities. Gendered dissimilarities materialize in communicative dynamics. The impetus to conduct this research comes from my own experience. As research, it involves starting where you are, "rendering problematic in our research matters that are problematic in our lives" (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 10). Therefore, my professional experiences have been a compelling motivator of my academic interests and intellectual curiosity towards women's leadership discourse.

Working in organizations for 14 years has allowed me to reflect on my own experiences and constitute my research focus: to empirically study how my experience is itself part of the asymmetries of women's position within leadership and how leadership discourse constitutes these very positions. I have witnessed how leadership tends to be a masculine normative conception (or a tacit standard) from which women are measured. In this sense, as defined by Robinson (2001), "leadership is exercised when ideas expressed in talk or action are recognized by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them" (p. 93). After working as a Product Manager around the meeting table, I observed how women are often questioned about their recommendations or decisions while men's recommendations or decisions are not questioned in the same way. For example, when working on product campaigns, some decisions are related to employee training or measuring campaign results. Women's suggestions may be questioned in

detail, forcing women to demonstrate their capabilities of being in charge of that product campaign.

Similarly, I have witnessed how men were chosen to manage significant projects and had more exposure to executive and directive spheres by being invited to crucial meetings. Likewise, men seemed able to count on the company's recognition and were promoted effortlessly. As interdisciplinary scholars have mentioned, cultural aspects impact the type of experience and our identity. However, I would like to emphasize that my Latina identity was not a deterrent to the struggles I experienced in my career. Since all my experiences were located in Puerto Rico, all employees were Latinos. Thus, little to no cultural or race factor defined the different treatment of men and women as leaders. In fact, in the series of events I witnessed, gender was crucial to differentiate leaders and their competencies.

In light of my observations and the growing number of initiatives created for women to improve their status as leaders, this project examines leadership, not as a quality, but as discourse: as a communicative dynamic. I draw on a synthetic approach to discourse, where the analysis positions talk and text "with the goal of developing an understanding that will be action-implicative for practical life" (Tracy & Craig, 2010, p. 146). This is actually in line with how organizations see it when they create leadership programs, for these programs are designed to advise or teach women to be different, to be better leaders. But in calling leadership a discourse, I take a metaposition to leadership as communicatively constituted, for I see advice as a social action, as a doing of *making a narrative*, creating a metanarrative of gendered abilities, and producing a metadiscourse of helplessness. Essentially, I look at the big D discourse in terms of individual interaction with social contexts and the small d discourse in which texts and conversations are put together (Jones, 2016). In this sense, I examine leadership as a set of

identifiable characteristics that tend to present a masculine conceptualization when leadership is ideally performed (Holmes, 2017) and as a narrative created by advice. Therefore, I distinguish my understand of leadership from other understandings that position it as cognitive and its influence on women's professional growth, especially in terms of their gendered identity.

But leadership discourse enacted in advice to women is also metadiscourse. Craig (2013) points out that "metadiscourse is self-reflexive discourse, talk about talk, the pragmatic use of language and other semiotic resources to influence meaning and action by commenting on some aspect of a contextual discourse" (p. 13). Accordingly, metadiscourse in this project is what a social practice (advice) says and does with language to deliver meaning and action. Therefore, by examining the different initiatives of advice, I will observe how "norms and meanings for communication are continually negotiated" (Craig, 2013, p. 14).

Though women's success is part of what is presented in public discourses — for example, we see headlines such as *Top Female CEOs: The 16 Leading Women of Business* (Theodorou, 2019) — I argue that this version of women's positioning distracts our attention from actual gender asymmetries that prevail in organizations and society (Cameron, 2003). Those distractions "are part of society's apparatus for maintaining gender distinctions in general…in many cases, they also help to naturalise gender hierarchies" (Cameron, 2003, p. 452). Asymmetries are part of all communication, and they may establish a condition of being equal. In a sense, asymmetries may have detrimental interactional consequences, thereby influencing the outcome of talk as they are inherited in discourse (Marková & Foppa, 1991). Meanwhile, hierarchies are related to people arranged appropriately to the importance which is observed in organizations. Like Cameron (2003), I am motivated to study asymmetries. By attending to how organizations — including corporate women — advise professional women on how to be successful leaders, I am interested

in how organizations are communicating to women how a leader should be and how women should change what is “innate” about them and learn to be a leader to advance in their careers.

Looking closely at women’s leadership discourse, I developed an interest in corporate women's contributions. While reading a self-help book by Sallie Krawcheck (2017), I noticed the role of advice in leadership discussions and career progression. I strongly identified with many of Krawcheck’s stories, which resonated with my work experiences. The stories were so similar. An example that Krawcheck and I share was when discussing ideas or brainstorming for a product launch at the meeting table, men’s recommendations are taken into consideration, but women's are not. We women product managers needed to explain our suggestions in-depth or justify our recommendations to be considered or heard as a possible idea. Most of the time, our leadership skills or ideas were in question.

Another example is how women’s leadership is viewed. Women who act like men are considered leaders and selected to top positions. In addition, I observed the discourse patterns in Krawcheck’s (2017) narratives and how the stories and discourse transcended even cultural aspects since Krawcheck, an American white woman, experiences the same situations as me, a Latina. Thus, my data is based on self-help literature written by corporate women who advise other professional women on leadership and career matters. I examine their narratives and advice to other professional women in relation to how their identities (individual and social) as fluid or contingent are constituted in leadership discourse. In addition, I explore how advice is a product of consumption for women and the corporate women’s role in creating gendered leadership literature exclusive for women.

This study extends research on relational communication and organizational communication. This dissertation contributes to the understanding of communication and

interaction between professional women and their peers or superiors in the sense of relational communication (for example, speak up, bring diversity issues up). In organizational aspects, the study provides an understanding of how organizations are promoting the leadership model or the leader role model (for example, managing training and career opportunities). As a discourse and organizational scholar, I look at how our everyday micro-practices create the ontology of interaction order, which we inhabit and connect to the larger contexts of organizations and social discourses of leadership, organization, and gender. Specifically, I explore how organizational practices constitute leadership discourse in which women (as itself a discursively constituted category) lack career advancement.

Thus, I am concerned with how leadership discourse constitutes women's identity and puts forth identity accounts and narrative spaces for women to occupy and enact. Drawing on researchers such as Karen Tracy, Janet Holmes, Gail Fairhurst, and Stephanie Schnurr, my purpose is to encourage inclusiveness and contribute to leadership discourse research as well as exploring how leadership discourse is negotiated as a quality that women lack qua women.

## Research Questions

In this section, I present the questions that guide my research. My main focus is on organizations, corporate women (women who occupy top positions and advise professional women), and professional women, especially considering leadership discourse dedicated to professional women. The following is the main question guiding my research:

RQ 1: How are women advised to be leaders in organizational settings?

Additionally, I consider the following more specific questions:

RQ 2: How does innateness work in the discourse of leadership?

RQ 3: What are the strategies of advice-giving?

RQ 4: How is advice contributing to a metadiscourse of gendered leadership?

RQ 5: How is advice contributing to a metadiscourse of helplessness?

By synthesizing discourse analytic approaches, I examine how advice is constituted in women's leadership metadiscourse by analyzing self-help literature by coaches and corporate women for women. Specifically, I analyze narratives of corporate women as they pertain to their leadership experiences. I analyze the role of this type of text and the discourse constituted in the social reality of women's leadership. In the following chapter, I present the literature review, which includes relevant research in leadership discourse, women in the workplace, identity, language, gender, and advice.

# CHAPTER ONE:

# LITERATURE REVIEW

As a discourse and organizational scholar, I consider how our everyday micro-practices create the ontology of interaction order (Goffman, 1983) which we inhabit. I consider micro-practices indexical of the larger narrative contexts of organizations and social discourses of leadership, organization, and gender. In this study, I explore how advice is organized as a gendered metadiscourse that, in turn, organizes women's leadership. I focus on organizations to capture the relationship between organizational or professional practices and institutional order (Sarangi & Roberts, 1999); though initiatives to promote women's leadership are a growing trend, they recreate and re-produce a gendered notion of leadership which disadvantages women. I contend that leadership discourse recognizes men as natural (and naturalized) leaders. Therefore, it is important to critically examine the workings of leadership discourse as it is recreated in language, the assumptions present in accounts, as well as tensions in the master narratives themselves.

In this project, the idea of organizing and communication as constitutive draws especially on a discursive approach to organizations and how organizations establish the notions of leadership. Scholars such as Fairhurst and Putman (2004) argue that "discourse is the very foundation upon which organizational life is built" (p. 5). Thus, one of the discursive forms in this study is how organizations present women's leadership discourse as social practice.

In this chapter, I situate and present the theoretical framework that guides my dissertation research and valuable literature to my project. In what follows, I select and evaluate scholarship on leadership discourse, women in the workplace, identity, language, gender, and advice.

## Leadership Discourse

The idea of leadership is embedded in organizations, and the term leadership is constantly discussed and attributed as a characteristic of specific positions or people in organizations. Some scholars have defined leadership as a process of influencing and managing actors, an attribution of followers, as well as something that only one individual needs not to perform because leaders shift and distribute themselves between members in an organization (Fairhurst, 2007). Additionally, "leadership is exercised when ideas expressed in talk or action are recognized by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them" (Robinson, 2001, p. 93). In applied linguistics, discursive leadership focuses on language in use and its process of communicating and accomplishing through discourse. Therefore, scholars such as Stephanie Schnurr and Janet Holmes state that discursive leadership recognizes the crucial role of language and performance, and it analyzes the process and approach of what leadership does in the micro-level of interaction (Schnurr, 2018).

Schnurr (2009) notes that leadership is associated with hegemonic behavior with respect to men, and leadership discourse looks at gender stereotypes and societal norms. I concur with Schnurr that gender is an "omnipresent background factor that may move the foreground at any moment" (p. 105), and gender is the most pervasive social actor that impacts leadership performance. According to Schnurr, the discursive strategies correlated to men are viewed as speech styles and behaviors ascribed to ways of doing leadership. This bias persists even though

research has shown that effective leadership is ascribed to speech and behaviors related to femininity (Schnurr, 2009).

Meanwhile, Holmes (2017) argues that ideas about hegemony are conspicuous in the common leadership stereotypes, and the good leader is portrayed as authoritative, strong-minded, decisive, aggressive, competitive, confident, and courageous — characteristics associated more with males than with females. Thus, leadership qualities include willingness to challenge, ability to inspire, problem-solving approach, toughness, and willingness to take risks. These qualities tend to favor men and communicate that an effective leader takes a more masculine approach (Holmes, 2017). Therefore, "many women leaders begin from a position of disadvantage; challenging the very masculine popular stereotype of a good leader is an uphill battle" (Holmes, 2017, p. 19).

Hence, women face a disadvantage even though current leadership theories have highlighted the importance of assertiveness and authority (normatively associated with masculine styles) and the importance of relational skills (normatively associated with women) as characteristics for an effective leader. Therefore, this normative male style offers more disadvantages since women are expected to be both styles (authoritative and relational) to demonstrate their ability to do leadership (Cunningham et al., 2017). Additionally, feminine speech patterns prevent women's ability to lead groups and actually serve to establish some powerlessness in women's language. Some examples of these patterns are hedges (e.g., "just," "wondered," "somehow," "somewhat"), intonations, and introducing phrases such as, "This may not be important, but…".

In my project, it is essential to consider what leadership discourse is accomplishing in the advice-giving dynamic. Many scholars emphasize that leadership is achieved with both men's and women's styles. However, leadership is viewed as a masculine task. Thus, the tensions and

language used in women's discourse are pertinent since many behaviors and aspects about effective or ideal leaders are correlated to men's leadership styles. Also, scholars indicate that women arrive at organizations with a disadvantage because of how leadership discourse is constituted in organizations. These aspects will allow me to pay close attention to evaluate what corporate women's advice is accomplishing to eradicate this disadvantageous connection between leadership and males.

## Women in the Workplace

Considerations about depicting leaders are essential in this study. Hence, workplace discourse is a significant site for research, allowing me to study what professional women account for as their experience. By workplace discourse, I mean the articulation of ideas, patterns, and assumptions about how a woman leader is portrayed in organizations (Fairhurst, 2007), not only in the general sense but also in social practice, texts, and semiotic resources (e.g., images). In particular, gender is an undeniable factor that we cannot ignore in the workplace in terms of behaviors and talk (Holmes, 2014), as well as social identities constructed and performed in the workplace (Holmes, Burns, et al., 2003).

Below are the widely mentioned features of feminine and masculine interactional styles:

| **Feminine interactional style** | **Masculine interactional style** |
|---|---|
| Facilitative | Competitive |
| Supportive feedback | Aggressive interruptions |
| Conciliatory | Confrontational |
| Indirect | Direct |
| Collaborative | Autonomous |
| Minor contribution (in public) | Dominates (public) talking time |
| Person/process-oriented | Task/outcome-oriented |
| Affectively oriented | Referentially oriented |

Figure 2: Widely Cited Features of Feminine and Masculine Styles. Taken from Holmes (2006, p. 6).

This different articulation of traits between men and women has captured a lot of attention. There is an articulation and differences because of misarticulation; research emerges from studying women's career and career barriers. Organizational scholars are interested in exploring what barriers are causing the lack of women in corporate leadership positions. An extensive body of literature has documented the issues that impact women's careers, such as gender roles, self-concept, career decisions, threats to the status quo, distribution of unpaid labor, combining work, and caregiving (e.g., Allen et al., 2016) and has established that women have a "social personality" and normative behaviors (Takano, 2005). According to Kisselburgh et al. (2009), this personality begins as early as two years old in which girls are encouraged and reinforced to engage in "play, academic subjects, and occupations that are gender appropriate" and later on, "resulting in different educational exposure and perceived expectations" (p. 387). Even though governments and organizations have implemented programs and policies to avoid unfair practices (Allen et al., 2016), women still face many challenges to pursue promotions and career advancement (Glass & Cook, 2016).

Women are advised to be more assertive (Allen et al., 2016). However, society and organizations have expectations because, by doing so, women are at risk of violating social norms since being assertive is considered a masculine quality. In turn, women are violating norms of how a female leader should and should not act. This "violation" of the norms becomes a contradiction or dilemma because women do not know what behavior would favor them. As stated by Allen et al., an example of this contradiction is represented with qualities such as assertiveness, ambition, and outspokenness — qualities that describe men as leader-like, high potential, enthusiastic. However, if a woman adopts these qualities, a woman is labeled as bossy, opinionated, and too

emotional. Thus, this dilemma is observed in advice-giving and creates inconsistency in what is expected.

In the same way, those gendered expectations have become stereotypes that dictate people's career advancement as well. For example, Allen et al. (2016) report that in a series of videos on Twitter about women's challenges in the workplace and society, the videos indicate that it is not acceptable to ask women if they do not know to smile. However, according to Allen et al., women need to be aware that not smiling brings women some repercussions because the gender roles expectations dictate that women are always caring and warm. Similarly, the same occurs with the phrase "I'm sorry," which has become a "career killer for women" (p. 207). That means that this type of phrase makes women look too lenient.

In terms of power and authority, research shows that women confront more vicissitudes when they exercise their authority, and the leadership discourse between men and women managers is differently perceived when women exercise power (Ladegaard, 2011). The reason is, in society at large, specifically in business organizations, men occupy most of the top-level positions. As a result, the qualities of being an effective leader are assumed to be masculine features (Baxter, 2010). Consequently, this association has given multiple masculine attributes to managerial positions, such as aggressiveness, authoritativeness, competitiveness, orientation to goals, and strong-mindedness (Ladegaard, 2011). That means that there is a reflexive co-constitutive relationship between discourse and reward (positions granted to men).

Additionally, when women do leadership and enact authority, women face the challenge of not being assessed as men, even if both men and women perform the same leadership strategies (Mullany & Yoong, 2018). Women are subject to what is known as the "double-bind." Women are judged if they use linguistic characteristics that are considered too feminine; therefore, they are

perceived as lenient leaders (Mullany & Yoong, 2018). This double-bind limits women's ability to engage in a full range of influencing behaviors, and women tend to be negatively evaluated if they are too feminine in their leadership style (Fitzsimmons et al., 2014; Carli, 2001, 2006). However, if women decide to use a more masculine speech style, they are perceived as overly authoritative (Mullany & Yoong, 2018). Thus, women tend to adopt more conversational strategies such as warmth of manner, humor, acceptance of being teased, mitigated commands, forms of politeness and attention to "face needs," and indirect engagement to avoid being stereotyped as "irrational women" (Baxter, 2010). Therefore, showing leadership is additional linguistic work for women in order not to be labeled or misunderstood. Pamela Fishman studies these types of women's supportive strategies and names them "interactional shitwork." Women skillfully use these strategies to control and engage in conversations with their male counterparts by forming minimal responses, asking questions, or using tag questions (Cameron, 1992).

According to Ladegaard (2011), men's authority is never questioned while women's leadership is challenged; principally, male colleagues challenge it. Therefore, in terms of career advancement, corporate masculinity is present and operates as the norm. As a result, women and men who aspire to grow professionally must adopt a masculine leadership style (Baxter, 2010). Because they are not implicated in the gendered metadiscourse of leadership in the same way, men are not accountable to the same categories and category-bound activities as women (Fairhurst, 2007; Sacks, 1992). In this sense, under those categories, women perform some activities that are expected to be performed and done in specific ways in which certain actions are implicated. For example, women as a category are expected to be caring or polite, behaviors that are not implicated in the leader model. To illustrate, if a woman asks for a report, she is expected to ask nicely and

tactfully for the report. Thus, women are measured or held accountable under categories that could distance them from being leaders and reaching top positions.

A great deal of research completes the assumption that both males and females do leadership in similar ways (Baxter, 2010). Also, even though the leadership gap continues, research has documented that the most effective leadership incorporates a combination of both masculine and feminine traits (Cunningham et al., 2017). In this respect, Holmes et al. (2003) argue that women managers are skillful, have an extensive verbal repertoire, and are flexible communicators. Additionally, Holmes adds that women are skillfully controlling the discourse in meetings, paying attention, negotiating agreements, and making decisions (Holmes et al., 2003).

At this point, it is noteworthy to draw on an analytical boundary between the characteristics that may be attributed to women versus being actual characteristics of women. Leadership discourse presents women as having specific features such as being cooperative or facilitative; however, women possess actual attributes that leaders embody, and women actually own these attributes. As Cameron (1992) emphasizes, stereotypes are often more influential than facts since labels are ingrained. For example, it is widely mentioned that women are cooperative, and men are competitive. Nevertheless, looking at gender is not enough since "the meaning of a linguistic feature cannot be determined outside of its context" (Cameron, 1992, p. 52). It is necessary to establish the context to determine how cooperative or competitive the person is. That means gender is always contingent on the communicative context rather than independent of it and cannot be more important than the context.

## Identity

Communication is a process where we negotiate meanings, starting with ourselves (Cornella et al., 1991). As part of this communication process, "all behavior, not only speech, is

communication, and all communication affects behaviors" (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p.22). Because communication is a process, it is also a vehicle to manifest our identities. Therefore, identity and communication are intertwined. This connection makes both identity and communication mutually constituted.

Identity is mediated, constituted, and organized in communication. Identity is developed in a social context and influenced by many biological, cultural, societal, and relational factors (Carbaugh, 1996). Therefore, identities are fluid and are not isolated because identity is connected. Identity is a process that is continuously in the "making and remaking" of ourselves during our lives (Berry, 2016). According to the communication of the theory of identity (CTI), identity is "inherently a communication process and must be understood as a transaction in which messages and values are exchanged" (Hecht et al., 2003, p. 230). CTI points out that identity includes how others see us and how the individual experiences the self (Hecht, 2015).

Metaphorically, I consider identity a journey where new nuances are aggregated to the self-formation that is molded over time. As Eisenberg (2001) suggests, and I agree, identity is an open-ended question to which we add responses throughout the journey of our lives. As Hecht (2015) observes, identity is multi-layered, fluid, and contingent in which the individual goes through multiple experiences at the number of those levels or layers. Hecht classifies these identity layers as personal, relational, enacted, and communal. Similarly, Tracy and Robles (2013) add that identities have stable and dynamic features enacted through talk and accomplished by different changing situations. Thus, people construct who they are, have been, and will be throughout their talk. For example, people's identities shape their talk and bring features from their communities or nationalities. The individual's different selves brought to an interaction reflect how the individual communicates (Tracy & Robles, 2013). Thus, identity is not static; instead, it is a

dynamic that is constantly negotiated depending on the interlocutors and the conversation occurring.

Our identity is continuously in interaction with the social order (Carbaugh, 1996). By social order, I mean to characterize the nexus of dynamics in which the self is produced in social interaction, how this interaction is embedded and productive of societal discourses, and the everyday communication and the cultural meanings (symbols of identity) that society presupposes as intelligible. The social scenes provide us with a context to enact and validate our identity. At the same time, social discourse is communicating and offering us the dimensions and outcomes of our performances and identity negotiations (Carbaugh, 1996; Hecht, 1993). Therefore, cultural meanings and symbols are always present in our communicative practices and social interactions (Carbaugh, 1996).

In terms of language, Holmes (2015) notes that "individuals are constantly engaged in constructing aspects of their interpersonal and intergroup identity, including their professional identity and their gender identity" (p. 887). The discursive strategies, vocabulary, or grammatical structures that women adopt construct particular aspects of their social identity (Holmes, 2015). Therefore, women's leadership discourse constitutes and molds their professional identity. This discourse is what organizations convey and what corporate women tell other women that constitute or co-constitute women's identity.

People achieve their identities by being (re)presented discursively, and identity becomes a contingent identification in which a subject positions herself or himself in a competitive discursive field. That is a field where women constantly use supportive strategies to engage and participate in conversation with their male counterparts. According to Fairhurst (2007), the term "contingent" indicates that identity is always otherwise positioned. The more contingent the field, the more

"space of action" the individual has for determining freedom, autonomy, and personal interest. Thus, identity as a process is "discursively constructed over and over again in particular interactions," and it cannot be viewed as "typical of a person, but instead individuals have multiple identities because of their evolving and contextually bound nature" (Van De Mieroop, 2011, p. 566). Therefore, social interaction participates as part of the identity formation that is constituted during its process.

This section has been about understanding how identity is created as a dynamic process of social ordering in which order is always in motion, present, and not as a separate entity (Law, 1994). Especially, I explore how the individual (corporate women) brings her identity to the interaction and how these speakers (corporate women) accept their identities, respectively. I will use some aspects of how identity is negotiated regarding the attributes related to leaders and how corporate women portray themselves in the leadership discourse. That is because leaders create identity throughout their interaction by bringing features (e.g., cultural), and leaders select their language in use while doing identity as well.

## Language

In studying texts, I focus on how corporate women use linguistic strategies in their advice. Baxter (2010) argues that women do not have a special or distinctive language attribute as accounts of female success argue; in fact, both men and women do leadership similarly by integrating transactional and relational goals. Nevertheless, Baxter contends that women utilize distinct linguistic strategies that form the "language of female leadership." Baxter (2010) states the following:

> Female leaders use a style of language that is a more proscribed and self-regulated version of men's because they need to use special linguistic strategies in order to preempt negative evaluation in a business world that continues to be male-dominated. (p. 169)

Therefore, even though doing leadership is very similar for both male and female genders, women find a way to establish some linguistic strategies that advance their careers.

Baxter (2010) suggests two types of linguistic strategies: individual and corporate. The individual strategies are associated with women's goals and how women achieve self-regulation of their linguistic repertoire. For example, women use politeness and humor as linguistic tools when they invoke authority (Baxter, 2010). In terms of corporate strategies, women implement strategies that support individual linguistic expertise across the organization. These strategies require action and change. For example, some strategies include introducing programs for new managers, developing and encouraging coaching and mentoring, and flexible arrangements for staff (Baxter, 2010).

Furthermore, professional women use different directive strategies such as gender-neutral language, politeness, and indirectness. Some examples of masculine directive forms are imperatives and "need" statements; examples of feminine forms include hedges such as "I wonder if," modal verbs such as "may," "could," "would," and the pronoun "we" (Holmes, 2006). Women employ other strategies such as solidarity approaches, polite language in highly face-threatening situations, powerless makers, control playing dynamic role empowering, and women also use their multiple identities for their directives approaches (Takano, 2005). Women utilize politeness strategies as an anchor of negotiations for power in highly confrontational workplace interactions. In addition, professional women use the individual's communicative competence, effectively manipulating both negative and positive politeness to achieve their communicative goals. Women

utilize negative politeness for mitigation; for example, they could request, “I’m sorry for bothering you but, would you mind making coffee?” In positive politeness, women promote solidarity; for example, “You and I have the same problem.”

According to Takano (2005), “Language not only is defined by the context, but also helps define a context in which particular aspects of speaker-addressee relationships are foregrounded, and the distributions of power and rights/obligations are strategically negotiated or controlled by the speaker” (p. 657). Therefore, language is an essential component that professional women in leadership positions use to succeed in the workplace. Additionally, Baxter (2015) argues that the language used in business leadership is gendered, but it is not for managing gendered differences; it is for social construction.

In their discussion of gender as socially constructed in societal practices, social construction scholars contend that men and women are expected to speak and interact in certain gender-specific ways (Baxter, 2015). Meanwhile, Holmes (2014) notes that different researchers have found that gendered identity is constructed in multiple types of interactions, for example, interactions in meetings, swearing, and ribald banter, among others. In the same way, small talk is remarkably associated with stereotypical feminine contexts such as hairdressing, clothes, and social activities. Thus, communicative patterns are key in the workplace because they constitute masculine sites, masculine discourse, and perpetuate gendered norms. As a result, women find themselves in particular disadvantages in these contexts that limit their career advancement (Holmes, 2014).

The scholars of this section argue that women use language as part of their leadership strategies in order to advance their careers. Specifically, women do identity work by doing discursive activities and choosing their utterances (Tracy & Robles, 2013). In addition, women

establish communicative patterns, and women are measured by them instead of being measured by context and circumstances (Cameron, 1992). By this, I mean that considering the specific context is crucial before evaluating a communicative pattern. In this way, women can demonstrate their leadership attributes.

## Gender

In this section, I evaluate what scholars have researched in the matter of gender formation. For my research purposes, gender refers to men versus women. I recognize this division is highly contested and consequential; however, this gender specification is what I have found as relevant in my data, which is, of course, itself a significant finding. It is noteworthy to mention that there is an important distinction to be made between sex and gender. According to Littlejohn and Foss (2009), "sex and gender are separate and distinct concepts. *Sex* refers to physiological and biological differences between men and women (e.g., male or female). *Gender* refers to one's social and psychological sex-role orientation (e.g., masculine, feminine, and androgynous)" (p. 426). In addition, feminist researchers have moved from the perspective that gender is categorized "as a set of cultural constructions about expectations for men and women" and sex is "a biological category"; thus, "feminist researchers conceptualize gender as socially constituted through communication and performance and not reducible to biological sex" (Dow, 2009).

According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), gender is exercised by humans from the moment they are born. Boys and girls learn to be different because they are treated differently from an early age. For example, these scholars indicate that adults tend to change their tone of voice depending on who they are talking to, a boy or a girl. Similarly, children are told what is appropriate for each gender in terms of toys, activities, or sports. There are gendered expectations in which boys and girls are even told what gender-specific career they should choose.

According to Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2003), society creates gendered segregation, which generates the sense of boys and girls having to compete, creating a "site for the construction of difference with claims that girls or boys are better at whatever activity is in question" (p.15). So, this segregation creates an ideology of opposites between men and women. Gender continues transforming as we move to the professional marketplace. Men and women learn new ways of how their respective genders should be performing as men or women in the workplace or life. Thus, we learn how to act as a secretary, lawyer, manager, wife, husband, mother, or father (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Eckert & McConnell-Ginet argue that "gender consists of a pattern of relations that develops over time to define male and female, masculinity and femininity, simultaneously structuring and regulating people's relation to society" (p. 21). Gender is intrinsically in every aspect of society. Therefore, gender is embedded in societal activities (family, church, school, media) and organized at every level of experience.

Gender equality is focused on the "distribution of privilege (advantages) and individual-societal relationships" (Buzanell, 2020, p. 250). According to Buzanell, when we look at the workplace, gender equality should consider the same opportunities for both men and women, such as ensuring that job titles are commensurate with the job functions that are so circumscribed and the corresponding duties expected as a result. Buzannell explains the advantages of gender equality and its purpose in organizations:

> On broader levels, gender equality is advantageous so that men and women can participate fully in personal and work life. These rights include the opportunities both to contribute meaningfully to the organizations with which they identify and to choose what careers they want and how they might best "balance" work and personal life considerations. (p. 251)

Meanwhile, according to Cunningham et al. (2017), "the gendered leadership gap is related to unequal access to the more important business functions in organizations. Some gaps are attributed to differential treatment in mentoring and performance reviews" (p. xvii). These gaps explicate the work-balance demands and why women do not experience the same considerations as men for top positions (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). Thus, the difference in exposure to experiences adds to the unequal treatment between genders. Furthermore, according to Fitzsimmons et al. (2014), the relationship between leadership and men is due to "all social interactions around leadership are influenced by gendered expectations and associations" (p. 246). Men tend to be more exposed to leadership activities than women, creating social associations of what a leader should be. Additionally, the double-bind limits women from engaging in leadership behaviors since women are negatively evaluated if they are too feminine or too masculine in their leadership styles (Fitzsimmons et al., 2014). As I see it, organizations, programs, and advice-givers constantly assume a variety of expectations of women and their performance as leaders.

## Advice

According to Webster's New World Dictionary, advice is an "opinion given as to what to do or how to handle a situation; counsel." As Bonaccio and Paik (2018) state, in interpersonal relationships, "advice is characterized as a form of verbally communicated social support, whereby well-meaning others offer information and knowledge about specific issue/problem that they perceive as being helpful to the advice recipient" (p. 256; see also, Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997; MacGeorge, Feng, & Burleson, 2011).

MacGeorge and Van Swol (2018) argue that advice is consequential and is an implicit recommendation. These authors help us understand how advice is constituted and what makes advice. The authors explain that advice has seven prototypical elements. The first element is a

focus on the message or interaction on the target's action. The action is largely cognitive. For example, the target needs to make a decision. Even though the message indicates some value and attitude, the advice addresses the target's action, not just his or her perspective. The second element is a focus on the future. Past actions tend to be criticized or analyzed. The third element is the speaker having an actual or apparent intention to guide the target's future behavior. The fourth element is that the influence attempt is made in the context of a problem or issue that makes intentional guidance to the future action relevant. The problem or issue can be identified for the advisor or target. The fifth element is the intention to help the recipient with the problem or issue. The sixth element is that advice is a one-to-one phenomenon involving a unitary source and a unitary recipient. Finally, the seventh element is a disparity of expertise between the sources a recipient; for example, the source has more experience, information, skill, or wisdom than the recipient. The disparity could be small, but advising relies on a source with expertise that the recipient lacks.

MacGeorge and Van Swol (2018) add that "advice is undeniably a way of providing social support (or form of supportive communication), advising is a behavior distinct from providing emotional support or comforting" (p. 7). That is because emotional support is an effort to relieve the distress caused by a problem rather than influencing a future action for resolving an issue (MacGeorge & Van Swol, 2018). Thus, according to Feng (2009), advice is more effective when integrated with other forms of support such as counseling, therapy, and supportive communication since advice is maximized when provided with emotional support and analysis of the problem. The aspect of advice as social support is relevant to my research. Corporate women evaluate their experiences through their books and advise other women who struggle with the same leadership issues. Corporate women in my data set evaluate their experiences (problems) and offer other

professional women emotional support (e.g., empathy, understanding, encouragement) to overcome the leadership challenges.

In addition, the utilization of advice in the workplace can lead to better decisions and could improve job performance if advice comes from the right person. In the same way, advice can improve individual and organizational performance as well as positively influence performances such as learning and negotiating (MacGeorge & Van Swol, 2018). On the other hand, advice can be conflicted when it is unsolicited. This type of advice may need clarification because it suggests that the recipient lacks competence (MacGeorge & Van Swol, 2018). In addition, giving unsolicited advice can negatively impact the face-threatening nature of the act (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1955; Goldsmith, 2000). Nevertheless, according to Feng's and Magen's (2016) research, unsolicited advice-giving is correlated with relational closeness, with advice-giver tending to advise friends they consider very close. I argue that self-help literature is both solicited and unsolicited advice. Corporate women do not have any close relationship with their audience; however, corporate women seem motivated to reach out to other women and offer their advice to help women to progress in their careers. From my data, I am able to examine how closeness between parties is actually created as a presumed condition of offering advice, and how this premise supports the account that corporate women desire to give advice to other women (who implicitly request it). This advice is also solicited since the books are bought by other professional women who need to read advice from successful women. Thus, advice is produced and consumed. Advice is an industry-created by gendered categorization, and it keeps it in place.

Furthermore, mentoring forms part of career development and professional support. It is noteworthy to add that mentoring and advice can be intertwined between the messages and interactions offered to leaders. Advice sometimes forms part of mentoring and is seen as a

communicative tool that performs in mentoring (Buzzanell, 2021). Specifically, advice becomes a supportive and career orientation when advice is provided as an element of mentoring. Both mentoring and advice can be interconnected, even though both have different main directions (guidance and recommendation).

In other fields, such as psychotherapy and education, advice is applied and viewed differently. Some psychotherapy practitioners disagree with advice-giving as a strategy because they argue it can create a dependent therapeutic relationship due to the patient's decisions. However, research shows that therapists give advice frequently as part of their verbal responses (MacGeorge & Van Swol, 2018). On the contrary, in the education field, using advice is habitual and expected because it is an integral part of its discursive vehicle. In terms of research, advice in education focuses on specific discursive practices such as counseling, supervision, or tutoring.

## Conclusion

In my project, it is essential for me to evaluate how leadership discourse is portrayed, how women are depicted as part of leadership discourse, and how corporate women participate in this discourse as well. In this chapter, I draw from scholars who present the double-bind and the tensions that are not favoring women in their leadership path. Books written for corporate women organize leadership and what is intelligible within its practices. As I see it, gender is a remarkably contested issue in leadership discourse, and women are categorized to specific labels or characteristics that detain their career progression. Scholars note that gendered differences exist; however, women have demonstrated to be as effective leaders as men are, even though some stereotypes haunt women's careers. It is noteworthy to point out that this literature focuses on workplace matters and emphasizes men and women as individuals and their styles, making these two categories the gender in question for this research. In the same way, my data (corporate women

narratives) discusses and handles gender as binary and does not consider all the spectrum of genders.

Within the literature, I have noticed how women need to demonstrate or put extra effort by using linguistics strategies and showing authority even though scholars indicate that men and women have similar leadership styles. I look at advice as a communicative tool in the leadership discourse and a product that is produced and consumed. This product is produced to attend a leadership deficit that is capturing in place, specifically for women as a gender category. The books sell ideas of gendered deficit, and women pay for these books. I have observed that the books create a metadiscourse of leadership deficit as something innate or unique in women. In addition, it is important to evaluate how women's identities are negotiated and form part of what is expressed in the discourse as well as the social association regarding leadership.

In the following chapter, I present the methodology I chose for the study and my approach to the data selection. I explain why I chose discourse analysis (DA) as a method and how DA partakes as part of what people do, say, or write. Especially, I focus on how the texts (books) contribute as agents in the women's leadership discourse.

# CHAPTER TWO:

# METHOD AND DATA

In this chapter, I present four sections. The first section explains Critical Discourse Studies as an approach to communication data. The second section describes the data I selected for the study; here, I explain the nature of texts as written discourse and my understanding that texts have agency. The third section provides a detailed account of the project data and how I selected them. In the fourth section, I will examine issues of reflexivity and my position on this project.

## Method

I engage in a critical approach to advice-giving as a part and function of leadership discourse. For this purpose, I choose a synthetic approach Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), with a specific emphasis on notions from critical discourse analysis (CDA). Flowerdew and Richardson (2017) note that "Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is an inter-disciplinary approach to language in use, which aims to advance our understanding of how discourse figures in social processes, social structures, and social change" (p. 21). Therefore, CDS sees discourse as "both socially constituted and constitutive" (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2017, p. 96) that have a dialectical relation between social context and text.

Meanwhile, CDA is "the critical analysis of text in context" (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2017, p. 96). By utilizing CDA, I am "denouncing or critiquing forms of power, control, dominance, inequality, or oppression that language use contributes to reproducing" (Cooren, 2015,

p. 47). CDA enables me to navigate the tensions, asymmetries, and enactments in the advice-giving and the social practice mediated by text.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 271–80) summarize the main tenets of CDA as follows:

1. CDA addresses social problems.
2. Power relations are discursive.
3. Discourse constitutes society and culture.
4. Discourse does ideological work.
5. Discourse is historical.
6. The link between text and society is mediated.
7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory.
8. Discourse is a form of social action.

The tenets above guide me to address how organizational culture is entrenched in power relations. In this project, texts are embedded in a historical context of ever-evolving social relations so that advice is relevant and intelligible because of its contingency of what is produced and consumed at a particular time in our awareness. I explore language in use, primarily what is socially shaped and socially constitutive (Fairclough, 2010).

Discourse analysis is a tradition that serves different academic disciplines, especially emerged as disciplinary activity in Linguistics. I will explore "beyond language itself, by embracing other modalities as potential objects of study" (Sarangi, 2017). In this case, by studying texts, I will explore the notions of "context of situation," with the tenet that "meaning must be sought in use" (Firth, 1935, as cited in Sarangi, 2017). As Jones (2006) states, I am interested in studying "the way people speak and investigate how that affects how they do things in the world"

(location No. 587). In this case, I will examine how corporate women use advice and do things linguistically.

Thus, a critical approach allows me to examine texts as embedded in and indexical of social practices. Because I understand communication as constitutive of social relations and practices, I adopt the approach of the communicative constitution of organizations (CCO) where "studying discourse allows us to unveil the mechanisms by which human beings coordinate actions, create relationships, and maintain organizations" (Putman et al., 2009, as cited in Cooren, 2015, p. 12).

Thus, the analysis will enable me to query and explicate how assumptions are naturalized in discourse and, because of this, render discourse ontologically consequential (Khosravinik, 2015). Naturalization refers to when some discourses are treated as common, acceptable, and natural. For example, the concept of an effective leader is commonly and discursively related to being competitive and aggressive. As follows, Khosravinik (2015) states the importance of a critical approach to discourse:

> It explains why, and with what consequences, the producers of a text make such specific linguistic choices (or avoid doing so), given the various options that are available. Such a framework is then capable of accounting for *absences as well as presences* in the data. (p. 52)

For absences, I understand what is socially established and is not explicitly mentioned in the narrative/discourse. For example, in a narrative explaining a workplace incident in which the corporate woman's son is present, we could evaluate mother-son relationship matters or mother-example relationship at the level of the analysis. However, aspects of the relationship can be absences or presences in the data and being discussed as social practices. That means that the

relationship could be explained between the contexts and conversations. Thus, the relationship between interlocutors or practices they engage in could be evaluated in the narrative.

## The Agency of Texts

This study examines written narratives by focusing on self-help literature that organizes advice as a vehicle and technology to counsel professional women on advancing their careers. I see context as part of human communication and discursive practices, including non-human actants (Barge, 2021). I draw on Cooren's (2004) claims that texts have agency, do things, and make an active contribution to women's leadership discourse. I take texts as elements of social practices, which bring an interactive process of meaning-making (Fairclough, 2003) in the advice-giving process.

Texts are elements of social actions that designate or reformulate the meaning of action (Fairclough, 2003) because text organizes organizations. According to Fairclough (2003), texts "bring changes (we can learn things from them) to our knowledge, beliefs, our attitudes, values" (p. 8). Consequently, texts contribute to changes in people's actions and social relations. Thus, this study explores how texts (self-help literature) participate in the daily production of organizational life (Cooren, 2004) by advising women on leadership matters. As Smith (2001) argues, and I agree, documents are essential in organizations and institutions for their simple existence, and texts organize people's activities. Texts "mediate, regulate, and authorize peoples' activities" (p. 160). In addition, Smith (2001) states the importance of texts and documents as follows:

> Text and documents make possible the appearance of the same set of words, numbers, or images in multiple local sites; however, differently, they may be read and taken up. They provide for the standardized recognizability of people's doings as organizational or institutional as well as for their co-ordination across multiple local settings and times. It is

> not enough to use texts as sources of information about organizations. Rather, they are to be seen as they enter into people's local practices of writing, drawing, reading, looking, and so on. They must be examined as they co-ordinate people's activities. (p. 160)

My data consists of self-help literature: written discourse that is produced for women's consumption. I analyze advice-giving texts and narratives statements from these data as a practice or activity that organizes women's leadership discourse. I consider four books written by corporate women and corporate coaches who advise other professional women in their career progression.

## The Data and my Criteria for Data Selection

According to Dolby (2005), self-help books are a conspicuous genre in American social life. These books offer cultural critique, advice, and reflections on diverse topics such as psychological well-being, workplace matters, optimal health, among others. As a genre, self-help is often based on personal narratives of the authors and extends popular expressive productions (Dolby, 2005) such as aspects which readers can identify. Within the self-help genre, I consider the data from advice texts that I examine as representative of self-help texts overall, as it emulates the typical popular frame that characterized this genre. Thus, the books I analyze seek to help others overcome putative shortcomings in career and leadership matters. As is the case in dynamics of offering and receiving help, authority is prominently implicated; specifically, those who offer help are implicitly authorized to impart it to those who presumably need it and are therefore assigned the position of experts in leadership matters.

I examine written discourse data (self-help literature) to analyze what is communicated as advice to professional women who want to be promoted or grow in their careers. That is because self-literature is produced by corporate women and consumed as a product categorized for women. Because I have observed that every time more corporate women (C-Suite) decide to advise other

women, I analyze four Amazon best-seller books directed to professional women regarding how they can pursue their career advancement. C-Suite is “a widely-used term used to refer collectively to a corporation's most important senior executives” (Fitzsimmons et al., 2014). These corporate women advise other women in their career progression based on their experiences and anecdotes. This analysis will focus on advice-giving in terms of discourse, gender, identity, and language.

The following four books have Amazon customer ratings of 4.5 stars, and their authors are well-known in their respective fields:

(1) *Lean in* (2013), Sheryl Sandberg, CCO of Facebook. (Technology industry)

(2) *Own it: The power of women at work* (2017), Sallie Krawcheck, CEO and Co-Founder of Ellevest. (Financial Industry)

(3) *How women rise: Break the 12 habits holding you back from your next raise, promotion, or job,* (2018), Sally Helgesen, an international author, speaker, and leadership development consultant, and Dr. Marshall Goldsmith, a top-ranked executive coach and influential business thinker. (Leadership field)

(4) *Lean out: The truth about women, power, and the workplace* (2019), Marissa Orr who spent 15 years working at today's top tech giants, Google, and Facebook (Technology industry).

I define advice as a communicative formulation where one party suggests/recommends to another what to do to achieve or change something. Two important things are worth mentioning the first is that the act of giving advice reflexively legitimates the giver as someone who is in a position of offering advice. That is, the act of giving advice legitimates a functional asymmetry of knowledge between the person who offers and the person who is presumed to seek the advice and for whose benefit the advice is formulated. Second, it follows that the particular change is

something desirable that the advice-seeker wants and, therefore, that advice is warranted and sought after. This, though the actual request for advice, is never explicated; it is simply assumed. In sum, the logic of offering advice is circular and self-validating. It creates and legitimates its own authority and asymmetrical relationship.

Specifically, I analyze the speech acts performed in terms of advice by corporate women authors as well as the accounts they formulate for women readers. I selected the project's data by paying attention to patterns (e.g., metaphors, phrases), repetitive phrases (e.g., you need), stories that stand out (e.g., rejecting promotions, maternity leaves, being fired), and narratives that are elaborated in detailed (e.g., workshop).

Advice is introduced by using specific types of sentence forms and words that indicate that a communicative formulation recommends or suggests something to professional women readers. For example, corporate women tend to shift to pronouns "you" and "we" or the phrase "you need" or an imperative sentence in order to build affiliation and encourage action. Below, some examples of these types of communicative formulations:

(1) **You don't need** to be the world's biggest extrovert to do this. You don't need to try to make friends or form close ties. **You just need** to engage as many people as possible in your efforts to have an impact. And **you** want to do it in a public way so that you, and they can benefit from the association. (Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018, p. 116)

(2) **Do not wait** for power to be offered. Like that tiara, it might never materialize. (Sandberg, 2013, p. 63)

(3) **You need** the other members of the team. (Krawcheck, 2017, p.10)

(4) **We need** to own that power and put it to work. (Krawcheck, 2017, p. 24)

(5) So, it is time **we women** started taking these things into our own hands, putting money where our beliefs are, and supporting our values with our dollars. (Krawcheck, 2017, p. 211)

## Reflexivity: My Own Positioning

Like many other researchers, I start where I am. My own experience has served as an avenue to my research interest and concerns (Lofland et al., 2006). My experience in organizations became the starting point of my research in women's leadership discourse. Because of this, I engage in reflexivity throughout my research, and as defined by G.H. Mead (1962), it is "the turning-back of experience of an individual upon himself" (p. 134). He goes beyond and states, "it is by means of reflexiveness that the whole social process is brought into the experience of the individuals involved in it" (p. 134). As Jones (2016) adds, reflexivity will allow me to reformulate and reframe my experiences through the metadiscourse.

Undeniably, it has been a challenge to avoid being influenced by my own lived experience as part of an organization. I am constantly thinking about my experiences in the workplace when analyzing the data. On many occasions, I feel like a participant of the stories by sharing similar experiences in which I have moments of frustrations and questioning. I situate myself as a narrator when my stories from prior experiences as a manager are comparable to the corporate women in my data. During the analysis, I identify myself in every story, and through this identification, I can internalize corporate women's perspectives (Lofland et al., 2006). Taking a reflexive turn allows me to notice my own involvement in the production and consumption of advice and how this dissertation is itself advice. I acknowledge the complexities and tensions in this research process, and it has been important to me to realize how I have come to describe or choose the data that are relevant to my research.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have established the analytical approach of my research, discourse analysis, and how I will engage with critical discourse analysis. In addition, I have explained how texts are essential in organizations and people's activities. I showed the data selected and how I identified advice-giving texts. Finally, I presented my positing in the research and how reflexivity is part of my analysis. In the next chapter, I will start with my first analytical chapter and engage with corporate women's strategies to accomplish their advice.

# CHAPTER THREE:

# STRATEGIES OF AUTHORSHIP

In this chapter, I examine the strategies of advice-giving employed by the authors of self-help literature. I pay special attention to the repertoire of strategies and how they accomplish advice with each strategy. I refer to this body of strategic formulations as a technology (Jones, 2016). In this case, the technology of advice and its role as a social practice. In the following sections, I discuss the strategies that corporate women utilize to advise other professional women regarding being a leader in organizational settings and the discourse in the advice-giving. In addition, I look at corporate women's authority as a dynamic process accomplished by interaction and communication. Specifically, I evaluate how corporate women use accounts of their (presumed) experience to authorize their suggestions to readers in terms of advice that should be taken for the readers' benefit. In line with this, I identify and analyze nine strategies, namely, pronoun choices and alignment, credibility, the use of should, imperative sentences, elaboration, expressions of empathy, the assertion of necessity, introspective questions, and metaphors. I conclude with a reflection on how some strategies are crucial for showing identification, authority, and credibility among the authors.

## Advice as Technology

By calling advice a technology, I mean that advice is a mediational means for the authors of self-help literature to negotiate leadership matters. As Jones (2016) explains, a technology is employed to do something, and technologies do more than transmit a message. Technologies also

have an effect on the meaning of the message. In spoken discourse, technologies exist not as a physical tool but more as a set of rules that have some expectations in the speakers' minds (Jones, 2016). This set of rules are often used as "part of larger social practices, which can be considered highly developed "technologies" for getting things done in the societies in which we live" (location 239).

In understanding advice as technology, I examine the variety of strategies by which the authors advise or recommend other professional women to take some actions (authors' expectations) in their career matters. In the same way, authors see a demand (advice-seekers) to produce advice through self-literature, and the books become products for the business of advice. Human beings seek help solving problems by asking other people or reading literature, which serves as a source of advice. Advice-seekers pursue sources of authority that can help them through advice-giving. The authors' authority and their discursive strategies involve how "talk is sequentially organized," offering benefits to advance or defending certain positions and arguments (Vasilyeva et al., 2020). According to Benoit-Barné (2020), authority from the communication-as-constitutive perspective is "a property of relationships communicatively generated and negotiated in the process of organizing" (p. 149). Thus, authority does not belong to an individual or organizational structure. Instead, authority is a communicative process that requires negotiation and co-orientation, and it is dynamic through interaction and communication (Benoit-Barné, 2020).

In addition, DeCapua and Dunham (1993) note that "people who are seeking advice frequently turn to those who they feel might have insights into their problems, whether or not those individuals have credentials" (p. 529). Thus, decision-makers are inclined to use experts for advice to resolve their situations because expertise is related to experience, reputation, or training

(MacGeorge & Van Swol, 2018). As mentioned before, MacGeorge and Van Swol argue that advice is an implicit recommendation, and the utilization of advice in the workplace can lead to better decisions that could improve job performance. This can be plausible if advice comes from the right person. Therefore, in this analysis of advice-giving, the authors have emphasized their expertise and experience working with organizations and highlighted how professional women should deal with work-leadership situations.

Meanwhile, leadership is associated with the hegemonic behavior that is connected with masculinity, and also, the leadership discourse has been looking at gender stereotypes and societal norms (Schnurr, 2009). The ideal leader is a masculine stereotype that provokes an arduous battle for women and their career growth (Holmes, 2017). As mentioned previously, women are still struggling and facing challenges when they want to advance in their careers due to the effective leaders' qualities associated with male approaches. Therefore, gender is a ubiquitous aspect of leadership discourse (Schnurr, 2009). Workplace culture has a particular way of understanding gender, and leadership is not a gender-neutral concept; thus, "masculine ways of doing leadership are typically viewed as normative" (Schnurr, 2009, p. 7).

In the self-help literature I analyze, advice-giving is implicitly solicited in the sense that other women do not directly ask the authors; however, the readers (advice-seekers) are professional women who buy these books to reach their career advancement goals. Consequently, these books are produced as accounts in expectation of request by consumers in such a way that the authors and their narratives keep the gendered asymmetries feeding the need for production and consumption. As follows, I present two examples of how authors express the matter of solicited advice and how advice is presented.

Excerpt 3.1: Own the power (Krawcheck, 2017, p. 2)

That's right, to empower women, power must be given to them. Well, this book isn't going to be about the slight sense of passivity that the definition implies. We shouldn't count on anyone else doing this for us.

Instead, this book is going to be about how to take an active role in your future by owning the power you already have. I'm here to tell you that you already have the qualities and skills it takes to get ahead in the modern workplace, and, that in owning those qualities, you have more power and potential than you realize.

So rather than looking to be "empowered," this book is going to be about how to leverage our existing power to thrive and advance in our careers in ways that play to our strengths, how to turn our companies into places at which we want to work (or leave to start our own), and how to invest or economic muscle in making our lives and the world better.

Who am I to tell this story? Well, I've been around.

In Excerpt 3.1, we observe that Krawcheck speaks in the first person and assumes the wants of the readers. She also relies on her experiences, research, and observations at the workplace to advise women. Krawcheck counsels other women since she has enough experience that allows her to advise others in organizational and career advancement matters. As Krawcheck mentions in her book, she is over the notion of women being empowered and believes that women can actively work on diversity issues (women's inclusion). According to Krawcheck, women do not need to be given any power because women already have the power and qualities that leaders own. In line 13, Krawcheck introduces herself in terms of how long she has been an experienced professional. She uses the idiom "I've been around," creating a familiar register. Notice that this phrase is vague;

therefore, she relies on readers to grant her authority in her personal experiences. Below, I offer another example that illustrates solicited advice.

Excerpt 3.2: My intention is to offer advice (Sandberg, 2013, p. 9-11)

I never thought I would write a book. I am not a scholar, a journalist, or a sociologist. But I decided to speak out after talking to hundreds of women, listening to their struggles, sharing my own, and realizing that the grains we have made are not enough and may even be slipping. The first chapter of this book lays out some of the complex challenges women face…

(data omitted, continued on page 11)

My intention is to offer advice that would have been useful to me long before I had heard of Google or Facebook and that will resonate with women in a broad range of circumstances.

In Excerpt 3.2, Sandberg is more direct with her intentions. She starts by claiming to be better or different from a "scholar, journalist, or a sociologist" since the first-hand experience is more authoritative than "research" (Bartesaghi, 2009). The use of "but" in line 2 allows her to emphasize what she really is, an experienced professional woman. Thus, her experiences grant her authority of advice. In addition, Sandberg clearly recognizes that professional women are facing struggles in the workplace, and women can dismantle these issues by themselves. Thus, Sandberg desires to advise other women on what she has learned throughout her career so other women learn from her experiences. In terms of strategy, advice as a recommendation and agentive utterances (Limberg & Locher, 2012) are organized in "packages" which contain factual and normative information that provides "a number of discursive moves such as accounts, assessments, and

repetitions weaved into a longer stretch of talk" (Limberg & Locher, 2012, p. 9; see also, Locher, 2006). That is, we can observe some patterns in advice-giving.

It is important to note that linguists have studied advice-giving in multiple spheres such as conversations, phone calls, and online forums. Linguists have highlighted some strategies of advice that I borrow and include as part of all strategies I observe in the self-help literature. In what follows, I focus on the strategies of authorship used in advice-giving by analyzing the self-help literature and how corporate women deliver advice to other professional women in matters of leadership and career advancement.

## Strategies of Authorship

I identified nine strategies of authorship: pronoun choices and alignment, credibility, the use of should, imperative sentences, elaboration, expressions of empathy, the assertion of necessity (you need), introspective questions, and metaphors. Five of these strategies (the use of should, imperative sentences, elaboration, expressions of empathy, and introspective questions) have been previously identified by DeCapua & Dunham (2007), and I reexamine them here as part of the repertoire of strategies I found in the self-help literature. DeCapua & Dunham categorize these strategies as linguistic and content-based. The last category employs an elaboration of ideas in the advice-giving to appeal to the audience. The other four strategies (credibility, the use of pronouns, the assertion of necessity, and metaphors), I identify them as additional strategies utilized in the advice-giving. As follows, I analyze different excerpts to distinguish each strategy and how each strategy of authorship accomplishes advice-giving.

### Pronoun Choices and Alignment

The authors use multiple strategies to address professional women in their advice-giving. One of the strategies employed is pronoun choices and alignment, such as I, We, and You, in which

each pronoun is shifted and has a unique function in advice. I refer to pronoun alignment when authors include themselves in or distance themselves from the issues in discussion. For instance, when authors choose pronoun "I," they focus on their authority, expertise, and power. By switching to the pronoun "you," the authors center on the familiarity and closeness they develop towards the readers throughout the book and its content. Also, the pronoun "you" is sometimes utilized as a command which indicates how people should act or feel. Some authors switch and use "you" to disassociate themselves from certain women's actions that do not let them progress professionally. The pronoun "we" can be multifunctional and, in many cases, refer to inclusiveness. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that according to Pantelides and Bartesaghi (2012), "*we* is multifunctional, periodically signaling collaborative affiliation and disaffiliation, marking the negotiation of coauthorship, implying shared identity, and acting as an indicator of institutional discourse" (p. 24). In the self-help literature I analyze, the pronoun "we" extends the sense of inclusiveness and empathy. The former makes the author position herself as part of the issues related to women's leadership. The latter emphasizes the author's understanding of what women are going through. Most of the time, the authors use "we" as including themselves as part of the issue they discuss, for example advocating equality. According to DeCapua & Dunham (2012), and I agree, shifting pronouns are often a discursive strategy that produces identification and lessens the distance between the advice-giver and the advice-seeker, shares the sense of identity, and promotes bonding.

***Pronoun "I"***

The principal strategy utilized by authors in my corpus is to shift to first-person "I." During the narratives, the authors (corporate women) present themselves as experts who can advise other professional women on account of their experiences and achievements in organizations. As

Bamberg (2012) points out, narrators give narrative forms of experiences, confer their experiences, order experiences, and make sense of their experiences. Although narrators' expertise is a component that may underscore an asymmetrical relationship between the advice-giver and advice-seeker, at times, it may promote bonding as well (DeCapua & Dunham, 2012). As we study the authors' self-help literature, we learn that texts produce and function as agents in organizational life (Cooren, 2004). Thus, the authors' voices become an agent in the text that participates in the production of the advice-giving to women who seek advice to progress and manage leadership positions. At the same time, as Bakhtin (1981) states, utterances "are populated -even overpopulated with intentions of others" (p. 294). The authors' utterances/voices provide multiple meanings and create linguistic richness incorporating in their strategies. Thus, these corporate women (the authors) form part of the production and apparatus of advice directed to professional women by indicating how to do leadership. This strategy (shifting to the first-person "I") positions the author as an authority who knows how organizations operate and how a professional woman should deal with leadership aspects. This positioning also brings Cooren's (2012) ideas of ventriloquism into play. He explains ventriloqual acts as follows:

> The activity that consists of making someone or something say or do something — which is what I mean by ventriloquism—can thus be considered coextensive with any conversation, any discourse, whether we end up ventriloquizing not only policies and organizations but also languages, accents, ideologies, speech communities, rules, norms, values, identities, statuses, etc. (p.5)

As I see it, Krawcheck and Sandberg position themselves as experts who speak in the name of expertise or authority in leadership in which they act and speak in the name of their ideas of leadership. The author's animation of ventriloquism can lead the audience to say or do something

provided from the advice-giving or recommendation obtained from the authors (Cooren, 2012). The following excerpt illustrates the use of pronoun choices and alignment, "I."

Excerpt 3.3: (Sandberg, 2013, p. 48)

No wonder women don't negotiate as much as men. It's like trying to cross a minefield backward in high heels. So what should we do? Should we play by the rules that others are created? Should we figure out a way to put on a friendly expression while not being too nice, displaying the right levels of loyalty, and using "we" language? I understand the paradox of advising women to change the world by adhering to biased rules and expectations. I know it is not a perfect answer but a means to a desirable end. It is also true, as any good negotiator knows, that having a better understanding of the other side leads to a superior outcome.

In Excerpt 3.3, Sandberg's aligns "I" as an animation (Goffman, 1974) for the author to speak and positions her as the expert who understands what women experience and the paradoxes at the workplace. In line 1, Sandberg lets the audience know that she understands that specific matter ("negotiate as much as men") and can speak general knowledge ("No wonder"). By shifting to "I" in line 5, the author represents herself and represents all women in terms of understanding and awareness of what happens in organizations. The author situates herself as an authority who has the experience and knowledge of this specific situation. In terms of advice-giving, Sandberg advises women to reflect on their behaviors and develop an understanding of how to manage themselves. Notice that the multiple retrospective questions allow the readers to reflect on issues they may be familiar with. Furthermore, in these series of retrospective questions, she includes herself as part of the issue ("So what should we do?"). Sandberg constantly uses the pronoun "we"

in lines 2 and 3 to include herself as a fellow agent (Van De Mieroop et al., 2017), who has this dilemma as well.

It is also noticeable how Sandberg shifts pronouns, from “we” in lines 2 and 3 to “I” in lines 5 and 6, to mark and dissociate herself from the rest of the women. Authors take a stance, and as Du Bois (2007) states, “Stance has the power to assign value to objects of interest, to position social actors with respect to those objects, to calibrate alignment between stancetakers, and to invoke presupposed systems of sociocultural value” (p. 139). The epistemic stances “I understand” and “I know” in lines 5 and 6 acknowledge the speaker’s intellectual position in the discourse. Also, the phrase “I know” imparts a sense that the reader must know because, at times, this phrase implicates agreement with the other party. Moreover, Sandberg frames herself as an authority when she uses the phrases “I know” and “I understand.” The pronoun “I” provides the first-hand experience of her understanding of workplace and leadership matters.

In studying exchanges of authority, Bartesaghi (2009) examines how first-hand experiences are substituted by expertise. Thus, professional women may have the same experiences as corporate women; however, the corporate women’s expertise (their first-hand experience) allows them to advise other women. Thus, in Excerpt 3.3, Sandberg reinforces her expertise and authority of being capable of advising others by indicating that she knows what women are experiencing about bias rules. This authority also allows Sandberg to tell the audience that she knows how to deal with this type of situation. Thus, the author represents herself and all women's understanding and awareness. She conveys who the expert is. In addition, the author “participates in it not only with his thoughts but with his fate and with his entire individuality” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 292) as part of the dialogue and her integral voice. In this way, she highlights her expertise, authority, and knowledge about leadership. Therefore, at this juncture, the author

(advice-giver) marks the asymmetry between her and her audience (advice-seekers) by stating that she knows better, and she is not like the other women (advice-seekers).

***Pronoun "You"***

The authors I examine concur with addressing the reader with familiarity by shifting to the pronoun "you," which permits the authors (corporate women) to position themselves as the character or voice who understands what the reader (professional woman) is going through professionally. Similarly, that "you" approach creates a closeness between the writer and the reader. In other words, the change to the pronoun "you" produces a direct conversation between both the writer and the reader. As Linde notes drawing on Labov, the narrative assumes the personal experience and representation of an actual occurrence (Linde, 1993). The familiarity allows the writer to express that she has been in the same position that the reader is.

Developing familiarity also includes the type of stories that the authors select. Therefore, by establishing familiarity and stories, the audience, as members of a culture, do not struggle with the story because they recognize the stories and are receptive (Gergen & Gergen, 2006). As Harvey Sacks (1992) points out, "you" in its singular case is "regularly a way of referring to that member of "they" who happens to be present" (p. 166). In this case, the author refers to a member of the women category (professional women) who is present reading the book. In addition, we observe that "you" is multifunctional, and some authors exercise the notion of entitlement (Sacks, 1992). The teller authors the reader's experiences and is entitled to them even though that experience is not her first-hand. According to Shuman (2006), entitlement is a way of redrawing boundaries between what can and cannot be told. The following excerpt illustrates how the sense of familiarity can be involved by using the strategy of pronoun choices and alignment, specifically with "you" and the claim to entitlement.

Excerpt 3.4: (Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018, p. 16)

1 As you will see, the trick to maximizing your talents and opportunities is not
2 becoming a less thoughtful and giving person, but rather purposeful and intentional
3 about your choices while also addressing the behaviors that keep you stuck.

By using the expression "As you will see" in line 1, the authors express having the ability to anticipate yet unforeseen experiences. We also observe in line 2 that the authors assume that readers are thoughtful and giving; thus, readers are not using the right strategy because, according to the authors, the readers should be purposeful and intentional about their choices. In addition, Excerpt 3.4 exemplifies how the authors intend to guide the reader through what she (the reader) is discovering in the book and expresses familiarity and understanding about what "you" have to offer and why "you are stuck" in your career. The use of this familiarity establishes a direct and informal conversation within the audience. This strategy also provides the author certain expert-authority level that presents the author as the very knowledgeable expert about women's leadership. Therefore, shifting to the pronoun "you" gives the author authority and entitlement to the author's experience over what they explain to the readers regarding what they (the readers) will discover in the book's anecdotes.

In terms of entitlement, the two authors, Helgesen and Goldsmith, are leadership coaches who recount anecdotes and stories that belong to other women when they exercise advice. They author the reader's experience and own readers past, present, future as a case of experts. For instance, Shuman (2006) gives the example of a doctor who, without experiencing the same illness, may be more knowledgeable than the patient about the illness experience from professional knowledge. Helgesen and Goldsmith, as experts, take stories like theirs to employ advice.

On another note, the future tense in line 1 is intended to provide a sense of guidance and indicates that it will be a forthcoming explanation. The future tense also suggests that what will be explained is something that the reader does not see (the reader needs the explanation), and the authors will show her how to manage it. Specifically, the authors authorize that version of the story of life by giving a piece of advice. The following excerpt is another example in which the use of the pronoun choices and alignment with the pronoun "you" appear.

Excerpt 3.5: (Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018, p. 116)

1 When you enlist allies on a project, be sure to talk about them in a positive way.
2 Praise what they are doing and connect them with others. You don't need to be the
3 world's biggest extrovert to do this. You don't need to try to make friends or form
4 close ties. You just need to engage as many people as possible in your efforts to
5 have an impact. And you want to do it in a public way so that you, and they can
6 benefit from the association.

In Excerpt 3.5, this shifting to "you" is at almost every beginning of each sentence by employing anaphora. This rhetoric device allows the authors to emphasize the specific advice and intensify to whom they speak (their audience) by employing repetition. In addition, looking into the author-reader approach, Helgesen & Goldsmith use "you" as a command and claim to demand what women fail to do and, conversely, what they need to do to obtain more allies. In Excerpt 3.5, the authors seem to have some stories that support the advice of achieving ally engagement. By claiming these stories' entitlement, the authors claim ownership of the experiences (Shuman, 2006) of both their clients' experiences and the reader's experiences; thus, the authors advocate those experiences where women pursue incorrect ways of acquiring allies and establishing advantageous relationships.

## Credibility

One of the strategies used by the authors is credibility. The authors position themselves as experts who are knowledgeable about leadership and workplace matters. As part of the analysis, we notice what the authors do in their narratives, what they have in common, and how their chosen strategies become discourse patterns for their advice-giving. MacGeorge and Van Swol (2018) state that the advisor's characteristics are expertise, intentions, and confidence, and these corporate authors establish these characteristics in their narrative distinctly. At the beginning of each book, all the authors specify their credentials, motives, and purposes that inspire them to approach other professional women to help and encourage them with their career advancement. The authors establish credibility through strategies of legitimization (MacGeorge & Van Swol, 2018), in which they cite respected sources to increase their credibility when they offer solutions. Simultaneously, the authors reinforce their arguments and positions regarding the topic they discuss when presenting the sources.

On another note, Limberg and Locher (2012) argue that advice-seekers place the advice-givers in a position of having something to say about the issue raised; however, despite this, advice-givers use two strategies to show credibility, warranting strategies and mitigation strategies. As Limberg and Locher explain, the warranting strategies are used to "give credibility to their recommendations and to show expertise (e.g., citing a source, quoting facts and numbers, invoking personal experience to make a point)" and mitigation strategies are used "to downtone the impression that they might be imposing their view on the advice-seeker" (p. 6). As we observe, these author's behaviors establish certain standing among the readers, such as reliability and humbleness. In other words, the authors' personal experiences validate the sources, and vice versa, the sources validate the author's personal experiences.

Furthermore, all the authors voice the impersonal claim "research shows" when they mention some statistics or specific data, and most of them include the sources. In many instances, the authors refer to academic studies as well. It is noticeable that emphasizing "research shows" makes information reliable, and this expression highlights that their information is based on credible data. In addition, this phrase "research shows" demonstrates how the author presents self-evidence in her reading making, understanding, and knowledge about the issues. In other words, the reader is invited to trust what the authors expose in their books. Thus, credibility as a strategy is necessary in order to justify their expertise and authority to provide advice to other women. The following is an excerpt in which Marissa Orr presents credibility in her narratives.

Excerpt 3.6: (Orr, 2019, p. 95)

1 Many research studies and lab experiments confirm that women are liked less when
2 they become successful. One of the most well-known studies that's referred to
3 throughout *Lean In* comes from Columbia Business School professor Frank Flynn
4 and New York University professor Cameron Anderson.

In line 1, Orr highlights her statement as credible and a piece of information from research. She puts accountability/authority on other texts that the reader should take for granted. Therefore, Orr is not accountable for the research; she is simply repeating what research shows. In Excerpt 3.6, we observe that texts and humans are co-agents. In the same way, Orr mentions two universities and their respective professors in lines 3 and 4 who have studied how women tend to be less liked when they are successful. However, Orr does not specify how the study measures this unlikability. By stating these academic institutions and the professors, Orr makes the argument stronger in terms of credibility since she provides a source. Also, the fact that the statement emphasizes that the finding is based on research makes it believable and indicates that research in

these matters is available and substantial. Thus, Orr positions herself as someone informed about women's careers and leadership matters and able to read and interpret scholarly research for the reader (who, by contrast, is less informed). In this case, Orr frames this academic study before exposing her opinion and discrediting it based on her experience with successful women. Orr uses her expertise as task-related knowledge (MacGeorge & Van Swol, 2018) to uncover the false discourse that other corporate women and organizations deliver to professional women in terms of not being likable.

In Excerpt 3.6, credibility is located in research as a non-human actor that offers agency in describing successful women as not likable. Text participates and becomes part of credibility strategy which is supported as evidence of what women are or become. Text constructs a performative activity and produces agency where texts do things and bring knowledge to the spectrum of credibility (Cooren, 2004; Barge, 2021). On another note, by mentioning *Lean In* and its reference to this study, Orr seems to question the credibility of Sandberg's (2013) book and Sandberg's sources since Orr is discrediting this study as factual enough. Orr positions her authority based on her experiences and negotiates the communicative process of organizing credibility (Benoit-Barné, 2020), questioning research and what *Lean In* references. The following excerpt from Krawckeck's book shows how she positions the credibility strategy.

Excerpt 3.7: (Krawcheck, 2017, p. 9)

1 I'll take you through some of the troves of research on the positive business results
2 that derive from gender diversity for companies.

In line 1, Krawcheck starts establishing her credibility with the assumption that the reader is unfamiliar with this type of research and cannot complete this task without her guidance, which she will provide. Also, Krawcheck shows research as part of creating credibility and making

arguments. She has read research and assessed it for the readers. Krawcheck specifies the quality of the information in the research (positive business results), and the information she will offer comes from research. Krawcheck provides respected sources as evidence that allow her to explain or discuss gender diversity in line 2. Agency is distributed between Krawcheck, research, and business results. Krawcheck claims, explains, and rationalizes the information. Research serves as supporting evidence, and business results are evidence that communicates something. In Excerpt 3.7, we can also observe the idea of ventriloquism where Krawcheck speaks in the name of research and business results and makes them act or do something (Cooren, 2012).

In addition, in Excerpt 3.7, Krawcheck offers warranting strategies to give credibility to their recommendations (Limberg & Locher, 2012). This strategy eases her explanations by using evidence, data that support her arguments, or statements. Thus, the authors are cognizant of the importance of establishing credibility in their narrative and the information they offer, such as research, testimonies, and stories for an audience (professional women) who can be receptive to their messages. As noticed earlier and as part of presenting credibility, authors have interpreted research ahead of time, and readers take their word for what the research says and their expertise. They interpret research for the reader as the person who is familiar (expert) with this type of data.

**The Use of Should**

The use of should is a common strategy used by the authors to suggest that the issue under discussion must be addressed in greater depth (De Capua & Dunham, 2007). In terms of grammar, we know that “should” is a modal verb commonly used for recommendations and advice and also indicates obligation. The following excerpt demonstrates how this strategy is used and how Krawcheck addresses the issue of ideal leader behavior and diversity in organizations.

Excerpt 3.8: (Krawcheck, 2017, p. 77)

1 Here you may be noting that I spent the whole first part of this book saying that we
2 women should be allowed to act like ourselves, and that we shouldn't have to act
3 like guys to be successful. Yup, I made a pretty big deal about it. And asking for a
4 rise and negotiating for yourself and talking about your worth to a company —
5 well, we tend to think of those as guy things.

In line 1, we observe how the expression "I spent the whole part of this book saying…" functions as a metacommunication statement. Essentially, Krawcheck explicitly communicates, "I was saying a coherent argument and took my time explaining," in which she has brought some arguments reminding readers about readers' obligation. Thus, these claims are important to her in terms of delivering her advice. In addition, we observe how "should" is in the context of introducing an alternate argument at the beginning of the advice-giving in line 2. The modal verb "should" is part of the moral argument in which Krawcheck indicates that women have the moral responsibility of being women and acting like women. Notice that Excerpt 3.8 presents a moral portrayal of women as characters of organizations and how they should act in the different scenes in organizations (Roulston, 2001).

As Holmes (2017) argues, leadership qualities have been associated with authoritative, aggressive, confident, courageous, and competitive characteristics related to what are largely considered as masculine "behaviors." These characteristics support the idea that effective leaders should have a masculine approach to communication. This type of training is why some negative stereotypes persist regarding women's ability to manage leadership discourse (Holmes et al., 2003). The use of "should" denotes that what Krawcheck recommends in lines 2 and 3 ("women should be allowed to act like ourselves and that we shouldn't have to act like guys to be

successful") is not occurring, and she asks women to consider making that change by "not acting like guys." Therefore, according to the author, women are limited in terms of behaviors because they cannot be successful if they act like women. To succeed, women need to act like men and follow them as effective leader role models. I refer to a successful professional as someone who progresses and advances in her career by escalating positions.

In her advice, Krawcheck offers supportive speech acts by comforting and inquiring about a problem (Feng, 2014). In line 4 of Excerpt 3.8, Krawcheck indexes a couple of actions or petitions that, according to her, men use in the workplace, and women do not see them as part of women's actions (negotiating and taking your worth). Krawcheck suggests women see beyond what they think since women do not see negotiating and taking worth (value as a professional employee) as a woman's action. Thus, the reader is invited to negotiate and participate in activities that establish their self-worth because those are not exclusively for men. In other words, women are encouraged to demand those activities (negotiating and self-worth) and start establishing a counter-narrative claim participating in the master narrative of being a leader. Through her advice, Krawcheck situates her claims with a purpose by resisting the dominant discourse (Bamberg, 2004) of what a leader should be like and counters the hegemonic ideologies of leadership discourse.

Additionally, Krawcheck employs the multifunctional use of the pronoun "we" in lines 1, 2, and 5 as a tool of integration and inclusiveness. Using the communicative formulation "we women" (lines 1-2), Krawcheck specifies that she is part of that collective and seeks identification with her readers (DeCapua & Dunham, 2012). Thus, by incorporating the expression "we women," Krawcheck includes herself as someone who has experienced this same problem and also indicates that she has gone through the same thoughts or behaviors that the reader is experiencing. For

example, Krawcheck knows these experiences and understands them even though those experiences are not hers. In addition, notice that the formulation "we women" says that women are monolithic, with no variation among them. Therefore, Krawcheck knows all of the participants are part of the membership category, "women."

**Imperative Sentences**

Imperative sentences are utterances considered strong expressions with a direct request or command by using verb forms (DeCapua & Dunham, 2007). In advice-giving, imperative sentences invite action and retrospection (Limberg & Locher, 2012). Additionally, the use of imperatives can be attributed to the fact that the advice-giver is an expert (Morrow, 2012). For instance, the authors request women to assume some positions or take some actions in their careers as part of their advice. Specifically, we can observe the connection between authors and texts through direct speech acts, what the authors meant to say, and the type of action that text performs (Cooren, 2004). The authors in my data use linguistic expressions to demand what they direct. The following excerpt exemplifies this strategy.

Excerpt 3.9: (Krawcheck, 2017, p. 82)

1 Find out what it is that the company needs and values, then be the one to deliver
2 it.

In this directive, Krawcheck produces an imperative expression to direct women to act in a specific manner if they want to be noticed by the companies. By using the imperative verb formulation, Krawcheck talks directly to her advice-seeker. That means she establishes a direct conversation with her readers, exhorting them to act. Additionally, she uses the verb "find," which is intended to create an effect in the advice-seeker by telling them to address the problem (DeCapua & Dunham, 2007). By expressing "be the one," Krawcheck inquires women to be the agent who

delivers what the companies ask. In other words, this imperative expression indicates to women that this specific action is only theirs if women want to offer the company what they need. Thus, the author requires the readers to act. In Excerpt 3.9, the author and the reader are placed in a functional asymmetry of knowledge. For example, the author knows something the reader does not, the author knows what the reader is/is not doing, and the author, by virtue of advice-giving, imparts direction to the reader as to what to do. Regarding speech act, this text provides a directive that performs as advice (Cooren, 2004).

**Elaboration**

DeCapua and Dunham classify elaboration strategy as a content-based category. This type of strategy requires more explanation and some background in the issue discussed. Elaboration strategy offers statements that allow discussion of rationales, background information, and/or moral support. This approach provides additional information to complement the advice-giving and explains the "why" of something (DeCapua & Dunham, 2007, 2012). Usually, elaboration is combined with a positive criticism provided after advice-giving (Limberg & Locher, 2012). Another attribute of this strategy is to offer a rationale in advice-giving. According to this strategy, we notice that, occasionally, advice needs storytelling to attach to it to offer more rational and support arguments in the advice-giving, and advice is sometimes not explicit but in disguise. Thus, the author offers further information to explain and elaborate on her advice; in the same way, the elaboration in their storytelling allows the authors to accomplish things through the text (Cooren, 2015). In the following excerpt, Orr describes the diversity issue and the lack of adequate training in organizations.

Excerpt 3.10: (Orr, 2019, p. 139)

Pose as a friend, work as a spy. It's not diverse because only a small subset of human behavior is recognized and rewarded. Diversity doesn't happen by trying to mold everyone into the same narrow template. It doesn't happen by forcing people to adopt one set of rules and singular definition of success. It happens in exactly the opposite way: by letting people be themselves. It happens by holding the truth and objectivity as the values that govern our organizations, so we can better see the full scope of diverse talent sitting right before our eyes.

The strategy of elaboration is ubiquitous among the authors. The additional explanations provided to accompany the narrative allow the author to explain the "why" of the issues presented (DeCapua & Dunham, 2012) and provide additional accounts to validate the advice offered. In Excerpt 3.10, the author explains what diversity means and how organizations should manage it. Notice that Orr and Krawcheck concur that organizations train leaders according to the same rules and do not consider their leaders' diversity. Therefore, women are limited to acting like men if they want to progress in their careers. Both authors agree that organizations need to change their training approaches and appreciate the diversity they find in their leaders (men and women). Excerpt 3.10 shows how organizations insist on creating a specific model of an ideal leader in terms of metadiscourse. Thus, people in organizations are not themselves because they need to follow particular rules to be successful. Orr suggests that organizations should be objective and expand their diversity through the talents that they hold in their institutions.

Recall how Helgesen and Goldsmith, in Excerpt 3.4, start with a rationale before offering advice. Then the authors, along with the piece of advice, presume that women adopt some behaviors at work that keep them stuck. The authors suggest women should be "purposeful and

intentional about their choices" (line 2-3). Therefore, this stuck career issue is because women fail to behave in specific ways. According to the authors, the lack of career immobility is because women miss and neglect to select the right strategy, make decisions, and maximize their talents and opportunities. Thus, in Excerpt 3.4, the authors ask women to change their work behaviors if they desire to advance in their careers.

**Expressions of Empathy**

I define expressions of empathy as statements where syntactic and lexical items contribute to an empathic stance and how the advice-giver appeals to an empathic understanding of other's situations (Morrow, 2012). The advice-giver often asks for empathy or expresses empathy for the advice-seeker. In her discussion of entitlement and empathy in personal narratives, Shuman (2006) argues that "Empathy is the act of understanding others across time, space, or any difference in experience, but a shift is required to cross those differences" (p. 161). The teller (author) intends to react to a personal narrative, and this narrative enhances a representation of an experience that later becomes something larger than personal (Shuman, 2006). When this occurs, empathy converts into a process of transvaluation (Greenblatt, 1981), which is related to interpreting the experience and finding common ground. The following excerpt from the book *Lean in* presents an example of expressions of empathy.

Excerpt 3.11: (Sandberg, 2013, p. 49)

1 My hope, of course, is that we don't have to play by these archaic rules forever and
2 that eventually, we can just be ourselves.

Sandberg mentions "hope" to express common ground like something good would happen, and she is part of it. In Excerpt 3.11, Sandberg expresses empathy for the equality issue by including herself as a group member of this concern and using the pronoun "we" as a method of

identification. Furthermore, by using “we” in her strategy, Sandberg justifies her advice and appeals to an empathic understanding (Morrow, 2012) of what women are experiencing in organizations regarding the archaic rules and the ideal leader's conception.

**The Assertion of Necessity (You Need)**

The assertion of necessity is a revised version of what DeCapua and Dunham name the assertion of individual choice (2007). In their work on the pragmatics of advice-giving, DeCapua and Dunham describe this strategy as “statements that emphasize the importance of or need for, the advice-seeker to do what was best for himself/ herself” (p. 332). This strategy meets with the paradox of needing or choosing something. If you need something, then the choice does not exist. The authors in my corpus utilize the expression “you need” as part of their advice in an attempt to encourage an action. The semi-modal “need to” expresses strong obligation and necessity, specifically when something is required (Biber, Johansson, Leech, & Finegan, 2006). Thus, this semi-modal works implicitly like “must.” I reexamined this strategy, and I call it “the assertion of necessity,” which I define as a statement about something that is needed or requires an action to step forward and advance in an issue. It entails something necessary to achieve an objective.

In Excerpt 3.12, Sandberg advises women to disrupt the status quo in organizations (“<u>we need</u> to disrupt the status quo). In her advice, it is required to disrupt the status quo in order to achieve equality. Notice that Sandberg invites women to have a conversation about equality and gender norms. Sandberg uses the assertion of necessity to encourage women to act and find solutions for the equality issue. She refers to equality as something that women are required to work with in order to achieve the equality path. Sandberg’s narrative picks up as she recounts that after a couple of talks about gender, someone asked her, “So is this your thing now?”

Excerpt 3.12: (Sandberg, 2013, p. 146)

1 At the time, I didn't know how to respond. Now I would say yes. I made this my
2 thing because we need to disrupt the status quo. Staying quiet and fitting in may
3 have been all the first generation of women who entered corporate America could
4 do; in some cases, it might still be the safest path. But this strategy is not paying off
5 for women as a group. Instead, we need to speak out, identify the barriers that are
6 holding women back, and find solutions.

In her answer, Sandberg recommends women assume new roles as speaking out and using different strategies to work with equality. She includes herself as part of the issue by using the pronoun "we" in lines 2 and 5 and as a member of the women category who needs to address this issue. Therefore, Excerpt 3.12 carries two strategies of advice. The first is the assertion of necessity. This strategy invites women to do what is necessary to achieve equality. We observe that in her strategy of advice, the assertion of necessity, the word "need" is utilized as something that is required to be done, like "disrupt the status quo" and "speak out." Sandberg asks women not to stay quiet and just fit in the workplace. Thus, women need to pay attention to and find a solution to gain more equality if they want to advance in their careers. The second strategy is the imperative that commands women to act ("identify and find") towards equality issues. In the imperative strategy, Sandberg requests women to "identify the barriers that are holding women back and find solutions." Sandberg advises women to act and change their actual strategy at work, which is not working with the equality cause.

Excerpt 3.13: (Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018, p. 196)

1 As your sort through your decision, it's helpful to keep in mind the old saying:
2 Perfect is the enemy of good. In other words, don't agonize, don't imagine you need

3 to start in the perfect place or get every step exactly right; just get going.

In Excerpt 3.13, the authors use two strategies, the assertion of necessity and imperative sentences. Both strategies work together since the imperative sentence as command indicates what is necessary to do (lines 2-3). In Excerpt 3.13, the authors advise women to move forward and not wait for the ideal time or place; otherwise, they cannot keep advancing in their careers. Nothing is perfect, and women cannot paralyze themselves, waiting for the ideal moment to make the correct move in their careers. Notice that by using "you need" in line 2, the authors give an explicit command of action.

**Introspective Questions**

The introspective questions strategy is expected to help the advice-seeker to gain some perspective on the problem. Thus, by posing questions, this strategy intends to encourage the advice-seeker to reflect upon the different alternatives to resolve a situation (DeCapua & Dunham, 2007). Advising by introspective questions also tends to be a way of advice-free by using questions and asking for relevant issues (Butler et al., 2010). That means authors pose advice indirectly and make the audience reflect on the issue. The authors invite the readers to consider priorities and evaluate different viewpoints to help resolve the problem through advice. The following excerpt from Krawcheck (2017) demonstrates the use of this strategy:

Excerpt 3.14: (Krawcheck, 2017, p. 9)

1 What I mean is that the real power of diversity comes not by hiring a bunch of
2 women (or any other group) and teaching them, training them, coaching them. To
3 be men-like creatures: asking for the raise like men, showing decisiveness like men,
4 negotiating like men. It's us women (and other groups) embracing and doubling
5 down on the power of our diversity. It's us women deciding to celebrate rather than

6 apologizing for all the amazing unique qualities that we bring to the table — and to
7 give ourselves permission to act like our true selves at work. So why does so much
8 of the advice out there today have us conform, rather than own our difference?

In Excerpt 3.14, Krawcheck critiques how organizations are directing their training, seminars, workshops, and other activities toward women's leadership. According to Krawcheck, organizations mold women to be "men-like creatures." Excerpt 3.14 shows how gender asymmetries prevail in organizations. Additionally, this excerpt demonstrates how gender can be organized at every level of experience (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003), how leaders have a masculine conceptualization, and how organizations consider a set of characteristics for the ideal leader that are associated with men (Holmes, 2017). By using the introspective question strategy, Krawcheck focuses on how women should allow themselves to act like their "true selves" and bring to "the table" their unique qualities and celebrate them. Krawcheck's strategy directs women to question themselves and suggests women embrace their power of diversity and value their unique qualities. Krawcheck encourages women to act by celebrating their uniqueness. Now, let us consider what this means from the standpoint of gender identity. If persons in communication achieve their identities by being represented discursively (Fairhurst, 2007), how would it be possible for women to have representation if leadership training focuses on men's behaviors?

**Metaphors**

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphors are much more than language, for they are essential for the physical orientation of human beings in the world. They are used as a mechanism to create new meanings and new realities in our lives (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Consequently, they direct our sensemaking. This physical orientation allows us to pick certain parts of our experiences and treat them as entities or substances. As a result, metaphors

develop similarities that aim to understand our experiences. Because we understand the world in metaphorical terms, we explain concepts and give meaning to those concepts through the use of metaphors. In the same way, metaphors are related to our culture, experiences, and everyday life. We use metaphors strategically or unwittingly in our speech, conversations, life, and thoughts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). They are part of our tacit cultural knowledge (Polanyi, 1970). In a broad sense, all language is metaphorical because it creates meaning.

Metaphors organize text and aim "to gain an understanding of the metaphorical nature of our activities" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 7). Metaphor analysis is structured by looking at metaphorical expressions used in our everyday lives, using the most specific metaphorical concept, and identifying the entailments, which are the subcategorization that characterizes the relationship between metaphors. An example of this structure of a coherent system is *Time is money* (metaphorical concept); h*ow do you spend your time these days?* (metaphorical expression), and *Time is a valuable commodity* (entailment).

Organizational scholars have used metaphors to understand and study meanings in organizations. For example, Gareth Morgan (1986) employs metaphorical understandings to analyze the significance of organizational life through various metaphors such as organizations as machines or organizations as political systems, to mention a few. Therefore, through narrative and metaphors, we understand complex stories that answer our questions. In this study, we notice how authors use metaphors as a strategy to illustrate aspects of the workplace and how they address those aspects.

I draw from Rodney Jones' (2018) understanding of discourse as mediated action. Because metaphors mediate experience and become institutionalized (the same metaphors reappear across multiple texts), they are technology. In this particular case, metaphors are a technology of advice-

giving. Thus, metaphors influence the meaning-making process that can be made with language (Jones, 2018), and metaphors as a technology of advice help the way people use language.

In the following excerpts, I analyze the metaphors used by corporate women authors. Specifically, I draw from the insights on metaphors by Lakoff and Johnson in order to identify metaphorical concepts, metaphorical expressions, and entitlements. In addition, I explore the advice-giving provided in the metaphorical expressions. From my data, the container metaphor is used most prominently. This type of metaphor is seen as objects that we move, entities, or substances (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The metaphors in my corpus identify power, options, opportunities, and decisions as containers that one can move, push, and manage.

***Power and Authority***

Excerpt 3.15: (Krawcheck, 2017, p. 24)

1 But it's not enough to hold that power. We need to own that power and put it to
2 work.

First, we observe the conceptual metaphor is *Power is a tool* with a specific metaphorical expression in line 1, which entails that *Power is usable*, *Power is carried*, and *Power can be manipulated*. Krawcheck describes how women should act when they are granted power or authority as part of their positions. She advises women about the importance of managing that power or authority at work. Krawcheck describes power as an object that someone can touch, hold, and do something with it. Krawcheck indicates that "it is not enough to hold that power;" therefore, she urges women to use the power or authority which their positions allow them. In other words, she encourages women to act and take action in their positions. Thus, Krawcheck calls for women's empowerment. Additionally, in Excerpt 3.15, she invites women "to own that power and put it to work." Power represents possession and something you are authorized to use, and you

should use it. Power is also exemplified as an agent capable of wielding the technology for a particular gain. In the same way, power is used as an object that does something, and it can work. Thus, power symbolizes an object that women can put to work for their benefit. Krawcheck advises women to be doers, to use that power because, according to her, women are not using that power.

***Careers and Options***

In the following excerpt, Sandberg advises women on managing their options and how to act to keep themselves moving forward in their careers.

Excerpt 3.16: (Sandberg, 2013, p. 103)

1 Anyone lucky enough to have options should keep them open. Don't enter the
2 workplace already looking for the exit. Don't put on the brakes. Accelerate. Keep
3 a foot on the gas pedal until a decision must be made. That's the only way to
4 ensure that when that day comes, there will be a real decision to make.

According to Sandberg, women hold back their careers because they think about future decisions such as getting married or having children. Notice that it is interesting to mention the binary and the assumption that women need to choose between career or family. The conceptual metaphor is *Career is a race* with the metaphorical expressions in lines 2 and 3, which entail that *Careers can be driven*. Sandberg mentions "options" as an object that simulates a door in which a person can enter freely, and the person decides how to work with it (the option). She encourages women to leave those doors open and not close them before the precise time. In line 2, Sandberg directs an action which she compares with a race car. This race car represents how women should keep going and taking those opportunities or options that the workplace offers them. The brakes symbolize how women should not stop their own career aspirations and opportunities. In line 3, Sandberg uses another metaphorical expression to impart that women need to keep going and

moving forward. The lack of action to "keep the foot on the pedal" causes women to lose professional opportunities. Thus, Sandberg has noticed that many opportunities and promotions are lost because women stop pursuing them. Sandberg notes that women leave (not accepting or seeking promotions) because of future marriage and motherhood decisions. Therefore, women believe that their future obligations will not allow them to perform that possible new promotion. Thus, Sandberg has observed that women withdraw themselves from professional opportunities.

***Equality and Leadership Gap***

Sandberg has been especially vocal in her encouragement by advising women to do more for their careers. Throughout her book, metaphors are a common tool that Sandberg uses in her narratives to explain her advice-giving. In her chapter *Working together toward equality*, she employs the following metaphorical expression:

Excerpt 3.17: (Sandberg, 2013, p. 172)

The hard work of generations before us means that equality is within our reach. We can close the leadership gap now. Each individual's success can make success a little easier for the next. We can do this — for ourselves, for one another, for our daughters, and for our sons. If we push hard now, this next wave can be the last wave. In the future, there will be no female leaders. There will be just leaders.

In Excerpt 3.17, we find multiple metaphors: *Actions are movements, Equality is an object*, and *Change is a wave*. As we notice with these metaphors, our conceptual system plays a central role when explaining our everyday realities, and concepts can be understood through several different metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Let's analyze the principal conceptual metaphor. *Actions are movements* with the metaphorical expression "If we push hard now, this next wave can be the last wave*,"* which entails that *Actions can bring changes* or *Actions can do changes.*

This metaphor uncovers the social domain between genders and their leadership gap. Men are positioned as ideal leaders and role models if women want to be leaders. This metaphor intends to explain the fight against women's leadership gap in the workplace and what direction equality should take (there will be just leaders without a gender distinction). Equality is presented as an object touchable and reachable. In Excerpt 3.17, women are positioned as not having done enough in their capacity to reach this tangible goal (equality). Women are failing to seize the opportunity that is right in front of them. This narrative navigates the equality and leadership gap, especially how women have attempted to close the leadership gap for generations. Sandberg offers her advice with a supportive act in which she is inquiring about a problem and provides information, knowledge, and guidance to resolve a problem (Feng, 2014). However, by explaining how women can contribute to equality, Sandberg tells women to "push hard now." When someone pushes harder, the person is close to accomplishing the goal that is "pushed" because the person is asked for an extra effort. This metaphorical phrase presents the leadership gap as a container/object that is pushed to the other side, but it still needs to be pushed harder, and now it is the moment to do it. Push represents the actions taken towards closing the gap. Therefore, women need to push more because this issue is not over and because if they stop, all the efforts of previous generations would be in vain. As she specifies, Sandberg invites women to push because this could be the last push since "this wave can be the last wave." This expression conveys that Sandberg does not know if this is the last wave to struggle with the leadership gap, but she recognizes that pushing now can signify an essential achievement in the leadership gap issue. If she indicates that "this wave can be the last wave," Sandberg believes that the leadership gap issue is close to its end.

In addition, in Excerpt 3.17, we observe expressions of empathy in Sandberg's advice. A speaker or narrator can convey a stance as internal feelings and display a stance toward social

situations and others (Tracy & Robles, 2013). Sandberg takes an empathetic stance towards what other women have done about the equality issue and urges their advice recipients (women) to be empathetic with future women generations. In this particular example, the advice-giver recommends women be empathetic and try to understand others (Morrow, 2012) who are part of the same issue. Thus, Sandberg presents an account in which she produces a stance explaining the equality issues (Du Bois, 2007).

***Opportunities and Decisions***

Metaphors constitute concepts like gender and gender styles (Koller, 2011). As a result, we see how metaphors are used to talk about men and women and how metaphors construct discourses and social domains that are identified as masculine or feminine. The following example illustrates how women and their gender are created through a metaphor used by Sandberg.

Excerpt 3.18: (Sandberg, 2013, p. 115)

1 Women face enough barriers to professional success.

Through this metaphorical expression, Sandberg describes what women encounter in the workplace. In this sentence, the metaphor concept employed is *Women are climbers* with the metaphorical expression *Women face enough barriers*, and the entailment is *Women confront obstacles*. The metaphorical expression "women face enough barriers..." depicts how women struggle against organizational barriers and how their gender works two times more than men to achieve success. This metaphor also describes women as the gender which struggles the most to reach professional success. Thus, this metaphor represents that it is more complicated for women to grow and accomplish professional success in organizations because they face more obstacles in their career paths.

### *Value and Women*

Turning to another author, Orr provides another metaphor that drives to gender's description. It is important to note that she does not believe in Sandberg's motto, "lean in." Orr believes that women have many values and qualities to offer to organizations, and women do not need to behave as a man to achieve success. The following excerpt shows how she constitutes a woman.

Excerpt 3.19: (Orr, 2019, p. xxvii)

1 Perhaps the most difficult part for me to accept was the incessant stream of advice
2 on how to behave. Instead of encouraging us to lean in to our individual strengths
3 and celebrate the value women bring to the table, we were essentially being told to
4 behave more like a man.

In the metaphorical expression underlined in line 3, Orr uses the metaphor *Value is an object* which entails *Value as something you give or hand out.* Value is described as an object that you bring and offer to others. Orr also depicts women as a gender that can make things happen. Thus, women offer their individual strengths and a range of values and ideas. The expression "bring to the table" signifies what women add and contribute to organizations with their particular uniqueness without behaving like men. Additionally, we observe that the expression "instead of encouraging us" describes women as the gender that needs to be advised and encouraged to be successful. In other words, women need motivation and encouragement to grow professionally; thus, these components lead to organizations preparing leadership training exclusively for women.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the strategies of authorship. Specifically, I have shown how the authors use a repertoire of strategies to approach and advise women on managing their careers and

organizations' issues. I analyzed nine strategies: the use of pronouns, credibility, the use of should, imperative sentences, elaboration, expressions of empathy, the assertion of necessity, introspective questions, and metaphors. Some strategies help the authors form part of the women category and create identification. This is especially accomplished when corporate women employ pronouns as a strategy. As we know, pronouns can indicate nothing or be used as a placeholder. However, depending on the context and the discourse surrounding this can change. This chapter shows how the authors manipulate pronouns to accomplish inclusiveness, closeness, and familiarity. Therefore, context is crucial. Unlike the professional women (advice-seekers), other strategies are centered around building credibility by showcasing the authors' experiences and overcoming the issues presented to position them as fit to be in the advice-giving position. Thus, corporate women as experts are authorized to advise and inform professional women on how they need to act at work and their careers. Some corporate women are even entitled to other professional women's experiences, and they use women's stories to represent workplace issues. These corporate women feel comfortable sharing those experiences as relatable stories for other women to identify with.

In my corpus, credibility, elaboration, and pronouns were the most powerful strategies. Authors organize credibility by emphasizing warranting strategies to invoke personal stories, testimonies, data/ statistics, and cite sources. In this way, authors present themselves as someone knowledgeable who researches leadership issues. Most of the time, authors reference sources such as studies about leadership or women's behaviors. By using credibility, authors frequently emphasize their expertise and how familiar they are with scholarly information. In addition, elaboration strategy was crucial for the authors when they make a case and need to offer some background and additional explanation to their advice.

The pronoun strategy was essential to seek identification and bonding with the readers. Formulations like “I Know,” “I understand,” and “I’ve been there” enact empathy, identification, and understanding. In addition, the constant use of “you” was well-used when the author wanted to be specific and direct, like “you are stuck.” In line with this, we observe how advice carries the metadiscourse of innateness, helplessness, gendered inability, and gendered leadership throughout the strategies of authorship. A formulation like “behaviors that keep you stuck” supports the metadiscourse that women are unable to succeed as leaders. This formulation reinforces helplessness and expresses that women need help in leadership matters because they are doing something wrong. According to the authors and their advice, women do not maximize their opportunities and talents, and women do not see their self-worth. Along with this, training in organizations is a tremendous setback for women. We learned how organizations neglect to train women as women, acknowledge their value, or offer representation. The way training is structured in organizations emulates men’s behaviors and positions them as role models. Therefore, training is a persistent issue that needs to be assessed.

In the next chapter, I analyze the authors' personal narratives and how these stories embed in master narratives within which advice makes sense. In the same way, I examine how the authors negotiate to counter the master narratives regarding leadership, authority, and gender expectations in organizations.

# CHAPTER FOUR:

# ADVICE AS A NARRATIVE

In this chapter, I examine how advice takes the form of a narrative, in which the authors of the books I examine become characters of the events of their professional experiences. Also positioned as the storytellers, the authors reflect on the workplace experiences, thus availing themselves of their own stories to advise the readers. Some of the experiences recounted are related to motherhood and authors' challenges, such as managing time and work-life balance. Other experiences are associated with being heard and taken into consideration in the decision-making process. The corporate women, too, are characters in the stories of the authors, for the stories are rendered tellable (Ochs & Capps, 2001) by virtue of the existence of the professional women who require the advice to progress in their careers. Specifically, I analyze the authors' personal narratives in their self-help literature and how these are embedded in and activate master narratives (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004) within which advice makes sense. I examine how personal narratives index and reconstruct master narratives of women's leadership, gender differences, and gender expectations. I conclude with how these personal narratives follow narrative structure to deliver advice and how the authors negotiate to fit in the master narratives.

## A View on Narrative

Stories are part of our everyday life. From an early age, we understand how to tell stories, and through stories, we learn how to answer questions that give us genuine narrative qualities

(Hyvärinen, 2013). Thus, narratives are an integral part of our lives and our mundane activities; and they are not restricted to novels or tales (Bruner, 1991). Van De Mieroop (2021) argues that "stories are ubiquitous in human interaction, as people make sense of their lives through storytelling" (p. 2). This is not lost on leadership training programs, where storytelling is a means of strategizing how to address organizational issues by organizational consultants intent on changing particular corporate practices (Gergen & Gergen, 2006). In the same way, "narratives are seen not as fixed texts but as communicative performances that are "embodied, material, and concrete" (Langellier, 1989, p. 267), influencing particular relations of power" (Mumby & Ashcraft, 2006, p. 78).

According to Labov's temporal model of narrative, which is arguably the model in narrative analysis from which all others emerge, respond to, or deviate from, "Narrative is concerned with personal experience and thus taken to be a representation of an actual occurrence" (in Linde, 1993, p. 68). Because of this presumption of the correspondence of life with story, individuals utilize narratives for "connecting to others and for understanding and explaining the self," where life and story are mutually and ongoingly constituted (McLean & Syed, 2015, p. 322). Indeed, the corporate women authors in this study narrativize their personal experience to render career matters tellable in terms of advice that can be translated to the stories encountered by other women managing workplace situations and careers. Through stories, the authors advise women readers on how to work with traits like "leadership," "authority," and "confidence," among others. Personal narratives' quality and tellability are evident in choosing significant events (Ochs & Capps, 2001) related to women's leadership issues. The authors select tellable accounts about stories that are familiar situations for females in the workplace. These particular stories are situations that touch women's lives and personal experiences related to women's interests.

Self-help literature is a narrative genre that contributes to the master narratives of the gendering of women's leadership. Swales (1985), in his definition of the genre, notes that:

> A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. (p. 58)

Thus, it is all about sharing purposes and events in which the expert members create a schematic structure in their discourse and influence its content. This specific self-help literature genre has a particular communicative purpose in advising professional women, and the narrators position themselves as experts contributing to the women's leadership narrative. Through this genre, narrators use narrative as a basis for sensemaking and understanding the world (Fairhurst, 2007).

Additionally, I observe that the self-help literature follows the elements identified by studies of narrative: characters, setting or scenes, and a plot. Thus, the narratives I examine display attributes of autobiography, where the authors talk about their expectations in the social interactions and show how their personalities are affected by the changes (Vonèche, 2001). The authors use autobiography to create their Self and "its doings, reflections, thoughts, and place in the world" (Bruner, 2001, p.25). Drawing on Van De Mieroop's research (2017) and Labov's analytical framework (1972; 1997), I analyze how the authors structure their personal narratives to display advice-giving and how they locate their personal stories within recognizable master narratives. I also analyze how the authors negotiate an alternative narrative to the master narratives for the purpose of creating a social change. Alternative narratives are stories created to resist the

master narrative (McLean & Syed, 2015), also known as counter-narratives. Bamberg (2004) argues that counter-narratives are claims that resist the dominant discourses, and by examining counter-narratives, we could indicate what specific purposes authors may serve (for example, liberating an agenda). In the narrative evaluation, the narrator identifies a new position and counters some master narratives that can lead to a change or transformation. Therefore, narratives serve as a tool to facilitate that transformation (Bamberg, 2012). In the books I examine, counter-narratives are part of advice-giving since these books aim to create changes or social arrangements in which leadership is equally accessible to women. Below, I first examine how the self-help literature is structured. I then analyze four narratives from the self-help literature in my data set.

## Narratives and Labov's Narrative Model

Narratives and the self are mutually constituted. Thus, narratives bring forth the selves of the teller, and through the narrative, the teller unfolds her expectations and shapes experiences by giving an order to the events (Ochs & Capps, 1996). These selves may multiply depending on the dimension as past or present events that the narrators bring them forth. The notion of past and present events become part of knowing ourselves and understanding our experiences (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Specifically, narratives of personal experiences are discursive performances in which narrators "rehearse or even relive events of his past" in the telling (Labov, 1972). If we think through this assumption, the personal experiences and rehearsed events make narratives develop and create characters and plots. According to Labov (1997), personal narratives are mostly organized with a temporal juncture, and when the speaker recounts the "events that have entered into the speaker's biography are emotionally and socially evaluated and so transformed from raw experience" (p. 399). This could be changed since personal narratives transform how we pay attention to and feel about the experiences (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Furthermore, when narrators

arrange their stories, they situate their experiences "globally by drawing on cultural knowledge" (Schiffrin, 1996, as cited in Van De Mieroop et al., 2017, p. 3). Thus, narrators sketch their stories based on master narratives even though the narrators rarely make explicit references with master narratives (Van De Mieroop et al., 2017).

According to Labov's framework, narratives have a structure and follow specific patterns. Most of the time, the sequential clauses follow the structure of abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result or resolution, and coda (Labov, 1972, 1997). I include the definition of each ordered structural part of the narrative designed by Labov (1972; 1997).

(1) Abstract – This is an initial clause in a narrative that reports the narrative's entire sequence of events.

(2) Orientation – This gives information on the time, place of the events of a narrative, the participants' identities, and their initial behavior.

(3) Complicating action – It is a sequential clause that reports the next event in response to a potential question: "And what happened then?"

(4) Evaluation – It is the information on the consequences of the event for human needs and desires.

(5) Result or resolution – What finally happened?

(6) Coda – This is a final clause that returns the narrative to the time of speaking, precluding a potential question: "And what happened then?"

It is important to note that Labov's model is for oral narratives; however, I choose to apply it to this analysis of written discourse since the narratives in my data are held in a conversational, informal register. Thus, I argue that these narratives are hybrid texts, which authors purposefully render conversational. Fairclough (2003) calls this hybridity conversationalization, which he

explains as “the tendency towards a simulation of conversation in public interactions and texts” (p. 224). Also, in many cases, written discourse is ambivalent between informing and persuasion (Fairclough, 1995). Although persuasion is a significant speech function, certainly readers can be influenced by text as well.

**Narrative Structure in the Self-Help Literature**

In the following Excerpt 4.1, Krawcheck frames her story as a personal experience and evaluates her story, making her recognize that being a woman was a controversial issue at the workplace. Krawcheck recalls her time working at Smith Barney as a financial analyst. This event was between 2007 and 2008 when the market collapsed, and clients lost an excessive amount of money in their investments. The loss occurred because Smith Barney’s team misread the investments' risk, and this mistake cost the clients a large amount of money.

Excerpt 4.1: I got fired for being different (Krawcheck, 2017, p. 4-5)

1 And so, I approached my boss, the new CEO of Citigroup, with the position,
3 unorthodox on Wall Street, that we should share some pain of the mistake — our
4 mistake — with our clients. I proposed giving them back some money that our
5 miscalculation had cost them. My boss wouldn’t even meet with me to discuss it.
6 Instead, he sent one of his squad to let me know that his answer was no – no way
7 were we returning any of the money we had lost our client. Not a cent of it.
8 Surely, I reasoned, he hadn’t understood that we had made a mistake, which we
9 should make right. So, I tried again, appealing to him with a new analysis of how
10 badly our clients had been hit as a result of costly miscalculations; he still said no.
11 I became obsessed, totally consumed with thinking about the clients whom we had
12 let down. The clients whom we had built relationships with, who had trusted us to

make the right investment decisions for them. And when I couldn't think about them anymore, I thought about long-term harm that we were doing to our business. We had shaken those clients' confidence in us, so why would they ever want to invest their hard-earned dollars with us again? I sent another analysis and another; he said no again and again. The message I was sent was to "sit down and shut up." I remember at one point during this back-and-forth — this would be around the time the CEO stopped calling on me in executive committee meetings — thinking that if I took one step further, the *best* outcome would be that I would lose my job and we would return some of our clients' money. The more likely outcome was that we wouldn't return their money — and I would still lose my job. I took one more step. The board of directors of the company asked to be briefed on the debate. We met with them, played out the pro and cons, and they voted to partially reimburse the clients… and no big surprise, within months my boss fired me — yep, I was out of the company and onto my backside. The company leaked the news to CNBC before it was finalized; I will never forget watching it come across the tape from what would soon no longer be my office. If you'd asked me in that moment, as I was putting framed photos of my kids into a cardboard box, if I'd been fired because I was a woman, I would have told you, *Absolutely not! That's ridiculous. It was a good old-fashioned business disagreement. How could you even imply such a thing?* But, now, as time has given me the distance and perspective — and the research analyst in me has replaced emotion with facts — I'd say, *Yes, in a way, I believe I was*. I know that's a horrifying statement. But you'll see my larger point in just a minute. I don't mean I was fired because I had

36 different body parts; I mean I was fired for being different, for challenging the
37 majority opinion, for speaking up, for daring to go against the grain. I was fired for
38 calling out the risk, prioritizing the long term, and for putting client relationships
39 ahead of the short-term bottom line. In other words, I was fired for some of the
40 things that, the research you'll read about in subsequent chapters tell me, were
41 driven…at least in some part…by my being female.

Following Labov's narrative phases, Krawcheck's narrative utilizes a temporal structure. Her story begins with an abstract (lines 1-4) in which Krawcheck declares the issue, and then she reports the setting or scene, so the readers situate themselves in the workplace landscape. Krawcheck offers (lines 1-5) a certain orientation by providing the participants' identities (herself, her boss, and any intermediary officer) in the story and provides the initial behavior in the story's sequence. Thus, Krawcheck identifies the "the cast of characters" and the participants' activities by touching on their cultural knowledge related to them (Roulston, 2001). By "cast of characters," Roulston describes the use of a particular membership categorization device, for example, boss or meeting participants. That is, Krawcheck offers some details about the event by describing her boss and the event as contentious (e.g., in line 5, "My boss wouldn't even meet with me to discuss it").

We see how characters are presented by the speaker's accounts, moral qualities, and roles of the participants (Roulston, 2001). The characters' roles emerge from the speaker's story (script) and co-production of the conversational setting. When Krawcheck indicates in line 11 that she became obsessed with the issue, she embarks on the phase of complicating action in which she announces that something will happen next. In fact, what happens is that she spoke with the board of directors, looking for others to listen to her recommendation. Subsequently, in the narrative,

after arguing about client trust and client relationships (lines 12-17), she explains what happens next (in lines 16-18, “I sent another analysis and another; he said no again and again. The message I was sent was to “sit down and shut up”). Thus, in these lines, we note the sequential clauses regarding what happens next.

In lines 36 and 37, Krawcheck portrays herself as a person with principles and values (e.g., line 37, “for speaking up”); thus, she addresses and negotiates how values and actions are understood by depicting herself as a good person (Linde, 1993). It is important to note that a good person functions as the protagonist and the hero of the story. Narratives of personal experiences present perspectives in the events, and those stories are rooted in a moral stance about how one ought to live in the world (Ochs & Capps, 2001). Subsequently, Krawcheck turns to the evaluation phase (lines 36-37); specifically, she struggles to understand how acting righteous caused her to be fired. Similarly, the narrative presents how Krawcheck claims her moral values and cares for other people (i.e., her clients). As part of her reflection, Krawcheck explains the consequences of the events as human and her needs (Labov, 1972; 1997); that is, the unexpected way of how she got fired. In terms of result or resolution, first, Krawcheck recounts how she was fired and how abrupt it was. Second, in this result phase, she finds out what the principal reason for being fired was (“I was fired for being different, for challenging the majority opinion, for speaking up, for daring to go against the grain”).

In the same way, in lines 37-39, Krawcheck embraces the final phase, the coda. She returns the narrative to the present time, indicating to the audience what comes next and what they will read and find in the subsequent chapters. The narrative allows the character (Krawcheck) to account for past, present, and future, thus adding to the narrator's authority. The next book’s chapters will present research that made her understand the real reasons why she was fired (being

a woman). Hence, we observe how, during this narrative, the narrator adopts the narrative of personal experience and its structure. As we note, Krawcheck's story moves through all of Labov's phases during the sequence of her narrative, and the narrative seems like speech allowing the author to sound informal and direct. Krawcheck, as a speaker, structures her utterances to reproduce her own thoughts without using reported speech. This can be problematic since, according to Holt, reported speech makes the reproduction of a narrative more accurate and more reliable than other forms because the original speaker is responsible for what he or she said (Holt, 1996; 2000). In addition, the evaluation is the most important part of the narrative; without it, there is no narrative, and we note all narrative elements add up to the evaluation. In terms of advice-giving, it is implicit since she uses an elaboration strategy to explain and expand the situation and register sequences of her actions. Her advice comprises paying attention to diversity and speaking up if a person must.

## Narrative Characters

While the authors (corporate women who give advice to the readers) act as narrators of their stories (corporate women who learned something that renders them competent to give advice), we notice that they also act as characters who speak in the story (corporate women in the midst of events requiring narrativization) as well as reflect and evaluate their own actions in the story. In other words, they occupy multiple speaking positions (pronouns) at the same time. The fact that the authors/ narrators are characters or protagonists of their stories sometimes causes tensions between the narrator and the character. In their narratives, we observe that the authors reflect on their experiences, and in many instances, they evaluate those experiences. Hence, they (the authors/narrators) criticize their actions as characters, especially how they have acted or managed previous work situations. Some of them even dislike their actions, and they talk about

what they learned from the situation. Thus, we notice that the narrator has done research and knows what certainly happened in the situation due to her evaluation or reflection, contrary to what the character knows. At times, we note that the narrators seem to ascribe or dissociate themselves from the stories throughout their narratives.

In addition, in terms of structure, we observe that the authors control the characters, most of the narrative leads to evaluation, and the narrative has a reflection that leads to some advice. Thus, the authors use reflection as the purpose of evaluation in order to explain concepts, ideas, and opinions, and along with it, authors address their failures in their workplace interactions. As part of the evaluation, the narrator uses her cultural knowledge and social order to recognize the characters and describe the scenes. Also, they add a moral dimension to the account (Roulston, 2001). These moral implications may lead to how the story should be heard. This moral corresponds to what people should retain or learn from the story; thus, authors' involvement is not only telling a story but also achieving "to express a purpose or aim of the actor" (Goffman, 1963, p. 43). In this case, the actor is the author/ narrator who intends to advise other women.

In Excerpt 4.1, Krawcheck, before introducing the characters, places the characters in time and space to give some order to what happened in the story (Bamberg, 2012). Subsequently, Krawcheck introduces the characters (lines 1-5), herself, her boss, and other members of the company ("one of the squads"). Specifically, Krawcheck describes the goals and roles of each character regarding the situation to evaluate. Additionally, we observe that in this story, Krawcheck does not distance herself from being the protagonist. Krawcheck always uses the pronoun "I" to identify herself as the main character of this story, allowing her to position herself as an authority who has experienced the paradoxes of organizations and understood how organizations work.

All stories have protagonists, antagonists, and support characters, and in Excerpt 4.1 the author makes sure to present the main characters of the story and the roles of each one. The characters' roles emerge from the narrator's interpretation and production (Roulston, 2001), in which she offers a description of specific characters. In lines 1-5, Krawcheck confirms her boss as the antagonist of the story. She specifically focuses on describing the antagonist (line 5, "My boss wouldn't even meet with me to discuss it.") when she recounts the events. Krawcheck openly depicts him as the one who did not want to talk to her and sends another person on his behalf in line 6. Notice that Krawcheck's account presents her boss as an unreliable character, and the depiction of his moral character is achieved by recounting the scenes (Roulston, 2001). This effort of calling the characters becomes a necessary resource to describe the narrative accounts (Roulston, 2001). Additionally, as the protagonist, Krawcheck portrays herself as the character who wants to act reasonably and do what is right.

We note that throughout her storytelling, the protagonist (Krawcheck) does not understand what happened at that time, the meaning of the director's actions, and the responses to her attempts. That is because the protagonist insisted on her suggestion (lines 8-9) without any success. However, Krawcheck, in her position as narrator, after thinking about the event for years, recognizes that her gender was part of her boss' decisions which is her claim to produce the story. During the narrative, Krawcheck maintains the attachment between the narrator and the protagonist, and she expresses what she learned from that event. As we see, her first thought about the event was to call the incident "a good old-fashioned business disagreement." Based on her experience, she thought that what happened between her boss and her was a difference in opinion on managing specific business decisions. Nevertheless, she noticed that her woman's nature is implicated in her boss' decision. In her reflection, she finds some cues that explain why she was

fired; being a woman and being different (line 36). We observe some elements like, for example, she was a minority, and her opinion differed from the rest of the male colleagues. Therefore, she was not part of the club (male colleagues), which implies that she approaches or manages business' decisions differently; thus, she is continuously prevented from communicating directly with the boss.

## Types of Plot

The plot is an essential component of the narrative. It is the part in which readers become aware of what happens in the story (Linde, 1993) and what allows us to study the problem (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012). The plot is part of the tellable or reportable event and a product of an unexpected activity that calls for being accountable for the story (Labov, 2001). According to Labov (2001), narratives are initiated to respond to a question "What happened?" (external stimulus) or "I've got to tell you what happened" (internal stimulus). In Excerpt 4.1, the implicit question is, "Why did I get fired?" Then, the narrative comes to the full elaboration of the personal narrative. In the women's corporate books, as we note, the plot is usually framed as an evaluation of a personal experience or an explanation of any learning process that provides an understanding of what happened during those events. This evaluation gives the authors the authority to advise other women because of their corporate women's position and their learnings of their careers. Thus, the use of this type of story is a reaffirmation of self-legitimation and invokes authority by contesting part of the story (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012), specifically the consequences or the results of the event.

During the plot description in Excerpt 4.1, as a narrator, Krawcheck reminisces and reflects on a conflictive situation she experienced in which she was fired. Krawcheck, in her role of narrator, evaluates the actions and the approaches of the protagonist (herself) meticulously. We

notice that Krawcheck encounters a difficult situation where she struggles with the company's decisions, and she attempts to promote her completely different solution to the problem. In Excerpt 4.1, Krawcheck criticizes the situation and reconciles the company's decision at that time. Thus, she carefully evaluates her efforts to present her perspective in a business decision and understand the outcome of those business decisions (lines 3, 8, 22). As narrator, we observe that Krawcheck intends to understand why the company did not accept her business recommendation and how her gender status is related to the company's decision.

Authors choose stories that create familiarity with the audience; therefore, Krawcheck selects stories that women can identify with. The narrative is an ordinary story in its most profound sense, and it intends to convey important experiences of the author's own life (Labov, 1997). In terms of narrative effectiveness, Krawcheck presents herself as a trustworthy witness of her own experience and recreates the Self by reflecting on the event. On the one hand, being a witness entitles her to tell the story even though the story could include other voices (Shuman, 2006). On the other hand, by recreating her Self, Krawcheck explains the evolution of her thoughts about the situation. This reflection on her Self and doing research allow her to change her perspective about the situation. Thus, this story's plot is a self-evaluation of the event in which she evaluates her actions, the company's actions, and the consequences of the parties' actions.

## Master Narratives

Individuals exist within several social contexts, and it could be problematic for them to fit into some master narratives. I refer to context as the interactional meaning that, for example, references to "all background kinds of information that shape how interactional meanings get assigned to what is said" (Tracy & Robles, 2013, p. 9). Meanwhile, McLane and Syed (2015) define master narratives as follows:

> Master narratives are culturally shared stories that tell us about a given culture and provide guidance on how to be a "good" member of a culture; they are a part of the structure of society. As individuals construct a personal narrative, they negotiate with and internalize these master narratives – they are the material they have to work with to understand how to live a good life. (p. 320)

Thus, narrators locate their experiences by drawing on cultural knowledge (Schiffrin, 1996, as cited in Van De Mieroop et al., 2017), including master narratives or "big D" discourse. In their research, Van De Mieroop et al. (2017) demonstrate how master narratives accomplish essential identity work and narrators construct "default identities" in which they share cultural knowledge and master narratives that provide tacit background to their stories. Similarly, Bamberg (2004), in his research regarding master narratives, argues that authors position themselves in the story and are subject to that story without escape due to general cultural expectations. Gender norms and expectations establish a specific type of role that men and women are supposed to fulfill in society (Allen et al., 2016). However, even though master narratives "constrain and delineate the subjects," they also provide guidance, and without them, we would be lost because master narratives offer a sense of direction (Bamberg, 2004, p. 360). The subjects become attuned to them because master narratives tend to normalize events. Bamberg (2004) notes that "Master narratives structure how the world is intelligible, and therefore permeate the petit narratives of our everyday talk" (p. 361). Thus, individuals appeal to master narratives unwittingly.

In organizations, leaders belong to a type of membership categorization in which men are predominantly related to particular attributes that position them as the leader role model. Membership category is a type of people, for example, "leaders" or "females" (Fairhurst, 2007). These categories are used "to make claims and/or their actions accountable" (Fairhurst, 2007,

p.51). Thus, professional women struggle with some master narratives associated with the workplace and how a leader should be, and also, professional women attempt to fit in and make these master narratives functional in their lives (McLean & Syed, 2015).

The self-help literature examined in this study shows how authors organize master narratives in their stories. In Excerpt 4.1, we observe some lexical devices that take us to one of the principles of coherence: causality. According to Linde (1993), we tend to read causality into narrative sequences, and some clauses offer us formal markers such as because, since, therefore, and the reason that. For example, in lines 29 and 34, the author uses the word "because" as a lexical device to present causality.

In Excerpt 4.1, we note that one of the master narratives presented is *Men are leaders*. In organizations, men are identified as the gender associated with authority, and research shows that men and women are differently perceived when they exercise power in their positions (Ladegaard, 2011). Thus, in Excerpt 4.1 (lines 4-5), we observe how this master narrative dominates when Krawcheck intends to suggest and bring a solution to her boss and company. Krawcheck becomes completely powerless (lines 17-18) in the company and with limited access to crucial company executives (lines 18-19, "this would be around the time the CEO stopped calling on me in executive committee meetings"). This limited access created a barrier that reduced her power to express her ideas and be equally considered in her contributions. Therefore, by preventing her from accessing company executives and disregarding her recommendations, the boss and other executives did not perceive her or her gender as an authoritative agent.

However, from another standpoint, in the last sentence (lines 39-41), where she concludes that being a female was a significant part of what happened in the event, Krawcheck invokes how the power of research leads her to her analysis, conclusions, and the authority to advise other

women in this matter. Thus, this authority collaborates and produces this context between the author/narrator and participants/readers. Krawcheck has the role of presenting information and being accountable, and participants engage in the text (Bartesaghi et al., 2020).

**Master Narratives in the Workplace**

Excerpt 4.2 is from *Lean In.* This narrative presents how Sandberg (2013) examines some prominent women's master narratives, such as deciding between their professional careers and motherhood.

Excerpt 4.2: Returning to my job (Sandberg, 2013, p.127-128)

Three months later, my non-leaves maternity leave ended. I was returning to a job I loved, but as I pulled the car out of the driveway to head to the office for my first full day back, I felt a tightness in my chest, and tears started to flow down my cheeks. Even though I had worked throughout my "time off", I had done so almost entirely from home with my son right next to me. Going back to the office meant a dramatic change in the amount of time I would see him. If I returned to my typical twelve-hour days, I would leave the house before he woke up, and return after he was asleep. In order to spend any time with him at all, I was going to have to make changes…and stick to them.

I started arriving at work around 9:00 a.m. and leaving at 5:30 p.m. This schedule allowed me to nurse my son before I left and get home in time to nurse again before putting him to sleep. I was scared that I would lose credibility, or even my entire job, if anyone knew that these were my new in-the-office hours. To compensate, I started checking e-mails around 5:00 a.m. Yup, I was awake before my newborn. Then once he was down at night; I would jump back on my

computer and continue my workday. I went to great lengths to hide my new schedule from most people. Camille, my ingenious executive assistant, came up with the idea of holding my first and last meetings of the day in other buildings to make it less transparent when I was actually arriving or departing. When I did leave directly from my office, I would pause in the lobby and survey the parking lot to find a colleague-free moment to bolt to my car. (Given my awkwardness, we should all be relieved that I once worked for the Treasury Department and not the CIA.)

Looking back, I realize that my concern over my new hours stemmed from my own insecurity.

In Excerpt 4.2, we find the master narrative in society's expectations; that is, women are expected to be caring and the center of child-rearing. This particular master narrative places women in a "paradox of negotiation process" (McLane & Syed, 2015, p.331) at work and home. When people tell stories, their narratives try to fit in the master narratives or seek an alternative narrative. In Excerpt 4.2, Sandberg tries to fit in this women's master narrative since she is concerned about not being part of the everyday son's nurture. However, Sandberg recognizes what participation in this master narrative would bring her professionally (lines 12-13). Thus, we note how both master narratives, *child-rearing* and *professional growth*, intersect. Sandberg knows that the changes at work, such as work hours, would encounter a possible lack of credibility or even cause her to lose her job. In other words, this new change (being a mother) would violate the expectations (lines 10-12) and gender norms (Allen et al., 2016) in terms of how a leader should act or how much time a leader should invest at work (line 6). Therefore, master narratives are a matter of negotiation since the authors are concerned about what is socially acceptable (Van De

Mieroop et al., 2017). In Excerpt 4.2, Sandberg needs to negotiate between time invested at work and time invested at home.

Additionally, Sandberg accepts that motherhood creates tensions between leadership responsibilities and how leaders are portrayed in organizations. Thus, the center child-rearing narrative could create tensions among the women's responsibilities at work, the family, and societal expectations. By expressing this concern, Sandberg agrees that women in leadership positions face consequences when they return from maternity leave. These consequences are observed (lines 19-21) when Sandberg is concerned about being seen by her coworkers while she leaves the office early. Equally, Sandberg is concerned (lines 12-13) about how her leadership reputation could change and what her colleagues would think about her work commitment. Sandberg shares that she found support from the top executives and resolved the issue by modifying the number of working hours and cutting unnecessary meetings. Recall Sandberg is a company executive, and perhaps it is easier to decide what meetings she would attend. In her resolution (lines 24-25), Sandberg assumes that every woman has the same position and can make changes and speak up. However, can other professional women be able to modify their working hours and not have professional consequences? Are these tensions or constraints permanently in their career progression?

**Master Narratives in Career Advancement**

In Excerpt 4.3, we also find the master narrative that women are expected to be caring and the center in child-rearing. This narrative by Orr (2019) addresses a promotion. Women who postpone work are not deviating because this alternative is acceptable for them; on the contrary, if they decide to pay more attention to work, they will deviate from the master narrative (McLane & Syed, 2015).

Excerpt 4.3: Rejecting my promotion (Orr, 2019, p. 8-9)

After the birth of my twins (my older son was only two at the time), I tried to figure out how to handle the magnitude of work to do at home without compromising a promotion I was on track to receive, and that was the culmination of many years of hard work. I didn't care about the title change, and I wasn't thrilled about the added responsibility, but I wanted the salary increase. Now that I was running a daycare at home while fulfilling the demands of my day job, I was afraid of losing the raise. In a meeting with my manager, Dana, I asked what I'd need to do to stay on track. Dana said she was planning to submit my promotion after the next review cycle, and that to get it approved, I'd need to start managing people. The peers on my team — the same level as me and all reporting to Dana — each managed at least five people, whereas I had no direct reports. I've always preferred to do work instead of lording over others who do the work, so I'd made the conscious choice to be an individual contributor instead of a manager. But as Dana explained, Google's policy prevented me from getting a promotion without having direct reports. The fact that I had the highest scores on our team made no difference. It was a hard-and-fast rule that beyond my level, you were required to manage people. My valiant effort to hold back a fountain of tears lasted precisely no seconds. "Dana, of course, I want to be promoted. But I also wanna do work. Managing a team means I won't be able to get deep into projects or be creative. And frankly, I'm a single mom of three babies. I'm responsible for enough people at home; I don't want to be responsible for people at work. I just wanna do work." It was the only time I was ever direct and honest with a manager about my

resistance to being promoted and advancing my career. Although this resistance was likely interpreted as a lack of ambition, it wasn't. I did have the desire to do interesting work. I wanted to solve problems and make an impact on the business. But managing a team wouldn't help me do that. My time would be spent managing other people's work and creating endless PowerPoints to explain to the higher-ups what it was we did at work all day, since most of them had no clue what was going on in their own departments.

People adopt master narratives automatically or unwittingly, and they become visible when individuals negotiate them or deviate from them (McLane & Syed, 2015). In her story, Orr recounts a personal experience in which she negotiates between her professional aspirations and her priorities in life. She evaluates how climbing the corporate ladder is not the priority of many women who have many responsibilities at home. Even though Orr has waited for this promotion for years (lines 3-4), she struggles with handling more job responsibilities and her new personal situation. Like Sandberg in Excerpt 4.2, Orr deals with making career decisions after she becomes the mother of twins. Orr does not deviate from the master narrative (women are expected to be caring and the center in child-rearing); on the contrary, she decides to fit in the master narrative. Although she rejects the promotion, Orr struggles with the traditional narrative and the paradox of negotiation process (lines 1-5) in which some women do not meet the modern expectations of engaging in a work-life balance or women who do not fulfill the nurturing roles (McLane & Syed, 2015).

In addition, Orr portrays herself as a good person who is "direct and honest" (line 22). Narrators tend to present themselves as socially good people who behave correctly (Linde, 1993). Therefore, Orr frames her identity as a good person throughout her conversation with Dana by

stating, “the only time I was ever direct and honest with a manager.” At the same time, Orr admits that she usually lies to other managers and is a person who hides things. Thus, Orr indirectly expresses that women are this way; that is, women (like her) will not be truthful when it is not to their advantage. The fact that Orr does not find this to be at odds with her trustworthiness as an advice-giver is itself ironic. And yet readers are to trust her version of the story and to relate to it. Notice that the narrative in Excerpt 4.3 brings a piece of implicit advice that lying is sometimes right.

In this chapter, we observe how the three authors, Krawcheck, Sandberg, and Orr, depict themselves as righteous and good people. Similarly, it is noticeable that all the narratives in the evaluation phase are related to certain redemption in their personal experiences. Regarding characters, in Excerpt 4.3, Dana occupies the story's antagonist, who is not offering Orr many options but just supervising if she wants to grow in the company. In lines 1-4, a few narratives are taken for granted, such as women seeking help. Orr emphasizes how much work she has after giving birth and how difficult it is to handle home and work responsibilities. In addition, in line 6, she makes an extreme formulation about “running a daycare at home.” This can be connected to the typical phrase of “not having it all” and the goal of pursuing a work-life balance. In lines 17-18, we observe another master narrative: women are emotional or women cry at work. Orr indicates that she tries to hold back her tears in an effort to negotiate with herself what is socially acceptable (Van De Mieroop et al., 2017), although she could not control it. In the subsequent lines (18-21), her narrative uses reported speech, making the reproduction of the narrative more accurate and reliable because the original speaker is responsible for the statement (Holt, 2000). Lines 23-26 present the paradox of accepting a promotion and resisting a promotion. Orr presumes that Dana

and her readers would interpret her promotion rejection as "a lack of ambition" since it is a contradiction to aspire to be promoted and reject a career promotion.

**Master Narratives and Social Activities**

The following narrative is from *Own It: The Power of Women at Work* by Krawcheck (2017). She recounts an encounter outside the workplace.

Excerpt 4.4: I was one of the good guys (Krawcheck, 2017, p. 214-215)

Some years ago, right after we caught our breath from the financial crisis, I took my then-fifteen-year-old son to dinner to celebrate the end of the school year. He got to choose the restaurant; naturally, he chose a steak house.

As we were being seated, I recognized Dick Fuld. The reviled former CEO of Lehman Brothers, whom I had covered as a research analyst at Bernstein. I stopped, said hello, met his daughter, and introduce my son.

As we walked to our table, I thought, *Great. A teaching moment.* When we sat down, I said, "Honey, that was Dick Fuld and he –"

My son cut me off… with energy. "You don't have to tell me who Dick Fuld is. I know who Dick Fuld is! He shouldn't be at dinner; he should be in jail!"

To my utter surprise, Jonathan went on and on and on… about the financial crisis, about the collapse of Lehman Brothers, about his views about greed on Wall Street. I kid you not. And these were not topics we were discussing at home, though we had certainly been living the financial crisis. I hadn't talked to him about it because I thought he was too young to "get it" or to have any interest or opinions on what was happening on Wall Street.

But apparently, he did, and let's just say they were not favorable. (And they were

not favorable… at length. The kid was on a tear.)

*Uh-oh,* I thought.

"Honey," I said, after he ran out of steam, "you know I work on Wall Street, don't you?"

"I know," he said. "I googled you. You're one of the good guys."

Phew. In that moment, I felt relief that my son was proud of me. I felt relief that he thought I was "one of the good guys" and hope that he, too, would grow up to be "one of the good guys."

Since then, I've found a pretty effective way to make decisions that involve right or wrong or navigating ethical gray areas: if my kids were standing there watching, what would I do?

In Excerpt 4.4, Krawcheck's personal experience underlines how she creates a balance between motherhood and work-life. Krawcheck establishes this balance several times by indicating where she works (Wall Street) and the type of industry Wall Street is. She categorizes Wall Street as harsh (where she covered a top executive man), greedy, and a place where you find bad guys. Krawcheck also establishes a professional identity by letting the audience know that she is a well-known person who can be searched on the Internet (line 21). This narrative separates her from the master narrative, where women postpone or leave the workforce to take care of their children (McLane & Syed, 2015). Thus, Krawcheck represents the woman who diverges and balances both motherhood and work-life and achieves this deviation from the traditional women's expectations.

Krawcheck engages in countering work-life balance practices, and that counter-narrative can describe her liberating agenda (Bamberg, 2004) and resist the dominant discourse. Also, this

personal information provides Krawcheck the strategy of being who knows better and a person who counter and orient the audience (Bamberg, 2004) about the working life in Wall Street because she has access to this information. Therefore, Krawcheck displays herself as the expert in this particular situation which helps frame her advice (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997).

We observe that this type of narrative, which has attributes of autobiography, allows the author to reflect on her actions and be accountable for her experiences (Freeman & Brockmeier, 2001). Additionally, as previously mentioned, narrators present themselves as good people, and Krawcheck as a character includes a moral dimension in this account to achieve a purpose (Roulston, 2001). Notice that in Excerpt 4.4, Krawcheck's identity as a good person is challenged when her son describes Wall Street and the people who work for it as not favorable (lines 11-13, and lines 17-19). Although Krawcheck expresses relief when her son indicates that she is "one of the good guys," she assures her evaluative stance as a good person. Krawcheck manages to construct a counterclaim by indicating a "flip-side" (Bamberg, 2004) of the master narrative about people working in Wall Street.

Additionally, Krawcheck takes an evaluative position comparing the past and present regarding how she makes decisions based on what is set as an example for her kids. At this point, Krawcheck describes how she shifts both identities, professional and mother, especially how she moves from a professional to a mother when decisions are made. Furthermore, in the narration, Krawcheck emphasizes three times that she is "one of the good guys" and presents how ethically mindful she is when making professional decisions (lines 25-27). This repetition was like requesting that her audience "take seriously the impression that is fostered before them" (Goffman, 1959), letting the audience knows that she possesses the attributes of a good person as such. In fact, Krawcheck makes a point and delivers a message of a moral evaluation (being a good person)

about “the world the teller shares with other people” (Polanyi, 1985, p. 12). In her narrative, notice that the phrase “one of the good guys” can represent a problematic language since it can represent only men.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that narratives in the self-help literature are recounted as oral narratives. Also, the narratives are reported to the readers in a conversational and informal register. By analyzing four narratives from the corporate women’s books, I have demonstrated that these narratives follow the same structure as oral narratives. Also, I have shown how master narratives are ingrained in corporate women’s stories. Some of the stories sustain that motherhood is problematic — for example, two narratives present family as the antithesis of having a successful career. The stories assume women must choose between family and career, rather than acknowledging that both can occur simultaneously and not impede one another. As I have noted, all of the authors seek to fit in the women's master narratives, except one who offers an alternative narrative by presenting herself as a professional who achieves the balance among work-life, motherhood, and success.

My data showed that women embrace the master narratives for leadership, and it is challenging for women to choose an alternative narrative. Because of this, women decide to fit in the master narratives. Therefore, it is evident that women struggle with their career decisions and aspirations when personal aspects such as motherhood compromise their time or social expectations limiting them to their home obligations. In terms of advice-giving, the narratives I analyzed are full of contradictions and tensions; however, the authors/narrators selected tellable accounts their audience of women are familiar with, talking about real aspects of life such as motherhood and promotions. I argue that advice is implicitly given; for instance, Sandberg (2013)

advises speaking up and making changes if necessary, and Orr (2019) counsels women to be honest and think through their decisions. Finally, Krawcheck (2017) advises women to make the right choices because their kids are watching them. Advice is implicit because corporate women do not tell women what to do directly in the specific situation (e.g., rejecting a promotion or returning from maternity leave). Rather corporate women recount their stories and explain how difficult it was to make changes or make decisions by elaborating the narrative. Therefore, corporate women tell the story and their resolution. In the following chapter, I analyze how gender is constructed and how identity is negotiated in self-help literature. Specifically, I evaluate advice as a site for constituting gender and identity.

# CHAPTER FIVE:

# ADVICE AS A SITE OF GENDER AND GENDERED IDENTITY

In this chapter, I examine how advice-giving is a dynamic of gendering. By this, I mean that advice-giving is a site for the production and consumption of gender and gendered identity. Along with that, advice-giving seeks to work with substantive feedback in which advice provides women suggestions for taking actions to increase knowledge, skills, or attitudes. Even though organizations have had the impetus to create policies and initiatives to address women's unfair workplace practices (Allen et al., 2016), women still encounter many challenges to their career advancement (Glass & Cook, 2016). Thus, it is still notable that career opportunities and career trajectories are characterized by men and tend to favor men in professional settings (Pocock, 2005; Känsälä et al., 2015). According to Cunningham et al. (2017), "women in leadership positions are expected to be both feminine and masculine, yet perceptions of leadership styles show that they cannot achieve either ideal" (p. 17). By utilizing advice as a resource, the authors of the self-help literature construct gender in their narratives, possibly unwittingly, in which leadership is considered a masculine matter in the advice-giving.

Discourse is the foundation of organizational life (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004). I argue that the authors' narratives uphold and reinforce the metadiscourse of women's leadership inability even though the authors' purpose is to engage and encourage women to seek their career advancement. This chapter is divided into two sections, gender construction, which I define as a

process of determining what is masculine and what is feminine established by society, and gendered identity, which I define as a process of how oneself describes herself.

## Gender Construction

According to Mullany and Yoong (2018), scholars' research has shown that "men and women leaders skillfully switch between stereotypically masculine and feminine discourse strategies, depending on their context, objective, and audience" (p. 312). Both men and women leaders adjust to their best "wide-verbal-repertoire" (Marra et al., 2006, as cited in Mullany & Yoong). Although masculine and feminine leaders have some language preferences, certain language leadership features are associated with masculine or feminine "particular stances" such as being authoritative and advising, which are associated with "hegemonic masculinity and femininity" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). For instance, transactional behaviors related to men are "solving- problems, getting things done or achieving goals" whereas "women behaviors are more relationally-oriented" (Schnurr & Mak, 2011, p. 348).

Although women have reached more professional opportunities, the gender order preserves certain biases and privileges to the masculine hegemony at the workplace (Schnurr et al., 2020). Gender is grounded in gender ideologies, which provoke a rise in gender stereotypes emphasizing gender differences between men and women and positioning women in a lesser position (Mullany & Yoong, 2018). Drawing on Schnurr's research, Connell (1987) defines gender order as "a historically constructed pattern of power relations between men and women and definitions of masculinity and femininity" (p. 168). The advice-giving excerpt below illustrates how leadership behaviors are still coded according to gender.

Excerpt 5.1: You have the power (Helgesen & Goldsmith, p. 59)

1 Past experiences may shape your behavior, but they need to determine it. You
2 have the power to become more precise, more intentional, more present, more
3 assertive, more autonomous, more at ease exercising authority, more confident
4 setting boundaries, and more effective advocate for yourself.

Research has demonstrated that men's interactional styles are related to being assertive, authoritative, confident, goal-oriented, and direct (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Holmes, 2017). Excerpt 5.1 suggests that women should change their behaviors and advocate for themselves. These two actions are presented as behaviors women lack when they manage leadership. Indeed, the authors advise women (as advice-seekers) to change their behaviors if they want to grow professionally. In lines 2 and 3, we observe that most of the behaviors mentioned are common masculine features (assertive, authoritative, confident, precise) used to describe an effective leader. At the same time, we notice that these features create an identity category for a leader. By advising on assertiveness, confidence, and authority, this advice manifests the "gap in leadership due to the double bind in communication differences between men and women" (Catalyst, 2007, p. 1). Thus, most common gender differences rest on masculine versus feminine speech patterns (Cunningham et al., 2017).

Excerpt 5.1 reinforces how all social interactions correlated to leadership are influenced by gendered expectations and associations (Fitzsimmons et al., 2014). This advice supports the gender code or label that perpetuates in the allusive characteristics of a leader with which men are associated. Thus, this advice maintains the metadiscourse of women's leadership inability by presenting the characteristics or skills women lack. This advice also encourages women to change their behaviors or their ways of doing leadership. Notice that this advice reconstructs gender as a

binary and generalizes "feminine" and "masculine." The following advice-giving excerpt counsels women about issues and conversations about gender and gender norms.

Excerpt 5.2: We all are gender-biased (Krawcheck, 2017, p. 183)

So too, do the conversations about gender issues that arise day to day. That's because each of us is socialized to traditional gender norms in some way, to some degree, and understanding it, calling attention to it, and talking about it are ways that each of us can contribute to reducing it. (If you're thinking to yourself that you're not gender-biased in some way, let me assure you — you are. I promise you; we all are.) Educate yourself, look closely, knit together the details, and you will likely begin to see the differences in how the genders are treated.

In Excerpt 5.2, Krawcheck emphasizes how gender norms are ingrained in our conversations and everyday workplace activities. In her narration (lines 4-6), Krawcheck shifts to a separate thought directly to the reader as if she reads the audience's mind to explain that all people are biased. Notice that she sees what the readers cannot. Readers (advice-seekers) must trust her promise since she reads their minds in lines 4 through 5. In addition, Krawcheck indicates that everyone can contribute to reducing their ingrained gender bias by talking about gender issues and being aware of gender differences. She admits that gender bias exists, women are part of this bias, and everyone is biased. Also, Krawcheck acknowledges that if women pay close attention and educate themselves, they will notice "the differences in how genders are treated" (line 7). We observe that Krawcheck shows certain dissatisfaction with how women are treated in organizations and how this treatment is something noticeable. Thus, leadership is not only a masculine conception, but also gender is reflected in the culture of leaders' workplaces, which is constantly associated with men (Schnurr, 2009).

Gender norms are omnipresent in our conversations. According to Krawcheck, gender norms are present in organizational conversations, and the consequential differences in treatment are evident. Therefore, "the discourses within an organization help shape the culture in ways that reinforce or (re)construct the gendered notions of careers" (Kisselburgh et al., 2009, p. 280). Organizational discourse maintains and reinforces these notions of leadership and gendered notions of careers. The following advice-giving excerpt below raises how women's behavior affects their authenticity.

Excerpt 5.3: Women's behavior (Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018, p. 75)

1 And if you still think of effectively marketing yourself as cheesy or beneath you,
2 you might try looking at it through an upside-down lens. For example, Marshall
3 has observed that men sometimes mistrust women who are averse to claiming
4 their achievements. They view such women as inauthentic, falsely humble, or
5 lacking in commitment. So why would you let your behavior support such
6 negative perceptions?

Just like Krawcheck in Excerpt 5.2, Helgesen and Goldsmith start the advice-giving as if they know what the reader is thinking. Excerpt 5.3 continues encouraging women to change behaviors, and if one needs to change behaviors, that person lacks something (in this case, leadership skills). According to this advice, women should behave in a certain way to be authentic, humble, and committed; otherwise, their male counterparts perceive them negatively. The authors (advice-givers) pose an introspective question in lines 5-6. This question indicates that something is wrong with women's behaviors at work. Thus, women fail in their actions or performances, and this supports "negative perceptions" at work. The use of the introspective question strategy allows the author to encourage the advice-seeker to reflect, gain some perspective, and seek alternative or

solution to the issue (DeCapua & Dunham, 2007). The next advice-giving excerpt brings how women are not using their gifts adequately.

Excerpt 5.4: Becoming more intentional (Helgesen & Goldsmith, 2018, p. 105)

So, please don't get the idea that we're urging you to undervalue your gift for intimacy or rein in your warmth and concern for others in favor of a more leveraged approach. Instead, you might think about how to bring your skills for forging deep connections into play as you also seek to become more intentional in building relationships that may be advantageous to you in the future. This is certainly the approach taken by women who are superb at leverage, which is why their efforts can be so compelling and magnetic.

Notice that, as in Excerpt 5.3, Helgesen and Goldsmith pose their advice as oral narrative and know about the thoughts and ideas of the readers. This functions as a therapeutic strategy in which, by altering thoughts, people can change how they feel or what they do (American Psychological Association, n.d, as cited in MacGeorge & Van Swol, 2018). Constantly, these authors employ a correlational register to the readers, assuming the readers' responses. Their advice underlines the frequently repeated characteristics attributed to women, such as intimacy, warmth, and concern for others in line 2. Some researchers have associated these characteristics with gender role expectations (Allen et al., 2016) and conversational strategies used by women in the workplace (Baxter, 2010). The authors identify these characteristics as gifts but gifts that need to have a better use. Hence, women are not utilizing their skills or gifts properly.

In addition, in Excerpt 5.4, we observe that the authors emphasize that women lack making relationships and should become more intentional in building those relationships. The authors underline that women who progress or achieve positions of power take this approach. Thus, once

again, women need to change behaviors because what they do or how they use their skills is not working in their favor. The following advice-giving excerpt examines women's values.

Excerpt 5.5: Speaking about the value on you (Helgesen & Goldsmith, p. 73)

1 If you don't find a way to speak about the value of what you're doing, you send a
2 message that you don't put much value on it. And if you don't value it, why
3 should anyone else? You also communicate that you may be ambivalent about
4 getting ahead. And if you're ambivalent, why should anyone stick his neck out to
5 support you?

Here, the authors use the introspective question strategy to motivate women to reflect on their value and learn how to use it. This advice-giving emphasizes women's values, specifically, how women value themselves. However, men have higher pay and obtain promotions with more significant remuneration, which offers more advantages (Buzzanell, 2020), giving men some privilege over women in the workplace and society. Thus, men's advantage has become part of the discourse that can affect future women's advancement careers practices. The authors suggest that women change their behaviors and advocate for themselves; therefore, what women have done is not working. Presenting their value or making it noticeable is something women do not do and should do if they want to be noticed by organizations (line 1). But why do organizations not see women's value? Why do women need to demonstrate their value instead of being noticed with their work? Why is a women's value not visible? Notice that this advice contributes to the metadiscourse of helplessness by women not being considered equally and having the same advantages as men. Thus, women do their work, and additionally, they need to show it; otherwise, their work is not noticeable.

## Gendered Identity

This section analyzes how corporate women (authors/narrators) take advice as a site to negotiate their identities in particular situations. As Freeman and Brockmeier (2001) point out, personal identity is changeable and negotiable across various discursive contexts, and it has an experiential dimension on many levels in which "narrative is itself the source of the self 's identity" (p. 296). As Benwell and Stokoe (2006) argue, narratives construct our identities, and through biographical work, lives are coherent and meaningful. That is, narratives help us make sense of our lives and the events in them. In the self-help literature analysis, we observe some tensions between the narrator (corporate women who narrate the story) and the character (corporate women who experience the events) of their narratives.

In my data, I have observed how narration incorporates connection and temporal unity to provoke "a sense of identity coherence" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). During the narrative evaluation of the events or learning stories, the authors assess their Self, their learning struggles from their experiences, and their life changes. As Linde (1993) claims:

> Narrative is among the most important social resources for creating and maintaining personal identity. Narrative is a significant resource for creating our internal, private sense of self and is all the more a major resource for conveying that self and negotiating that self with others. (p. 98)

Narrative creates some qualities or characteristics of the Self that allow seeing "the nature of the self that is constructed" and how some aspects of the narrative help to contribute that type of Self (Linde, 1993, p. 98). For instance, looking at Excerpt 4.1 from the previous chapter, Krawcheck notices how her identity as a woman was crucial for her boss' choices. At that moment, Krawcheck did not recognize that her woman's identity was part of the reason for being fired. Due

to the event, her identity was shaped and transformed, and at the same time, the event (as a factor that impacts) changed the way she used to see the world (Mills et al., 2010). Krawcheck clearly expresses how reflecting on the event makes her change or replace emotions with facts. Thus, during her reflection, Krawcheck articulates how her convictions, values (doing what is right), and frustrations (lack of communication with her boss) create tensions between herself and her understanding of the experiences. As Bamberg et al. (2007) point out:

> Narrative functions as the glue that enables human life to transcend the natural incoherence and discontinuity of the unruly everyday (and the unruly body – see Punday, 2003) by imposing a point of origin and an orientation toward closure, and thereby structuring the otherwise meaningless into a meaningful life. (p.5)

Thus, narratives as a heuristic method allow authors to inquire into representations of past events and make sense of themselves regarding those events (De Fina & Geogakopoulou, 2012). Telling these stories allows the authors to bring "the coordinates of time, space, and personhood into a unitary frame so that the sources "behind" these representations can be made empirically visible for further analytical scrutiny in the form of identity analysis" (p. 5). These stories allow authors to see beyond the event and analyze themselves by creating identity inquiries and constructing a sense of Self.

In particular, most of the self-help literature presents leadership in women as situated within a deficit identity. Reynolds and Taylor (2004) describe deficit identity as an identity "defined in terms of lack or what a person is not" (p. 199). In their research, Reynolds and Taylor study a "speaker's narrative and the discursive work to counter negative associations of an identity as a single woman" (p. 197). At this juncture, I explore how some corporate women narratives

create a deficit identity or counter a possible deficit identity. The following excerpt will examine a narrative in which Sandberg and a participant of a seminar negotiate their identities.

Excerpt 5.6: I have been blind to one myself (Sandberg, 2013, p. 36)

I continue to be alarmed not just at how we as women fail to put ourselves forward, but also at how we fail to notice and correct for this gap. And that "we" includes me. A few years ago, I gave a talk on gender issues to a few hundred employees at Facebook. After my speech, I took some questions for as long as time permitted. Later that afternoon, I came back to my desk, where a young woman was waiting to talk to me. "I learned something today," she said. "What", I asked, feeling good, as I figured she was about to tell me how my words had touched her. Instead, she said, "I learned to keep my hand up." She explained that toward the end of my talk, I had said that I would take only two more questions. I did so, and then she put her hand down, along with all of the other women. But several men kept their hands up. And since hands were still waving in the air, I took more questions — only from men. Instead of my words touching her, her words hit me like a ton of bricks. Even though I was giving a speech on gender issues, I had been blind to one myself.

Excerpt 5.6 conveys two characters who, throughout the conversation, construct their identities and unmask some moral values as being good with others and being objective. In this conversation, personal identity is presented in the interaction order and what Goffman (1959) calls "self-work." Sandberg struggles with how her identity is presented by the participant in the sense that "people do not want just any objectifiable self; they want a good self, and a self that is perceived as good by others" (Linde, 1993, p. 122). Sandberg is surprised by the participant's

words in line 13 and how the participant portrays Sandberg's actions. That is because the participant depicts Sandberg's performance as inadequate and part of gender issues. At the same time, Sandberg learns how to negotiate her identity by positioning her actions as an accidental exclusion by mentioning, "since hands were still waving in the air, I took more questions."

In Excerpt 5.6, Sandberg establishes that the omission was not intentional. In a sense, we observe that the participant's agency is something that Sandberg does not control, and it is "dominated by opposite orientation" (Bamberg, 2014, p. 133). Thus, the participant decides or exercises her agency, that is, if she keeps the hand in the air or puts it down. Additionally, we observe that Sandberg reflects on the event (lines 13-14, "Even though I was giving a speech on gender issues, I had been blind to one myself") and herself as an advocate of gender issues. Sandberg evaluates her actions and reflects on how she unintentionally is part of gender issues by not providing women the appropriate participation during the seminar. Likewise, in line 14, Sandberg notices how she was part of the problem at that moment.

Regarding the participant identity negotiation, the participant portrays herself and her fellow women colleagues risk averse in giving up their participation during the question section. Thus, the participant associates her actions with a deficit or fault, which is the lack of taking risks. The participant presents a "deficit state" (Reynolds & Taylor, 2004) by presenting women's decisions (put their hands down) as an action that affects them. Also, in line 8, the participant highlights that she learned from that experience and is willing to change that behavior. Thus, because identity is continuously in the making, "a potential transformation of the characters from one state to another serves to demarcate the identity of the reflective self under investigation" (Bamberg, 2014, p. 133).

The following excerpt presents Krawcheck's evaluation with respect to diversity and women's identity in the workplace.

Excerpt 5.7: The other members of the team (Krawcheck, 2017, p. 10)

Now, the point guard is arguably the most important player on the team; after all, the point guard runs the plays. The point guard brings the ball down the court. The point guard is the natural team leader. But you can't win a national championship with all point guards. You can't have five guys trying to run the plays. You need the other members of the team – with all their diverse skill- working together. You need – here comes that word again – diversity. True diversity.

Notice how Krawcheck uses the sports analogy, "the point guard," to describe her male counterparts as the ones who run the game at work. Ironically, Krawcheck employs a sports analogy, something traditionally considered masculine. She claims women should be part of the game (running the business). It is worth mentioning that Krawcheck works in financial institutions, which are male-dominated fields. She highlights the gender disparity in certain key positions in organizations. Also, Krawcheck refers to men as the "natural team leader," emphasizing how being a leader has a masculine conception, and leadership is associated with men (Holmes, 2017). Krawcheck advocates for diversity and positions women as the new members who can contribute with "their diversity skill." Thus, the team's new members would bring diversity to the group and contribute to running the game better. Krawcheck positions diversity as a complimentary attribute that women bring to organizations, and at the same time, this attribute allows organizations to expand their game. Krawcheck offers a counter-narrative by suggesting organizations include diversity (women) in their businesses. In Excerpt 5.7, we observe how local stories are connected

to master narratives (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006), and identities emerge as individuals construct their experiences and position themselves in relation to the cultural or social expectations (Schiffrin, 1996). In this case, the master narratives invoked are the conception of being a leader and how this conception is identified with men.

In the following narrative, Orr narrates what she experiences in a communication workshop for women.

Excerpt 5.8: Nice girls don't succeed (Orr, 2019, p. xxx-xxxi)

Then, our instructor told us something we didn't know: their bravado and self-aggrandizement are precisely what make men more successful at work. So, if we wanted to be just as successful, we needed to be arrogant too.

Carol sat on one side of me, and on the opposite side of me sat our former manager, Kathy. Kathy was a walking example of someone who communicates with certainty and with the intend to ~~crush your dreams~~ establish authority. Her self-centered arrogance was obvious to everyone except those above her in the food chain. Despite our team being tortured for the duration of her eighteen-month reign, she had just been promoted to the coveted title senior director. Her natural talent for ~~being an ass…e~~ speaking with authority seemed to prove our instructor's point: the more assertive, the better, because nice girls don't succeed. During the two-day workshop, there was no discussion on any way positive aspects of what I suppose is a "female" style of communication. It was as if we were better off not even admitting we spoke like *girls*. It felt like shame. Like, don't be so you, or you'll never succeed. It was disappointing, but I was starting to understand it.

Identity is developed and situated in many dynamics such as biological, cultural, societal, and relational (Carbaugh, 1996). Excerpt 5.8 presents Orr's experience with a workshop intended for professional women and their career advancement. According to the workshop instructor, lines 2-3 point out how a successful leader should perform if a woman wants to achieve professional growth. The attributes to follow are typical features related to men's leadership discourse (bravado, self-aggrandizement). One of the aspects of identity is how others see us and how the individual experiences the Self (Hecht, 2015), and this training suggests that women need to change their feminine ways to masculine ways if they want to be successful.

Thus, we observe that this training teaches women that they need to adopt men's attributes if they want organizations to see them as leaders. As Hecht (2015) states, "Individuals are constantly engaged in constructing aspects of their interpersonal and intergroup identity, including their professional identity" (p. 887). Hence, this training intends to construct or mold women's professional identity since their innate women's behavior does not favor them as leaders. Therefore, the leadership discourse attempts to change women's professional identity. Lines 12-15 emphasize how being so feminine affects their careers; thus, the adopted women's discursive strategies are seen negatively and as barriers to their career growth. The workshop intends to modify women's discursive strategies to construct their new social identity as leaders (Fairhurst, 2007).

Additionally, Orr's narrative in Excerpt 5.8 presents evidence of the women's leadership discourse (lines 9-11) by describing her former manager's behavior as the same behavior portrayed by the instructor. Orr emphasizes how masculine attributes (assertiveness, authoritarian) are part of the requirements to get promoted. Thus, the men's attributes adopted by her former manager were key to obtaining her promotion and being considered a leader. As a result, the traits correlated

to women (cooperative, relational, warm) are not appropriate for leaders and promotions because being assertive and authoritarian are leadership qualities.

Moreover, we can notice how Orr displays humor combined with politeness strategies in her narrative by crossing out some words, as if she suppresses her real thoughts and the way she sees leaders in organizations. By crossing the words out, Orr expresses the real meaning of speaking with authority ("crush your dreams") and establishing authority (lines 6 and 10). The claim here is that women and men use language differently, as argued by Holmes (1995), and by crossing words out, Orr uses politeness as a tool to pretend not to offend her former manager. According to Holmes, "politeness is an expression of concern for the feeling of others" (1995, p. 4), whereas "humor is a rich and multifaceted strategy for doing both positive and negative politeness" (Holmes & Schnurr, 2005, p. 142). In Excerpt 5.8, politeness as "relational practice" (Holmes & Schnurr, 2005) intends to conciliate Orr's original thoughts about her boss (lines 5-6) and how her former boss adopts those suggested leader's behaviors.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we notice how gender is produced and consumed through advice-giving. Corporate women create this product of advice that professional women consume in order to achieve career advancement. In addition, we conclude that gender is implicated in every aspect of our life, and, according to the authors, organizations keep perpetuating negative labels about women's leadership. As the authors claim, organizational discourses have men's leadership styles as the norm of doing leadership. This can be observed in the authors' narratives about training, seminars, and meetings. Thus, women are constantly negotiating identities and situating their gender around what leadership discourse asks for.

Most of the advice-giving indicates that women are the gender who needs to change behaviors and reevaluate their skills, actions, and relationship strategies. The authors' narratives portray women as needing to behave or have men's leadership style to be promoted and be considered as leaders. We notice how the advice-giving excerpts bring some tensions and odd strategies. In particular, it strikes me how the authors use mind-reading as a strategy in advice-giving. This omniscient strategy can be dangerous since the authors produce a conversational register as if they know the readers very well and their thoughts. Additionally, throughout the stories, the authors claim diversity, and some of them intend to counter some discourse to contribute to changing women's leadership discourse in organizations. In the next chapter, I include the project's conclusion, contributions, and potential future research.

## CHAPTER SIX:

## CONCLUSION, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

*After examining many self-help literature books and their respective advice, I feel it is my turn to provide some advice. Men and women have different leadership styles, and leadership should be a gendered neutral task. Candidates for leadership positions should not be selected by gender or gendered stereotypes. I mean organizations, recruiters, and directors' primary criterion should be that contenders own the position's qualifications. I argue that masculine leadership conception is ingrained, and we researchers should provide more understanding in leadership aspects to help eradicate the disparity between men and women leadership discourse.*

*Reflecting on my personal narrative in the introduction chapter, why did Benjamin have to present my coworker's presentation and my presentation? Why did the director think that both men were the ideal leadership representation of our product department? By reading, we have learned that ideal/effective leadership has qualities of both men's and women's leadership styles; thus, we should be more unequivocal in showing how an ideal leader is constituted. Leadership training should be created for everyone and not a special group (women) that "does not know" to manage leadership. Amanda and I had the qualifications for our position as product managers. Otherwise, we would not have occupied or been recruited for those positions. We should have presented our business results and had the same opportunity as Benjamin to demonstrate our work and manager's skills. Amanda and I should have spoken out and been champions of our work and business results. In the end, our bonus performance depended on annual results. Indeed, no one*

*could have explained the results better than us. The conception of leadership should be changed not only in an individual sense but also in an organizational manner.*

In this study, I examined advice as a social action that is embedded in the self-help literature produced for professional women who desire to advance in their careers. I consider advice as a communicative choice that one person recommends for another person to make. This choice is part of his or her learning experience process, but it does not mean that the person has tried that choice. The person recommends a suggestion that his or her experience has developed to handle a situation, do, or choose the best professional options. Corporate women have found a space in this genre to advise other professional women and share their expertise, opinions, evaluations, and reflections related to their workplace experiences. Thus, corporate women have become part of the apparatus of advice and leadership discourse by presenting their narrative of personal experience.

Because of my professional experience, I became interested in the constant metadiscourse of women's inability and helplessness in organizations and how women's career advancement is a consequence of the leadership discourse that favors men. Focusing on practical metadiscourse, I was intrigued by "our ordinary, everyday practices of talking about what we say and do with language" (Craig, 1999, p.21), particularly in the matter of women's leadership discourse. I also noticed how organizations had created particular programs and training for women to prepare them for leadership positions. Thus, leadership is viewed as an innate quality which women lack. Likewise, advice has become a product for consumption that carries gendered production. That means advice is produced as a tool for recommending and suggesting professional women deal with leadership and career advancement.

My analysis explored four books written by corporate women and career coaches who advise professional women on workplace and leadership matters. By examining corporate

women's personal narratives, I studied how professional women are advised to progress professionally. I had three analytical chapters in which I centered on the strategies of authorship, advice as narrative, and advice as a site of gender and gendered identity to answer my research questions. I focused on five research questions in this study:

RQ 1: How are women advised to be leaders in organizational settings?

RQ 2: How does innateness work in the discourse of leadership?

RQ 3: What are the strategies of advice-giving?

RQ 4: How is advice contributing to a metadiscourse of gendered leadership?

RQ 5: How is advice contributing to a metadiscourse of helplessness?

As follows, I explain the conclusions for each research question, the project's contributions, and potential future research.

## Research Questions

### Question 1: How are women advised to be leaders in organizational settings?

I was interested in learning how women are advised and the leadership discourse around the advice-giving regarding their career advancement. Women are frequently told to change and adopt new strategies to achieve their professional growth. Therefore, I wanted to study how organizations and corporate women (C-Suite) contribute to the leadership discourse that seems to disadvantage women's career advancement. Although corporate women of this study have clear objectives, such as advising other professional women in their career advancement, their advice carries the women's leadership inability. Most of the corporate women suggest that professional women change something. For example, this could be adjusting behaviors or attitudes. Corporate women's advice urges professional women to redirect their behaviors since what women currently

do does not work in their favor. Helgesen and Goldsmith, the two authors who are the career coaches, by means of sharing stories, point out that women are acting in ways that are not ideal, and these authors advise women on the specific aspects they should focus on to obtain a promotion, recognition, or benefits. Thus, a great deal of the coaches' advice constitutes that women should take a more male attitude or adopt the typical male leadership features. Therefore, these coaches maintain the metadiscourse of inability and innateness towards women. On the contrary, Sandberg, Krawcheck, and Orr, corporate women, tend to inspire other women by changing some practices or changing leadership narratives. Corporate women seek to motivate and invite professional women to fight against the leadership master narrative and the lack of diversity in organizations.

Regarding how women are advised, on the one hand, organizations have opted to create training, seminars, and workshops to help women be better leaders. Corporate women have chosen to write books and offer seminars and talks to reach other professional women. Yet, even though corporate women criticize the organizational training and the lack of diversity, they sometimes fall into the script which asks women to change some leadership styles. Additionally, the corporate women in my data set admit that the double bind is evident, and the system fails professional women in training, promotions, and diversity. However, their position in giving advice is akin to giving up on the organizational system. As a result, their meta-message perpetuates the claim that women are solely responsible for creating changes in women's career progression. That is, most of the advice centers on individual solutions. Thus, women always need to see their careers differently and "carry the burden within the system by changing their mindsets, actions, and approaches to work" (Lanier & DuPree Fine, 2018). In the end, the authors suggest that women's career advancement rests on women and not in organizational systems.

**Question 2: How does innateness work in the discourse of leadership?**

The corporate women's personal narratives point out how women still face disadvantages in assuming top leadership positions as these very positions tend to be offered to men. The authors show that women are constantly advised to adopt masculine behaviors and masculine speech styles since men are the ideal leadership role model in organizations. Throughout the narratives of personal experience, we observe how the organizational training (seminars & workshops) is oriented to emulate men's leadership style, such as being goal-oriented, using direct speech, and having an aggressive attitude. If women want to reach top leadership positions, they need to assume this style. Leadership discourse persists in saying that men are born with some leadership skills, and on the contrary, women need to be trained since they lack these skills. Thus, the meta-message maintains innate leadership as an attribute of men.

Also, we notice how women constantly need to show their efforts and talk about gender issues if they want to be noticed by organizations. The authors distinctly establish how diversity is an issue in executive positions. Diversity disparity is also noticeable when women offer some suggestions or recommendations. This discrepancy happens in Excerpt 4.1 when Krawcheck (2017) intends to give some business recommendations, which are not heard. Krawcheck concludes that being a woman was the principal reason her suggestions were not heard. This is also related to some societal norms and stereotypes that disfavor women as leaders. For example, women are expected to be caring and relational. In addition, organizations have some expectations and stereotypes of how women should or should not perform at work. Those women's stereotypes are not exactly part of the definition of being a leader. As a result, according to the authors, all these aspects impact women's professional growth.

**Question 3: What are the strategies of advice-giving?**

Narration is a privileged genre that allows authors to construct their identities by presenting characters in time and space and coordinates their speech (Bamberg, 2014). One of the findings is that self-help literature as a genre acts as an oral narrative. For this reason, Labov's model was successful in this analysis. This type of narrative is reported to the readers in a conversational and informal register. Consequently, this narrative has many aspects similar to oral narratives, and it sounds like a speech. Thus, the self-help literature takes a variety of features of conversational language (Fairclough, 2003).

Strategies of authorship in a narrative are crucial to accomplish corporate women's objectives in advice-giving. Authors take a stance on representing all professional women and take a position of their leading concerns. Their selected strategies allow them to establish some patterns in their discourse and target the audience. Additionally, showing authors' expertise was key for their strategies since expertise is correlated to experience, reputation, and training (MacGeorge & Van Swol, 2018). In Chapter Three, I identified nine strategies throughout the texts, such as pronoun choices and alignment, credibility, the use of should, imperative sentences, elaboration, expressions of empathy, the assertion of necessity, introspective questions, and metaphors. As mentioned before, linguists have studied some of these strategies used in advice-giving, and I identified others. In addition, in the analysis, we observe that most of the strategies were combined to formulate the advice-giving. That means that corporate women use multiple strategies to reach the audience in different ways to accomplish their advice.

Additionally, identification was a tool that corporate women apply continuously throughout their narratives. We observe how important it was that the audience perceives the authors as part of their membership categorization (professional women). Even though they

establish their position as an authority and experts in career matters, the authors work on identification and closeness toward the audience. Thus, these strategies came along with their credibility strategy, which was well-established and organized based on their experiences.

**Question 4: How is advice contributing to a metadiscourse of gendered leadership?**

The narratives of personal experience indicate that women continuously struggle with leadership stereotypes and master narratives that dominate in organizations. In the analysis in Chapter Four, we observe several master narratives that have dictated the authors' career advancement regarding their professional decisions. Some of the master narratives of my data are related to motherhood, leadership notion, and working commitment. The authors face the "paradox of negotiation process" (McLane & Syed, 2015) where the leadership roles and motherhood meet their career and personal decisions. These master narratives reinforce the gendered metadiscourse in which perpetuates leadership as a matter of men.

Especially, two of the authors meet a particular struggle in their careers when they became mothers. In Excerpt 4.2, we notice that Sandberg (2013) encounters how her leadership reputation would be impacted due to her new motherhood responsibilities since the master narrative associated with women is that women are the primary caregiver and the center in child-rearing. Thus, Sandberg is aware of the professional repercussions since she needs to modify her working hours. As a result, Sandberg was concerned about how she would be perceived in terms of her commitment to work and how these modifications would affect her leadership reputation. In her case, the master narrative dominates her decisions, and Sandberg makes modifications or changes after her maternity. The same master narrative is presented by Orr (2019) in Excerpt 4.3; however, she let it dominate her career decisions and succumbed to pursuing her career aspirations. Orr accepts the master narrative by postponing her professional growth and rejecting a promotion. We

note how the motherhood narrative approaches all the authors throughout the stories and how leadership conceptions become a struggle after women embrace maternity.

In the analysis, we also found how some of the authors countered several master narratives and how they managed to work with them. One of the findings was that some corporate women restate the master narrative, and many of their decisions are based on the master narratives. For example, Krawcheck (2017) clearly establishes in Excerpt 4.4 how she juggles her responsibilities at work and home, posing in her advice that women can achieve both (profession & motherhood); however, Krawcheck specifies how her example as a mother is a priority and determines many of her career decisions.

**Question 5: How is advice contributing to a metadiscourse of helplessness?**

Based on the analysis, corporate women's advice-giving remains at the same starting point, and the contribution to change leadership discourse is minimal. At times, we observe that authors criticize the organizational system and how corporations intend to mold women as their male counterparts since males own the leadership role model. However, in their advice-giving, the authors encourage women to modify their leadership styles, strategies, and career approaches since what women do is not working or is not ideal. In addition, it looks like that critique towards organizations does not go further since they urge women to do something for themselves and emphasize that the leadership disparity solution is on them.

The analysis shows that women are alone and should fight alone. Even though the organizational leadership discourse and career advancement barriers are exposed as evident, women carry the burden of managing their careers differently and changing their performances. I argue that this self-help literature sounds like cheering a solitary player who has to run all the bases on her own. This type of advice-giving is not contributing to the actual metadiscourse of

helplessness, inability, and innateness. That is because women are requested to change behaviors, adjust language, and work/fight alone. Women continue to be objects of the double-bind in organizations. Notice that advice takes part of the metadiscourse, and advice is exclusively produced for women's consumption. Therefore, advice is a metadiscourse that produces gender for consumption. In addition, I found that causality, though crucial in matters of advice (since the purpose of advice is to create a change in the circumstances of those who receive it) is left ambiguous by the authors. In offering accounts of what women leaders *must* or *should do,* we see that causality is always implied. Authors' narratives ask the readers to do something with the expectation to have a response or action. Thus, even though the authors do not explicate how things might change and which exact actions are expected to produce this change in circumstances, action is always warranted. This suggests that authority is granted to those imparting advice based on their (self-proclaimed) expert status; experts can implicitly suggest what to do without being accountable.

On another note, while analyzing the narratives in my data, I found that identity negotiation was a significant part of leadership discourse. As mentioned before, narration provides identity coherence, and narratives construct our identities, and through biographical work, lives are coherent and meaningful (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Thus, authors as narrators and characters of the stories negotiate their multiple identities as professionals, mothers, and authors. For example, in Excerpt 4.4, Krawcheck (2017) highlights her stance as a professional with principles in which she portrays herself as a right, honest, and caring person. At the same time, Krawcheck works with her identity when she reveals her attitude toward work and as a role model (good professional and good person) for her son. We noticed how Krawcheck's identity negotiation was crucial in describing herself in her narratives, so the audience sees her as a good person.

In Table 1 below, I offer a snapshot of the findings of this study:

Table 1. The most significant research findings

| | |
|---|---|
| Finding 1 | **The most powerful strategies were pronoun choices and alignment, credibility, and elaboration.**<br>• Authors organize credibility by emphasizing warranting strategies to invoke personal stories, testimonies, data/ statistics, and cite sources.<br>• The pronoun choice and alignment strategy was essential to seek identification and bonding with the readers.<br>• Formulations like "I Know," "I understand," and "I've been there" enact empathy, identification, and understanding.<br>• Authors shift pronouns to accomplish inclusiveness, authority, closeness, and familiarity. |
| Finding 2 | **Advice carries the metadiscourse of innateness, helplessness, gendered inability.**<br>• A formulation like "behaviors that keep you stuck" supports the metadiscourse that women are unable to succeed as leaders.<br>• Organizations neglect to train women as women, acknowledge their value, or offer representation. The way training is structured in organizations emulates men's behaviors and positions them as role models. Therefore, training is a persistent issue that needs to be assessed. |
| Finding 3 | **Narratives in the self-help literature are recounted as oral narratives.**<br>• These narratives follow the same structure as oral narratives, conversational and informal register. |
| Finding 4 | **Master narratives are ingrained in corporate women's stories and their decisions.**<br>• Authors seek to fit in the women's master narratives, except one who offers an alternative narrative by presenting herself as a professional who achieves the balance among work-life, motherhood, and success. |
| Finding 5 | **Advice is implicit.**<br>• Corporate women do not tell women what to do directly in the specific situation (e.g., rejecting a promotion or returning from maternity leave). Rather corporate women recount their stories and explain how difficult it was to make changes or make decisions by elaborating the narrative. |
| Finding 6 | **Gender is produced and consumed through advice-giving.**<br>• Corporate women create this product of advice that professional women consume in order to achieve career advancement. |

Table 1. The most significant research findings (Continued)

| | |
|---|---|
| Finding 7 | **Organizations keep perpetuating negative labels about women's leadership.**<br>• Organizational discourses have men's leadership styles as the norm of doing leadership (e.g., training, seminars, and meetings). |
| Finding 8 | **Women are constantly negotiating identities and situating their gender around what leadership discourse asks for.**<br>• Advice-giving indicates that women are the gender who needs to change behaviors and reevaluate their skills, actions, and relationship strategies. |

## Project Contributions

In this study, I analyzed how four self-help literature accounts contribute to the women's leadership discourse. I have always been interested in gender asymmetries that prevail in organizations and society. One of my main goals was to provide additional understanding of women's career advancement as well as examine the issues that professional women face when they pursue professional growth. I especially wanted to explore the metadiscourse of gendered helplessness or inability in which a key factor is the characterization of leadership as an innate quality present in men and less present in women. I was intrigued since more and more corporate women have joined the trend of writing books to advise other professional women. Thus, this initiative creates a discourse that women require special attention, and they should be trained and advised to be successful leaders.

This study makes several contributions to different areas such as advice-giving as a product of consumption, self-help literature as a narrative genre, master narratives, strategies in the advice-giving, and identity negotiation. A great deal of scholars have studied oral narratives. Thus, examining advice as narrative and text, specifically their role as non-human actors, allows me to

provide an additional contribution to the advice-giving literature. These narratives of personal experience act similarly to speech and follow the same structure or model.

Narrative is a privileged genre that offers the opportunity to present past and future events and transforms the characters unfolding in the sequences of the events (Bamberg, 2004). This transformation allows the authors to provide advice through the evaluation and reflection on their stories. Therefore, advice is used as a technology of leadership discourse that employs something and affects the meaning of the message (Jones, 2016). Analyzing advice as a narrative allows me to present how advice is organized and structured in the self-help literature. The authors establish strategies and patterns in the discourse to reach their audience and manage organizational issues such as lack of diversity in top positions and training perspectives.

This study also contributes to the evaluation and reflection of identity and its negotiation. This can be observed between the author and the character (herself). The author criticizes the character (herself) and, in some instances, distances herself from the character's decisions. The constant negotiation and representation of the Self were captured in this type of narration. The authors of my data paid attention to how they were presented in the stories. In addition, the research shows how advice of leadership is a product produced only for women and consumed only for women. Additionally, we observe how master narratives are part of the personal narratives and how personal narratives are beneficial to construct or counter master narratives (Van De Mieroop et al., 2017). In the same way, personal narratives and master narratives present ways to understand the world and identities (Van De Mieroop et al., 2017) in which the author constructs their advice-giving.

## Potential Future Research

Further research to expand the study of advice and career advancement is necessary. First, I suggest focusing on other technologies of advice. I refer to different technologies of advice directed to women's leadership, such as podcasts, websites, organizational training (seminars or workshops). In this way, researchers can study how advice is produced intertextually and how its strategies and accounts may be recontextualized across multimodal genres, each contributing to the metadiscourse of women's leadership. For example, the podcast *Women at Work* by Harvard Business Review is dedicated to orienting and advising women on workplace issues and women's positions in organizations. Through critical discourse analysis, scholars can examine the advice incorporated in these conversations and the current events or issues that women face in organizations. Each episode brings professional women who talk about lessons learned and challenging moments in their careers. These personal narratives could provide two perspectives: the hosts and participants. Additionally, seminars and workshops can be excellent sources of direct leadership advice to examine the language in use and organizational approaches towards professional women.

Second, I suggest that advice can be studied from professional women's perspective. Specifically, I recommend researching how professional women are incorporating advice-giving in their career progression. Sources such as interviews and online reviews of the self-help literature would provide some understanding. For instance, online reviews could provide opinions, reactions, and suggestions related to the advice-giving in the self-help books. These reviews can offer feedback towards the advice-giving and the impact on women's career progression. I hope future research addresses more advice and career understanding to help organizations understand women's careers and help professional women achieve leadership positions.

## Reflecting on Advice-giving

Why is advice so ingrained in women's career advancement? Why are women's challenges more visible than men's challenges in the business of advice-giving? By revisiting my professional experiences as a manager and reviewing this project, I find it troubling to learn that women are the gender who need help doing leadership. Whether women themselves seek advice or the business of advice-giving identifies women as the target to receive guidance, advice has become part of the tools to achieve women's success.

I recall particularly my professional experience in which organizational culture and lack of support to women were crucial to women's success in my former organization. Women did not have support since men were the first option when a promotion was available. Leadership positions were a synonym of the word men. These organizational practices make me question whether organizations are hurting women's confidence by considering leadership as a masculine attribute; therefore, women want to pursue advice.

I have noticed that seeking advice is the first instinct during these challenging times. Recently, I have listened to various podcasts about women in the workplace, and women are needed for professional advice. Numerous letters are sent to these podcasts. Women seek advice on a career change, working from home, negotiating strategically, and productivity, to mention a few. No doubt, advice-giving has a role in women's career advancement, but we need to continue to empirically interrogate the ontological premises in which this advice operates.

Organizational culture has a long way to go in developing what I consider is adequate and fair discourse of leadership, and this is especially so when pertaining to qualifications for positions. Research has shown that effective leaders use both goal-oriented and relational strategies. Those strategies have historically been related to men and women. However, organizations need to

improve the notions of being an effective leader in the workplace, specifically in organizational training. According to this project, training portrays leadership as a masculine quality, and women should acquire this quality. This project made me reflect on my professional decisions and my actions in my previous organization and how I can contribute to the understanding of leadership discourse. First, it is important to improve the existing dissimilarities in leadership discourse. Women still struggle to be seen as leading figures, and organizations perpetuate leadership as a matter of men. My research findings have shown how advice recreates these dissimilarities and supports them by pointing women as the gender that needs help. This means that advice is situated or produced as a necessary resource in women's career advancement. As a scholar, I am looking forward to researching and advocating for these dissimilarities in leadership discourse that, in turn, is organized by advice.

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# APPENDIX A:

# FAIR USE ASSESSMENT: HOW WOMEN RISE

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Class or Project: Dissertation project

Title of Copyrighted Work: How women rise: Break the 12 habits holding you back from your next raise, promotion, or job

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Overall, the amount and substantiality of material used in relation to the whole ■supports fair use or ☐does not support fair use.

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## CONCLUSION

The combined purpose and character of the use, nature of the copyrighted material, amount and substantiality of material used in relation to the whole and the effect on the market for the original

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*Smith, Kevin; Macklin, Lisa A.; Gilliland, Anne. A Framework for Analyzing any Copyright Problem. Retrieved from: https://d396qusza40orc.cloudfront.net/cfel/Reading%20Docs/A%20Framework%20for%20Analyzing%20any%20Copyright%20Problem.pdf*

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# APPENDIX B:

# FAIR USE ASSESSMENT: LEAN IN

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## INSTRUCTIONS

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Name: Amaly Santiago Date: 2/8/2021

Class or Project: Dissertation project

Title of Copyrighted Work: Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead

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Overall, the amount and substantiality of material used in relation to the whole ■supports fair use or ☐does not support fair use.

## EFFECT ON THE MARKET FOR ORIGINAL

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## CONCLUSION

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*Smith, Kevin; Macklin, Lisa A.; Gilliland, Anne. A Framework for Analyzing any Copyright Problem. Retrieved from: https://d396qusza40orc.cloudfront.net/cfel/Reading%20Docs/A%20Framework%20for%20Analyzing%20any%20Copyright%20Problem.pdf*

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# APPENDIX C:

# FAIR USE ASSESSMENT: LEAN OUT

University of South Florida

## INSTRUCTIONS

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Name: Amaly Santiago Date: 2/8/2021

Class or Project: Dissertation project

Title of Copyrighted Work: Lean out: The truth about women, power, and workplace

### PURPOSE AND CHARACTER OF THE USE

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| ■ Small amount (using only the amount necessary to accomplish the purpose)<br>■ Amount is important to favored socially beneficial objective (i.e. educational objectives)<br>☐Lower quality from original (ex. Lower resolution or bitrate photos, video, and audio) | ☐ Large portion or whole work<br>☐ Portion used is qualitatively substantial (i.e. it is the 'heart of the work')<br>■Similar or exact quality of original work |

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## EFFECT ON THE MARKET FOR ORIGINAL

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Overall, the effect on the market for the original ■supports fair use or ☐does not support fair use.

## CONCLUSION

The combined purpose and character of the use, nature of the copyrighted material, amount and substantiality of material used in relation to the whole and the effect on the market for the original

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# APPENDIX D:

# FAIR USE ASSESSMENT: OWN IT

University of South Florida

## INSTRUCTIONS

Check all boxes that apply, and keep a copy of this form for your records. If you have questions, please contact the USF General Counsel or your USF Tampa Library Copyright Librarian.

Name: Amaly Santiago Date: 2/8/2021

Class or Project: Dissertation project

Title of Copyrighted Work: Own it: The power of women at work

### PURPOSE AND CHARACTER OF THE USE

| Likely Supports Fair Use | Likely Does Not Support Fair Use |
|---|---|
| ■ Educational<br>☐ Teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use)<br>☐ Research or Scholarship<br>■ Criticism, Parody, News Reporting or Comment<br>■ Transformative Use (your new work relies on and adds new expression, meaning, or message to the original work)<br>☐ Restricted Access (to students or other appropriate group)<br>■ Nonprofit | ☐ Commercial<br>☐ Entertainment<br>☐ Bad-faith behavior<br>☐ Denying credit to original author<br>☐ Non-transformative or exact copy<br>■ Made accessible on Web or to public<br>☐ Profit-generating use |

Overall, the purpose and character of your use ■ supports fair use or ☐ does not support fair use.

### NATURE OF THE COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

| Likely Supports Fair Use | Likely Does Not Support Fair Use |
|---|---|
| ■ Factual or nonfiction<br>☐ Important to favored educational objectives<br>■ Published work | ☐ Creative or fiction<br>☐ Consumable (workbooks, tests)<br>☐ Unpublished |

Overall, the nature of the copyrighted material ■ supports fair use or ☐ does not support fair use.

### AMOUNT AND SUBSTANTIALITY OF MATERIAL USED IN RELATION TO WHOLE

| Likely Supports Fair Use | Likely Does Not Support Fair Use |
|---|---|
| ■ Small amount (using only the amount necessary to accomplish the purpose)<br>■ Amount is important to favored socially beneficial objective (i.e. educational objectives)<br>☐ Lower quality from original (ex. Lower resolution or bitrate photos, video, and audio) | ☐ Large portion or whole work<br>☐ Portion used is qualitatively substantial (i.e. it is the 'heart of the work')<br>■ Similar or exact quality of original work |

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Reviewed by USF General Counsel 08/11/2015

Overall, the amount and substantiality of material used in relation to the whole ■supports fair use or ☐does not support fair use.

## EFFECT ON THE MARKET FOR ORIGINAL

| Likely Supports Fair Use | Likely Does Not Support Fair Use |
|---|---|
| ■ No significant effect on the market or potential market for the original<br>☐ No similar product marketed by the copyright holder<br>☐ You own a lawfully acquired copy of the material<br>☐ The copyright holder is unidentifiable<br>☐ Lack of licensing mechanism for the material | ☐ Replaces sale of copyrighted work<br>☐ Significantly impairs market or potential market for the work<br>☐ Numerous copies or repeated, long-term use<br>■ Made accessible on Web or to public<br>☐ Affordable and reasonably available permissions or licensing |

Overall, the effect on the market for the original ■supports fair use or ☐does not support fair use.

## CONCLUSION

The combined purpose and character of the use, nature of the copyrighted material, amount and substantiality of material used in relation to the whole and the effect on the market for the original

**■likely supports fair use or ☐likely does not support fair use.**

*Note: Should your use of copyrighted material not support fair use, you may still be able to locate and request permissions from the copyright holder. For help on this, please feel free to contact your Copyright Librarian.*

*This worksheet has been adapted from:*

*Cornell University's Checklist for Conducting A Fair use Analysis Before Using Copyrighted Materials:* https://copyright.cornell.edu/policies/docs/Fair_Use_Checklist.pdf

*Crews, Kenneth D. (2008) Fair use Checklist. Columbia University Libraries Copyright Advisory Office.* http://copyright.columbia.edu/copyright/files/2009/10/fairusechecklist.pdf

*Smith, Kevin; Macklin, Lisa A.; Gilliland, Anne. A Framework for Analyzing any Copyright Problem. Retrieved from:* https://d396qusza40orc.cloudfront.net/cfel/Reading%20Docs/A%20Framework%20for%20Analyzing%20any%20Copyright%20Problem.pdf

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