

## **DAUGHTERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT: A STUDY ON BECOMING LEGITIMATE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY BUSINESS**

The literature on daughter successors of family-owned businesses suggests that these women face multiple challenges not only in gaining access to the business, but also once they enter it. Based on Curimbaba's (2002) classification of daughters' roles in the family business (invisible, anchors, and professionals), this study explores how some daughters have been able to overcome invisibility and become anchors and active professionals in family-owned businesses. To do so, qualitative data was gathered via interviews with personnel from 20 family businesses located in Colombia. In this particular setting characterized by weak institutions, dominance of primogeniture, and traditional expectations for women, daughters often found their legitimacy as family business leaders challenged once they entered the firm. This study identifies different sources of legitimacy daughters built upon in order to increase their visibility and role in the family business, highlighting novel theoretical insights and implications for theory and practice.

**Keywords** *family business, gender diversity, female leadership*

## INTRODUCTION

Women's active presence in family business is becoming more and more evident (Dugan, Krone, LeCouvie, Pendergast, Kenyon-Rouvinez, and Schuman, 2011); however, research on women in family business remains limited (Ahrens, Landmann, and Woywode, 2015). One of women's key strengths is the ability to maintain family unity; an important factor in determining family business' success. Additionally, women can help in achieving family businesses economic goals and non-economic goals (e.g. higher performance and innovation and preserving family harmony) by providing idiosyncratic resources that contribute to such goals (Campopiano, De Massis, Rinaldi, and Sciascia, 2017). Despite this, women continue to face a myriad of obstacles and hurdles in accessing top managerial positions and actively participating in their family's business. These obstacles include: decreased consideration as successors, limited participation in strategic decision-making, and less opportunities for promotion (Dumas, 1998; Martinez Jimenez, 2009). In fact, it has been pointed out that women working in the family business are likely to be underutilized and less appreciated due to gender norms and expectations that emphasize women's role as family care-takers, and the limited acceptance of women's work role from family and non-family employees (Salganicoff, 1990). Furthermore, their invisibility can be exacerbated by their perceived emotional leadership (Dugan et al., 2011; Dumas, 1989) and primogeniture (Dumas, 1992; Vera and Dean, 2005).

In an effort to help advance our knowledge on women's role in family businesses', this paper aims to understand how daughters can become active leaders in the family business. Fundamentally, this paper is focused on understanding *how do daughters become legitimate members of family business management?* To do so, this study relies on the literature regarding different types of

legitimate authority and sources of legitimacy (Weber, 1978) as well as Curimbaba's (2002) typology on the roles of daughters in the family business.

This study focuses on Colombian family business because despite the significant advances made in studying women in family business, the vast majority of the research has been conducted in developed markets (e.g. Danes, Stafford, and Loy, 2007; Dumas, 1992, 1998) where there has been significant progress in terms of promoting equal gender opportunities. Nevertheless, the obstacles and career dynamics that women encounter in family businesses embedded in developing countries has received limited attention (Campopiano et al., 2017; Welsh, Memili, Rosplock, Roure, and Segurado, 2013). This is unfortunate because context can certainly impact the overall family business behavior (Samara and Berbegal-Mirabent, 2017).

Colombia provides a highly under-studied country located in a region where family business constitute more than 85% of companies (Ernst and Young, 2014), and where women face specific challenges that are context-driven. For example, the Latin American region is generally characterized by strong traditional expectations for women to prioritize their family role and be the main childcare givers in the family which, can put women under significant social pressures if these expectations are not met (Kuschel, Lepeley, Espinosa, and Gutiérrez, 2017). Moreover, the visibility of women as potential business leaders is threatened by the general acceptance of primogeniture and the predominance of large families with potential male successors (Curimbaba, 2002). Additionally, from a cultural perspective, the country presents a high level of masculinity (Hofstede, 1984), a characteristic common to many developing countries and which clearly delineates the role of men and women, and favoring men in the occupation of prominent positions in business and society (Cruz, Justo, and De Castro 2012).

Given the limited research on the role that women play once they have accessed the family business, and especially in the context of developing countries, this study follows an inductive theory building approach (Locke, 2007). Using this approach requires collecting and analyzing data to develop inductively valid concepts, followed by linking the findings to existing theory and helping to move the field's current knowledge (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). In doing so, I develop propositions rather than testing hypotheses, following qualitative rather than quantitative methodology.

This study makes several contributions to the discussion on family business heterogeneity and the role women play in it. First, it augments the family business heterogeneity literature by studying the roles played by women in family businesses from diverse industries, locations, ages, and overall family structures. Secondly, this paper contributes to the family business research, particularly to recent calls for further inquiry into understanding women's career dynamics and experiences in the family business (Campopiano et al., 2017). Finally, this study adds contextualized evidence by increasing our understanding of the dynamics of family businesses in the developing world. This paper is structured as follows: a short summary of the theory on daughters' roles in the family business and legitimacy is provided, as well as a brief description of the Colombian context. Then, the methodology is described before discussing the findings. Finally, implications, limitations and avenues for future research are discussed.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Daughters in the Family Business**

Women's contribution to the family business had previously been overlooked, however it has been gaining significant recognition (Ahl and Nelson, 2010). When it comes to a particular group of

women – daughters, their role as leaders in family businesses has attracted considerable attention in the last decade, however, research in this domain remains limited. Overall, trends indicate that the proportion of women family-member-managers in family businesses has been growing in many countries (Campopiano et al., 2017). Despite this growth, women continue to face several obstacles in accessing top managerial positions and actively participating in their family's business. Daughters trying to access the family business face the typical challenges common to all women such as discrimination and gender stereotypes, and work family-role conflict (Salganicoff, 1990). However, in addition to these challenges, daughters are also confronted with obstacles that are unique to their position as members of the owning family, such as: decreased consideration as successors, limited participation in strategic decision-making, and less opportunities for promotion (Dumas, 1998; Martinez Jimenez, 2009). Historically, daughters were not considered for succession into leadership positions in the family business and were not encouraged to prepare themselves for succession (Stavrou, 1999). Additionally, daughters who were able to join the family businesses encountered challenges such as conflict over their roles and loyalties, complex relationships and expectations from parents, acceptance from siblings and nonfamily members, and struggles for power (Dumas, 1992; De Rosenblatt, Mik, Anderson, and Johnson, 1985; Salganicoff, 1990).

The obstacles faced by daughters result in these women often feeling “invisible” as a result of traditional gender-based roles that establish that women should be responsible for the home and not the business (Ahrens et al., 2015; Danes and Olson, 2003). These gender roles, or societal expectations about what women and men should do may lead women to take positions of limited or low responsibility and decision-making power (Nelson and Constantinidis, 2017). Therefore, even when these daughters are able to access top positions in the family business, they may not be

viewed by others within the business in the same way male members are viewed (Rodríguez-Cameron, 1989). This may lead to the underutilization of daughters by family businesses (Ahrens et al., 2015). Overall, the existing literature points toward daughters playing different roles in regards to their ability to join and lead the family business (Dumas, 1989).

#### Typology of Daughter's Roles in the Family Business

In a study of Brazilian family businesses, Curimbaba (2002) identified three typical roles for daughters in the firm: *invisibles*, *anchors*, and *professionals*. The “invisible” daughters included those who were not considered or included in management succession and therefore, did not play any role in the family business. The “anchors” on the other hand, were described by Curimbaba (2002) as being similar to a ship's anchor because although they were essential for the firm and its continuity, they were only used in precise moments. Therefore, these daughters were included in the family business, yet their actual significance for the firm is reduced. Finally, “professional” daughters typically received job offers from the family business because their contribution to the firm would matter and they were active in recognizing opportunities to become involved in the family business. While Curimbaba (2002) states that these positions held by women are not definitive, the author does not clearly state how daughters are able to move from one role to another.

Undoubtedly, the roles of women have been changing and it is not surprising to see daughters deciding to become part of the family business, not only as owners but also as managers and leaders of the firm, and sometimes taking over the leadership (Vera and Dean, 2005). Becoming anchors and professionals, requires overcoming the reluctance of daughters' parents, siblings, and co-workers, who may see them more as “family members” and not adequate to run the business (Frishkoff and Brown, 1996); making it difficult for daughter to overcome invisibility as potential

family business leaders (Jimenez, 2009). Additionally, in the Colombian context, as in many other developing settings, the observance of birth order, in which male successors are favored, results in women having to compete for a position in the family business. By considering the male successor as a legitimate candidate for leading and becoming part of the family business, an overarching issue for women to be acknowledged and included in the family business is legitimizing their occupancy of leadership positions among family and non-family members (Curimbaba, 2002).

### Legitimacy

The literature focusing on daughters' succession and role in the family firm generally indicates that when taking over the family business or becoming part of its leadership, the legitimacy of daughters' positions tend to be threatened by others. On one hand, if there are sons in the family, they are perceived to be the "natural" successors, with women being often overlooked for leadership positions (Cole, 1997; Salganicoff, 1990). When these daughters enter the family business their credibility, acceptance, and overall legitimacy is susceptible to scrutiny from both their family members and non-family employees, as well as other stakeholders (Dumas, 1989). Daughters' relationship to the owning family can contribute to casting doubt on their capacity as a business leader, causing these women to struggle in gaining acceptance in the family business (Haberman and Danes, 2007).

Overall, extant research reveals that daughters not only face traditional gender-biased discrimination or stereotyping, but also experience rivalry with other family and non-family employees who doubt their leadership capabilities and associate their position in the business with nepotism (Vera and Dean, 2005). In this regard, women in the family business run the risk of having their legitimacy as leaders challenged, which can in turn, reduce their discretion and role in the family business (Torchia, Calabrò, and Huse, 2011). With this in mind, this study draws on

the theoretical framework set forth by Weber (1978) on legitimacy, where legitimacy is linked to power that should be obeyed and respected. Specifically, Weber (1978) identifies three types of legitimate authority: *rational-legal authority*, *traditional authority*, and *charismatic authority*. While rational-legal authority relies the belief of normative rules, traditional authority relies on established routines and traditions. Charismatic authority, on the other hand, relies on the exemplary characteristics of an individual. Based on this typology, individuals can derive their legitimacy from different sources (Weber, 1978). By applying this theoretical lens, we study diverse experiences of daughters' process of becoming legitimate or considered "worthy" leaders of the family business.

### The Colombian Context

To address these research questions I will conduct a comparative study of 20 family business in Colombia in which women were present in top management positions. Colombia provides an excellent context to study family business issues; it presents an under researched setting, as most studies in this domain have been conducted in developed countries (Campopiano et al., 2017). Colombia is the third largest country in Latin America in terms of population, and the dominance of family-owned business presents an ideal setting for empirical testing. In 2018 Confecamaras (the national network of Chambers of Commerce) established that 86.5% of the country's firms are family-owned businesses. Focusing in a developing country, such as Colombia, can help advance our understanding of the obstacles and opportunities that women encounter in family businesses embedded in developing countries, which has received significantly less attention (Campopiano et al., 2017).

As a developing country, Colombia has been characterized by facing constraints caused by their weak institutions, bringing about issues of corruption, lack of infrastructure and government



inefficiency (World Economic Forum –Competitiveness Report, 2015). These weak political and governmental institutions have resulted in few efforts being done in regards to gender equality, such that no reforms have been legislated requiring gender parity or increased female participation in firms’ board composition. According to the latest statistics from the National Statistics Department (DANE), the unemployment rate is higher for women (11.5 percent) compared to men (6.9 percent), and the latter’s participation in the labor force is 83 percent, while the former’s is 59 percent. Despite this difference, it is worth noting that there has been a steady increase of women’s participation in the workforce during the last decade. Additionally, when taking the largest 7 out of 100 firms in Colombia,

## **METHODOLOGY**

Given this study’s qualitative nature, it was deemed appropriate to use a multiple case-study methodology, as suggest by Yin (1989). The cases are based mainly on data obtained from semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Cases favoring a diversity of characteristic in terms of geographic location, family structures and relationships, were selected. This diversity can be seen through the description of the firms interviewed in Table 1.

The twenty cases used in this study emerge from a larger family business database from the Colombian Chamber of Commerce. In order to gain the experiences of daughter ins the family business, cases were required to be managed by owning family, as opposed to be managed by non-family managers, and must have endured at least two generations. Cases favoring a diversity of experiences and industries were selected to include a number of factors that are characteristic of a family business.

Insert Table 1 here

Considering that our research question is aimed at dealing with how women become legitimate leaders in the family business, a multiple case study qualitative approach was used. This type of research method is appropriate in trying to clarify “how” questions (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007), particularly by focusing on capturing detailed information about the experience of women in the family business, which is difficult to convey in quantitative data. The adoption of a qualitative research approach allows the construction of knowledge through our interpretation of the reality investigated (Creswell, 2003). Multiple cases allow for the development of new insights, where each case represents an independent study which may help further extend the theoretical background through the commonalities and differences among cases (Chirico and Nordqvist, 2010). By capturing interorganizational differences, multiple case studies facilitate greater generalization (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). Additionally, by relying on multiple individuals on each firm, a broader analysis was possible.

#### Data Collection

Data was collected through interviews, secondary sources (internal documents and websites), conversations and observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted separately with three or four respondents from each firm: the founder or an active individual from the founding generation, when possible, a male individual from the top management team, a female individual in the top management team, and an active family member of the last generation when possible, chosen on the basis of their central role within the family business. Interviews were conducted during various formal meetings. These meetings provided an opportunity to talk with several family and non-family members and observe interactions among them. Observation during the meeting also allowed for a greater understanding of the firm’s culture and the dynamics that occur

on a day-to-day basis. During and after each meeting, the researcher took notes based on impressions and observations, to develop ideas (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The interviews were taped, transcribed, and translated. The interviews were conducted by using open-ended questions where the respondents are not aware of research purpose, to avoid potential biases. In addition, probing questions were asked to obtain more details.

### Data Analysis

Coding of the information from interviews consisted of three phases of coding: open, axial, and selective, as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). By using NVivo, open coding phase was initiated by developing categories of information, followed by axial coding where these categories were interconnected and finally, engaging in selective coding to build a “story” that connects these categories (Creswell and Poth, 2017). During the open coding phase, transcripts were examined, notes and documents from the family business interviewed to identify salient categories of information. Using a constant comparative approach, allowed looking for instances that fit or represented a category until categories were saturated and no new information could add additional insights into the category. In doing so, the information was reduced to a set of themes or categories to be further analyzed. Further, these categories were interconnected to understand the story behind the role women played in these family business. The coding scheme can be seen in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 around here

## **FINDINGS**

Coding of interviewees answers and experiences revealed that legitimacy, expressed as a judgement of acceptance, appropriateness, and desirability of daughters, was a common

underlying theme. Interviews and observation revealed that daughters who became “anchors” were often regarded by family and non-family employees as lacking legitimacy because they were placed in a leadership position by either their parents or their siblings, they lacked general capabilities required for their position in the firm, and were perceived as not having sufficient knowledge of the family business to have a leadership position. Both family and non-family employees used expressions referencing “nepotism”, “lack of merits”, and referring to the daughters as “daddy’s little girl”; indicating a general perception that anchors’ lacked legitimacy as leaders of the family business. Daughters in the anchor position found it difficult to demonstrate their abilities and achieve credibility in their positions:

*“...As the head of the finance department, my journey within the family business was not easy; although my family members respected my capabilities, other employees and some suppliers find it difficult to see me as the leader.”*

*Rocio, Daughter/ Director of Finance*

*Industry: Auto-parts*

Daughters who were able to reach a role in the family business as anchors were usually perceived by their colleagues as token members of the organization who were involved in the firm due to hereditary privilege. Other employees, especially non-family ones accepted the inclusion of daughters in the business because, as many of them put it: “*Women who are members of the family end up becoming part of the business regardless of their qualifications and capabilities. It has always been that way.*” Daughters in the anchor position were able to overcome invisibility and had a formal role in the family business; however, other employees linked their inclusion in the firm to their *family capital*. This implies that due to their family relationships with the CEO of the business, the owner, or the founder, they were able to join the leadership of the firm:

*“...When I first joined the company I would walk into a room and conversations would stop. I got the sense that other employees did not trust me with important decisions. While employees did respect me, I still got the sense that instead of thinking of me as part of the leadership of the company they thought of me as merely the owner’s daughter. The assumption was that I was part of the family business because my father had decided to include me...”*

*Angela, Daughter and General Manager*

*Industry: Transportation*

In addition to their family bonds and relationships, daughter who reached anchor roles were also found to have the *academic preparation* that allowed them to break from invisibility and be considered eligible to join the family business leadership. By obtaining an undergraduate degree, daughters were perceived as having the minimum requirements to have a formal role in the business. Despite this, it was clear that they were still underutilized at times and they lacked a voice in strategic decision-making:

*“Recently, the daughter of one of the two owners came to be part of the company, as COO. This person was appointed by management in their position at the end of their studies in the United States. However, many of the decisions she should be taking care of are still being made together with the owners (her parents and brothers). I also get the sense that they don’t really allow her to deal with important clients.”*

*Sergio, Non-family employee*

*Industry: Chemicals*

Daughters who had a “professional” role were often regarded by family and non-family employees as legitimate authority figures because: not only did they possessed the capabilities and general knowledge of business required for their positions, but they were also perceived as having sufficient knowledge of the specificities of the family business. Additionally, in the majority of the cases these daughters’ mothers had been involved in the family business as well, paving the way for daughters’ credibility as active leaders of the family business. Both family and non-family employees referred to professional daughters with expressions such as: “she has paid her dues”, and mentioned that “she has learned our business”, as well as referring to the daughters as “being engaged in the firm’s continuity”, indicating professional daughters’ legitimacy in the family business.

Findings revealed that much of the legitimacy of professional daughters stemmed from having a career within the family business itself. By joining the firm early on and building their way up the corporate ladder, these daughters legitimized their knowledge of the family business’ intricacies and showed that they obtained a leadership position by merit and through a progressive increase in their responsibilities. By doing so, these daughters were perceived as having the potential to truly contribute to the family business.

Additionally, the professional daughters were deemed credible leaders partially because their mothers had also been involved in the family business in most of the cases. Because mothers became involved in leadership, management, or governance of the firm, family and non-family employees had a greater acceptability of women family members’ involvement in business by the time daughters joined the firm. Having mothers participating in family businesses’ decision-making eased daughters’ path into influence over strategic decision. Additionally, the presence of other women of the family in the business encouraged daughters to feel less inhibition when trying

to influence strategic decisions. The presence of more women family members in the business signaled a female-friendly culture to employees, helping to shift the strong perception of corporate leadership being male oriented, and the conservative view of women's traditional role in society present in the Colombian context. Therefore, having their mothers be present and involved in the family business, allowed women to become legitimate leaders of the firm and encounter less resistance from both family and non-family employees.

*“In 1981 the company required to increase its production schedules that ended at 5.30PM. An additional work schedule was coordinated from 6.00 to 8.00 PM and my mother asked me to attend that additional day, so I worked part time to meet that need. A few months later, the accountant, assistant to the company's management, retired and was invited to enter the firm full time, assuming part of her duties. I was in this position for 2 years and was invited by my mother to replace her as second in the company from 1987 to 2016. Then in 2016 my brother, who was president of the company, and its leader for 40 years decides to retire and I take up his position.”*

*Amalia, Daughter/CEO*

*Industry: Party Supplies*

An additional source of legitimacy for professional daughters stemmed from these women's professional experience outside the family business. By working in other companies that were not associated to the family business, daughters were able to build the business competencies and skills deemed necessary for a leadership position. These competencies allowed daughters to build legitimacy in regards to their preparation and ability to contribute to the family business and the validity of their opinion, given their previous work experience.

*“...My siblings and I knew that she was ready to join the company as a CEO. We trusted her because we were sure that her education and professional experience would allow her to perform well as a leader for our family business. This decision was not arbitrary, she has a Bachelor’s degree in Chemistry, a Bachelor’s degree in Mathematics, graduate studies in finance, Senior Management Studies and she completed an Advanced Management Program abroad. Additionally, she worked for more than a decade in other companies. We unanimously and confidently decided she should become the next CEO.”*

*Kenneth, Brother and COO*

*Industry: Party Supplies*

In some cases, these daughters’ work experience stemmed from leading their own entrepreneurial ventures. By starting their own business, these daughters demonstrated that they had the necessary business skills to both start and manage a business venture.

*“...First I spent five years at a solar energy company, in the area of international sales. After this, I left the company to start a business with my husband, which is an ice cream business that we still have today. After years of having this business with my husband I was contacted by my brother to join the family business as the marketing director.”*

*Consuelo, Daughter/ Director of Marketing and Sales*

*Industry: Textiles*

As part of their charismatic authority, professional daughters were described by other employees as “inspiring”. Employees mentioned that these daughters showed concern for the continuity of the business as opposed to being a threat for the continuity of the family business. Additionally, professional daughters were described as anticipating the firms’ needs and having a more “staff-



centered” than a “self-centered” approach, which is a common characteristics of family members who are involved in the family business.

*“..As a CEO, she has strived to guide the top management team, develop confidence, delegate when necessary and be available to support other team members. Her approach and strategic decision style, while it can be considered a more emotional style, it is also logical, and includes having multiple alternatives, scenarios, impact variables, conducting sensitivity analysis, and all the necessary information to contextualize and guide decision-making.”*

*Carlos, Non-family employee*

*Industry: Party Supplies*

*“As for her leadership style... Consuelo makes an effort to listen more to other employees and team members when expressing their points of view and when asking for guidance. She has always implemented an “open door” style so that everyone feels free to consult her and does not intimidate employees who are not related to the family.”*

*Christian, Non-family employee*

*Industry: Education Services*

## **DISCUSSION**

This study has taken a case study approach to understand how daughters legitimize their role in the family business. Given daughters increasing participation and visibility in the family business, this study has contributed to increasing our understanding the dynamics of women, and specifically daughters, as family business leaders. Our findings reveal that in Colombia, and most likely in other Latin American countries, women must to strive to build acceptance and legitimacy as

leaders in order to become desirable and active members of the family business. Building legitimacy will help daughters overcome the burden of the weak role of legal-rational authority in promoting gender equality forces, combined with societal norms of primogeniture and traditional gender roles, and the lack of credibility perceived by siblings, as well as family and non-family employees.

Findings from the interviews emphasize that two sources of legitimacy “family capital” and “academic formation” are strong force to build traditional authority, enabling daughters to become anchors in the family business. By using their family relationships and their academic formation, daughters were able to overcome invisibility, by joining the family business, however their role and influence in decision-making remained limited. By using traditional authority as a source of credibility, daughters were accepted into the family firm, yet their adequacy and worthiness as a member of the business remained questioned. Acceptance was achieved through the family relationships that enable daughters to have access to the family business, and their academic formation allowed to be considered as having the minimum knowledge of business, yet their desirability as leader of the business remained questioned.

Findings revealed that in order for daughters to not only break from invisibility but ply an active role in the family firm, traditional authority was not the right path. For daughters to become professionals in the family business, legitimacy is obtained through “professional experience”, “building a career” in the firm and “inspiring” employees through charismatic authority. By building external work experience outside the family business and progressively growing their role within the family business, daughters were perceived as having the necessary general business knowledge and of the intricacies of the family business; resulting in their desirability and credibility as leaders of the firm. Additionally, their leadership style was also a source of

acceptance, especially by non-family employees. Given the complexity of family businesses where family and business dimensions intertwine, non-family employees perceived that through their leadership style, these daughters were not only looking after their own family's interests, but also looking after non-family employees' concerns and the overall continuity and growth of the business, benefitting all stakeholders at large. These sources of legitimacy allowed daughters to build important relationships with family and non-family employees; contributing to family harmony. This is not surprising, given the importance of cultivating relationships in the Latin American context (Poza, 1995).

The stories uncovered by qualitative data gathering stress the importance of considering gender and legitimacy as two important factors in the study of women in the family business. While women in general are faced with obstacles in rising to managerial leadership, women in family business face particular constraints in a setting where family and business coexist, causing their legitimacy as adequate leaders to be questioned. Therefore, studying the process and mechanisms allowing some women to be accepted as legitimate business leaders is helpful in uncovering daughters' career dynamics in the family business.

## **LIMITATIONS**

This study is not without limitations. While our sample comprised a variety of family businesses from multiple sectors, no clear differentiation was made between family businesses from the services and the manufacturing sector. Additionally, while focusing on daughters who managed to have a presence in the family business, this study falls short in understanding the experiences of "invisible" daughters, in terms of women who desired to become active members of the family business but were not able to join the firm. Furthermore, this study focuses on women who were part of the family and wanted to become part of the family business, however the study did not

look at women who are not family members and those who are not interested in joining the family business. Finally, the study did not acknowledge the specificities of the roles that daughters played inside the family business, failing to distinguish between formal and informal roles played by daughters.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH**

Our study opens multiples avenues for future research. This study focused on medium and large family businesses, however it would be worthwhile further examination of the distinct experience of women in small family businesses when compared to those of women in large family businesses. This research could focus on questions such as: are there specific obstacles faced by women in large/small family businesses? If so, what explains these obstacles and how are the women handling the situation? Also, what are her family members and co-workers doing to help or not help? Another avenue for future research comprises the leadership style of women in family business. Our study provides some initial insight into the leadership style of women who reach a professional role in the family business. Some questions related to this topic include: how effective are daughters' and women's leadership style in the family businesses? , and what factors influence their behavior? Additionally, more studies are needed to compare female career dynamics and experiences across multiple countries and regions to shed light on issues that are contextually driven. Finally, quantitative research is needed to help corroborate qualitative findings in this research domain.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study contributes to the scarce research on daughters' career dynamics in the family business by identifying different types of authority as mechanisms through which daughters gain legitimacy

in the family business. By setting the study in an under-researched, developing setting, this study contributes to enhancing our understanding of gender diversity in a context where the state has a weaker role in pushing for gender equality and inclusion in business.

Family business owners must strive to: Groom daughters early on in terms of academics, professional experience, and knowledge of the family business, all of which will allow daughters to overcome their invisibility and fully contribute as credible leaders in the family business. In the developing context, policymakers must: Strive to increase and facilitate women's access to higher education, professional experience, and development of leadership skills, as mechanisms that grant them legitimacy in top management teams.

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## APPENDIX

TABLE 1- MULTIPLE CASE STUDY SAMPLE

Geographic Location	Industries	Size	Age Range	Generation
Barranquilla (9)	Services (Transportation, IT services, Interior Design) Manufacturing (Food, Party Supplies, Pharmaceuticals, Chemicals, Textiles)	Medium (Between 51 and 200 employees) Large (250 and above)	19 – 52	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Bogota (6)	Services (Industrial Services, Business Consulting, Advertising) Manufacturing (Food, Textiles, Auto parts)	Medium Large	17- 61	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Cartagena (3)	Services (Hospitality) Manufacturing (Pharmaceutical, Food)	Medium	14-25	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Santa Marta (2)	Services (Educational Services) Manufacturing (Food)	Medium Large	19 – 30	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup>



FIGURE 1 – CODING SCHEME

