

DISSERTATION

CONFESIONES Y CONSEJOS DE TRES MUJERES:
HOW CHICANA/LATINAS NAVIGATE, NEGOTIATE, AND RESIST HEGEMONIC
STRUCTURES WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

CONFESIONES Y CONSEJOS DE TRES MUJERES: HOW CHICANA/LATINAS NAVIGATE, NEGOTIATE, AND RESIST HEGEMONIC STRUCTURES WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to better understand the experiences of Chicana Latinas interested in the professoriate. Rooted in a Chicana Feminist Epistemology, the study utilized a testimonio/platica approach to answer how Chicana/Latinas navigate, negotiate, and resist the hegemonic academic structures that exist in higher education as they traverse the pathway to and through the professoriate. The principal themes emerging from the pláticas highlighted that platicadoras are in a constant state of negotiation, even the slightest deviations for the approved/legitimate standards set forth by academia are considered forms of resistance, and platicadoras live in a constant state of hypervigilance. Utilizing Anzaldúa's (2015) seven steps of conocimiento, the study provides a framework for how to understand the pain and trauma experienced by Chicana/Latina's in their journeys. Resulting from this study is, Un modelo de conocimiento, which provides an opportunity to better understand the nuances of navigation, negotiation, and resistance and how they interact with the stages of conocimiento, building bridges for healing.

In collecting, documenting, and sharing roadmaps, Chicana/Latinas reclaim their spaces in the arena of knowledge creation. More importantly, to reimagine the academy, guided by an ethic of love and care, an opportunity to apply Rendon's (2000) Academics of the Heart as well as follow the consejos of the platicadoras.

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DEDICATION

Para todos mis estudiantes

Your stories are valuable and legitimate

y especialmente para todas las Chingonas

Without your love and support, none of this could have been possible

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Esta sera mi primera confesion¹. Espero que la confesion y el consejo² me sanaran. The year is 1980, only five years old, my only recollection of that year is the following;

White, middle aged kindergarten teacher: Struggling to pronounce my name, starts with my last name, easy enough, “Carmona, uh, Hosay?” stops and says, “it is a j sound or h sound? Well sweetheart, I think I am going to have trouble saying that name, so let’s just call you Josie from now on. How does that sound?”

Me: “OK”, shrugging my shoulders and sliding down into my chair, hoping that the other kids stop staring and laughing. The other kids were mostly white, a sprinkling of black kids, and to the best of my recollection, I was the only Mexican kid in the bunch.

The only thing I remember about that day was going home—we lived in a small oil town in the Texas Panhandle called Borger—and telling my mom and dad that this was my “new” name. I have no memory of how they responded, nor do I have any memories of my kindergarten year. None. I only remember how I felt: embarrassed and ashamed. And each time I recall the incident, I feel an enormous knot form in my throat and tears well up in my eyes, the same

¹ The term *confesion* in this study is used in a broader context than simply translated to confession. Particularly in Chicana/Latina communities, the act of confession, or *confesion* is very much a part of the Catholic religious practices, creating tensions for Chicana/Latinas as they deal with the paradoxes of religion and their feminism (Delgado Bernal, et.al, 2006). In this study’s context, the act of *confesion*, is seen more as process for healing, for verbalizing the acts in which I, the researcher, and the Chicana/Latina research participants have encountered, endured, and accepted inappropriate and damaging behavior throughout our educational journey. We are not seeking absolution, we are seeking healing through the *testimonio* process.

²² *Confesion* allows for *consejos*, drawing upon the concept of educación of Delgado Bernal, et. al (2006), learning takes place at multiple levels, from family, community, and la *sabiduria* that is shared cannot be equated to western constructs of wisdom and learning. The term advice does not begin to describe the concept of *consejos* therefore, I chose to utilize this term to better represent how valuable *consejos* that the Chicana/Latina participants will share through their *testimonios*.

feelings of embarrassment and shame coupled with anger that I couldn't defend my name back then. I didn't understand what was happening to me other than it made me feel less than; it made me feel delegitimized. These moments are generally followed by a forced swallow of the knot in my throat and I whisper to myself, "it was over 38 years ago, you have got to let it go."

But I cannot forget, it is a part of who I am, and my name, Josefina Carmona, is part of an identity that was pushed aside for a more anglicized name in order to make my teacher feel better, and in order to teach me to assimilate. From that day forward, I chose to only speak English, to work hard to be accepted by my teachers and classmates, and to find legitimacy in an educational system which did not believe in my worth and would only focus on negative stereotypes to justify their treatment of me as a young woman, eager to learn and fit in. I learned very early in my educational career about the importance of legitimacy. I now understand that academic legitimacy is couched in a Eurocentric framework, valuing what is worthy and what is not, good or bad, acceptable and nonacceptable. It is a strict and rigid set of judgements, all of which are a result of a white supremacist educational system, where other ways of knowing are not valued and the pressure meet those parameters become a centralized theme in the lives of many Latinx/Chicanx students (Contreras, 1995; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Padilla, 1994; Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002).

The Construct of Legitimacy

Early on in my educational journey, I had no way of naming it, but I knew what resulted from not working hard to fit in and meet those standards. It meant poor grades simply due to a lack of understanding of white cultural norms, chastising lectures from teachers who just did not understand why I had no clue what 'flappers' were when we were studying the 1920s. It meant even though I was one of the best cheerleaders, earning a spot on the squad would not happen for

me because the school had met their quota and a black student was already on the squad. It was being told by my high school counselor that the ACT and SAT packets I was helping him prepare for juniors and seniors who were considered college bound, were not meant for me, because I would go to secretarial school, meet a nice boy, be married, and start a family, none of which required that I take those exams. It also meant I would learn to question my value each and every time I started a new degree program, wondering if my academic contributions were valuable, if I had something to say, if my way of knowing was legitimate.

The construct of legitimacy has evolved over time for me, I struggle with my relationship with it. I am filled with contradictions around this construct and believe there are other ways of knowing and that this white supremacist system is not the end all be all for academia and yet it continues to be for many. In other words, I can see this system, name it, watch it in action, and yet, I perpetuate it in my language, the standards I set for myself and others around me, and for how I self-critique my writing. It is ever present, entrenched in psyche, constantly reminding me that there is a threshold I must meet in order to be legitimate. More than anything, these contradicting value sets I hold deep inside are filled with sadness and pain. Much of which brings me back to that day in kindergarten, where the knot in my throat expands, and I fight the tears in my eyes, begging them to let them loose, knowing if they do, they will make me look weaker in the eyes of those who judge me and those whose acceptance I seek.

At home, I was reminded that I was very much Mexicana, my parents' choice of identity for me at the time. My dual existence, a young Chicana who spoke only English and listened and understood the world of Spanish, living in two worlds, often left me feeling as though I was neither Mexican or American, as Anzaldúa (1987) wrote, "A veces no soy nada ni nadie. Pero hasta cuando no lo soy, lo soy" (p. 85). Over time, without understanding how and why, I

learned to navigate between my multiple realities assimilating and acquiescing to the dominant white culture at the same time, preserving my own cultural identity (Anzaldúa, 2015).

The struggle continues in all aspects of life. We live in the borderlands; the borderlands live within us; and we are the borderlands. Someone asked me recently, “Have you considered using your full name, Josefina?” I paused and said, “I am not sure. I use it for all official documents and my writing, but I am not sure.” To deny that Josie is not a part of who I am would now mean that I am denying a part of me that has developed over time. Imposed or not, I am Josie, Jo, JoJo, Jos, to many people in my life. After pondering it for a moment, I can now say no, Josefina and Josie are representative of dual identities, both of which at times exist, at times live, and at my best, at times thrive in the borderlands.

I share this story as a confession, un papelito guardado, of how very early in my educational experience I suffered a great trauma, one of many which I would suffer throughout my educational career. Inelegantly translated, papelitos guardados means saved/guarded/tucked away little papers, the authors in *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios* (2001) disclose how ‘papelitos guardados’ which are private and public accounts/testimonios of their experiences, which are closely guarded parts of their identity. The use of this term in the study is important due to the nature of how the process of testimoniando can at times be quite distressing and the papelitos guardados are ways in which Chicana/Latina’s are able to document the trauma and heal it in private.

This doctoral journey has brought to the surface that the act of swallowing the knot in my throat time after time is to deny the trauma and never truly heal from it. My hope is that through this study, other Chicana/Latina students find the confesiones y consejos from the testimonios of successful Chicana/Latinas as motivating and at the same time, healing. In an interview with

Karin Ikas, Gloria Anzaldúa (2007), shared when Chicanas read *Borderlands*, “it somehow legitimated them..., to them it was like somebody saying: ‘you are just as important as a woman, as anybody, from another race. And the experiences that you have are worth being told and written about” (p. 271). As a Chicana who read *Borderlands* twenty-two years ago, that was true then and more so now as a doctoral student who is reminded that I am worthy and legitimate. I have Doctora Susana Muñoz and Doctora Carmen Rivera for reminding me of that worth and inspiring this study.

Translating Terms or Not

In this study, I used terms that are in both Spanish and English, the following provides a bit more context to the way I chose to use them. In particular, the Spanish words are highly influenced by own understanding of them, how I was raised, how my family and particularly my parents informed my understanding of these terms. As a child, I was always confused, and still today at times, with just how different a translated word was from Spanish to English, as I began to use Spanish more, I began to dream and think in Spanish, realizing that the Spanish meanings felt more authentic to my true self. Anzaldúa (1987) suggested linguistic identity is an integral part of identity and the inability to speak and write in all languages, Spanish, English, Tex Mex, Spanglish, etc., are just more ways of legitimizing one’s existence. At times, Spanish words will be translated and at others not, particularly when the translation does not do the word or sentiment justice.

Problem Statement

Historically, Chicanx/Latinx³ students have experienced the United States (U.S.) educational system in oppressive ways, beginning with segregated substandard schools, racialized and identified as intellectually inferior and deficient due to their cultural and familial upbringing (González, 1990; Mares-Tamayo & Solórzano, 2018; Menchaca, 1999). This marginalization and oppression of Chicanx/Latinx students was and is a function of a history of conquest and colonization, intended to force assimilation at all costs.

Current day high school dropout and completion rates, indicate 4.7% white students drop out and 94.3% complete high school, and 11.8% of Hispanic⁴ students drop out with only 85% completing high school (NCES, 2016). To determine whether change had occurred across a 20-year period, I checked the same data for females and found there had been very little improvement. Data for Hispanic females across both reporting periods, 1996 and 2016, demonstrate a lower dropout rate for females than males (6.5% and 4.0%) for each reporting period, and completion with a diploma (86.8% and 92.6%) shows some progress over the course of twenty years, (NCES, 1996; 2016). More troubling is the data which indicate Hispanic students in 2014 accounted for only 9.1% of overall college enrollment, whereas their white counterparts made up 65.6% of all enrollment (NCES, 2015). These data also point out the disparate numbers of college completion where Hispanics hold only 22% of an associate degree or higher as opposed to 46% of their white counterparts (Excelencia, 2015). These data are important to include for a few reasons, first, they support the impetus for a continued discussion

³ For the purposes of this study, I will be utilizing the terms Chicanx/Latinx when discussing this population in an effort to be gender neutral, when discussing populations and communities not limited to women.

⁴ The term Hispanic will only be utilized when referencing official government agency reports who utilize this term to refer to all Spanish speaking ethnic and racial groups. It should also be noted that in these government agency reports, disaggregated data on Chicanx students in particular are not available.

and study of this population and the oppressive structures that continue to keep them from achieving greater results, and second, they establish a pattern of maintaining marginality of Chicana/Latina students within the constructs of higher education. Finally, while the data do not implicitly tell the story of struggle, the literature reveals the educational experiences of Chicana/Latina students are filled with struggle, trauma, but more importantly resilience (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Mares-Tamayo & Solórzano, 2018; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Valencia, 2008).

The barriers to Chicana/Latina pathways to educational attainment may help explain the low representation of Chicana/Latina faculty within higher education. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports that of the 1.5 million faculty in the U.S., 53% are considered full-time faculty of which, only two percent are represented by Hispanic women (2017). Numerically speaking, this is problematic for a few reasons. It is estimated that by 2060, Latinos will represent 31% of the total U.S. population (129 million), while whites are projected to represent 43% and yet Latino students continue to attend institutions where they cannot see themselves represented in the faculty that teach them (Excelencia, 2015). Second, the literature shows that although colleges and universities have attempted to recruit and retain Faculty of Color, Latina faculty included, they have failed to do so in a way that makes a significant impact on the overall numbers of Latina faculty representation amongst the full-time faculty across the nation (Kayes, 2006; Smith, 2000; Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, & Richards, 2004; Suinn & Witt, 1982; Turner, Gonzales, & Wood, 2008). The manner in which Chicana/Latina faculty experience the journey to and on the professoriate is also problematic; with the literature pointing to stories of struggle, hostile working environments, but also of survival and some success (Arriola, 1997; Ruiz & Machado-Casas, 2013; Gonzalez, 2007; Martinez, Alsandor, Cortez,

Welton, & Chang, 2015; Martinez, Chang, & Welton, 2017, Martinez & Welton, 2017; Medina & Luna, 2000; Flores-Niemann, 1999; Rendon, 2000; Reyes, 2005; Segura, 2003; Urrieta, Jr., & Benavidez, 2007). Researchers argued until universities make concerted efforts to change the white supremacist structures which keep Faculty of Color from achieving success, their recruitment and retention efforts for Faculty of Color are just symbolic in nature (Ahmed, 2012; Alger, 2008; Patel, 2015; Sensoy & Diangelo, 2017).

One university structure/process in particular is the Review, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) process, leading to tenure, which to a certain extent, provides faculty members with job security, protection of academic freedom, and legitimacy within the larger academic community (AAUP; Cohen & Kisker, 2009). Although faculty are not reviewed for tenure until their fourth or fifth year as tenure-track faculty, the standards for what is deemed to be legitimate career as a scholar have been clearly established since the beginning of a doctoral journey if not before. While most universities and colleges steer away from detailing in writing what they constitute as ‘legitimate’ scholarship there are unspoken guidelines for what is acceptable, such as having scholarship submitted to ‘reputable’ journals that are peer reviewed. On the surface, the concept of proving one’s academic legitimacy would appear to be straight forward; a scholar conducts relevant and meaningful research that contributes to one’s discipline and submits their research to be reviewed and accepted by their peers to be published in an acceptable journal. What is less clear is how research is judged based on the methods utilized to conduct research compared to what has been historically lauded as ‘scientific’ inquiry and thus deemed legitimate.

In their work, Scheurich and Young (2002) argued scholarly legitimacy is judged utilizing a racist set of epistemologies which value Eurocentric ways of knowing. This inherently creates an institutionally supported racist set of judgements for how scholarly research is judged

to be ‘legitimate’ or not. In other words, if a Faculty of Color, or Chicana/Latina faculty member chooses to pursue what the academy considers to be alternative approaches to conducting research, not falling in line with a positivist or post positivist approach to conducting research, it is more likely to be deemed less valuable to the institution potentially leading to a vote of non-tenure for a faculty member.

The RTP process creates various levels at which the scholarly work of faculty are judged and scrutinized starting with how the research is conducted to where the research is published. The entire system is built upon a racist set of standards by which Faculty of Color must choose to navigate and at times submit to a racist system in order to achieve tenure. In *Presumed Incompetent* (2012), women of color faculty share their stories related to the RTP process and its intentional structure which facilitates further marginalization and exclusion to the women of color faculty. Scholars Wallace, Moore, Wilson, and Hart (2012) shared the following assessment of the RTP process:

I now understand how important it is to know your strengths and the way the academic promotion and tenure game is played. Often the formal, unwritten rules are hidden from those who ‘aren’t a good fit.’ This causes African American women and other marginalized groups to stumble and appear incompetent when that is not the case. (p. 448)

Tenure carries with it an immense amount of power, security, and stability for academics and yet, for Chicana/Latina faculty, the road to achieving tenure through the RTP process, also carries with it an immeasurable amount of struggle, trauma, and uncertainty and for many, does not result in tenured status. Many, in spite of being completely qualified, were pushed out of their fields due to their lack of playing the tenure game, demonstrating that tenure is reserved for those who “fit” within the constructs of what the institutions of higher education deemed to be legitimate (Arriola, 1997; Flores-Niemann, 2012).

Chicana/Latina faculty who have successfully traversed and achieved tenure have typically suffered greatly in this quest to seek membership/acceptance/legitimacy within the persistently and overwhelmingly white professoriate. The literature—which highlights this struggle—points to an incredible amount of strength, perseverance, and above all, a love for teaching and strong commitment to bringing about change within the institutions of higher education. Carmen Lugo (2012) shared:

...regardless of all the things I have discussed and the complicated interactions I may have had with students, I love being a college professor. I see it as a contribution to improving this most incomprehensible society. I also see it as my way of helping leave this place in a better condition than I found it. (p. 452)

When I first started this journey of completing the doctoral program, I refused to ever see myself in the role of faculty member, I always asked myself, “Why would I do that? Why would I subject myself to more pain and trauma?” Study after study points to many faculty feeling a much higher calling to doing their work, and to subject themselves to what is often a grueling RTP process (Baez, 2000; Gutierrez et al., 2012; Ponjuan, 2011; Urrieta, Jr. & Benavidez, 2007). That calling, in essence, is what Anzaldúa pointed to in her work when she wrote *Borderlands*, it served as means to legitimating the existence of other Chicanas seeking to find value and worthiness in their stories.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to better understand how three Chicanas/Latinas navigate, negotiate, and resist hegemonic structures within higher education in their journey to, and through, the professoriate. Utilizing a Chicana Feminist Epistemology, the study will employ testimonio as a methodology to explore the research participants lived experiences. In particular, I chose to collaborate with a doctoral student, who like me, is in the process of completing her doctoral studies, navigating the constructs of academic legitimacy as she begins to craft and

shape her research agenda. The choice to collaborate with a tenure track faculty member provided an insight to someone who is at the beginning stages of the RTP process. Finally, the choice to collaborate with a recently tenured faculty member provides us with a fresh perspective of the struggles and obstacles she faced in the pursuit of tenure. In particular, how each one has navigated, negotiated, and resisted within the constructs related to academic legitimacy as nepantleras who represent “mediators who have survived and been transformed by their oftentimes painful negotiations,” developing “perspectives from the cracks” reimagining the worlds that they live in and in between (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 245). Centering Chicana/Latina voices and their consejos provides an opportunity for other Chicana/Latinas to seek out examples of how their own stories have worth and, in some ways, find the inspiration to possibly follow in the footsteps of those Chicana/Latinas who are paving the way in academy.

Significance of Study

Given the previously discussed data and historical context for the many challenges with achieving success within the institutions of education in the U.S., achieving tenure for Chicana/Latina faculty is in it of itself, an act of resistance and a testimonio of sobrevivencia. While outwardly appearing to be places where learning and new and innovative ideas are formed, institutions and structures of higher education are built upon white supremacist ideologies and were not meant to encourage the success of those who are not white males (Patel, 2015; Wilder, 2013). Chicanx/Latinx populations and their journeys through educational systems, specifically within higher education, establish a spirit of resistance, fighting for every achieved success. This study proposed to add to the conversations and literature surrounding the experiences of Chicana/Latina faculty as they traverse the path towards the professoriate. More

broadly, it contributed toward research on how marginalized individuals resist and navigate, and possibly transform, dominant structures in higher education.

Studies of demographic data and trends suggest more Chicanas/Latinas are pursuing higher education, but few are entering graduate programs from which new faculty are often drawn (Pérez Huber, Malagón, Ramirez, Gonzalez, Jimenez, & Vélez, 2015). As prolific as Gloria Anzaldúa was, the structures and expectations of the academy made it difficult for her to complete her doctoral degree. She only received her doctorate posthumously (Anzaldúa, 2015). Her many competing projects, demands on her time, and later, her failing health made it difficult to complete the dissertation. For Chicana/Latina graduate students seeking to pursue a doctorate, this study provided an opportunity to better understand how each Chicana/Latina research participant negotiated her scholarly identity while challenging the constructs of legitimacy within the academy.

Although studies focused on Chicana/Latina faculty are continuously growing, the body of literature available on their lived experiences and expertise at *sobreviviendo* and thriving in the academy is not substantial nor complete. By centering the voices and experiences of Chicana/Latinas in ways that provide opportunity for *consejos*, the possibilities of inspiring and motivating Chicana/Latinas who are on their journey towards the professoriate are immense. Last, and yet more important, elevating the voices and experiences of Chicana/Latinas pursuing the professoriate through their *testimonios* is an act of resistance, claiming agency as a researcher to contribute to scholarly work in ways that challenge Eurocentric epistemologies.

Lastly and equally important, while this study focused on the experiences of Chicana/Latinas, the value of utilizing this approach for other minoritized populations is just as significant. It is not surprising that scholars like Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2008) have spent

considerable amounts of time publishing work which focuses on how African American scholars can “survive” the RTP process without “losing their souls.” Utilizing the testimonio approach, centering voices of Faculty of Color and how they choose to navigate, negotiate, and resist those structures can expand the resources available to all Faculty of Color and potentially create connections between groups.

Research Questions

The main research question for this study is: How have Chicana/Latinas navigated, negotiated, and resisted the hegemonic structures that exist in higher education as they traverse the pathway to and through the professoriate? More specifically, I am also interested in answering the following question: Based on their experiences, how has the concept of academic legitimacy played a role in Chicanas/Latinas navigating these structures? These questions are informed by the existing literature related to how Chicana/Latinas experience institutions of higher education, my conceptual framework, Chicana Feminist Epistemology, and by my experiences regarding the hegemonic structures that exist within higher education which have had a profound effect on my educational experience. The questions recognize Chicana/Latinas’ very presence in higher education is an act of resistance. Therefore, the questions provide an opportunity to further delve into the various nuances that exist within the liminal spaces, or *Nepantla*, which exists to create new ways of understanding the world (Anzaldúa, 1987).

Summary

In this study, I aimed to better understand the lived experiences of Chicana/Latinas at various stages of their pursuit of the professoriate, specifically how they addressed the constructs of academic/scholarly legitimacy negotiating their scholarly identity in ways that made sense to them and their identities. Recognizing the presence of Chicana/Latinas in the institutions of

higher education are acts of resistance, their testimonios serve to provide insights, motivation and inspiration to other Chicana/Latinas at various levels of their journeys on and to the professoriate. The limited research regarding Chicana/Latinas experiences while traversing the pathway to the professoriate, specifically the ways in which they navigate, negotiate, and challenge hegemonic academic structures provides opportunities to add to the ongoing research on Chicana/Latinas pursuing the professoriate.

Chapter two begins by framing the extant literature around the ways in which I understand the world of knowing, utilizing a Chicana Feminist Epistemology. The current study is very much situated in an epistemology which challenges Eurocentric approaches to research which tend to speak to how Chicana/Latinas ‘fail’ to fit into the hegemonic structures which exist within higher education. In order to better understand why Chicana/Latina faculty have experienced their journeys in such stressful and traumatic ways, a critical discussion centered upon the hegemonic university structures, particularly the constructs of academic legitimacy, is critical to better understanding how these structures serve as major obstacles. This chapter also provides an overview of the relevant literature pertaining to how researchers have presented the experiences of Chicanx/Latinx have experienced higher education. Experiences of Chicana/Latina faculty on and to the professoriate highlight the various levels of struggle, success, and the coping mechanisms they formulated to sobrevivir are also included. One gap that this review has exposed is the lack of the how they honed their navigation, negotiation, and resistance skills which result from these traumatic and challenging structures.

Chapter three outlines the methodology and methods of narrative inquiry utilized in this study. Beginning with a discussion around my research paradigm, positionality, and how that paradigm influenced my decision to utilize testimonio as a method. The Chicana/Latina

participants provide their testimonios, participate in a series of pláticas, and culminates in the sharing of wisdom gained, of consejos for other Chicana/Latinas who find themselves considering and/or on the road towards the professoriate. Chapter three concludes with a detailed description of the planned analytical approach and how trustworthiness is established in the study.

Chapter four outlines the salient findings of the platicadoras testimonios and sets the stage for recommendations for future research in this area. Testimonios pointed to the acts of navigation, negotiation, and resistance not as distinct linear actions, but as complex, interdependent, and often painfilled experiences. Common themes/findings included: (1) platicadoras are in a constant state of negotiation; (2) even the slightest deviations from the approved/legitimate standards set forth by academia are considered forms of resistance; and (3) platicadoras live in a constant state of hypervigilance.

A continuation of findings, Chapter 5 proposes an additional framing of the testimonios utilizing Anzaldúa's (2015) seven stages of *conocimiento* to provide further insight the painful and traumatic experiences each platicadora shared through their testimonio. The chapter also includes *cartas de consejo* from the platicadoras filled with powerful *consejos* for Chicana/Latinas and others who might be interested in pursuing the professoriate.

Chapter 6 concludes with an overview of the findings in relation to the literature, proposed *modelo de conocimiento*, and recommendations for future study. It culminates with a *carta de agradecimiento* a todas las mujeres que me han apoyando en este proceso.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

“The question at hand is this: are researchers destined to find themselves in another three decades reiterating what is already known and lamenting once again the severe underrepresentation of Chicanas in institutions of higher education? (Cuádras, 2005, p 216).

This chapter presents a critical review of relevant literature to understand and describe the status of Chicana/Latina faculty within higher education. Historically, research about this population has focused on attempts to explain lack of access to and/or success within higher education, much of which focused on cultural deficits for explaining the lack of their presence and/or successful completion (Cuádras, 2005; Sanchez, 1973; Tinto, 1988). As a response to this research, scholars, particularly Latinx⁵ scholars, began to counter the cultural deficit model through their research by introducing asset based, community cultural wealth, and funds of knowledge models, challenging the findings of previous studies on Latinx populations (Delgado Bernal, 2001, 2002; Nuñez & Murakami-Ramalho, 2012; Romero, 2004; Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Valdés, 1996; Valencia, 2002; Valencia & Solórzano, 2012; Yosso, 2005, 2006). As Latinx scholars continued to provide a counternarrative to the cultural deficit models, they also included research participants in the research process, encouraging a sharing of their lived experiences to further accentuate the value of their stories. Research on Chicana/Latina experiences also began to grow in effort to tease out their experiences as unique and not monolithic as much of the initial research prior to had presented their experiences to be.

⁵ For the purposes of this study, I chose to utilize the term Latinx in an effort to be inclusive and non-gendered, use of x, as well as attempt to capture a large group of scholars who study the experiences of Latinos/Hispanics. I recognize not all scholars identify with this term and/or find it to be problematic.

From the growing bodies of research on Latinx populations, the study of Chicana/Latina experiences has remained inadequate, and the unique nuances of their experiences, particularly within higher education and on the pathway to the professoriate, continue to sit in the margins of the research bodies related to the professoriate. The research about the Chicana/Latina faculty experience is rich in describing the inequitable treatment with regard to practices of faculty recruitment, classroom experiences, and unfair expectations related to the tenure process. Lacking however, is a large body of work which points to specific details to how Chicana/Latinas navigate, negotiate, and resist those structures which place them at an unfair advantage. Particularly with regard to the construct of academic legitimacy and its role in teaching, scholarly research, and overall impact on the journey on and to the professoriate.

The review provided a brief overview of the racist and colonial structures of higher education, which undergird hegemonic academic structures steeped in constructs of legitimacy. How those structures are fueled by a desire to achieve legitimacy within the ranking regime, and how socialization of faculty into the professoriate is not only fixated in ideas of legitimacy but utilizes them to further marginalize Faculty of Color, particularly Chicana/Latinas. Moreover, it will center the Review, Tenure, and Promotion process as one of the most powerful mechanisms for both promoting ideas of legitimacy, specifically through scholarship/research, and for serving as a gatekeeper for Chicana/Latinas pursuing the professoriate. Research regarding how Faculty of Color experience higher education structures is interwoven through each of the above-mentioned areas, demonstrating that Faculty of Color are left to navigate the system and develop coping mechanisms to assimilate to the system that will ultimately grant them membership via tenure. At the core of all of these systems, legitimacy remains the focal point of the research, whether Faculty of Color are able to prove their value through their scholarly legitimacy,

contributing to what some consider to be is an academic capitalist system (Bok, 2009; Finkelstein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhodes, 2004).

The review concluded with a with an overview of how Latinx populations have been studied within the context of their experiences as Latinx faculty within higher education, followed by the literature related to Chicana/Latina faculty experiences. To contribute to the larger discussion around the experiences of Chicana/Latinas within higher education, the purpose of this study was to better understand how Chicana/Latinas navigated, negotiated, and resisted the hegemonic structures that exist in higher education as they traverse the pathway to and through the professoriate. More specifically, I was also interested in answering the following question: Based on their experiences, how has the concept of academic legitimacy played a role in Chicanas/Latinas navigating these structures?

Racist and Colonial Practices of Higher Education

To understand how the academy and its hegemonic structures shape the way in which Faculty of Color experience the professoriate, it is crucial to understand that the organizational structures are not neutral and are steeped in a racist and colonial practices. The following provided an overview of how university structures, rules, and processes are problematic and contribute to the negative experiences of Chicana/Latinas seeking the professoriate. There are a few ways to look at how universities work, operate, succeed, etc. One might look to the work of Birnbaum & Edelson (1989) who wrote, *How Colleges Work: The Cybernetics of Academic Organization and Leadership*, to gain a working knowledge of the everyday structures through which institutions of higher education operate. This approach, while logical to some, does not critically review the historical context of the organizational structures which are grounded in racist power structures and a history of inequality. In contrast to Birnbaum & Edleson (1989),

more recent research has taken a more critical approach to both understanding and evaluating how higher education organizations operate as well as how those operations fail to address inequity amongst minoritized actors within the institution (students, faculty, staff, etc.) (Ahmed, 2012; Gonzales, Kanhai, & Hall, 2018; Patel, 2015; Sensoy & Diangelo, 2017). We must first, however, understand how rooted white supremacy is in the foundations that built the higher education system in the U.S. A deeper understanding to how organizational theory can inform both how those structures operate as well as a reimagined approach that may offer solutions for creating opportunity for equity and justice.

Patel (2015) suggested in order to understand why universities resist diversity efforts, one must understand that educational institutions are considered white property and that the structures were developed and maintained by utilizing a white settler colonizing approach which prohibits real structural changes. Patel (2015) further explained this as an approach by which white settler colonialism is a series of processes, acts, actions, systems, structures which first take land, then erase all previous inhabitants, those who remain must either become assimilated in order to stay, and lastly, outside slave labor is brought, as property, in to work the land, never achieving ownership, seen as primarily labor forces and property (Patel, 2015). As discussed by Wilder (2013), the institution of higher education in the U.S. was built on the backs of enslaved African Americans and at the cost of Native American lives. Maintaining the majoritarian narrative that whites are superior to People of Color, it is not hard to understand how and why for many years, only white males were offered admittance to the nation's most prestigious universities. By understanding these foundations, the ways in which institutions are organized can be better understood.

It is not surprising the structures which dictate membership operate to keep people of color from accessing educational opportunities, this is accomplished through its admissions standards, and only those who are considered meritorious by those standards and are also willing to assimilate are accepted. Patel (2015) argued the use of meritocracy and the myth that Students of Color have ‘access’ to higher education, colleges and universities have avoided the discussion of the role that racist and oppressive university structures play in marginalizing People of Color. Institutional diversity initiatives within higher education have only served to address the purport a desire to have a multicultural approach to education and address the very real growth of larger communities of color who are accessing higher education but not necessarily to do much more than provide surface level changes (Ahmed, 2012; Patel, 2015; Sensoy & Diangelo, 2017). This growth of students of color within higher education, coupled with a lack of Faculty of Color within the ranks, places institutions of higher education in a precarious situation, challenging it to do more than just surface diversity work (Ahmed, 2012). Given the current political climate, continued lack of addressing openly racist acts on university campuses across the country and demands by both students and scholars that universities do more than pay lip service, institutions can no longer ignore their racist historical foundations.

Gonzales, Kanhai, & Hall (2018), identified a novel approach to introducing change within higher educational structures by utilizing a reimagined approach to organization theoretical schools of thought as entry points to change. This approach was particularly powerful in that it offers ways of weaving issues of labor justice, intersectional justice, reparative justice, and epistemic injustice into organizational schools of thought, which at minimum brings to the forefront an avenue for introducing critical changes to the hegemonic academic structures which exist (Gonzales, Kanhai, & Hall, 2018). In particular, the issue of epistemic injustice as it related

to knowledge production and how knowledge is deemed legitimate is essential to this study and the ways in which minoritized groups, specifically Chicana/Latinas, experience their journeys on and to the professoriate.

Hegemonic Academic Structures

Much of the scholarly work related to scrutinizing higher education structures tended to focus on how academic capitalism plays a central role in issues such as lack of faculty support, use of contingent faculty (adjuncts), workload requirements, academic legitimacy, and the tenure and promotion process (Boyer, 1990, 1991; Gonzales, 2015; Gonzales & Nunez, 2014; Gonzales & Terosky, 2016; Kezar, Maxey, & Holcombe, 2015; Kezar, Holcombe, & Maxey, 2016; O'Meara & Terosky, 2010; O'Meara, Eatman, & Peterson, 2015; Stromquist, 2017; Terosky & Gonzales, 2016). These bodies of research suggested there are a number of nuances based on institutional type and the expectations that are set by each institution, such as competitive research institutions might require more research production from a faculty member than a small liberal arts college which focuses on teaching and learning. Existing research showed how faculty experience their treatment from an academic capitalistic perspective, which is indeed oppressive and unfair. While critiques of higher educational structures from an academic capitalistic perspective are valuable, they fail to address how they might impact Faculty of Color in even more oppressive ways. More recent work has somewhat addressed this but not enough to tease out the many nuances of Faculty of Color experience alongside the academic capitalism and how race, racism, and white supremacist structures of higher education continue to maintain the status quo, making access to tenured positions for Faculty of Color more difficult to attain.

The following provides a definition of legitimacy and the forms it takes within the academy, the prominent role it plays in academic capitalism and the rankings regime, and how

institutions socialize faculty into perpetuating expectations of academic legitimacy. Setting the stage for an overview of one of the more prevalent gatekeepers for faculty, particularly Chicana/Latinas as they pursue the professoriate.

An Exclusionary Construct: Academic Legitimacy

For the sake of this discussion, we must define what legitimacy and/or what legitimation means within the context of higher education as an institution as well as what it means from the individual perspective as a faculty member. Scott (1995) defined legitimacy as “not a commodity to be possessed or exchanged but a condition reflecting cultural alignment, normative support, or consonance with relevant rules or laws,” therefore, legitimacy is not static and is indicative of the values of an organization (p. 45). Suchman (1995) further defined legitimacy as both a representation of an organization’s “constructed system(s) of norms, values, beliefs” of what is deemed to be appropriate and/or desirable (p. 574). The first definition provides clarity on the fact that legitimacy is not a static, one-time achievement, but is fluid and can change over time, and the latter suggests that there is an organizational investment in how legitimacy impacts its reputation. Further complicating the construct of legitimacy is how various stakeholders mold and uphold the systems of norms, values and beliefs which have serious implications for how faculty achieve legitimacy within higher education. More importantly, who determines what is legitimate is also essential in understanding how faculty, Faculty of Color, and more specifically, Chicana/Latinas experience these systems of legitimacy and/or expectations for legitimacy is one aspect of how choices to navigate, negotiate, and resist hegemonic academic structures

Gonzales and Terosky’s (2016) research identified five distinct areas for legitimacy in which faculty are evaluated, judged, and/or are granted legitimation within higher education. The findings identified research, teaching, service, work style, and institutional type legitimacy, as

areas in which faculty believed they acquired and sustained legitimacy within higher education (Gonzales & Terosky, 2016). This study further offered the findings aligned with predominantly professional legitimacy and normative legitimacy as described in New Institutionalism as described by Deephouse and Suchman (2008). Furthermore, Gonzales and Terosky (2016) connected professional legitimacy to scholarship (research and publication types) and to a certain extent teaching. Normative legitimacy involves how faculty's labor (work style) and service are valued. This research confirms how the construct of legitimacy is steeped in organizational structures, and most relevant to the current study, manifests most clearly in how scholarship is evaluated across the spectrum of review, tenure, and promotion processes. In this context, value standards are typically set forth by groups, what Gonzales and Terosky (2016) would have categorized as normative legitimacy, that have been historically dominated by white males, for example, journal review boards, discipline departments, college divisions, academic offices within institutions, all of which are firmly grounded in a history of racism and white supremacy. These values can include a provision that faculty must publish in 'top tier' journals, the number of publications per year, the type of research, valuing post-positivist methodologies, research tied to grant funding, are just a few of the various ways that a faculty's research is deemed 'legitimate' (Collins, 1986; Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Gonzales, 2018; Gonzales & Terosky, 2016; Padilla, 1994; Smith, 2000; Stromquist, 2017).

Institutions utilize professional legitimacy, more specifically scholarship legitimacy, as a means for establishing organizational legitimacy, potentially increasing their ability to secure resources based on prestige gained in the process of legitimization (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008). Bringing the conversation full circle, where institutional needs and desires supersede

those of the individual and in fact commodify the scholarship/labor of faculty in service to the overarching institutional demands for legitimacy.

College Rankings Regime

Institutions of higher education do not operate within a vacuum. They have a number of stakeholders such as local politicians, workforce boards, donors, etc., to whom/which they are obligated and outside market forces often drive educational policy and organizational structures. In its earliest stages of development, U.S. colleges' mandates were to educate the white males who were entering the ministry, contributing to the societal development of a citizenry in the 'new' world (Patel, 2015; Wilder, 2013). As higher education continued to evolve and research began to play a dominant role in the advancement of innovation and technology, economic forces began to play a more central role in how educational policy was developed (Cohen & Kisker, 2009; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; St. John, Daun-Barnett, & Moronoski-Chapman, 2013). In conjunction with the shift towards academic research came the Civil Rights era, which demanded equality and access to all students, particularly women and students of color, a shift in how funding for universities was determined and the use of market models began to take shape around the 1960's (St. John et al., 2013).

The shift from human capital theory (policy decisions made based on human and economic returns) to market models (based on potential market returns: return on investment), greatly impacted how resources are allocated to the various budget streams within the organizational structure of higher education (Becker, 1994). This meant universities began to look at other ways to increase revenue streams and research began to take a front seat in how universities supplemented their budgets. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) argued relationships between stakeholders were not to be seen as separate, where one impacts the other, rather they

work as a system or network of various actors who cross boundaries, blurring lines of distinction between what is academic and what is economic (Chapter 1, Section: II, para. 3). As the economic constraints continued to squeeze universities, decision making about how to allocate resources, specifically to faculty, faculty training, and research began to rely heavily on the ability for faculty to garner large dollar research grants, shifting the focus to research as a priority for the professoriate. Proponents of academic capitalism argue this shift towards a more market driven structure, impacted all faculty, research on Faculty of Color suggests otherwise. Turner, et. al, 2008 argued this shift only made it more apparent due to the fact that Faculty of Color have consistently remained in the marginalized spaces of higher education.

Stromquist (2017) and Kezar et al.'s (2015, 2016) research indicated effects of market driven decision-making have led universities to adopt the use of contingent faculty, or adjuncts, as a means to increase profitability in courses, lowering the cost per unit for delivery. From a purely labor rights perspective, this dual system of tenured faculty and adjuncts creates a divide within the university, placing adjuncts in a precarious situation, where their teaching is valued less than that of the tenured faculty member. This research suggests because institutions fail to appropriately support adjunct faculty, they are unable to address and meet the needs of students, particularly in their first year, and especially in developmental classes (Kezar & Maxey, 2015). Due to the increased workloads across all faculty ranks, a call for new faculty models to be developed and adopted, which suggest that some progress has been made in addressing the current faculty model, calling for multiple pathways for faculty contributions to be considered (Kezar et al., 2015, 2016).

Kezar et al.'s (2015, 2016) research provided insight to the importance of revamping how labor is perceived, the role of tenure, and the need to address the inequitable systems that the use

of contingent/adjunct faculty create within higher education. Additionally, Kezar's (2015, 2016) survey of faculty begins the dialogue of how the faculty system, or professoriate, might find ways to adjust and evolve beyond the status quo.

Stromquist (2017) argued because of this shift, universities have defaulted to evaluating the value of a professor based on a quantitative set of indicators, which can quantify amount of research dollars and number of publications. Externally, if a university is funded based on performance, utilizing rating systems only serve to further allow outside market forces to determine a faculty member's value within the institution of higher education. The shift has also caused an increased use of a contingent faculty model where class sizes are larger and adjunct faculty are utilized as a means to limit costs, increasing the universities return of investment. Arguably, both of these shifts have great impact on student success outcomes as well as how faculty are retained and valued within the organizational structure (Kezar et al., 2015, 2016; St. John et. al., 2013; Stromquist, 2017).

College Rankings and Legitimacy

Gonzales and Núñez's (2014) integrative review of the literature around college rankings and knowledge production provided an in-depth discussion around the extent to which universities are invested in achieving "world class" university designations (p. 2). This research suggested universities and colleges have bought into the culture of "rankings" which similarly to the FSPI ranking system, ranks universities to determine quality, value, prestige, etc. The findings of this study clearly indicated a direct connection to how faculty are evaluated, particularly with regard to knowledge production (Gonzales & Núñez, 2014, p. 8). The research further asserted ranking regimes perpetuate individualism, standardization of measuring faculty, commodification of research and knowledge production, and homogenized knowledge, all of

which stagnate and limit the ideas of what is legitimate scholarship (Gonzales & Núñez, 2014). This has major implications for Faculty of Color with respect to how they choose to contribute to scholarly work within higher education.

FSPI's and ranking regimes serve to further marginalize Faculty of Color within the ranks of academia due to their limiting indicators of what is legitimate. In *Faculty of Color Reconsidered: Reassessing Contributions to Scholarship*, Antonio (2002) discussed the value of Faculty of Color and the contributions to scholarship within the ranks of academia. The study builds upon Boyer's (1990) four proposed functions of scholarship, discovery, integration, application, and teaching. Utilizing existing datasets, Antonio (2002) set out to draw comparisons between white faculty and Faculty of Color with regard to Boyer's four views of scholarship. The results indicated that while many Faculty of Color do not publish at the same rate as their white counterparts, their commitment and time spent on research activities were higher than white faculty (Antonio, 2002). More importantly, Antonio argued the differences in the desire of Faculty of Color to utilize their positions and research to create change within their communities are not valued in the structure for how faculty are typically evaluated, thus losing an opportunity for the professoriate to rethink what it values. According to this study, Faculty of Color provide unique contributions such as conducting research alongside communities of color to solve problems, but within the structures of what constitutes professional legitimacy, this type of research is not valued nor will it lead to the nod of legitimacy that tenure provides. This further serves to marginalize Faculty of Color, seriously limiting the numbers who choose to remain in the professoriate. More troubling is how faculty are socialized in their graduate preparation to centralize these norms of legitimacy before they even enter into the professoriate.

Socialization of Faculty and Expectations

Turner, Gonzalez, and Wood (2008) provided an important review of the literature pertaining to the scholarly work on the experiences of Faculty of Color in academia over the course of a twenty-year period. The meta-analysis, uncovered numerous themes such as chilly campus climates, negative classroom experiences, lack of support, hidden service requirements, and challenging tenure and review processes, across the work of over 270 scholarly articles pertaining to Faculty of Color. The findings suggested that issues such as overt and covert racism, experienced by Faculty of Color spanned across the departmental, institutional, and national level (Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008). It should be noted the issues of unrealistic labor expectations, focus on research as priority over teaching and learning within the review, tenure, and promotions process, within the professoriate discussed by Boyer (1990, 1991) are just as problematic for Faculty of Color, with the difference that they may experience them two- and threefold more than their white counterparts.

Turner, Gonzales, and Wong (2011) mentioned how women of color in faculty positions encounter white supremacy in their daily actions and while useful in establishing the existence of white supremacy and its impact on Faculty of Color, the study did not directly address how university leaders and scholars can address the structures that create the environment where those interactions continue to exist. This study also did not provide a clear picture of how women of color in those positions were able to navigate, negotiate, and resist the hegemonic structures in ways that could potentially provide other women of color advice on how to find success in spite of those structures.

The number of Faculty of Color, let alone, Chicana/Latina faculty in higher education is concerning, particularly given the increasing number of Latinx students entering higher

education, where their presence in supporting students of color can make positive impacts on student success in higher education (Castellano, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006; Castellano & Jones, 2003; Irizarry, 2011). Much of the literature focused on these constructs of legitimacy and how graduate students are socialized to believe that scholarship/research is the most important avenue for achieving professional legitimacy. Austin (2002) argued there was a changing expectation for graduate students entering the academy and suggested a two-track system of “complete scholars” and the “differentiated academic” arguing that not all students would be able to meet the demands of colleges and universities, thus could pursue the differentiated scholar which in essence focused solely on teaching and did not have the research requirements of a “complete scholar” (p. 124).

Also concerning is the idea that rather than change the system and broaden the definition of what is considered legitimate, some scholars have proposed a system which differentiates professional legitimacy into two categories. The acceptance that academic capitalism should continue to drive legitimacy norms and suggest that scholars should choose between two different types of scholar tracks accepts the status quo and only serves to marginalize Faculty of Color. Rather than challenge the system for being couched in white supremacy and demand that all faculty be treated equally, Austin (2002) argued for a solution, complete and differentiated, that only served to further mark research-oriented scholars as legitimate. Clearly there is a sentiment in the literature that faculty expectations are unrealistic and labor requirements are problematic, the response is to propose solutions that uphold the unequal system.

Oftentimes, institutional structures and processes carried out by faculty leadership/administration unfairly places the onus is upon Faculty of Color to adjust themselves to “fit” the system that is, in its own right, oppressive and unjust, telling graduate students

seeking faculty positions how to adjust in ways that helps them get the interview and prove their qualifications in ways their white counterparts are not expected (Brayboy, 2003; Kayes, 2006; Suinn & Witt, 1982). Austin's (2002) work clearly highlights this phenomenon, the onus is on the student to develop a broad range of skills, which will increase their hirability and potential success in higher education. This supports the master narrative that the system is fine, that the issue is with the Faculty of Color who either chooses to assimilate or risk not achieving tenure. Placing the burden on women and Faculty of Color removes the responsibility from the university to address its systems. Faculty "who [have] not yet earned tenure and believe campus decisions are inequitable depart prior to the review, especially women and minority groups," tend to be discouraged due to the added pressures of hidden service and unfair labor requirements (Lawrence, Celis, & Ott, 2014, p. 156).

Another study by O'Meara, et. al (2017) is useful and significant to the study of faculty roles but does not adequately and or explicitly address women and Faculty of Color in determining whether the suggested modifications to the roles of faculty might address the inequities, particularly with regard to workload expectations, that are faced by women and Faculty of Color. Additionally, Kezar and colleagues (2015, 2016) proposed updated faculty models but did not specifically address the role that scholarly legitimacy plays in the proposed updated faculty model. Similarly, to Austin's (2002) model of "complete scholars" and "differentiated scholars," Kezar (2015, 2016) fails to adequately consider how the differentiated systems they have recommended have the potential to further alienate and marginalize Faculty of Color. The consequences of researchers continuing to provide solutions such as dual models of what can be translated to legitimate scholars and illegitimate scholars, only further support white supremacist academic structures which marginalize Faculty of Color. This is critical to my

research topic given that its methodological approach and choice to focus on how Chicana/Latinas choose to navigate, negotiate, and resist hegemonic academic structures can serve to broaden the conversation around different ways to address the construct of academic legitimacy within higher education.

Furthermore, Austin (2002) failed to address the hidden service requirements that Faculty of Color experience in higher education that many other scholars have pointed out as problematic for Faculty of Color (Brayboy, 2003; Jones, Hwang, & Bustamante, 2015; Turner, 2002; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). These added demands can limit the time Faculty of Color have to participate in traditional forms of service and to conduct research. Research has shown that hidden service requirements, which include the increased expectation by administrative leaders and white faculty refusing to advise students, of mentoring and advising Students of Color, unfairly tax Faculty of Color, in contrast to the expectations of their white male counterparts (Jones, Hwang, & Bustamante, 2015; Turner, 2002; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). The following is a brief overview of how legitimacy shows up in academia via the review, tenure and promotion process and how scholarly legitimacy plays a crucial role establishing legitimacy as well as maintaining it throughout a faculty member's career.

The Gatekeeper: Review, Tenure, and Promotion

Historically, the review, tenure, and promotion process grew out of a need to professionalize the role of faculty as well as provide security and protections from retaliatory acts on behalf of the administration towards faculty with unpopular ideas (AAUP, Cohen & Kisker, 2009). While tenure has been seen as a necessary step in the process of protecting the faculty as well as establish their credibility as legitimate experts, research has consistently questioned whether this process is a fair and equitable process (AAUP (year?); Cohen & Kisker,

2009; Jencks & Reisman, 2002; McPherson & Scapiro, 1990). Research has also challenged higher education to revisit the question of whether tenure is indeed necessary or if a new faculty model which includes contingent faculty in the construct of the profession might be a better solution to equalizing the ranks of faculty (Kezar & Maxey, 2015; Kezar, Holcombe, & Maxey, 2016; McPherson & Scapiro, 1990). The tenure system, however flawed in that it is inconsistent, subjective, and inequitable for Faculty of Color, is a system which has provided varying levels of power, for those who attain it, within the organizational structures of higher education. Its elimination is not likely, however there have been some attempts from lawmakers to challenge and question its necessity, particularly in at-will to work states like Wisconsin (Stein & Marley, 2013). From this understanding, a critical review and attempt to redefine how the tenure process determines what is deemed legitimate scholarly work must be pursued.

The following sections provide a brief historical context for how the need to professionalize and ensure academic freedom led to the tenure process, its perceived fairness, particularly with regard to Faculty of Color, and provides a discussion the current literature has proposed to address the inequities created through the tenure process. For Chicana/Latinas pursuing the professoriate, it is imperative to understand this structure, how the research bodies have traditionally addressed tenure, and potentially how they can navigate the process successfully. It is critical to note the founding principles of tenure did not consider the changing landscape of who would benefit from this system, clearly not considering how Faculty of Color, particularly Chicana/Latina faculty would experience and navigate the system. It is not surprising that the research demonstrates, by and large, that Faculty of Color have difficult and traumatic experiences going through the tenure process. In many cases, tenure is denied due to a perceived lack of academic legitimacy (Muhs, Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012; Segura, 2003).

Professional Legitimacy and Academic Freedom

It is important to note the foundations for how tenure was created but more importantly for whom it was created to protect and empower. Professional legitimacy by far was central to developing the standards by which future faculty would be judged and granted legitimation. Gonzales's,(2018) work discussed the powerful nature of boundaries of work as introduced by Lamont and Molnar (2002) which suggested the manner in which academia distinguished itself from others was by creating “normative frameworks”, in other words, establishing the standards and the tools/mechanisms for evaluating faculty (p. 680). As governance structures of institutions of higher education began to take shape, there was a clear push and pull relationship between the administration and the faculty and through academic departments, faculty were able to leverage power in deciding how they spent their time, what they deemed appropriate discipline and curriculum foci, and types of community and research activities (Cohen & Kisker, 2009). From this need to ensure autonomy and maintain power, the concept of academic freedom evolved, not only ensuring that faculty had the freedom to teach and to study without constraints, but more importantly, to protect faculty from being disciplined for speaking out on controversial issues. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) was formed to protect the academic freedom of faculty mainly focused on protecting what and how faculty chose to teach as well as what they chose to research and write about. The means by which academic freedom is guaranteed to a faculty member is through tenure. Tenure carries with it an immense amount of power, providing protections for faculty academic freedom and allows for universities to foster a “culture of inquiry and knowledge-seeking, allowing a great deal of faculty agency” (Stromquist, 2017, p. 133).

As faculty demanded academic freedom, white males formed associations, faculty became members and standards for legitimacy within the various disciplines were developed, and the review, tenure, and promotion process were born (AAUP (year?); Cohen & Kisker, 2009; McPherson & Scapiro, 1990). Standards varied from discipline to discipline and institution to institution. It was after the publication of AAUP's Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, that universities began to adopt a time-frame, typically seven years, for junior faculty to meet department standards of achievement (teaching, research, and service) for the review, tenure and promotion process (AAUP, Cohen, & Kisker, 2009). Rating systems varied by institutions, but in most situations, faculty are rated on how well they teach via number of publications, types of research journals their research is published in, student evaluations, and service, typically measured by the number of committee's they serve on in service of the institutions. In some cases, service to student organizations and community organizations are considered by evaluation committees, but this is rare (Boyer, 1990; Cohen & Kisker, 2009; Lawrence, Celis, & Ott, 2014).

Fairness in Review, Tenure, and Promotion?

Lawrence, Celis, and Ott (2014) conducted a quantitative study to determine whether faculty believed the tenure and review process was fair, given the amount of disconnect between what 'should' be evaluated and what is actually being evaluated. The study addressed the two distinct periods, the probationary or review period, and the actual tenure review process during which the faculty portfolio (made up of publications, teaching evaluations, and community engagement) was evaluated to determine whether tenure would be granted. Similar to many studies on this topic, the study highlighted the issues most often seen such as lack of collegial support, organizational climate, role expectations, performance feedback, and resources

(Lawrence, Celis, & Ott, 2014). The findings indicated faculty perceived the fairness of tenure based on a faculty's perception of campus conditions, whether faculty held agency over their research agendas, and whether relationships with fellow faculty members were collegial (Lawrence, Celis, & Ott, 2014).

Lawrence, Celis and Ott (2014) recognized the study, while limited in its scope, laid the groundwork for future studies, the study did not consider how Faculty of Color perceived the tenure and review process in a robust and meaningful way. The research questions in Lawrence, Celis, and Ott's (2014) study did not adequately address women and Faculty of Color and whether they experienced the ability to control their research agendas differently than their White male counterparts. It is clear that the research design excluded asking questions that might have been able to better gauge how Faculty of Color and women experienced the review and tenure process, as being fair or not. The study does not provide any significant insights to how Faculty of Color and women perceive the review and tenure process to be fair given that the study was 76% White and 56% male (Lawrence, Celis, & Ott). Johnsrud and Des Jarlais (1994) and Ponjuan, Conley, and Trower (2011) conducted studies which included perceptions of women and Faculty of Color, find similar results with regard to campus climate, particularly with the perception of fairness as well as faculty having free agency. Faculty of Color and women experienced the review and tenure process in similar ways but had added layers of concerns related to other considerations in trusting in the process as the following research will show. Researchers found Faculty of Color experienced hidden service requirements such as additional advising requirements, serving on diversity related committees, being called upon to represent all activities related to marginalized populations, and being assigned to teach a inappropriate amount of race/gender related courses (Brayboy, 2003; Jones, Hwang, & Bustamante, 2015; Wood,

Hilton, & Nevarez, 2016). It is common for these types of hidden service requirements to have negative impacts on how Faculty of Color experience the tenure process to be unfair and oppressive, and potentially for it to lead to limited time on conducting research.

Furthermore, Faculty of Color must also deal with the fact that while academic freedom is supposed to protect their research activities, many Faculty of Color find their research is not protected, particularly if the research is deemed controversial and/or does not line up with the image that the institution is seeking to advance (Fenelon, 2003; Guanipa, Santa Cruz, & Chao, 2003). The case of Dr. Steven G. Salaita's firing from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, despite his tenured status, for speaking out against the atrocities suffered by the Palestinian nation on twitter, represents that tenure is not equally protective of all faculty (Salaita, 2015).

While many departments' signs which read "publish or perish" are seen as acceptable forms of communicating the importance of research and scholarly work, particular to the tenure process, but for Faculty of Color this message shouts that publications are at the core of where they must focus their energy. Additionally, this messaging, whether through subversive comments related to the types of journals, or research being pursued, all point towards establishing a non-written rule about what is deemed valuable within a department. In some cases, colleagues have point blank challenged their choices to conduct research that does not fall in line with Eurocentric epistemologies, questioning the value or scholarly contribution of such research (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Sanchez-Peña, Main, Sambamurthy, Cox, & McGee, 2016).

Ultimately, the tenure process, while filled with issues, is one of the ways that Chicana/Latinas faculty are able to gain membership into the professoriate with some level of

security. It is however, not an equal playing field, and poses significant amounts of pressures and challenges to Chicana/Latina faculty given the various obstacles discussed in the literature as they relate to hidden service requirements, academic legitimacy expectations framed in white supremacist structures, and service which is not considered in the tenure process.

Scholarly Legitimacy

The following provides an overview of how Faculty of Color experience the construct of what legitimacy as it pertains to their scholarship or as Gonzales and Terosky (2016) identified as the legitimacy of scholarship. The construct of scholarly legitimacy is pervasive throughout the literature and while not always fully defined, it highlights the prevalence of placing the onus on the faculty recruit to prove that they have in fact subscribed to constructs of scholarly work, which meet the legitimacy requirements of the institution (Kelly & McCann, 2014; Suinn & Witt, 1982; Turner, Gonzales, & Wood, 2008). Scholarly legitimacy becomes one of the more problematic aspects of the recruitment and later retention of Faculty of Color, given that it is one of the most utilized excuses, blaming Faculty of Color for not having published in the ‘right’ journals, for institutions not meeting their goals in diversifying faculty ranks (Smith, 2000). In many cases, when Faculty of Color have ethnic and race focused research agendas, they tend to suffer more scrutiny, and face more difficulty during the review, tenure, and promotion process, making the scholar legitimacy construct central to this discussion (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Padilla, 1994; Martinez & Welton, 2017; Turner, 2000).

As previously mentioned, the way in which scholars conduct research is central to what is privileged and valued across top-tier journals, which is directly tied to whether faculty’s scholarly research is valued within the review and tenure processes. Ultimately this has led to privileging a Eurocentric approach to research and knowledge creation, based upon American

democratic perspectives (e.g., meritocracy and objectivity), firmly based in colonization and white supremacy (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002). Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) further stressed this Eurocentric epistemology ignores the systematic privileging that this creates for white males, ignoring the fact that there are other ways of knowing. Valuing of the hard sciences, which suggest research is conducted from an objective perspective and can predict outcomes, is considered positivist epistemology (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). There has been slow movement towards accepting of other ways of conducting research which have grown from the social scientist movement, but still requires that researchers remain distant observers of phenomenon and their research is conducted in a manner which can not only describe but also predict and be replicated, similar to scientific inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011; Merriam, 1991).

A post positivist approach would utilize “inanimate instruments” to test theories, such as surveys, statistical data sets, and surveys where the researcher/scholar remains objective is key to establishing validity and legitimacy (Merriam, 1991, p. 45). It should be noted that Stromquist’s (2017) research regarding the use of the Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index (FSPI) to determine faculty productivity very much matched this post-positivist approach to determining and predicting faculty worth and value. The FSPI tracks publications of books and peer reviewed journals, citations in journal publications, federal researching funding, numbers and amounts of grants, and awards and honors (Stromquist, 2017, p. 135). If we are to accept that external market forces influence institutions of higher education, it is not surprising that research, and the monies and prestige attached to research, serves as the priority in determining a faculty members value within academia. This value system is another obstacle and challenge that Faculty of Color, and in particular, Chicana/Latinas must face in their quest on and to the professoriate.

Understanding these systems is crucial but so is understanding the ways in which Chicana/Latinas can negotiate the pressures and at times resist and still find success.

Gonzales, (2018) advanced the conversation regarding legitimacy and highlighted the ways in which boundaries of work and epistemic authority heavily influenced and controlled the process for knowledge production. More specifically, that research/knowledge production is policed in three distinct ways: (1) the methods used, (2) theoretical framing, (3) and content, particularly when those ways are in contrast with western science. Gonzales's (2018) work provoked a deeper conversation related to how women and women of color subvert the boundaries placed on their research, should be knowledge creators and most importantly, challenged tenure and publication review boards to broaden what defines legitimate knowledge. This work furthered the conversations around epistemic justice and how crucial it is for the academy to move beyond its narrowly focused concepts of what is considered legitimate, providing an opportunity for Faculty of Color to achieve justice and equity within the academy.

Latinx Faculty in the Academy

As the United States continues to experience growth among ethnic and racial minorities, where Latinas are leading that growing demographic, universities are recognizing the need to also increase the numbers of diverse ethnic and minorities in faculty positions (Delgado-Romero et.al, 2007; Maruyama, Moreno, Gudeman, & Marin, 2000; Ponjuan, 2011). The desire to increase diverse faculty ranks varies from institution to institution and is oftentimes linked to mission statements to increase diversity and inclusion. Other times, it because they have embraced that an increased diverse faculty is positive for all students, not just students of color (Maruyama, et.al, 2000). The NCES, (2017) reported of the 1.6 million faculty nationwide, 50%

are considered full time faculty and the following chart highlights the race and ethnic breakdown.

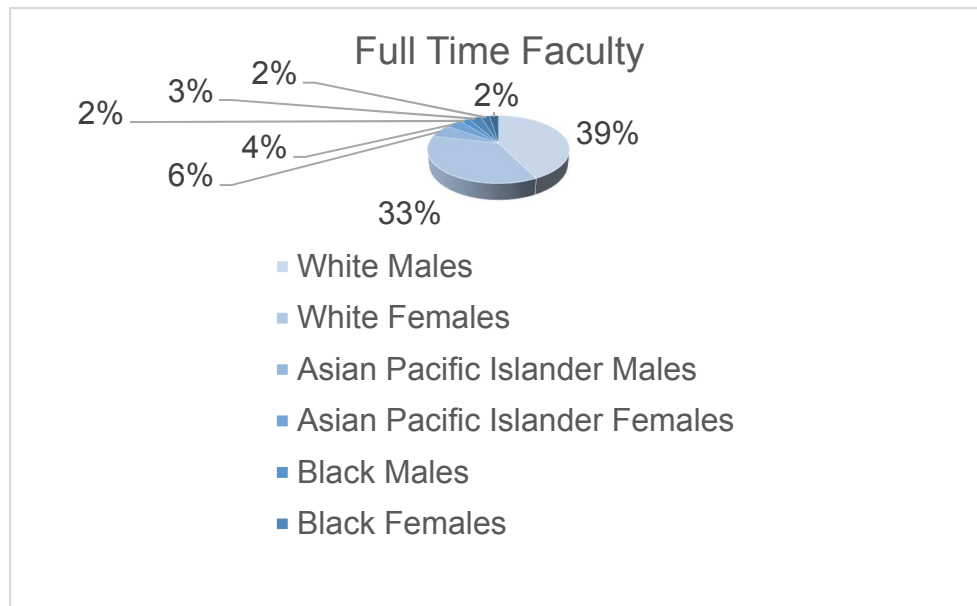


Figure 2.1. Total number of full-time faculty in higher education. Data Source: The Condition of Education 2017 (NCES 2017-144), Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty.

Of the total, Hispanics make up approximately 4% (35,786) of full-time faculty. A 2017 Pew Research Center report, indicated in 2016 there were 58 million Latinos, 63% of which are Mexican heritage living in the U.S. With current reporting mechanisms, it is difficult to extrapolate the total numbers of Chicana/Mexican-American who hold a full-time faculty position therefore, we are left to attempt to find ways to estimate their existence in the academy. If we apply the same percentage of overall population breakdowns (63%) to the 2% of overall Hispanic female faculty reported above, a rough estimate of the number of female full-time faculty that are Chicana/Mexican is .01% (11,918). This is troubling due to the very low number of Chicana/Mexicanas who are actually serving in full-time faculty positions when we know the

number of Chicana/Mexicanas attending institutions of higher learning far exceeds this number. If institutions are committed to addressing representation for their student populations, the above data point shows that they are failing at achieving that goal.

The following chart highlights how the Chicana/Mexicana population compares to the entire population.

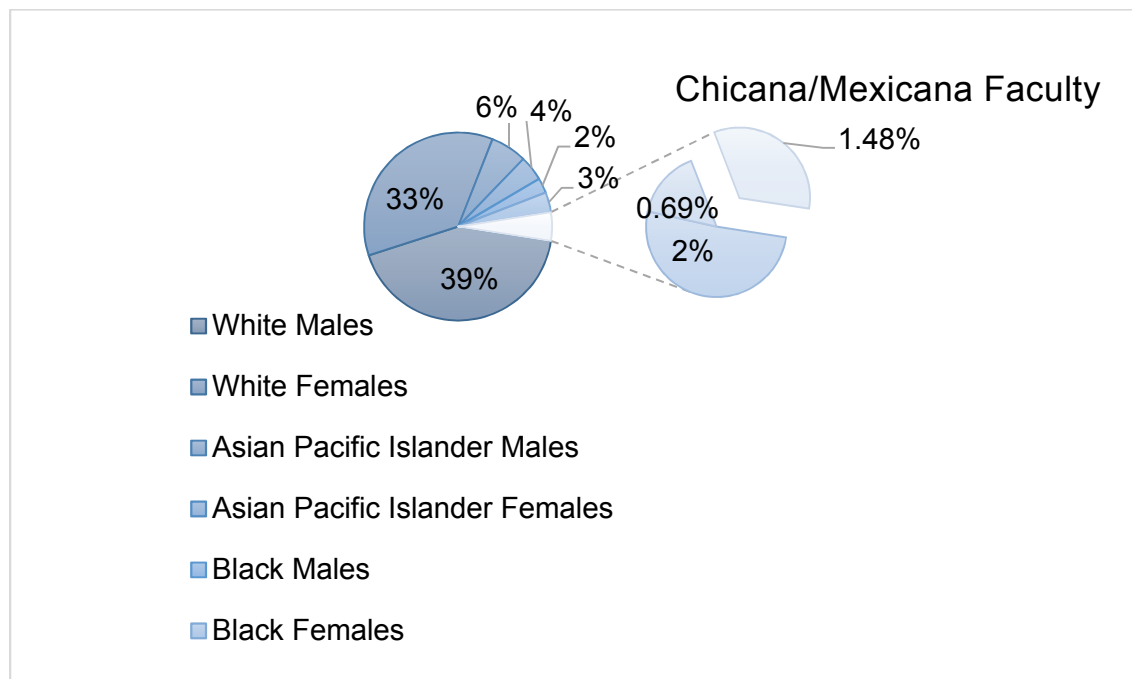


Figure 2.2. Percentage of full-time Chicana/Mexicana faculty. Data Source: (Flores, 2017) and The Condition of Education 2017 (NCES 2017-144), Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty.

Clearly, the numbers of Chicana/Latina Faculty are minimal in comparison to white males and white females. Focusing on the numbers of full-time Chicana/Mexicana⁶ faculty

⁶ Although the NCES utilizes the umbrella term Hispanic, for the purpose of this study, I chose to use the term Chicana as well as Mexicana as the feminine form of Mexican, Mexican American, etc.

provides a clearer picture of the lacking representation of them in the ranks of full-time faculty. The point is to recognize that not all female faculty of Mexican decent identify with the term Chicana and/or Hispanic. It further demonstrates the need to study this population to determine both how they have achieved success as well as how they coped with the hegemonic academic structures that exist.

Latinx Experiences within Higher Education

The research dedicated to studying Latinx faculty within higher education tended to fall into a few distinct categories: (1) issues with recruiting and retaining Latinx faculty; (2) the value of Latinx faculty in supporting Latinx students as an intervention for student success; and (3) Latinx faculty experiences within the systems of higher education, from doctoral training to seeking and maintaining faculty positions. The following provides a brief discussion of how each of the areas impact how Latinx faculty are viewed, valued or not valued, and how they survive and resist within the institutions of higher education.

Recruitment and retention of Latinx faculty. This chapter illustrates universities have issues with the recruitment and retention of faculty for several reasons. One of the most utilized excuses for institutions failing to recruit Latinx faculty is the pipeline issue. Several studies discuss the pipeline issues arguing Latinx students being disproportionately the first in their families to graduate from high school and being underrepresented in high prestige professions tends to limit the number of Latinx students pursuing faculty roles (Delgado-Romero et al., 2007; Solórzano, 1998; Zambrana, Dávila, Espino, Lapeyrouse, Valdez, & Segura, 2017). Universities also face many issues to retain Latinx faculty due to concerns related to campus climate, teaching and learning, the tenure process, disparate workloads and hidden service requirements, and lack of mentoring (Ponjuan, 2011; Martinez & Toutkoushian, 2014; Ramirez & De La Cruz, 2016;

Solórzano, 1998; Smith & Anderson, 2005; Urrieta & Benavidez, 2007; Urrieta, Mendez, & Rodriguez, 2015; Verdugo, 1995; Zambrana et al., 2017). These studies derived from several perspectives such as simply assessing the numbers of Latinx faculty within higher education and more frequently, from faculty perspectives and critiques on the dismal numbers.

The impetus for increased efforts to recruit and retain faculty can be attributed to the increasing numbers of Latinx students matriculating into higher education. From this perspective, some research related to the experiences of Latinx faculty within higher education tends to point to this increased student population as a reason to be concerned with the dismal numbers of Latinx faculty within the academy (Cuádras, 2005; Delgado-Romero et al., 2007; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Ponjuan, 2011; Verdugo, 1995).

Expectations of Latinx faculty. The literature also points to the expectations of Latinx faculty to contribute to university efforts to increase student retention of Latinx students. Ponjuan (2011) makes the case for improving conditions for Latinx faculty because of how Latinx faculty “uniquely engage students in the classroom,” which positively impact student success (p.100). Latinx faculty are also tasked to serve as positive role models to Students of Color, particularly Latinx students, although these extra service requirements often go unnoticed and or are not counted towards service requirements during the review, tenure, and promotion process (Jones, Hwang, & Bustamante, 2015; Turner, 2002; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999). Latinx students in higher education, especially at predominantly white institutions, tend to seek out other students or faculty to whom they can go for help. Latinx faculty, irrespective of discipline, spend countless hours serving Latinx students, out of a deep commitment to helping students who remind them of themselves, understanding the challenges faced in higher education. Similarly,

Latinx faculty are further taxed to represent their communities on countless committees and “show up” for Latinx events.

Both Brayboy (2003) and Turner’s (2002) research highlighted the unfair expectations of Faculty of Color, to serve on committees that are race or gender issue focused, as if the responsibility to understand these issues can only be discussed by a woman and/or a Faculty of Color. More importantly, this research highlights how these hidden service requirements are not calculated within the review, tenure, and promotion process, further taxing Faculty of Color in their quest to achieve tenure. The amount of time spent on these hidden services, take away from both the teaching and learning aspect as well as research. Ultimately, Brayboy (2003) suggested the hidden service requirements for Faculty of Color at the junior faculty, non-tenured status, greatly impacted their chances of achieving tenure.

Oftentimes assumed of Latinx faculty is the expectation that they conduct research about Latinx communities. While this might be true of some disciplines, it is critical to point out that this is not the experience of all Latinx faculty. However, Ponjuan (2011) points out there is an opportunity for Latinx faculty to conduct academic research on ethnic communities, furthering the understanding of those communities, particularly within the social/applied sciences. Researching Latinx communities becomes critical to many faculty in how they show up for their communities as faculty members. The value this brings to the institution is oftentimes overlooked and unappreciated, but the literature points to a deep commitment on the part of Latinx faculty to make this type of research a critical part of their overall research agendas (Anzaldúa, 1987; Castillo, 1994). It is important to point out however, this expectation is not one that is representative of all Latinx faculty across all disciplines, particularly outside of the social sciences and applied fields where the connections to the Latinx communities might be more

easily made. While they may not focus their research on Latinx communities, they are more likely to be tasked with serving as role models, mentors, and advisors to Latinx students (Castellanos, Gloria & Kamimura, 2006; Castellano & Jones, 2003; Perez, 2019; Ponjuan, 2011; Zarate, 2019).

Latinx faculty exercising agency. A common thread found within the literature on Latinx faculty experiences is a commitment on the part of faculty to survive and resist the structures that make it difficult to thrive in academia. Couched in a critical race and/or LatCRT theoretical framework, scholars suggest the very presence of Latinx in higher education is a form of disruption and resistance and that their contributions are valuable, in spite of the hegemonic structures meant to keep them from achieving success (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Solórzano, 1998 ;Urrieta, Méndez & Rodriguez, 2015; Yosso, 2005, 2006). Research points to work arounds, or ways in which Latinx faculty have created spaces for their support and success in higher education. Various themes include comunidad (community commitment), activist scholarship, and critical agency within academia (Ramirez & De La Cruz, 2016; Urrieta & Benavidez, 2007; Urrieta, Mendez, & Rodriguez, 2015). Urrieta, Jr. and Benavidez conducted a qualitative study to determine how community commitments are embedded in Chicana/o faculty ideology and practice within academia as well as how their scholarly work in relation to Euro-American academy standards. The study findings, which support a distinctive point of view held by, in this case, Chicana/o faculty, suggest that comunidad (community commitment) plays a fundamental role in why they pursued a faculty role within education. Specifically, not only to benefit the Latina/o community but to “raise consciousness in all students that they taught” (p. 228). The study further found that because of this community commitment the faculty participants took their scholarship pursuits seriously to further a conscious raising agenda, what

Urrieta, Jr. & Benavidez (2007) termed activist scholarship. The study does not negate the negative experiences that Faculty of Color experienced as presented here, but it does highlight how Latinx faculty resist and navigate the system in a manner which challenges the white supremacist system of higher education.

In continuing with this theme of resistance, Ramirez and De La Cruz (2016) documented via autoethnography the experiences of two Latino educators who chose to highlight the importance of community and familia from an asset-based approach, highlighting the funds of knowledge that each of them brought to the professoriate. There is a strength in addressing the experiences of the faculty participants from this perspective to demonstrate a counter narrative to how faculty typically respond to negative experiences rather than assimilating. In assessing this study, I thought of Baez's (2000) concepts of critical agency and how, at the individual or local level, Faculty of Color can effect change. Instead of positioning the choice of Faculty of Color to participate in race based or social justice-based service as problematic, Baez (2000), instead, argued the choice to participate in such service provides an opportunity for faculty to exercise crucial agency. Further arguing, that without such agency, "institutions will continue to maintain advantages for Whites and males" (p. 387).

Finally, Urrieta, Jr., Mendez, and Rodriguz (2015), highlighted *supervivencia* (survivance), more than surviving, a thriving to some extent, and its positive impact on how Latina/o faculty utilize their community commitment, Latina/o-based research, and social justice agenda as a form of resistance. Faculty participants in this study suggested that drawing upon the local, regional, and national networks of Faculty of Color, provided numerous opportunities to succeed and resist at the same time (p. 1162). This study is relevant in shifting the conversation of how Faculty of Color experience the institution of higher education from documenting the

inequities to discussing how to challenge the systems that create the conditions for inequitable and racist treatment to continue. Major themes across how Latinx faculty are studied within the context of higher education and the professoriate demonstrate a deep commitment to maintain community connections. Valuing Latinx faculty's inherent community cultural wealth as a means of resisting and surviving what is an obstacle filled pathway to the professoriate.

Chicana/Latina Faculty Experiences

Just as Chicana/Latina faculty data are lumped into the larger subgroup of Hispanic, so are their experiences within research on Latinx faculty experiences. In order that a more nuanced description of the lived experiences of Chicana/Latina faculty is highlighted, the following will provide an overview of the major themes found in the research, specifically how Chicana/Latina faculty experience the professoriate. A large proportion of the studies reviewed here utilized a qualitative approach, challenging the limiting nature of quantitative studies ability to provide a rich accounting of Chicana/Latina faculty experiences in higher education. One such study focused on Latina faculty acknowledged that it was difficult to disaggregate the data to achieve any significance for specific ethnic groups particularly with regard to race (Sanchez-Peña, Main, Sambamurthy, Cox, & McGee, 2016). They further argued Latinas who identified as white, may report having more in common with their white counterparts, not experiencing microaggressions in the same manner as mixed-race Latinas and yet still experiencing similar feelings of racism and isolation (Sanchez-Peña et al., 2016, p. 4). Sanchez-Peña et al. (2016) further explained white-passing Latinas may find it just as difficult to challenge the racism that exists in higher education.

The literature indicates the pathways to the professoriate for Chicana/Latina faculty are not linear, lack support, institutions and processes fail to value the work of Chicana/Latina

faculty, and intersectional identities further complicate the journey (Cantú-Ruiz & Machado-Casas, 2013; Ek et al., 2010; Gonzales, 2012; Gonzales, Murakami & Núñez, 2013; Segura, 2003). Several scholars noted in their research that Chicana/Latina faculty experience sexism, racism, isolation, lack of mentoring, tokenism, unfair workload and service expectations, disparate pay, lack of administrative support, unfair review, tenure, and promotion processes (Ruiz & Machado-Casas, 2013; Gonzalez, 2007; Martinez et al., 2015; Martinez, Chang & Welton, 2017; Martinez & Welton, 2017; Medina & Luna, 2000; Flores-Niemann, 1999; Reyes, 2005; Segura, 2003; Urrieta, Jr., & Benavidez, 2007). Given these negative experiences, a consistent finding across these studies is that Chicana/Latina faculty seek out ways in which they can remain authentic and rely upon their communities for support and guidance.

Authenticity: Resisting Academy Expectations

Turner (2002), Medina and Luna (2000), Ek, Cerecer, Alanis, and Rodriguez (2010), Machado-Casas, Cantu-Ruiz and Cantu (2013), employed narrative approaches in an effort to elevate the voices of the research participants as well as provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of Chicana/Latina faculty. Ek et al. (2010) completed a study utilizing CRT, LatCRT, and agencies of transformational resistance (ATR) to evaluate the lived experiences of the authors, four Chicana/Latina tenure-track faculty members as well as focus groups of Chicana/Latina faculty who were members of the group Research in Education for the Advancement of Latin@s (REAL). Methodologically, the use of a co-operative inquiry method where the authors served as both researchers and participants provided a unique way for Chicana/Latina faculty to participate in the counter-narrative approach to documenting their lived experiences. The findings indicated the REAL organization played a critical role as an agency of transformational resistance, supporting Chicana/Latina faculty in challenging the

status quo (pp. 543-544). Additionally, this study found that REAL also supported Chicana/Latina faculty in the muxerista⁷ style mentoring system which also helped Chicana/Latina faculty to hone and refine their scholarship (p. 548).

Machado-Casas, Cantú Ruiz, and Cantú (2013) conducted a testimonio narrative analysis study with seventeen Chicana/Latina faculty members at various stages of their careers. The faculty participants published their testimonios as journal articles, and Machado-Casas, Cantú Ruiz, and Cantú (2013) compiled the common themes that resulted from those testimonios. Common themes that emerged from these essays were: (a) resistance as a tool for survival, (b) balancing of multiple identities (family, academia, community), (c) the value of *hermandad* (sisterhood) in navigating the “academic labyrinth,” situating Latina faculty within the broader construct of higher education, (d) counterstories fighting the assimilation aspect of academe, and (e) consejos that Latina faculty can employ as they navigate the world of academia (Machado-Casas, Cantú Ruiz, & Cantú, 2013, pp. 9-10). Common themes emerging from the Segura (2003), Gonzales, Murakami and Núñez (2013), and Machado-Casas, Cantu Ruiz, and Cantu (2013) indicated the need for muxerista mentoring, comunidad, resistencia, activist scholarship, consciencia de cultura Chicana/Latina, and claiming voices. Medina and Luna’s (2000) study highlighted the need to validate scholarship and ability amongst Chicana/Latina scholars, recognizing many had experienced multiple deficit messages. For example, [Gabriela, research participant] explained, “I was always told by educators that I would never go beyond high school and to never aspire to a higher degree” (Medina & Luna, 2000, p. 54).

⁷ *Muxerista* mentoring redefined Hetherington & Barcelo’s (1985) concept of “womentoring” and applies a cultural significance which honors and respects the language and culture of Chicana/Latina faculty (as quoted in Ek, et, al, 2010, p. 545).

Recognizing the academy and its oppressive structures encourage and reward inauthenticity amongst faculty, Rendon (2000) sought to find ways in which she could reimagine an academy where love and authenticity remained core values to which faculty could aspire. The following dimensions of Academics of the Heart, provide a reimagined approach to how Chicana/Latina faculty might be better able to navigate the journey on and to the professoriate:

- Individual behavior- focusing on self-renewal, creativity, commitment, connectedness, spirituality, and what it means to be authentic.
- Teaching and learning- making sure students succeed; changing the expert model of delivering information to students; finding ways to integrate knowledge and to focus on the interdependence among faculty, administrators, students, and staff; preparing students for lives of commitment.
- Leadership- getting leaders to think more about community, authenticity, and purpose; getting leaders to engage in “followership.”
- Research- validating the use of mixed genres, acknowledging that there are multiple sources of truth, permitting subjectivity and imperfection, linking research to teaching.
- Rewards- recognizing and rewarding creativity, giving individuals the time and space to discuss and create, providing resources to allow individuals to be innovative, creative and different (Rendon, 2000, p. 153).

As these studies demonstrate, Chicana/Latina faculty intentional documenting of experiences can not only inform efforts to change the structures which impede the recruitment and retention of Chicana/Latina faculty within higher education but do it in a manner in which authenticity and love remain at the center of the discussion. Recognizing the systems are not designed to support the growth and success of Chicana/Latinas it is critical to understand the

many ways in which they are able to navigate, resist and challenge a system, which attempts to strip them of their identities.

Sobrevivir No Es Suficiente

The current research on Chicana/Latina faculty continues a long tradition of identifying the lack of representation within higher education as well as attempts to elevate their voices and experiences as they traverse the path towards the professoriate. Cuádriz (2005) pointedly asked the following question: “Are researchers destined to find themselves in another three decades reiterating what is already known and lamenting once again the severe underrepresentation of Chicanas in institutions of higher education?” (p. 216). A fair question, and while the literature produced on Chicana/Latina faculty is growing, it has thus far demonstrated it is focused on and dedicated to researching and representing the Chicana/Latina faculty experiences in ways that challenge the status quo. Unfortunately, the research continues to show Chicana/Latina faculty experiences are fraught with issues related to how they show up in the academy, which forces a negotiation through a hegemonic system which is not required of white male faculty.

Chicana/Latinas have accomplished this by utilizing elements of community cultural wealth as described by Yosso (2005), navigating and resisting the structures that attempt to preclude them achieving membership. In this context, navigation capital refers to how Chicana/Latinas rely upon social/community systems of support, fellow Chicana/Latina faculty, developing muxerista systems of mentoring which foster a sense of belonging and legitimacy (Gonzales et al., 2013; Machado-Casas et al., 2013; Segura, 2003; Yosso, 2005). The research also shows Chicana/Latinas identify the importance of resisting the systems of inequity in ways that allows them to share their counterstories, pursue activist scholarship as a means of transforming what the academy deems to be legitimate. The clear message current research on Chicana/Latina

faculty is that survival within the academic system is not enough, transformational change which encourages different ways of knowing and an authentic approach to the professorate is missing.

Recognizing that academic structures were founded upon a white supremacist set of ideologies and privileges white male faculty, further understanding how Chicana/Latinas negotiate the constructs of legitimacy through the process and beyond becomes critical to discussions about reimagining the academy in ways that do not continue to perpetuate the same oppressive systems for other Chicana/Latinas navigating the system. Moreover, it is important to understand how Chicana/Latinas navigate, negotiated, and resist the hegemonic structures in higher education as they traverse the pathway to and through the professoriate adds to the bodies of literature. More specifically, understanding how Chicana/Latinas navigate these structures while also addressing the construct of academic legitimacy. Ultimately, this study was intended to take the conversations away from sheer survival to engaging in dialogue which better defines what it means to navigate, negotiate, and resist hegemonic academic structures. Influenced by Yosso's (2005) definitions of navigational and resistant capital, this study aimed to develop extended definitions of how to navigate, how to negotiate, whether to resist or not resist while negotiating, and what the consequences are. By establishing a framework for how to engage Chicana/Latinas in preparation of these three concepts, Chicana/Latinas with an alternative way to define what is legitimate, providing consejos to Chicana/Latinas considering the professoriate.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

“My dilemma, and that of other Chicana and women-of-color writers, is twofold: how to write (produce) without being inscribed (reproduced) in the dominant white structure and how to write without projecting and reproducing what we rebel against. Our task is to write against the edict that women should fear their own darkness, that we not broach it in our writings. Nuestra tarea is to envision Coyolxauhqui, not dead and decapitated, but with eyes wide open. Our task is to light up the darkness” (Anzaldúa, 2015, pp. 7-8).

The purpose of this study was to better understand how three Chicana/Latinas navigate, negotiate, and resist hegemonic structures within higher education in their journeys to and through the professoriate. Utilizing a qualitative approach to seeking deeper understanding, testimonio methodology was employed to interrogate, deconstruct, and bring about deeper understanding of the lived experiences of the research platicadoras (Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2001; Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Flores Carmona, 2012; Delgado Bernal, Elenes, & Godinez, 2006; Flores, Hamzeh, Bejarano Hernández Sánchez & El Ashmawi, 2018; Latina Feminist Group, 2001). This chapter outlines the research question in detail, methodological stance, participant details, methodological procedures and positionality. This study employed a Chicana Feminist Epistemological (CFE) approach in developing the design, the analysis, and the recommendations. Counterstories, testimonios, and the use of pláticas, which highlighted the rich lived experience of people of color, is central to the study and centers the powerful experiential knowledge that exists within communities of color (Solórzano, 1998).

Methodological Stance

Una conciencia de mujer, a consciousness of the Borderlands, an opportunity to present new and valued ways of knowing is central to how I chose to design this study (Anzaldúa, 1987). Throughout my academic journey, I have been inundated with messages regarding what is considered legitimate research, how to frame research in legitimate and trustworthy ways, removing myself from the equation, splitting my consciousness, establishing a clear objective approach to ‘studying’ the problem from afar. Anzaldúa (1987) influenced me to challenge those internal, colonized approaches to how I viewed the world. Cual era mi perspectiva, que era lo que sentía en el pecho, what was my intuition about what I was learning, hearing from the world about me, and deciding whether any of it really mattered when it came to my research. Could I really have my feet in two worlds, lo podía mezclar? Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002) cautioned that positivist and post positivist Eurocentric epistemologies fail to recognize the value of ‘other’ ways of knowing and understanding, simply eliminating and delegitimizing the work of Faculty of Color within higher education. Research involving qualitative methods suggests the researcher and the research questions and/or problem lend themselves to engaging in inductive methods to develop individual meaning of complex problems or situations (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Bazely, 2013; Creswell, 2014).

Utilizing Eurocentric methodologies is clearly a problematic way to approach research when your consciousness is pulling at your heart, cuando lo sientes en el pecho, y cuando estas cansada de ignorar tu intuición. Positioning this study firmly in a Chicana Feminist Epistemology was the best and most appropriate way for me to reconcile how to honorably approach this research question, understanding the importance of centering Chicana/Latina voices as they shared their experiences related to their journeys to and through the professoriate.

Anzaldúa (1987, 2005) suggested *Nepantleras* saw these points of contention - rubbing the wound open over and over - had an inherent power to “build bridges, where other saw borders,” that choosing to create bridges was an “act of love, an attempt toward compassion and reconciliation, and a promise to be present with the pain of others without losing themselves in it” (Anzaldúa, 2002, Preface, Paragraph 6). To accomplish this, I engaged in a different methodological approach, which introduces new or alternative narratives, turning centuries old paradigms on their heads, believing that new paradigms exist and can lead to *una nueva conciencia*.

Chicana Feminist Epistemology

Drawing from the experiences of Chicana, Native American, and Black feminist work, Delgado Bernal (1998) was concerned with providing Chicanas, the opportunity to tell their stories which included the historical context of systematic oppression. Applying Anzaldúa’s (1987) concept of “mestiza consciousness,” Delgado Bernal (1998) suggested Chicanas are better able to embrace their assets in a “transformational resistance” which is oftentimes overlooked in public school systems which focus on deficits, Delgado Bernal (1998) challenged Eurocentric approaches to developing understanding of Chicana experiences (p. 625). By considering the role that immigration, migration, bilingualism, generational statuses, limited English proficiency, and the contradictions that Catholicism creates for Chicana identity, a Chicana Feminist Epistemological (CFE) approach values and lifts the experiences of Chicanas as valuable and legitimate (Delgado Bernal, 1998).

Delgado Bernal (1998) suggested within CFE, there are particular methods inherent to Chicanisma and began with learning to listen with one’s inner voice and trusting one’s intuition, a cultural intuition. CFE further argued because of this intuition, Chicana scholars are able to

utilize their own personal experience, the existing literature regarding the Chicana experience, professional experience in working with Chicana/o communities leaning upon the “insider” perspective, and are able to include research participants in the analysis process of any research study (Bernal, 1998). In the simplest of terms and at the core of CFE, there is a commitment to centering Chicanas in the quest to challenge inherently racist and oppressive structures which suggest they are not legitimate knowledge creators (Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2002; Flores, 2000; Elenes, 2010; Elenes, Gonzalez, Delgado Bernal, & Villenas, 2010).

Also inherent to CFE is its commitment to centering the researcher’s cultural intuition and unique and valuable perspective that Chicanas contribute to research. In more recent work, Delgado Bernal, Pérez Huber, Malagón & Nelly Vélez (2012) revisited the importance of CFE to educational research and discussed the addition of a spiritual component, based on Anzaldúa’s “spiritual activism” validating the infusion of spirituality in research to challenge oppressive structures (p. 516). This is particularly important to this study given the use of testimonio and the nature of confesiones and consejos being personal and filled with opportunities for healing. Anzaldúa’s (2015) seven stages of *conocimiento* provides an opportunity to make sense of how the healing process is fluid, never linear, and never complete. Figure 3.1 provides seven stages that Anzaldúa introduced as all contributing to *conocimiento*, an avenue for understanding the healing process. In Chapter five, a deeper discussion of how each *platicadora* traversed the seven stages is presented.



Figure 3.1. Seven stages of Conocimiento

Framing the study in this research paradigm calls for specific methodological approaches. Therefore, I chose to approach the question of how Chicana/Latinas navigate, negotiate and resist the hegemonic structures of higher education by engaging in testimonio.

Testimonio/Pláticas Inquiry

The centering of Chicana/Latina voices requires a methodological approach which sets the stage for exploration of common themes and understanding across research participants, more importantly where research participants construct their stories through their *testimonio* (Delgado Bernal, 1998, 2001; Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Flores Carmona, 2012 ; Flores Carmona et al., 2018). Testimonio challenges traditional forms of narrative in that it expands and allows for both the platicadoras to collectively craft their lived experiences in meaningful ways, embracing their whole selves, which challenge the oppressive norms experienced and draw attention to those experiences, in this case, the hegemonic structures within higher education.

Pláticas as a methodological tool in collecting testimonios further centers the importance of the role that a Chicana Feminist Epistemology plays, the importance of platicadoras as co-creators of knowledge; connects the lived experiences of Chicana/Latinas to the research; and co-creates a space for reciprocity between the platicadoras to include the researcher (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). Researcher reflection, or as understood from a Chicana Feminist Epistemological (CFE) approach, these connections can be largely informed through the researcher's cultural intuition. Given my own personal experiences in higher education and the educational system in general, it is natural those experiences informed how I engaged with the responses of research platicadoras. It is important to note that traditional forms of narrative inquiry alone do not fully capture the essence of storytelling in the manner which testimonio is capable of, mainly due to its political intent in calling attention to the experiences of Chicana/Latinas, which have been largely ignored in higher education research (Prieto & Villenas, 2012). Therefore, this study utilized a testimonio inquiry approach, centering upon the rich and valuable conversations that can take place using pláticas as a tool.

Figure 3.2 provides a visual as to how this study situated the lived experiences of Chicana/Latinas, framed in CFE, utilizing testimonio/pláticas as methodological approaches, leading to confesiones and consejos. It is critical to note the process is cyclical and central to the discussion is the lived experiences, as recounted through testimonio/pláticas. The testimonio/pláticas were rooted in a Chicana Feminist Epistemology, with the goal of producing confesiones/consejos, which serve to encourage, motivate, and inspire other Chicana/Latinas to pursue the professoriate. Methodology is mapped out below.

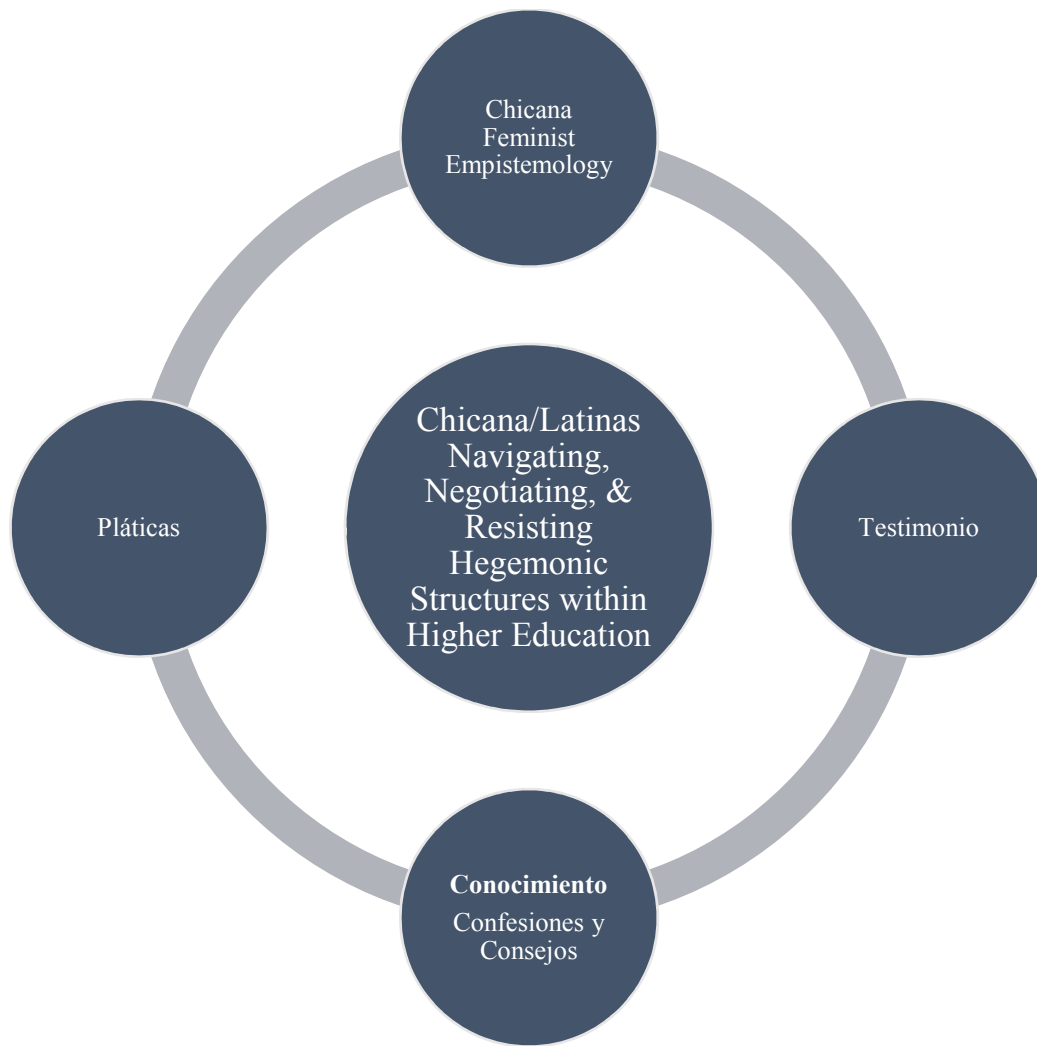


Figure 3.2, Methodology

The guiding question was broad enough that research *platicadoras* were able to craft and mold their *testimonios* in ways that delved further into the questions of navigation, negotiation, and resisting as skills resulting from their experiences. More importantly, at each juncture of the process, *platicadoras* were invited to reflect upon how they developed those skills, questioned those skills, and how they fit into the larger discussion of resistance of oppressive, hegemonic academic structures, and whether they continue to see value in how they have chosen to approach their journeys (Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016). In this study, *testimonio* can be seen

as a both a research paradigm as well as a method for data collection, both of which complement and are in my estimation, a core approach utilized within a Chicana Feminist Epistemology.

Testimonio

Testimonio has a long historical grounding in Latin American indigenous struggles for liberation and social justice as well as in oral traditions (Behar, 1993; Burgos-Debray, 1984). An essential element of testimonio is its ability to create politicized accounts of lived experiences, with the intent to challenge oppressive norms demanding social justice action. Additionally, testimonio differs from traditional oral histories and/or autobiographies in that a testimonio requires rich and deep descriptive accounts of experience along with a reflection on how research participants negotiated the choices and silences (Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Testimonio offered an opportunity to break those silences in ways that bridge “brown bodies” within communities with academia (Anzaldúa, 1990; Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Flores Carmona, 2012). Silence, imposed and/or chosen, have great implications in the way that Chicana/Latinas experience higher education. Knowing when and how research participants negotiated those silences provided a deeper understanding of both how hegemonic structures impact Chicana/Latinas but more importantly, the negotiation process in which those silences are reconciled amongst the research participants. Beverley (2008) offers when someone bears their testimonio, “something is asked of us,” holding a greater power to reclaim those silenced moments in productive ways (p. 1). The reconciliation process was further dissected utilizing the seven steps of *conocimiento*, yielding powerful and healing discoveries of the costs associated with resistance within the academy.

Testimonio offered a methodological approach which served as a process and a product, and at the crux, “disentangling questions surrounding legitimate truth” (Delgado Bernal,

Burciaga, & Flores Carmona, 2012, p. 3). Common to Chicana/Latina experiences, as pointed out in chapter two, legitimacy and what is considered legitimate truth and legitimate research result from hegemonic academic structures, which value Eurocentric epistemologies. The role of the researcher as testimonialista in this method played a larger role in that they served as activists, bringing attention to the lived experiences of the research platicadoras but also engaging in research methodologies which challenge oppressive research norms in academia. Testimonio scholarship has seen an increase in its use and has developed an array of approaches to employing a testimonio as both a methodology and a methodological tool (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Flores Carmona, 2012; Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012). I utilized the confesion and consejo approach to frame questions surrounding navigation, negotiation, and resistance of hegemonic structures through the use of pláticas.

Pláticas

Pláticas are semi-structured conversations between researcher and co-researcher during which emphasis is placed on dialogic exchange and knowledge sharing as a means to capture lived experiences among Chicana/Latina women (Elenes, 2011; Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016; Gonzalez, 2001; Preuss & Saavedra, 2013). At the core of pláticas exists a reciprocity of exchange between researcher and co-research which requires trust or *confianza*. Huante-Tzintzun (2016) explains *confianza* is established when participants begin to grapple with “impossible knowledge,” using Haig-Brown’s definition of impossible knowledge as being “knowledge that is beyond our grasp because of the limits of our language and our lived experience” (Haig-Brown, 2003, p. 415). *Confianza* therefore, is an evolving status between the researcher and the co-researcher, each plática leading to more and more trust over the course of the study and beyond.

Fierro and Delgado Bernal's (2016) developed contours of plática methodology which further frames the testimonio/plática approach. These principles are: (1) draws from Chicana/Latina Feminist Theory, (2) platicadoras are co-creators or co-constructors of knowledge, (3) recognizes the strong connections between everyday experiences to research and scholarship which inevitably occur during the process of developing each testimonio, (4) create the spaces for potential healing, and (5) relies heavily upon "relations of reciprocity, vulnerability, and reflexivity (Fierro & Delgado Bernal, 2016, pp. 108-114). From these pláticas, *emerge* a rich and oftentimes traumatic accounts of the lived experiences of Chicana/Latinas. This approach is critical in achieving the intended or hoped for testimonios of Chicana/Latinas on the pathway on and to the professoriate, resulting in *confesiones y consejos*.

Confesiones y Consejos. In *Testimonios of Life and Learning in the Borderlands: Subaltern Juárez Girls Speak*, Cervantes Soon (2012) highlighted this concept of Confesiones y consejos that resulted from her study. Confesiones framed as entering a vulnerable stage by which the research participants shared a potentially painful, shameful, or private experience in the form of a confession, suggests and acknowledges that research participants in their experiences, have negotiated times during which they have either been silenced or have chosen silence. It is at this point testimonio eliciting *confession* becomes relational, "departing from the heroic autobiographical traditional, we are not speaking from the voice of "I," rather we are exploring the ways in which our individual identities express the complexities of our communities as a whole" (Latin Feminist Group, 2000, pp. 20-21). The power of "we" suggests the experience is shared and there are others who have likely shared similar stories as well as provide opportunities for deep internal reflection resulting in rich discussions on *consejos*.

Consejos result from a process by which the experience is interrogated, oppressive structures are critiqued and brought to the surface and at the same time offers the reader a language of hope and agency, validated by the wisdom gained from the process (Elenes, González, Delgado Bernal, & Villenas, 2001; Hernández, 1997). This requires and demands a reflective process by which the research provides the knowledge gained from their experiences, but also be able to relate those to the power structures, in this case, hegemonic academic structures that exist, in order to craft the consejo for Chicana/Latinas seeking the professoriate. Embracing the role of *tlamatinime*, in Nahua societies, who are “knower of things,” “sage,” or “philosopher;” those who were inquisitive, asking questions, establishing the wisdom and advice for those who came to them for guidance (Maffie, 2014, p. 1). The final product in this study is not only be the research participant’s testimonio, comprised of confesiones y consejos, but in two cases, yielded a carta de consejo, which are written and addressed to Chicana/Latinas who are considering the professoriate.

Participants

For the purpose of this study, I recruited and selected three platicadoras. The first is a doctoral student in their final year of coursework/dissertation phase. The second a tenure track faculty member finishing up her first year as a Professor. The third is a recently tenured (fewer than three years) Professor. In *Living to Tell* (Latina Feminist Group, 2001), a re-occurring theme of feminism which “affirmed a relational ethic of care and support for each other and for the group,” resulted from the act of testimoniando contributing to the understanding of how powerful and important the act of testimonio can be (p. 21). Because of this, I followed a traditional process of recruiting research participants through purposive sampling, in which it was critical to carefully select the three participants given the nature of the topics to be

discussed. After much contemplation as to how to proceed with this study, it became clear to me the study would require a level of confianza between myself as the researcher and the testimonialista/platicadora. Of utmost importance was the platicadoras understood that a high level of trust and commitment on their part, to share their lived experiences as well as live in a vulnerable state during the study. To identify participants, I utilized social media networks on Twitter and Facebook, which specifically catered to Chicana/Latinas who are either pursuing the professoriate or are already serving as professors. Facebook Groups such as Binders Full of Women, Nonbinary People of Color in Academia, Binders of WOC-Education (closed group), Latinas Completing Doctoral Degrees, Chicana and Chicano Studies, and Black & Brown @AERA. Additionally, I shared the general premise of my proposed study with several Chicana/Latinas on their journey toward the professoriate, my committee members, mis comadres, requesting they reach out to their networks to help in my recruitment efforts. My hope was through their networks, they could suggest potential candidates who might be interested in participating.

I chose three levels within the journey due to how the construct of legitimacy progresses at each stage, becoming more and more demanding, ultimately dictating whether they are/were able to achieve tenure and gain legitimacy within their field of discipline. The recently tenured platicadora provided a recent experience as well as an opportunity to discuss the “what next” and how they may continue to negotiate and resist the hegemonic structures of “legitimacy” in higher education. I purposely did not choose a full professor because their experience for Chicana/Latinas who are considering the professoriate seemed too distant an experience for them to understand. For me, getting through a doctoral program was a feat and I had to learn how to take small steps. I also wondered if their consejos might sound like a self-help list of things to do

and not necessarily seem to connect with the emotions, trauma, and experiences of Chicana/Latinas who have yet to achieve ‘success’ and are in the middle of dealing with their self-value issues. I recalled my first encounter with Dra. Cantu at the MALCS conference and her very supportive and positive attitude, she said, “just write, just write.” It was very logical, but I kept saying to myself, “well that’s easy enough for you to say, but I don’t believe in my ability or that I have something relevant to say.” I was certain her success and position came at a steep price and her testimonios and books represent just how difficult it was, but it still seemed like a distant future for me at the time. I appreciated it, but there was something missing. I continued to ponder how to address these feelings of disconnect that I was feeling with those who had achieved much success in higher education.

Another important reason for my choice of three can be attributed to the deep influence that my professional work, adjuncting, and teaching a course entitled *La Chicana* had on my understanding of how we, Chicanas, are boxed into three distinct identities, *La Virgen de Guadalupe*, *La Malinche*, y *La Llorona* (Cypess, 2010). Further influencing my choices was the central role that Anzaldúa’s (1987, 2015) work had on my perspectives throughout this process. Again, three identities emerge from Anzaldúa’s (1987, 2015) work, *Coatlicue*, *Coyolxauhqui*, and *La Llorona*. As I sat and pondered how these identities shape and/or influence Chicana culture, it seemed to me that somehow, they would become relevant in our discussions. There was something magical in imagining a conversation where each identity spoke to one another with the intent to support, nurture, and challenge myths that surrounded their identities as well as the challenges that they faced. I also imagined this *plática* might disclose a strength and resistance that would turn misogynistic patriarchal representations of their identity’s upside down, leading to deeper understandings of the strength that lies within them. As the *platicadoras*

shared their testimonios, it became clearer and clearer they very much shared in common a desire to heal, presented their testimonios at varying levels of healing, and connections to these identities, particularly Coatlicue and Coyolxauhqui, as will be further discussed in Chapter five.

Growth and learning happen at various stages and this helped me in choosing three distinct stages within the journey towards the professoriate. Choosing three Chicana/Latinas at the doctoral, tenure track, and recently tenured stage, would provide insights for students like me, who were in the midst of grappling with their academic scholarly identities. As previously stated, I did not think Chicana/Latina faculty who had achieved associate and/or full professorship would be able to identify with Chicanas/Latinas who are considering the professoriate in ways that would go beyond, the general, “you can do it!” or, “just write, just write,” or “we need you in the professoriate.”

It also occurred to me at this moment the Latina Feminist Group (2001) in *Living to Tell* had testimonios from Chicana/Latina faculty who had achieved various levels of success and were recounting their stories several years after the fact. I felt this study should focus on the experiences of Chicana/Latinas on their journey to and through the professoriate at three different levels. A doctoral student, a tenure track faculty, and a recently tenured faculty would have insights at the various levels, which just might have insights to strength and resistance that are oftentimes overlooked in research when we focus the discussion on the hegemonic academic structures and their negative impacts on Chicana/Latinas. In terms of the type of institution they were from and the discipline area, I only wanted to ensure they were all in the field of education would provide a common frame of reference for each of the participants, particularly when they came together to develop the cartas de consejo blog. It is important to note because of this choice, while results might have some relevance across the board to all Chicana/Latinas pursuing

the professoriate, different Chicana/Latinas from across discipline areas would more than likely experience their journeys according to discipline specific requirements with regard to legitimacy.

This is clearly a departure from traditional methods of sampling and calling for research participants and yet it fits in nicely with the construct of nepantla and its challenge to merge approaches, creating hybridity in how research is conducted, relying on my cultural intuition to carefully choose the study research participants while employing a clear method for how I will carry out the research process. The platicadoras agreed to participate in this study all provided a clear commitment to sharing their experiences in ways that will invoked confession with the intent to find ways towards producing cartas de consejos as products that complement their testimonios.

Informed Consent

It was central to the study that the research participants understood they could withdraw their consent and participation in the study at any point without fear of negative consequences. How research participants choose to be identified within the study was honored when referencing their testimonio and consejos. See Appendix A.

Informed consent included the need for research platicadoras to have access to a computer and internet when interviews must be conducted online via zoom. All efforts were made on the part of the researcher to meet with the platicadoras in person but when not possible, the alternative was via video interview. Participants were assured confidentiality and the level of anonymity was determined by each of the platicadoras. Recognizing their testimonio may have long lasting effects on their future employment, this was a crucial decision made by each participant. Interviews were recorded and live on the hard drive of my computer and kept for the

purpose of transcription and data analysis. Copies of recordings and transcripts were shared with each platicadora.

During the research process, platicadoras were encouraged to participate in a group plática but it was not mandatory. Ultimately, as we progressed, all three chose to keep their participation private and a group plática was not scheduled.

Methods

In order to complete this study, I deliberately framed it in the following manner. First, I accepted that academic hegemonic structures exist, particularly with regard to how they establish the standards for legitimacy. We were able to understand the ways in which platicadoras' continuous navigation, negotiation, and resistance worked in relation to the process of *conocimiento*. In Chicanx/Latinx communities, when someone is facing a challenge and says, “*y que*” they are facing the challenge head on, recognizing the situation is what it is and yet having the courage to conquer it in spite of the odds against them. This does not by any means suggest continued research in disrupting and challenging hegemonic academic structures should not continue, it is just not the focus for this study. Second, I wanted to understand how the process of navigating, negotiated, and resisting intersected with one another.

Initially influenced by Rendon's (2005) *reimagined academy*, *Academics of the Heart* I framed the second portion to address questions of how platicadoras approached research, self-care, and achieving authenticity within the academy. *Academics of Heart* posits while oppressive structures within higher education encourage inauthenticity amongst faculty, Rendon (2005) argues there is an alternative to how faculty approach the academy.

My methodological approach was consistent with Chicana Feminist Epistemology and *testimonio/plática* as methodological tools. The following outlines the interview protocol, data collection, analysis procedures, trustworthiness, and study boundaries.

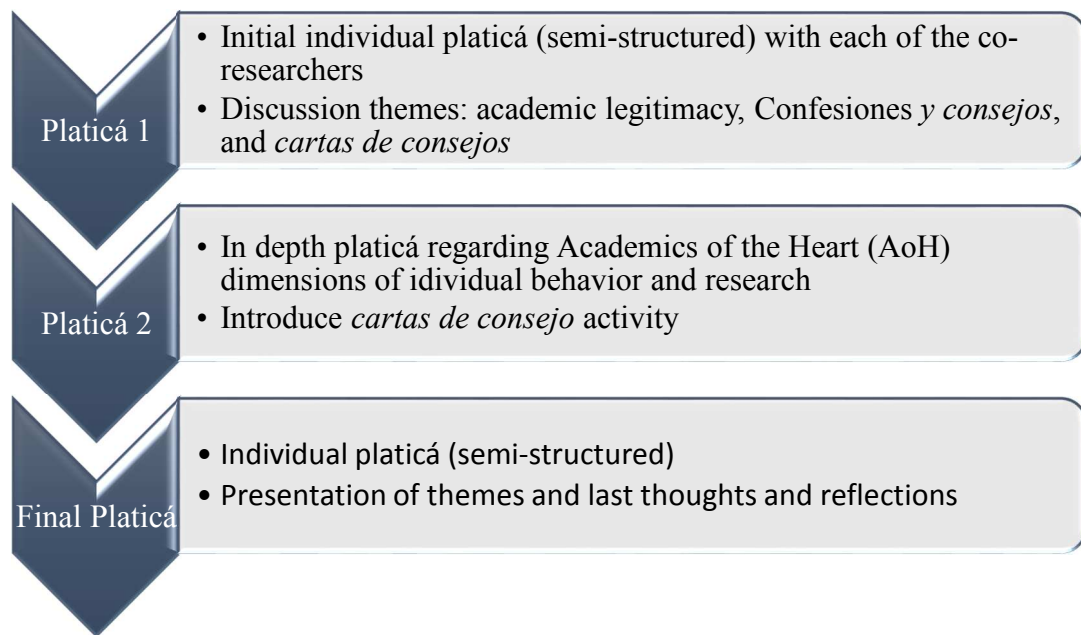


Figure 3.3. Method outline

Interview Protocol

After IRB approval, I began the recruitment process, forwarding a recruitment email and flyer to the social media networks previously mentioned as well as colleagues I believed may have had potential referrals (Appendix B & Appendix C). I asked each potential *platicadora* to complete a short survey sharing demographic data. After evaluating each potential *platicadoras* responses and in collaboration with my advisor, three were selected and asked to sign the consent forms required by the institution for participation via a research participant email located in Appendix D. I scheduled the first of three semi-structured *pláticas* with each of the *platicadoras*.

Given the timeframe, we conducted the first plática via an online video conference service where the interviews were recorded and saved to my password-protected laptop hard drive and backups will be saved to an external hard drive. I was fortunate enough to conduct the second interview in person with each participant. Subsequent pláticas took place via zoom, phone calls, and email. These pláticas served to clarify and/or provide the platicadoras an opportunity to add to their testimonios.



Figure 3.4. Research study timeline

Figure 3.4 provides an overarching timeline for the study from the proposal defense through the final dissertation defense. Each phase of data collection is further explained. Pláticas denote an informal, familiar approach to sharing of information between researcher and research participant. While considered interviews, the approach, setting, and goal of each plática is to create and develop trust, ensure safe spaces for vulnerability, and respect for the information sharing that is taking place. See Appendix E for the detailed protocol.

Table 3.1
Data Collection Timeline

Data Collection Method	Themes	Means	Completion
Plática #1	Higher Education Experiences: <i>Confesiones</i>	In Person or Recorded Zoom	April 2019
Plática #2	Continued Discussion- Legitimacy- Self Care	In Person or Recorded Zoom	May/June 2019
Cartas de Consejo	Navigating, Negotiating, and Resisting	Blog/Digital Document	June2019
Individual Plática/Activity	Cartas de <i>Consejo</i>	In Person or Recorded Zoom	June 2019
Final Individual <i>Plática</i>	All Themes	In Person or Recorded Zoom	July 2019
Sharing of Analysis	All Themes	Email	October 2019

Primera Individual Plática. During the first plática, we focused primarily on the experiences in higher education on their journey toward the professoriate. This interview at minimum lasted for about an hour and half. While I wanted to conduct the first pláticas in person to encourage a trust and establish safe spaces, it was not possible. During this session, the concepts of legitimacy, *Confesiones y consejos*, and *cartas de consejo* were introduced.

Segunda Individual Plática. Based on timing, I was able to conduct the second plática, in person, and due to the amount of information related to the first plática, we continued the

discussion around legitimacy along with concepts of self-care and explored the Academics of the Heart (AoH) dimensions of individual behavior and research. Specifically, whether they approached research as a relationship centered process, where heart and science are intertwined, whether they honored diverse ways of knowing (epistemological approaches), and whether they engaged in contemplative and self-reflective practices (Rendon, 2000). Given the focus on research legitimacy of the study, it was important to explore how this might influence choices, whether deliberate or not, platicadoras made clear how they want their research to be represented in the academy with regard to their epistemology and chosen methods. Rendon (2002) argued to reimagine the academy and how faculty approach their roles within higher education from a place of love. I chose to utilize AoH as a result of the role of spiritual activism as discussed in Chicana Feminist Epistemology framed by Anzálúa's (1987) assertion that the infusion of spirituality in all aspects of research, writing, and teaching is integral to challenging oppressive systems. During this session, I introduced the cartas de consejo assignment (Appendix E).

Cartas de Consejo Individual Request. The initial intent was to hold a group plática, but given the choice of the platicadoras, this turned into an individual activity. Each platicadora and I communicated via email, had brief phone chats, and zoom meetings to gain clarity on how the platicadora might approach the writing of the cartas de consejo. We also discussed the process and the ways in which they wanted to present the final cartas de consejo.

Final Individual Plática. During this plática, research participants were provided a final transcript of all pláticas and preliminary themes and analysis. During this meeting, we discussed questions related to the transcriptions and the cartas de consejo request. Each platicadora submitted their suggestions and cartas via email based on their own schedules.

Reflective Journal. I maintained a digital, hand-written, and audio journal, documenting notes at each session, identifying questions that informed subsequent plática as well as the cartas de consejo exercise. This portion of the process was critical because I engaged with what Rendon (2009) calls Sentipensante journaling which requires consistent reflexión. Espino et. al, (2012) suggested reflexión plays a crucial role in bridging the act of testimoniando with the process of healing, connecting with one another in ways that expose vulnerabilities of the platicadoras where they intersect, and ultimately leads to new pathways for understanding one's identity. This journal was used to spark inspiration while I was preparing for subsequent pláticas, theorizing with the data, and seeking themes throughout the process.

All recordings were saved locally on my laptop. Recorded interviews were shared with a professional transcribing service, rev.com, and copies of transcribed transcripts were provided to the platicadoras. Every effort was made to encourage participant engagement along each step of the process.

Analytical Procedures

The minute I began the pláticas with the research platicadoras, I began what is termed 'theorizing through the process.' In *Living to Tell*, the Latina Feminist Group (2001) proposed what at that time was seen as radical; that testimonio was not a traditional form of research and a linear plan for data analysis did not properly capture the essence of testimonio (p. 8). I proposed a linear approach, and what transpired was messy, emotional, and cyclical. Later, I learned I had begun to theorize en el primer minuto de nuestra platica. Even though I wanted to challenge Eurocentric norms of research, subconsciously I was consistently pulled back into those practices, standards, and language. It was a constant conflict, questioning my own legitimacy,

and believing if I could not adhere to a cold, objective approach, my work would be deemed illegitimate.

Once data was collected and research participants approved transcriptions as representative of their experiences, all data were uploaded into the data assessment platform, Dedoose. Utilizing traditional forms of qualitative methods of analysis, I engaged in an initial reading and review of transcriptions identifying potential codes/themes, utilizing dimensions of Anzaldúa's seven stages of *conocimiento*, as well as the literature on legitimacy and its relationship with navigation, negotiation, and resistance to develop an initial analysis/thematic framework. Next, I completed multiple read-throughs of the transcriptions to develop categories of themes, identifying patterns within the larger picture as well as patterns within categories. Finally, I connected themes to the overarching theoretical framework to develop meaning from the stories (Bhattacharya, 2017; Josselson, 2007; Kim, 2016). Traditional forms of qualitative or narrative analysis requires the researcher review and analyze the data at both the macro and micro levels, ensuring a holistic approach to developing overall understanding and meaning, and in this study, ensuring and consistently contemplating the data's connection to the Seven Stages of *Conocimiento*. A traditional qualitative approach accomplished only part of the analytical process by applying techniques of *testimonio/pláticas*, I also engaged in Fierro and Delgado Bernal's (2016) five principles of *plática* methodology, particularly with regard to drawing from my Chicana Feminist Epistemological lens, co-constructing knowledge alongside research participants, and engaging in an analytical process which engaged the existing scholarship, but also paying careful attention to how their everyday lived experiences should be highlighted.

My grounding in Chicana Feminist Epistemology played a critical role in how I viewed and assessed the data. I paid careful attention to how cultural intuition influenced my assessment

of legitimacy, challenging myself to question whether I was assuming things or if I was honoring the actual words and sentiments of the *platicadoras*. I engaged the data with the utmost of integrity, recognizing the power of how decisions to present data in certain ways have long term implications, specifically with regard to the sociopolitical aspects of the discussions surrounding hegemonic academic structures. Engaging the *platicadoras* during my analysis, seeking their input, and respecting their positions ensured I worked toward representing their experiences in the purest form. The process for *platicadoras* to play a role in the analysis through member checking played a crucial role in establishing validity. More important was their role in the co-creation of the final analysis (Delgado Bernal, 2012). Moreover, when in doubt, and/or the member checking process did not address any ambiguous analysis, I sought counsel from my community support system of Chicana/Latina scholars to provide guidance and *consejos*.

Another fundamentally important piece of the analysis was my personal researcher journals (digital, audio, and written) which held observations, initial connections to the research paradigm such as the themes of *nepantla*, mestiza consciousness, spaces in which obvious resistance to oppressive/hegemonic academic structures are evident, and overall Chicana feminist epistemology perspective provide potential insight to the data (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014). In addition to free writing/journaling, memos with more succinct assessments of pieces of interviews or observations were developed to support the process of chunking out and categorizing broad themes that emerged (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014; Kim, 2016). The journaling process was two-fold: one for documenting and seeking patterns, themes, etc. and the other the opportunity to record my own reflections on the process, what the data were saying to me, and whether I was able to clearly identify my own perspectives as opposed to what is resulting from the data.

Finally, the cartas de consejo required a slight modification, given that the platicadoras chose to conduct this as an individual process. One platicadora, due to time constraints opted not to submit a carta and while not ideal, I completely understood that this was one of the many ways in which additional labor is negotiated amongst Chicana/Latina faculty. The approaches as discussed in this section enabled the platicadoras to trust that a transparent approach to this study has been upheld and their engagement throughout the process was critical to the outcomes throughout the process (Wertz et al., 2011)

Trustworthiness

The construct of research trustworthiness is grounded in post-positivist research paradigms and does not necessarily translate exactly in how trustworthiness is established within qualitative research approaches. To ensure the research study was conducted in an ethical and consistent manner, it was the intent of the study to follow a few principles for ensuring trustworthiness. Co-construction of analysis is very much at the center of testimonio, collaboration and sharing of final analysis layers an extra mode of establishing trustworthiness (Bazely, 2013; Creswell & Miller, 2000). Most important to whether the study was deemed trustworthy was the ethical approach was how I interacted with the data as well as the participation of platicadoras in the process. Every effort was made in the design in the study to ensure there are multiple levels of involvement. It is also important to note I worked closely with my Chicana/Latina scholar network to discuss how my own bias and/or assumptions may impact how I engaged with the data. Of great importance was my positionality, discussed later in this chapter.

Study Boundaries

The study was inherently bound by the nature of its design, the number of research participants, three, and the intimate nature of the question and its intended outcome. While this study intended to produce cartas de consejo to be shared broadly with Chicana/Latina prospective professors, I recognize the results were not indicative of every Chicana/Latinas experience in higher education, especially given that only one discipline area—Education—was the focus. Also, due to the nature by which the platicadoras were selected, it was clear this was not meant to be representative of all Chicana/Latinas who found themselves on their journey toward the professoriate. The study was situated in a deliberate framework which assumed Chicana/Latina participants have been forced to navigate, negotiate, and resist hegemonic academic structures.

Researcher as Testimonialista

In qualitative research, the relationship between researcher and research participants must be clearly delineated and how that relationship impacts the manner in which the study is carried out (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014). In my role as researcher/testimonialista, I recognized the power my own experiences within higher education had on the way I interacted with the research participants of this study. Clandinin (2016) suggested that in narrative inquiry, the process is relational and research is co-constructed, particularly due to the intentional nature of the approach. I was clearly invested in how the research was conducted; the potential for how consejos can impact Chicana/Latinas who are on their own journeys towards to and through the professoriate, and ultimately the potential healing power involved for both the research participants as well as for me.

This study evolved over several years of contemplation of whether I belonged in the academy and after recently choosing to leave a toxic position. That departure felt as though I was pushed out of a twenty-year career at a four-year institution and the questioning became central to my daily thoughts. During my job search, I spent some time immersing myself in Chicana feminist readings searching for answers and attempting to make sense of it all. I picked up a copy of the Latina Feminist Group's *Telling to Live* to learn more about testimonio, the methodology I eventually used for this study. I read Norma Cantú's testimonio in *Getting There Cuando No Hay Camino*, and the little strength I had to put up facades, melted away in tears. Tears that would not stop flowing, me desahugué de años de violencia, de sentirme que no valía nada, y mas que nada, de sentirme tan triste que a veces no queria vivir mas en este mundo. It sounds quite dramatic—and it was—there was an uncontrollable purging of emotions that still today comes at the oddest of times. It was at this moment that I realized that years of pushing the knot in my throat down had finally manifested itself as I read Dra. Cantú's testimonio. In it, she shared there were circumstances during which she felt she may not be “good enough or smart enough,” sentiments I had and still have today (Latina Feminist Group, 2001, p. 64). Dra. Cantú completed and earned her Ph.D. in 1982, when I was seven years old, and yet her story, 37 years later, resonated with me on so many levels. I felt as though I had traversed as similar path. Each testimonio I read after hers brought more tears, more connections, and more strength. It was at that point I truly felt and understood the power of testimonio and how representation matters. Seeing myself in others served to empower me in ways that I had not found up until that point. More importantly, the Latina Feminist Group (2001) provided me with the necessary tools to name my pain and be able to make sense of my circumstances in ways that I had not ever thought possible,

The power differentials and mechanisms of betrayal and abuse do not end simply because we have managed to achieve “successful” positions. These earlier experiences helped us negotiate and survive the academy because they taught us something about how power works and how to thrive in spite of its abuses. In each of the instances we have suffered (or witnessed) erasure, and named it, exposing and cleaning (out) the deeply painful and sometimes previously unspeakable wounds, we have learned huge lessons, we have gathered our information to ourselves tenderly and consciously. We have shared our silencing/silenced stories with each other as amigas. With each experience put into words, we have initiated the transmutations necessary for own joyous well-being. Somos tan invisibles que somos visibles. Parece contradicción pero no lo es (p. 168).

Meeting Heroes

Soon after reading *Living to Tell*, I had the great privilege of attending my first Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS) during which I was able to connect with several of the women who shared their testimonios in *Living to Tell*. I reached out to Dra. Cantú, Dra. Cuádriz, and Dra. Delgado Bernal to ask if they would meet with me while at the conference. I was compelled to meet them and tell them how their work and their very presence in the academy gave me hope. I wanted them to know I appreciated their willingness to share their lived experiences in ways that had been healing for me.

The conference also introduced me to Dra. Burciaga, Dra. Flores Carmona, Dra. Aviles, and the list goes on. It was in that experience I realized although the hegemonic structures of academia had damaging and long-lasting traumatic effects on Chicana/Latinas pursuing the professoriate, I was at that moment in a room with immense power; I was surrounded with women who had successfully navigated, negotiated, and resisted those structures. More

important, their warm welcome of me and others on their journeys towards the professoriate indicated they had much wisdom to offer about how they had been able to reach this space. It was in this very space I realized I no longer wanted to center how terrible the hegemonic academic structures have been in their treatment of Chicana/Latinas. I also did not want to restate what much of the literature had already identified as problematic with these structures. I wanted to center the ways in which Chicana/Latinas traversed the stages of *conocimiento*, despite these traumatic experiences, developing a set of *consejos* that would directly speak to Chicana/Latinas who were contemplating a journey towards the professoriate. A roadmap which highlighted the mechanisms by which Chicana/Latinas had navigated, negotiated, and resisted those challenges.

Summary

Employing a *testimonio* methodological approach to this study grounded in Chicana feminist epistemology is a deliberate approach to understanding how Chicana/Latinas navigate, negotiate, and resist hegemonic academic structures within higher education. In this chapter, I provided an overview of my epistemological and methodological stance; specifically, how it informed the study design. The chapter also provided a detailed timeline for how the study was conducted, and how I ensured the methods are congruent to the narrative and *testimonio* approach. Grounding the study in a Chicana Feminist epistemology and employing *testimonio* as both a product and a data collection method ensured a rich discussion which centered the voices of Chicana/Latinas on their journeys towards the professoriate.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

“We stand at a major threshold in the extension of consciousness, caught in the remolinos (vortices) of system change across all fields of knowledge. The binaries of colored/white, female/male, mind/body are collapsing. Living in nepantla, the overlapping space between different perceptions and belief systems... rendering the conventional labels obsolete... You know that the new paradigm must come from outside as well as within the system”
(Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 119).

The purpose of this study was to better understand how three Chicana/Latinas navigate, negotiate, and resist hegemonic structures and the role of legitimacy in their journey to and through the professoriate. Utilizing a qualitative approach, testimonio methodology was employed to interrogate and deconstruct, the lived experiences of the platicadoras. As previously discussed, study findings were analyzed and identified utilizing a Chicana Feminist Epistemology framework. The process was iterative, included an analytical approach which was messy, nonlinear, used theming, categorizing, and relied heavily on the literature, all of which contributed to the ultimate findings. Several salient findings emerged, providing insight to the relationship between hegemonic structures, its deeply rooted standards of legitimacy, and the centralized role negotiation plays in the navigation through higher education of each platicadora. The platicadoras very presence in higher education is, in it of itself, an act of resistance, and the findings highlight they have endured long, arduous, and traumatic journeys to become recognized as professors in the academy. Testimonios pointed to the acts of navigation, negotiation, and resistance not as distinct linear actions, but as complex, interdependent, and

often painfilled experiences. Common themes included: (1) platicadoras are in a constant state of negotiation; (2) even the slightest deviations from the approved/legitimate standards set forth by academia are considered forms of resistance; and (3) platicadoras live in a constant state of hypervigilance. Finally, and perhaps the most hopeful finding, was the connection of the platicadoras journeys to Anzaldúa's (2015) seven stages of *conocimiento*. Este conocimiento nos da esperanza de que aunque el sistema nos ha sido la vida pesada, aye manera de crear una nueva conciencia.

Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987, 2015) influence on my academic journey started twenty-three years ago, starting with *Borderlands: La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. It was the first text which spoke to my inner spirit. It was the first time I found my story, and it was the first time I felt legitimate. Anzaldúa's poem (1987) *No se raje, chicanita*, served as a mantra for me as I entered the world of working within higher education. Several times, I would go back to it, seeking inspiration to continue. Little did I know that years later, I would connect with another Anzaldúa gem, *Light in the Dark/Luz En Lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*, which highlighted that I began my journey of *conocimiento*, creating la nueva conciencia de la mestiza, many years ago. I have traversed many puentes to arrive here, my fellow platicadoras have traversed, built, and torn down many puentes on their journeys towards the professoriate, these are their testimonios.

Las Mujeres

The following provides a brief description of the three platicadoras who were brave, genuine, honest, and above all vulnerable throughout this process. Each platicadora identifies as either Chicana/Latina, had completed a graduate degree in education and/or were currently

working as scholars in the field of higher education. Platicadoras selected their pseudonyms and the table below provides additional demographic details.

Table 4.1
Participants

Name	Status	Institutional Type	Self Identifies as
Flor	Doctoral Candidate	Private R1	Chicana/Tejana/ Fronteriza/Latina
Luna	Tenure Track Professor	Public Regional Aspiring R1	Mexicana/Inmigrante/Latina
Sofia	Recently Tenured Professor	Public Regional Recently Categorized as R1	Chicana/Mexican American/ Latina

Flor

Flor, originally from the western region of the U.S., was a first-generation college graduate whose post-secondary journey included private research institutions, regional research institutions, and was a doctoral candidate at a private research institution. The choice to pursue the professoriate and complete her doctorate was not one she ever thought she would pursue. She began as a biology major, expecting to pursue medical school. After resetting her course, her desire to work within the Latinx community led her to a career in teaching in the public schools. Her choice to pursue the professoriate was heavily influenced by her love of teaching. She began her career as a middle school teacher in the public-school system at which her peers encouraged her to pursue a master's in education so she could one day serve as a principal and/or counselor.

Flor shared:

I kind of like dodged those conversations, because I didn't see myself as a principal, or assistant principal, or a counselor. I was just like, no, I like teaching. I couldn't see myself

teaching as long as they did, which was like 30 years, and they would retire being teachers, but I knew I didn't want to do that, but I wanted to do more than I could. So I thought the way to do that would be to try to make some changes at a district level or administration or policy. I knew I had to go bigger than just the classroom or just the school.

Keeping this in mind, she pursued a master's in educational leadership and policy with a concentration in bilingual/bicultural education at a public regional, aspiring research institution. Once there, she secured a job as a graduate assistant where she began to develop aspirations of becoming a professor at the college level, sharing:

And that's when I was surrounded 100% of the time by research assistants that were doctoral students. So many of them, we know through our network, and they're the ones that are probably professors now. Being surrounded by them and kind of being mentored by them, they would always check in on me, because their offices were down the hall from each other, and I was the only master's student graduate assistant at the time. Then, I guess maybe I just didn't believe in myself enough to think that I could do it, or maybe because I didn't really know what doctoral studies were. Probably a combination of the two. I didn't see myself as being a professor. I knew I liked teaching, but I knew I liked teaching kids, because I taught sixth grade, and that was my perspective at the time. Once they put that little bug in my ear, I started to think, okay, what would it be like to teach college? Then I started reflecting on some of the classes that I had that weren't so good and the classes that I had that were really great in college, and trying to see how I could change the instruction or how my pedagogy was influenced based on that.

Flor applied to a doctoral program with the intent to pursue the professoriate, and very much attributed her decision to the positive support from Latinx mentors and was accepted to a private research institution. Throughout Flor's testimonio, she shared multiple stories of challenging experiences such as her expertise and whether she was qualified to teach, microaggressions which questioned her research ability, and whether her choice to become a mother during the process was indeed the right choice along her journey. These experiences coupled with the question as to whether the professoriate was the right choice were pervasive in her thoughts, "I don't want this place where I can't be myself, ... I don't want keep going down the path where I'm going to maybe be a faculty member after having the CV, and after checking all the boxes and be completely unhappy." Additionally, Flor centered her identities as a

Chicana/Tejana/Fronteriza/Latina as essential to how she showed up in higher education but also highlighted how these identities all carried different political connotations and as such, she chose when and where she utilized each one. She said,

Hell yes, I'm a Chicana. Then it's a work in progress still to this day just because I think it's a very loaded word, and I use it to kind of ... I don't know. I'm very careful with which social circles I use it in. Sometimes I'll introduce myself as a Latina, sometimes I'll introduce myself as Tejana. Other times it's Chicana.

In choosing her salient identities, she centers her ethnicity and gender as the two most salient, she shared:

Yeah, and I was going to say, as I was talking, maybe the other identity would be just a feminist or a woman. Something having to do with my gender. That has also been a work in progress, because when I was younger, I didn't really like ... I didn't like being considered feminine and dainty. Not that I wanted to be considered masculine, I didn't want that either, but I just saw being feminine as an insult. I saw it as weak. So, I didn't want to accept that identity. I remember, this is something that stuck with me. I don't know why, but since I was young, I would say maybe middle school, high school, people always told me just randomly that I would be a good teacher for some reason. I'm like, "Why?" Maybe it was because I would take time to help somebody work through a problem that they got wrong on a test and I got right. I just always heard, "You would be a good teacher, you would be a good teacher." I was like, "Why?" They said, "I don't know, because you just seem like a mom," or "You seem like a very nice person." And I saw that as a bad thing. When I went to college, I was doing exactly the opposite of what everyone thought I was going to do. Yeah, I didn't want to be seen as too vulnerable, because I think that when people are nurturing, it's maybe taken advantage of. But I didn't have words for it at the time.

Throughout Flor's testimonio and plática process, it became evident she no longer resisted the femininity and nurturing characteristics she embodied, but rather, began to embrace them as a form of resistance.

Luna

Originally from Mexico, Luna was a tenure-track professor at a regional, aspiring research institution. She was a first-generation college student and began her post-secondary career at a community college. Her choice to pursue a career in the professoriate was personal:

For me, getting here has been a personal mission. As you're maybe aware, I was born and raised in Mexico. I didn't come to the U.S. until I was a teenager. My parents, they are both immigrants as well. My dad used to be a seasonal farm worker, so he would spend probably most of the time here, and then a few months in Mexico, growing up. He used to be undocumented, but then in the mid 80s, he got documents. He applied for all of us to become residents of the United States, and that process took over a decade and a half. But we finally got approved at different stages. My mom got approved first, so she came along with my dad, and then my five siblings, at the time four siblings and I stayed back home in Mexico with my aunt, and then another year with my grandma. So, we lived with them. My mom was here working with my dad, so we separated for a couple of years. Then, my siblings and I got approval for the residency a few years later. I was in high school then, and I was about to finish.

Luna's immigrant identity and experience added to the complexity of her journey and pointed to how acquiring a second language was challenging:

...also in the school, there were no teachers or staff that spoke Spanish, so learning the language was pretty much something that was left up to us, my siblings and I. So, I did a lot of reading... I was reading like third, fourth grade level, just trying to familiarize myself, and that's how I learned the language actually, by reading.

For Luna, her immigrant identity coupled with experiencing numerous challenges along her pathway toward the professoriate, eventually led her to pursue a graduate degree in student affairs. This choice was highly influenced by a first-generation college prep and support program called TRiO. Luna became frustrated with the discussions around social justice and began to consider shifting from a practitioner in student affairs to a researcher/professor:

Of course, back in the day, diversity was pretty embraced at the professor level. It was all about difference, tolerance and respect, which some ideals with which I'm like, "No, we have to go beyond just like, what do you mean tolerance? That's just terrible." I think that throughout my journey, there were pieces that I was noticing that I was just like, "Okay, I think we can do a little better." I realized also in student affairs that practitioners kept doing the same things, and embracing the same models, like Tinto's Model of Transition, or Chickering's Seven Vectors, and not really recognizing that those things don't apply to everybody, and we can't put people in boxes. So, my desire to pursue a Ph.D. emerged from that... So, I wanted to become a researcher, and I thought I could make an impact by working with students in TRiO one by one, but maybe I could also influence the scholarship in this field. Specifically, scholarship that is informed by asset perspectives, and also the focus is on the agency that already exists within these communities, as opposed of conceiving them as powerless and lacking, and incapable of succeeding.

Driven by a desire to conduct research relevant to underrepresented communities became a driving force behind Luna's pursuit of the professoriate. She wanted to challenge outdated theories, particularly regarding deficit frameworks for studying these populations. And she wanted to bring about change.

At the time that Luna was a student at the community college, she worked in the diversity office, which exposed her to a greater understanding of the negative experiences she and other students of color were facing:

There were a couple of people of color who were aware of the issues students of color face, which at that time as I said, I wasn't fully conscious about it, but I was starting to see how we're treated and differences in my experiences. The second language issue that I had as well, I was perceived as incapable of doing more, because we didn't speak English really. I think all of that combined with just my desire of wanting to challenge those narratives about myself, that's what pushed me to continue on in higher education, just generally, not higher education as a field yet... because of TRIO, I became much more empowered to continue pursuing an education, to graduate. Also because I got a job with them as a work study, I became like a peer mentor with students in the program. So, just like my counselor would meet with me a couple of times a semester, I would meet with students also in the same type of fashion. So, that increased my awareness of the issues that communities that we come from face in college. I think that also strengthened my passion for wanting to empower these students to challenge those barriers, and to move forward. This is where my love for higher education really emerged.

Of the three *platicadoras*, Luna stood out as fierce, no-nonsense, self-aware, and strong-willed Latina who was adept at negotiating the hegemonic academic structures that make up higher educational institutions.

During our *pláticas*, Luna also shared the many internal conflicts she faced with regard to how she is negotiating her space in academia and the impact on her mental health, the required hypervigilance required to *sobrevivir*. As we continued through our journey together, it became clear that while she embodied the elements of resistance, *Tambien carga un peso de tristeza*. In many ways, our *pláticas* served as spaces for healing and reflection.

Sofia

Sofia was originally from a largely Latinx border town and is a recently tenured faculty member at a public regional research institution. She attended a private, highly selective institution for her undergraduate degree and attended an equally selective large public research institution for her doctorate degree. For Sofia, the professoriate was not something she considered and as she completed her doctorate degree, she purposely chose not to participate in the typical faculty position searches her classmates did in their final year of doctoral studies. Sofia attributed this decision to her experience of going straight from undergraduate school to a combined master's and doctoral program without a break, witnessing how women Faculty of Color experienced the profession:

I was really young and had very little time between undergrad and the doctoral program. I think I also hadn't fully formed my ideas of what it meant to be, "I'm going to a place where I'm theirs and I'm viewed more as a professional and a colleague." I think I didn't quite have that perspective. That was something that I think I had some rough experiences figuring that out... Maybe it was because I worked with female junior faculty that had to make certain sacrifices or were very real with me about how difficult the tenure process was. That aspect of it was just not appealing to me. I didn't feel like I was fully committed to being a professor even though I liked my discipline training.

Similar to Flor and Luna, Sofia recognized both her ethnicity and gender played a significant role in her higher education experiences, particularly because she attended predominantly white institutions:

Especially being at predominantly white institutions, I mean, my ethnicity I always felt was something that consumed a lot of my thinking, and maybe confounded with the fact that I was a first-generation university student, and from a working-class family, I mean, those identities, like, there was a lot of culture shock at (undergraduate program private institution). (Graduate program large public research institution) wasn't quite as shocking because I already experienced a pretty extreme juxtaposition of my background and those of very privileged students at (undergraduate program private institution). Being at (Graduate program large public research institution), I think it was just more of the same, maybe not even as extreme.

With regard to choosing to get off the expected faculty track, Sofia shared:

Things (the process for becoming and securing a faculty position) they could have been very linear for me, but I didn't take that route. In straying from the linearity that was there for me to proceed on, I felt like I was already, kind of, I was about to say rebelling, but that makes it sound like I was doing it intentionally. I guess I was resisting that linearity because I had concerns about being a tenure track professor, especially at a place similar to where I had been for undergrad and grad school. I guess I was playing with, "Well, what if I get off that track?" Even though this is what they're prescribing for me, even though this is what the expectations are, like, I mean, I felt like I had the freedom to not do that if I wanted to. There were going to be risks, I guess, associated with that, but somehow, I guess, I felt like I was willing to take those risks because it was a lot of struggle. I told you I had that very short break between undergrad and the start of the doctoral program. The master's was just along the way, so it didn't feel like, you know, there wasn't a separate master's program. I guess along the way, I felt like, "This is a lot of struggle. This is a lot of burnout for me."

Sofia further shared while in graduate school, she was diagnosed with clinical depression, which influenced her decision to choose to get off the prescribed track that her program was expecting her to follow. While her classmates were on the tenure track faculty job search, she chose to pursue jobs in which she could use her quantitative research skills, interning in at an institute focused on policy. Her family encouraged her to "come home." Soon after the internship, she received a research-oriented staff position job offer in her hometown institution — a public regional aspiring research institution. She said,

The director of the center wanted, actually, someone with quantitative skills because they wanted to work on evaluation and research aligned with what the collaborative was doing. That's how I got hired, mostly from my quantitative training and it was, kind of, I was a little bit wary about, I mean, I had mixed feelings because I was happy to be able to be (at home) with my family, and they were ecstatic, and I wanted this easiness, you know? Coming home, like, (home) felt comfy, in a sense. Being at these PWIs and having that duality of, how do they call it, like being invisible in one sense and being hyper visible in another sense. That was my experience in (undergraduate and graduate school), and so I thought, "To be home, to be in my community, that sounded really relaxing to me."... I took the job. It seemed like a good way to satisfy some needs I had for being with my family, being somewhere more comfortable, less fast paced, less white, I guess, than where I had been before.

Throughout the process, it turns out, that Sofia's relationship with the professoriate was filled with traumatic experiences, and she characterized her feelings as being in a constant state

of ambivalence over whether she wanted to conduct research, teach, pursue a tenure track position or even stay within higher education.

Navigating, Negotiating, Resisting

As I began this process, my understanding of what it meant to navigate, negotiate, and resist academic hegemonic structures was informed by a need and desire to neatly describe how Chicana/Latinas achieved some level of success as faculty in education. I wanted to believe the process was linear, that each element operated independently, and above all, if we could capture their essence in a neat manual, this could somehow inspire other Chicana/Latinas to pursue the professoriate. An owner's manual of sorts, of how to survive the academy.



Figure 4.1. Sculpture by Maria Martins

Instead, the *platicadoras*, through their *testimonio*, began to unravel my preconceived idea of how this process works, particularly with regard to the role of negotiation, it reminded me of a sculpture by Maria Martins, I saw in Brazil many years ago, *The Road, The Shadow; Too Long, Too Narrow*.

This image continued to sit with me during our pláticas, and it occurred to me that the long twisty, snakes emerging behind the woman, for me, represented the ways in which legitimacy was wound tightly within, around, and a part of the hegemonic academic structures that each platicadora was forced to contend with. Those structures and standards, they carry them with them always, requiring a constant state of negotiation.

Examining the Tenure Process

As I began evaluating and analyzing the data, it was critical for me to define what it meant to navigate, negotiate, and resist as related to the elements of legitimacy outlined in Deepti and Suchman (2008) and then later fine-tuned by Gonzales and Terosky (2016), which were detailed in chapter two. After reviewing the data, the most prevalent form of legitimacy identified was that of professional standards—in this case, the review, tenure, and promotion standards. In this context, navigation involved having a plan or course of action to pursue and achieve a particular goal, to become a professor and achieve tenure and promotion. Navigation also refers to how platicadoras planned and prepared a course of action to achieve this goal, a roadmap of sorts. Negotiation is the process by which the platicadoras addressed challenges and/or obstacles which caused them to adjust their course of action. These challenges/obstacles included but were not limited to: (1) hegemonic academic structures which privileged certain types of research, service, and teaching over others; (2) encountering contradictory practices and/or double standards based on their gender and ethnicity; (3) trauma inflicted upon them by faculty peers, administrators, students, family members; and (4) unrealistic expectations related to labor and productivity standards. These points of intersecting contradictions caused the platicadoras to strategically negotiate various levels of resistance and

in most cases, caused them to recalculate and adjust their roadmaps. Figure 4.2 illustrates the intersecting points of legitimacy and the process of negotiation and resistance.

Navigation



Figure 4.2. Intersecting points of negotiation and resistance

How the platicadoras negotiated elements of professional legitimacy, sustained by systems of academic hegemony as well as the actors within the institution who agreed to maintain those standards of legitimacy is further discussed below (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Gonzales & Terosky, 2016). Similar to previous research, platicadoras pointed to the system of review, tenure, and promotion and the elements of research, teaching, and service as the standard for which they were most likely to achieve levels of legitimacy and acceptance. Most consistently mentioned throughout the testimonios, however, was the critical role research—its perceived quality and quantity—played in establishing levels of legitimacy within the academy. In particular, its ability to derail a platicadoras ability to first secure a tenure track position, secondly, achieve tenure, and lastly, to keep up with the established standards for research production at their respective institutions.

Creating the Roadmap: Con Aviso No Hay Engaño

Each platicadora had a firm grasp about the fact their very presence in higher education and pursuing a doctorate degree with the intent to become a professor was clearly an act of resistance. Flor, Luna, and Sofia, all agreed from very early on in their educational journeys, the constructs of legitimacy were present and they were constantly reminded they did not fit the mold of what a professor was. Each defined what academic legitimacy meant in terms of their own experiences as well as what it meant for Chicana/Latinas pursuing the professoriate. When asked how she defined legitimacy, Flor said:

Yeah, I feel like, okay, that's loaded, because legitimate to who, right? It's legitimate to the white people, or the people that created the institution. Like for a Latina, I have to abide by certain structures to be legitimate in their eyes. I was thinking about this recently, it's kind of like my trajectory to Ph.D. wasn't planned, right? We talked about that a little bit last time, but I feel like deep down I knew that I needed to go through this route, to have that legitimacy. To be taken seriously in the field. Like I couldn't just do the work, and be respected. Like I had to have this degree to go with it. That's really sad that, I mean I encountered that I think when I was teaching and in my masters it's just like being seen as really young or ... I've been to events as a Ph.D. student where I'm seen as an undergrad. Then like, "Wait, I just facilitated your workshop." Like, "Not that undergrads can do that," but you still don't see me ... I'm not legitimized in your eyes because I don't have this, this and this. If I was a white man, that's more valued. That's legitimate. Legitimate to who? To white people. What does it require in our space? It requires publications.

Luna also shared there was an image of who is deemed legitimate in higher education,

I think that there are many elements to legitimacy in academia, one of them being how you look or how you should look as a professor. So, just appearance and expectations that you fit in some type of narrative that they have for you. I think as a professor of color, then there are standards for you to care about issues of diversity and equity and social justice, where you wouldn't be really committed unless you're caring about those issues. Then, I think like the biggest ones are the expectations. So, you need to be productive, you need to be publishing. Even if you publish things that are not really meaningful, you just have to publish. You've got to remain active in research, so have projects going on all the time. Then, you need to somehow be an excellent teacher. If you don't fulfill any of those things above and beyond, you're not good to be here.

For Sofia, revelations of these legitimacy expectations unfolded more organically, and she acknowledged she might not have evaluated legitimacy in this way before, but she did share there were definitely expectations imposed upon her and her peers in her

doctoral studies which clearly identified what was deemed as legitimate both in appearance and action. When I asked her whether she had encountered hegemonic academic structures, she requested additional context. I provided a brief definition and connected some of her already shared experiences as examples, such as microaggressions, her assessment that “she was owned” by her faculty when in her doctoral program, etc. In response, she shared:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, that's really interesting. I guess I'm just trying to quickly reassess things in that light because, maybe I haven't really considered that so much. I was fully funded, that was another draw to going to (large selective public research institution) because they paid all tuition expenses, even stipend as long as you were a TA for a couple of years, but I actually only had to be a TA for one year because I also got a Fellowship while I was there. I mean, financially, I was covered and I think that also brings a certain level of expectation. Faculty know that you are fully funded, so your time is theirs. I don't think we were even allowed to have a job outside of that. No one in my cohort was married, no one had children. I think there were a few graduate students a little farther along in the process, but those were the exceptions, if you were married or had kids. Your life was going to class, doing the laboratory experiments with your advisor.

This example supports how institutions perpetuate academic capitalism, Sofia's role as a graduate student was contributing to their ability to increase their research, elevating their prestige. In exchange, doctoral students' labor is the commodity that is exchanged for financial support.

Flor, Luna, and Sofia acknowledged that because of their socialization in graduate school, what constituted legitimacy in higher education is not surprising and helped them place the system into perspective. This understanding, however, does not make up for the trauma that each platicadora has suffered through. For Luna in particular, something she shared during our discussions regarding self-care struck me as both unfortunate and insightful to the frame of mind that is required to sobrevivir:

Yeah. I mean nobody invited us to enter this ivory tower so, why should they care? We chose to be here. And so I think that... that is highly tied to not only how the system negatively impacts our experiences but then also the damage. They are not responsible for any of it. It's kind of like when you are signing a liability waiver. It's possible for any of it ... I'm telling you. You want to do this? You might die in the process, okay. Sign off your life... YOU BETTER BE READY.

Being ready also meant they had to be aware that the expectations for Faculty of Color, particularly for women of color, were different, and when asked if she thought that expectations were different, Luna emphatically shared, “they’re higher,” further stating:

Luna: They're higher, they're higher definitely because, I don't see like ... Being here, I look at what I'm doing right now, and I put it in the context of people that are not people of color, and they don't seem to be as concerned to have that many publications, and to be creating collaborations outside. They're just like chilling. I don't feel like that. I feel like if I don't do all these things, I'm not going to be able to remain here. They're not going to give me tenure. They're not going to think that I'm worth it. This specifically was affirmed last week when I went into a meeting with the dean to do like a yearly check in that they do with first year faculty. I was telling him about all the things that I have accomplished this year, and how many publications I've gotten to move forward. The follow up question to the publication was, "Wow! In the order of authors, what author are you?"

Josie: Really?

Luna: Yeah. I'm like “First or second”. “Oh that’s excellent.” So, you know...

Josie: This is a white male?

Luna: It's a white male, yeah. So, not only do you have to publish but you also have to be first or second, or primarily first, or maybe solo. Go solo. So, I think that all those are pieces that legitimate your position and that you're taking and occupying this space in academia. These are different elements that create this stock image of you, and what you need to do, how you should behave, what you need to look like, who you need to be connecting with, and then what you need to be producing. (Public regional institution) is a teaching institution these days, but they really are a striving institution, they want to be like the research ones. So, they incentivize research over teaching, sadly.

Operating from this understanding or warnings (con aviso), there is little room for betrayal (engaño). This forewarning, however does not make the process any less painful, nor has it made the navigation process any more bearable. Navigation requires a deep understanding of the written and unwritten rules regarding the “how” one reaches levels of legitimacy within the professoriate, tenure is the avenue for which they win an initial nod of legitimacy, an entry point of membership.

Tenure: The First of Many Mechanisms to Offer Legitimacy

The process by which faculty are awarded tenure—a protection of sorts—is through the evaluation of scholarly work produced (research), contributions to teaching (to include advising/mentoring of students), and service to the institution. Platicadoras all shared how the expectations for this first milestone in achieving legitimacy in the academy is centered in the ways in which they were continuously negotiating how they navigate through the system, while strategically choosing when to resist. Resistance, therefore, is not a separate action. It is intertwined within the process of both navigation and negotiation, becoming a constant act, even when not actively trying to resist. The following findings illustrate just how intertwined these processes are and impact every aspect of how Flor, Luna, and Sofia have negotiated/navigated through the process of achieving professorial status.

Teaching: Three Little Letters, Are You Qualified, Please Don't Challenge Me

Las platicadoras agreed their experiences with teaching were filled with many contradictions, all agreed they thoroughly enjoyed being in the classroom, contributing to the learning of their students, and challenging students to grow in their respective fields. Their testimonios pointed to many painful experiences in which their legitimacy was questioned by peers and students alike. At times, they questioned their own abilities and struggled with showing up as their authentic selves, particularly with regard to showing any type of vulnerability. What is more, while teaching might not be as heavily weighted as research, any negative evaluations involving their teaching could potentially lead to not being able to secure tenure. Flor's account of how she shows up in the classroom illustrated the difficulty for her to be authentically herself, where vulnerability was a point of contention, she shared:

You made me think of something in the classroom. During my alternative certification, one of the teachers was a woman ... I want to say she identified as Chicana, but I could be

wrong. She actually told me, she told the whole class, that it was this longstanding teacher rule that you don't smile until Christmas. I was like, "What does that mean?" ... I didn't know what that meant, and then we asked, "What does that mean?" It was, if you smile or are friendly with your students, it's a sign of weakness and they will eat you up, they will walk all over you, you will have no management of your students, lose control completely. Of course, I was terrified. I was like, oh shit. I was really young, because I was like 23. I looked young, I'm small, relatively. I might pass as a seventh or eighth grader sometimes. I was like, they're not going to take me seriously. That was in the back of my mind going into teaching... So, like I said, even going into teaching, I had that mindset that showing emotion and being vulnerable was weak.

During her graduate teaching assistant experience, Flor recalled an instance when her students provided comments on evaluations that read, "Flor was really nice, she was great, super helpful, always friendly" and she further shared:

But, there was one that straight up said, "I don't think she would qualify to be a TA for this class because she doesn't have years of experience in student affairs." I was like, okay, that's valid, but it's also really shitty, you know? Like you're not considering the other things that I bring to the table, and the fact that I was nice and friendly was more of just ... I don't know. It wasn't worth anything. I think to answer your question, there is this expectation that the teacher or the TA has to have this really ... Well, let me take that back. If you're a white man, you don't have to have experience. You just have to have the degree, and you're qualified, and you're taken seriously and you're given the benefit of the doubt 100%. But if you're a woman, a woman of color, specifically a young Latina woman, if you don't have those credentials, you don't have those three fucking letters after your name or you don't have 20 years of experience doing this work, then you're not seen as an expert. Your level of expertise is not valued. That was hard to handle. I'm probably going to cry, just because I had teaching experience already, and I thought I was good at it. That's the part about teaching that those hegemonic structure dictate what I'm able to do in that sense. It was hard to take.

Luna faced similar challenges and in her newly appointed position as a tenure track faculty in which she was forced to strategically negotiate how far she could push her students on topics related to social justice and equity without putting her tenure at risk, she shared:

I think in terms of addressing issues of equity and social justice in the classroom specifically, I find myself at a place where I am willing to address them, but I will not push as hard as I could push, because, I know as a pre-tenure faculty, there is no protection for that. I don't even know that there is protection after you get tenure, but I also have a family, and they depend on me to some extent. So, I have to think of who's going to get impacted by the choices that I make. So, I think then that I have to negotiate how much do I push and to what extent do I put my body on the line, and then what's going to come out of this.

When I asked her what she attributed this ability to, she shared:

I think there are several sources. I think my lived experience, and my family, and also in the community, my training of course. I think just my ability to deconstruct all this. I think that my training, my lived experiences and my awareness, all combined, I'm able to see through things sometimes much quicker than other people, or at deeper levels than other people that are not in tune with the context and themselves and what they're seeing. That really helps me to then take action. So, it's definitely a combination. I don't think that I would have done any of this as an undergraduate student, and I didn't. I never did. I was a student leader, I was very academically successful, but I never consciously knew that I had the agency that I know today that I have.

This insight highlights the importance of understanding the language to resist, the ability to exercise agency and draw upon one's navigational capital is crucial to the navigation, negotiation, and resistance process.

Sofia also struggled with teaching but in a different manner. Her graduate school experience was so focused on conducting research and she had received a few internships which did not require her to serve as a teaching assistant. Much of her teaching training happened on the job after she secured her tenure track position. Preparing for teaching was incredibly stressful and problematic given that she was the only qualitative scholar in her department, and she was creating all of her course curriculum from scratch, with very little help and/or direction from her colleagues. The tenure clock was ticking, Sofia shared the complexity of her circumstances:

Maybe I did spend too much time on teaching. I also felt like I was building from the ground up because I had never taught stats or research methods before. Then, I was teaching to practitioners. I wasn't teaching even in the way that I was taught because I wasn't teaching students who were going to be [utilizing quantitative methods more frequently], but more consumers of research. So I was trying to find a way to craft courses that were practical for practitioners. I actually enjoy teaching in that way much more than I think I would have teaching more traditional stats classes. I like that, but it did take quite a bit of time because I was figuring it out as I was going. It was all on me. The faculty assumed I was the expert because I had this quant background.

As discussed in chapter two, socialization and training of faculty tends to focus on research and although teaching is an area that is evaluated, training for how to teach is a topic

that is not generally provided in graduate preparation. Additionally, the labor involved in preparation for teaching is not accounted for in the tenure process.

Ultimately, Flor, Luna, and Sofia's accounts of how they were deemed to be legitimate teachers, how those opinions posed risks to tenure, and how they played a crucial role in achieving tenure, all align with previous study findings. What resulted from our pláticas was the level of understanding and agency that each had when negotiating how they chose to show up in that space. All three recognized double standards existed and that they needed to be strategic in how far they pushed students. They also understood the importance of developing their craft for the sake of student learning. The act of continuous negotiation was central to Flor, Luna, and Sofia navigating the construct of teaching and legitimacy and resistance, remained present throughout each instance shared in their testimonios. Service was another category which contributes to the process of legitimation and tenure and the platicadoras shared similar stories of negotiating how they address service throughout this process.

Service: Inconvenient Truths about Hidden Service Requirements

Service is commonly linked to the tenure process and is explicitly named as one of the areas where faculty are evaluated. As previously discussed, there are few documented standards for what is considered to be legitimate service efforts. What has been well documented is how certain types of service by Faculty of Color are either not counted and/or seen as relevant to establishing a department's legitimacy. Hidden service requirements such as serving as advisors/mentors to students of color from across the campus, as members of committees related to social justice/equity issues, and community service projects generally go unnoticed and most often have no positive bearing on whether a Faculty of Color achieves tenure. As found in previous research, Flor, Luna, and Sofia participated in hidden service because they felt an

obligation to support students of color, bring to light issues of social justice and equity, and oftentimes because they were the only Faculty of Color in their colleges and universities. This commitment, however, does not come without its own set of challenges and points of trauma and conflict for the platicadoras. Flor shared how during her doctoral program, she had grown weary of the lack of recognition for her service labor, particularly when it came to helping the program institute better practices for serving the needs of students of color. She shared:

It just so happened that our program in my first and second year was going through some shit, like I mentioned, with a lot of students of color leaving the program... Because of that, there were all these fucking committees that were coming up, like Committee of Equity and Inclusion, Committee for Curriculum Redesign, Committee for whatever, whatever. And there was some of the clinical faculty that were Faculty of Color that were on these committees, and I thought, okay, this is an opportunity for me to work with these people, but it's also an opportunity for me to help change the program a little bit. Let's go for it. Maybe I was already stretched too thin, but I thought this could be good. And it was. It was good in the sense that I could build some of those relationships with clinical faculty, the non-tenure track that they seemed, to me, to be a little bit more in tune with my experience. So I had a connection with them that I didn't have with the tenured or the tenure-track faculty. Like I said, that was great. That was positive for me. The negative of it was, and I don't know what I expected, and this has nothing to do with the mentoring, that I never got recognition for that work. It's just like the time and the energy and the labor that I put into doing some of that honestly never got recognized. It left a little bit of a bitter taste in my mouth, and for me to think, I'm not going to do this fucking work for them anymore. I'm not going to do this work for white people so that they can say "We made all of these changes," but who made the changes? Or who did the work that led to these changes? ... It was a little disheartening that I'm going through it in grad school, and if I were to get a faculty position, it doesn't end there. You know? It's just not because I have a Ph.D. am I automatically going to be respected.

Flor understood fully what this implied for her as she made choices as to where she would apply for a tenure track job. She knew this trend would continue and eventually could lead to her not being able to secure tenure. She had been fully socialized to understand this type of service was not valued or considered as legitimate, stating,

I would just hear those stories that really left me disheartened. It left me kind of unsure if I wanted to continue down this path, because the Faculty of Color that do get asked to be on these committees never get recognized on their tenure promotion, I think it's called dossier or something. It never gets on their CV or it's not seen as something that can help lead to promotion. I still don't know how to navigate it, and I'm thinking I just need to

carve out my own space and be happy with what I do. I don't think being a professor at an R1 is going to make me happy anyway, so it is what it is, and that's not what I'm going to expect, because I'm just not going to be happy for the rest of my life if I'm having to put up with that shit.

Although Flor indicated she had not figured out how to navigate the circumstances, she was beginning to negotiate what type of institution for which she wanted work based on her personal experience as well as what she had witnessed.

For Sofia, the amount of hidden service in which she participated had a negative impact on her tenure decision. Sofia spent a considerable amount preparing for her teaching duties and because she was one of very few quantitative scholars within her college, any student with interest in conducting quantitative research were referred to her. Additionally, she served on several outside dissertation committees given her discipline experience as well as supported interdisciplinary research efforts across the campus, all of which had very little value when it her tenure dossier was reviewed. Flor shared:

That consumed a lot of time. Then a lot of students, I was one of the few faculty who had quantitative research background, so when it was time for students to look for committee members, a lot of students, and it was a required course for the Doctoral students that I was teaching, like Quant 1, a lot of them would ask me to be on their committee if they wanted to do a quant study. Maybe I should have said no, but they were students I had in class. How could I say yes to one and no to the others. So, I was on a lot of committees, dissertation committees. Yup. Then, because I knew people in [my original field of study], one faculty member especially, I had known since I was a doctoral student, not because of my graduate work, but because my [original discipline] area is a small field... they asked me to be the external member of some of their committees, and then I got to know some of the other faculty in the same department and I gave a talk on my research. Then more faculty asked me to be the external member of their committees. I did a lot of dissertation committee work.

Josie: how many?

Flor: Over 30

Josie: oh my god!

Later, she would be told by the acting chair:

And they (acting chair) said, "Well, what [the provost] told me was that they were giving you tenure, but that you really needed to work on increasing your academic capital and that the number"... they were like, "How many committees did you serve on again?" They were like, "It was a lot of committees, right?" So I was on a lot of doctoral committees, I think the count was like 30-some committees. They were like, "(the provost) said they found the number of committees you served on disturbing."

Josie: that it was too many?

Sofia: yes.

Josie: ok

Sofia: It was disturbing and that I should have been saying no to students more.

Josie: Are you serious?

Sofia: Yes. And so that now that I have tenure I need to really focus on my scholarship and building my academic capital. So, I was kind of upset because it's like, yeah you have tenure but these are the stipulations.

And I told (the department chair), I was like, "You know, maybe I could have said no to students." But I was like, "You know, I was one of the only quantitative researchers at the time, and in fact that's why they hired me, so I would teach the statistics courses." So, I said, "When I would have students in my class and they told me they felt less apprehensive about statistics and quantitative research, and I think they appreciated how I taught those classes, then some of them decided they wanted to do quantitative dissertations and so naturally they asked me to be on their committee." And I said, "I guess I could have said no to them, but it was me, and (another colleague) has done some quantitative research, and so who's going to be on all of these committees?"

Later in our conversations, Sofia mentioned her institution had recently been categorized as a Research One (R1) institution by Carnegie and her department had been recognized for its contributions to the number of doctoral degrees conferred. And, because of those numbers, the institution was able to move into the R1 status. Sofia's testimonio reflected how very little value service, particularly to students, had on the tenure decision making process. Additionally, the fact that her chair, colleagues, and the dean, did nothing to protect her from serving beyond what was fair. Again, the desire to serve students on Sofia's part placed unfair constraints on her time and no one provided the necessary support for her to thrive. Throughout these processes, both Flor and Sofia demonstrated they negotiated how they choose to serve, show up, and resist the

accepted norms for what was considered to be legitimate service, opting not to forego their commitment to serving students and/or their communities, seeking social justice and equity along the way.

Research

Flor, Luna, and Sofia, identified research legitimacy as the most significant aspect of achieving overall legitimacy in higher education as well as the most critical aspect of achieving tenure. All three mentioned this message had highlighted throughout their post-graduate experiences, being socialized to value legitimate research above all else. Platicadoras exhibited quite a bit of anxiety, frustration, and concern over their research agendas and how they would be perceived as they continued their journey. Challenges revolved around the types of research such as critical and/or social justice-oriented research and/or interdisciplinary research; lack of sufficient resources to conduct research; and production expectations, which include total number of publications as well as the prestige level of journals.

Learning to Play the Game

Flor's testimonio highlighted the importance of proper mentorship and attention by program advisors and how their involvement can have a significant impact on a doctoral students' research agenda. One of her more frustrating experiences revolved around her initial advisor's lack of presence and support, which ultimately led to her being assigned a new advisor. Flor shared:

Well, I think up until now my advisor situation was very hands off, so I had a lot of freedom to explore what I wanted to. Which was good and bad, it was good because I could just do what I thought was really interesting. It was bad because I wasn't getting training. I wasn't getting a lot of mentorship, but the flexibility that I had to pick topics that were interesting to me, led me down this path of Faculty of Color and legitimacy and academia, and emotional labor and even boundary crossing in faculty positions using an intersectionality approach.

As a result of not having a hands-on advisor, Flor sought out the help of a fellow classmate who was a few years ahead of her and pursued a research agenda which centered on her personal interests. At his suggestion, they have submitted their work to various journals, she shared:

Like I wouldn't say our work was completely sound in terms of method and theory, but the concepts, I think we're pretty good and they were there. Now that we're trying to publish these papers, we're not getting a lot of bites. We're going to top-tier journals. Mostly because of him. He recognizes we have to do it.

Given the research approach, they had not had much luck in getting them published. She pointed out the hegemonic academic structures which served as gatekeepers, journal boards, made up of mostly white males:

We have to submit it to these top journals, because when we're on the job market we just have to. Like, "I'm sorry, if you're going to put up a fight, but that's what it is." Or even getting rejected from them. The thing that I think is ... who's on the review committee or the review board for these journals? Who are their reviewers? Do they know about intersectionality? Do they know about emotional labor of people of color? Like this work, which we find really important is being stopped by these gatekeepers, that aren't willing to publish it because it doesn't fit with the views that they have.

Recognizing this as a point of recalculation, she negotiated whether she shifts her research focus, or chooses other journals that may not be considered legitimate in the eyes of the future employers:

Then I mean obviously we're trying other journals, but then they're going to be journals that don't have that much recognition, or that don't have that much foot traffic basically. That's kind of the hurdle that I've found myself in the first few years. Now that I have a different advisor, a white woman, she knows how to play the game. She's bringing me into more writing projects, because she's a good mentor and she knows that I need to be well-positioned for the market... Now everything that I'm doing because of her, is much more focused towards going on the market and publications.

Flor shared part of her negotiation of this process was to present her research in spaces where scholars understand her work, such as The Council of Ethnic Participation (CEP) at the

Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE). She shares that in that space, she received positive feedback:

Those are the spaces that I want to be in, but then we get all of this praise from those pieces, and then we try to publish more, then all the feedback (from 'legitimate' journals) is, "Oh, you have to re-revise your framework." Or we have to submit it to another journal, because the reviewers don't get it. It's just that whole experience has been really eye-opening, in terms of the gatekeepers of whose voices have value in the academy.

When asked about whether she refused to change her framework, a point of resistance, she shared an example of continuing to shop the article around to other journals because in her words:

It's critical and your ass is going to sit with it, and you're going to have to wrestle with what we're talking about in here, because the academy is racist." We're putting that out there. It's been pretty freeing and empowering to just take that stance, but the payoff is that it's not getting published anywhere.

On the flip side, she also recognized there are times and places for resisting and resistance has its place and time:

On the other hand, with my current advisor, we were working on something. I was like hesitant with how much I should foreground a critical perspective. We were talking about equity, but I wanted to go in. I wanted to talk about whiteness, how it impacts everything. Instead, we kind of just kept it a little bit, not as intense. It's still theoretically critical, but it's not ... I knew that that was going to be the case, because it's attached to her name and she's not that type of scholar. She is critical, and she does a lot to help mostly like the science community and how they view equity, but equity from more of a gender perspective than a race perspective.

At this point in the plática, it became clear that Flor lamented those decisions and shared, "if it was just me and somebody that I thought, like my other co-author that we want to make our names as critical scholars in the field of race scholars, then I would keep my stand, when there's other people involved and they don't really seem on board, then..." I noticed as both a sense of resentment and sadness washed over Flor; negotiation always comes with a price.

Co-opting of Intellectual Labor

As a tenure track professor, Luna recognized the importance of her first faculty appointment, particularly regarding her level of production of research and grant funding. During our second plática, she shared, what I categorized as *white woman chronicles*, several instances during which she encountered a white woman professor (program director) who ultimately made her first year difficult. This faculty member, who had been removed from another discipline area due to challenges she had faced with her colleagues, had no experience in the discipline area of higher education, and was appointed as the director of the Ph.D. program. Almost immediately, Flor encountered issues with this woman, she questioned Flor's ability/expertise in teaching a course she had never taught before and emailed her and asked her to justify her decision to teach that specific course, "so when I first got her correspondence, like, 'Can you please tell me why you want to teach this course? Blah Blah Blah.' I sat down and I wrote like two paragraphs and then I erased them, all them, and I just wrote back and said 'This is a very timely issue. Thanks for reaching out.' That's all I said."

It is important note at this juncture that this type of treatment did not end with that email, and on one hand, the woman continued to question Luna's academic abilities and on the other, continued to seek opportunities to mentor and publish with Luna. During her interview, the woman suggested Luna connect her with her higher education scholars sharing:

...she told me that she wanted another female here because she was only the only female and there were two males and she didn't feel supported and she wanted another female to be, like- kinda like, to have that support. Also to connect her with people in the field because she didn't know anybody. She still doesn't know anybody because she was just wants to take and I didn't give her what she wanted.

There were several egregious actions but her attempts to co-opt Luna's intellectual labor was one of the more disturbing behaviors. Almost as soon as she arrived on campus, this person requested to serve as her mentor and to co-author research with her, Luna explains:

Then we shifted the topic to the proposal, the grant proposals. And I was interested, but I wasn't super interested, ... So, we talked about the proposal and she got me to a point in the conversation where I had to ask her if she was interested in doing it with me and so I did, she's like "Oh I would love to! I would love to do that with you." I'm like "Okay."

It was for a small grant proposal and Luna decided that it was a solid negotiation, part of playing the game. She figured that it would be smart to work with the white woman colleague, because, she was also the program director.

And then before I left she's like "So um, did you want to engage the [educational] framework in this?" And this was my dissertation work, and I'm like "No. I have collaborators outside of the university and we're working on something already, so I'll get back to you."

Luna's area of expertise was very specific. This woman's desire to latch herself onto Luna's work given her lack of understanding or presence in the field sets the stage for how Luna experienced working with her on the grant proposal.

I already knew... like preparing the proposal, that she had no knowledge of [education]... I did all the intellectual work on it and she created a timeline and the budget for it... I went into the literature and rationale and I wrote up the study, so it was my idea that got funded.

Although Luna had prepared the bulk of the proposal including the intellectual framework and rationale for the proposal, the chair attempted to appoint herself as the principal investigator, during the holiday break without Luna's knowledge and/or approval.

Well I find out, when I left the city, she's like "Oh, if you want, I can get started on the IRB proposal and then we can, you know, complete it together," and I'm like "Yeah sure, you can set it up and get the application and then we'll just fill it in as we go."

Well when I login to the IRB I realized that she put herself as a PI and she put me as a Co-PI, even though it was my idea. So, I asked her, "I went on to the IRB system and noticed that you are the PI and I am the Co-PI, I'm wondering if either we can both be PIs or Co-PIs".

She's like, "Oh, I don't think the system allows for that," and so I'm like, "Yes it does, I've done it before, and it's the same system." She was like, "Oh, um, you know, this is just a formality for IRB communications, who is the PI, it doesn't really matter, what matters is that you have the funding on your CV."

On the surface, this may seem as a simple misunderstanding, however, given this woman's consistent and frequent questioning of her academic competency, multiple requests to co-publish in Luna's area of expertise and be introduced to scholars in the higher education discipline, presumably, her desire to list herself as the sole PI was perceived by Luna to be an attempt to coopt her intellectual work.

Further complicating this situation with the white woman faculty member, is that she serves in a position of power, as director of the Ph.D. program and although not Luna's supervisor, she took on the role of supervisor in many ways. Leading to unhealthy work conditions which had not only impacted Luna, but other faculty in the department. Luna negotiated a strategy to vocalize her concerns to the actual chair of the department (white woman) and encountered what could be categorized as lip service. She shared:

So... I come back and meet with the chair, like in January, and also the associate chair and the associate chair apparently didn't know all the details, but I told her, so... she's like "Oh, we're gonna do something about it, just tell us what you want us to do."

You know, like, what the hell, So, I'm like "You know, I'm gonna try to talk to her before you go to her so that she's not shocked when you go," and so I did.

This exchange highlights how hegemonic systems do not account for protecting faculty from this type of harassment. Given Luna's training and understanding of the system and her desire to exercise agency, she does not back down, sharing:

I scheduled a meeting with my colleague (problematic white woman), and the very first thing (on my list) was the project. I discussed what she told me over break and the whole PI, Co-PI thing, and I told her and she kept saying, "Oh, its just a formality," and I'm like, "Well no. My idea got funded, so it only makes sense that I have the PI." And she's like, "Oh, yeah absolutely." I hope you don't have a problem with that. She's like "Oh no no no, I- no, why would I? You will be the PI."

Issues with this white woman continued throughout the spring semester, and the administrators continued to ignore and/or avoid addressing her problematic behavior. In some

ways, while Luna took a stand and resisted the white woman's attempt to co-opt her intellectual work, she has still been burdened with helping the administration figure out how to handle the situation. It is in these types of moments during which resistance and non-resistance come to cross-roads, and inflict negative consequences, both professionally and emotionally.

Tenure Granted: But... You MUST Increase Your Academic Capital

Sofia's testimonio was filled with many ups and downs, twists and turns, challenges and obstacles, all of which ended with a denial of tenure in May and a reversal in August of the same year. It is the most representative of how no matter how much a person negotiate, change course, and try to play by the rules of legitimacy, tenure can be—and often is—denied for many Chicana/Latina faculty. What follows is the final testimonio in this chapter and it represents how convoluted and confusing the actual process is and how interdisciplinary research approaches, while touted by institutions as strategic and forward thinking, are not well supported and or judged as legitimate. It illustrated how an institution's aspirations to achieve Carnegie research status has real consequences for faculty's ability to achieve legitimate research status, particularly without the appropriate level of resources. Finally, it demonstrated that faculty governance and approval of tenure at each level had no bearing on whether tenure is granted and that an institution's president can overturn a tenure decision without cause.

Today Marks the Anniversary of My Tenure Denial

Sofia said,

It was May 1st. My chair calls me and I'm on the way to pick up kids. And they're like, "Sofia," they were sick. So, they were like struggling, like, to talk... losing their voice., they were like, "Sofia, the dean just came in here. They came upstairs and told me that the president didn't recommend you for tenure.

The chair recommended she call the dean:

They said, "The president won't be recommending you for tenure." And they were like, "I'm sorry. I know this is really not good news. And, you know, it's not what we were

expecting." And then I was like, "Well, did they say why?" And they were like, "Well, they said that they had concerns about the trajectory of your productivity." And they were like, "That's about it." . . . , "I know that they said they're going to send a letter. I don't know if that's going to have any more information." And was just like, "I'm sorry, I don't know what else to tell you."

And just like that, after having the program chair, college committee, dean, outside reviewers, all support tenure, the president denied Sofia's tenure. While I knew this piece of information from the beginning, hearing her account of the details of that day was disconcerting. Sofia shared:

And so, I had to go pick up my kids and I was just like kind of shocked about, like, what had happened. And because the process seems so mysterious, like I was saying from the provost on (referring to not knowing what happens at the provost level and beyond), that it's kind of like, well, what do you do? Nothing. You just take that information, you swallow it and that's that.

Sofia's entire testimonio regarding her tenure track faculty experience started and ended with the demand for research legitimacy as central to achieving tenure, particularly at an aspiring research institution.

Going Up For Review

During Sofia's tenure review period, she was provided two extensions, both having to do with breaks in her service due to Family Medical Leave (FMLA) and both suggested and approved first by the provost and second by the dean. Mentoring of tenure track faculty at her institution was sparse and not formal, but there were a few occasions during which she met with other tenure track faculty to gain insights as to how to increase their chances for tenure. She shared these meetings would oftentimes make her feel worse about her chances:

But when we'd have those meetings and we'd look at each other's CVs, even within the college... (when they would review my CV)... I think that's also why the Dean and Associate Dean just didn't know what to do with me. They were just like, you're weird. You do interdisciplinary stuff, and you're not publishing anywhere at the rate (you should be publishing). I mean they didn't say these things explicitly, but I think that that's the sense that I got from them.

Still, Sofia continued to receive mostly positive messages in which administrators and peers alike pointed to her extensive service and work with students as well as her teaching. After all, this was a regional college whose number one mission was education and her teaching load contributed to numerous students completing and graduating. She said,

But I think everyone knew at this point, (the institution) is trying to be tier one. The name of the game is the number of publications you have. I mean I knew that from the outset. I think the way that I kind of frame my whole experience of being tenure track faculty, is ambivalence. I know that sounds so mediocre, but it was really this constant state of ambivalence. Sometimes I felt like, maybe I'm pretty good about it. If I got a journal publication accepted, and my teaching, my course evaluations came out well. Some days I'd be like, okay, this is going pretty well, then I'd have other days where I'd look at someone else's CV and just feel like I was just nowhere near where I should be.

The amount of inconsistent messaging began to take a toll, and Sofia just wasn't sure she would be competitive enough.

It was a lot of ups and downs, and mostly downs. I think just feeling like this whole thing is just kind of hopeless. My husband was always trying to get me to go to [another city]. I told you, we spent my maternity leave there. Part of that was also I think he was trying to show me, well see, things don't work out, we can just move over here. I did have this push and pull. I don't know if this is going to work out, and I'm killing myself for what? It's really kind of hopeless. It's like, it was constant ambivalence. Like yes, no, maybe.

Yet, she continued to rely upon her faculty peers, administrators, and mentors to guide her and be honest about her chances. Sofia shared:

I felt like I was ready for people to talk me out of going up, or just to prepare me, like it's not going to be a good outcome for you. Even though people were kind of worried for me, like well you don't have a lot of publications. I still wasn't getting (comments) no, or this is really bad. It was kind of like, well you have this and this. Some quality (publications), a lot of work with students. So then I just submitted and just like, okay, we'll see what happens.

Clearly, Sofia had negotiated throughout the process, identifying points in which she might find pushback prior to submission. She was prepared to hear she was not going to be tenured, but all signs pointed to her being supported, despite not having a large number of publications.

Interdisciplinary Research

Due to Sofia's interdisciplinary research and the fact she came from another discipline into the college of education, she found herself caught between two very different sets of expectations when it came to establishing research legitimacy.

[in my department] was maybe one faculty member who also had a quant background. I did publish some with him, and he was pretty supportive. Then the faculty member who had been the Director of the center eventually retired. But he also was not a big researcher. How to do (collaborative research) that and opportunities to do that were kind of thin. Then plus, I'm doing this interdisciplinary work, which throws everyone off because I didn't really know the major journals for [education]. I knew the major journals for (original disciplinary field), but the kind of work I was doing wouldn't really fit in the major journals (in that discipline), nor would they fit probably in the major [education] journals. So I had to find journals where they were looking for interdisciplinary research that wasn't pure [education], or pure [original disciplinary field].

During this period of transition to a tier one, or research one institution, Sofia found an ally in the provost given their interdisciplinary background. Although they had very concrete thoughts on publishing and its impact on helping the institution achieve research one status.

After a meeting with them, Sofia shared how she felt:

I wanted to cry after that one because they were basically saying for us to invest in you, you have to show us you're worth the investment. (saying to herself) I don't think I'm worth it. Then they were like, "and past behavior is predictive of future behavior."

These were the types of messages that Sofia was being bombarded with and each message that highlighted research, only served to cause more anxiety for Sofia.

So when my request was put in for the extension, the first one, the Provost called me into their office, I was a little worried about what they were going to say. But what they said was, "I can grant you the extension. I wish it would have been requested a little more in advance before your third year review", But they were like, "what I want to know is, what do you feel like you need to be successful at (institution)?"

I was so stunned by that question because I felt like no one had ever asked me that. I never thought the Provost would call me into, their office to ask me that. I never saw that kind of outreach. What I was describing had never happened at the college level, even with those tenure track meetings where I felt so denigrated afterwards. They had never been like, what do you want from us? What do you need? Tell me. So when he asked me that, I was just kind of like,.. I didn't even know how to respond. I came up with

something about (how) I could probably benefit from more collaboration and other faculty because of the research I want do. Then they did put me in touch with other faculty that were doing similar research, and I did end up doing projects with them.

This was the only time during which Sofia's interdisciplinary work was supported and resources were provided. Unfortunately, this provost did not stay long and the support they provided to her ended upon his departure from the institution. Further complicating Sofia's experience with the tenure process was the institution's desire to become an R1 institution which did nothing but add to the complicated nature of her tenure experience.

Aspiring Research One

It has been mentioned several times throughout Sofia's testimonio, and the literature also showed us when a regional public institution shifts its priorities to becoming an R1 institution, faculty have a difficult time adjusting and/or securing the types of resources they need to meet those expectations. Research legitimacy becomes the primary focus and the onus of achieving these new metrics is placed on the faculty members. Sofia said,

This transition that I think I mentioned that was taking place with (institution) had aspirations to become a Tier one research university, and that I think only started to build momentum maybe the year I was hired... So the existing faculty, especially in my department, that only had working professionals as their students, and practitioners, the faculty were not really researchers...some had done research, but they were inactive in research and they were practitioners themselves, or they were more concerned with meeting students' needs and advising them with regard to their professional practice.

The culture of the department was one that did not align with the institution's desire to become a research designated university. This lack of alignment had a direct impact on what types of resources were available and monetary resources were not the only challenge. Sofia explained:

I had no contact with undergrads in my department. We just have master's and doctoral students. Anyways. I did a lot of publishing with graduate students, which I thought was a good thing. I thought the quality of the publications were very strong because they were pretty rigorous, quantitative studies. I mean, not the kind you find... (in her original discipline) (because) usually their prime methodology is experimentation. The most

rigorous (discipline) journals have; not one, it's study one, study two, study three, study four, study five, and one publication. So I wasn't doing those because (because I didn't have an extensive subject pool).

Sofia further explained that sheer lack of full-time graduate students had an impact on her ability to conduct research in the manner in which she was trained:

I'm in, the college of ed, I have no subject pool. I have no lab. I have no full-time graduate students. Yet, I'm still trying to do kind of similar research that I did myself in (original discipline), but without those kinds of resources. Fortunately, I had some of the NSF funding. I also had startup package with some funding there, so that's how I managed to get some research done by being able to pay some graduate students. I also had a few graduate students I attracted from another discipline area who just liked my research and worked with me just for free.

All of this coupled with the lack of resources made it almost impossible to produce the number of publications the institution then began to require of its tenure track professors. Sofia recounted a time when the president met with faculty who were on the tenure track and brazenly placed the onus on securing resources on the faculty, she stated:

I remember early on in the race to tier one they (president) gave this one talk to the faculty at a College of Ed retreat before classes started where they told us that we didn't have the resources that other tier one schools do, but that we should be creative. So I think I made this face like, right? Like I'm going to be creative and just come up with some research money out of my pocket or something.

This particular moment highlighted how an aspiring research institution taxes faculty both from a labor perspective but also imposes unrealistic research legitimacy expectations.

The Reversal

After the initial shock, Sofia was able to gather her thoughts and began to ask questions about why the president made this decision. Multiple reviews of the handbook of operating procedures highlighted there was nothing in the regulations or policies which precluded her from receiving tenure. Sofia shared, "it just seemed wrong, even though it was perfectly... it wasn't violating any rules or anything. But you know, it did seem like disdain even, of faculty governance, or something personal." This conflict between what should have happened and what

actually happened, sparked more questions and Sofia continued to conduct research which led to more of an understanding, an awakening of sorts, a level of conocimiento:

So I was learning how little protection there is for faculty when something like this happens, and no one seems to talk about it. I mean, I guess I didn't think much of it either until this was happening to me and I was like, wow you're really on your own and the President wields a lot of unchecked power. So it was really eye opening. And since I'm in education program it was also somehow interesting to me because I thought of education in a way that I hadn't really thought of before.

Ultimately, Sofia was able to secure an audience with the interim provost, more than anything to gain clarity on what events actually led to the president's decision. She prepared a list of questions and she shared:

I have this form letter terminating me, but that's all I have, and a bunch of positive reviews. Positive and reviews and a termination letter, it just felt like I need a little more closure because this is a lot of dissonance. So I wasn't going to go in and argue my portfolio or anything like that. And maybe if I would have felt stronger as a scholar maybe I would have been, that would have been my angle, but it wasn't.

And so they said, probably one of the first things he said was like, "I'm under no obligation, legal or otherwise, to give you a rationale for the decision." But I had expected that based on what I read. And I said, "Okay, well I appreciate your time, thank you for meeting with me. I guess I just wanted to see if you could at least provide some extra information because I'm trying to understand how the president went against the other levels of review, how she came up with a decision that was in opposition to all the other positive recommendations."

At this juncture of the conversation, the provost brought up Sofia's research production. She continued to share:

And they were like, "Well, the president had a concern about the length of time that you've been at (institution) in various capacities and your productivity." And I said, "The length of time." I said, "Well, was the President aware that I was on FMLA on maternity leave?". And they were like, "The President was not aware that you took FMLA, I was not aware that you took FMLA. And even if we were, it has nothing to do with your review." And I said, "Well, it's just that you're saying the rationale had to do with the length of time I've been at (institution), and I have that timeline in the portfolio and I was wondering if you all were aware of that?" And they were like, I can't remember what they said, but he was so dismissive. He was just like, he was like, "I understand this is not an easy thing to hear, and it's not easy for me to give this outcome to faculty that come in here."

Sofia pressed on, not allowing the conversation to end there:

"If I had had indication, negative feedback at any of the other levels of review, I wouldn't be sitting across from you right now." And I said, "I'm here because the President's decision was in opposition to all of those other levels of review." And they were like, "Well, there's a lot of factors that come into play in these kinds of decision."

Sofia's resistance continued:

"Well, my Chair reported to me that you told the Dean that you were going to approve me for tenure, is that correct?" And he was like, "Well," they were like, "I think there was some kind of misunderstanding and that's not exactly what took place." "And we called your Dean in to explain their decision to us, the President and I, and they gave a very weak oral argument," I think they said. And I said, "So this decision was based on the Dean's weak oral argument, even though they had written a letter, a positive letter, of recommendation?" And he was like, "No, no, it was not just based on this weak oral argument."

Later Sofia found out the dean had been called in and basically berated for having approved her tenure. Ultimately, the interim provost's comfort level had been pushed too far and he abruptly ended the conversation but provided the following advice:

"How about this, if there is anything else you think that I should consider in evaluating your portfolio, why don't you send me those materials." And I was kind of confused by that because I wasn't understanding what else I could send them. But I could tell they were pretty frustrated by that point, they were trying to get rid of me so they were like, "How about that?" They were like, "How about you send me anything that you think I should take a look at and I will take a look at it?" So, he pretty much took me to the door.

After submitting numerous letters of support from students, faculty, previous mentors, etc., the decision was reversed but the damage had been done.

I felt like if the president was solely concerned, and this was just my hunch, about the number of publications I had, if that was their feeling that I wasn't living up to the tier one standard, I thought, why couldn't I put the number of pubs I had on a sticky note and hand it to them and be done with this? Why did we have to go through this whole tenure process? Is it a façade that we have levels of review and really the President gets to decide on their own whether they're going to give tenure or not? Is it just an illusion what we're doing?

Sofia's testimonio was filled with multiple levels of complexity, layers and layers of challenges which caused her much pain and anxiety along the way. During this time, she found

herself negotiating, resisting, and recalculating her path. Sofia's testimonio does not end here... it is the start of another level of *conocimiento* which will be further discussed in chapter five.

Negotiating and Resisting

Platicadoras Flor, Luna, and Sofia shared their testimonios in hopes to provide an insight to the negotiation and resisting process of their experiences to and through the professoriate. The findings illustrated the complexities involved in choosing to resist and furthermore highlight the constant negotiation that took place as they navigated the hegemonic academic structures which dictated their legitimacy. Even slight deviations from approved/legitimate standards set forth by the academy were considered forms of resistance. Lastly, platicadoras found themselves in a constant state of hypervigilance, always anticipating the next instance for negotiation and/or resistance. Chapter five serves as an extension of the findings, highlighting moments of *conocimiento* which focus on the pain and trauma experienced by the platicadoras and their path towards healing. I purposely chose to frame this using the seven stages of *conocimiento* due to the power of seeking understanding, knowledge, and healing through nonwestern ways of knowing.

The passion to know, to deepen awareness, to perceive reality in a different way, to see and experience more of life—in short, the desire to expand consciousness—and the freedom to choose, drove Zochiquetzal, Eve, and Cihuacoatl to deepen awareness. You, too, are driven by the desire to understand, know, y saber how human and other beings know. Beneath your desire for knowledge writes the hunger to understand and love yourself (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 121).

CHAPTER FIVE: CONOCIMIENTO

“By redeeming your most painful experiences, you transform them into something valuable, algo para “compartir” or share with others so they, too, may be empowered. You stop in the middle of the field and, under your breath, ask the spirits- animals, plants, y tus muertos- to help you string together a bridge of words. What follows is your attempt to give back to nature, los espíritus, and others as a gift wrested from the events in your life, a bridge home to self.” (Anzaldúa, 2015, pg. 118)

Chapter four discussed and presented findings about how three Chicana/Latinas navigated, negotiated, and resisted hegemonic structures and the role of legitimacy within higher education in their journey to and through the professoriate. In doing so, it illustrated the various ways in which the platicadoras enacted strategic negotiations, particularly with regard to the act of resistance, as they navigated through the system. In presenting those findings, it was difficult to incorporate the level of pain, hurt, and trauma that Flor, Luna, and Sofia shared their confesiones. I realized their testimonios were about more than answering a question about legitimacy; we could not attribute the pain, doubt, and trauma solely to definitions of academic hegemonic systems or imposter syndrome. I picked up Anzaldúa’s (2015), *Light in the Dark*, one more time. I had tabbed the seven stages of conocimiento in a prior reading, so I started there. In doing so, I realized presenting Flor, Luna, and Sofia’s testimonios through lens of the seven stages of conocimiento made sense. The following is my attempt to honor their testimonios, invoking my ancestors’ ways of knowing and creating understanding, simply by sharing their confesiones about trauma and pain, with the hope and wish for healing.

Seven Stages of Conocimiento

Anzaldúa (1987, 2015) introduced the new mestiza in her seminal work, *Borderlands: La Frontera*, encouraging transformation and healing through a process for new consciousness. Similar to the process of navigation, negotiation, resistance, the process is not linear, and achieving enlightenment or liberation does not magically stop the process. Also integral to this process is the Imperative to “put Coyolxauhqui together” (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 125). Table 5.1 provides a snapshot of each stage and defining characteristics of how they may have manifested themselves in the platicadoras testimonios. It should be noted that platicadora experiences and journey’s may have taken them through multiple stages at once, demonstrating that the process of conocimiento is oftentimes messy, painful, and at the same time liberating.

Table 5.1
Seven Stages of Conocimiento

Stage (Anzaldúa, 2015)	Defining Characteristics
1. El arrebato...rupture, fragmentation...an ending, a beginning	"...rift with a loved one, illness, death in the family, betrayal, systemic racism, and marginalization—rips you from your familiar home... the urgency to know what you're experiencing awakens la facultad, the ability to shift attention and see through the surface of things and situations." (p. 125)
2. Nepantla... torn between ways	"...where the outer boundaries of the mind's inner life meet the outer world of reality, is a zone of possibility." (p. 122) Opportunity for transformation and melding of multiple forms of thought
3. The Coatlicue state...desconocimiento and the cost of knowing	"...when overwhelmed by the chaos caused by living between stories (nepantla), you break down, descend into the third space." (p. 123) "...de éste lugar de muerte viva the promise of sunlight is unreachable. Though you want deliverance, you cling to your misery." (p. 129)
4. The call... el compromise... the crossing and conversion	"...a call to action pulls you out of your depression. You break free from your habitual coping strategies of escaping from realities you're reluctant to face, reconnect with spirit, and undergo a conversion." (p. 123) "The bridge (boundary between the world you've just left and the one ahead) is both a barrier and a point of transformation...Conocimiento hurts, but not as much as desconocimiento." (p. 137)
5. Putting Coyolxauhqui together...new personal and collective "stories"	"Coyolxauhqui personifies the wish to repair and heal, as well as rewrite the stories of loss and recovery, exile and homecoming, disinheritance and recuperation, stories the lead out of passivity and into agency, out of devalued into valued lives. Coyolxauhqui represents the search for new metaphors to tell you what you need to know, how to connect and use the information gained, and, with intelligence, imagination, and grace, solve your problems and create intercultural communities." (p. 143)
6. The blow-up...a clash of realities	"you take your story out into the world, testing it. When you or the world fail to live up to your ideals, your edifice collapses like a house of cards, casting you into conflict with self and others, angry and then terrified at the depth of your anger, you swallow your emotions, you hold them in." (p. 123) Further complicating matters, women of color respond in old ways, conocimiento resorts to Coatlicue stage, victimhood can return, and Anzaldúa suggested that only nepantleras can bridge these two camps. Jolting people out of the dissonance, encouraging "individual and group rituals to contain volatile feelings and channel them into acts of conocimiento." (p. 149)
7. Shifting realities...acting out the vision or spiritual activism	"...the critical turning point of transformation, you shift realities; develop an ethical, compassionate strategy with which to negotiate conflict and difference within self and between others; and find common ground by forming holistic alliances. You include these practices in your daily life, act on your vision—enacting spiritual activism." (p. 123) "...honoring people's otherness, las nepantleras advocate a "nos/otras" position—an alliance between "us" and "others". In nos/otras, the "us" is divided in two, the slash in the middle representing the bridge—the best mutuality we can hope for in the moment." (p. 151)

Torn Between Two Ways

Oftentimes, platicadoras found themselves in this state of *nepantla*, torn between two worlds, two ways of being, asking for admission/acceptance into the world of academia. Instances of ‘choque’ throughout their testimonios, illustrating the never-ending state of ambivalence and the constant state of hypervigilance they each experienced (Anzaldúa. 1987, p. 100-101). The seven stages of *conocimiento* lends a deeper understanding of the actual process that one goes through as they encounter and experience the *remolinos*, or the *arrebatos* of what was their understanding and/or planned pathway towards the professoriate. These traumatic experiences thrust Flor, Luna, and Sofia into the state of *nepantla*, the place of negotiation between what academia calls for as legitimate and what they know to be innately genuine to their being. Over time, living and existing in the state of *nepantla* takes its toll and the platicadoras entered into a third space, the *Coatlicue* state. During this state, platicadoras shared some of their most painful and traumatic *confesiones*, desperately attempting to find ways for healing. Until something calls them into action, to let go of the practices that no longer serve them, for Flor, Luna, and Sofia, the choice to resist and show up as genuine in the academy. It is at this point that the platicadoras made conscious decisions and efforts to put *Coyolxauhqui* together again, healing their fragmented selves in ways that honored their true spirit and desires. Stage six (blow up) are the points during which platicadoras test their newfound *conocimiento*, oftentimes experiencing pushback and disappointment, and possibly reverting to some of the previous stages. Seven (shifting realities) is the space in which platicadoras have achieved some levels of resolution, establishing strategies to build bridges between the two conflicting worlds, making themselves whole and attempting to heal and operate from a genuine, spiritual place.

Each platicadora shared many confesiones during our pláticas, what follows are confesiones that resonated the most with the stages of conocimiento and offered key points for healing and further contemplation.

Mami Scholar

Throughout our time together, it was clear Flor had struggled with embracing her femininity and how others perceived her as potentially weak if she showed vulnerability,

I didn't want to accept that identity. When I went to college, I was doing exactly the opposite of what everyone thought I was going to do. Yeah, I didn't want to be seen as too vulnerable, because I think that when people are nurturing, it's maybe taken advantage of. But I didn't have words for it at the time, because I was just like, "No, I'm not girly...

I know that I'm nurturing to the people in my research center, like the other grad students." Even recently one of them was like, "You're like a mother to us... I am a mother, but it's like, I don't know why I always hid from that, as if it is not a good thing. Maybe because like in our culture, moms aren't given that much respect.

During the study, she gave birth to her first child who joined us during all of our pláticas. When we began to discuss ways in which she practiced self-care, she kept leading us back to this idea that she wanted desperately to live a genuine life in which being a doctoral student was not her only identity:

Yes, the whole time I was in the program I wanted to feel like more than just a student. I wanted to have a life outside of being a student. I didn't realize that it looked like getting married and having a baby. I thought it just looked like, I wanted to have a hobby. Like to be more than just a student meant doing something like, "Oh, I'm a runner." I thought it was something very simple like that.

Josie: Which it still could be.

Flor: It could be. Yeah, but for me it wasn't.

Josie: Right, but the point ... I guess your now advisor was saying is like, you just continued living.

Flor: Yes.

Josie: For you that's a form of continued renewal, self-renewal through this process

Flor: Right, because basically like in every year in the program, I've had a different life change or life event. My first year I was engaged. My second year I was married. My third year I guess I was doing my qualifying exam, and getting pregnant.

Flor: In my fourth year I had a baby. All of these things helped me feel like I had a life, I had control of my life instead of letting it be dictated by the program or controlled I guess.

As we continued, Flor became more and more emotional, sharing the difficulty in dealing with peers and colleagues questioning her ability to complete her dissertation simply because she had a baby. We discussed a time when she posted on social media about how comments like

It's true, like there have been little comments about, 'Oh, I don't know how I would write a dissertation if I had a baby.' Like, 'Well, that's you.' Yeah, it's going to be hard for me, but this is my experience I guess."

I vividly recalled how that very social media post prompted a conversation offline during which I acknowledged I had even made those types of comments to new parents and Flor's story forced me to think about my own biases about the choices scholars should make. At the time, I felt an overwhelming sense of shame for having been a part of exacting colonial standards for her choice to have a child. As a testimonialista, I learned there was definitely room for us to have an exchange of ideas in that moment but was scared of what it meant for my own process of *conocimiento* and that I too, by virtue of being in this process with the *platicadoras* was experiencing the seven stages of *conocimiento*.

It was at that exact moment when I myself entered into a stage of *conocimiento*, recognizing that in my own journey, I had made choices for myself to follow the standards of legitimacy with regard to not having children before achieving stability within my career. Fue un arrebató muy fuerte, porque cuando decidí que quería tener hijos, ya no pude. I realized for many years I had been living in the (third) Coatlicue state, avoiding the topic of motherhood and all of the reasons I would never be a mother. It was far too painful to put into words all those years, and there I was—in the middle of Flor's kitchen—while she nursed her *bebida*, y me empecarion

a caller las lagrimas. It actually felt as though, in that moment, I traversed many of the stages of *conocimiento*: (first) *arrebato*, (second) *nepantla*, and (fourth) the call. My intuition tells me that these moments for Flor sat squarely in the (sixth) blow up phase, where she had achieved levels of *conocimiento* but she was getting push back from the very people who claimed understanding. Interestingly enough, her grace and love for me helped us have a conversation which led to my own understanding. Flor's strength in resisting the standards and living authentically was not lost on me, nor was her humbleness She said:

It's not that I'm just that amazing, but I think it also came out of the research that I did with Faculty of Color, because it had such a wild impression on me as a person, and as a researcher and as a student and now as a scholar. I was interviewing some of these faculty members, and they would say that they didn't feel like they could be their authentic selves. I was pissed because I was like, "Fuck, I don't feel like I can be my authentic self as a grad student. They're over the hill where I want to be, right? They already have the jobs.

They already have tenure or whatever, and they feel like they can't be their authentic selves?" It's like, "I don't want that." Like, "What for, if I have to change who I am, well as soon as I walk in the doors of work every day? That's bullshit." Then someone once told me... they were talking to a widely known scholar. They asked her something about why she wanted to work at (a public regional institution), instead of the R1. She said something like, "Well, because I wanted to be able to present my research, and have my colleagues evaluate, and know what I was talking about and you'll have a conversation with them about it. I was like, "Okay, that's real.

That's what I want. I don't want this place where I can't be myself and be my authentic self." Then having the research (perspective), and then hearing about that thing that this scholar said, I was like, "Okay, things have to change. I don't want to keep going down the path where I'm going to maybe be a faculty member after having the CV, and after checking all the boxes and be completely unhappy. If that's the case, I don't want that job.

The feelings of showing up authentically in academia were strong during our time together. Flor was in a constant state of *nepantla* and establishing *conocimiento* through her experiences—of mentorship, communities of support, exposure to literature about how Faculty of Color experience higher education, and personal desire to achieve healing—which supported her choices to resist the hegemonic academic structures. During this process, her *testimonio*

represented varying levels of conocimiento, all of which contributed to her carta de consejo. The following is Flor's carta de consejo to her younger self.

Consejos Para Florecer En La Academia

Flor's Carta de Consejo

Florecita,

Right now, I know you're sitting in your profesora's office in awe that her job is to read books and think all day. I'll admit, it is really cool for nerds like us. We get excited when the library restocks the Popular Reading or the New Books section right by the entrance. Hell, we get excited when we walk into a library – the smells, the shelves, the quiet, the serenity, the prose, the poetry, we soak it all in every time we set foot beyond those doors. I know that feeling all too well and I still get that excitement even as I am drawing a finger along the spines in the university library stacks looking for a book on phenomenology that I found in the online database. But before you jump in wholeheartedly to the trail of the professoriate, let me tell you that this feeling comes and goes. Some days you feel like you belong here, but many other days you say “what the hell am I doing? I should have gone to [medical/business/any other graduate program] instead.” The question of belonging is one that you have probably thought of before. If I remember correctly, you said something about wanting to be a role model for younger generations of Chicanas so you would endure the difficulties for them. If your profesora could do it, so could you, right? Just know that this is easier said than done. It's easy to say that you will challenge the system and that your presence alone is an act of resistance, but do you really know what that means and all the baggage that it carries? Your experience is yet to unfold, but I'd like to tell you a bit about my own to help provide an example of how things could go for you. Also, keep in mind that for the most part, your success in higher education has taken place at Hispanic-

serving institutions. Do you know what it would be like at a predominantly white institution? Do you know what it would be like to be one of the few Latinas in your entire college? Just really think about that before anything. It may be that you are up to the mental challenge but I just hope you are ready for the emotional and psychological challenges that come along with it.

My experience in the Ph.D. program started off rocky before it really even began. First, you should know that as much as you will be told to choose a program and an advisor that are going to advocate for you and nurture you, you will do what you think is best for yourself and your family regardless of what you've heard. For me, I was told to not put all my eggs in one basket and to be sure that my advisor was a right fit because if my advisor would leave, I could wind up shit out of luck. But that wasn't going to happen to me. And plus, I was moving with my fiancé. I had a support system and was going to be fine. Little did I know that faculty have their own plans, they have their own goals and families to think about. My advisor told me the week before classes began that she had taken another position across the country and I had to find a new advisor. I was grateful that she had at least told me early enough in the program that I could easily recover, but in all honesty, I still felt the effects of that blow even 4 years later. It was as if I started the program 10 steps behind all my peers because I was in limbo from the offset. I was starting miles behind everyone else in the race. And yeah, you shouldn't compare yourself, and it's not a sprint, it's a marathon – and lots of other clichés – but the truth is, you do compare because the faculty compare you to each other. They do it in disguise, of course. They call it “First Year Review,” or “Qualifying Exam” or “Proposal Defense.” All these markers of development are essentially comparisons between you and others before you and your peers. But then they also tell you to your face that you're not as good of a writer as [name of elite white student]. Or they tell you that they don't favor the white students they favor the good writers –

but when you see who the “good” writers are, they’re all white. It’s not fun, but that’s what it is. Are you ready for that? Really ready for the emotional and psychological turbulence that this competition and constant judgment will create for you? Ready for the microaggressions? Ready for sitting in class for months with only 8 other students at a time and your professor continually confusing you for the other Latina in the room? I know I’m being blunt, but I just really want you to consider the whole picture before you jump in because the academia requires a lot of labor and I don’t just mean in that it is mentally challenging.

If you’re ready to handle this, if you are up for the challenge, I’d like to give a couple pieces of advice. First, find your familia. If you decide on a program close to home and you have your real familia as support, that’s great, but you should still listen to what I have to say. The Ph.D. process is a hazing process. They don’t like to call it that, but it is. The faculty will say things like “Well, that’s how I had to do it” and force you to similar conditions and will call it a learning experience. You’re going to want people to go through this hazing with you. Which is why you need a Ph.D. familia, or a Phamily. You need people who are going to listen to you cry and cry with you, scream with you, go drinking/dancing/running with you. You need people in your program to be like your family because you sure as hell will not survive if you try to go through it alone. The process is isolating and solitary as is, so you need people that know what you’re going through to go through it with you. You find your familia, your community, and you will be set. I promise.

Second, learn who you are and be unapologetically her. I cannot stress how important this is. Faculty will want you to conform, they will want you to be just like the ideal little research assistant they have in mind. And yet, they want you to distinguish yourself in the academy and make a name for yourself because it reflects upon them if you do well. If you are told to play the

game, just know that this means to act white. It means to check your identity at the door and don't let it show at any point when you're in the classroom or in research team meetings. It means respectability politics and being nonconfrontational and nonemotional. Somehow, faculty expect you to be these things because it is easier, but whether you do this or not, many of them will forget your name, many of them will confuse you for the other Latina in your program, many of them will reach out to other students for opportunities and forget you are there waiting in the wings. Playing the game doesn't work for us, so be unapologetically you and stand out. Let your identity guide your research agenda, be unabashed about your emphasis on advocacy through research and your commitment to social justice. Let all of this be a part of every conversation so that you begin to be seen and known by your name instead of by "the one with [insert some physical identifying trait]."

Third, don't concern yourself with the opinions of people who are not important to you. If you wouldn't invite them to your birthday party, forget what they have to say about you to your face or behind your back. That is all.

Fourth, find out who you are outside of a Ph.D. student and stoke that fire as often as possible. If you enjoy dancing, dance. If you enjoy running, run. If you enjoy baking, bake. Do whatever you need to feel like you because the Ph.D. process can want to take over your life and give you a new identity.

Fifth, find a practice of mindfulness that sustains you. Whether its meditation, prayer, yoga, exercise, you need to find a way to quiet your mind and disconnect. The Ph.D. process can be mentally exhausting and that's not including all of life's other obstacles (financial burdens, familial obligations, relationship concerns, etc.) so you need to find a way to focus on gratitude or something bigger than the Ph.D.

Sixth, live your fucking life. Don't let anyone tell you how to navigate this Ph.D. journey because it is YOUR journey. They may mean well in telling you how to do something because it meant success for them, but that way is not your way to success or joy or whatever you're after. Once you learn that and learn to stop comparing your route to theirs, you will be so much happier. Your timeline is your timeline. Your choices are your choices. If anyone wants to share their opinion on your journey, they can share it with the wall because as far as you're concerned, you are doing it your way.

After all of the struggle, I just want you to know that the journey can be worth it. It can be validating, or empowering, or whatever you want it to be, but you do have to put in the work. You will go through many changes and many challenges and will come out on the other side a different person than you were before. And it will be beautiful.

Flor's note on the carta de consejo. I reached out to you a while ago saying that I thought my letter was too mean because it was a letter to my younger self, and I am my harshest critic. The letter wasn't yet finished, but I didn't like the direction it was heading because it seemed too mean or cynical. It wasn't the way I would handle a conversation with a master's student interested in applying to Ph.D. programs. But I was jaded and that has been because my experience in the Ph.D. program has been pretty demoralizing. I would have liked for the message to be more inspiring and immediately convey a sense of passion to achieving a higher calling, but it wasn't that. My experience has made it so that I now approach the Ph.D. process without rose-colored glasses. So, I stepped away from the carta de consejo that I was writing and when I came back to it days later, I continued writing the same letter to my younger self. I didn't edit any of the writing I had already written, but when I added the pieces of advice at the end, I think it softened the overall message a bit. I still wouldn't call it an inspiring message, but more

just a realistic response to the question of navigating academia as an intersectional woman. So I decided to not write a second letter (and delay getting it to you any longer) because I thought this carta – without any self-editing – was the real advice I would give to someone when I strip back all the academic performing and illusions of what academia could be for a person like me. This exercise has been wild. I've reflected on a lot of feelings I had been holding in about my Ph.D. process and about academia so if it came out sounding cynical, there's a reason behind that and it shouldn't be sugarcoated to make it sound like it wasn't as bad as it actually was.

Viviendo en Estado de Hipervigilancia

Luna's journey on the conocimiento spectrum was most representative of a shifting between stages and having an adept vocabulary for exercising her resistance agency. As we progressed through this process, Luna demonstrated strength and commitment to challenging hegemonic academic structures and was the most strategic in her negotiations. Nonetheless, there were points of pain and trauma that could not be overlooked, no amount of having the resistance language can heal the pain associated with the constant state of hypervigilance she exists in.

When we discussed how she practices self-care and self-renewal, Luna shared:

Yeah, so I think that even before coming here, that's been a struggle for me to identify ways that I think that I am caring for myself. That's much less than identifying things to care for the body. So when I think about like care, like I think about both, just say holistically... like the body, the mind, I focused a lot on the body because it's easy. I like working out, so I go to the gym. It helps me feel less stressed, I think. Also when I... if I go before I'm going to work or write, that's helped me stay more focused. So I do that, and I know it's healthy.

That's one thing, but I don't think that I have... that I have found something or somewhere here what I feel like, "Oh, like, I am peace." I am at peace when I leave this place. That's when I'm at peace.

Luna's physical space and location contributes to quite a bit of personal stress and feelings of unsafety. During our initial conversation about self-care there seemed to be sadness

and so it dropped off. In a subsequent plática we circled back to this question and the resulting testimonio was quite powerful:

I don't know and I feel like that is a consistent issue that I have. I don't know what gives me a relief, mentally and emotionally. I think I mentioned during the interview like I take care of myself physically and that helps but the mind is a harder thing to calm and relax, be able to detach myself from all the noise. It's really hard, I can't do that. And I think ... I don't know if there is like bigger issue but I just have this urgency, I try to remain in control, and I think part of remaining in control brings the negative side of it so, I'm always in the middle of the chaos. I'm always in the middle of the drama or you know... worrying about things that are not yet here. I'm always worried because I think I'm afraid that if I don't worry and if I don't remain invested and maybe I'm going to miss out on whatever it is or I'm not going to succeed if I don't continuously stay there. And I think that that's the root of the issue because I can't just walk away from it.

Luna provided an example of how this played out, particularly when it involved the process of potentially going back out on the job market and her reaction to a job posted in her home state, where she would like to return to be closer to family. She explained:

But I went and I looked at the faculty and the program and they are all white. And then when I saw that, ... I felt so triggered. I felt scared and I felt nervous. And then I was telling my partner, "Oh my God, you know they are all white." I know it's going to be like that everywhere but just like the reaction that I experienced just opening a Web page and he kind of had to remind me that I have to go through the motions of the process and just go with it because I'm already thinking about how terrible it's going to be but I haven't even applied... And that causes stress and it causes mental ... like I am investing in it, mentally. It makes me tired and it makes me worried, it makes me scared, it makes me annoyed but I don't really need to be doing that but I think it's just my desire to have some powers of agency in the process. But I think that's a larger issue. I don't know how to talk about it.

After further discussion, Luna agrees that this state of hypervigilance is tied to the standards that faculty always be productive and that for a Faculty of Color, she needs to be even more productive, sharing:

For example, for this report, this is with the colleague that's been tormenting me this whole year and we're still working together so we have to do this, and I've been trying not to do it. Because I didn't want to put effort into something that I know she's not really invested. So, I took a while to find that and I sat down and when I sat down, I just wanted to finish it so I've been working on this since I got back from the gym. My back is hurting a little because I've been just working on it nonstop. But I can't leave it. I could just go and take a nap or go outside and walk but I can't go, I have to finish it.... get it over with

so you don't have to live with it anymore? That also comes with certain demands and investments. Sometimes my body is not ... I know I'll be sitting for too long, it's painful. But mentally I cannot walk away from it, so I stay here.

We continued this discussion and Luna shared this constant state of vigilance does not allow her to show up in an authentic manner, and that the concept of imposter syndrome may not have been what she was truly experiencing:

Yeah. (Imposter Syndrome is about) People like not fitting in or feeling like they don't belong in space. I don't feel that, I just feel like there is so much pressure like what the students share with you. And there is ... the expectations are higher. And then we kind of abide to those expectations at the expense of our bodies and our minds.

I asked if it was more about this constant state of hypervigilance which leads to unhealthy practices to survive:

Yeah, so. I think that all of that combined ... I have no idea how to unplug and just go offline. I don't know. I do what I can to keep the body going and keep it healthy physically and just hope that I don't go insane. Or that I don't get one of those mental illnesses because the burn out is real and having to continue to push through when you are so drained is very hard.

Back to the conversation of self-care, Luna was not buying it, calling it out as just another act of oppressive systems placing the burden of healing on the individual rather than to look at the systems as problematic. She shared the following:

One of my colleagues told me I should start meditation or something like that hot Yoga. I don't know. I just ... if I were ... if I knew that if I let go then I would be safe and that the academy would be forgiving for me letting go a little. Maybe it will, but I know that's not the case. So, even though it's June and I should be doing nothing, I'm going to be writing this summer. I have to figure out a couple of projects, I need to do this report, prep for the fall, all of that.

Josie: And it still puts the onus on you to deal ... to figure out how you heal yourself from the actions of the institution.

Luna: Yeah.

Josie: So, this whole concept of self-care and-

Luna: The self-care itself ... self-care

Josie: Right, and you have to find a way to cope in ways; but it doesn't change the system.

Luna: No.

Josie: And so that's the rub...

Luna: Yeah.

Josie: Because I think that's just the way it is in general, right? We have to find ways to make it work so that we don't lose our heads. And the onus is always on us to figure it out?

Luna: Yeah. I mean nobody invited us to enter this ivory tower so, why should they care? We chose to be here. And so, I think... that is highly tied to not only how the system negatively impacts our experiences but then also the damage. They are not responsible for any of it. It's kind of like when you are signing a liability waiver.

It was after this plática I began to see and understand that no amount of negotiation and resistance could truly take away this pain and trauma. That we could name things like imposter syndrome, or imposing hegemonic academic structures, or even use terms like legitimacy, and none of them could ever capture the true pain that lives within us. I say us because I started this journey trying to find out how and why these constructs of legitimacy, academic hegemony, roles of navigation, negotiation and resistance were important for me and for other Chicana/Latinas. However, none of them are more important than the act of healing and the power of conocimiento and the transcendence into a new conciencia.

Coincidentally, Luna's choice in pseudonym, translated to moon, is tied to the stage of Putting Coyolxauhqui back together again. Coyolxauhqui, moon goddess, leads through the light of the moon, Luna's actions and consejos lead by the light of the moon. The following is her carta de consejo to Chicana/Latinas seeking the professoriate.

Luna's Carta de Consejo

Le he dado muchas vueltas al asunto. Que es lo que quiero decir en mi carta de consejo? He considerado varias opciones: (1) cosas que me hubiera gustado que alguien me hubiese dicho

antes de comenzar mi camino en esta carrera, (2) una lista de cosas que nunca debes hacer en tu papel como Faculty of Color, si quieres sobrevivir, especialmente as una mujer inmigrante Faculty of Color, (3) o tal vez que no importa cuánto hayas leído sobre o estudiado las experiencias of Faculty of Color en academe, el golpe será duro y siempre dolerá más que lo que dicen the most vivid narratives of what it means to exist and work in the ivory tower.

Our bodies are disposable, easily replaceable in part because so many of us want to become faculty, to continue to exist in a place that does not want us, a place that does not value us. One brown woman leaves, one brown woman comes in, ironically, the new brown woman is assigned the office of the brown woman that is on her way out. A message on the whiteboard of the office reads “Make it work!” I chuckle and feel confused and maybe a bit sad. The person before me did not stay very long, maybe it did not work for her? Was she the one that wrote “make it work”? I do not know, I read the message and I feel many things. This space feels cold, disconnected, even when many people are outside and when many stop by to say hi and welcome you into the department, at least for the first two weeks. Invitations to lunch, dinner, yoga? But it is all quiet after that. After a month or two you know the people you can trust and who will have your back, some of these people you have never met and perhaps one of them is familiar to you from another time in life. Mi madre siempre me ha dicho y me sigue diciendo, no comas nada de lo que te den. The message: “tread carefully,” with people that is. Mi madre tambien me regalo un fuerte sentido sobre las personas, kind of like intuition about the good people that are good and the people that even when they look good, they will not be good for you. Or the people who say they want to support you but ellos solo te quieren usar para su propio beneficio, Aguas con esos! Trust your intuition. En especial, por que de esos hay muchos.

As a faculty who recently got on the tenure track para muchos vas a parecer una indefensa, inexperienced, naive, source of work, brilliant ideas, many of which more seasoned scholars will want to pursue- at your expense--- ten cuidado. Pasa tiempo con esos que te quieren y apoyan de verdad, que aunque sean far few, they are worth it, they are your comunidad. Enfócate en ti y en tu trabajo, hay competencia pero no con los demás, sino consigo mismo. El system lo hará ver como que the competition is with your fellow colleagues and friends and it will reward that behavior y eso te pone en riesgo de perderte en el vacío. En peligro de abandonar lo que realmente amas hacer para perseguir shiny things. Remember why you came here, acuérdate de las largas horas trabajando para alcanzar las tres letras, acuérdate de los motivos que te trajeron aquí, de las personas, de la esperanza y de las metas.

Whenever you feel like the system is draining you dry, take a step back, look at the brighter side, you are still here and you are not leaving. Pero ten en cuenta that if it is time to leave, it is time to leave and you leave. Esta bien. The academy does not make you. Sometimes when things get really bad and you know that things did not go to shit just for you, you will feel like you are a burden for your village if you open up and discuss your struggle, no te lo calles, do not let it in, it will blow you up into pieces. Habla, discútelo, compártelo. Dicen que las penas con pan son menos pero también se sienten menos cuando las sacas y las compartes con esos que te apoyan. Tal ves they already lived through the same thing, perhaps they have not, no puedo decirte cuánto me ha ayudado estar cerca de mi village, aunque no sea en persona, a text, a snap, a message on twitter or other social media. They give me life, they make me see that not everything is bad or lost that even when the academy kicks me hard, I am stronger than that and I will prevail. No pierdas la esperanza, no dejes que el sistema te cambie, que te robe tu espíritu, tu alma, tu alegría o tu vida. Take care, the system and the work will be here tomorrow but life and

those you love might not be, Vive la vida, la academy does not make you but it can surely break you, if you let it.

Bittersweet News

Sofia shared her testimonio, retracing her steps through the tenure process, identifying multiple points of recalculations, como la vida no le importa si tienes planes, she negotiated her identities along the way. Each point of resistance had its very own consequences, our pláticas causing a pause for contemplation of the what if's. The news of the tenure denial reversal was bittersweet. Sofia recounted:

It was a little bit disappointing because it wasn't like, yay on my merits I got tenure. I used to think, when I would allow myself to daydream about it I would think, maybe I'll have a party and invite faculty, or maybe I would do some kind of celebration. I never did that because it just felt ridiculous at this point where there had been all of this drama. And I stayed away from the University during that whole summer because I thought... I didn't feel like I really had a future there, so I thought why go to any meetings? And I think there was still one more department meeting left, one more college meeting left. But I thought, if I'm there in my terminal year it doesn't really matter, and so I stayed away, and I really didn't want to see anyone.

Sofia traversed the seven stages of conocimiento several times while on her journey. During the summer months, she began to regroup to find acceptance for what would be a final year of teaching. During the following conversation, Sofia reminded us of the sixth stage of conocimiento, clash of realities during her conversation with her dean:

So I met with the interim dean and he was like, "Well," he was like, "Whatever you did to change the President's mind, you should do more of that." ...he was like, "I don't know how that happened, but it was pretty amazing." And so I told him, I said, "You know, I didn't really fight this so much because," I was like, "I'm well aware of what the weaknesses were in my portfolio, and I didn't really fight this based on that, but because I feel like there should be a respect for the process here and the decision she made was in opposition to all those other levels of review and there was no real explanation for it. And the only explanation that was given to me sounded like they weren't even aware of what my timeline was."

Here was this white male, clearly not recognizing the pain and trauma this entire process had been inflicted upon Sofia. So it was definitely bittersweet, even the thought of celebrating

her tenure at the first department meeting was awkward, another sources of pain as she recounts what occurred:

So at the meeting, the first department meeting since I came back, my Chair announced "So, Sofia"... I think it was the first thing on the agenda. "I want to congratulate Sofia, she got tenure. As some of you know there was a long process involved," because I guess people had heard that I didn't get tenure. He was like, "I'm sure Sofia can answer questions if you have questions about that, but I want to take some time to congratulate her." So, when he said that the three white faculty were sitting across from me, they all looked down, they averted eye contact with me, and the remaining faculty... There was one senior white faculty member who came over and squeezed my arm and said, "Congratulations, it's well deserved." Then two Faculty of Color, men of color, gave me thumbs up, shook my hand. So those three young white faculty averted eye contact.

The three young white faculty she referenced had been recruited to the department to increase the institutions ability to achieve research one status and she had later found out were vocal critics of her tenure application. One particular critic went as far as to reach out to the president to express their concern about her tenure; they had done the same for another Faculty of Color (male) prior to leaving. Sofia shared at the end of our conversation the president had also denied that faculty's tenure. And just like that, Sofia shifts into what is the seventh stage of *conocimiento*, the shift of realities, sharing:

Academia I think is not an easy place to be and there are more politics involved than I would like. But I think I try to hold on to the things that kind of brought me to academia in the first place, like wanting to study disadvantage and equity. And if I have some room to do that then that feels satisfying. I mean, it's a constant kind of process because things come up that I think just I still feel questioned about how much I belong, a little bit of it myself, but sometimes from others. But as a whole, I think our department is kind of shaping out to be closer to more of the supportive environment that I had been wanting.

Quickly following up, so as not to romanticize this in any way, Sofia explained:

Things have settled in my life too, compared to how things were at the beginning of the tenure process. But it's still having two parents that work a lot, and then two young children, it's just that in itself is a whole balancing act. And like I said, I feel like I drop the ball consistently somewhere. So, it's just learning to be okay with that's just how things happen. And I think I'm easier on myself than I was with my first child because they seem to turn out fairly okay even if you do drop the ball here and there.

Sofia's characterization of what the future looks like was hopeful, cautious, but hopeful. As the director of the program, she explained she hoped to influence how their department selected faculty, recognizing that research was not the only important thing; but in fact, students were the most important reason to be in higher education. While Sofia was not able to complete a carta de consejo, her entire testimonio serves as a gem of sabiduria. This quote by Anzaldúa (2015) is how I felt Sofia's energy throughout her testimonio:

In gatherings where people feel powerless, la nepantlera offers rituals to say good-bye to old ways of relating; prayers to thank life for making us face loss, anger, guilt, fear, and separation; rezos to acknowledge our individual wounds; and in commitments to not give up on others just because they hurt us. (p. 149)

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

To live our lives based on the principles of a love ethic (showing care, respect, knowledge, integrity, and the will to cooperate), we have to be courageous. Learning how to face our fears is one way we embrace love. Our fear may not go away, but it will not stand in the way. Those of us who have already chosen to embrace a love ethic, allowing it to govern and inform how we think and act, know that when we let our light shine, we draw to us and are drawn to other bearers of light. We are not alone” (hooks, 2000, p. 101).

As I contemplated how to conclude this study, I was reminded of a time where Dra. Muñoz challenged my classmates and me to live and work from an ethic of love and care. It was soon after the 2016 election, we were reading many difficult texts for our class, Inclusive University, and I was mad as hell. My anger was unexplainable, with each text we read, I became further enraged, and I could not bring myself to understand how I was ever going to be able to find an ethic of love within me. I picked up bell hooks book, *All About Love: New Visions*, with the hopes somehow it would spark something within me and the truth is, I felt even more confused and hopeless, believing, I would never achieve this elusive ethic of love and care that Dra. Muñoz constantly mentioned. I pondered, struggled, and felt confused about how I could or would convey the power of Flor, Luna, and Sofia’s testimonios, not fully trusting in myself to be able to capture all of the emotion behind this project. There was so much pain, but also hope, and it led me to pick up *All About Love: New Visions*, one more time. This study, testimonios and cartas de consejo, all lead to a call to reimagine the academy, guided by an ethic of love and care, an opportunity to apply Rendon’s (2000) *Academics of the Heart*.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to better understand the experiences of Chicana Latinas interested in the professoriate. Rooted in a Chicana Feminist Epistemology, the study utilized a testimonio/platica approach to answer the following questions:

1. How do Chicana/Latinas navigate, negotiate, and resist the hegemonic academic structures that exist in higher education as they traverse the pathway to and through the professoriate?
2. Based on those experiences, how has the concept of academic legitimacy played a role in Chicana/Latinas navigating these structures?

In choosing testimonio/pláticas as a methodology and method, the voices of Chicana/Latinas were clearly centered and the platicadoras, Flor, Luna, and Sofia, served as co-creators in this study. The principal themes emerging from the pláticas include: (1) platicadoras are in a constant state of negotiation; (2) even the slightest deviations for the approved/legitimate standards set forth by academia are considered forms of resistance; and (3) platicadoras live in a constant state of hypervigilance. A sub theme identified in the findings, demonstrated that the constructs of academic legitimacy were threaded throughout the experiences of each platicadoras testimonio. Findings and analysis are placed into context with the existing literature. As a result of these findings, a model for defining a model of navigation and its relationship to the interconnectedness of negotiation and resistance is presented followed by recommendations for further research, higher education practitioners, Chicana/Latinas interested in pursuing the professoriate. The chapter concludes with a carta de agradecimiento and consejo from the testimonialista.

Implications for Research

The literature provided a foundation for understanding the pathway to and through the professoriate is filled with challenges, is rarely linear, and experiences with sexism, racism, and oppression are to be expected (Ruiz & Machado-Casas, 2013; Gonzalez, 2007; Martinez, et. al, 2015; Martinez, Chang & Welton, 2017; Martinez & Welton, 2017; Medina & Luna, 2000; Flores-Niemann, 1999; Reyes, 2005; Segura, 2003; Urrieta, Jr., & Benavidez, 2007). Testimonio/Pláticas was the vehicle for achieving this understanding. To delve into such private and painful experiences, confianza was required and integral to this approach (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Flores-Carmona, 2012; Elenes, 2011; Fierros & Delgado Bernal, 2016; Gonzalez, 2001; Huante-Tzintzun, 2016; Preuss & Saavedra, 2013). The platicadoras testimonios reinforced what the literature reported and also provided new insights for disentangling the constructs of navigation, negotiation, resistance, and the role that academic legitimacy played at each intersecting point. Fortunately, there were ample data which led to rich and nuanced examples for each of the findings. While many of their experiences were not new, the ways in which they utilized their agency was representative of them having the language and tools to negotiate and resist, choosing to show up more authentically in the academy.

Chicana Feminist Epistemology y Conocimiento

The study was framed and guided by a Chicana Feminist Epistemology coupled with Anzaldúa's (1987) concept of "mestiza consciousness" which allowed for a counter-hegemonic approach to research, centering Chicana voices and experiences as critical and places an urgent call to action on the part of the researcher (Delgado Bernal, 1998). The research design and analysis was grounded CFE and mestiza consciousness principles. This approach lent itself to establishing an environment where the platicadoras were able to openly share their papelitos

guardados, confessing many painful experiences, moving forward in the healing process. Also critical to the process, was the avenue for leaning upon my own cultural intuition, engaging as a nepantlera, recognizing that while we were rubbing and opening old wounds, opportunities for building bridges of understanding outweighed the pain (Anzaldúa, 1987, 2002).

Sofia's testimonio was filled with incredibly nuanced explanations for all of the many competing life events which led to her feeling she was in a constant state of ambivalence. As we further delved into why this was so, she shared a complicated account of how she started a tenure track job after becoming pregnant outside of marriage and how that situation further taxed her entire being, body, mind, soul. While Sofia was able to somewhat compartmentalize the shame of being pregnant out of wedlock, and also having to negotiate starting mid-year (which gave her an extra semester for the tenure clock), she could not help but feel "really dumb for making a mistake... even though I was (in my early 30's), had a Ph.D., was earning enough." Her Catholic upbringing was causing turmoil within her family and she also felt shame for having to start a new job with stipulations, knowing there were not many other women in the department, fearing how she would be perceived. Delgado Bernal (1998) pointed to how important it was to take into consideration all aspects of a Chicana identity, Catholicism being one of those, and the power of CFE in validating and legitimizing those experiences.

Las confesiones de cada una de las mujeres, gave us a deeper understanding of not only their experiences to navigate, negotiate, and resist, but also how the seven stages of conocimiento offers a framework for explaining the healing potential for each platicadora. Keating (2015) argued Anzaldúa "does not simply write about 'suppressed knowledges and marginalized subjectivities,' she writes from within them," resisting hegemonic approaches to what constitutes knowledge creation, decolonizing epistemological and ontological assumptions"

(p. xxix). Platicadoras all spoke of their experiences in higher education as interconnected, like trenzas, which could not be disentangled in neat and orderly ways, recognizing how each arrebato fractured their being. The need to make sense of these arrebetos, the need to heal, the Coyolxauhqui imperative, is one way of bringing the pieces back together, through knowledge/understanding creation, in this case, through the pláticas (Anzaldúa, 2015).

After our first pláticas, Sofia shared how she valued the process,

...it's very cathartic, I feel like that's the benefit to me sharing this because, like I said, there's things, bits and pieces, that I've told people but some information I've withheld, so I mean, yeah, it's very freeing to lay things out in this way.

With each subsequent plática, Sofia shared her pain, finding healing along the way, but also providing wisdom for those who will come behind her. When we chatted via text and telephone later on, she shared that she was not able to write a carta de consejo, she had been appointed the program director, was raising two children, and attempting to negotiate some stability after having endured a traumatic tenure process. She had already shared an immense amount of herself in this process, her entire testimonio would serve as a carta de consejo.

Utilizing both CFE and the stages of conocimiento as a means to explain the process for healing, opened the doors for creating knowledge and understanding in ways that Eurocentric, 'legitimate,' ways of conducting research would have not done justice to the experiences of the platicadoras. By utilizing these approaches, I openly and actively shared in the process, co-constructing meaning while sitting alongside them rather than coldly observing and analyzing their experiences from afar. The value of healing from sharing in this process, not only served to begin putting Coyolxauhqui back together again, los testimonios laid the groundwork for identifying how to parse out and deconstruct how navigation, negotiation, and resistance manifested itself in their experiences.

Navigation, Negotiation, and Resistance

Central to this study was the need to understand how Chicana/Latinas navigated, negotiated, and resisted throughout their experiences in pursuit of the professoriate. Tangentially, how academic legitimacy showed up during their experiences was also explored during the pláticas. Defining the terms, navigation, negotiation, resistance, and legitimacy beyond the daily understanding of the words became crucial. The terminology of navigation and resistance can be traced back to Critical Race Theory (CRT), LatCRT which both inform CFE, and the model of community cultural wealth (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005). Grounded in a philosophy of resistance to oppressive structures, navigation and resistance were closely intertwined as crucial for survival for people of color, and in higher education, Faculty of Color. In the spirit of countering deficit models, scholars recognized institutions of education served as places for transformation and empowerment as well as spaces of oppression of Latinx students (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Vialpando, 2004; Yosso, 2005). Starting from this understanding, there was initially a desire on my part to understand how Chicana/Latinas balanced navigation and resistance.

In a personal conversation with Dolores Delgado Bernal at the MALCS conference in August 2018, she noted the act of balancing suggested an equilibrium between the two and suggested that I utilize the term negotiate, which implies there is a compromise between competing priorities. While Yosso's (2005) definition of navigation can be considered the conflation of both steering(navigation) and overcoming obstacles (negotiation) in an effort to progress through an inherently racist and oppressive system, it does not fully capture the essence of negotiation. Developing a more concise definition of what each term meant was critical when

we began to make sense of the platicadoras experiences. What resulted was the development of a more nuanced definition of navigate and negotiate, whereas the defining characteristics of resistance aligned with the literature. I proposed the following definitions in relation these terms to contextualize the experiences of Chicana/Latinas pursuing the professoriate in higher education:

In an effort to better understand how Chicana/Latinas experience pursuing the professoriate, it is critical to further define and differentiate between navigation, negotiation, and resistance. Navigation involves having a plan or course of action in pursuing and achieving a particular goal, in this case, the pursuit of the professoriate and achieving a level of legitimacy, initially, tenure. More specific to this study, how the platicadoras charted their course, what elements influenced that plan, the blueprint for their roadmaps. Negotiation is the process by which platicadoras addressed challenges, roadblocks, that would cause them to adjust their course of action and/or recalculate their roadmap. Also included in this process, the strategy they chose to use in choosing to resist, or not, determining the costs/repercussions for their choices. Resistance is representative of a choice to push back on, ignore, or challenge hegemonic academic structures which are contrary to their Chicana/Latina identities. This applied to areas teaching, service, and research; all three of which had specific standards of legitimacy.

Flor, Luna, and Sofia all pointed to an immense amount of thought that went into the choices they made regarding their educational choices. Each shared their plans (roadmaps) for how they traversed the pathway towards the professoriate, from choosing which schools they would attend for undergraduate, post-graduate, and doctoral educational institutions. As first-generation college students, they each followed pathways established by high school counselors, mentors, and family for what types of institutions they would pursue, as evidenced in their

doctoral program choices. Flor's undergraduate experience highlights how navigation and negotiation as defined for this study show up in the lives of the participants.

My undergrad trajectory was also kind of weird, because I started off at (highly selective university). I got good grades in high school, I wanted to go to a quote-unquote good school, so I went there and I hated it.

Flor followed a pre-established roadmap, the experience was not positive, she had to negotiate her next move, and recalculate her previous course of action. Although she was on scholarship and it was a private school, she shared, "I just felt completely out of place and I struggled a lot with grades and mental health, even though at the time we weren't really talking about mental health." The negotiation process required making decisions which would have an impact on her roadmap but also required that she choose to go against the standards set forth by academia for what is deemed legitimate, "because when I was at (highly selective university), I just felt really, really defeated. Being a good student my whole life, I had never failed, I had never done poorly. I was just like, maybe college isn't for me." She negotiated a decision which was contrary to the expectations set forth in the roadmap she had initially pursued, resisting the widely accepted expectations that when you go to a prestigious institution. Flor's recalculated roadmap involved her returning to her home, regional institution, regrouping, and "restoring my faith in going to college." Her choice to honor her need to protect her mental health was an act of resistance.

Academic Legitimacy

The tangential question of how academic legitimacy played a role in the navigation process also required that we define what legitimacy meant in context with this study. The literature, by and large, defined legitimacy as representative of an organization's agreed upon standards for what is valued, beneficial to, and representative of values, beliefs, and created by members of the leadership and upheld by the members (Deepphouse & Suchman, 2008; Gonzales & Terosky; Scott, 1995; Suchman, 1995). In particular, the role of scholarly legitimacy or

research legitimacy, which was clearly connected to how institutions of higher education value publications in “top tier” journals, number of publications, type of research approaches, research tied to grant funding. Platicadoras speak to how they were socialized to understand these standards of legitimacy, no one more than Sofia, understood the impact of scholarly legitimacy and its potential to negatively impact their progression towards tenure. I found the acceptance of this standard of legitimacy as unchangeable the most lamentable. Flor, Luna, and Sofia all shared experiences where this was a major point of contention in their journeys, negotiating when and how to resist remained one of the most difficult questions to answer.

To be clear, Sofia, whose tenure was denied—largely in part to this question of productivity in research—like no other, understood the demand and value of research in whether she would achieve tenure. It was never enough. Even after securing a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant, she indicated she remained in the good graces of the dean but that was short lived, particularly when one of her classes did not meet enrollment expectations and had to be canceled. She was required to develop and submit a grant proposal without support to justify her workload. Sofia said,

I think back, maybe I should have fought that at the time. I was junior faculty, it was pretty early on, so ok, I'll do this proposal and kill myself, which was much more work than what would have been required had I taught the class.

She would submit four other grants, and further lamented,

...if any one of those grants had come through, I feel like then I would have been, I think, on [grants office] good side, and therefore on the good side of the administration. But they all failed and so I was just a failure in that respect.

Research and grant funding productivity, in addition to other requirements of faculty, is valued above teaching and service, and, as in the case of Sofia, seemed to be based upon many factors which were out of her control (Gonzales, 2018; Gonzales & Teroskly, 2016; Smith, 2000; Stromquist, 2017). Sofia's denial of tenure was firmly rooted in this hegemonic standard of

legitimacy, where her interdisciplinary research did not fit the acceptable standards and lack of securing grant funding, further distanced her from achieving the nod of acceptance that tenure provided. Sofia's choice to resist and challenge her tenure decision is an example of how she was in constant negotiation, carefully and doggedly fighting for what was fair. She clearly acknowledges throughout our pláticas that she is aware that her portfolio was not what the "standards" called for, but her work as a whole was valuable, legitimate, and demanded that she be heard. This choice ultimately resulted in the reversal of the initial decision and carried with it bittersweet emotions but it also strengthened her resolve to make a difference moving forward.

Answering the Research Questions

While the platicadoras found themselves at different stages in the process and each shared rich and varied accounts, they shared similar experiences with regard to the process of navigating, negotiating, and resisting hegemonic academic structures. They could all point to challenges and obstacles which included but were not limited to: (1) hegemonic academic structures which privileged certain types of research, service, and teaching over others, (2) encountering contradictory practices and/or double standards based on their gender and ethnicity, (3) trauma inflicted upon them by faculty peers, administrators, students, family members, and (4) unrealistic labor production expectations.

Platicadoras testimonios consistently pointed to the fact that negotiation was constant and oftentimes required they recalculate their roadmaps to address compromises. It was a false narrative to believe that there is really a choice to resist or not to resist because non-resistance in many cases carries the same if not more consequences for the body, mind and soul of each of the platicadoras. Finally, and most alarming, is the constant state of hypervigilance the platicadoras found themselves in. The urgency of identifying ways to counter this pain and trauma in some

ways is at the core of the relevance of this study. While the seven steps of *conocimiento* helps to contextualize the process for achieving healing and learning to live and thrive authentically in this inhospitable space we call higher education, it is not enough. Above all, identifying ways in which we define navigation, negotiation, and resistance and how they are braided into experiences of Chicana/Latinas journeys opens the door to identifying ways to better support them in becoming faculty members.

There was consensus con las *platicadoras* that academic legitimacy played a crucial role in the ways they navigated, negotiated, and resisted throughout their journey. Identifying ways in which legitimacy is measured, in context with higher education, was meaningful in that it began to define how and where we can develop strategies for supporting Chicana/Latinas in their journeys on and through to the professoriate. Flor, Luna, and Sofia concluded the role of research legitimacy was central to how they would ultimately be deemed legitimate in the eyes of institutions of higher education. While not surprising, they each had established they did not want research legitimacy to define their scholarly identities nor drive their overall experiences as professors. Each *platicadora* was actively resisting the pressures of succumbing to those standards of academic legitimacy, with the goal of maintaining authentic identities. Overall, academic legitimacy could not be disentangled from the entire navigation, negotiation, and resistance process. It remained a common thread throughout our *pláticas*, indicating additional research and work must be conducted in challenging those master narratives.

Decolonizing Roadmaps: Un Modelo de Conocimiento

As each *plática* concluded, it was evident that Flor, Luna, and Sofia developed roadmaps based on expectations and standards set forth by the master narrative of how to achieve success on their journeys towards and through the professoriate. *Platicadoras* also shared multiple

experiences which require multiple recalculations to their roadmaps based on the constant negotiations they found themselves making when time and time again, the system not meant for them, forced them to adjust. Platicadoras acknowledged their academic training influenced how they negotiated and resisted, “because they had been exposed to the language of resistance.” Over time, they learned to recognize at which points they chose to resist and estimate the potential consequences that might exist. In particular, Flor sought to live an authentic Mami Scholar identity, and through the mentorship of her advisor, who also worked towards challenging hegemonic structures, she was able to recalculate her roadmap to pursue jobs in places where research legitimacy was not going to supersede her desire to maintain an authentic identity. Figure 6.1 offers a visual representation of how platicadoras navigated, negotiated, and resisted hegemonic academic structures of legitimacy while also achieving *conocimiento* at multiple stages within the process.

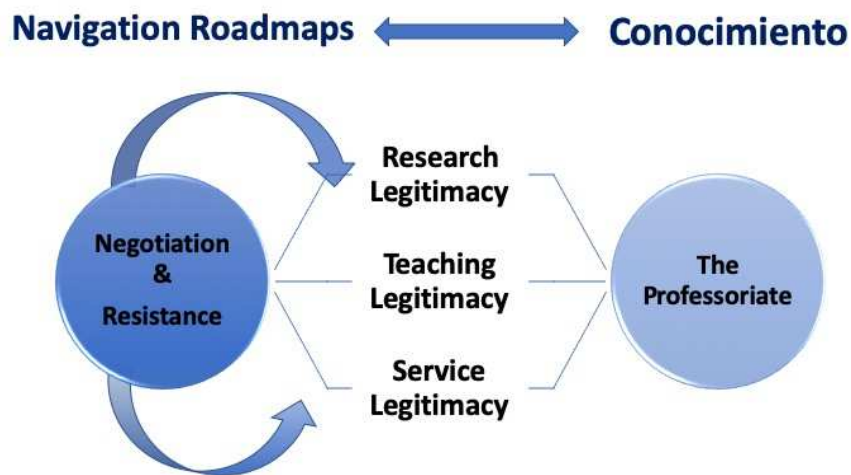


Figure 6.1. Modelo de Conocimiento

In defining navigation, negotiation, resistance, and academic legitimacy, platicadoras were better able to determine strategies for how they could continue to disrupt these hegemonic structures in more productive ways as well as maintain their authentic identities. For Luna, this was evident in her disciplined approach to holding her colleagues, administrators, and students accountable for their actions. These acts of negotiation resulted in Luna requesting equitable pay on multiple occasions, knowing at some point, she may need to go on the market again, giving up some level of stability in the name of resistance.

Conocimiento is not a destination, it is an ongoing process. Messy, and necessary for growth, this model represents an approach by which one can truly adhere to the dicho, “con aviso no hay engaño,” with appropriate notice, there can be no betrayal. There was consensus among the platicadoras that there is no doubt that resistance brings repercussions, but with conocimiento comes healing and comfort in knowing that they have the agency to choose.

Recommendations for Action

One of the more significant tenants of testimonio, is a call for action to bring about change based on the understandings and knowledge created through pláticas (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga & Flores Carmona, 2012). Similarly to Flor, who chose to embrace a Mami Scholar identity, Sofia also shared how her traumatic experiences with tenure process, led her to seek out more information related to faculty governance. Additionally, Sofia recognized how her new appointment as a program director, provided her with the ability to influence interviewing procedures for new faculty. By disrupting previous practices, she hoped to attract more diverse candidates who would serve to bring a new and reimagined approach to scholarly research and benefit their students. The following recommendations are intended to identify ways in which Chicana/Latinas can live authentically, care for self, create and nurture community; how

institutions of higher education develop reimagined graduate socialization programming which challenge colonized ways of existing as faculty; create policy related to achieving tenure and expand the defining characteristics of legitimacy and develop and implement mentoring programs which are thoughtfully and intentionally designed in commitment to standards of justice and equity. These recommendations serve as a call to reimagine the academy, guided by an ethic of love and care, an opportunity to apply Rendon's (2000) *Academics of the Heart* as well as follow the consejos of the platicadoras.

Recommendations for Chicana/Latinas

Gender and ethnic identity played a central role in how the platicadoras experienced institutions of higher education, maintaining an authentic identity was challenging and riddled with self-doubt, questioning of scholarly ability, and hypervigilance. Rendon (2000) challenged faculty to center love and authenticity as core values to pursue, focusing on individual behavior which encouraged self-renewal, spirituality, and connectedness. Recommendations were intended to provide roadmaps, consejos, and a process for which to understand the stages of *conocimiento* as valuable and necessary in the healing process.

Be Unapologetically You

Flor nos aconseja que seamos quien somos, without apologies, you may not have been invited, but you are legitimate and belong here. As Flor advised, "let your identity guide your research, be unabashed about your emphasis on advocacy through research and your commitment to social justice." Luna also shared, "Vive la vida, la academy does not make you, but it can surely break you if you let it." There will be several *arrebatos*, *remolinos*, which will challenge you to negotiate how much you will compromise your authentic self, knowing the academy will change you if you are not careful.

Tend to your Spiritual, Mental, and Physical Health

Luna shared no matter how much your level of understanding of the experiences of Faculty of Color in higher education, “el golpe será duro y siempre dolerá más que lo que dicen the most vivid narratives of what it means to exist and work in the ivory tower,” and one must be prepared. Pay careful attention however, to body, mind, and spirit, find ways to have self-grace, maintain healthy boundaries, and center one’s “whole” identity as a form of resistance. In doing so, one contributes to reimagining an academy that honors the body and mind as sacred.

Busca y Alimenta tu Comunidad

This cannot be stressed enough. A consistent consejo shared by the platicadoras was to find a community of support. Connections with other mujeres is paramount to moving beyond survival, y mas que nada, para aflorcerer como fierce scholars who embrace interdependence and multiple ways of knowing. These are the spaces where mutual and connected healing happens, where nepantlers achieve shifting realities and build bridges.

Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions

As the platicadoras and I traversed this journey of knowledge co-creation, it became clear while this is personal, institutions can very much be influenced and held accountable to disrupt hegemonic systems. Based on sheer numbers, Chicana/Latina faculty nor other marginalized faculty groups can accomplish change alone, it requires buy in from all faculty and administrators to serve as advocates for change. This advocacy position requires a willingness on the part of allies to give up their privileges not afforded Chicana/Latinas and other marginalized populations within higher education. It requires leadership who is not only willing to reimagine the academy, but to do the necessary work to create equitable and just change.

Challenging Constructs of Legitimacy and Tenure

It seems like such a simple fix and while most faculty argue these systems are outdated, racist, and overall oppressive, decolonizing the academy is not an easy feat. Particularly when white males—the dominant group—benefit greatly from these structures. Sofia shared how her negative experience had an impact on how she views her own privilege now that she has secured tenure and serves in a role with immense power. Her shifted reality encourages her to find ways to challenge her peers to question the ways in which they perpetuate the cycles of oppression.

This is one of the areas where all levels of administration can become involved, from setting the tone of how tenure should be viewed (president/provost) to how tenure committees are trained in reviewing and evaluating tenure portfolios. Most recently, I have had the opportunity to participate in the tenure process in my position at a community college. These same issues exist and our current president and newly appointed provost have made a commitment to address the subjectivity in the process. The tenure process should be seen as direct reflection on the investment and support that the institution provides all faculty and when you bring in a faculty of color, in this case, a Chicana/Latina it is incumbent upon the leadership to mentor, support, provide the necessary resources for that faculty to be successful. This also means that they must invest in training all levels of review on the importance of challenging hegemonic norms of legitimacy, demanding that they not continue to replicate oppressive practices. Most important however, is that the leadership (president and provost) invest time in intervening when any level of review is exacting oppressive standards and not valuing the work of Chicana/Latina faculty, or any faculty of color. In addressing these antiquated systems, a commitment on the part of the leadership helps provide the foundation for real change to happen.

Graduate Education Socialization to the Professoriate

Las platicadoras agreed the space in which messaging of legitimacy began was their entire educational experience, however, the messages related to research legitimacy were pervasive in their doctoral experiences. Rather than continue to divide faculty according to research productivity, creating tracks of ‘complete scholars’ and ‘differentiated scholars,’ Academics of the Heart suggested in reimagining the academy, we elevate and honor all ways of knowing as legitimate, disrupting the systems which incentivize research productivity indexes.

This is perhaps the place where Chicana/Latinas are able to receive the most personal support and establish a strong ethos related to how they understand what is deemed ‘legitimate’ as they prepare for the professoriate. By choosing not to perpetuate the same standards of legitimacy, faculty are primely positioned to provide a more inclusive system of support for Chicana/Latinas. This requires the support of all levels of administration, but the work falls squarely on program directors and faculty of programs to choose whether they will promote hegemonic standards of legitimacy, or if they will continue to perpetuate the same standards that were thrust upon them as students.

I believe that my experience as a graduate student is a prime example of how having the right faculty in place can lead to different outcomes. Without the support of faculty who are willing to encourage all types of research, it would have been impossible for me to have conducted this type of research and feel that it was legitimate. This required a faculty director who advocated for hiring a more diverse faculty with critical research backgrounds, adding critically focused courses, such as inclusive university, and in essence revamping the entire program to provide a more inclusive experience for me as a Chicana/Latina. A far more simplistic approach is for programs to consistently ask themselves if their curriculum, policies,

and research focus is encouraging Chicana/Latinas and/or all students of color or if they are serving to further marginalize them and upholding hegemonic structures.

Mentoring Initiatives for Chicana/Latinas Interested in Pursuing the Professoriate

Finally, and perhaps one of the more immediate ways in which institutions can disrupt hegemonic academic structures, is to expand upon the definition of pathways as they relate to traversing all systems of education for Chicana/Latinas. The study consistently showed that during their journeys, *platicadoras* experienced multiple points of recalculation which required modifications to their navigation roadmaps. These spaces in *nepantla*, offered and built bridges which resulted in many *consejos* useful for mentoring initiatives. In collecting, documenting, and sharing these roadmaps, we further reclaim our spaces in the arena of knowledge creation. Testimonios become the method of delivering support for those who were not invited to the ivory tower.

All levels of administrators (provost, deans, program chairs) should be involved in creating space for these types of communities of support to be fostered. An example would be encouraging and financially supporting participation and attendance of conferences whose central role is to support Chicana/Latinas both in their research as well as connecting them to other Chicana/Latinas in higher education such as *Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social* (MALCS). The president and provost should also invest in consistent meetings with Chicana/Latinas on their campus, beyond social receptions, listen to the concerns and choose one or two initiatives that can address concerns in real time. If institutions are committed to living up to their Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status they should look at how they are supporting the very Chicana/Latina faculty who are serving in the most visible of positions to support Hispanic students.

Recommendations for Future Testimonio/Pláticas

I recently attended the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) annual conference where Dolores Delgado Bernal served as a keynote and spoke of the reimagination of research legitimacy which held testimonio as a valued as legitimate knowledge creation. I was struck by a slide of fewer than 20 Chicana/Latina scholars other than Delgado Bernal, who participate in such a praxis. It highlighted the need to continue building capacity within the research community to not only embrace testimonio as a powerful method and tool for knowledge creation, but to consider employing it on the personal level. The experiences of Flor, Luna, and Sofia, while rich and powerful, add to the ever-growing literature on Chicana/Latinas experiences but it is not nearly sufficient enough.

In order to develop and grow navigation roadmaps, expansion and use of testimonio methodology to include all marginalized groups, helps to grow the counter-narrative of how operationalizing a reimagined academy is urgent. Increasing the repository of navigation roadmaps also serves in supporting and mentoring minoritized humans who may want to pursue the professoriate. El modelo for conocimiento provides a framework which can be applied to other minoritized populations who are pursuing the professoriate, offering a deeper understanding of those experiences with the potential to create navigational roadmaps. The modelo for conocimiento offers ways in which to develop and assess interventions to support Chicana/Latinas on their journeys. Navigation roadmaps offer opportunities to successfully traverse the pathway toward and through the professoriate as well as deeper understanding of the process of healing and shifting realities.

It was clear once platicadoras were exposed to the language of negotiation and resistance, the more empowered they were to exercise their personal agency in resisting and showing up as

their authentic selves within the academy. The consejos provided can be applicable across a variety of stages within the higher education pipeline; there is value in applying it within the K-12 education environment, as well. There is room for exploring how this model, which is built upon the tenants of CRT, LatCrt, Chicana Feminist Epistemology, Community Cultural Wealth, and Academics of the Heart. These tenants can be applied to better understand the educational experiences of minoritized populations. In reimagining the academy and its standards of legitimacy, we must also recognize a colonial approach to education inflicts pain and wounds in all levels of formal educational systems and those testimonios deserve to be shared.

Reflections on Love & Conocimiento

Finding light in the dark through an ethic of love and care perfectly captures the essence of what the platicadoras co-created through this testimonio study. I vividly recall how, in spite of confessing painful stories of their experiences, Flor, Luna, and Sofia each looked when they shared instances where they embraced their agency and resisted and how genuine and authentic they were able to feel in those moments. If I could describe how fierce chingoneness looked, it was the vision I have of the energy that shone in their eyes, the fierceness in their voices, the pride reflected in their posture, and the love that emanated from their hearts. Only we, nos/otras will completely understand this look or presence and that is the power of testimonio pláticas. The findings of this study are powerful and add to the body of research which is concerned with the lack of Chicana/Latina representation as profesoras in the academy. And yet, I continue to struggle with the idea that this dissertation study and all of its findings and recommendations can neatly identify the ways in which Chicana/Latinas have navigated, negotiated, and resisted hegemonic academic structures, and academic legitimacy as they traverse the pathway towards and through to the professoriate.

I recognize my own internal challenges with living in a colonized mind, keeps me from fully embracing, living, breathing, and exercising the principles of Academics of the Heart because of fear. Fear, which hooks (2000), argued, is an obstacle which derails us from truly knowing love and living from an ethic of love and care. In the simplest of terms and yet most daunting of actions, a reimagined academy which centers love and authenticity, values all ways of knowing, requires a dogged approach and deep commitment to love. A lesson I will forever be grateful to Dra. Muñoz for having taught me. As my ride or die sister scholar, Dra. Carmen Rivera once shared with me, “we need more verb love in our lives.” As I previously shared, the idea that I could ever live and work from an ethic of love and care was foreign, distant, and appeared to be unattainable to me. As I have traversed this pathway, I see that in letting go of fear and embracing and enacting love, as a verb, the possibilities are endless. The love and grace that resulted from Flor, Luna, and Sofía’s testimonios proves that we can continue to build bridges of un nuevo concocimiento and that a reimagination of the academy is not as distant as one might assume.

Una carta de agradecimiento: Las Meras Meras Chingonx's

Queridas,

When I began this journey, I could not have imagined that I would connect with so many Chingonx's who would love me through this process in securing the three letters.

You loved me when I did not love myself, or my abilities, or my words, or my understanding... and ... Loved me when I wanted to give up and become a casualty to the dreaded three letters, A...B...D

You loved me through personal traumas y wished for my healing, reminding me that healing involves the body, mind, heart, and soul.

Many of you literally fed me and fed my spirit in times of joy and in times of sadness. Nuestras citas de cafecitos y calditos, me llenaron con amor y fe.

You loved me enough to provide consejos, aveces con mucho, mucho, amor... at times with a fierce tone, jarring me out of my Coatlicue state of depression.

You loved me enough to call me on my bullshit when I was participating in colonial oppressive practices

And

You loved me when I was on the receiving end those colonial oppressive practices and never once said, you deserve it because...KARMA

Above all....

You loved me enough to share your navigation roadmaps, siempre diciendome, "aguas" con eso mija...

Me amaron sin condiciones, y me amaron porque you really SAW me... You SEE me... and you give your LOVE to me in ways that I never thought could be possible.

Por eso y mucho mas, no podría decirles todo cuanto las aprecio.

Gracias por acompañarme en este proceso de conocimiento and teaching, modeling, and showing me how to do this through an ethic of love and care.

En las palabras de Walter Mercado, "Sobre todo, mucho, mucho amor,"

Las quiero un chingo,
Finita

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: HOW CHICANA/LATINAS NAVIGATE, NEGOTIATE, AND RESIST
HEGEMONIC STRUCTURES WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION: CONFESIONES Y
CONSEJOS DE TRES MUJERES

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WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

You have been identified as a Chicana/Latina who is pursuing a doctoral degree in higher education, or a Chicana/Latina tenure track faculty member in higher education, or a recently tenured Chicana/Latina faculty member in higher education. Your experiences on the journey towards to the professoriate are of interest to this study

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?

I along with my doctoral advisor will be conducting this research as part of my doctoral program dissertation requirements.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of Chicana/Latinas and how they navigate, negotiate, and resist hegemonic or oppressive academic structures within higher education.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

When possible, the study/individual interviews will take place in the city where research participants reside, if this cannot be accomplished logistically, then individual zoom interviews will be conducted online. The group interview will be conducted online, using zoom technology. The study will commence in March 2019 and conclude no later than December 2019.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

If you agree to participate in this study, the investigator will ask you to participate in the following activities:

- Participate in (3) individual interviews: 1- 2 hours each. With your permission, these interviews will be audiotaped.
- Complete an online blog assignment- in an effort to share ideas a community blog where each participant is added as an author will be created on Google EBlogger.

Research participants will be asked to write a letter, or carta de consejo to a Chicana/Latina who is considering pursuing the professoriate in higher education. The EBlog will be co-created and with your consent direct quotes from the blog will be published as part of the study.

- Participate in (1) group interview: 1-2 hours.
- Review final themes I identify through analysis of your interviews

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

The study poses minimal risks. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any potential, but unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? There is no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the study will result in positive contributions to the study of experiences of Chicana/Latinas within higher education. Potentially leading to continued research in the area.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY? Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE? We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law.

For this study, we will assign a pseudonym to your data, this includes your institution name, rank, title, etc. so that the only place your name will appear in our records is on the consent and in our data spreadsheet which links you to your code. Only the research team will have access to the link between you, your code, and your data. The only exceptions to this are if we are asked to share the research files for audit purposes with the CSU Institutional Review Board ethics committee, if necessary. When we write about the study to share with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private. Educational institutions and individual participants will not be identified, individual, organizational, and institutional identities will remain explicitly confidential unless the research participant provides consent to publish identifying characteristics.

Participation in a focus group involves some loss of privacy. The researchers will make every effort to ensure that information about you remains confidential, but cannot guarantee total confidentiality. Your identity will not be revealed in any publications, presentations, or reports resulting from this research study. While we will ask all group members to keep the information they hear in this group confidential, we cannot guarantee that everyone will do so.

WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

No forms of compensation will be issued to participants

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Josefina Carmona at jcfinita@gmail.com or via cell: 915-449-8362. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at: RICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

The researchers would like to audiotape your interview to be sure that your comments are accurately recorded. Only our research team will have access to the audiotapes, and they will be destroyed when they have been transcribed by a 3rd party transcription service.

Do you give the researchers permission to audiotape your interview? Please initial next to your choice below.

Yes, I agree to be digitally recorded _____ (initials)

No, do not audiotape my interview _____ (initials)

The researcher would like to utilize direct quotes from the recorded interviews. Please let us know if you would like your comments to remain confidential or attributed to you. Please initial next to your choice below.

I give permission for comments I have made to be shared using my exact words and to include my (name/position/title). _____ (initials)

You can use my data for research and publishing, but do NOT associate my (name/position/title) with direct quotes. _____ (initials)

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

Name of person providing information to participant

Date

Signature of Research Staff

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Hello, my name is Josefina Carmona, and I am currently a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education Leadership program at Colorado State University. I am conducting a qualitative dissertation study, under the mentorship of Dr. OiYan Poon, on the how Chicana/Latinas navigate, negotiate, and resist hegemonic academic structures within higher education on their journey towards the professoriate.

My study is motivated by my own experiences within the oppressive education system. The lack of Chicana/Latinas in professorial roles within higher education was concerning to me and as I traversed my own path towards a doctorate, I came to realize why. I was most drawn to understanding how Chicana/Latinas successfully traversed the process, particularly how academic legitimacy impacted them at each step within the process. While there is research related to experiences of Chicana/Latinas in higher education, very few studies focus upon the navigation, negotiation, and resistance skills that many employ in achieving success. It is my hope that through this study, we identify and share *consejos* with Chicana/Latinas who are interested in pursuing the professoriate.

I will conduct my research beginning in spring 2019, conducting individual interviews, a group project involving cartas de *consejo* via a blog medium, and a group interview amongst the research participants selected for the study. I am seeking participants who are Chicana/Latinas in the final stages of their doctoral journey, a tenure track faculty member, or a recently tenured faculty member within the discipline of higher education.

If you or someone you know might be interested in this project and would like more specific information about timeline, confidentiality, and/or process, please contact me at jcfinita@rams.colostate.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at: RICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu ; 970-491-1553.

With gratitude,

Josefina “Josie” Carmona

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL TO COLLEAGUES

Dear (Name),

As you know I am working on my dissertation and I am on the how Chicana/Latinas navigate, negotiate, and resist hegemonic academic structures within higher education on their journey towards the professoriate. In an effort to recruit students for this study, I am wondering if you can connect me with students who meet the following criteria:

- Identify as Chicana/Latina
- Meet one of the following criteria:
 - Current doctoral student in their last year of coursework or dissertation phase
 - Tenure Track faculty member in their first or second-year teaching
 - Recently tenured faculty member (no more than three years after tenure)
 - Participated in learning experiences OR completed projects on race/racism

Once I have the contact information for the person, I will reach out to them via email. Any participation in the study will not be directly connected to your institution and their participation will be confidential.

I look forward to hearing from you. If you have questions regarding the study or further clarification of the criteria please contact me directly via email at jcfinita@gmail.com or via phone at 915-449-8362

With gratitude,

Josefina “Josie” Carmona

APPENDIX D: EMAIL TO SELECTED RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Dear (Name)

Thank you for your interest in participating in the study on how Chicana/Latinas navigate, negotiate, and resist hegemonic academic structures within higher education on their journey towards the professoriate. I appreciate your time and would like to extend an invitation to participate as a co-collaborator in this research endeavor.

With your consent, I would like to begin the process of connecting the group of participants via an email introduction, as well as schedule our first individual *plática* as soon as most convenient for you.

Your response to this email will commence the process for informed consent process, which will outline the timeline, confidentiality, and process for this study. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email, jcfinita@gmail.com and/or my cell at 915-449-8362.

With gratitude,

Josefina “Josie” Carmona

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Primera Plática 90-120 minutes

This plática will be semi-structured and dialogic in congruence with a testimonio approach. While the setting will be informal there are a few broad themes that we will cover during this initial interview. As the interviews progress, co-research participants will be encouraged to add to the list of questions and/or provide clarification when necessary. The following questions will guide the plática.

1. Tell me about yourself and your journey towards the professoriate?
2. What inspired you to pursue a professorial career?
3. Discuss your salient identities and how they have impacted your journey towards the professoriate.
4. How have hegemonic academic structures impacted your experiences?
 - i. Doctoral student- how have research expectations been set forth by faculty, your advisor, and/or committee members?
 - ii. Tenure track faculty- describe how the research expectations within the tenure process has been introduced. How has set those expectations?
 - iii. Recently tenured faculty- describe your tenure evaluation process. How your research was judged, rated, valued during your tenure process?
5. Which academic structures in particular have been the most difficult to navigate?
6. How have you navigated those structures?
7. Have there been occasions where you have resisted those structures? If so, how?
8. What types of negotiations and or compromises have you made specifically choosing not to resist?
9. How do you reconcile how you make those compromises?

Depending upon whether academic legitimacy is mentioned the following questions will be asked:

1. What is your definition of academic legitimacy?
2. How does the construct of academic legitimacy inform your choices in how you navigate the system?
3. Do you consider whether your research is considered legitimate?
4. If yes, why and how do you negotiate that construct?
5. If no, why?

Segunda Plática 60-90 minutes

The interview will be semi-structured and dialogic in congruence with testimonio approach. This interview will focus on Rendon's (2000) Academics of the Heart approach to navigating the world of academia. While there are five dimensions of how this can be achieved, for the purpose

of this study, I will focus solely on the first, individual behavior and the second, research. Specifically whether you approach research as a relationship centered process, where heart and science are intertwined, whether they honor diverse ways of knowing (epistemological approaches), and whether they engage in contemplative and self-reflective practices (Rendon, 2000). AoH offers a reimagined approach to how professors navigate, negotiate, and resist historically oppressive academic structures where individual behavior focused on self-renewal, creativity, commitment, connectedness to spirituality, and what it means to be authentic are most crucial (Rendon, 2000, p. 153). Additionally, Rendon (2000) suggested that a renewed approach to how research is conducted where other ways of knowing are valued, utilization methods that encourage subjectivity and imperfections, and the linking of research to teaching is critical in the shifting of academia. The following questions will guide the second plática:

1. How do you take care of you and your personal well-being? This could be physically, emotionally, spiritually.
2. How do you feel about the role of spirituality or spiritual activism?
3. Describe the ways in which you do or don't focus on self-renewal as you progress towards the professoriate?
4. Given our first discussion around hegemonic academic structures and legitimacy, can you discuss the ways in which you resist and does it impact the ways in which you design and frame your research agenda.
 - i. Doctoral student- Given AoH, how do you as a student navigate the research process and how has it impacted your relationships with your faculty advisors?
 - ii. Tenure track faculty- Given AoH and the established structures within your department, how have you framed your research agenda? Has it impacted your relationships with fellow faculty members?
 - iii. Recently tenured faculty – Given AoH and your recent tenure, how does this impact your research agenda and do you have plans to adjust it now that you have achieved tenure?

Cartas de consejo Group Plática.
90-120 minutes

The interview will be semi-structured and dialogic in congruence with testimonio approach. All participants will participate in an online video focus group. The aim of the focus group will be to explore themes from the *cartas de consejo* blog activity in a group context. Decisions regarding the best ways to present these *consjeos* will be a prime focus of the interview. ***See Appendix E for details on cartas de consjeo blog.***

Final Individual Plática
45-90 minutes

Final interviews are focused on meaning making and reflection on both the process and the themes presented to research participants. Questions will emerge from the themes and the focus group project. The following questions are intended to start the conversation:

1. What are your thoughts about the entire process? Particularly with regard to how the interviews were conducted, the questions posed.
2. Is there anything you would like to add, change, or omit from what you have shared in this process?
3. What are your thoughts on how to share this research?

APPENDIX F: CARTAS DE CONSEJO

The *cartas de consejo* project is intended to invite research participants to consider what types of *consejos* they would have appreciated long their journey. This project will not have strict parameters so as to organically allow the research participants to address the most pertinent *consejos* in their estimation. The following provides an informal guideline for research participants to consider as they craft their *cartas de consejo*.

In an effort to share ideas, a community blog where each participant is added as an author will be created on Google EBlogger. Research participants will be asked to write a letter, or carta de consejo to a Chicana/Latina who is considering pursuing a professorial profession. The following considerations should be made in the process.

1. Who would you address your letter to? Yourself at a younger stage of your journey? Someone you know who is currently on their journey? Or Chicana/Latinas in general?
2. How would you describe your passion or reason for wanting to pursue the professoriate?
3. Utilizing Academics of the Heart as a framework, what 2-3 pieces of advice would you share? Considering the following;
 - a. What navigational skills were most useful and relevant to your current success?
 - b. What negotiations did you have to make and how did you reconcile those points of negotiation?
 - c. What are the most effective ways in which you resisted hegemonic academic structures? Did these forms of resistance include a spiritual activism approach?

These questions are only intended to inspire reflection for how to approach this assignment. By no means are they intended to box in the *cartas de consjeo*, only for the purpose of sparking a response. You will have four weeks to complete your submission prior to the scheduling of the group *plática* where all three participants and myself will negotiate the best way to present these *cartas de consejo*.